

תנ"ך

יואש: Friend or Foe?

Ilana Nattel

AFTER A CURSORY glance at יב-יא and מלכים ב פרקים כג-כד, one is left confused and bewildered. The life of יואש המלך seems to waver dialectically between devout righteousness and dire evil. How could one man vacillate between such extremes?

The מדרש paints a very derogatory picture of יואש. It says:

”וירא ה' כי שנואה לאה...מהו וירא ה' כי שנואה? שראה הקב"ה שהיא עתידה להוציא בנים רשעים, וקרא אותה ישנואה. ואילו הן: יהורם, אחז, **יואש**, מנשה, אמנון, יהויקים, צדקיהו...” (מדרש אגדת בראשית פרק מט).

From where does the מדרש get this idea, to call יואש a רשע? Does the not say “יהי יואש כדב: and מלכים ב יב:ג) ”ויעש יואש הישר בעיני ה'”?

One possibility is that this מדרש is an example of the concept הולך האחרון, and since the life of יואש ended off badly, his whole life is viewed in a negative light. Perhaps, however, there is more to this. Upon careful inspection it is possible to see in the beginning of his life characteristics that foreshadow his future downfall.

From the very beginning, the childhood of יואש was quite different than that of most other children. When יואש was an infant, his father אחזיה died and his grandmother עתליה went on a rampage, killing all members of her family to insure her seat on the royal throne. יואש's aunt יהושבע, the wife of יהוא, took quick action and hid יואש in the חדר מטות (the attic) (בית המקדש explain this to be an attic in the מפרשים). There, his safety was ensured and all of his needs were filled.

During the seventh year of יואש's hiding, יהוידיע decided that it was time to anoint the king. He organized a whole procedure, involving three different groups of guards revolving around the seven-year-old child who was to be anointed king. יהוידיע proclaimed: על דבר ה' על: יהי יואש מלך. בני דוד further explains this connection with דוד. בני דוד... (דה"ב כג:ג).

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It says: "אלמלא הברית שכרת הקב"ה עם דוד, אזי נהרג יואש גם כן ונתבטלה מלכות בית דוד (ג. פרק ג) לגמרי" (תנא דבי אליהו זוטא, פרק ג). This shows that יואש's miraculous survival was not due to his own merits, but was rather due to the promise which ה' had made to דוד that the מלוכה would always stem from him.

Throughout this ceremony, no response by יואש is recorded. The תנ"ך portrays an image of a young child who did not really understand what is going on, yet saw many people making a tremendous fuss over him. After having been isolated from society for his entire life, he now watched in awe as many people worked to execute an intricate plan to crown him as king. He was given the "ניור" and "עדות" (which מעדות דוד explains to be a כתר מלכות and a ספר תורה, respectively.) He was then anointed king, and stood before the nation as they declared "יחי המלך!" and rejoiced in his kingship.

Two בריתות were then made. One was between ה', the king, and the nation, promising that they would be "עם ה'". The second ברית was between the king and the nation. And thus began the "glory years" of יואש. Although he did not deter the nation from sacrificing on במות, he initiated the repair work on the בית המקדש and supervised the work to make sure his plans for the בית המקדש were actualized. Things seemed to be going smoothly—until יהוידע הכהן died.

At this point in יואש's life, there appears to have been a radical change. He left the בית המקדש to take part in the rampant זרה עבודה of שרי יהודה. נביאים rebuked him but their words fell on deaf ears. ה' sent a נביא, none other than זכריה, to tell them that if they continued forsaking ה', He would leave them and terrible things would befall them. Not only did they not accept the words of זכריה, but by the order of יואש, they actually stoned him to death. When there seemed to be an impending attack by מלך ארם, חזאל bribed him with all kinds of valuable riches from the treasuries of בית המקדש and the king's palace. It seems that יואש went from great צדקות to profound רשעות. How did such a dramatic change transpire?

The מדרש says:

"כל זמן שהיה יהוידע קיים היה יואש עושה רצון בוראו... אחרי מות יהוידע באו שרי יהודה וישתחוו למלך אז שמע המלך אליהם—שקבל עליו לעשות אלוה. לפיכך, זאת יואש עשה שפטים" (במדבר רבה כג:ג).

It is clear that the focal point of the change in יואש was the death of יהוידע. The מלביים explains further:

"ויעש יואש הישר... כל ימי אשר הורהו יהוידע הכהן... כי אחרי מותו חטא... ויש הבדל אצלי בין הוראה ובין לימוד... ור"ל שלא למד היטב רק שהורה, והראה לו. ובמות המורה, נטה מן הדרך. מה שלא היה כן אם היה לומד להשכיל להטיב בדרך לימוד".

The מלכים clarifies that the problem actually lay in the fact that יהוידע had shown יואש the proper way to live all of his life. But he had simply *shown* him, not *taught* him. יהוידע did not give יואש the skill to choose the proper path on his own, rather he "dragged him along" in his shadow.

If we scrutinize the פסוקים describing the events of the first part of the reign of יואש, it becomes very clear that יהוידע was the one who was acting, while יואש simply observed.

- **ויכרת יהוידע** את הברית בין ה' ובין המלך ובין העם להיות לעם ה' ובין המלך ובין העם" (מלכים ב יא:יז)
- "ויבאו כל העם בית הבעל ויתעוהו ואת מזבחותיו ואת עלמיו שברו..." (דה"ב כג:יז)
- "וישם יהוידע פקדות בית ה' ביד הכהנים הלויים..." (שם כג:יח)
- "ויורד את המלך מבית ה'..." (שם כג:כ)

In all of these cases, יואש was very passive. He was lingering in יהוידע's shadow, while יהוידע essentially ran the country. יואש never had to develop his own identity. He never had to struggle to win the people's trust, and never carried the weight of making significant decisions on his own. Without the slightest exertion on his part, the nation revered and exalted him. At this point, there was no real problem with this arrangement, because יהוידע was still alive and keeping everything in place.

The one thing יואש initiated on his own during this period was the בדק הבית. Perhaps, since he spent the initial years of his life hidden in the בית המקדש, it was one thing to which he felt personal ties. However, even with this project, יואש leaned on יהוידע as a crutch. יואש instructed the כהנים and לויים to act hastily, but they did not adhere to his words—"ולא מהרו הלויים". The moment things did not run smoothly, יואש panicked and ran to יהוידע: "ויקח יהוידע הכהן ארון אחד ויקב חר בדלתו ויתן אותם אצל המזבח בימין..." (מ"ב יב:י). יואש simply did not know how to run things on his own and deal with obstacles as they came up.

Against this background one can begin to understand the change that occurred within יואש after the death of יהוידע. Suddenly, there were no more

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wings carrying יואש through the sky, and no more lighthouses illuminating his path. He was abruptly left on his own, and he was not prepared for this.

“ואחרי מות יהוידע באו שרי יהודה וישתחוו למלך או שמע המלך אליהם” (ד”ה ב כד:יז) יואש quotes חז”ל to explain that שרי יהודה came to deify יואש. (Based on the פסוק of “והזר הקרב יומת” (במבדר יח:ז), they had reasoned that if יואש could live in the בית המקדש for six years and come out alive, he must have been some kind of god.) מלבי”ם says that they made idols that looked like יואש and named אשרות after him and worshipped them as עבודה זרה. Once again, יואש was exposed to excessive adoration that he did not deserve—only this time he no longer had יהוידע to guide him.

מלבי”ם also explains the words “אז שמע אליהם” as referring to the death of יהוידע, meaning that יואש listened to the שרי יהודה only afterwards, “ובעוד יהוידע חי לא שמע אליהם, ואז שמע אליהם”.

Thus began his terrible downfall, and the people went down with him. זכריה warned them: “למה אתם עוברים את מצות ה’?” and, strikingly, instead of harkening to מצות ה’, they opted for מצות המלך which was its antithesis—“וידגמוהו אבן במצות המלך בחצר בית ה’”.

To add to the defiance, they murdered זכריה in the חצר of the בית המקדש. זכריה’s father יהוידע had enough respect for the קדושת המקום to remove עתליה from בית ה’ before killing her, despite the fact that she was clearly מיתה חייבת, זכריה, on the other hand, had even been a part of יואש’s coronation process, as it says in כג:יא “וימשכוהו, ד”ה ב כג:יא” and יהוידע had saved יואש’s life. What lack of gratitude!

After יואש bribed ארם מלך with valuables from the treasuries of the בית המקדש and בית המלך, his servants revolted and murdered him. אברבנאל says that this is a clear example of how ה’ works מידה כנגד מידה. He draws parallels between יואש and his servants:

<u>יואש</u>	<u>עבדי יואש</u>
1. Did not respect ה’ בית ה’, and commanded to kill זכריה, the חצר בית המקדש, כהן ונביא.	1. Did not respect מלכות, and killed יואש in his bedroom.
2. Rejected the authority of ה’.	2. Rejected the authority of the מלך.
3. Forgot the kindness יהוידע had done for him, and killed his son.	3. Forgot the kindness that יואש had done for them, and killed him.
4. Killed זכריה, although he was a כהן and the son of a נביא.	4. Killed יואש, though he was a king and the son of a king.

It makes sense that these servants would behave in a similar manner to יואש, as it was under their influence that he had turned evil. It is also a

tragically appropriate end to יואש's life—all along these עבדים had been dragging him deeper and deeper into a spiritual abyss until they finally physically killed him.

The נביא then brings us full circle at the end of יואש's life. יואש was now in the same position as עתליה his grandmother. Just like her, he rebelled against that which was good and he killed the innocent for his own glory and survival. Their fate was also the same. In regards to עתליה, the נביא says "מ"ב יב:כא) "מ"ב יא:יד) ויתקרא קשר קשר" and she was subsequently killed. Regarding יואש, "מ"ב יב:כא) "ויקומו עבדיו ויקשרו קשר".

In his book "מקדש מלך", יגאל אריאל casts a slightly different light on this issue. He suggests that יואש did not like the fact that all of his fame and glory emanated from יהוידע who had saved him, raised him, and crowned him. He suggests that this weighed heavily on יואש, for he craved honor and respect in his own right, not merely as a reflection of יהוידע. יואש did not dare revolt during the lifetime of יהוידע, as his greatness depended upon him. However, once יהוידע died, יואש completely turned his life around, in order to affirm his own sense of worth and to prove that he was not just a product of יהוידע.

Subtler manifestation of this inclination can be seen even during the lifetime of יהוידע. יואש felt the need to rebuke יהוידע for not properly tending to the הבית. The פסוק says:

"ויקרא המלך ליהוידע הראש ויאמר לו מדוע לא דרשת על הלויים להביא מיהודה ומירושלים את משאת משה" (ד"ה ב כד:ו).

According to "מקדש מלך", perhaps his intentions were not so pure. All of his terrible actions later in life were part of the process of rebellion. Whether the blame lies on יואש for rebelling, or יהוידע for not teaching him properly, there is a great lesson to be learned. In משה ה' told פרשת בהעלותך, "בהעלותך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות" (במדבר ח:ב) אהרן command "דרך להדליק עד שתהא השלהבת עולה" that "בהעלותך" that מנורה can also be understood metaphorically. When educating, one cannot just be a מורה, but must also be a מלמד. One must lead, teach, explain and guide, until the recipient flame becomes a fire on its own, lighting up the world. When the process of education does not reach this point, as in the case of יואש, the results can be tragic.

יעקב אבינו – A Story of Struggle and Achievement

Karen Pelcovitz

THE תורה INTRODUCES us to יעקב אבינו even before his birth. From the very beginning, his unusual character and destiny shine through. The very first thing that we hear about the nature of his life is "ויתרוצו הבנים בקרבה" (בראשית כה:כב). Even in-utero, יעקב's life was filled with struggle and confrontation.

However, as we see only a few פסוקים later, יעקב was really, at heart, (כה:כז) "איש תם יושב אהלים". The connotation of the word "תם" is unclear. Is this a positive or a negative term? If we look at other individuals in תנ"ך who were called "תם", we can gain insight into what an איש תם really is.

In the beginning of נח פרשת נח, the תורה describes נח as: "איש צדיק תמים היה" (נו:ט). בדורותיו, את הא-להים התהלך נח" (נו:ט). His תמימות was reflected in the fact that he walked with ה' unquestioningly. When ה' told him that the world was going to end, נח had no questions or comments. He simply obeyed ה', as it says: "ויעש נח ככל אשר צוה אותו א-להים". Nevertheless, this תמימות did not prevent him from sinning after the מבול.

איוב is also called "איש תם וישר" (איוב א:א). Until late in the ספר, איוב accepted the many tragedies that befell him with a sort of blind faith. The reaction of "ה' נתן וה' לקח יהי שם ה' מבורך" (איוב כא) תמימות. But, as the ספר continues, we see that this type of reaction cannot last. Soon, as the suffering intensified, איוב recognized what happened as רע, and ultimately "cursed his days" (איוב ג).

We therefore see that תמימות alone, while praiseworthy, is not necessarily an ideal way of serving ה' in all situations. In יצפן לישרים, it says: "משלי ב:ו". תמימות distinguishes between the terms "תם" and "ישר". A תם will not deviate from his path. He follows blindly, and is uncomplicated. However, because of this, he can easily stumble. A ישר, on the other hand, will use his שכל to think and to question. He will struggle to find the answers, constantly searching to find the proper path. Since he is always watching where he is going, he will not stumble. It seems that this was the

ערבית is recited during a time of darkness, when the sun is no longer shining, and it is difficult to see ה'. This too is characteristic of יעקב's life (and the existence of his children — בני ישראל — in general). His life was filled with struggle after struggle, searching through the darkness, but still turning to ה' in תפילה (תהלים צב:ב) — תפילה in ה' was able to praise and follow ה', in both the good times and the bad.

In מכתב מאליהו, Rav Dessler writes that the ladder יעקב saw is symbolic of the constant struggle of growth that צדיקים must go through. יעקב saw a ladder in his dream, and this foreshadowed the path of the rest of his life. It was to be filled with constant struggle in order for him to finally reach the top.

A primary theme in this monumental revelation is that יעקב was the chosen one, the successor of the previous אבות. At the same time though, according to הרשב"א, רב שמשון רפאל הרש"א, the words "והנה אנכי עמך" (כח:טו) which ה' told יעקב in his dream, can be contrasted to the parallel promise made to אברהם אברהם (יב:ב) "ואברך ואגדלה שמך" (יב:ב). ה' did not promise יעקב that he or his life would be blessed or great, as he did for אברהם, He simply promised that He would be there for יעקב, no matter what. This was exactly the type of reassurance that יעקב needed at this point. He had no desire to be great or famous; all יעקב wanted was that ה' be with him. At the same time, the promise of "והנה אנכי עמך" can be seen as foreshadowing the future events that were to come in יעקב's personal life and in the future of the nation. ה' was always with יעקב and so He always was and will be with בני ישראל.

After awakening from his dream, יעקב explicitly stated his goal in the form of a נדר, in which he expressed his hope: "ושבתי בשלום אל בית אבי" (כח:כא). All he really wanted was to return in peace to the home of his father. But again, that was not what ה' had in store for him. Very soon, יעקב met לבן, his next confrontation with רמאות. As with עשו, he was compelled to deal with לבן using methods that can be perceived as trickery.

עשו begins with the next major event in יעקב's life, that of עשו coming to meet him with 400 soldiers. יעקב's reaction to this news was very telling of the way that he viewed himself. He stated "קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת". According to רמב"ן, יעקב was not saying that he had run out of merits, but rather that he never had any at all and that he was not worthy of all the kindness and truth he had received. Maybe יעקב was expressing his doubts about how he had been acting until this point. He viewed his actions with עשו and לבן as tricky and manipulative, and thus didn't feel that, מדה כנגד מדה, he was worthy of ה's attribute of אמת.

ה's response to this תפילה was expressed through יעקב's confrontation with the mysterious איש. After this pivotal encounter, the איש changed יעקב's name. A name is the essence of a person, and should influence the way that

one views himself. Instead of seeing himself as "יעקב", which comes from the עקב of שורש עקב, meaning רמיה, he was told to change his self-perception and his behavior to "ישראל" which means שרית - struggle. ה' encouraged יעקב, and gave him confidence to take those same actions and experiences, and to realize that, unlike what he thought ("קטנתי מכל החסידים"), his previous experiences were really all a very positive type of struggle.

However, throughout the rest of the תורה, he is still called יעקב. Perhaps this is because he never fully internalized this message. חז"ל tell us that it is only when dealing on a spiritual/national level that he is called ישראל. When he was able to take a step back and look at his life from a broader perspective, then he was able to see that life and the destiny of עם ישראל is really all about struggle, because that is what leads to growth and greatness. Of course, this does not mean to imply that יעקב was in any way insufficient, but rather, that this was part of his growth process, his development into the father of כלל ישראל.

יעקב's life continues in this manner. He did not have a moment of quiet. The encounters with יוסף, מכירת יוסף, שכם ודינה, יהודה ותמר, sending בנימין down to Egypt, the exile of the entire family, and his illness at the end all kept him moving and struggling.

states: מדרש רבה פה:א

"שבתים היו עוסקין במכירתו של יוסף ויוסף היה עוסק בשקו ובתעניתו, ראובן היה עוסק בשקו ובתעניתו, ויעקב היה עוסק בשקו ובתעניתו ויהודה היה עוסק לקח לו אשה, והקב"ה היה עוסק באורו של משיח".

The message here is clear. כלל ישראל was built on struggle, and it is precisely this struggle that is our strength. On both a personal and national level, we must realize that just at the point that seems most hopeless, that is the time that "הקב"ה היה עוסק בורא אורו של משיח".

יואב בן צרויה: Devoted Hero or Cunning Politician?

Malka Zeiger

יואב בן צרויה, שר עבא דוד's famous דוד, played an integral, albeit ambiguous, role in the establishment of דוד מלכות דוד. In addition to his brothers, אבישי and עשהאל, יואב was an active, if not the most active, character throughout דוד's reign. However, the character of יואב and his brothers is foggy and puzzling. Although many of us have been taught to classify figures in Tanach into the roles of either "צדיק" or "רשע" to further our understanding of the manifest context (פשט) and latent meaning (דרש) of the text, יואב and his brothers are exceedingly difficult to categorize; a simplification of their character would be trivializing and damaging rather than beneficial. This analysis attempts to discover the complexity of יואב's true character and uncover the dynamics of בני צרויה's relationship with דוד.¹

Possibilities

There are two basic approaches that one can take regarding יואב:

One possibility is to suggest that יואב was immoral and power hungry, nevertheless a great soldier upon whom דוד was dependent. This suggestion is supported chiefly by the fact that יואב killed אבנר, אבשלום, and עמשא. As we will later see, אבנר and עמשא were both שרי עבא who were killed by יואב through means of shrewd trickery and cunning deceit. אבנר was the שר עבא of בית שאול, and עמשא was שר עבא of both אבשלום and דוד. It is logical that יואב, considering his unsteady relationship with דוד, would consider both men threats to his esteemed position, and would do anything to maintain his job — even kill them. Indeed, דוד removed יואב from his post after יואב killed אבשלום, and replaced him with עמשא as שר עבא. Although this theory may not be the only possible incentive for יואב's acts, it is consistent with דוד's reactions to the death of these men, all of whom were his political enemies. In fact, it is evident throughout the story of בני צרויה that not only were they not tolerated, but they were perhaps detested by a very forgiving

king. This is also powerfully indicative that יואב led an immoral and irreligious existence.

However, a deeper look into יואב's actions and character reveal a challenge to this theory. Not only did יואב ostensibly accomplish positive things for בית דוד, as we have seen in the list of בני צרויה's appearances in תנ"ך, but he also made three statements that are inconsistent with he who kills in vain:

1) אבנר led יואב - ש"ב ב:כו 1) in a war against שאול, בית שאול, led by אבנר. יואב's brother, עשהאל, killed אבנר and surrounded him, at which point אבנר cried his famous declaration, "הלנצה תאכל חרב?" יואב unquestioningly accepted this offer of peace without questioning, and instead of killing אבנר, responded, "יחי הא-להים כי לולא דברתי!" (ש"ב ב:כו). יואב swore by God that if אבנר would have expressed his desire to stop fighting earlier, he would have agreed then to stop immediately as well. יואב's use of God's Name and his immediate willingness to forgive אבנר for initiating the fight display a significant degree of spiritual greatness.

2) יואב and אבישי led בני עמון into battle against עמון. After separating their army into two camps, one led by אבישי and the other by יואב, they devised a strategy that whichever camp became overpowered by עמון would be rescued by the other camp. It is then that יואב delivered a powerful speech to the army: "חזק ונתחזק בעד עמנו ובעד ערי אלוקינו והי יעשה הטוב בעיניו" (ש"ב י:יב). Rarely in Tanach do we see such a passionate and moving declaration spoken by a Jewish leader or general before war. Perhaps יואב's character is delineated in this statement through his mentioning that although בני עמון must put forth physical effort, they are fighting for the Glory of God rather than their own, and their fate lies in God's Hands, regardless of their physical strength.

3) שבע בן בכרי, who had rebelled against בית דוד, escaped into מעכה, and יואב and his men surrounded the city to prevent שבע's escape. A woman called out to יואב from inside the city, "אנכי שלמי אמוני ישראל אתה מבקש להמית עיר ואם בישראל! למה תבלע נחלת היי?" (ש"ב כ:יט). The woman, thinking יואב was about to destroy the city, begged יואב to spare her life because she was a righteous Jewish mother. The woman also pleaded with him not to destroy a city that lies in Israel. יואב responded, "חלילה חלילה אם אבלע ואם אשחית" (ש"ב כ:כא). יואב asserted he only wished to kill שבע בן בכרי, who was מורד במלכות and therefore deserved death. His intent was not to kill freely and unnecessarily.

It is clearly problematic to suggest and impossible to prove that יואב was wholly and thoroughly "bad".

We therefore present the second possibility: that יואב was a great person who was tragically unappreciated by בית דוד.

This theory is of course supported by יואב's three statements listed above, in addition to the fact that יואב was extremely loyal to דוד.⁴ For instance, when יואב fought עמון and led בני into a sweeping victory, he sent דוד a message at the last moment, saying, "ועתה אסף את יתר העם וחנוה על העיר ולכדה פן, יוסף ה' א-להיך אל, אלכד אני את העיר ונקרא שמי עליה" (ש"ב י"ב:כח) יואב told דוד to fight the final battle against עמון and capture the city himself, so that יואב would not be given credit for the victory. This story expresses the loyalty and faith with which יואב subjugated his prestigious position and the honor it naturally warrants to his king. Similarly, when דוד wanted to count the nation, a terrible sin, יואב did his utmost to discourage דוד, saying, "העם כהם וכחה מאה פעמים...ואדני המלך למה חפץ בדבר הזה?" (ש"ב כ"ד:ג) Although דוד did not heed his advice and it would therefore seem extraneous for the פסוק to recount יואב's plea, perhaps it is stated to infer יואב's desire to abstain from sin and prevent his master and king from sinning.

Of course, it is no surprise that this second possibility concerning יואב's character must be countered by the fact that he murdered three people for no obvious reason, and was, along with אבישי, despised by דוד despite his intense loyalty towards the latter.

Upon examining both theories, it is obvious that neither apply to יואב; he is a much more complicated figure than one that can be called "good" or "bad." In order to successfully discover who יואב was and understand his relationship with דוד, the opinions of חז"ל regarding specific stories concerning יואב must be examined. The four major events in יואב's life that can be analyzed to best uncover his cryptic character are:

- 1) The murder of אבנר (ש"ב ב:ג)
- 2) The murder of אבשלום (ש"ב י"ח:טו)
- 3) The murder of עמשא (ש"ב כ"י)
- 4) יואב's death at the hands of שלמה (מ"א ב:לד)

Each of these stories will be analyzed in depth with the help of the ראשונים, גמרא, and contemporary scholars in attempt to discover whether or not יואב sinned and why דוד hated him. Finally, I will suggest a theory regarding יואב and his relationship with דוד.

אבנר

The ראשונים all maintain that אבנר deserved to die, although there is much debate concerning why he deserved death, and whether it was for this reason that יואב killed him. Also, the question of whether יואב sinned bothers the ראשונים a great deal. The commentaries of רד"ק, רש"י, and רלב"ג are particularly intriguing.

רד"ק attempts to prove that אבנר deserved to die by quoting the fa-

mous exchange between רב יהודה and רב יוחנן.⁵ רב יהודה asks why יואב killed עשהאל for his brother גואל הדם to be אבנר replies that רב יוחנן. אבנר עשהאל then inquires whether אבנר may have been justified in killing עשהאל because it was an act of defense in wartime. The response to רב יהודה is that אבנר could have defended himself by stabbing עשהאל in one of his limbs, thereby injuring rather than killing him. רב יהודה responds that maybe אבנר had no control over where he attacked עשהאל. רב יוחנן rebuts with a rhetorical question: Could אבנר have managed to injure עשהאל in the חמט, a rib that if punctured one surely dies, but not hit עשהאל in one of his limbs, none of which are fatal?!

The implications of this גמרא are twofold: First, יואב killed אבנר to avenge עשהאל's blood, as opposed to other reasons for which אבנר deserved to die. Second, יואב's reason for killing אבנר is completely justifiable, because עשהאל died an unnecessary death. רב יוחנן then quotes רב יהודה quoting רב, also in סנהדרין מ"ט, who states that all of the curses with which דוד condemned יואב after he killed אבנר, fulfilled themselves in דוד's descendents. רב יוחנן comments that this occurred because דוד did not utilize the characteristic of דין (justice) to curse יואב, and was therefore incorrect to have cursed him. In fact, דוד knew that אבנר deserved to die and was going to command יואב to kill אבנר anyway.

רב יוחנן does not explain whether דוד felt that אבנר deserved to die for killing עשהאל or for another reason, the most obvious being that he was מורד במלכות. Regardless, it is very perplexing why he was angry at יואב if he wanted אבנר killed. דוד's belief that אבנר deserved to die and fury for יואב's act implies that he felt that יואב's motivation to kill אבנר was impure. This could be either the fact that יואב killed אבנר for personal reasons in avenging his brother's blood, or perhaps דוד suspected that יואב felt threatened by a man whose peace treaty had been accepted by דוד and whom דוד might appoint as his new chief general.

In any case, רב יוחנן elucidates clearly that אבנר deserved to die and יואב's act was justified. He does not, however, explain דוד's anger towards יואב satisfactorily.

רב יוחנן suggests that יואב killed אבנר to avenge עשהאל's death but אבנר was justified in killing him and is not deserving of death for this act. דוד only wanted אבנר killed if he would be killed for the right reason; consequently, דוד was angry at יואב. רב יוחנן quotes a גמרא also from סנהדרין מ"ט that brings another reason why אבנר deserved to die, but this reason, unlike the first, does not justify יואב's act. When יואב sent for אבנר, the latter was taken from the "בור הסירה" (ש"ב ב:כו), which ר' אבא בר כהנא interprets as being the two incidents in אבנר's service to שאול which made אבנר deserve death. These events were the two confrontations between שאול and דוד in ש"ב פרקים כ"ד

and כ"ו, when דוד had an opportunity to kill שאול. In both instances, אבנר did not sufficiently protect and prevent שאול from being vulnerable to דוד. The אבנר cites this as an act of being מורד במלכות that deemed אבנר deserving of death.

However, אבנר killed אבנר because the latter killed עשהאל, as the פסוק recounts, "וימת בדם עשהאל אחיו" (ש"ב ג:כז). רש"י maintains that יואב could not avenge his brother's blood because he was killed in war, during which the halacha does not apply. Therefore, דוד was angry at יואב because אבנר should not have been killed for killing עשהאל but rather for being מורד במלכות.

רלב"ג also comments on יואב's and דוד's relationship, with the assertions that דוד cursed יואב to be "זב מערע ומחזיק בפלך ונפל בחרב וחסר לחם" (ש"ב ג:כח) because the bearers of these ailments are considered halachically dead. רלב"ג implies that דוד could not kill יואב, and the best that he could do is curse him with afflictions that made him "almost dead." Although it is not clear why דוד could not kill יואב according to רלב"ג, it can only be for one of two reasons: a) דוד needed יואב; or b) דוד knew "deep down" that יואב had acted correctly. However, he detested bloodshed too much to admit that אבנר's death was justified. Again, רלב"ג is not clear concerning דוד's feelings towards יואב.

In fact, there is a general conflict among the פרשנים in terms of reconciling יואב killing a man who deserved death and דוד's negative reaction. Most agree that אבנר deserved death, and also that דוד was correct to be angry. Thus, the source of דוד's anger must stem from the nature of the act, rather than the act itself.

Two contemporary scholars, Prof. David Seri and Rabbi E. M. Goitein, author of דמויות בתנ"ך, suggest that דוד actually supported and appreciated יואב, but could not publicly display his alliance with him for political reasons. Specifically, Prof. Seri maintains that although יואב's motivations for killing אבנר were unclear, he undoubtedly had a justifiable reason.⁶ Moreover, had דוד genuinely felt that יואב was wrong to kill אבנר, he would have put יואב to death immediately. Rather, on his deathbed he told שלמה, "ועשית כחכמתך" (מ"א ב:ו), not specifying to kill יואב. Ultimately, however, שלמה killed יואב for political reasons, to help establish a peaceful and just reputation for his kingdom.

Regarding אבנר's death and יואב's guilt, Rabbi Goitein adds that not only did אבנר deserve death because he failed to defend שאול from דוד and killed עשהאל unnecessarily, but also because he sinned in two other areas: a) אבנר suggested that twelve of his men and twelve of יואב's men fight for pure entertainment: "יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו" (ש"ב ב:ד) and it led to a bloody war, and b) he put his name before דוד's when he proposed a peace treaty to דוד: "וישלח אבנר מלאכים אל דוד תחתיו" (ש"ב ג:יב).⁷ For these reasons, יואב

felt that אבנר displayed too much loyalty towards בית שאול. Furthermore, as אבנר's cousin, it is highly unlikely that אבנר would have abandoned his royal lineage. Furthermore, another proof that אבנר was not truly seeking peace with דוד is that after אבנר dined with דוד and officially "signed the contract," he returned peacefully to his house (ש"ב ג:כא). If אבנר had truly considered himself a member of בית דוד rather than one of בית שאול, he would not have returned home (certainly not peacefully!) (ש"ב ג:כא) for fear of his life. Rabbi Goitein concludes that although דוד privately sanctioned אבנר's death, he publicly distanced himself from יואב and his aggressive killings to maintain his image of a benevolent and kind leader. However, Rabbi Goitein suggests, יואב committed one fatal error which culminated in his being killed without a trial. This mistake shall be explained when we investigate the story of יואב and his death at the hands of יואב.

In conclusion, if יואב was indeed justified in killing אבנר, דוד's consequent fury towards him is extremely perplexing. Although it can be suggested that יואב was completely wrong and דוד was right to be angry at him, most פרשנים instead go out of their way to justify יואב. Clearly, יואב was a more complex figure than we originally proposed. To further investigate this matter and the general nature of יואב's character, we turn to the second major event in יואב's life, the story of אבשלום.

אבשלום

אבשלום, after being returned from exile by his father דוד for killing his half-brother אמנון, won the hearts of the Jewish people and led a large group of Jews into rebellion against דוד. דוד put אבישי in charge of the army, and sent them to pursue אבשלום and his men after giving them the warning, "לעט לי לער לאבשלום" (ש"ב יח:ה), which is generally understood as a command to spare אבשלום's life. Nevertheless, יואב unhesitatingly killed אבשלום immediately upon reaching him in the forest, despite his awareness that דוד would be less than thrilled. יואב's knowledge of this is evident in his speech to אחימעץ בן צדוק, who asked יואב if he could run to דוד and tell him that the war was over: "ויאמר לו יואב לא איש בשרה אתה...כי על בן המלך מת" (ש"ב יח:כ). When דוד heard from another messenger that although the rebellion had been put down, אבשלום was dead, he lamented bitterly: "בני אבשלום בני בני יואב heard that דוד was in mourning rather than rejoicing that he was still king and the Jewish kingdom was saved and he confronted David with a powerful admonition: "הבשת היום את כל עבדיך...לאהבה את שניאך ולשנא את אהביך...כי לא אבשלום חי וכולנו היום מתים" (ש"ב יט:ה). Although דוד did not respond (perhaps because he recognized the truth of יואב's words and was stunned and embarrassed) he

clearly never forgave יואב for killing his son, to the point where after the rebellion he replaced יואב with עמשא, עמשא's former צבא, as his own. Replacing an extremely loyal and successful general with a man who wanted דוד's life may seem illogical; simultaneously the act elucidates just how angry דוד was at יואב. Furthermore, when דוד instructed שלמה to kill יואב, one of his reasons seems to have been because יואב had killed אבשלום את: "וגם אתה ידעת את אבשלום יואב" (מ"א ב:ה) "אשר עשה לי יואב בן צרויה..".⁸ It is difficult to understand whether יואב was justified for killing אבשלום, and again, why דוד was so angry. The פרשנים, particularly רלב"ג, מלבי"ם, and Rabbi Goitein, have fascinating and helpful insights into this story.

מלבי"ם suggests that יואב was aware of the emotional impact that אבשלום's death would have on דוד; nevertheless he willingly killed him to save דוד's kingdom from the destructive hands of the royal prince himself. From the words "ויתקעם בלב אבשלום..ויכו את אבשלום וימתהו" (ש"ב יח:טו-טז) מלבי"ם extrapolates that יואב struck אבשלום first so that it would be he who would ultimately be held responsible for אבשלום's death, although his soldiers were the ones who actually killed אבשלום. This interpretation implies that יואב was willing to sacrifice his reputation and personal relationship with דוד in order to save the kingdom, in contrast to previous textual implications that יואב acted to gratify his uncontrollable anger, which directly conflicted with the kingdom's welfare.⁹ Although יואב did expect דוד to be deeply saddened at the loss of his son, מלבי"ם adds, he was nevertheless stunned to hear that דוד felt that his son's death was a result of an unjust act. In fact, דוד was enraged not only because he felt that אבשלום did not deserve to die, but because he maintained that אבשלום was actually a זדיק! דוד claimed that his son wanted to rule under him rather than kill him, and he took full responsibility for אבשלום's death because he considered the tragedy his own punishment for taking בת-שבע and killing her husband אוריה אני: "מי יתן מותי אני: אוריה" (ש"ב יט:א) תחתיד" (ש"ב יט:א).

Furthermore, דוד's eulogy (ibid.) "בני אבשלום בני בני אבשלום.." highlights דוד's despair that his son, who simply wanted to rule as a son under his father's rule, had been mistaken for a traitor and had been ruthlessly killed. When יואב heard that דוד was mourning his son's death and considered it an unnecessary act of bloodshed, he was shocked, angry, and hurt that דוד was so blind and naive. In his most aggressive and passionate confrontation with דוד, יואב shed his subservient persona towards him by coming uninvited, and expressing how wrong דוד was to have turned the nation's victory into a tragic day of mourning. מלבי"ם divides יואב's speech to דוד into four separate admonitions:

1) אבשלום *did* want to kill דוד and the rest of the royal family. He wanted to be king *right then* (as proof he took דוד's concubines, a defiant act of de-

claring himself king) and if he had succeeded, the rest of בית דוד would be dead, so mourning was highly inappropriate. אבשלום's death was justified not only because he rebelled, but also because he was a רודף, and דוד, as the נרדף, had a halachic right to kill him. This is expressed in יואב's statement, "הבשת" (ש"ב יט:ז):

2) Even if it is assumed that אבשלום did not want to kill דוד, he employed the help and support of דוד's enemies to rebel against the kingdom, and that alone rendered him deserving of death. מלבי"ם interprets the phrase "לאהבה את שנאיך ולשנא את אוהביך" (ש"ב יט:ז) as referring not to דוד but to אבשלום, who considered דוד's friends his enemies, and דוד's enemies, his friends.

3) Even if דוד let his love for אבשלום get the better of him and chose to forgive his son for rebelling, he should have been killed only for the good of the nation and not for the good of דוד himself. As king, דוד was more responsible to his subjects than he was to himself: "כי הגדת היום כי אין לך שרים" (ש"ב יט:ז). ועבדים כי ידעת כי לא אבשלום חיי" (ש"ב יט:ז).

4) אבשלום's final argument was a personal defense for his killing אבשלום. אבשלום maintained that if אבשלום would not have been killed, the war would have continued until אבשלום and his army won and inevitably killed all of בית דוד. This is highlighted in the statement, "כי לא אבשלום חי וכולנו היום מתים כי" (ש"ב יט:ז). אז ישר בעיניך". It can be inferred that דוד did not answer יואב because the latter was clearly correct. אבשלום was מורד במלכות and he and his army threatened the welfare of the entire nation. Exceptions, יואב felt, cannot be made whether or not a rebel was heir to the throne.

Moreover, both רלב"ג and Rabbi Goitein support יואב's killing of אבשלום. In fact, they cite the instance of יואב blowing the shofar after he killed אבשלום as proof that he sought only justice and not unnecessary bloodshed, contrary to דוד's perception of him. Immediately after אבשלום died, the פסוק explains, "ויתקע יואב בשופר וישב העם מרדף אחרי ישראל כי חשך יואב את העם" (ש"ב יח:טז). יואב ordered his men to stop chasing אבשלום's army, because all that was needed to stop the rebellion was the death of their charismatic leader. The juxtaposition of אבשלום's death and יואב's blowing the shofar amplifies his focus on executing only the acts that were absolutely necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of peace while sparing as many lives as possible. Again, it is ironic and tragic that דוד hated יואב because he felt that יואב was the cause of sin and death amongst the nation.

Finally, יואב's innocence concerning אבשלום can also be proven from discussion in the גמרא,¹⁰ or rather, the lack of discussion in the גמרא. After אבנר asks why יואב kills אבנר and it is proven that אבנר deserved to die, instead of asking about אבשלום (whose story comes chronologically after אבנר), he addresses the death of עמשא, שר צבא אבשלום, עמשא, whose death at the hands of יואב is of a stranger and less justifiable nature. הרב יהודה's silence regarding

אבשלום implies the explicit cause of his death: אבשלום was a מורד במלכות who threatened both דוד and the nation that he was destined to protect.

עמשא

Far more than אבנר and אבשלום, it is extremely difficult to understand יואב's motivations for killing עמשא. In fact, throughout the whole אבשלום-story, no one succeeded in acting in his own self-interest despite their intentions to do so. Nobody acted in his self-interest, that is, except for עמשא himself, who was strangely passive. The story is as follows: אבשלום was killed and יואב rebuked דוד for mourning him. דוד in turn replaced יואב with עמשא as his new general and helped execute the entire rebellion that led to a civil war and אבשלום's death, but עמשא did not even officially beg דוד's pardon or seek peace with him!¹¹ However, it is clear that דוד's replacing the most excellent and loyal שר צבא in the history of the Jews and hiring instead a potential "shady character" has no relevance to עמשא's credentials; rather, the פרשנים, specifically רלב"ג and מלבי"ם, comment that it was a retaliation against יואב, unforgiven by דוד for the murder of אבשלום. After שבע בן בכרי and יהודה revolted against דוד, the latter instructed עמשא to pursue and apprehend יהודה and return in three days. עמשא obeyed, but returned late. When יואב met עמשא while chasing שבע, he greeted עמשא and took hold of his beard as if to kiss him. As עמשא lost his guard, יואב stabbed him to death with his sword and removed עמשא's bowels from his body. The two most prevalent issues in this troubling tale are whether עמשא deserved to die, and whether יואב killed עמשא for this very reason. Again, it is far more difficult to justify the death of עמשא than the deaths of אבנר and אבשלום, partially because, as opposed to the latter two, עמשא simply didn't do anything. There is nothing in the text that makes it apparent that עמשא deserved death, and what is more, the manner in which יואב killed עמשא is shocking and horrific. In this story, the פרשנים do not jump to יואב's defense. Although most agree that עמשא deserved death because he was מורד במלכות by returning to דוד later than he commanded, the question remains regarding יואב's motivations. Most troubling, however, is the פרשנים's silence regarding יואב's guilt. אברבנאל and רד"ק, one of the few who address this issue, both maintain that יואב killed עמשא because he feared losing his position to the latter. Conversely, the גמרא,¹² in its tendency to defend יואב, states that יואב killed עמשא only because he was מורד במלכות by returning late to דוד. Supposing that this is true and יואב was right to kill him, the cruel manner in which עמשא died must be addressed. סנהדרין מ"ט in תוספות imply that יואב's killing עמשא cannot be justified because he gave him no warning.

The issues of יואב's incentives and questionable innocence is addressed the least regarding עמשא, and certainly not answered satisfactorily. Moreover, of all the other stories in which יואב appears, it is here that he is defended the least, which perhaps sheds light on why יואב was condemned and killed by דוד. בית דוד. Although we know from the פרשנים that it is possible to prove that אבנר, אבשלום, and עמשא deserved to die, יואב killed them through unnecessary means of trickery, and for this reason he deserved punishment. We now arrive at our last stop in our journey through the primary events in יואב's life: his death.

יואב's Death

The story, although not surprising, is a tragic and troubling tale. On his deathbed, דוד told שלמה to remember what יואב did to him, אבנר and עשאל, and to act according to his own wisdom. יואב heard that he was a wanted man, and, seeing that it had worked for אדוניו,¹³ ran to the אהל משכן and grabbed onto the קרנות המזבח. שלמה sent יהוידע, commanding יואב to leave the מזבח and give up his life, but יואב refused. בניהו relayed יואב's refusal to שלמה, and the latter gave בניהו permission to kill יואב at the altar. יואב was thereupon killed and buried in the desert. The two primary issues that present themselves in this story are: a) whether or not יואב deserved to die, and why, and b) whether דוד told שלמה to kill יואב for this reason. Furthermore, the actual content of the story must be examined; namely, יואב's reasoning in running to the מזבח for salvation, the significance in the verbal exchange between בניהו and יואב, and שלמה's speech in which he permitted בניהו to kill יואב at the מזבח. In order to shed light on these issues, it is necessary to analyze a broad range of commentaries. After doing so, we will examine the גמרא regarding the overall character of יואב, and ultimately develop an educated hypothesis as to whether יואב was a devoted hero or a cunning politician.

The Rishonim agree that יואב died because he killed בערמה, with trickery. Their opinions diverge, however, regarding the defense of יואב's character. רלב"ג suggests that the reason why יואב deserved to die and the reason why דוד commanded שלמה to kill him are one and the same: יואב had killed with cunning and trickery. This theory, while acknowledging יואב's sin, does imply that, had אבנר, אבשלום, and עמשא been killed in honest manners, יואב's actions would be justified because these men deserved to die. Although the commentaries do not generally come to the defense of יואב's character at large, they leave room for speculation: If יואב had not killed בערמה, would he have then been considered a spiritual role model and overall hero in Jewish history?

Among others, אברבנאל and רד"ק maintain that although דוד was right to condemn יואב because he killed בערמה, יואב possessed a superior character, even spiritually. אברבנאל proposes that from the words, "ויקבר בביתו במדבר" (מ"א ב:לד), it can be derived that יואב opened a house for the poor and was buried there so that these people could pray that his soul be admitted to the next world. Moreover, רד"ק elaborates by quoting three מאמרי חז"ל on the words, "ויקבר בביתו במדבר", that illuminate יואב's excellent character:

1) "מה מדבר? זה מופקר לכל, אף ביתו של יואב מופקר לכל, כי נדיב היה מאד" (סנהדרין מ"ט)

2) "מה מדבר? זה מנוקה מגול, אף ביתו של יואב מנוקה מגול" (סנהדרין מ"ט)

3) "וכי מדבר היה? אלא כיון שנהרג, נעשו ישראל כמדבר" (ירושלמי, מס' ברכות, פרק ב', הלכה ו')

These statements display יואב's powerful and pervasive role as a political and spiritual leader of the Jews. Overall, it can be safely assumed after examining the commentaries of the Rishonim that although יואב deserved to die because he committed a terrible sin, killing בערמה, he lived an outstanding spiritual existence besides being the physical power behind דוד's throne.

Contemporary scholars also contribute significantly to this chapter in יואב's life. Prof. Seri suggests that because דוד did not specify to שלמה to kill יואב, as he was not necessarily deserving of death. Rather, יואב killed שלמה as a political maneuver to disconnect בית דוד from the deaths of אנור, אנשלום, and עמשא, in an effort to create a reputation of being a just, "people-friendly" king. Seri continues to explain why יואב ran to the מזבח. In שמות כא:יד, God commanded: "וכי יז איש על רעהו להרגו בערמה מעם מובחי תקחו למות". If a murderer runs to the altar to be saved, he should be taken away from it and killed. If יואב ran to the מזבח hoping to be saved, it can be inferred that he did not consider himself a murderer, but recognized that his life was sought for political reasons. Seri suggests that not only was יואב not deserving of death for murder, but he was also not a מורד במלכות for following אדוניוהו, for four reasons:

1) אדוניוהו was the next in line to be the king, because his older brothers אנשלום and אמנון were dead, and the next in line, כלבא,¹⁴ did not wish to be king. (דעת מקרא, מ"א א:ו). This is one reason why יואב believed that אדוניוהו was rightfully deserving of the kingship.

2) אדוניוהו said that he was going to be king and דוד did not protest (מ"א א:ה-ו), which insinuates consent (שתיקה כהודאה).

3) יואב did not necessarily know that שלמה had been appointed king, due to its clandestine nature.

4) אדוניוהו himself was never punished for rebelling against דוד; he was punished only for taking the king's concubine, אבישג השונית.

Thus, although he does not go so far as to suggest that יואב committed no sin, Seri concludes that, had יואב been given a fair trial, he would have been found completely undeserving of death.

In contrast, Rabbi Goitein assumes that יואב did deserve to die, and suggests two possibilities why:

1) The answer given in the פשט is: פשט: "והשמועה באה עד יואב כי יואב נטע אחרי: פשט מורד deserved to die because he was מורד by following אדוניהו and killing אבשלום, whose life דוד commanded him to spare.

2) יואב died because he killed using trickery. As opposed to Prof. Seri, Rabbi Goitein quotes the נצי"ב in interpreting שמות כא:יד to be referring specifically to one who kills בערמה,¹⁵ as it says, "וכי יז אש..להרגו בערמה".¹⁶ The נצי"ב proposes that יואב ran to the מזבח because he thought that שלמה wanted to kill him for political reasons, including the fact that יואב's loyalty to שלמה was cast into heavy doubt due to his having supported אדוניהו. Knowing the halacha that one who kills with trickery or cunning will not be saved from the altar,¹⁷ it must be inferred that יואב did not put himself in that category; rather, he considered himself a victim of political strategy and assumed that escaping to the מזבח would save his life.

In truth, however, שלמה wanted to kill יואב to punish him for his criminal rather than political acts. Rabbi Goitein quotes the נצי"ב who maintains that יואב was killed solely because he murdered אבנר and עמשא cunningly and without warning. Regardless of these two possibilities for the cause of יואב's death, one political and one criminal, Rabbi Goitein maintains that יואב's character is of outstanding caliber. He quotes the חז"ל, who are quoted by רד"ק and come to יואב's defense, and adds two textual proofs concerning his superior nature:

1) In מ"א יא:כא: הדרד, יואב rebelled against שלמה after he saw that דוד as well as יואב were dead: "כי שכב דוד עם אבותיו וכי מת יואב שר צבא".

2) In י"ד אדם שכל is described as an אדם שכל, מכות פרק ב' הלכה ז', תלמוד ירושלמי "ישראל צריכים לוי", someone who was needed by everyone in the nation.

These statements are clearly powerful implications of יואב's personal greatness and public influence. They are used by Rabbi Goitein to highlight the fact that יואב was basically good, despite his killing through trickery and deceit; a sin that determined his untimely death.

There are two crucial statements in the גמרא that have not yet been examined; one concerns יואב's death, and one, his overall character and role within דוד's kingdom. Although their implications contradict, it is unnecessary to reconcile them because the statements are made by different people. The first is a statement made by רב יהודה in the name of רב, who extrapolates

יוהשיב ה' על דמו ועל ראשו אשר פגע בשני אנשים, מ"א ב:לב from שלמה's statement in that יואב died because, unlike אבנר and עמשא, he did not seek out every fact and halacha in the Torah, and he obeyed a sinful command that was received through a letter while they disobeyed a sinful command that was verbally related to them. According to the גמרא, this refers to שאול's instructions to kill the priests of Nov because they hid דוד from שאול.

Responding to this גמרא, Rabbi Goitein proposes three proofs regarding why it was easier for אבנר and עמשא to refuse שאול's command to kill the נוב כהני than for יואב to refuse דוד's command to kill אוריה:

1) Everyone, including שאול's servants, knew that כהני נוב were innocent. Conversely, יואב did not know whether or not אוריה deserved to die. It is logical to assume that אוריה did deserve death when taking into account that the message to kill him was from דוד, the last person who would ever consider killing someone if he was even slightly unsure of his being guilty.

2) אבנר and עמשא knew that שאול was acting irrationally and even madly concerning דוד; therefore they did not feel compelled to obey him.

3) אבנר and עמשא knew that שאול wanted to kill דוד because he feared that דוד would overthrow his kingdom, and they recognized that this is an insufficient and blatantly wrong reason to have someone killed.

Even if one does not accept these arguments against the condemning tones of the גמרא, it is crucial to keep in mind that it is contrasted by many other previously explored commentaries on the very same page (סנהדרין מ"ט), that come to יואב's full defense concerning both his acts and his character.

The second statement in סנהדרין מ"ט is made by רב אבא בר כהנא, who derives from the words, "ויהי דוד עושה משפט וצדקה לכל עמו ויואב בן צרויה על העבא", (ש"ב ה: טו-טז) that without דוד, יואב would not have been successful in war, and without יואב, דוד would not have been able to immerse himself in Torah. Although there are numerous other statements in סנהדרין that we have already discussed concerning יואב's spiritual excellence and outstanding persona, רב אבא בר כהנא's statement is exceedingly significant in that it stresses the powerful function and symbiotic dynamics that are at the core of דוד's and יואב's relationship.

In conclusion, the פרשנים that we have examined prove that the men that יואב killed deserved to die. He erred not in the act of killing them but in the nature of his killing them, namely, his use of ערמה, deceit and trickery. However, יואב's sin and the reason for דוד's anger towards יואב are inconsistent. Because the פרשנים do not reconcile this inconsistency or explain יואב's tumultuous and ambiguous confrontations with דוד, I would like to propose a theory concerning their relationship.

Two Antithetical Typologies

דוד and יואב are dichotomous characters who, through their actions and personalities, elucidated each other's tragic flaws, and to a lesser degree, greatness. דוד's ultimate goal as king was to establish a spiritually and physically perfect reign to pave the way for שלמה to build the Temple, a symbol of maximal connection with God through physical means. דוד interacted with man and God primarily on a spiritual level. He was not an ordinary warrior; his greatest fear was bloodshed. However, a physically perfect kingdom had to be established and all enemies had to be eliminated in order to maximize the kingdom's spiritual potential. דוד, therefore, needed someone who could take care of the physical aspect of leadership. This is why יואב was not only an integral member in the group of people who established בית דוד, but a necessary one as well. יואב and דוד each recognized that the other was needed to establish the kingdom, but דוד did not believe that יואב acted in the interest of the nation's welfare. Rather, דוד regarded יואב as a hasty and bloodthirsty warrior while יואב felt that he acted only in the interest of the king and his nation. The result of this friction was a strong mutual distrust and an urge to survive and lead independently of the other, while pretending that the other's contribution was not necessary to establish a perfect kingdom.

There is one inconsistency in the otherwise identical dynamics with which the two related to each other: יואב was in conflict regarding the way he felt about דוד; דוד was clearly not in conflict regarding the way he felt about יואב and his brothers. יואב had a problem: On the one hand, he was a subject and employee of the king, and felt strong loyalty to דוד and his nation. Furthermore, he possessed a deep desire to have the king's approval. On the other hand, he thought that דוד's leadership tactics were harmful to the nation and could barely resist the urge to take the law into his own hands and make all of the major political decisions in דוד's stead. Also, despite his loyalty to דוד and desire for approval, he was regarded with suspicion and contempt instead of gratitude and respect. יואב never resolved this conflict. Ultimately, however, יואב found himself incompatible with דוד and rebelled with אדוניו in the hopes of establishing a more "normal" political system in which he would receive appreciation.

Moreover, דוד's and יואב's major sins lie in contrast to one another and, despite their effort to correct each other's, they not only failed, but plummeted more deeply into the depths of their personal weaknesses. דוד's greatest sin, an event that shadowed over him all of his life, is taking בת-שבט and killing her husband, אוריה. דוד saw בת-שבט bathing, sent for her, and slept with her. He saw her because he was wandering the palace roof at

night, rather than going out to war with the rest of the army, as the king was required to do. דוד's passivity directly led to his greatest sin, for which he and his children were severely punished. In fact, דוד's unwillingness to act regarding what he feared was unnecessary bloodshed, came into conflict with יאב's tendency to act upon his every passionate whim.¹⁸ Both דוד and יאב reprimanded each other for their extreme behavior, but neither of them succeeded in finding a functional medium to integrate a healthy balance of action and passivity, of physicality and spirituality. Nevertheless, דוד and יאב shared the ultimate goal of establishing a kingdom most conducive to serving God.

Finally, there is one other subtle, yet truly striking point that is worthy of notice here. Consistently, throughout the ספר דוד, דוד used the four-letter Name of ה' while יאב in general referred to Him as א-להים.

In order to succinctly enumerate דוד and יאב's similarities, parallels and differences, a chart is very helpful:

דוד	יאב
Passivity led to his downfall	Action led to his downfall
Forgave his enemies	Did not forgive his enemies
Ruled with mercy	Ruled with justice
Considered יאב destructive for the nation's survival — but was dependent on him	Considered דוד destructive for the nation's survival — but was dependent on him
Blinded by love	Blinded by anger
Relied on spiritual strength	Relied on physical strength
Considered himself maintainer of the kingdom	Considered himself maintainer of the kingdom
Tried to survive independently of יאב	Tried to survive independently of דוד
Relates to "ה'"	Relates to "א-להים"

To better understand how יאב and דוד each envisioned a perfect kingdom and ideal servitude to God, it is crucial to examine the different Godly aspects that they each related to:

א-להים vs ה

There are two popular approaches regarding the antithetical nature of the Names ה and א-להים: One is that ה"י denotes the Divine attribute of mercy while א-להים denotes the Divine attribute of justice. The second is that ה"י is mentioned regarding the interpersonally relating God of the Jews, and א-להים is mentioned regarding an omnipotent Creator of nature. To best grasp this dialectic, one must turn to the two cases in the Torah in which the relationship between ה"י and א-להים most blatantly manifest themselves: the creation of the world and God's presentation of His מידות הדין and מידות הרחמים. The Torah begins with, "בראשית ברא א-להים את השמים ואת הארץ" (בראשית א:א); God, the Mighty Source, created nature. Throughout the entire account of creation, God is quite reasonably referred to as א-להים. In fact, the first time we see the use of ה"י is still in conjunction with א-להים: "וייצר ה' א-להים את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים": א-להים (בראשית ב:ז).¹⁹ As soon as God created and breathed His own breath into man, the latent Name of Hashem, the Connecting Relater, presents itself. However, ה"י is still juxtaposed with א-להים, the Creator. Furthermore, the first time that we see ה"י exclusively is in א-להים, בראשית ד:א, when אדם and חוה had a child, and חוה named him קין because, "קניתי איש את ה'". רש"י comments that "את ה'" means "עם ה'"; God created and participated in the union between man and woman, and through having children they connected and participated in the act of creation with the ultimate Creator. In other words, ה"י is first used when man discovered his connection and likeness to God through his ability to create.

The second case in which the natures of ה"י and א-להים play a prominent role is the מידות הדין stated in the עשרת הדיברות (שמות כ) and the מידות הרחמים, when God "showed" Himself to Moshe (שמות לד).²⁰ Predictably, א-להים is used in conjunction with מידות הדין (אני ה' אלוך) (שמות כב: is one example) and ה"י is used in conjunction with מידות הרחמים (among others, שמות לד: in ה' ה' א-ל רחום וחנון). Moreover, despite the fact that in the עשרת הדיברות, א-להים is mentioned seven times, it is completely absent when God relates the מידות הרחמים to Moshe. Clearly, these Names present a very powerful dichotomy throughout the Torah that represents the two polar ways in which man discovers God. Finally, among a vast number of commentators and scholars that further pursue this topic,²¹ Prof. U. Cassuto²² succinctly enumerates seven primary differences between ה"י and א-להים that can be beautifully integrated into the characters of יואב and דוד:

1) ה"י conveys the Jewish conception of God, in particular His ethical Character, and א-להים conveys an abstract conception of a Supreme Deity that is the Creator and Ruler over nature.

- 2) "ה'" is employed when He is depicted as a lucid and clear Being, while "א-להים" is employed when God is depicted as a hazy and obscure Being.
- 3) "ה'" implies a majestic and glorious God; "א-להים" implies an ordinary God.
- 4) "ה'" appears in direct relationship with a personal character, and "א-להים" appears as an outside Force above and beyond the physical universe.
- 5) "ה'" is found in relation to the Jews; "א-להים" is found in relation to mankind.
- 6) "ה'" is mentioned concerning the Jews' tradition and "א-להים" is mentioned concerning humanity's tradition.
- 7) "ה'" portrays man's simple and intuitive concept of God, while "א-להים" portrays the philosophical concept of thinkers who ponder the world and humanity.

In short, Prof. Cassuto suggests that the Tetragrammaton (the Name of Hashem), refers to God's relationship with man, His personal connection with the Jews, and consequently, the ethical manner with which He relates to His creatures. In contrast, "א-להים" insinuates God's rule over the general mass of mankind and His role as unattainable Creator, who, because of a lack of connection between Him and His creations, has no compassionate ethical code and acts with objective justice alone.²³

This notion is completely consistent with the characters of יואב and דוד. דוד referred to God as "ה'" because דוד personifies love, brotherhood, and mercy. יואב refers to God as "א-להים" because יואב personifies justice, while דוד referred to God as "ה'" because דוד personifies love, brotherhood, and mercy. The misunderstanding between these two men that results from the tension of this dialectic does not reflect a "right and wrong" situation, in which either יואב or דוד related to God "the correct way." Rather, it reflects a fundamental personality clash. This clash resulted in tragic misunderstanding which led both יואב and דוד to feel that they could not lead the nation together as an integrated duo, but were doomed to exist as opposing forces.²⁴ There are four major instances in which the use of the names of "ה'" and "א-להים" best reflect the opposite characters of דוד and יואב, אבישי, and צרויה בן עשהאל:²⁵

1) דוד fled from שאול and came across his sleeping regime in the middle of the night. אבישי felt that it may be דוד's last opportunity to defend himself against שאול and offered to kill the latter, knowing that although דוד is a נרדף and had a right to kill שאול, he would never do so on his own. אבישי urged דוד (ש"א כו:ח), דוד אבישי. Clearly, אבישי used not only the Name of God that he identified with, but also the One that, due to its objective nature, would justify and approve of דוד's killing שאול. דוד, however, assured אבישי that although technically he could kill שאול, he identified not with "א-להים" but with Hashem, the personal,

loving, and ethical God of the Jews. דוד expressed this by mentioning God's Name Hashem five times in his refusal to אבישי: "כי מי שלח ידו במשיח ה' ונקמה...חיהי: אבישי". דוד dissociated himself from צרויה's formal conception of God, manifest in אבישי's use of the Name "א-להים" emphasizing his own passionate relationship with God, manifest in his manipulation of the Name Hashem. This is further highlighted in the second example:

2) יואב and אבנר led the Jews in war against each other. After killing עשאל, אבנר offered a cease-fire to יואב, and the latter responded in emphatic assent, "חיהי הא-להים כי לולא דברת כי אז מהבקר נעלה העם איש מאחרי אחיו" (ש"ב ב:כז). It is fascinating that this is the only place in תנ"ך where someone swore by the life of "א-להים". Perhaps יואב was trying to justify his belief in the greatness of God as "א-להים", the just and mighty Creator, while refuting דוד's notion that God could only be related to as the "demeaning" image of a "Father-Figure," implied by Hashem.

3) יואב sent an "אשה חכמה" to convince דוד to allow אבשלום to return to Yerushalayim²⁶ by using a parable in which she described a parallel story that she claimed had happened to her family. In her speech, the woman referred to God as "א-להים", although דוד responded by referring to God with the Name of Hashem. The woman's words can be equated with יואב's, since she functions in the story only to deliver his message, as the פסוק clearly states: "וישם יואב את הדברים בפיה" (ש"ב יד:ג). Although the woman referred to specific entities in a possessive form regarding "א-להים" (i.e., "עם א-להים..."), (נחלת א-להים...מלאך א-להים...) פסוקים יג, טז, יז, דוד, she said "יהי אלוקיד" (פסוקים יא, יז). In fact, it is quite possible that דוד suspected that this woman was sent by יואב for the sole reason that the two utilized the Divine Names identically.

4) Despite דוד's express instructions to spare his son's life, יואב killed אבשלום, thereby ending the war and eliminating a national crisis. Instead of allowing his people to rejoice, דוד turned the day into one of mourning and grief, and of course was furious at יואב. The latter in turn severely rebuked דוד for what יואב deemed are backward values, and urged him to reach out to his people: "לאהבה את שנאיך ולשנא את אוהביך כי הגדת היום...כי בהי". יואב pleaded with דוד to stop mourning his son and resume his role as intermediary between God and His people. To stress how strongly he felt, יואב went so far as to swear in the Name of Hashem, expressing his attempt to identify himself with דוד, as if saying, "I am with you, דוד, not against you. Listen to me so I can help you reestablish order and your role as charismatic and optimistic king, which you have temporarily lost. My loyalty to you even brings me to be willing to subjugate my personality to yours, so as not to oppose your will."

Clearly, the Divine Names "א-להים" and "יה" are utilized to elucidate יואב's just nature and דוד's merciful character. יואב related to an abstract omnipotent Creator of humanity, a world in which everyone shares the same code of ethics, while דוד related to a personal Savior, a world in which the Jews have the privilege of having God's love and mercy bestowed upon them. This fundamental difference is portrayed throughout דוד's reign in that he and יואב forever remained opposing forces that could not, or would not, be integrated.

Conclusion

Now that it has been established that יואב's presence was necessary to establish the kingdom because he was an extraordinary military leader, an actor, and a just ruler, and that דוד's presence was equally necessary because he was a spiritual leader and a loving and merciful king, we must now return to the stories in which בני צרויה²⁷ appear and explain them in light of this necessary but ultimately tragic dialectic:

שיב ב-ג

These פרקים recount the war between בית שאול and בית דוד, in which אבנר killed עשהאל and was in turn later killed by יואב. The latter did not kill אבנר immediately for killing עשהאל but instead killed him when the war was over and peace reigned, an act for which דוד criticized him and which is possibly a motivation for condemning יואב to death. However, the text implies that יואב accepted אבנר's gesture of peace because he was not aware that his brother was killed. אבנר probably offered peace to יואב only because he knew that once יואב discovered that אבנר killed his brother עשהאל, יואב would refuse to stop fighting until he defeated בית שאול and killed אבנר. However, the latter's speech to יואב insinuated that the war was יואב's fault:²⁸ "הלוא ידעת כי מרה תהיה באחרונה ועד מתי תאמר לעם לשוב מאחרי אחיהם" (שיב ב:כו). Surprised at אבנר's words, יואב immediately assented that he did not want more bloodshed and agreed to a cease-fire. The irony was further highlighted when יואב himself blew the shofar and called an end to the war. On their return home, יואב gathered his army and counted them to determine the number of war casualties. He then discovered that עשהאל was missing: "ויפקדו...תשעה עשר איש: ועשהאל" (שיב ב:ל). ויבין יואב upon the horrific realization that אבנר killed עשהאל and called for peace before יואב could discover what had happened. יואב probably felt that אבנר was a sly murderer and a selfish liar; meanwhile, אבנר's blood was not avenged and ironically יואב himself was the man who had innocently called off the war.

In פרק ג, when אבנר offered a peace treaty to דוד and it was accepted, יואב of course assumed that it was another plot in which אבנר was pretending

to come peacefully while secretly plotting to manipulate דוד into innocently accepting him just before turning against דוד. Perhaps because אבנר was a מורד במלכות, as well as the fact that יואב had a halachic right to be גואל הדם and avenge his brother's blood, so אבנר killed יואב.

However, דוד typically misunderstood יואב and assumed that אבנר was killed because יואב was angry and lost self-control. This may explain why ג' פסוק opens with the story of why אבנר abandoned דוד; we are told that his peace-treaty to דוד was genuine. Furthermore, it is possible that אבנר brought twenty people with him as a symbolic gesture to express his regret for the bloodshed of the twenty men from בית דוד that were killed. This misunderstanding between יואב and דוד laid the groundwork for the rest of their relationship, in which דוד's mistrust of יואב disabled them from working together.

Finally, it is significant that although the Name "א-להים" appears in פרק ה', the Name "ה'" is completely absent. This implies that during this war, דוד (represented by the use of the Name "ה'") was powerless regarding the Jews' fate, and יואב, as physical leader, was in control. The military aspect of establishing the kingdom is, for better or for worse, not in דוד's complete control.

ש"ב י, יב

In עמון, before דוד led the Jews into a stunning victory over עמון, יואב delivered his famous "חזק ונתחזק" proclamation. As the war came to a close and victory was inevitable, דוד arrived to fight the last battle and יואב silently faded out of the picture. This seems to be יואב's ideal function: to fight wars for דוד and give the glory that he earned over דוד and the kingdom. This concept also manifests itself in פרק יב, when יואב fought עמון and sent a message to דוד to come finish the war: "פן אלכד אני את העיר ונקרא" שמי עליה" (ש"ב יב: כח). Again, this reflects what the relationship between יואב and דוד was supposed to be; יואב achieved and utilized material greatness to glorify דוד's spiritually perfect reign.

ש"ב יד

This is the story of אבשלום's rebellion, an event that permanently destroyed any hopes of reconciliation and integration between יואב and דוד. An important factor in אבשלום's rebellion is that it was imminent, and this was probably recognized by both יואב and דוד. The harbinger of the rebellion in which this is most apparent is that, in his father's absence, the manner in which אבשלום spoke to his servants was that in which a king speaks to his subjects: "אל תראו הלוא כי אנכי צוית אתכם" (ש"ב יג: כח).²⁹ Furthermore, the fact

that אבשלום escaped to his gentile grandfather גשור מלך rather than going to a distant city or עיר מקלט in Israel is sufficient evidence alone to assume that אבשלום dissociated himself from דוד. Perhaps the reason why דוד did not want אבשלום to return to him is because he knew that אבשלום would rebel and cause a national state of emergency; even worse, דוד feared that he would be forced to have him killed. Conversely, יואב had no qualms about killing אבשלום, even if he was דוד's son. Consumed with the incentive of getting אבשלום pardoned for being a גואל הדם so that דוד would be compelled to forgive יואב for being גואל דם, יואב plotted to return אבשלום home. When he did, of course, אבשלום slowly began the process of rebellion. Lighting יואב's fields on fire because יואב could not convince דוד to consent to seeing his son, and winning the hearts of the Jews, אבשלום masterfully set the groundwork for his plan. When he finally rebelled, דוד is told, "יהיה לב איש ישראל אחרי אבשלום" (ש"ב טו:ג). From this statement that does not necessarily convey an act of rebellion, דוד knew immediately to evacuate the palace. Due to the imminence of his rebellion, דוד blamed אבשלום's death on יואב for two reasons:

1) יואב knew of אבשלום's plan and still wanted him returned home so that he could be pardoned for killing אבנר, regardless of whether or not אבשלום died.

2) דוד specified to יואב to spare אבשלום's life but יואב killed him nevertheless.

יואב was perfectly aware of דוד's sentiments towards him, and in ט-ט confronted him with his famous "לאהבה את שנאיך" speech that we mentioned previously. יואב said "היום" five times to דוד, emphasizing that דוד had to stop mourning immediately and go out to the people that very day, or he would lose the loyalty of the people.³¹ The urgency in יואב's message is further displayed in that he said "כ"י" seven times, reflecting his fragmented stream of consciousness and frantic tone. Although he knew that his killing אבשלום completely severed any remaining bonds between them, יואב remained devoted to דוד and willing to sacrifice his own good graces with the king to save the nation from crisis and help דוד reestablish his kingdom.

ש"ב כ

After killing עמשא, יואב chased the מורד במלכות, שבט בן בכרי, שבע בן בכרי. When he arrived at the city wall inside which שבע was hiding, a woman called out to יואב, asking him to spare her life. He responded, "חלילה חלילה לי אם אבליע ואם" (ש"ב כא:כ). יואב was defending himself from those with the impression that he killed freely and thoughtlessly. Furthermore, the term חלילה is used in conjunction with the Name "יה"י.³² Perhaps יואב was utilizing this phrase to

identify with דוד, to indicate that he truly did not want unnecessary bloodshed.

שיב כ

דוד wanted to count the people, a grievous sin, and יואב tried to dissuade him. In contrast to the last time that יואב spoke to דוד, in which he harshly reprimanded him for mourning אבשלום, here יואב spoke humbly and formally to דוד, expressing their cold and hostile relationship: "ויספך ה' אלקיך אל העם...ועיני דוד rejected יואב's plea and דוד himself was sent to count the nation; loyalty compelled him to obey the king even though he clearly did not want to sin. In this story we see יואב's basically good character typically conflicting with דוד's will.

מ"א: א

דוד rebelled, partially due to the fact that דוד never rebuked him.³³ Again, דוד allowed his love to blind him from reality. Perhaps this tendency influenced יואב to rebel,³⁴ as if stating, "I have had enough of being on דוד's side where my family and I are not appreciated because דוד loves his enemies and hates his friends, and therefore resents my view on how to run the kingdom. Also, maybe joining אדוניו will force דוד to take opposition seriously and he will learn from whom he must truly defend himself and act upon it."

מ"א ב

יואב discovered that he was a wanted criminal and ran to the מוכח for refuge, after seeing that אדוניו, after doing so, was saved. This story is parallel with עשהאל's death to highlight the traits that the brothers shared, and is in contrast with, בית דוד to delineate that, as is typical of דוד, the true enemy was forgiven and יואב never received gratitude or even forgiveness.

Regarding the parallels with עשהאל, both he and יואב rejected opportunities to escape or leave, and stubbornly refused to yield, dismissing the tragedy of losing their lives because they felt justified in their actions. Both עשהאל and יואב are portrayed as zealous and stubborn, manifest in the similarity of the words in each of the stories. "נטה" is used in conjunction with a refusal to yield (כח: מ"א ב: כח), and both were given objects to grab onto as opportunities to be saved. עמשא אבנר told יואב, "אחז לך אחד מהנערים", and concerning יואב, the פסוק recounts, "ויחזק קרנות המזבח", (ש"ב ב: כא), and concerning יואב, the פסוק recounts, "ויחזק קרנות המזבח", (מ"א ב: כח). These parallels elucidate the common traits of בני צרויה that are in stark contrast with דוד, and ultimately were the causes of their deaths.³⁵

Furthermore, regarding the contrast between יואב and אדוניהו, they both ran to the מזבח for refuge, "ויחזקו קרנות המזבח" (מ"א א:ז, ב:כח), but אדוניהו was saved while יואב was not. In light of דוד's tendency to forgive their enemies and hate ערויה בני, it seems that both יואב and אדוניהו knew that this would occur. This is apparent in that אדוניהו calmly walked to the altar, "ויקם ויניס יואב אל: יואב, in hopeless desperation, fled there: "מ"א א:ז) "מ"א א:ז) אהל ה'" (מ"א ב:כח). The predictability of יואב's fate is nonetheless tragic; due to the unwillingness of בית דוד to pardon יואב, particularly regarding אבשלום's death, he was not in control of his fate.

We return to our original question concerning whether יואב was a "צדיק" or a "רשע". I believe that the answer is that יואב was a "צדיק," but not a perfect one. יואב did not fulfill his potential to be a great leader and an ideal second in command to דוד for two reasons: He sinned by killing with trickery, and consequently, in addition to him not sparing אבשלום's life, דוד could not reconcile the differences that he had with יואב. Moreover, although they possessed antithetical personalities, יואב and דוד's strengths were both necessary to establish the Jewish kingdom but neither recognized the other as a crucial component in creating an ideal reign. Had they accepted and integrated each other's strengths, יואב and דוד would probably not have sinned in their leadership and would have succeeded in building the ultimate spiritual kingdom.

¹ The stories in which בני ערויה appear and their implications regarding their character must be analyzed:

משיח ה' שאול wanted to kill דוד, and דוד refused to allow him to kill the ש"י פרק כו = *negative*

אבנר, pleaded with him to run away, he refused, אבנר chased עשהאל - ש"ב פרק ב killed him = *negative*

אבנר suggested that his and יואב's soldiers "sport" and יואב agreed = *negative*

יואב gladly accepted, אבנר proposed peace - ש"ב פרק ב = *positive*

אבנר tricked יואב into speaking to him in private, then killed יואב = *negative*

עמון executed a stunning victory over יואב ואבישי - ש"ב פרק י = *positive*

דוד received a letter from דוד to kill אוריה and he obeyed = *negative*

דוד fought before he was about to win, sent message to עמון and right before he was about to win, sent message to דוד to come and fight the last battle so he could take the credit for the victory rather than יואב = *positive*

דוד was upset over אבשלום's absence, plotted to get him sent back - ש"ב פרק יד = *positive*

דוד was furious after he cursed דוד, and דוד wanted to kill גרא בני שמעי - ש"ב פרק טז

Devoted Hero or Cunning Politician? יואב בן צרויה

= *negative*

killed אבשלום after דוד told him not to = *negative*

wanted to kill גרא after he apologized to דוד, דוד was furious

= *negative*

rebuked דוד for mourning אבשלום and turning כניי's victory into a tragedy = *positive*

of דוד = שר עבא killed אבשלום, עמשא = ש"ב פרק כ = *negative*

assured the woman he would not kill her or the other inhabitants of the city = *positive*

he saved דוד's life in war against the פלישתים, last appearance = ש"ב פרק כ"א = *positive*

דוד told דוד that he may not fight with them anymore = *positive*

discouraged דוד from counting thenation, דוד did not listen = *positive*

joined אדניהו's rebellion against דוד = *negative*

was condemned to death by דוד on his deathbed = *negative*

wanted to kill him, ran to מובח for refuge, was killed by בניהו בן יהוידע = *negative*

² This war stemmed from the horrific tragedy that occurred at גבעון. בריכת אבנר suggested to יואב, "יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו" (ש"ב ב:יד), יואב and completely unnecessary war erupted.

³ This statement alone suggests יואב's just character; the woman assumed that if she could convince יואב that she is undeserving of death, he would unhesitatingly spare her life and the lives of the other inhabitants of the city.

⁴ Loyal, that is, until he rebelled and joined דוד's son אדניהו in his rebellion. This will be examined further on.

מסי סנהדרין מ"ט

⁶ עשהאל for גואל דם יואב or מורד במלכות אבנר was being.

⁷ This is in stark contrast to יואב's fierce loyalty to דוד, especially in war. For instance, in י"ב ש"ב י"ב sent a message to דוד to fight the last battle against אמון, when כניי's victory was clearly imminent. The purpose of this, יואב explained, is so that דוד would get the credit for winning the battle and not יואב: "...פן אלכד אני את העיר ונקרא שמי עליה" (ש"ב יב:כט).

⁸ Mrs. Yael Ziegler

⁹ At first glance at the story of אבנר, it seems that יואב willingly destroyed any possibilities of peace between דוד and אבנר when he killed the latter to avenge the death of his brother עשהאל.

סנהדרין מ"ט

¹¹ As opposed to אבנר in פרק ב

סנהדרין מ"ט

¹³ שלמה's half-brother who rebelled against דוד and whom שלמה saved after he ran to the מובח for salvation, as the halacha prohibits murderers from being killed at God's altar.

- ¹⁴ Whom many say is אביגיל בן דניאל, as he is listed as דוד's second son in א דברי הימים א ג:א.
- ¹⁵ See Rambam's Hilchot Malachim, פרק ג הלכה י.
- ¹⁶ Rav Yaakov Medan also makes this distinction.
- ¹⁷ ראש סנהדרין יואב was חז"ל say that.
- ¹⁸ The story of אבשלום is a primary example.
- ¹⁹ For those who have read Rav Soloveitchik's essay, "The Lonely Man of Faith" it is interesting to note that God creates Adam I with "א-להים" and Adam II with Hashem.
- ²⁰ For detailed elaboration, see Rabbi Menachem Leibtag's article on this subject.
- ²¹ In particular, see Rav Breuer's introduction to פרקי בראשית, as well as his discussion in פרקי מועדות.
- ²² See his compilation of lectures entitled "The Documentary Hypothesis" in which he refutes the theory that the Torah has multiple authors.
- ²³ Mrs. Aliza Segal
- ²⁴ Moreover, the relationship that יואב had with דוד mirrors the relationship that the other בני צרויה had with דוד. This is because all three brothers shared the same basic traits and religious philosophies.
- ²⁵ For a more in-depth study, compare ש"ב with גילה ש"ב, and ש"ב with טו:ט. Also, examine the contexts in which Hashem's Name is mentioned five times in מ"א ב:כב-לג.
- ²⁶ From exile for killing his half-brother Amnon after the latter rapes Tamar, also his half-sibling.
- ²⁷ As listed in footnote 1.
- ²⁸ Although we know that אבנר initiates the war - see ש"ב ב:יד.
- ²⁹ Mrs. Mali Brofsky.
- ³⁰ ibid.
- ³¹ ibid.
- ³² See דוד's declaration in ב:כא for an example.
- ³³ מ:א א:ו
- ³⁴ In addition to what we have said before, that a) אדוניוהו was next in line to be king so this was not a true rebellion, b) אדוניוהו proclaimed himself king and דוד did not protest, and c) יואב might not have known that שלמה had already been appointed king.
- ³⁵ Note also that בני צרויה are almost always mentioned in relation to each other - "אבישי אה יואב", "יואב אה אבישי", etc. This further highlights the point that they shared common fundamental personality traits.

”עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו”

Tamar Belsh

WHEN בני ישראל asked אהרן, “עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו”, what exactly were they asking for? What did they mean by the word אלהים? Our answer to this question will in fact help address another, more basic question: what actually was the sin of חטא העגל? Let us explore the interpretations of רש”י, רמב”ן, and כוזרי, in order to better understand פרק ל”ב.

רש”י

רש”י in א פסוק interprets “עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו” as “אלוהות הרבה איזו להם”, they desired for themselves many gods. Then, on רש”י, “אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים”, רש”י explains that משה used to show them the way, but now they felt they needed other gods to do that job. It is very logical that רש”י translates “אלהים” to mean gods. The great majority of times the תנ”ך uses this word, it either refers to ה’ or foreign gods.

For example, in the עשרת הדברות which בני ישראל just received, ה’ commanded them (שמות כ:ג-ג) “...לא יהיה לכם אלהים אחרים...”. It is therefore quite ironic that just over a month later, בני ישראל used that exact same term in their request (“עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו”)! They requested exactly what ה’ forbade them. They also claimed that the עגל was the god who took them out of מצרים, which, as also clearly stated in the עשרת הדברות, was an act performed by God Himself. Thus, by this heretical statement, they were essentially contradicting both of the first two דברות.

Then in א פסוק, בני ישראל brought קרבנות to the עגל. Afterwards they got up which “לעחק” רש”י, implies עריות גלוי. This flows with רש”י’s interpretation that they were worshipping זרה. It therefore turns out that according to רש”י they worshiped other gods (עבודה זרה), and according to the מדרש (quoted by רש”י on פסוק ה) they killed חור (שפיחות דמים), and then we see that they got up “לעחק” (גלוי עריות)! Therefore it makes perfect sense that בני ישראל wanted to destroy ה’. They committed three fundamental sins!

”עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו”

He told משה to descend from the mountain (פסוק ז), and He removed Himself from בני ישראל by saying “כי שיחת עמך”, referring to them as “your” nation, not “mine” (now that they worshiped other gods!) In פסוק י, ה' indicated that He wanted to destroy בני ישראל, and start again from משה. משה therefore proceeded to remind ה' that they were His nation, אפך “למה ה' יחרה אפך, בני ישראל argued that despite the fact that בני ישראל chose another god for themselves, ה' was still the God who took them out of מצרים, and they were still His nation! In פסוק כא, the sin of בני ישראל is referred to as “חטאה גדולה”. Another place in תנ"ך where this same phrase is used is in יזכא ב where it says בני ישראל where it says בן ירבעם את ירבעם בן ירבעם את ישראל מאחרי ה' והחטיאם חטאה גדולה” נבט ויחד ירבעם את ישראל מאחרי ה' והחטיאם חטאה גדולה” This means that ירבעם had pushed בני ישראל away from following ה' and caused them to commit a great sin, namely עבודה זרה! The same thing is true in our case: the “חטאה גדולה” of בני ישראל refers to their sin of worshipping a foreign god.

Another indication that the sin was actually עבודה זרה can be found in פסוק כו, משה called out, “מי לה' אלי”, in order to see who was still with ה', as opposed to with the other god. Also, at the end of פרק ה', ה' sent מלאך to lead בני ישראל, because He could not and would not reattach himself to a people who had just rejected Him and made a new god!

As we have seen throughout the פסוקים, the interpretation given by רש"י fits very nicely. However, there still seems to be a number of problems. Why would בני ישראל ask אהרן to make another god for them? אהרן was a נדיק, not the type of person one goes to in order to rebel and commit idolatry! Furthermore, how could בני ישראל have appointed for themselves a new god so soon after מתן תורה? It just does not make sense that the nation who heard God's voice would worship an idol a mere forty days later!

These questions, among others, are addressed by רמב"ן in his attempt to explain the request of בני ישראל.

רמב"ן

רמב"ן begins by quoting רש"י's interpretation of “אלוהות הרבה איוו להם”. The next step is to explain why he feels רש"י is wrong. רמב"ן rhetorically asks, did בני ישראל think that משה רבנו was a god? Certainly not! Why then would בני ישראל say, “now that משה is gone, let us make a god”? This is not a logical conclusion.

What then, were בני ישראל asking for (according to רמב"ן)? Apparently they were asking for another משה! They said, “משה האיש אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים”, משה led them from מצרים until here, “על פי ה' ביד משה”, משה was the middle-man between בני ישראל and God. Now that משה was not present, בני ישראל were worried that they would have no one to show them the way “על פי ה'”.

That is why they said “משה האיש אשר העלנו,” and not God. They needed an איש הא-להים.

There are several places in תנ”ך where the same word or שורש of “אלהים” is used to mean something other than a god. In בראשית ו:ד it says, “הנפילים היו, וגם בארץ בימים ההם וגם אחרי כן אשר יבואו בני האלהים אל בנות האדם...” In this context, “אלהים” means “rulers”. Then, in שמות כא:ו, when talking about an עבד עברי, it is written, “והגישו אדוניו אל האלהים והגישו אל הדלת...” There, even רש”י says that “האלהים” refers to בית דין! The “אל” שורש is defined as “power” in certain situations, such as בראשית לא:כט: “בראשית לא:כט: רע”:

רמב”ן continues with a proof in support of his argument. In פסוק כא, משה asked אהרן, “what have you done?”, and אהרן answered, “אל יחר אף אדני”. If the request/sin had been עבודה זרה, then אהרן would be adding insult to injury, because why shouldn’t משה get angry? What could be worse than עבודה זרה?

רמב”ן then explains the true request of בני ישראל. They did not want a God who controls life and death, they wanted a leader in משה’s place. That is why אהרן apologized to משה. The request of בני ישראל was a semi-personal offense to משה, in that the עגל was supposed to go before them in משה’s stead!

Another proof that the רמב”ן brings is that when בני ישראל saw משה, they immediately left the עגל. משה took the עגל and burned it, and made בני ישראל drink it, and no one complained. If it had truly been their god, there is no possible way that they would let it be burned without משה stoning משה, who destroyed it!

כזרי

רבי יהודה הלוי, in ספר הכוזרי (מאמר א:צו), offers yet another interpretation of the request of “עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו”. He begins with a reference to the norm of the time: all the nations at that time worshiped תמונות, images. Even the philosophers at the time could only comprehend belief in a god that has דמות, through which one could focus his כוונה on ה’. The image fulfilled a function similar to that of holy places today, which help us channel our כוונה towards ה’. בני ישראל were also promised a tangible object. When בני ישראל came out of מצרים, they had the עמוד ענן, and the עמוד אש. Also, משה went up to get the לוחות which would be a תבנית (form) for them, which they could also use as a focal point. So, בני ישראל anxiously awaited משה’s return from הר סיני. They did not change their clothes, and they waited for משה as if he would be back at any moment. He had not taken any food, so they figured he had gone only for the day.

בני ישראל started becoming very disappointed. Every one had his own

opinion about what was happening and what to do. In the end, they decided they wanted something tangible to worship, like the other nations had. רבי יהודה הלוי recognizes what בני ישראל were lacking—a tangible object (not a god). Because they needed such an object, משה had gone up to get one, the לווחות. When משה did not return, however, בני ישראל felt the need to create their own object. They did not deny God who took them out of מצרים. To the contrary, they wanted something tangible to represent God's glory! This was their request. (Thus, "א-להים" would actually mean God, whom they intended to serve through the medium of the עגל.)

If this was the real כוונה of בני ישראל, what was the sin? The כוזרי says it was only that they made for themselves תבנית (which they were not allowed to do). They attributed power to something which they made on their own volition, which was not commanded by ה'. In other words, חטא העגל was not a fundamental sin of denying God and His Torah, but rather a violation of one particular prohibition, that of תמונות. They violated this איסור, though, with "the best of intentions"—to be able to better serve ה'.

It then makes sense that בני ישראל turned to אהרן for assistance in their endeavor, which they mistakenly believed to be a righteous act. But we must ask why אהרן would agree to such a thing. It must be that he was trying to point out their error by converting their improper desires into concrete actions.

There are still questions that may be asked on the interpretation given by רבי יהודה הלוי. Why did it take בני ישראל forty days to get so worried, if משה was supposed to come back on the first day? In addition, why would אהרן be so devious, in wanting to bring the sin of בני ישראל into action?

There are many differences, yet there are also similarities among the three interpretations of רש"י, רמבין, and כוזרי. They each, in their own separate ways, explain בני ישראל's request of "עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו". Each opinion attempts to find the most suitable solution. It really is not clear what the word "אלהים" means, because according to *Brown-Driver-Briggs Dictionary* there are several different definitions including: rulers, judges, god, and God. There is a real ambiguity in the text. As we have seen, there are compelling proofs behind each פירוש, and yet there are still some questions that one may have on each interpretation. We have to learn what we can from each פרשן, as each one offers an interpretation which he feels best fits in with the פסוקים. Each of the various explanations leads to a radically different understanding of this monumental tragedy of our history.

Two Episodes Regarding כבשן האש

Sarah Abramowitz

ג OF דניאל OF פרק ג tells the story of the fiery furnace into which חנניה, מישאל ועזריה were thrown. This whole affair calls upon us to look back into כבשן האש—where the מדרשים and מפרשים discuss another כבשן האש—the one into which אברהם was thrown. The similarities between the two stories are numerous, while the differences are much slighter. However, looking carefully at both the parallels and the differences between the two stories can explain to us a lot about the reasons and purpose for each.

In the story of אברהם אבינו, the focus of the experience was on personal חיזוק, strengthening אברהם for his role as "אב המון גוים" and the founder of עם ישראל. As a result, all the details that revolve around the כבשן have a very personal, internal focus. On the other hand, חנניה, מישאל ועזריה were political figures. נבוכדנצר had promoted them, put them into the public spotlight, and even given them special names. In light of this, their experience in the כבשן was both publicized and extremely dramatic. The entire focus was on the public learning from the experience of מישאל ועזריה, חנניה.

This fundamental distinction can explain the most obvious difference between the two instances. חנניה's experience was recorded לדורות in תנ"ך. This is different than אברהם, whose whole ordeal is recorded in מדרש, and only hinted to in פשט of the תורה. We obviously are able to learn from אברהם's experience, which is why it is told in מדרש, however it was mainly a personal growth experience for אברהם himself, which is why it is not told explicitly in תנ"ך.

Differences begin to appear between the two stories in the events that lead up to each episode. Two versions of מדרש explain that אברהם either smashed idols, or burned them down. Either way, both מדרשים agree that אברהם then left either the torch or the axe in the hands of the biggest idol, blaming the other idols' destruction on "the big one." It seems that אברהם himself needed to develop within himself the strength to be able to destroy the עבודה זרה. However, he didn't necessarily intend it to be a display for the public. Although he was ultimately caught, אברהם did not start out with a plan of making the

idol smashing into a public display. At first, he left the possibility of an “alibi”, such that others would not necessarily know that he had done it. The act was fundamentally a personal mission that he needed to fulfill.

Conversely, מישאל ועזריה, חנניה publicly disobeyed נבוכדנצר’s order to bow down to the עלם that he had built. The consequences were outlined and clear, and yet they went ahead and publicly defied the king’s decree, knowing full well what would happen as a result. This is clear from their reaction to the king when he confronted them and sentenced them to death:

הן איתי א-להנא די אנחנא פלחין יכל לשויבותנא מן אתון נורא יקדתא ומן ידך
מלכא ישויב. והן לא ידיע להוא לך מלכא די לאלהיד לא איתנא פלחין ולעלם
דהבא די הקימת לא נסגד (דניאל ג:יז-יח).

Behold, our God Whom we worship is able to save us; He will rescue from the fiery, burning furnace and from your hand, O king. But if [He does] not, let it be known to you, O king that we do not worship your god, and to the golden statue that you have set up we shall not prostrate ourselves (Translation: Artscroll Stone Tanach.)

It did not matter whether they would live or die, whether ה' would save them or not, they wanted to make clear that under no circumstances would they bow down to the idol.

אברהם, on the other hand, according to the מדרש made no such statement before being thrown into the כבשן. He had no public agenda; this was a personal matter. Even though אברהם did make a statement about the שקר of עבודה זרה just by subjecting himself to the כבשן, originally he had tried to get away with blaming it on the “big one.” מישאל ועזריה had intended to make a scene, to demonstrate their אמונה and בטחון in ה', in order to inspire others. Many מדרשים discuss the idea that מישאל ועזריה wanted to make a קידוש ה' through their actions.

In דניאל פרק ג, דניאל נביא gives a detailed description of what the כבשן looked like, and how hot it was (see also מפרשים who elaborate). Both the מדרשים and פשט also place a heavy emphasis on the fact that one could see inside the furnace. Obviously, הקב"ה was setting the stage for a great example of נס נגלה and קידוש ה' by making the כבשן into a public display. Regarding the incident with אברהם, though, the מדרשים and מפרשים focus much more on the personal suffering that אברהם went through while in jail. The מדרש tells us practically nothing about the physical appearance of the כבשן. Again, this points to the fundamental difference between the publicity of מישאל ועזריה’s trial as compared to the privacy of אברהם’s ordeal.

Perhaps one may think that חנניה, מישאל ועזריה were greater than אברהם for making their קידוש ה' public and well known, or that אברהם was greater for keeping it private, and specifically not turning it into a public arena. However, these ideas are both incorrect. In actuality, the זכות each one received was absolutely identical. The מדרש says, הריח ריחו של, "וירח ה' את ריח הניחוח, הריח ריחו של, מדרש" אברהם אבינו עולה מן כבשן האש והריח ריח של חנניה מישאל ועזריה עולין מכבשן האש". Besides drawing attention to the basic similarities between the two episodes, there is a much deeper lesson that we can learn from this statement of the מדרש.

In דניאל, it is recorded that חנניה's clothes didn't even smell of smoke when they got out of the כבשן. In בראשית רבה, there is a מדרש that says אברהם smelled just like מישאל ועזריה, חנניה did when he got out of the כבשן. By putting the two statements together, it's possible to say that just as חנניה didn't smell like smoke, אברהם also didn't smell when he got out of the כבשן. This would seem to indicate that חנניה, מישאל ועזריה and אברהם all received the same level of נס while in the כבשן. Not only did they all merit surviving the האש, כבשן, but they were זוכה to the miracle of not having their clothes smell like smoke. This would also show that in their respective situations, חנניה, מישאל ועזריה and אברהם were all correct in dealing with their situations the way that they did: מישאל ועזריה very publicly, and אברהם as privately and quietly as possible.

There is one מדרש in particular that seems to clinch this idea of אברהם's נסיון being a personal one, while that of חנניה, מישאל ועזריה was designed to create wide-spread קידוש ה'. The מדרש describes a discussion amongst the מלאכים about who should go down and save אברהם. הקב"ה stepped in and said that He Himself would go down to rescue אברהם, while in ספר דניאל, מלאך (גבריאל) was sent to save them.

What difference did it make whether a מלאך ה' or Himself came down to אברהם? The answer becomes clear in light of the context we have explained above. To the rest of the world, no one would know the difference between a מלאך ה' or Himself saving אברהם. The only one who would know would be אברהם himself, and he would draw more חיוק from the presence of ה' than from a מלאך ה'. חנניה, מישאל ועזריה, however, were involved in a public קידוש ה', and therefore what was important was the way that others saw the situation. In that type of situation, there was no issue of drawing greater חיוק—the same effect would take place whether the הקב"ה performed the נס, or whether a מלאך did. Since that was the case, in ספר דניאל we hear just that נבוכדנצר saw a fourth "man" walking in the כבשן with מישאל ועזריה, חנניה, a "man" who looked like a מלאך!

One more element in which this fundamental difference can be seen is in the reactions and responses of the people who witnessed the כבשן. After

Two Episodes Regarding האש כבשן

חנניה ועזריה exited the כבשן האש, acknowledged that ה' was the true and real God, and even sent messengers throughout all the kingdom proclaiming ה' Supreme Power. However, the reaction of the people after אברהם's ordeal in the כבשן is not known, but his personal reaction is known. The מדרש says that since אברהם was so willing to give his own life, and showed his complete, unwavering faith in הקב"ה, he was on such a high level that he could no longer live among the people in ארם and had to leave. Therefore, the very next command ה' gave him was "לך מארצך" מישאל ועזריה. ה' explicitly directed at the bringing the people closer to ה', while אברהם's נס took him further away from the people, but closer to the personal heights that he had to reach.

Through comparing the stories of אברהם in the כבשן האש to that of חנניה ועזריה, מישאל ועזריה, חנניה, the purpose of each miracle becomes clear. In the case of אברהם, this נס was necessary for personal חיוק while that of חנניה ועזריה, מישאל ועזריה, חנניה, had a more national significance. In this way, the link between the two also becomes clear. אברהם's act of heroism helped him reach the level of personal commitment necessary to found ה' Chosen Nation. Centuries later, members of that great nation followed their ancestor's example and proclaimed the truths he had discovered to all of mankind.

דניאל: An Exemplar of Jewish Survival

Ilana Oppenheimer

דניאל, A JEW living in בבל, attained leadership by serving in the court of the king נבוכדנצר. In the beginning of the ספר, we are immediately told of the king's quest for courtiers and the choosing of דניאל as a member of this court. In this lofty position, he was exposed to the Babylonian empire, which formed a major part of the non-Jewish culture of the world at that time. דניאל was surrounded by a religion totally alien to Jewish life.

In the very first chapter, we discern that דניאל participated in the gentile world, yet kept certain limitations. He learned "the script and language of the Chaldeans," however he rejected the food eaten by his colleagues and refrained from drinking their wine, as it says לא יתגאל על לבו אשר לא יתגאל (דניאל א:ח) ובפת-בג המלך ובין משתיי" (דניאל א:ח). The גמרא says that דניאל abstained from eating in order to avoid forming a social bond with his gentile masters, lest they lead him astray. Although surrounded by a culture and religion that was repugnant to Judaism, the פסוקים stress that דניאל was able to withstand the pressures of society by retaining his identity and traditions as a Jew. The ספר describes this approach further in פרק ט, portraying דניאל's firm faith in ה' and observance of His laws. The פסוק states ואתנה את פני אל ה' אלוקים (דניאל ט:ג) and דניאל called upon the Jewish people to do תשובה because the word of God had been breached. This is just one example of דניאל's faith and commitment.

What prompted דניאל to remain loyal to his Judaism? This is a crucial question for all those, throughout the ages, who may find themselves in גלות, in circumstances somewhat parallel to those in which דניאל found himself, and wish to follow his example. Interestingly enough, the ספר itself does not give us much indication. Therefore, we must hypothesize, and look elsewhere in תנ"ך for guidance.

Perhaps דניאל was inspired by the behavior patterns set by his ancestors. For example, יעקב אבינו, in his confrontation with עשו, not only prepared for a serious military onslaught, but according to the מדרש, he challenged עשו spiritually, by saying (בראשית לב:ה) "עם לבן גרתי ואחר עד כה". The numerical

value of *גרתניי* equals *תרייג*, 613. This, according to the *מדרש*, is meant to hint that although *יעקב* had lived with *לכן*, he observed the *מצוות* of *ה'* and did not learn from his evil ways. Despite the surrounding factors that could have led *יעקב* astray, he was able to keep his righteousness intact and it was that fact that allowed him to prevail over *עשו*.

Alternatively, it is possible for *דניאל* to have looked back to *יוסף הצדיק* who, like *דניאל*, was a leader in a foreign country under the control of the king. *יוסף* was *פרעה*'s viceroy, the ruler of the land of Egypt. *פרעה* presented his royal ring to *יוסף* (*בראשית מא:מב*), indicating that *יוסף* was the leader of the entire government and would have the authority to seal decrees. The *מדרש* says that *יוסף* deserved these honors because of his virtuous life. His hands that refused to sin with *פוטופר*'s wife and instead followed *ה'*'s laws, were now adorned with glorious signs of royalty. Therefore, *יוסף*, while immersed in non-Jewish culture, still preserved his Jewish identity and *אמונה* in *ה'*. Despite his powerful position, *יוסף* did not forget his Jewish values. The recognition that his power stemmed from *ה'* and his final wish to be buried in *ישראל* (*בראשית מא:יב*) both illustrate how *יוסף* was able to keep a grasp on his roots, even as he functioned in his official capacity.

The challenges that faced *יעקב*, *יוסף*, and *דניאל* are very similar to the challenges facing the Jews of the Diaspora today. The environment in which we live, its culture and civilization are all typical of a secular society. Some of these societies have produced the most amazing strides in industry, science and social development. However, despite this progress, the culture is quite alien to Jewish life.

In light of the above, what should the "Jew of the Diaspora" do? Should he cut himself off entirely from culture so as to avoid being "poisoned" by its influences or should he participate in secular society even if he will succumb to the negative features which affect the *תורה* way of life? In Nachum Amsel's article "Jews in a Non-Jewish Society," he states that "becoming too friendly can easily lead to assimilation." However, "segregating too much can lead to anti-Semitism." If this is the case, then what is the proper relationship between Jews and gentiles in a secular society? There must be some middle path between both, which one should follow.

On one hand, we as Jews have a commitment to remain different from the gentiles. For example, the *מצוה* of *מילה* is to forever remind the Jew that he is separate from other nations. In *ויקרא יח:ג*, the *תורה* commands us not to copy the customs of the non Jews. What types of customs are included in this prohibition? *רמב"ם* explains that "The Jews are allowed to perform certain practices that are also performed by non-Jews, as long as they have a legitimate [Jewish] purpose." Only if the root of the custom is idolatrous is it forbidden. For instance, a Jew may wear a doctor's coat, a non-Jewish form of

attire, since the reason behind his wearing one is only to “identify a person as a doctor.”

Although it is important to remain distinct from the secular world, it is also crucial to participate in the non-Jewish society. Jews must be “אור לגויים”, a positive influence on the gentiles. Through interactions with non-Jews, gentiles will eventually come to accept the basic principles of Judaism. Rav Hirsch explains that when living in גלות, one should not be segregated from secular society. One must be loyal to the country in which he is living and promote its welfare. We as Jews must view the secular community as a means to bring others closer to ה'. The גמרא in סא. in גמרא ה' teaches that one should form positive ties with the גויים by giving them charity, visiting their sick and even burying their dead.

However, one must be careful not to become too integrated into secular society. In one of Malcolm X's speeches he stated, “Jews had won over half of Germany's prizes. Every culture in Germany was led by the Jew; he published the greatest newspaper. Jews were the greatest artists, the greatest poets, composers, stage directors. But those Jews made a fatal mistake—assimilating.” One must keep a certain distance in order to combat negative secular influences.

דניאל's approach to life seems to solve our struggle and give us the answer as to what direction to take. He participated in the general culture of בבל and served his society well, but tenaciously held on to his religion. To follow his example, we must not place such a strong barricade between ourselves and the positive benefits of our secular culture. But like דניאל, we must also hold on to our Jewish way of life, observe the מצוות properly and maintain אמונה in ה'. The תורה Jew does not lose sight of תורה ideals, even when living amongst גויים.

Harking back to the past, there is an eloquent example in the תורה that proves that this duality is justified. When the sons of יוסף and אפרים, מנשה were brought to their grandfather to be blessed, יעקב asked “מי אלהי?” מלביים explains that יעקב did not recognize his grandchildren because they were dressed in Egyptian clothing. As children of the viceroy of Egypt, אפרים and מנשה, the only Jews in the land, participated in the Egyptian society. They were the product of Egyptian culture, yet they maintained a strong connection to Judaism. This is why, of all of the great Biblical personalities, we use the words “ישמך אלוקים וכמנשה” (בראשית מח:כ) when we bless our sons. אפרים and מנשה represent the epitome of Jews who can withstand the influences of non-Jewish values and stay firm in Jewish belief while living in a gentile society. The same is true with the blessing a father gives to his daughter on Friday night, “ישמך אלוקים כשרה רבקה רחל ולאה.” All of the אמהות were products of non-Jewish, idolatrous homes. Nonetheless, they were able

to resist the negative pressures and emerge as role models for Jewish women. Therefore, no matter what community one lives in, one should be able to uphold his Jewish values, contribute to his society and at the same time maintain a strict observance of religious life, as exemplified by דניאל.

יונה and אליהו — Two Complementary Approaches to Leadership

Naomi Katzenstein

THE הקדשה (INITIATION) of a נביא plays a crucial role in defining his future career of prophecy. Often, the הקדשה takes the form of a prophetic revelation. However, the הקדשה of יונה was unique, because according to many מפרשים, it happened when he was just a baby and couldn't even speak.

In מלכים א יז:כ-כד, we are told that אליהו helped אלמנה in return for an agreement that she would sustain him when he was on the road fulfilling ה' missions. After אליהו arrived at her house and had settled in, her son got very sick and died. אליהו then went to revive him for her.

In פסוק כ"ה, it says "ויקרא אל ה'" אליהו called out to ה' in a תפילת זעקה asking ה' to help him because he felt bad that this אלמנה and her baby were suffering because of him. It seems that his presence in her house accentuated her חטאים, thus causing her son to get sick. This is what she meant when she said "באת אלי להוכיר את עוני ולהמית את בני" (פסוק יח).

After calling out to ה', אליהו placed himself onto the baby and pressed on him three times, calling out to ה' each time, "תשב נא נפש ילד הזה". In פסוק כ"ג, it says "וישמע ה' בקול אליהו" and the baby lived. In פסוק כ"ד, אליהו took the baby and returned him to his mother, saying "ראי חי בנך". Lastly, in "עתה זה ידעתי" אליהו thanked him for what he had done and said "כי איש אלוקים אתה ודבר ה' בפיך אמת". This brief scene, then, can be viewed as the הקדשה of the הנביא.

According to many מפרשים (including רד"ק and מלכים) this miracle baby was in fact the future prophet יונה. The יונה derives this idea from the words "בן אמיתי" as ראשי תיבות of "בן אמי" and "בן אמיתי", which have the same meaning as "בן אמי". In addition, יונה suggests he got the name "בן אמיתי" because after יונה was brought back to life, the אלמנה said "ודבר ה' בפיך אמת" and the word "אמיתי" is derived from "אמת". Since this is the first major event in his life which involved direct involvement of ה', we can view this as his הקדשה, initiation.

This הקדשה influenced יונה for the rest of his life. ספר יונה פרק א.

begins with a call by ה' to יונה to fulfill his שליחות as נביא. ה' told יונה to go to יויה and tell everyone in the city stop their wickedness: לאמור... יויה דבר ה' אל יונה... קום לך אל ינוה... כי עלתה רעתם לפני יויה דבר ה' אליו (יו: ח-ט): אליו ה' אליו... לאמר... קום לך צרפתה". Both יונה and אליהו were sent to be נביאים in remote places.

יונה was afraid to fulfill ה' commandment, because if יונה did תשובה, it would look bad for ישראל בני, who had not done תשובה. יונה tried to run to a place outside ישראל ארץ where ה' did not rest, to avoid fulfilling this command. Therefore, he got on a boat headed to תרשיש. ה' caused a huge storm to come and the boat almost sank. The sailors realized that it was יונה who was causing this trouble, and decided to throw him overboard.

Here, a major difference between יונה's and אליהו's personalities is highlighted. יונה was going through a lot of trouble to run away from ה' שכינה, even getting thrown overboard into a sea, all for the sake of בני ישראל. This is what חז"ל mean (see, for example, ועוד נוסף, ד"ה רמו שכה, ד"ה ועוד נוסף) when they say that יונה was טובע כבוד ה' when they say that יונה was טובע כבוד ה'. In every situation, יונה tried to work on behalf of בני ישראל. בני ישראל, however, took the exact opposite approach. He was טובע כבוד ה'. He always attempted to highlight ה' greatness and act for the sake of His כבוד. Because of this, אליהו caused many punishments to be brought upon בני ישראל because they were not following ה' ways. ה' had to send him many messages to get him to feel for בני ישראל, and not be so hard on them (including his revival of יונה, which was his turning point in terms of realizing this), unlike יונה, who received messages designed to instill in him a stronger sense of יראת ה'.

Another parallel between יונה and אליהו that can be seen here is through the sailors. They feared ה' and didn't want to be punished by the storming sea for יונה's actions, "אל נא נאבדה בנפש האיש הזה" (יונה א:יד), יונה אליהו felt the same way. She did not want her son to be punished because of אליהו's presence, "מה לי ולך איש א-להים באת להזכיר עוני ולהמית בני".

יונה was thrown into the water by the sailors and swallowed by a fish. While inside, he cried out to ה'. He said (ב:ג) — "קראתי מצרה לך" — he called out from the depth of his heart and asked ה' to answer him. יונה did this for three days, showing that he realized ה' greatness "ותעל משחת חי ה' א-לוהי". יונה now realized his mistake, feared ה' and consented to the mission, "אשר נדרתי אשלמה, ה' ומה לך".

A similar תשובה process occurred with אליהו as well. As was explained earlier, he cried to ה' three times, paralleling יונה's three days of תשובה, to save him from causing trouble to the אלמנה. אליהו portrayed his care for the baby, which in turn showed the change in his actions and the realization that he was wrong.

ה', at the beginning of פרק ג, spoke to יונה and gave him a second

chance. This time, יונה went to נינה right away, and told the people the word of ה'. The people listened and repented right away. They tore their clothes, fasted and called out to ה' to ask for forgiveness. This made יונה very upset because he still had an emotional attachment to בני ישראל, so he could not stand to see that בני ישראל did not accomplish what נינה did.

A similar situation happened with אליהו, later in his life in פרק יט, when he saw the outcome of his actions on בני ישראל because of his zealotness for ה'. אליהו now realized how strong his feelings for ה' were, and that he could no longer handle being the leader of בני ישראל. Through all that he had gone through, he still felt zealotness for ה', so he proclaimed "קח נפש כי לא טוב אנכי מאבתני".

From looking at יונה's life through the eyes of אליהו, we can see the major impact each had on the other. Both יונה and אליהו had a distinct model of עבודת ה'. Both of these דרכים can be integrated into each individual's service of ה' as we strive to serve ה' to our highest potential.

Evolution of the Covenant

Shira Bloch

OVER A PERIOD of hundreds of years ה' made several בריתות with mankind, beginning with the מבול and ending with the entrance of בני ישראל to ארץ ישראל. The central ones are:

- ברית הקשת (בראשית ט:ח-יז)
- ברית בין הבתרים (בראשית טו:ט-כא)
- ברית מילה (בראשית יז:ב-יד)
- ברית סיני 1 (לפי רש"י - שמות יט:ה-כ:כא, שמות כד)
- (לפי רמב"ן - שמות יט:ה-כד:יח)
- ברית סיני 2 (שמות לד:י-כז)
- ברית ערבות מואב (דברים כז:ד-כט:יד)
- ברית שכם (יהושע ח:ל-לה)

Although each ברית was made in an entirely different context, they were not necessarily independent events. In fact, each ברית can be seen as one stage in a process by which ה' refined His covenant with man, building on the previous one in response to historical events, until a functional model was found.

Definition of the Various בריתות

Even though seven such בריתות can be seen in תנ"ך, they do not all have clearly defined texts, and some may not even be new at all.

Firstly, ברית ערבות מואב and ברית שכם are essentially the same covenant. For the purposes of this article we will treat ברית ערבות מואב as the text of שכם, following the opinion of רד"ק.¹

Secondly, there is a מחלוקת between רש"י and רמב"ן concerning what is included in ברית סיני. While this ברית seems to end soon after the הדברות, in time to list the laws of משפטים given to משה on סיני, there is

another פרשה inserted between משפטים and תרומה which seems to return to the same ברית: In מתן תורה there is a “replay” of משה went up and down הר סיני, brought קרבנות and sprinkled the blood on the nation, declaring “הנה דם הברית אשר כרת ה' עמכם על כל הדברים האלה” (כד:ח). He also told the people about מצוות — “ויספר לעם את כל דברי ה' ואת כל המשפטים” (כד:ג) — and read the “ספר הברית” to the people, to which they responded “נעשה ונשמע” (כד:ז).

רש"י and רמב"ן both agree that this section relates to ברית סיני. The מחלוקת arises over what exactly is included in the ambiguous ספר הברית and how much of the תורה so far falls into the category of המשפטים.

רש"י believes that this פרשה appears out of order and actually occurred in פרק י"ט before the עשרת הדברות. Commenting on the words “ואל משה אמר” (כד:א), he says:

“פרשה זו נאמרה קודם י' הדברות ובד' בסיון נאמר לו 'עלה'.”

According to רש"י, the ספר הברית included everything from בראשית until שבע שבוע only refers to the laws received until that point: מרה, מרה and various other דינים given in מרה, מרה and פרה אדומה, כיבוד אב ואם, שבת, מצוות בני נח and the הגבלה of פרישה and מצוות. After this ceremony the עשרת הדברות were given, and then משה went up on הר סיני for forty days and nights to learn פרשת תרומה, immediately followed by פרשת משפטים.

רמב"ן, on the other hand, says that this פרשה appears in chronological order, and in fact all of משפטים is included in the ברית of סיני. Under the same דיבור המתחיל he comments:

והנה הפרשיות כלן באות כהוגן, כי אחר מתן תורה מיד בו ביום אמר ה' אל משה “כה תאמר אל בני ישראל”...וצוה אותו ואלה המשפטים...ואמר לו אחרי צוותך זה להם, עלה אל ה' אתה ואהרן.

רמב"ן's opinion is that ברית סיני really includes many מצוות and themes not mentioned in the עשרת הדברות, all grouped together under the title ספר הברית. In the forty days and nights following the ברית, only the details of the משכן were received.

Terms of the ברית

A covenant is a two-way agreement, involving two entities, both of which are bound by obligations defined in its terms. In the context of these בריתות, the two parties are God and human beings. The people were given certain obligations to fulfill, while ה' was responsible to keep the promises He made in return.

The nature of God's promises and man's obligations over these 6 בריתות form parallel patterns.

ברית הקשת, God made only one promise — that He would never again destroy the world. This is emphasized three times, but it is the only condition contained in the whole text of the ברית.

נח and his sons were given no obligations — although they received several מצוות beforehand, the ברית never specified the requirement to keep these as a condition for God's fulfillment of His side.

ברית בין הבתרים included several promises — אברהם would have children; he would die in old age; his descendants would go into slavery and leave with great riches; they would inherit כנען.

Similarly to נח, אברהם was not given any explicit obligations. However the promises imply that the ברית would demand human participation — he had to have a child and his descendants were forced to endure years of oppression; they could not remain passive as in ברית הקשת.

Shortly afterwards in ברית מילה a level of permanence was added to the promises of ברית בין הבתרים. ה' repeated His promise to give the land of כנען to אברהם's descendants and added that it will be an עולם אחוזת; He promised that not only would אברהם have children, he would be the father of many nations and kings, ה' would be their God and the ברית would be extended to them to become a ברית עולם.

This time ה' spelled out obligations for אברהם and the nation that would come from him. He gave them abstract commands of "ואת בריתי אשר תשמרו" and "זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו" as well as the מצוה of מילה under threat of כרת.

According to ה'רש"י's definition, the promises in ברית סיני developed the "nation" aspect touched on in the two previous בריתות, that בני ישראל would be an עם סגולה, עם קדוש גוי and God would bless them wherever they call on Him.

More emphasis is placed on the people's side of the covenant — again, they were commanded "ושמרתם את בריתי" as well as "שמוע תשמעו בקולי" to behave in such a way that they deserve the titles מלכת כהנים and גוי קדוש. The מצוה section was enlarged to include all the הדברות, encompassing a wide range of obligations such as בין אדם לחברו and בין אדם למקום and לא תעשה and עשה.

The renewal of ברית סיני after העגל complements the original one, concentrating on the other theme mentioned to אברהם — the "land" aspect. ה' promised to perform unprecedented miracles, to enlarge the borders of ארץ ישראל and drive out all the nations living in כנען and to instill fear in them so that they would not try to invade when the land is unguarded.

The obligations given to בני ישראל also reflect this. They were strictly commanded not to make a covenant with any other nation living in the land and to destroy everything that might lead them to עבודה זרה. They were also

given several מצוות which are directly related to ארץ ישראל — the שלש רגלים which mark key points in the agricultural cycle; פטר רחם which is only relevant to an agricultural society; חריש וקציר with an explicit emphasis on שבט; ביכורים; חמץ and the prohibition of bringing קרבנות with חמץ, two מצוות which would not apply until they entered the land and stopped receiving מן.

In ברית שכם ה' promises suddenly multiply. They address the two elements — nation and land — and for the first time the ברית includes its reverse, the negative as well as the positive. If בני ישראל would uphold their side of the ברית, God would cause them to be an עם קדוש and "עליו על כל גויי הארץ". He would destroy their enemies, allow them to enter the land and give them many physical ברכות, such as international power and agricultural success. If בני ישראל would not obey the terms of the ברית, they would receive קללות — the reverse of the ברכות — failure of the land to produce, oppression and destruction at the hands of their enemies, nationwide epidemics of disease and גלות.

Similarly, בני ישראל's obligations also become more detailed in this ברית. In addition to all the עריות they were warned against, they were commanded four times to keep all the מצוות they had been given, which by that time was the entire תורה, and warned another four times against violating them. ה' not only gave them the vague commandment of "והלכת בדרכיו" but also the very clear, strict guideline of "ולא תסור מכל הדברים...ימין ושמאל".

Each ברית introduces a new element in the category of promise and obligation. ברית בין הבתרים suggests human participation, ברית מילה brings in permanence, ברית סיני develops the themes on a national level and introduces formal מצוות, and ברית שכם includes the reverse side — what would happen if the ברית was not kept.

There is a definite trend in the terms of the covenant across these בריתות. God's promises and man's obligations increased and became more detailed with each new ברית. The בריתות become more conditional as the requirement for human participation increases, from נח who was completely passive to בני ישראל who were commanded to adhere to every letter of the תורה in every aspect of their lives. To parallel this, ה' response to our fulfillment of these conditions also becomes more physical and visible. Both sides made the transition from lofty, abstract themes to defined responsibilities that were applied to everyday life. It is possible that this made the בריתות more difficult to keep, but at the same time it clarified the terms of the covenant so that there could be no uncertainty as to what was required.²

Historical Context

The historical context of each ברית explains the need for the new version. Each new ברית was a response to events that indicated an inadequacy in the

existing one, and was followed by events that demonstrated the success of the new ברית.

During נח's lifetime, ה' saw man's evil — "וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם בארץ" — and destroyed the world, regretting that He had ever created it. (בראשית ו:ה) — and established the ברית הקשת to prevent this from happening again. As such, this ברית was not entirely positive — it was a preventive step to stop future destruction of the world which evidently was inevitable without a covenant as a safeguard. It was a ברית הפרדה, allowing God to separate from a world He had no desire to be involved with, rather than a ברית of partnership. This could be why He gave man no part to fulfill in the ברית, to ensure a total detachment.

The ברית is followed by a description of the renewal of the world, as נח's descendants multiplied, the planet was repopulated and new lands were inhabited.

This state of separation between God and mankind was fine until דור הפלגה. The incident of מגדל בכל demonstrated that humanity needed to relate to something spiritual and higher than itself, and in God's "absence" resorted to building a tower to reach that level on their own. The people themselves stated two reasons for this act: "הבה נבנה לנו עיר ומגדל וראשו בושמים" — they needed heaven to be a tangible part of their lives; and "ונעשה לנו שם" — they needed a central core for all of humanity, something concrete that the whole world could look towards. This indicated two things: first, that ה' had to become visibly involved in the world; and second, that He should choose a specific nation for the rest of mankind to see as leaders in bringing them back to real spirituality, replacing the substitute they created themselves in the absence of a better option.

The stage was now set for ברית בין הבתרים. By singling out אברהם and personally giving him commandments, ה' regained His involvement in the world and selected the father of His chosen nation at the same time. The actual ברית came after אברהם questioned ה' as to why he had seen no evidence of the nation he was promised — "לי לא נתתה זרע" (ט:ג) — when he was told earlier "ויבטן גודל" (יב:ב). It also happened after his separation from לוט, the first step in being set apart from others, and the war of the 4 kings and the 5 kings, which gave אברהם a chance to assert his authority and influence in the world and make a קידוש ה'.

We can now see the promises in the ברית as an answer to the world's needs. ה' confirmed that אברהם would become a nation and would not die before seeing it; this nation would be special from the outset, performing the great feat of surviving slavery and overpowering their oppressors, unlike other nations who all inevitably assimilate; they would inherit כנען, a key geographical point located between the two centers of ancient civilization, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

When ישמעאל was born soon afterwards, it seemed logical for אברהם to assume that this was the son he had been promised. There was no way for him to know otherwise — no other part of the ברית could be actualized in the near future.

Until this point, God spoke in theoretical terms, but now there was a reality to deal with — ישמעאל could have been the start of the chosen nation. ה' needed to quickly clarify that the promises hadn't been realized yet, they would come true through a different son.

The prophecy about ישמעאל's nature before he was born was the first indication that he was not the chosen son — he is described as "פרא אדם" (טז:יב). ידו בכל ויד כל בוי (טז:יב). At this point a new ברית was needed to reinstate the promises relating to the unborn son, and to emphasize the permanent nature of these promises, putting recent events in perspective. While at the time it seemed that אברהם, a father at 86, should be content that he was given a son at this age and not hold out hope for another one, when put into the incomprehensible context of eternity it didn't seem so hard to believe.

ברית מילה therefore emphasized the word עולם to impress upon אברהם that these promises should not be taken lightly, they would have an eternal impact — this detracted from the seemingly impossible event of another son being born. More importantly, the new ברית introduced a new concept, that אברהם would be "אב המון גוים" — the father of several nations, not only the singular גדול גוי he was originally told about. He now had a promise that he would have more than one son, and the chosen nation would not have to come from ישמעאל.

This ברית was immediately followed by the prediction of יצחק's birth both by God and the מלאכים, and his name was even given to make it realistic. In this prediction, ה' explicitly stated that He would establish His ברית with this particular son — "והקמתי את בריתי אתו לברית עולם" (יז:יט) — leaving no room for error. He also said that kings would come from שרה — "מלכי עמים" — ברית מילה — which corresponds to the recent promise in ברית מילה (יז:טז) — "ממנה יהיו" (יז:טז) — "ימלכים ממך יצאו" — while ישמעאל would only produce נשיאים. These statements were not said at the prediction of ישמעאל's birth, they are conspicuous differences between two scenes which are otherwise very similar — both times ה' said that a son will be born, gave a name and a reason for the name, and promised to multiply his descendants. At this stage אברהם knew exactly how the ברית would manifest itself and the only thing left was to wait for it all to take place.

The need for a change only arose again 400 years later, after יציאת מצרים. At this point the בריתות with אברהם were well on their way to being fulfilled — a nation had come from יצחק, they had been given divine help to

survive slavery, they had come out ברכוש גדול and were on their way to inherit כנען.

The transition from one family to an entire nation required the ברית to be reinstated on a national level with modified goals. God was no longer dealing with one faithful servant but with many individuals, each with their own personality and opinions, some more connected to Him than others. This provided ה' with two tasks: He had to forge several million individuals into one cohesive unit, and set out direct, objective guidelines for everyone to follow.

For this reason, ה' emphasized the "nation" aspect at סיני. By giving them collective promises, He forced בני ישראל to see themselves in the long term as a group with a common future making them inseparable. He also introduced formal מצוות to ensure that there were basic unambiguous guidelines that everyone would uniformly abide by, not only vague commands like "ויהיה תמים" which could be open to individual interpretation. The events immediately preceding the ברית show the beginnings of the nation, when they collectively overcame challenges such as עמלק and lack of water, and particularly when יתרו suggested a framework to enable wide-spread and accessible המצוות.

The ברית itself served as an official initiation for the nation and established a set of laws which could be incorporated into יתרו's system. It was followed by more laws which were told to סיני on משה including the establishment of the משכן as a spiritual center to enable national connection to God.

לעגל showed that this ברית was missing a fundamental element — it emphasized only the "nation" theme and neglected the land. At this point, בני ישראל knew only that they had been made into a nation and had certain responsibilities to fulfill, but they had no idea that this God would provide them with a homeland — as far as they were concerned, they could end up living in the מדבר forever. The fact that ה' described Himself as "אשר הוצאתיך" and didn't talk about taking them any further, could have implied to them that the desert was indeed their destination — the point of יציאת מצרים was to take them out of the midst of another people so that they could form their own national identity, but not to lead them anywhere specific. Impatient to leave their static life in the desert where they were totally reliant on God, and to find a place where they could work and build a society, they decided to find the land on their own — with a new god who would actualize the promise to the אבות. They maintained their group identity and did not discard the first ברית. However they also tried to create a new god with a different agenda: finding them somewhere to go. On the words "אלהות הרבה איוו להם", רש"י suggests: "אשר ילכו לפנינו" (שמות לב:א) —

they wanted many gods, not only one. They could retain ה' as the god of their nationhood and at the same time create a god of land. The words "אשר ילכו" indicate a god-like quality, as at no time during חטא העגל did the people specify a destination, leaving it up to the deity which they blindly trusted to lead them. This was not necessarily a change of attitude — it is possible that בני ישראל previously regarded משה as a god and now that he had disappeared they were looking for someone to replace him in this role. They described משה as "אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים", similar to the way ה' described Himself. This may have begun after קריעת ים סוף, where it says "ובמשה בה' ויאמינו" (יד:לא), possibly equating God and משה. This act of עבודה זרה does not show that they stopped believing in ה', but that they did not consider His promises sufficient.

This event demonstrated that the people did not expect ה' to make any more promises to them. He needed to rectify the misconception that He is not all-powerful, to show that He had prepared a destination for them beyond the מדבר, and to assure them that it was not a goal they were expected to achieve on their own.

The ברית made after חטא העגל is traditionally known as the renewal of ברית סיני, yet none of the promises made in the original one were in fact renewed. It is not a renewal in the sense of a repetition, but in the sense that the elements omitted in the first ברית are included so that the two complement each other. This ברית took place right after the concept of תשובה was introduced to עם ישראל, when משה invoked the מידות הרחמים and begged ה' for a national כפרה. This enabled ה' and בני ישראל to establish a new relationship — בני ישראל could now see ה' as a Being of absolute authority to whom they would always be answerable, so that they could be humbled before Him and see that there would never be anyone else equal to Him. ה' made an official ברית introducing the promise of ירושת הארץ both to inform them that it would happen and to assert His authority in deciding when and where they would go.³

אך בני ישראל now realized that they were going to ארץ ישראל and God would bring them there when He saw fit. The מצוות and promises listed were therefore connected not only to the land but also to the integral role God played in its inheritance. He would drive out the nations before them so they could conquer it, and the מצוות they would have to keep once they got there center around Him — appearing before ה' three times a year, redeeming firstborns from His possession and donating to Him the first of all produce.

The sequence of events following this ברית shows the dual effect ה' intended. First משה relayed to the people all the details of the מצוות he was given on הר סיני, testing their subservience. After this the ענן lifted and they began their journey to ארץ ישראל.

When this journey was interrupted by חטא המרגלים, ה' had to intervene with a new ברית. Whereas חטא העגל showed בני ישראל's eagerness to enter ארץ ירושת הארץ, חטא המרגלים showed the exact opposite. After this episode ארץ ירושת הארץ no longer appealed to the nation; they needed to be "forced" to inherit the land. Whether or not חטא העגל was really an act of עבודה זרה, contradicting the מצוה of "לא תעשה לך פסל", it basically stemmed from the nation's devotion to a different מצוה — ירושת הארץ — and they could have justified it in this way. Therefore, in the ברית following this sin, ה' partially acceded to their demands because they were worthwhile to some extent, although He established guidelines to ensure that these demands would be channeled properly. חטא המרגלים, on the other hand, displayed a complete lack of אמונה in an entire element of the ברית, so afterwards ה' had no need to listen to the people, only to impose His own requirements on them.

He did this by increasing the restrictions, detailing all the עריות as an example of pure הלכה and demanding that they keep the entire תורה. However, He also had a new need — to spell out the reverse side of the ברית. This was not necessary before as no previous ברית had ever been rejected. Now, having seen in חטא המרגלים that the nation was prepared to reject His ברית, ה' employed threats in order to dissuade them physically as well as morally from making the same mistake again. In every other ברית there was only a need for "אם שמוע תשמע בקול ה' אלקיך"; this time there was a real possibility of "לא תשמע".

But this would only work for people who wanted to inherit the land. The way things stood after חטא המרגלים, no amount of threatening would have helped without being accompanied by more promises, which would entice the nation to obey ה' despite the new restrictions. ה' needed to increase the appeal of the ברכות He offered them, or else there would be nothing to stop בני ישראל discarding תורה completely. He did this in two ways — by quantitatively increasing the number of ברכות, and by connecting the "land" ברכות to the "nation" ברכות, a ברית that was still intact. ברית שכם, containing both land and nation, was not just a summary of the two בריתות at סיני, but a new way of looking at the two elements. Beforehand, they were treated as two independent concepts. At the final ברית they formed a synthesis.⁴

ברית שכם is the final step in the sequence because of this synthesis. בני ישראל could now make the transition from a nomadic desert tribe reliant on God for their every need, to a self-sufficient society immersed in material as well as religious issues. Without "nation," there would be no continuity; without "land" there would be no achievement. Both of these together — continuity and achievement — when directed toward תורה goals, would provide the basis for the chosen nation God had sought to bring humanity to real spirituality.

Here we can consider the timing of ברית שכס in its own right, not just as the repetition of ברית ערבות מואב. There are several opinions as to when ברית was actually executed — immediately after כניסה לארץ (the opinion of רש"י and רד"ק), after the 14 years of כיבוש (according to רמב"ם) or as it appears chronologically in תנ"ך. Taking the chronological point of view, the ברית is a response to חטא עכן that occurred right before it. עכן showed contempt for the nation, exempting himself from the collective command of "שמרו מן החרם" (יהושע ו:יח), as well as disregard for the land by delaying its conquest, seen in the initial failure at עי. It is possible that ה' did not give clear directions as to when the ברית should be played out, instead leaving it to יהושע's discretion to decide when the nation most needed it. In this light, the slight differences between the instructions in דברים and the actions in יהושע are understandable — for example, בני ישראל were told to stand on certain mountains, yet according to פשט everyone in fact stood down in the valley with the ארון. This could be because specifically at this point in time, after their first failure, they needed an extra measure of חיזוק.

These changes were evidently legitimate, as the events after this ברית reflect its success. The new autonomous society overcame national and territorial challenges. בני ישראל all participated in כיבוש הארץ, single-handedly defeated 31 kings, and went on to complete יישוב הארץ as they were commanded. Their society was stable enough to maintain peace, preventing a civil war breaking out over the מובח built by שבט מנשה. גד וחזי שבט מנשה. By this stage בני ישראל finally accepted the importance, responsibilities and privileges of nationhood and settling the land.

In a sense, all of Jewish history from that point on displays our continued dedication to these ideals. Our inexplicable existence that defies nature, our continued שמירת המצוות and devotion to an ancient תורה and the emphasis placed on the Jewish community until today show that our nationalism is still alive. The centrality of ירושלים and ארץ ישראל in our תפילות, our uninterrupted presence in ארץ ישראל for over 3000 years and our constant longing to return there with משיח display a love for the land which has not diminished despite centuries of גלות. The recent rebirth through ציונות of the ancient ideal of כיבוש ויישוב הארץ, focusing as much on the needs of the nation as on the importance of the land and resulting in the establishment of מדינת ישראל as a national homeland, embodies this ultimate ברית manifested in our time.

Communication of the ברית

As these בריתות are between man and God, and it is not always possible for ה' to deal directly with human beings, they were not all delivered in the

same way. In each covenant, both בעלי ברית were represented on some level. The way God manifested Himself, and the people involved in the ברית, follow a sequence.

In Himself spoke directly to נח, while נח sat passively and made no reply, consistent with a ברית הפרדה. The same thing happened in the two בריתות made with אברהם, where ה' personally delivered the ברית, but the human participation increased. In ברית בין הבתרים God spoke to אברהם while he was asleep — "ותרדמה נפלה על אברם" — here אברהם didn't play an active role, but was required to be in a certain state. He also took part in the preparation of the ברית, cutting up the animals. In ברית מילה there seems to be a conversation, even though only ה' words are recorded, as it says "ויפל ה' ויבשר את אברהם" — that ה' spoke **with** אברהם, not **to** him, in response to אברהם's submission to Him.

ברית סיני serves as the transition between ה' and man in communicating the ברית to the people. משה participated in its delivery, either by relaying instructions to the people before הר סיני and passing on the laws he received on the mountain (as רמב"ן believes) or by actually saying eight of the דברות with ה' amplifying his voice (according to רש"י). He also read the ספר הברית to the people, brought קרבנות and sprinkled the blood.

משה's role in the ברית is seen again in its renewal, when ה' concluded by saying "כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתו את ברית ואת ישראל", separating him from the rest of the nation. משה, as part of ישראל בני, also participated in the ברית as one of the human partners, yet his experience was different because he received it directly from God, whereas everyone else got it through him.

In ברית שכם a whole range of intermediaries was used. The text was first delivered by משה and when it actually took place it was repeated by יהושע, also נביא, albeit on a lower level. Other people are mentioned too — the זקנים and כהנים were told to carry the ארון and the שוטרים ושופטים are listed separately from the rest of the nation.

There is a pattern formed from this sequence. Over the course of the בריתות more people are involved in the administration of the covenant. On one hand, this shows ה' trying to bring the ברית to the level of the people, encouraging them to be receptive and relaying it to them through intermediaries who they can relate to: from ה' Himself, to משה who was in a higher plane than any other human being, to יהושע and other leaders closer to the people. On the other hand, this also causes ה' to become increasingly distant as the process continues, stepping back to allow the ברית to occur more naturally.

The people included in each ברית also follow this pattern. At first נח and his sons were the only בעלי הברית. אברהם was also alone in His covenants, though יצחק was mentioned at the end. The later בריתות were given

The nature of each ברית also follows this pattern. ברית הקשת is supernatural, and its fulfillment could never be certain; ברית בין הבתרים contains physical promises which were only theoretical at the time they were given — the nation could only evolve once a child was born, and the land could only be inherited after גלות, both of which had not yet happened. ברית מילה too is represented by a physical sign, but the sign is not the ברית itself, just a symbol of the spiritual meaning behind it.

ברית סיני contains both elements — it was a spiritual initiation for the nation, and set out physical מצוות for life. ברית שכם is very practical, listing laws to be incorporated into society, and physical consequences of the מצוות בין אדם למקום.

בריתות became more in touch with reality, but this is not because God didn't know what reality should be. The situation addressed by each ברית could have lasted, if not for events which show man's inability to live this way. Each ברית built upon the previous one — each did not replace, but enhanced the one before. The תורה says about ברית שכם that this was "מלבד" — another layer added to ברית סיני, which still stood in its own right.

ה' went through several stages of בריתות with mankind, refining them continuously until He created a model man could cope with and remain loyal to. He started with the supernatural and transformed it until He arrived at everyday life of the ultimate quality — the synthesis of תורה, עם, ארץ ישראל and ישראל.

¹On the words "ואחרי כן קרא את כל דברי התורה הברכה והקללה ככל הכתוב בספר התורה" in הוא שאמרו ברוך האיש ארור האיש או...והיה אם שמוע תשמע והיה רד"ק comments: יהושע ח:לד — this refers to the ברכות and קללות listed in ערבות מואב.

The scene in יהושע was also very similar to the way ה' told בניי to play out the ברית in the future. רד"ק says that the שבטים stood in the same positions in יהושע as described in דברים, and the ceremonies were very similar:

ברית שכם	ברית ערבות מואב
או יבנה יהושע מזבח לה' אלוקי ישראל בהר עיבל (יהושע ח:ל)	אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום בהר עיבל (דברים כז:ד)
ככתוב בספר תורת משה מזבח אבנים שלמות אשר לא הניף עליהן ברזל (ח:לא)	ובנית שם מזבח לה' א-לוהיך מזבח אבנים לא תניף עליהם ברזל. אבנים שלמות תבנה את מזבח ה' אלוך (כז:ה-ו)
ויעלו עליו עולות לה' ויזבחו שלמים (שם)	והעלית עליו עולות לה' אלוך. וזבחת שלמים ואכלת שם (כז:ז-ז)
ויכתב שם על האבנים את משנה תורת משה (ח:לב)	וכתבת על האבנים את כל דברי התורה הזאת (כז:ח)

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We can assume that the text of the ברית and the stage directions were given in ערבות מאכ, and then repeated in full when they were carried out in יהושע's time.

²As mentioned above, רמב"ן says that the original ברית סיני included all of פרשת משפטים. Therefore, according to him the progression after מילה ברית is different. ברית סיני includes a heavy emphasis on the "nation" aspect originally mentioned to אברהם, but also mentions the "land" aspect in פרשת משפטים when ה' promised to bring the people to "המקום אשר הכינותי" by sending a מלאך to lead them.

The promises and responsibilities outlined later in the renewal of ברית סיני are not textually new to us. The חידוש in the second ברית סיני is its singular emphasis on ארץ ישראל without connecting it to the nation.

The progression from ברית הקשת to ברית סיני according to רמב"ן follows the same thematic pattern as in שיטת רש"י. The second ברית סיני plays a historical role in the sequence, drawing on the themes already mentioned in response to the chronological context.

³If we follow הרמב"ן, who holds that ברית סיני also included the מעות of פרשת משפטים, the new ברית served a slightly different function but still led to the same result. At this point ה' was leading a group of individuals aimlessly through the desert. This was a very unsettling time for the people, having been uprooted from מערים, their homeland as far as they were concerned. ה' needed to cause them to view their futures elsewhere, with a collective purpose in life. It was not enough simply for them to form a unit; they also had to see that this unit would be their "support structure" and would be necessary for significant accomplishment.

As well as giving these individuals a national identity, ה' also had to tell them that they were heading for a specific place. To provide them with a purpose amid the confusion, ה' gave them a destination and involved the people in a system of laws, building on יתרו's framework.

The instruction to build the משכן following the ברית expressed all these elements practically. Not only would the משכן serve as a physical center of national connection to God, it was essential for many מעוות and became a symbol of organized worship. The construction of the משכן itself showed its temporary nature — בני ישראל were embarking on a journey which would require it to be assembled, taken apart and transported many times, until a permanent structure would be built in a designated place.

חטא העגל showed ה' that the people had lost faith in His sincerity concerning the "land" aspect of the ברית. At ברית סיני בני ישראל were informed that they would enter ארץ ישראל led by a מלאך, but there was no way to know how far in the future this promise would be realized, especially because the מלאך's identity was kept vague. At the time, they had every reason to believe it was imminent and the מלאך was משה, but when he disappeared on הר סיני and didn't return they began to doubt whether God was referring to him, or to some other leader. The promise of a land of their own was enticing (כג:כז) "ונתתי את כל איביך אליך ערף" — was especially meaningful after their recent encounter with עמלק, and (כג:כח) "וברך את לחמך ואת מימך" appealed to people gradually getting tired of a static life in the desert, eating מן and waiting for משה. Impatient to reach the land and receive these blessings, בני ישראל became convinced

that it was up to them to create a new מלאך, which they made in the form of an עגל, to fill the gap left by משה — לא ידענו מה היה לוי...לא ידענו מה היה לוי" — משה seemed a good candidate because he was the one "אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים"; this qualification was transferred to the עגל when they said "אלה אלוהיך ישראל אשר עבדה זרה" but were attempting to bring about one of God's promises on their own — they only wanted to create a מורה דרך, not a god. רמב"ן explains their reasoning in this way:

בידוע שלא היו ישראל סבורים שמשה הוא האלוקים...היו מבקשין משה אחר, אמרו, "משה שהורה לנו הדרך ממצרים ועד הנה...הנה אבד ממנו. נעשה לו משה אחר שיורה הדרך לפנינו על פי ה' בידו".

The doubt they showed was not a deficiency in their אמונה in God but a lack of patience for His promise to be actualized when they found themselves at a standstill. They stubbornly felt that they had the power to initiate the process of עליה לארץ in order to inherit the land when it suited them. Consequently ה' called them "עם קשה" (לכ"ט) expressing anger at their inability to wait for His signal. He now had to make another ברית reiterating the promise of ירושת הארץ both to reassure them that it would happen and to reassert His authority in deciding when it would be.

The renewal of ברית סיני was a partial renewal, only discussing the aspect of ארץ ישראל. Here the balance of power in the relationship between ה' and בני ישראל was restored. This ברית took place after the concept of תשובה was introduced to ה', so that they were humbled before Him and unlikely to take matters into their own hands again. To stress this point ה' called Himself א-ל-קנא, a term of severity and דין. Although ברית סיני, ה' had shown that they did not have full confidence in all aspects of ה' still catered to their needs by making a new ברית because their feelings were understandable. The process of nationhood and מצוות could begin in the desert; ירושת הארץ would be dependent on faith until they reached the land. The "land" aspect was isolated now to reassure the people and give extra emphasis to this particular promise.

⁴This is relevant even for רמב"ן, who believes that both the "nation" and "land" aspects were mentioned in the first ברית סיני. In ברית סיני they were disjointed, given as two separate parts of one covenant. This allowed the people to discard one and not the other as soon as they were presented with a challenge. In ברית שכם they were inextricably linked. The rewards and punishments of this ברית predominantly relate to the land, but in connection to the behavior of the nation inhabiting it. בני ישראל had never rejected their national identity so far, but this could be because there had been no one else around for a long enough period of time to challenge it. Now they would be entering a situation where they would face at least six other nations, so it was necessary for ה' to refer to them collectively in order to reinforce their unity. He also needed to emphasize ארץ ישראל, a concept they had had trouble accepting. Recognizing that it was a disruption in leadership — משה's disappearance — which had prompted the people's partial rejection of the ברית, ה' delivered the final stage right before משה's death, rather than immediately after העגל, as a form of חיזוק for בני ישראל. He also added a built-in guarantee that this ברית would be repeated once

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again, by יהושע in שכם, upon their entrance to the land, preempting another rebellion which could result from the change in leadership. At that point the land would be a physical entity and בניי would see that they had a competent leader who had brought them there. No amount of national feeling or תורה values could have ensured the success of עם ישראל in the מדבר, while ארץ ישראל was only a theory or a dream — it had to be a practical reality.

This tactic could be the purpose of many נבואות throughout ניך. The conquest of all of ארץ ישראל was a huge task and a big societal change and required an official ברית to provide the חיוק the people would need. After they settled the land, there were smaller challenges from time to time, threats of invasion and internal conflict. To preempt a lack of אמונה or failure to adhere to תורה at these times, ה' sent נביאים to remind the people of whichever part of the ברית needed to be restated — the consequences of their actions, their role as עם סגולה or the importance of fighting for ארץ ישראל.

”נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות נכתבה”*

Rena Ginsberg

THERE IS A general principle, articulated in מגילה יד, which states “הרבה נביאים עמדו להם לישראל...אלא נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות נכתבה ושלא הוצרכה לדורות לא נכתבה”. Only those נבואות which were needed to teach a lesson to future generations were written into נ”ך. However, when one looks through נ”ך, this is not always easy to see. For instance, חגי ישעיהו devotes many פרקים discussing תוכחה given to the Jews of his time. Why is it relevant for us to hear a נבואה directed to people who lived thousands of years ago? Another puzzling section of נ”ך is the חגי נבואות. What necessity is there for future generations to hear how חגי encouraged the people of his time to build the בית המקדש? We cannot fulfill this today.

Upon closer examination, however, we can uncover the deeper meanings within the נבואות that are included in תנ”ך. We can accomplish this by using different methods of investigation, including a פשוט-based approach, analyzing the words of the text, and a Midrashic approach, which discovers symbolism hidden within the text. Through this, we will clarify how the words of the נביאים span the generations.

One example of the universal aspects of נ”ך can be found in חגי¹. ספר חגי prophesized during the time of שיבת ציון. However, in his time, the people who had returned to ארץ ישראל had not yet built the בית המקדש. חגי encouraged the people to start building. At the end of פרק א, ספר records that he succeeded in convincing them to start, after delivering an encouraging נבואה.

But there was still something that was causing them to hesitate. A number of the Jews who had returned to ארץ ישראל had seen בית ראשון in all of its glory. They were concerned that בית שני would not be able to compare to its holiness and splendor. חגי told the people and tell them:

”מי בכם הנשאר אשר ראה את הבית הזה בכבודו הראשון ומה אתם רואים אותו עתה הלוא כמוהו כאין בעיניכם...ועתה חזק...כל עם הארץ נאום ה' ועשו כי אני אתכם...גדול יהיה כבוד בית הזה האחרון מן הראשון...” (ב:ג,ד,ט)

*This article was written for a סיום on תנ”ך and given as a שיעור in MMY 5761.

The last phrase "גדול יהיה כבוד בית הזה האחרון מין הראשון..." at first glance seems quite perplexing. When one studies the time period of בית שני, the fact emerges that בית ראשון really was on a lower level than בית שני. It does not seem to have been more "גדול", as ה' promised. Many important elements were missing from בית שני, including the רוח הקודש, שכניה, אש המזבח, אורים ותמים, ארון, and the ארון. We must therefore ask, what did the נביא mean when he said that בית ראשון would be greater than בית שני?

In answering this question, רש"י quotes a מחלוקת between רב and שמואל. One opinion says that the physical building was to be bigger and more beautiful than the first. The other opinion says that בית שני would be greater in terms of the number of years that it would stand. Both of these opinions are accurate and reflect the reality of the בית שני time period — בית שני was indeed bigger and more beautiful than בית ראשון, and it lasted for 420 years as opposed to 410 years.

However, there is a more troubling problem to be raised when reading this פסוק. בית שני was described as the "בית האחרון" when it in fact was not. We pray daily and eagerly anticipate the building of the בית שלישי. What can possibly be the פשט of this פסוק?

When looking through תני"ך, it becomes clear that the word "אחרון" can in fact mean second. In שמות ד:ח, משה gave אותות ה' to בני ישראל to convince them of his divine encounter. ה' said: "להיה אם לא יאמינו...לקול ה'". In this context, the word "אחרון" is describing the *second* אות which ה' is about to give משה, but not the *last* one.

Another, more striking example can be found in בראשית לג:ב, describing עשו's preparing to meet יעקב. He divided his camp in two in preparation for his confrontation. The פסוק says: "וישם את השפחות ואת ילדיהן ראשונה ואת לאה". וילדיה **אחרונים** ואת רחל ויוסף אחרונים". This is an even more convincing proof that "אחרון" means second, because in this example "אחרון" means next in a series, and not necessarily last. Similarly, in the פסוק in חגי, the בית המקדש was second in a series of מקדש בתי.

However, "אחרון" can also be understood as "last," the more common meaning of the word. The נביא at the time of בית שני undoubtedly intended for the word to mean "last" for the people for his time. The כוזרי (מאמר ב:כד) explains that בית שני could and should have been the final המקדש, if all of בני ישראל had come up from בבל, excited to return and build the בית המקדש. "Last" and "second" would have been synonymous. However, "אחרון" can also mean second, so if בני ישראל did not come up to ארץ ישראל, it would have meant "second." Since the word "אחרון" can mean both second and last, this still has implications for the generations after חגי, who await the building of the third המקדש בית.

חנה provides an opportunity for another clear illustration, on a Midrashic level, of the principle of "נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות נכתבה". חנה had been barren for many years and was finally granted a child. This שירה expresses חנה's thanks to ה' for this miracle. The גר"א, however, explains the entire שירה as reflecting all of Jewish history. Each phrase reflects a different time period. For example, "עלץ לבי להי" (ב:א) refers to אברהם, because it says "אברהם יגל" (תפילת מנחה לשבת) refers to יצחק, because of the פסוק in the פרשה where it says "בראשית כב:ג". "יהנה איל אחר נאחו בסבך בקרניו" (בראשית כב:ג) refers to עשו and לבן, and "על אויבי" refers to יעקב, and "רחב פי" (see the גר"א on these פסוקים for more examples.) The explanation of the גר"א illustrates the universal significance of this שירה. If this had just been a song of thanks for a specific incident in time, it would be irrelevant to future generations. However, since the שירה can also reflect more global thanks, people living in future generations would also be able to relate to it. חנה's example of how to express הכרת הטוב allows us to extrapolate from her own personal experience to all of Jewish history.

The universality of נ"ד can also be seen in ספר תהילים. Although it is part of כתובים, which were written through רוח הקודש and not through נבואה, the same reason for writing them down applies (as explained by the מדרש תהילים, "ה' רב יודן אומר בשם יהודה כל שאמר דוד בספרו כנגדו וכנגד כל העתים אמרו: מומור יח.") There are many universal themes contained within ספר תהילים, such as man's longing for ה', praise of ה', and requests to be saved from צרות. There are נצרות written in both לשון יחיד and לשון רבים, to relate to both the individual and the ציבור.

מומור describes a specific event in the life of דוד המלך. The מומור starts with דוד המלך. מומור לדוד בהיותו במדבר יהודה" offers a number of possibilities as to which event in the life of דוד this מומור refers to. (One possibility is that it relates to the time when דוד was running away from שאול, when he hid in different places in the מדבר. Another possibility of the time frame of this מומור is when דוד was running away from אבשלום.)

The מומור can be divided into four sections. The first section (ב-ו) describes the idea of longing for ה', "צמאה לך נפשי כמה לך בשרי בארץ ציה ועיף בלי (ב), ה'". The second section (ז-ט) discusses the security found in דביקות, "ה' to דביקות". The third section (י-יא) details a curse to the "דבקה נפשי אחריד בי תמכה ימינד" (ט). The final section concludes with a "גיירהו על ידי חרב מנת שועלים יהיו: רשעים". The final section concludes with a ברכה to the king and those who speak the truth and קללה to those who lie, "ובמלך ישמח בא-להים...יתהלל כל הנשבע בו כי יסכר פי דוברי שקר".

מומור differently. It explains the מומור as referring to גלות בני ישראל. The phrase "ארץ ציה" (ב) refers to the longing for גלות, which is compared to man's longing for water in the desert. In

the last פסוק of the מזמור, the enemies of בני ישראל are representing them falsely to the king. בני ישראל first praise the king. They then protest that they have indeed spoken truly and that their enemies were lying. As a proof to this, they swear in the name of the king, which they would never have dared to do if they were lying, because that would be a disgrace to the king. Even the opening פסוק of the מזמור, which seems to clearly refer to דוד המלך, is explained by the מדרש to mean that בני ישראל are requesting to be saved, just as דוד was saved in the מדבר. This analysis shows how all of the נבואות recorded in נ"ך were written for the time period in which they were said, but also for future generations.

The נבואות of ישעיהו can be seen as a direct imperative to the people of his time. However, here also, much of his תוכחה is as applicable now as it was then. ישעיהו rebukes the people for stealing, taking bribes, and dishonest business dealings. He explains that the only way ציון will rebuilt is through צדק and משפט, as it says, "ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה" (א:כז). These messages can apply equally to all future דורות as a way of leading a moral life, bringing משיח and rebuilding the המקדש בית.

ישעיהו also received many נבואות about אחרית הימים, such as פרק ב:ב, "והיה באחרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית ה' בראש ההרים ונשא מגבעות ונהרו אליו כל גוים", pointing to ירושלים as the center of the world. Other נבואות include promises of world peace: "וגר זאב עם כבש וזמר עם גדי ירבוץ ועגל וכפיר ומריא יחדיו וענר קטן נוהג בם" (יא:ו), and "ונשא נס לגוים ואסף נדחי ישראל ונפוצות יהודה יקבץ מארבע כנפות: קיבוץ גלויות (יא:ו) תקופת בית ה' הארץ". These נבואות gave strength to the people at the end of גלות because that could and should have been the last of all גלויות. חזקיהו could have been משיח (ז:ד), and these נבואות could have been fulfilled then. However, unfortunately there was another גלות. These נבואות have given hope to Jews everywhere throughout this long גלות, as they anxiously awaited the day when the promises will be fulfilled.

We see this clearly from the גמרא in מכות כד: which tells the well-known story of רבן גמליאל, רבי אלעזר בן עזריה, רבי יהושע, רבי עקיבא, and רבי יהודה. They were walking near the קודש, and they saw a fox emerge from the site of the קדשים. They all began to cry, except for רבי עקיבא who started to laugh. "Why are you laughing?" they asked him. "Why are you crying?" he responded. "A fox emerges from the place about which it says (במדבר א) 'וזהור הקרב יומתי' and we shouldn't cry?," they answered. "That is exactly why I am laughing," said רבי עקיבא. "Since I see that the נבואה of (מטות ג:יד) 'ועוד ישובו זקנים וזקנות ברחובות ירושלים ואיש' was fulfilled, I can be sure that the prophecy of (זכריה ח:ד) 'משענתנו בידו מרוב ימים' (זכריה ח:ד) will also be fulfilled." The rabbis immediately turned to רבי עקיבא and said "עקיבא נחמתנו, עקיבא נחמתנו".

The נבואות of מיכה and זכריה were intended for their own generation. Yet generations later, רבי עקיבא found comfort in them, as they also contain promises for the future, applicable during his time as well as now. This is the most extreme illustration of "נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות נכתבה", because in this case, the נבואה of "ציון שדה תחרש" was already fulfilled. Yet it still holds meaning for the future, as a proof that other נבואות will be fulfilled as well.

Through a careful examination of different נבואות in נ"ך, one can uncover their hidden messages. As time marches on, layers of meaning are added to the תורה as every word takes on new significance. It is for this reason that תורה is so universal. It applies to people everywhere, in every time in history.

¹ I learned all of the material included in the example about ספר חגי with my high school teacher, Mrs. Marcy Stern.

יעקב and the בכורה: A Deeper Look

Orly Werblowsky

COULD IT BE that יעקב אבינו lied? In the story describing how יעקב acquired the ברכה from עשו, it certainly appears that way. Yet, how could that be possible? יעקב, among all the אבות, is the one to whom the מידה of אמת is attributed. The תורה describes him as being "איש תם יושב אוהלים". With such characteristics, why would יעקב have even become involved in such a situation?

What was the value of the ברכה that יעקב wanted so desperately, that he was seemingly willing to lie to get it? Additionally, if עשו was really such a רשע as to not deserve the ברכה, why did יצחק want to give it to him at all? Why did יצחק's "loyal" wife רבקה go behind his back to make sure יעקב got the ברכה? How could she be so sure that the way she was acting was correct? What really took place when עשו sold יעקב the בכורה at age thirteen for a bowl of soup? Was such a sale considered a legal transaction? In order to answer the many questions that arise when reading this story at face value, one must see how various מפרשים explain these events.

The first and most fundamental difficulty is how יצחק viewed עשו. Once that is explained, it will be easier to understand why יצחק would even consider giving the ברכה to him. In בראשית כה:כח, the פסוק states: "וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו לֵאמֹר כִּי יָצִיד בְּפִי וּרְבֵקָה אוֹהֶבֶת אֶת יַעֲקֹב" "ויאהב יצחק את עשו". רש"י interprets the word "יציד" as referring to the way עשו would trap יצחק with his words, "לצוד ולרמות את אביו בפיו". According to רש"י, יצחק viewed עשו as a צדיק. רמב"ן takes a similar approach. He explains that the word "יציד" refers to the idea that עשו was "trapped" in יצחק's mouth, meaning that יצחק, out of his extreme love for עשו, would constantly be talking about him.

This interpretation is raised once again by רמב"ן in כז:כא. After יעקב entered and began to talk with his father, יצחק called him over to feel his arms. רש"י explains that יצחק's suspicions were aroused because יעקב said "שם שמים שגור בפיו" and עשו did not usually have "שם שמים שגור בפיו" א-להיך לפני" רמב"ן quickly adds that this cannot be taken at face value, because יצחק believed עשו to be a צדיק. He therefore explains that יצחק felt that the reason עשו did not use ה' name was because he was a hunter and he would not say ה' name

when he was hunting. In other words, יצחק believed עשו to be a righteous person, and thus found ways to justify his inappropriate behavior.

רש"י, we know, is also of the opinion that יצחק viewed עשו as a צדיק. מהר"ל, in his commentary on (גור אריה) רש"י, gives a different explanation for why יצחק felt עשו didn't speak with ה'. שם ה' suggests that יצחק felt that עשו served ה' out of יראה, just as he himself did. In this type of עבודה, one feels too scared to say ה' name. יעקב however served ה' out of אהבה, so he could use the ה' שם in his conversations, because he was not afraid. On the contrary, he would love to mention ה' in all of his conversations.

ספורנו approaches this problem differently than רש"י and רמב"ן do. He says (כח:כח) that יצחק realized that עשו was not a גמור, but at the same time he did not think that he was a רשע. From different פסוקים throughout the story, we can see that יצחק knew יעקב was a צדיק and עשו was not. For example, when recognizing that יעקב had received the ברכה instead of עשו, יצחק proclaimed "גם ברוך יהיה" (כז:לג). However in כח:כח, we see that יצחק didn't realize עשו was a רשע, while רבקה did. ספורנו explains that for this reason רבקה only loved יעקב, because she recognized the רשעות of עשו, while יצחק did not. Most clearly, however, we can see ספורנו's opinion in כז:כד. There, he explains that יצחק asked עשו to hunt food for him to force him to fulfill the מצוה of כיבוד אב, so that he could be worthy of getting the ברכה.

Based on this מחלוקת, another question arises. What did the ברכה of the בכור encompass, and why did יצחק want to give it to עשו? רמב"ן says that the ברכה was the land of Israel, which is "שמנה מכל הארצות". He says יצחק meant for עשו to get the ברכה of ישראל because, as we learned previously, he viewed עשו as a צדיק. יצחק saw עשו as a continuation of the lineage of אברהם and himself. Both רד"ק and ספורנו disagree with רמב"ן and explain that the ברכה did not consist of a promise regarding ישראל, but rather was a ברכה of leadership. The land of ישראל, they say, was a different ברכה that was always meant for יעקב, because unlike רמב"ן, ספורנו believes that יצחק knew יעקב was the צדיק who deserved this. ספורנו explains that יצחק wanted to give the ברכה of leadership to עשו because he wanted יעקב to be able to learn תורה and not have to deal with "ענינים גשמיים והבלי הנפסדים". Thus, he wanted עשו to rule over יעקב, handle the mundane aspects and protect him, leaving יעקב free to deal with spiritual matters. However, יצחק did not give the ברכה of ארץ ישראל to עשו, because he felt that יעקב deserved it. יצחק's mistake, according to ספורנו, was that if he would have realized that עשו was a גמור and not simply less שלם than יעקב, then he would not have wanted עשו to control יעקב at all.

After learning both ספורנו's and רמב"ן's approaches as to how יצחק viewed עשו, the way each פרשן understands the words "גם ברוך יהיה" (כז:לג) becomes clear. יצחק stated these words when עשו came back from hunting and יצחק

realized he had blessed יעקב instead of עשו. רמב"ן explains that יצחק resented giving the ברכה to יעקב and thought that "אבד בנו האהוב ברכתו לעולם". However, he could not reverse it because once the ברכה was given, it already took effect. יצחק was upset because he viewed עשו as צדיק and now he was scared that he made a mistake in giving יעקב the ברכה. ספורנו however, says that יצחק was just saying "גם ברוך יהיה" as a matter of fact. Since he gave the ברכה to יעקב, this was the inevitable result, but it was not against his will. He never thought that עשו was a צדיק, so it was easy to come to terms with the fact that he had blessed יעקב.

It is clear that יצחק made a mistake regarding who deserved the ברכה, but how did רבקה avoid making the same mistake? How was רבקה so sure from the very beginning that יעקב deserved the ברכה that she even went against יצחק's will? רמב"ן (כז:ד) explains that, while pregnant with her two sons, רבקה was given a נבואה that showed that יעקב should really get the ברכה intended for the בכור: she was told "יורב יעבוד צעיר". If she would let יצחק give the ברכה of ישראל to ארץ ישראל, עשו would be contradicting this נבואה.

However, the answer provided by רמב"ן simply leads to another question: why would giving the ברכה of ישראל to ארץ ישראל preclude the fulfillment of this נבואה? If עשו had gotten ישראל, ארץ ישראל, he could still work for יעקב. We can answer this question by looking at the מחלוקת between the רמב"ן and אבן עזרא in regards to what being a בכור means and why עשו was ready to sell this privilege. אבן עזרא explains that the position of בכור was a special status related to ירושה. He says that עשו did not care to be the בכור because יצחק was poor and his inheritance would not be a significant amount of money. רמב"ן disagrees and says that before מתן תורה to be the בכור meant only to be the more important son. Only after מתן תורה did the בכור inherit more money. Even if the privileges of the בכור did include finances, רמב"ן believes that יצחק was rich, so it is not possible to say עשו did not want the בכורה because the amount of money was not significant. Rather, עשו was ready to sell the title of בכור because he thought that he would die before יצחק, as he was always hunting and the significance of being the בכור would apply only after יצחק died.

Rav Yehuda Meir Dvir explains that from this רמב"ן it becomes clear that being the בכור meant being the one in control and the one who receives כבוד. Stating that the older son would work for the younger son, "הוה גביר לאחיק" (כז:כט), in essence is saying that the older son would not have כבוד, which means he won't be the בכור. According to רמב"ן, this is how רבקה knew from the beginning, through her נבואה of "יורב יעבוד צעיר", that עשו should not get the ברכה for בכורה.

This explanation clarifies why עשו did not care for the בכורה, but why did יעקב want this title? Both רש"י and ספורנו explain that being the בכור enti-

tled one to work in the המקדש בית, and יעקב felt that עשו was not worthy of sacrificing קרבנות to ה' ספורנו explains that יעקב did not think that עשו should be the בכור because עשו was so rooted in הזה עולם that he was willing to sell this privilege for a bowl of soup. This clearly reflects on the fact that he would not be worthy to work in the המקדש בית. According to these two מפרשים, יעקב wanted the title of בכור so that he could work in the המקדש בית.

One might say that רש"י and ספורנו disagree with רמב"ן and אבן עזרא about what the privileges of a בכור are, but perhaps they can be reconciled. Each one could just be another aspect of the בכורה. רש"י and ספורנו were discussing why יעקב wanted the בכורה while אבן עזרא and רמב"ן were discussing why עשו did not care to have it. It's clear that יעקב did not want the בכורה because of money or power. He wanted it because of the עבודת בית המקדש. עשו was not trying to take the עבודה away from עשו, but he saw עשו was too involved in גשמיות and was not worthy of this job.

By examining the actual transaction that took place between יעקב and עשו when they were thirteen years old, we can see how fair it was that יעקב got the ברכה. There is מחלוקת between רד"ק and רמב"ן on one hand and אבן עזרא and ספורנו on the other in regards to what the בכורה was sold for. The פסוק describing the transaction is ambiguous, as it says "וימכר את בכורתו ליעקב". רש"י and רד"ק are of the opinion that יעקב paid עשו for the בכורה with the נידעדים עדשים. ספורנו and אבן עזרא are of the opinion that יעקב paid for the בכורה with money on the condition that יעקב would give him soup. The soup was the "משכון" since he did not pay right away, to show that the בכורה really belonged to יעקב. This is called a קנין חליפין. One gives the buyer an object and he picks it up to show that the sale has taken place.

The reason that עשו had to make a שבועה, as it says "והשבועה", was to strengthen the sale because this was not a sale of a physical object—it was the selling of a legal right. ספורנו seems to be going out of his way to show that the transaction was one hundred percent perfect. If this is so, then in all fairness, יעקב *should* get the ברכה. From the פסוקים following the sale, we see that עשו was still happy that he sold it, even after having completed the transaction. It says "והשבועה וישת ויקם וילך ויבן עשו את הבכורה" (כה:לד).

רש"י brings another proof which shows the correct nature of יעקב's receiving of the ברכה. The ילקוט מעם לועז explains that עשו said to יצחק upon realizing that יעקב got the ברכה, "ויעקבני זה פעמים" (כו:לו). He tricked me once when I sold him the בכורה and now he tricked me again when he took the ברכה. Until this point, יצחק was upset that he gave the ברכה to יעקב. However, once he found out that עשו had really sold it to יעקב, he was happy that he gave the ברכה to יעקב, as it was rightfully his.

It seems that the ultimate רצון ה' was that יעקב should get the ברכה, but how do we really know what רצון ה' is? We explained above that according to

רמב"ן gave רבקה a נבואה which made it clear that עקב should be the בכור. In addition to that, other sources also support the idea that ה' really wanted עקב to get the ברכה. In כ"ז it says "ותכהין עניו מראות" ה' made יצחק blind on purpose so that he could easily be tricked into giving עקב the ברכה. ליקוט מעם לועז cites בראשית רבה in regards to עקב tricking his father. עקב's heart was trembling at this thought of deceiving his father. Therefore, ה' sent two מלאכים to hold him up, one on his right and one on his left. When עקב went in to his father, he did not have any wine with him, as we see when the פסוק describes what עקב brought with him: "ותתן את המטעמים ואת הלחם אשר עשתה ביד יעקב: יעקב בנה." However the פסוק later says "ויבא לו יין וישת" ה'. From where did עקב get wine? Again, ה' helped עקב and sent the מלאך, מיכאל, with wine that had been saved from the six days of creation. ליקוט שמעוני explains how ה' stalled for עקב. The מדרש tells how all day long עשו was catching animals and tying them up, but ה' sent a מלאך to untie them in order to stall and buy more time for עקב. ה' would not have helped עקב in all of these areas, if it was not His will for עקב to get the ברכה.

We now understand that עקב indeed deserved the ברכה, that it is true that עקב was right, that רבקה knew all along, and יצחק was happy at the end. We have also now established why עקב wanted to be the בכור and that he received it in all fairness because he bought it. However, it's still troublesome to think that עקב lied and deceived his father. How did the fact that he deserved it make it right for him to lie? רש"י helps us answer with this question. רש"י takes a deeper look into עקב's words and analyzes what he actually said to his father. When we look closer, we see that עקב never uttered a word of שקר. When יצחק said "מי אתה בני" עקב answered "אנכי עשו בכורד" so when עקב answered the question, he was just saying that it was he who was there and a separate fact was that עשו was the בכור. If עקב would have just said "אנכי עשו", that would have been lying. All of this divine help was necessary because once עקב was forced into this situation, he did not want to lie. However, until the point where he actually had to go through with deception, he tried very hard to avoid it. בראשית רבה tells us that עקב "cried like a broken man" before he went through with this. Rabbi Noson Sifkin, in his book *Lying for Truth*, points out that עקב was praying to save his life from falsehood.

Perhaps עקב did not actually lie, but he nevertheless deceived and committed the sin of רמאות. ליקוט מעם לועז says that it was not considered a full lie, because יצחק was eventually going to be told the truth, and until then עקב would not say a word of שקר. It is also evident from other places in תנ"ך that sometimes it is permissible to lie. When the פסוקים describe how ה' broke the news to שרה that she was going to have a baby, she said "ואדני זקר". But

when ה' repeated the story to אברהם, He changed what שרה actually said to "ואני זקנתי". In this case it appears that ה' indeed lied. However, He lied to further בית שלום. In cases where אמת comes out of lying, lying is permissible. Rabbi Sifkin cites an example of a case where a murderer asks someone which way the man he wants to kill went. Although the man had turned right, the bystander tells him that the man he was searching for had gone to the left. This man is not considered a liar because that lie saved a man's life. Also Sifkin explain how יעקב could still be referred to as "איש תם", which implies ישרות. He knew when to allow lying and when to hold back. This experience in his life taught יעקב how to balance his מידת האמת with the regrettable need for deception. For only when he understood that, could his מידת האמת really be complete.

יוסף הצדיק — Paradigm of Balance

Yael Gamss

A JEW'S LIFELONG quest to understand the תורה and internalize its truths is dependent upon his struggle to achieve a synthesis between the physical world and its spiritual counterpart. One figure in the תורה who demonstrates this ability to find a balance between his role as a physical being and his potential for spirituality is יוסף.

Upon delving into the life and role of יוסף, one must first take a look at one of his greatest influences, his mother רחל. רחל can be characterized as someone who took initiative to correct circumstances she felt were unacceptable. Her sense of personal responsibility and her willingness to act drove her to reveal to לאה the secret signals that were meant to ensure her own marriage to יעקב (רש"י, בראשית כט:כה). Even at the expense of her own happiness, רחל took decisive action to prevent shame and embarrassment from befalling her sister. Another example of רחל initiating action to attempt to rectify a situation, even at the expense of danger to her own welfare, was the incident when she stole the תרפים of לבן (ל"א:י"ט). Although this had tragic results, ending in the fulfillment of יעקב's decree of "עם אשר תמצא את יעקב" (ל"א:י"ט), her efforts were of pure nature and good intention.

רחל passed this admirable trait on to her son יוסף. When יעקב's family encountered עשו, יוסף stood in front of his mother (בראשית לג:ו). רש"י explains that he did this to protect her from רשעות's עשו. According to רש"י, this action ultimately earned him the description "בן פורת עלי עין" (בראשית מט:כב). Even at this young age, יוסף demonstrated that he had acquired qualities that destined him for greatness.

On the other hand, some of יוסף's endeavors can be seen as valiant but misguided efforts. ספורנו views יוסף's bringing information of the brothers' deeds to his father as יוסף's attempt to correct their wrongdoings, but says he was wrong to do so. His unwise behavior, says ספורנו, was a sign of his youthful inexperience.

In order to correct this, יוסף received two dreams directed at teaching him when to act and when to let things happen on their own. In broader

terms, this served to illustrate the necessity for balance between השתדלות and השגחה, and the difference between material and spiritual endeavors. The first dream was about bundles of wheat, symbolizing the physical efforts man must invest in order to survive. In this dream, יוסף was an active participant — "ויהנה קמה אלמתי", his own bundle needed to rise before the others would bow. The second dream, however, featured stars, which represent a more spiritual focus. This time, when focused on the spiritual realm, it was ה', not יוסף who would bring all the efforts to fruition. יוסף remained passive, although the ultimate result was that he achieved מלכות.

Part of understanding the conflict between השתדלות and השגחה is recognizing that all physical success comes from ה', as יוסף later learned: "ויהי ה' פרק לו" (ל"ט:ג). את יוסף ויהי איש מצליח" (ל"ט:ג). Whenever יוסף began to focus on his material success and less on ה'’s hand in the matter, he began to stumble. In פרק לו is described as "יפה תאר ויפה מראה", emphasizing his physical beauty and vanity. The language he used to refuse אשת פוטיפר also strongly suggests a continued focus on the self — "אנינו גדול בבית הזה ממני" (ל"ט:ט). Perhaps it was for this reason that יוסף was punished with a jail sentence. He went from controlling everything in פוטיפר’s house ("וכל יש לו נתן בידיו") to having nothing in jail.

Once in jail though, יוסף seemed to learn the lesson and redirect his thinking. When offering his assistance in interpreting the dreams of שר המשקים ושר האופים (מ:ט), he made sure to mention that his abilities came from ה'. However, his בטחון wavered when he pressed the שר המשקים to mention him to פרעה with more השתדלות than was necessary. For this, he was punished with a longer jail sentence (רש"י, מ:כ"ג). Ultimately, יוסף was able to come to an understanding, realizing that ה' guides everything in life, and achieve the proper balance.

ספר was then able to use his talents to interpret פרעה’s dreams. ספר explains why יוסף was able to interpret פרעה’s dreams, when the חרטומים and חכמים could not. He says that פרעה’s own interpreters were unable to decipher the message of the seven years of famine, because this was contradictory to their entire ideology. Their whole way of thinking revolved around their god, the Nile River. It was incomprehensible to them that their god would be unable to provide. יוסף, however, was a "נער עברי", a term which חז"ל interpret to mean someone with completely different beliefs — "כל העולם בעבר אחד ואברהם בעבר אחר". Especially after his experience in jail, יוסף understood that the כוח הטבע was directly connected to a higher source, and he could therefore interpret the dreams.

יוסף was destined to go down to Egypt, a land of טומאה, and establish a working economic system, while retaining his high ethical standard. Imme-

diately after יוסף was appointed, he set out to organize the affairs of every city in Egypt (ספורנו מא:מו "ויעבר בכל ארץ מצרים"). The name "אברך" which יוסף received from the people while seeing to this task is representative of his unique skill. "אברך" is explained by חז"ל to mean "אב בחכמה ורך בשנים", which represents a level of wisdom at understanding סדר החיים beyond his years. The תרגום explains the name to mean אב למלך. A king's job is to set up an efficiently working society, and יוסף set the standard in this area. The name he received from פרעה, "צפת פענח", also connotes a certain wisdom that יוסף possessed. יוסף's own ישרות can be seen in his refusal of אשת פוטיפר, out of gratitude to פוטיפר as well as his recognition that to sin with her would be a חטא לא-להים. This moral strength earned him the title of יוסף הצדיק.

It was יוסף's strength in the physical world, however, that caused the schism between him and his brothers. The ברכה which יוסף received from יעקב was very similar to that of עשו's. To channel this power which יוסף inherited, יעקב taught him the teachings he had learned from שם and עבר (רש"י, בראשית לז:ג, ד"ה בן זקונים). ספורנו describes יוסף as having a natural inclination for material success, and therefore he advised his brothers on this matter ("ירעה את אחיו בצאן"). He further says that the "דבה רעה" that יוסף brought to יעקב were descriptions of the brothers' shortcomings in this field — he told his father "שאחיו היו טועים ומפסידים בבלי דעת כראוי במלאכת המקנה". The brothers' hatred and resentment arose not from the fear that יוסף was going to lead them ("המלך תמלך עלינו") but that he might force his views upon them ("המשל תמשל בנו"). The brothers represented a focus on spirituality, while יוסף's strengths lay in the physical realm. It was these two diametrically opposed life views that necessitated a separation.

The brothers thought they needed to rid themselves of יוסף. It was יוסף's task to show that in fact these two views were not so diametrically opposed, and that material prosperity can enhance the potential for spirituality. It was יוסף's job to sustain them physically, as seen in the dream of wheat, so they could prosper spiritually, as seen in the dream of stars. It was יוסף's job to care for their mundane needs and provide for them. Eventually, in מצרים, he came to fulfill this role: (ניכא): "אנכי אכלכל אתכם ואת טפכם".

יוסף's destined role as a physical ruler and spiritual leader can also be seen from the gift that יעקב bestowed upon him — the כתנת פסים. A כתנת is often described as a garment worn by leaders. It is a garment of holiness, one of the בגדי כהנה (ויקרא ט"ז:ד): "כתנת בד קדש ילבש". However, it also symbolizes political power. רש"י points out (based upon יג:יח) that a כתנת is the same thing as a מעיל, which is a garment of royalty. A מעיל is seen throughout שמואל as a בגד מלכות (כ"ב,ד): "את כנה המעיל אשר לשלמה". Also, שמואל הנביא himself, who was both a spiritual and a political leader, wore a מעיל

(see שמואל א' ב:יט, כח:יד). These two aspects represent יוסף's own mission: the spiritual leader who must raise his brothers to higher levels, as shown by the dream of the stars, and the political leader, the king, who must rule over mundane matters, as presaged by his dream with the wheat.

There is a מדרש ("תורה שלימה") (מובא בספר "תורה שלימה") that says that the כתנת which יעקב gave to יוסף was actually the garment of עשו that יעקב wore when he stole his ברכה. This gives additional credence to the dual meaning of the garment. יוסף was designated as the successor of עשו in the material realm, as well as the successor of יעקב in the spiritual capacity.

In representing to the brothers his own unique role amongst the שבטים, יוסף was also teaching them an important lesson: that every individual brother has a unique and necessary role within the שבטים as a whole. At the first stage of יוסף's development, he had to face rejection. בני לאה (לזב: ד"ה את בני בלהה) רש"י says יוסף associated with בני זלפה ובני בלהה because he was scorned by בני לאה. This disparagement prepared him for the future rejection and hatred that would result in his מכירה. The condemnation also served to strengthen יוסף's own belief in the legitimacy of his function. Years later, after reuniting with his brothers, he was able to declare: "וישלחני א-להים לפניכם לשום לכם שארית בארץ" (מ"ה:ז). יוסף understood the importance of each role, shown to him by the fact that in his first dream, the bundles of wheat were arranged in a circle, equidistant from each other.

When, after years of separation, יוסף met his brothers again in מצרים, he had the opportunity to begin to teach them the message of the importance of the individual. He questioned בני יעקב about their family, and insisted that they bring בנימין to מצרים (מ"ב:כ). It was important that each and every one of the שבטים be present, in order to bring about the fulfillment of their destiny. יוסף needed to clarify beyond a shadow of a doubt if they were in fact "שנים עשר...אחים...בני איש אחד" (מ"ב:יג), twelve separate individuals with one goal. He further demonstrated this idea when he specifically singled out one brother — שמעון — to remain in jail for the duration of the journey to bring בנימין. To complete the heart-wrenching learning process, יוסף issued a decree forbidding בנימין from returning to his father (מד:יז). יהודה's reaction and defense of בנימין concretized the lesson and confirmed יוסף's hopes. It was only then that יוסף could reveal himself to his brothers.

It is fairly evident why יוסף's first prophecy came in the form of dreams. His destiny was brought about by a series of dreams that he needed to interpret. The most important thing, however, was not that יוסף himself received prophetic dreams. Rather, it is that יוסף related these dreams to his brothers. יוסף's whole mission focused around elevating and guiding his brothers. Therefore, it is only natural that they should be involved in his initiation.

In addition, יוסף's mission could not be fulfilled without knowing how to deal diplomatically with people. If he was to guide his brothers, he needed to learn to do it in such a way that they would respond. He had to learn what to say, when to say it and how to say it. רמב"ן says the "דבה רעה" that יוסף should not have told his father is what caused the בני שפחות to agree to the sale. Even the way he retold his dreams suggests a certain lack of restraint on יוסף's part.

At this early stage, יעקב served as a buffer between יוסף and his brothers. יעקב seemed to know that יוסף's dreams had an element of truth in them: "ואביו שמר את הדבר". However, he made light of יוסף's dreams in front of his other sons, "וייגער בו אביו", in order to soften the blow to the brothers, as well as to protect יוסף. יוסף needed to learn the importance of tact from his father in order to be successful. He learned this lesson well, and knew how to respond to אשת פוטיפר, as well as שר המשקים ושר האופים about their dreams. יוסף also needed the talent of diplomatic speech in order to serve as second in command and relate to פרעה, so that פרעה would accept his advice. The greatest test יוסף faced of knowing when to speak up and when not to came when his brothers asked for food. יוסף did not reveal who he was. Rather, he accused them of being spies, following with a stream of false accusations. These allegations were all aimed at triggering the brothers to realize their mistake and do תשובה, a תשובה and a transformation that would establish the strong foundations and ideals necessary to build עם ישראל. Only after this task was complete could יוסף reveal that "אני יוסף".

The ability that יוסף developed to balance his innate sense of materialism and his inborn capacity for spirituality is what enabled him to become an outstanding pillar of עם ישראל. This talent of utilizing his physical and material strengths in order to enhance and further his brothers', in addition to his own, spiritual vitality is what merited him this leadership role. It is this skill that will also, בעזרת ה', be employed by משיח בן יוסף to bring about a more elevated state, spurring the coming of משיח בן דוד and the ultimate גאולה.

מחשבה ומעשה

שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום*

Sheera Hefter

THE גמרא IN 1:1-1 quotes a בריתא in which רבי יהושע בן לוי teaches us that thirty days prior to פסח, one must begin to look into the relevant הלכות of the upcoming holiday. The גמרא brings a proof from the time that בני ישראל were in the מדבר. In פרשת בהעלותך,¹ משה commanded בני ישראל to begin their preparations for פסח thirty days prior to the חג itself: "כדתניא...: "שלושים יום. מאי טעמא דתנא קמא שהרי משה עומד בפסח ראשון ומוהיר על פסח שני..." "ידורש להן בהלכות פסח השני דהיינו שלשים יום שהוא בארבעה עשר באייר"² explains רש"י. However, a different בריתא in לב-לב: teaches that משה instructed the people to study and explore the "ענינו של יום" on the day of the חג itself: "ת"ר משה תיקן להם לישראל שיהיו שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום הלכות פסח בפסח הלכות פסח בחג" עזרת בעזרת הלכות חג בחג". Are these two statements complementary or conflicting? What, in fact, is the nature of each of these two statements?

I.

א³, ריטב"א, addressing a related issue, qualifies the גמרא in פסחים to distinguish it from that in מגילה. He explains that the תקנה of "שלשים יום" is to be applied only in the מדרש בית, whereas that of "בו ביום" applies to the laymen as well. א³'s explanation is congruous with the משנה in אבות regarding the priority of a student's question before his teacher. The משנה (אבות ה:ז) teaches us that one should be "ענין". "שואל כענין ומשיב כהלכה" is defined as within thirty days. Within those days, a question related to the approaching חג takes precedence over other questions.⁴ ר"ן⁵ also explains the תקנה of "שלשים יום" as applying to the מדרש בית whereas משה's תקנה of "בו ביום" applies only to the laymen and is reserved for the learning of הלכות presumably with an emphasis on practical application. The שאילתות⁶ echoes this idea and explains that the תקנה of thirty days applies to those in the מדרש בית exclusively. The פסחים in ירושלמי⁷ also explains that the הלכה of "שלשים יום", with regard to הלכות פסח, applies only in the "בית ועד". Therefore, the תקנה of יום שלשים seems to refer, according to most ראשונים, exclusively to those in the מדרש בית.

*This article was originally presented in the form of שיעור in MMY on שבועות תשס"א, in honor of a סיום made on the completion of מגילה.

The *quod* quoted above, however, introduces another point of inquiry. Does the *תקנה* of “thirty days” apply only on *פסח* or is it more widely applicable, like *בו ביום*’s *משה* instruction? Although we will see that some sources limit this to *פסח*, according to the literal reading of the *ברייתא* in *רש”י*, *רוקח*⁹ expands this concept to include all of the *רגלים*, as does *מסכת סנהדרין* adding that this thirty-day *חיוב* applies even for *עזרת* (שבועות). However if this is so, if those in the *בית מדרש* must study the laws of every *חג* from thirty days beforehand, then what does *תקנה*’s *בו ביום* add for them?

One possibility, of course, is that the *תקנה* of *משה* is geared towards the laymen who did not begin thirty days in advance, and has no significance for the *תלמידי חכמים*. Perhaps, however, these two ideas are really not the same at all, but rather fundamentally different. Aside from quantitative differences, there may be important qualitative distinctions as well. Our *גמרא* earlier in *פסחים* strongly implied that the instruction of preparing the *הלכות* thirty days prior to the *חג* applies primarily to *פסח*. *בית יוסף*¹⁰ here as well, quoting *ר”ן*¹¹ in two places, explains that this *תקנה* is limited to study of *הלכות*. Both quote the *משנה* in *אבות* as a proof as well. *דרישה*¹² explains this as well: “*צריך להודיע לעם...לטחון הטחין...ביאור חמץ*”. One requires more time to learn all of the complex *הלכות* of *פסח*.

The *גמרא* in *זרה*¹³ explains that one needs these thirty days in order to properly prepare for the *פסח*. *קרוב* *ב”ח*¹⁴ later echoes these feelings: “*מעיקר הדין אין צריך שלשים יום...משום ביקור מומין*”. It appears therefore that this *תקנה* of “thirty days” is quite logical and seemingly purely functional. *משה*’s *תקנה* may apply in a different realm. This *תקנה* possibly has a more spiritual dimension of being appropriate and befitting to talk about a *חג* on the day itself. *רש”י*, in his commentary on the *גמרא* in *בב”ב*, offers the following interpretation: “*מלמד שהיה מדבר עמהן הלכות כל מועד ומועד בזמן ההודיע חוקי האלוקים ותורתיו*”.

What is the scope of *תקנה*’s *בו ביום*? Interestingly *רמב”ם* utilizes the *תקנה* of *משה* in the context of *תורה*:¹⁵

“*משה תקן להם לישראל שהיו קורין בתורה ברבים בשבת ובשני ובחמישי... ואילו הן הימים שקורין בהם התורה בציבור... במועדים...*”

Within the greater *תקנה* of *משה* to read from the *תורה* on Monday, Thursday and *שבת*, *כדי שלא יהו שלשה ימים בלא שמעת תורה*,¹⁶ we have additional readings on the *מועדים*: “*מפסיקו למועד...בענין המועד...מועד ומועד*”:¹⁷ commenting on these two *הלכות*, quotes the following *גמרא* in *מגילה* as a proof:¹⁸ “*פורים שחל להיות בשבת שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום*”¹⁹ and explains:

“*משה תיקן להם לישראל שהיו קורין בכל מועד בענינו דתנן מה קורא בכל מועד*”

והדר קאמר שנאמר וידבר משה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל מצותו שיהו קורין כל אחד ואחד בזמנו והא דאי אסמכתא היא דקריאת התורה גופא תקנה היא."

It appears therefore that תקנת משה here definitely has a dimension of spiritual significance. The idea of being "מוזכרים ומפרשם ענינו של יום" is quite strong. Our גמרא is a very fitting example of this greater concept:

"אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי פורים שחל להיות בשבת שואליו ודורשיו בענינו של יום מאי אריא פורים אפילו יום טוב נמי דתניא משה תיקן להם לישראל ליהיו שואליו ודורשיו בענינו של יום...פורים איצטריכא ליה מהו דתימא דתניא נגזר משום גזרה דרבה קמ"ל.²¹

One may have thought, רש"י explains, that no שיעורים should be given on פורים itself because of the גזרה דרבה שחל להיות בשבת:

"דגזר לקמן בקריאת המגילה שמה יעבידו ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים אף כאן דדרשה אטו קריאה."²²

However, the גמרא emphasizes, it is in fact important to talk about פורים even when it is שבת, and possibly all the more so because it is שבת. רמב"ם teaches us "שואלים ודורשים...כדי להזכיר שהוא פורים".²³ We see, therefore, that it is of importance to speak about the day even though we cannot read the formal text of the מגילה itself. There is spiritual value in talking about the חג on the חג itself.

An interesting question arises when we talk about expounding upon the חשיבות היום. Should one discuss the spiritual aspects of the day or the technical ones? Most ראשונים assume that תקנת משה refers to the spiritual dimension. ריטב"א and ר"ן hold that once we read the מגילה, the importance of learning the הלכות no longer exists—the implication is that the תקנה of studying the הלכות was instituted because of the spiritual significance of these הלכות, and that can be accomplished by reading the מגילה as well. רשב"א also says פורים שחל להיות on something that supports this analysis. He holds that even on שבת there is value in learning the הלכות of פורים,²⁴ גס בפה "מאי אריא פורים...גס בפה",²⁵ ביומוי.

Another example of this can be seen with regard to מרדכי. The גמרא in (in the Aggadic portion at the end of the first פרק dealing with events which took place that are not recorded in the מגילה) teaches us about an encounter between המן and מרדכי ליה.²⁶ "אתא המן ויתיב...מלי קומינא דסוליתא ומתכפר ליה". "דורש בענינו של יום...עד: הלכות קמינא ומתכפר ליה". רש"י here explains why מרדכי was busy with הלכות קמינא ומתכפר ליה, and these שושן, and these הלכות were therefore far from practical, מרדכי was busy nonetheless looking into the הלכות of "תנופת העומר בו ביום". מרדכי teaches us that there is an impor-

tant value to being "מזכיר ומפרסם" something significant that would go on in the בזמן החורבן, even בומן המקדש.

The approach taken by רשב"א, תוספות, and later, the טור, leads one to investigate further the relationship between the two original ברייתות "שלושים" and "בו ביום" and suggest a different approach. Perhaps they are not two unrelated concepts but are really one large תקנה with two subcategories. The מחבר takes this approach in both his commentaries on אורח חיים. The מחבר quotes²⁸ this law להלכה "שואלים בהלכות הפסח קודם לפסח שלושים יום", להלכה. The משנה brings together both of the ברייתות in his commentary on this הלכה:

"שהרי משה עומד בפסח ראשון...ומזהירן על כל הלכות פסח שני והוא הדין בשאר ימים טובים נמי דורשין קודם לכן שלשים יום בהליכות...ויש אומרים החיוב שלשים יום הוא רק בפסח משום דיש בהן הלכות גדולות...משאין כן בשאר ימים טובים די באיזה ימים קודם ועל כל פנים ביום טוב גופא לכלי עלמא עריך לשאול ולדרוש בכל יום טוב בהלכותה...."²⁹

He even clarifies one of our initial ambiguities at the end of סעיף קטן ב: "מכל מקום מצוה לכל אחד לעסוק בהלכות פסח שלשים יום קודם וכן בחג עצמו". We learn an additional piece of information here as well that משה תקנת expresses an equality between the רגלים: "ההלכות פסח בפסח, עזרת בעזרת, חג בחג": רגלים. רבי יהושע בן פסח's statement on the other hand of "שלושים יום" is seemingly limited only to פסח.

ביאור הלכה explains that the intention of "בו ביום" is not to the exclusion of "שלושים יום"; rather they are to be complementary elements of something larger. One could mistakenly read the ביאור הלכה and think that he is not commenting on the nature of these תקנות. But in fact, he is really keeping the two תקנות separate under one larger category. What is the real driving purpose behind these תקנות in their differing forms? These תקנות come to teach us the practical application required of us to facilitate proper anticipation and readiness for significant times in the Jewish calendar.

It is possible for one to say that תקנת רבי יהושע בן לוי of "שלושים יום" was focusing on the הכנה aspect of the חג whereas תקנת משה of "בו ביום" was aimed at emphasizing the importance of the day itself and that לימוד of בו ביום is a קיום in the מצוה of the חג itself. We must prepare and reinforce the concepts that are important to us.

II.

On ראש חודש אלול, we begin to blow the שופר in shul and ספרדים begin to say סליחות, precisely for the purpose of awakening us to the upcoming holiday of ראש השנה. The עשרת ימי תשובה are vital days in the calendar during which כלל ישראל engage in a most serious involvement in repentance and self-improve-

ment, all leading up to יום כפור. To properly attempt experiencing a meaningful תשעה באב, we start preparing three weeks earlier from תמוז, talking and learning about the בית, חרבן, and its significance. We have learned above that from ראש חודש ניסן, and really from פורים, one must begin to prepare for פסח. Lastly, we have ספירת העומר, perhaps the most significant example, leading up to שבועות, 49 days dedicated to real spiritual growth as an individual and as a nation. We left מצרים on the 49th level of טומאה and through the 49 days of ספירת העומר, we have the potential to raise ourselves up to the highest level of טהרה necessary for the close encounter with הקדוש ברוך הוא. We bring as the עומר offering on פסח a מנחה of barley, which is animal food. However, by the time we reach שבועות, we have refined ourselves, and therefore our קרבן as well, and we offer up to ה' a מנחה of wheat, fine human food. These times of preparation are built into the calendar. The תורה knew that we cannot jump into important times like these unprepared, rather we are in need of a gradual ascent toward the various high spiritual points in time.

The חג of שבועות completes the חג הפסח. חז"ל teach us אין לך בן חורין אלא מי חז"ל. חג הפסח that we strived to achieve at זמן ומן שמוסך בתלמוד תורה³¹ cannot be totally complete until after תורה. As a preparation for the intensity and magnitude of מתן תורה ה', ספירת העומר as days set aside for work. Not physical labor, but rather serious טהרה is needed in order to be ready to accept the תורה on חג השבועות.

The זוהר teaches us that the 49 days of ספירת העומר are equal to the פרקי אבות of גמטריא—"לב טוב" teaches us

"צאו וראו אזוהי דרך ישרה שידבק בה אדם...רבי אליעזר אומר לב טוב...
ואה אני את דברי רבי אליעזר שבכלל דבריו דבריכם."³²

The לב is the root and source for all מצוות.

"א-ל חי" גמטריא of מ"ט is also the job of the days of ספירת העומר is to purify and refine all of one's מדות, both those that are between people (בין אדם לחברו) as well as those that are בין אדם למקום, all which included in the category of א-ל חי (נתיבות שלום).

ספירת העומר בית אברהם points out that during the time of ספירת העומר, we read in the התורה each week פרשיות that deal with "עניני הנגעים ועניני טמאות וטהרות". Why is this so? The purpose is to help each Jew to purify himself from all these ideas and תאוות. Every time of year has a special סגולה, and this is the time of year that is מסוגל for us to be cleansed from all of these various טומאות. We say in the רצון יהי after counting the עומר,

"רבנו של עולם אתה ציונתו על ידי משה עבדך לספור ספירת העומר כדי לטהרו מקליפתו ומטמאותיו...שבזכות ספירת העומר שסיפרתי היום יתקן מה שפגמתי...ואטהר ואתקדש בקדושה של מעלה."

During the week of פרשת שמייני we read of קדושת האכילה; in פרשת קדושים we read of קדושה מין העריות and קדושה כוהנים; in פרשת אמור we read of the מועדים (קדושת הזמן); in פרשת בהר we read of קדושת הארץ. All these types of קדושה come to teach us the fundamentals behind being proper Jews, and fulfilling our responsibility of being a "קדוש" ³³ "ממלכת כוהנים וגוי קדוש".

An important textual question arises on the פסוק discussing the מצוה of ספירת העומר:

"וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עומר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה עד ממחרת השבת השביעית תספרו חמישים יום והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה." ³⁴

How is the last phrase about the מנחה connected to the rest of the פסוק? Based on the concepts that have been explained above, we can understand it. Only after a Jew purifies himself and refines his מדות can he be זוכה to bring a "מנחה חדשה לה" and accept the תורה. ³⁵ After the long process of ספירה, one is able to look into the world around them and see with great clarity "כי ה' הוא האלוקים אין עוד מלבדו" ³⁶

Every יום טוב has its own special "ענינים" unique to it. שבועות is a climax of sort. On שבועות, we reach possibly the greatest level of קדושה, as חז"ל teach us "ביום חתונתנו - זו מתן תורה". From here, a Jew needs to draw רוחניות to spill over to the entire year. The phrase "וספרתם לכם" is linguistically related to the idea of "ספיר ויהלום". This time is one whose sole purpose is to light up the rest of the year. שבועות is the culmination of one very long יום טוב. We have פסח and then a חול המועד of sort in the form of ספירת העומר, and we conclude with מתן תורה and חג השבועות.

We say in the תפילות of יום טוב "והשיאנו ה' אלוקנו את ברכת מועדך": יום טוב in general is to be close with ה' as it says "שלש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך את פני ה' אלוקידך..." ³⁷ We ask ה' to grant us an awareness, throughout the whole year, of His constant presence. The feeling of "ה' אלוקנו עמנו" is brought out through the wedding imagery of חג השבועות בני חג השבועות. They experienced of "ה' זוכה" were direct revelation at ישראל. They were and continue "פנים אל פנים דבר ה' עמכם": שכניה. ³⁸ We were and continue to be joined through תורה to an eternal relationship with הקב"ה, even if we sin. ה' is with us in everything that we do. On שבועות we were זוכה to receive The Rule Book, and the דבר ה' that guides us in everything we do, and in our own personal relationship with the עולם של רבונו.

¹ במדבר ט:א-יד

² ד"ה שהרי משה

³ מגילה ד.

⁴ The Rebbe in משנה אבות is also addressing an issue of כבוד. It is not appropriate to ask one's Rebbe a question in a topic that he is not currently studying. Therefore the ריטב"א interprets the אמרא in מגילה ד. as teaching that within 30 days the question is considered within a topic that he should be studying and reviewing.

⁵ מגילה ד. בדפי הרי"ף

⁶ סימן סח

⁷ פסחים פרק א, הלכה א

⁸ סנהדרין ז: ד"ה בשבתא דרגלא

⁹ סימן תכט on ב"ח, quoted in the סימן תמד

¹⁰ טור אורח חיים רכט:א

¹¹ מגילה ב: ד"ה פורים and פסחים ב. ד"ה העושה (סוף)

¹² אורח חיים תכט:א

¹³ עבודה זרה ה: "שואלים בהלכות פסח קודם הפסח שלשים יום...אנן דשכיחי מומין דפסלי אפילו בדוקין

שבועין בעיני תלתין יומין אינהו דמחוסר אבר אית להו בתלתא יומי סגי

¹⁴ טור אורח חיים רכט:א

¹⁵ משנה תורה הלכות תפילה יב:א,ב

¹⁶ הלכה אשם

¹⁷ שם יג:ח

¹⁸ שם

¹⁹ מגילה ד.

²⁰ הלכות מגילה א:יג

²¹ מגילה ד.

²² רש"י שם ד"ה משום רבא

²³ רמב"ם הלכות מגילה א:יג

²⁴ It is noteworthy that the רשב"א's line of thought is utilized by the טור in his discussion of סימן תפא. The טור writes in ליל הסדר on סיפור יציאת מצרים and הלכות פסח:

"ופירוש הרב יונה טעם למנהג לפי שחייב אדם לעסוק כל הלילה בהלכות פסח וביציאת מצרים ולספר בנסים ונפלאות שעשה הקב"ה לאבותינו."

A seemingly radical opinion is brought in the תוספתא יח on תוספתא אבות. The תוספתא teaches "חייב אדם הלכות פסח כל הלילה". One is led therefore to inquire what the connection is between הלכות פסח and הלכות פסח. One answer to this question is found in סיפור יציאת מצרים. There he addresses this question and answers something he was taught by his Rebbe. He teaches that סיפור in fact can be fulfilled by לימוד. His proof is the חכם from the הגדה whom we answer with הלכות!

²⁵ רשב"א מגילה ד.

²⁶ מגילה טז.

²⁷ שם

²⁸ שו"ע אורח חיים תכט:א

²⁹ שם סעיף קטן א

³⁰ מגילה לב.

³¹ אבות ו:ב

³² אבות ב:יג

³³ שמות יט:ו

³⁴ ויקרא כג:טו-טז

³⁵ If you take the first letter from the first word of the phrase of "מנחה חדשה לה" the letters are מחל which spells לחם—bread if read backwards. Spiritually, we bring the פסח to represent a complete turnaround from where we were on שתי הלחם. The רמב"ם writes in ב:ב ומצה במזון חמץ ומצה במזון חמץ כלל" that one should "חמץ תאפנה בכורים לה" is דוקא שתי הלחם which דוקא is "חמץ תאפנה בכורים לה" (ויקרא כג:יז). A Jew who is שקוע in the 49th level of טומאה is not able to bring a קרבן to ה' and have that connection with Him. But after ספירת העומר and the incremental growth and eventual טהרה that has resulted, we are able not only to bring any קרבן but a "מנחה חדשה לה".

³⁶ דברים ד:לה

³⁷ דברים טז:טז

³⁸ דברים ה:ד

The Nature of Prophecy, According to רמב"ם

Tamar Belsh

רמב"ם DISCUSSES THE topic of prophecy for many chapters in the מורה נבוכים (Chapters 32 through 48). He explains the importance of נבואה and discusses how one can achieve this state of perfection. Within these chapters, רמב"ם outlines eleven degrees of prophecy and different opinions concerning it. The importance of the "Active Intellect" in relation to the rational and imaginative faculties is described with regard to the prophecy of all prophets compared to that of Moshe Rabeinu. Who becomes a prophet, how one becomes a prophet, and conditions for becoming a prophet are also discussed.

רמב"ם tells us that there are three different common ideas pertaining to prophecy. The first is that of the masses who believe in prophecy. They are of the opinion that God picks whom He wants, and transmits to him נבואה and a mission. Whether he is intelligent or not, old or young, as long as he is sound in his morals, and is good overall, one can be eligible for prophecy. The second opinion concerning prophecy is that of the philosophers, who believe that prophecy can only be attained through intellectual perfection. This perfection, which cannot be reached by everyone, can only be achieved through training and preparation, bringing potential into actuality. An ignorant person, for example, cannot be a prophet according to this approach. On the other hand, someone whose rational, moral, and imaginative faculties are perfected through preparation will automatically become a prophet. The third and correct attitude towards prophecy is similar to that of the philosophers, with one distinction. One can be completely fit for prophecy, and yet not receive it because God chose not to give him נבואה. Prophecy, therefore, does not only rely on human efforts, but is also dependent on the will of God. He alone can choose not to give prophecy to the most qualified of men (*Guide to the Perplexed* II:32).

Prophecy is an "overflow" from God by way of the Active Intellect toward the rational faculty and then to the imaginative faculty. This is the highest rank of perfection possible, as the rational and imaginative faculties

also achieve a state of perfection predetermined by natural potential. Within the rational faculty, one is able to strip form from matter, and understand knowledge in its most abstract and pure form. When the rational faculty is perfect, it is as if he came to that knowledge through his own speculation. The imaginative faculty becomes so efficient that it is able to perceive things as if they came from the outside, affecting bodily senses. Senses though are at rest, and the overflow to the imaginative faculty causes dreams. This same overflow causes prophecy. According to חז"ל, "a dream is the 60th part of prophecy", although you cannot reach the ultimate level in a dream. A dream can be compared to prophecy, because the two are of the same variety.

Prophecy comes to man in either a dream or a vision, through a revelation from an angel, or from God through the agency of an angel. As it says in ויאמר שמעו נא דברי אם יהיה נביאכם ה' במראה אליו אתודע בחלום אדבר בו, במדבר יבו: . A "vision" (מראה), according to רמב"ם, is a frightening situation that occurs when a prophet is awake. But in the case of "God came to so and so in a dream (חלום) of the night", this is not prophecy, and the individual is not a prophet (like when Hashem came to לבן or אבימלך in a dream). מנוח, הגר, and his wife were not נביאים either, nor were they prepared for prophecy. In fact, what they heard (from an angel) was similar to a בת קול. These incidents may fall under one of the first two degrees of נבואה.

There are eleven degrees of prophecy, but not everyone who has a degree of prophecy is a prophet. The **first degree** of prophecy is divine assistance. The spirit of God encourages one to do something great and important, like whenever it says "the spirit of God came upon him" (see, for example, שופטים יד:ט). In the **second degree** a force comes upon an individual and he speaks by רוח הקודש (wisely) while he is awake. For example, דוד המלך, in writing תהילים, and שלמה המלך, in משלי וקהלת, שיר השירים, and בלעם all experienced this type of revelation. They all spoke through רוח הקודש, but when they awoke, they said it was a dream—as opposed to other prophets (e.g., יעקב) who woke up in awe and said, "Hashem appeared to me". This second degree is basically a dream conveying true realities of certain things (not through prophecy).

In the **third degree** of prophecy, the prophet sees a parable and its meaning in a dream. This happened in most of the prophecies of זכריה, with "the word of God" coming to him. The **fourth degree** is when a prophet hears clear speech but does not see the orator, like in שמואל's first נבואה, when he thought it was עלי הכהן calling him. In the **fifth degree**, a man addresses the prophet in a dream; in the **sixth degree**, he is addressed by an angel in a dream; and in the **seventh degree**, the prophet sees it as God Himself addressing him (e.g., in ישעיהו, "I saw God...") in a dream of prophesy.

The **eighth degree** of prophecy comes to a prophet through parables, in a vision. One example of this is נבואת אברהם at ברית בין הבתרים. This parable came to אברהם in a vision during the day. In the **ninth degree**, the prophet hears speech in a vision, in the **tenth degree** he sees a man addressing him, in a vision (like אברהם at ממרא אלוני). The **eleventh degree** occurs when the prophet sees an angel addressing him, in a vision. (*Guide to the Perplexed:II:45*)

All prophets receive נבואה only through the שליחות of an angel, with the exclusive exception to משה רבינו. A prophet can only hear God (through a dream or vision of prophecy) by intermediary of the imaginative faculty, whereas Hashem spoke with משה directly as it says, "פה אל פה אדבר בו..." (במדבר יב:ח). משה רבינו is the only human being to have reached beyond the eleventh degree of prophecy, to the twelfth, where God appeared to him in a vision (while awake). At מעמד הר סיני for example, בני saw fire and lightning, and heard frightening voices, but only those worthy of נבואה received it, and only at each individual's own level. Hashem spoke, משה understood, and the rest of בני did not: "אנכי עמד בין ה' וביניכם בעת ההיא להגיד לכם את דבר ה'" (דברים ה:ה). משה stood between Hashem and בני and repeated every commandment as he heard it. Although בני heard the Voice of God, only משה heard the articulation of the words. As it says, "ויהי כשמעכם את הקול" (דברים ה:כ), and "קול דברים אתם שמעים ותמונה אינכם ראים זולתי קול" (דברים ד:יב). It does not say "you have heard words", it only says that בני heard the voice, קול (*Guide to the Perplexed II: 32, 33, 45*).

The rest of the prophets all got נבואה through an angel, as opposed to משה who got prophesy while awake. שאר הנביאים received prophesy through either a dream or a vision. משה רבינו understood נבואה while retaining his normal waking state, whereas the other prophets became physically weak, and filled with fear. In order to attain prophecy, the prophets would have to concentrate their minds, and prepare. משה was able to get prophecy whenever he pleased. He had no need for the imaginative faculty, as all of his prophecy came purely intellectually, through only the rational faculty.

When the תורה tells an entire story that occurred in a prophecy, it starts in a general way, like with אברהם and the three מלאכים, it says: "וירא אליו" (דברים ה:כ), and with יעקב, it says: "ויעקב הלך לדרכו ויפגעו בו מלאכי הא-להים" (דברים ה:כ). Then the story "zooms in", and everything that happens occurs as a part of the נבואה. Just as things that occur in a dream seem quite real, a person can go through many parts of life and think they are actually happening, but then when he wakes up, he realizes it was all a dream. Prophecy also happens that way, in parables that seem as if actions are really done when in fact it is all a part of the vision of prophecy. Even if נביא does not say explicitly that when God came to him it was in a dream, and says instead that he perceived something

with his senses, this too is also part of a vision of prophesy. Everything produced in time has a cause, which has a cause leading back to God, the "First Cause". Just because someone left out the immediate causes or did not know them does not mean that the cause was directly from God.

There are many examples of cases where God commanded His prophets to perform certain actions, and they did them, but the whole thing happened in נבואה. An example is the case of יחזקאל being lifted up between heaven and earth, and digging a hole in a wall to see what was going on. Also the case of הושע, who followed God's command to marry a harlot. When someone has a מראה, he sees things as if they are external, coming from an outer sensation, but all this happened only in נבואה; God would not make his נביאים do such outrageous things in real life (*Guide to the Perplexed* II: 42,43, 46).

The greatness of man is in the brain. Man's brain is not affected by body temperature, or other changes in the body. Man can therefore obtain knowledge and perfect his intellect through the studies of science and philosophy without being bogged down by physical problems. So he will reach the "שביל הוהב" in moral practice, and he will only think about higher things and about knowledge of God. He will desire to know secrets and deeper causes and will deny his physical, animalistic side. He will then get prophecy through his perfect intellect, overflowing to his perfect imaginative faculty, and he will only be aware of God and the angels (*Guide to the Perplexed* II: 36).

Thus, three goals that we should pursue are to perfect our rational, imaginative and moral faculties. We can perfect our rational faculty through study, the natural constitution of our imaginative faculty, and our moral habit through suppression of bodily desires. There are many different ranks of these. Everyone's bodily faculties (i.e., imaginative) are sometimes weak and sometimes healthy. One's mood and the state of one's imaginative faculty determine whether or not he will get prophecy. For example, יעקב אבינו did not get any נבואה for twenty-two years while mourning for יוסף, because his imaginative faculty was preoccupied. Similarly with משה, who did not get נבואה from the time of חטא המרגלים till the time that the whole דור המדבר died out, although his imaginative faculty was not a factor in his נבואה. That is why there is no prophecy in גלות, because we are sad. Also, in גלות people develop more physical/animalistic desires. So, נבואה stopped and will be returned in the time of משיח (*Guide to the Perplexed* II: 36).

There are three classes of men who receive this overflow. The first is that of "men of science" occupied with speculation. Their intellectual overflow flows only to the rational faculty, and not onward to the imaginative faculty. The second is that of prophets, to whom the overflow reaches both faculties, and the imaginative faculty is in a state natural perfection. The third class

is that of people who govern cities, legislators, soothsayers, arguers, and dreamers of vertical dreams. Their overflow reaches only the imaginative faculty. People in this category have fantastic imaginations and dreams, and they feel as if they are prophets. They mix truth with imagination, but none of it is actualized because it does not have the help of the rational faculty (they have no knowledge).

There are two possibilities in the first two classes. Man can either retain knowledge, and keep it for himself, or he can utilize it and pass it on to share with others. He must teach if he reaches the ability to, even if it is dangerous; ירמיהו continued giving his נבואה even though no one listened. People of the third class can never be relied upon for anything, because they are basically made up of imagination. One should only rely on someone who is perfect (in his rational faculty), namely, a prophet (*Guide to the Perplexed* II: 37, 38).

תורה is ideal for the perfect man, the prophet. There are several criteria for becoming a prophet: the brain must be naturally perfect, the body must be healthy, and he must have knowledge so that his rational faculty can pass from potential to actual. His intellect must be perfectly developed, and his feelings pure and balanced. He must desire to know hidden laws and causes, his thoughts must be constantly on the knowledge of God, and he must not have physical/animalistic desires.

What's In A Dream?

Tali Levy

יְיָ HAS GIVEN human beings the ability to sleep, in order that both their bodies and their spirits may rest from their normal activities. It is during this time that we allow for both our physical and spiritual abilities to renew themselves. We then awaken, ready for the morning and our daily tasks. The images that we come across in our slumber are called dreams. The purpose of this essay is to analyze dreams from a תורה perspective, and to ask whether they carry any meaning.

The study of dreams is an ancient one. People have been fascinated by dreams, and since antiquity have tried to explain their nature, purpose and interpretation. In spite of the thousands of years of effort, this area of study has advanced very little. The modern study of dreams began in the year 1900, with the work of Sigmund Freud. His theory, written in his book *Die Traumdeutung*, was that every dream, even the most seemingly ridiculous one, contains significance. He believed that dreams exist due to our pushing thoughts out of consciousness and into the subconscious. Thus, the thoughts expressed in dreams reflect man's hidden thoughts and satisfy his secret desires. Others, however, contest Freud's approach, and do not seek to ascribe great psychological significance to all dreams.

During the first half of the last century, the scientific study of dreams progressed. In 1953, the identification of various stages of sleep was discovered (detailed in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 53, pg. 339–346). The stage of “Rapid Eye Movements” (REM) was described as the most important stage for dreams. In 1957 it was understood that people who lacked REM also lacked awareness of any dream during sleep. However, the importance and function of dreams have not yet been scientifically clarified.

When a person sleeps, his senses and mind relax. The only thing that remains awake is his imagination, which shows visions of various images. It is therefore possible that some of these images may simply come from things

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we have experienced while awake. This possibility is noted in the גמרא: "אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן, אין מראין לו לאדם אלא מהרהורי לבו" (שבת נה:). One source for this idea is דניאל ב:כט: "O king, the things that you think about (during the day) will come to you in your bed (in your dreams)."

Other dreams, however, may be the result of images that a person perceives from concepts that he knows and whose impressions remain engraved in his mind, together with all his powers of imagination. Such are the stimuli for normal dreams, those experienced by everyone.

Nevertheless, there are Jewish sources that indicate that some dreams may have greater significance. For example, ספר דרך ה' (חלק ג' א:ו) explains that when someone is sleeping, the bond between his body and the various component parts of the Divine Soul is loosened. The רוח (higher part of the soul) rises and mingles with the angels, who oversee natural phenomena, while the נפש (a lower part of the soul) remains with the body. When the higher levels of the souls perceive something in the spiritual worlds, they sometimes transmit it down, step by step, until it reaches the more mundane soul. The imagination is then stimulated and forms images in its normal manner. Humans see these images as dreams. Thus, in his dreams, one is able to soar above his body and attain the higher spiritual forces of eternal life, yet upon awakening he will be unaware of the implications of what he has attained.

In the תניך, we see many examples of dreams, and their interpretations and purposes are understood. ה' uses this half-conscious state to introduce thoughts into peoples' minds, and thereby to communicate an idea or contrive whole series of events to happen. This concept can be found in many places throughout the תניך, such as in the dreams of יוסף, פרעה, שלמה, נבוכדנצר, דוד, etc.

Let us concentrate on the dream of יוסף which describes the bundles of sheaves. The פסוק says "בראשית לז:ה) (פסוק): "ויוחלם יוסף חלום ויגד לאחיו ויוספו עוד שנא אתו"

What was it that יוסף dreamt that led to his brothers' hatred towards him?

הירש, in his פירוש to the תורה, suggests the following idea. In פסוק ז' it says "והנה אנחנו מאלמים אלמים בתוך השדה...והנה תסבינה אלמתיכם ותשתחווין לאלמתי". The words "אלמים" and "אלומות" are probably not the same. It seems that the fields were first completely cut, then the small bundles, אלומות, were tied up and gathered together to make big sheaves, אלמים, in the center of the field. According to this, יוסף described how "in my dream we were not divided, but united in our work and we wished to make a big heap in the middle of the field with all the smaller heaps. I too, wanted to participate in this, but my heap would not allow me to move it. It remaining erected in the middle.

Then all your sheaves surrounded mine and bowed down to it.” This presents a picture of one isolated sheaf reigning over the submissive others, against the will of the ruler. It appears that יוסף was quite prepared to join the others in the gathering, and thereby just be a part with the others of what they had accomplished.

The second issue is that יוסף's dream involved sheaves of wheat. If the brothers were shepherds then why, with the understanding of dreams mentioned earlier, would יוסף even envision the imagery of sheaves? רב הירש elaborates that the family of יעקב was destined, in the distant future, to become an agricultural people. If agriculture was so much on the mind of יוסף that he was capable of dreaming about it, the brothers were justified in thinking that this could only be due to the teaching and information given to him by his father יעקב, on the expected national destiny of his house. All the more then, could the brothers believe themselves justified in saying “Will you indeed in the future be a king over us, or even now are you doing so?” Such a thought should not occur in a dream! Hence the brothers hated יוסף, because both the content of his dreams, and his continued urge to tell them seemed to indicate something about his intentions.

One should note that at first the brothers did not take this dream to refer to them at all, but only once they had confronted their father did they begin to believe it. Hence, they began to be jealous of what the future had in store for him.

The גמרא (ברכות ה:;) says that רבי לוי said, “A person should always anticipate a good dream coming true, even if it takes 22 years to do so. How do we know this? From יוסף, as it says (37:2), ‘These are the chronicles of יוסף, יוסף was seventeen years old.’ And furthermore, it says (41:46), ‘יוסף was thirty when he stood in front of פרעה.’ How long was this time? 13 years. Add to this 7 years of plenty and 2 years of famine. It was after this time that יוסף's dream came true”.

Elsewhere in the תנ"ך, we see that all the prophets achieved their prophecies from God via dreams and visions, with the exception of משה. As the פסוק states in יחזקאל (1:1), “אם יהיה נביאכם ה' במראה אליו אתודע בחלום אדבר בו”, This teaches us that ה' sometimes manipulates man's power to dream, and uses it to transmit His messages.

The fact that the prophetic visions are sent as a dream, however, does not mean that the two are the same. That is why the גמרא (ברכות ה:;) says “חלום אחד מששים לנבואה”. They should not be confused as the same thing; however, both contain information that man could not attain with the power of reason alone.

There are various levels of prophetic experience. The prophetic dream

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is a dream in which the prophet receives a message of importance from ה'. This could be a dream in which the prophet hears things, or is addressed by an angel, or one in which it appears to the prophet that God spoke to him. Consequently, some רבנים describe true dreams (confirmed dreams which have significance and which can be used to determine הלכה or מנהג) as a 'minor prophecy'.

Nowadays, there are neither prophecies, nor are there voices from heaven. However, people still have dreams. There are various sources that provide us with indications of the signs certifying dreams as valid. On the other hand, there are also sources that suggest that a dream cannot be understood as meaningful and complete. אמת ירמיהו writes (כג:כח) "Let the prophet who has a dream, and let he who receives My word report My word faithfully! How can straw be compared to grain?" What do straw and grain have to do with a dream? רבי יוחנן said in the name of רבי יוחאי בר יוחאי: "Just as you cannot have grain without straw [all kernels of grain are encased in straw, which is worthless], in the same way it is impossible to have a dream without some nonsense." (ברכות נה.)

רש"י explains that a perfectly rational person can explain a dream quite exactly without wishing in any way to insist its truth. Scripture should be learned as פתרון, by understanding its sense from within, and the same is true with dreams. They should not be read from the outside, but must come from the dream itself, which is a deep psychological task. Errors can always be placed into them, but to seek out the meaning from within (hence the word דרש) produces just the one explanation, the right one. He gives the example of an organic birth and the unfolding of every bud. There is an inner point of force from which the whole development takes its course. At every 'closed' symbolism there is one kernel, one central idea that only once it has been grasped, is it possible for all the rest to be understood to follow naturally.

We can understand from the above investigation that some dreams are totally true; these are usually related to "minor prophecies", and less common today. Some contain both truth and falsehood. And some are complete nonsense and obscurities, holding absolutely no meaning at all. These baffling, sometimes contradictory possibilities regarding the validity of a dream and its relevance partially explain the wide range of Rabbinic positions regarding the importance one should ascribe to a dream.

In general, since by their very nature it is very difficult to determine whether dreams are nonsense or should be taken seriously, we generally assume that the majority of dreams are considered meaningless today. However, there is an exception for matters that could constitute danger to life,

in which case we tend to ascribe more significance to the matter.

Preventing and Neutralizing a “Bad Dream”

Upon going to bed, one recites the prayer of המפיל, where we find the verse “...ואל יבהלוני רעיונו וחלומות רעים והרהורים רעים...”. This is explained by the *Artscroll Siddur* to be referring to disturbing nightmares or immoral dreams which may have been led by ideas and fantasies that one came across during the day.

יום טוב is recited every day in ארץ ישראל and every ברכת כהנים in חוץ לארץ. Between the verses of the ברכת כהנים, it is customary to recite a supplement regarding dreams (שולחן ערוך או”ח סי’ ק”ל). The תלמוד explains that the reason for this supplement is “if one had a dream but is uncertain of its meaning, and hence unsure whether the dream foretold good or evil, let him stand before the כהנים at the time they spread their hands in blessing, and let him say ‘Master of the world! I am Yours and my dreams are Yours...’” (ברכות נה:). In ארץ ישראל, where ברכת כהנים is recited every day, the prayer is omitted unless one had a dream the night before.

The reason why this supplement is inserted into the ברכת כהנים, according to a number of ראשונים (quoted in the אנציקלופדיה תלמודית, Vol.7, pg. 84–91) is because during this תפילה one has more כוונה than during any other part of service, as we have full concentration on being blessed. Also, there is hope that the כהנים will give relief to the dream. The קהל will then answer אמן as the כהנים recite the last words. (It should be noted that if there are no כהנים present, then the supplement should be said during שים שלום in order that the קהל can answer אמן.) However, the ירושלמי is of the opinion that this should not be said during ברכת כהנים at all, but rather when the dreamer awakens from sleep in the morning, as it is most fresh in the mind and subsequently can be said with more כוונה.

The גמרא (ברכות נה:) also states that if one has a dream that makes one sad or disturbed, even if it contains no bad, one is able to “neutralize” the dream by reciting a תפילה. This תפילה is in the form of a dialogue between the dreamer and three other people, in which a declaration is made that the dream should be interpreted for the good. This is based on the concept that the dream may include a portent of things to come, and the תלמוד illustrates that most such indications can have either good or bad results. Consequently, the sincere good wishes of the listeners can bring about the dream’s favorable interpretation.

During the “neutralization” (הטבת חלום), one should remember the dream in one’s mind. The dreamer should describe the dream to the three

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people, who should then “interpret” it for the good (שולחן ערוך או”ח רכ:א). In general, however, the רבנים advise people not to pay attention to dreams because most are meaningless. But, if one is disturbed and anxious about the dream, he should perform the neutralization ritual.

Finally, halachic authorities indicate that someone who had a bad dream should fast the next day because fasting is as potent against a dream (שם סעיף ב) “כאש לנסורת” “as fire to straw”. Some say that the reason is because of possible danger to life. However, רמב”ם writes (הלכות תעניות א:יב) that the reason is that one can examine his deeds and do repentance. In any case, there is a מחלוקת as to whether one is permitted to fast on שבת. The opinion that permits it also fundamentally requires the dreamer to fast the next day in penance for having failed to make the שבת a delight (see שולחן ערוך או”ח ג:רפ”ח). Today, though, we do not generally fast on שבת because of a bad dream, as we are not experts in dream interpretation to know which are good or bad.

As we have seen, there are many different aspects to dreams, both positive and negative. Much relating to dreams is unclear and not generally practiced today. However, dreams can have real significance and perhaps should not be pushed aside lightly.

פגם הלבנה — חסד לישראל

Dassie Naiman

THERE IS A disturbing passage in the תורה portion designated for ראש חודש. ראש חודש lists a series of קרבנות that בני ישראל must bring on a monthly basis, concluding with a קרבן חטאת of a particularly striking nature: "ושעיר" "לחטאת לה". עוים אחד לחטאת לה...". The word "לה" is not added to the description of any other חטאת. Quoting a מדרש קרבן חטאת on קרבן חטאת ראש חודש is symbolically meant as an atonement for ה' Himself, referring to His "sin" of reducing the size of the moon. As with much Aggadic literature, this concise explanation raises a number of questions:

1. What is the exact nature of this sin? How did reducing the moon qualify as a sin?
2. If ה' saw that it was improper to minimize the moon (and thus, requires an atonement for it) why did He do it?
3. Why is it the duty of בני ישראל to atone for God's sin?

The first question, regarding the nature of this sin, is alluded to in the prayer "א-ל אדון" recited in תפילת שחרית של שבת, "קרא לשמש וירח אור, ראה והתקין: תפילת שחרית של שבת, "א-ל אדון" recited in תפילת שחרית של שבת, "קרא לשמש וירח אור, ראה והתקין" can lead us to ask a very pertinent question—what exactly did ה' "see" that caused him to adjust the form of the moon?

Perhaps we can suggest that God saw that in the future, people would erroneously assume that the sun was the Ruler of the Universe, since it was the only heavenly body, an untouchable, unchanging presence impacting the entire world. Therefore, God created the moon, a second heavenly body, to dispel this misconception and prevent people from worshipping the sun. Thus, when the moon's stature was lessened, the likelihood of people mistaking the sun for God increased. The sun again became the only big, powerfully bright heavenly body, and the moon clearly played a subordinate

role. The possibility of dangerous misconception was revived.

It is now clear how ה' "sinned" by diminishing the moon. This act may have helped human beings to commit עבודה זרה. It served as encouragement and provided justification for the widespread, mistaken belief that the sun was indeed the Ruler. In this way, God was responsible — albeit indirectly — for a חטא. He was in some small way "מחטיא את העולם". He caused the world to sin by leading it to believe something false.

However, this explanation leads us to another question. If diminishing the moon revived an erroneous assumption and increased the likelihood of עבודה זרה, why did ה' do it? Why was the moon lessened to begin with?

תנ"ך (רש"י, בראשית א:טז ד"ה המאורות הגדולים) מדרש (quoted in) relates that on the fourth day of creation, when ה' created the sun, moon, and constellations, the moon, which was originally equal in size to the sun, complained that "two kings cannot share one crown." Whenever a pair was created, one always held a primary position, and the other was secondary. One always played a more significant role or was more powerful or prestigious than the other. (For example, of the two worlds, עולם הבא is greater. Similarly, water is greater than fire since it can extinguish flames.) Yet the sun and moon were equal in size and brightness, and were expected to share the sky and rule together in harmony. The moon did not like this, and demanded that one of the two lights (presumably referring to itself) be granted prominence. The מדרש explains that ה' punished the moon for complaining and seeking honor by diminishing it. Thus ה' addressed the moon's complaint, since the sun was now the primary source of heavenly light and the moon was demoted to a secondary position in the sky.

It is implied in the מדרש that the moon sought more power and prestige so that it could be greater than the sun. The moon desired to be the single, supreme ruler of the sky and resented any other force encroaching on its territory and usurping its power. For this it was punished.

Presumably the מדרש presents the story this way to illustrate an important point. Those who seek power ultimately stand to lose. While this works well from a pedagogical viewpoint, it is hard to accept from a more literal perspective. It is difficult to attribute greed and envy, which are human characteristics, to the moon, an inanimate object. How can one rationalize the complaint of the moon by simply saying, "the moon was greedy"? What was the moon's true motive in complaining, and how did his complaint justify ה' response?

It says תהילים פא:ד, "תקעו בחודש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו". What is this "כסה" on which the שופר must be blown? Rabbi Abraham Chill, in his book *The Minhagim*, explains that the word כסה is derived from כסוי, a cover. This is an

allusion to ראש השנה, which is the only Jewish holiday that is celebrated on the first of the month, when the moon is obscured. Rabbi Chill describes the correlation between the holidays and the state of the moon:

Other holidays are observed when the moon is nearly or completely full and shines with all its radiance and the Jews, too, celebrate those holidays with a radiant pride and elaborate ceremony (p. 182).

Why is ראש השנה different in this respect? Is it not also a holiday that should be celebrated with “radiant pride and elaborate ceremony”? Why is it the exception?

Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov raises this question in his “ספר התודעה”, and the answer he suggests also sheds light upon the question raised earlier, regarding the moon’s complaint. ראש השנה is also called יום הדין, the Day of Judgment. When this day arrives, סמאל, the prosecuting angel, presents every person’s sins before ה'. ה' then demands that סמאל bring two עדים to testify to the sins and corroborate his accusations. סמאל brings the sun as his first witness, and then proceeds to retrieve the moon as a second witness. However, he is unsuccessful because the moon is not visible on ראש השנה, and סמאל cannot search for it, since one is not supposed to delve into that which is hidden.

This explanation helps elucidate the moon’s complaint. If the moon were to emit the same light with the same intensity as the sun and have its own independent source of energy like the sun, then it could never be naturally obscured by the clouds, just as the sun is never completely hidden by the clouds. And then, when יום הדין arrived, the שטן would have two very visible, accessible עדים to testify against בני ישראל. ה' saw the value in the moon’s complaint, and responded accordingly by dimming the moon to allow it to “hide” behind the clouds at certain times of the month. ה' lessened the moon as a favor to בני ישראל, so that when they do תשובה for their sins it would be easier to gain כפרה, since the שטן would not be actively prosecuting against them due to a shortage of witnesses. ה' diminished the moon to facilitate בני ישראל’s successful repentance.

This is then the reason that בני ישראל are held responsible for bringing an atonement for a sin that God “committed.” God only committed this “sin” for בני ישראל’s benefit, in order to assist them in attaining forgiveness. Therefore, any resulting negative repercussions, such as God being מחטיא את העולם by justifying people’s misconception of the sun, are also בני ישראל’s responsibility. Doing this favor for בני ישראל had an unfortunate side effect for the rest of the world, yet ה' chose to aid בני ישראל over aiding the העולם. For this reason, it became בני ישראל’s duty to bring atonement on God’s behalf. After all, it was

only because of them that God sinned in the first place.

Everything that has been said thus far with respect to the moon, its creation, and subsequent reduction, seems to apply equally to all people, with no distinction between men and women. Yet, the *מידוש לבנה* מצוה is generally performed by men only. One could explain this practice by pointing out that this is a *מצוה עשה שהומן גרמן*, a category of מצוה that women are generally not obligated to observe. However, it is puzzling that women, although not obligated, generally do perform *מידוש לבנה* if they are able to, and yet they generally do not recite *לבנה*.

This is not merely a casual observation. It is actually an official, conscience decision that women made, which is codified in the *מגן אברהם*. Quoting the *שליה*, the *מגן אברהם* (ריש סימן תכ"ו) explains that women do not have the custom to recite *לבנה* because they are the ones who caused the diminution of the moon. It would be inappropriate for them to recite this *תפילה* that focuses on the restoration of the moon to its original size and former glory, when they are the very ones who caused the *פגם הלבנה* to begin with. This is a prime example of the principle "אין קטיגור נעשה סניגור".

This explanation of the *מגן אברהם* would work very nicely if it fit chronologically with historical events. The entire episode with the moon, however, occurred on the fourth day of creation, while women were only created later, on the sixth day. How could women be responsible for the *פגם הלבנה* if they did not even exist when it transpired?

The answer to this difficulty lies in a *פירוש* ראשית in רש"י. Immediately following *אדם's* and *חוה's* sin in *עדה*, רש"י comments, "לא נתן בו יצר הרע, עד שאכלו מן העץ ונכנס בו יצר הרע (בראשית ב:כה)". The implication is that prior to man's sin with the *עץ הדעת* he had no *יצר הרע*, no inclination to sin; therefore he did not need to do any *תשובה*. If God only lessened the moon to facilitate man's *תשובה* process, then had man not required *כפרה* for anything, ה' would presumably have left the moon alone at its originally intended size. After all, if man had no *יצר הרע* and no sins, the שטן would have nothing to prosecute and would not require any *עדים*. Thus there would be no need to obscure the moon.

Here lies the connection between women and the *פגם הלבנה*. *חוה* was the one who sinned first; only afterwards did *אדם* sin. Thus, if one were to pinpoint the exact moment when the *יצר הרע* entered the human being it would be when *חוה* first ingested the fruit from the *עץ הדעת*. *אדם* only ate the fruit after *חוה* offered it to him, and persuaded him to follow in her misguided footsteps. This is why the *מגן אברהם* writes that women are ultimately responsible for the *פגם הלבנה*. When God created the heavenly bodies on Day Four, He saw that on Day Six, when man was to be created, *חוה* would

sin and the יצר הרע would become imbedded in mankind as a result. ה' therefore modified the moon accordingly so as to benefit בני ישראל in their future quest for כפרה.

In summary, God originally created a perfect world in which both heavenly bodies were of equal size so as to discourage any pagan worshiping of the sun. However, He saw that man (or more accurately, woman) would ultimately sin and require כפרה. Therefore, he modified His perfect world to aid בני ישראל, who have a special מצוה of תשובה. Had man never sinned with the עץ הדעת, none of this would have been necessary. God would not have had to perform any favors and His perfect world would have been maintained. Thus it is proper for בני ישראל to bring this חטאת on God's behalf, since God only committed this "חטא" to better assist them.

There is an allusion to this concept within the text of קידוש לבנה. The תפילה concludes with a short יהי רצון prayer that focuses on fixing the פגם הלבנה and restoring the moon to its original size and brightness. The יהי רצון ends with the following request: "וייתקם בנו מקרא שכתוב, 'ובקשו את ה' א-להיהם: ואת דוד מלכם אמון'".

At first glance, this פסוק seems out of place, as it has no apparent connection to the פגם הלבנה, or the לבנה at all. Once the origin of the moon's defect is understood however, this פסוק takes on a whole new meaning. The moon was only lessened in response to בני ישראל's need to repent and receive כפרה for their sins. If they are "מבקשים את ה' א-להיהם" and follow in His ways by not sinning, then the entire premise for פגם הלבנה would be eliminated and the moon could finally be restored to normal size without any negative consequences for בני ישראל. The most effective way to fix a problem is to eliminate its source. This particular פסוק then serves as a very appropriate conclusion for תפילת קידוש לבנה as it not only identifies the source of the פגם, but also offers a way to rectify it: "ובקשו את ה' א-להיהם".

What's In a Name?

Elana Abilevitz

WHILE STUDYING THE lives of various figures in תנ"ך, one cannot help but notice the trend of names being changed at various climactic points in their lives. אברהם's and שרה's names were changed in י"ז when אברהם was promised that he would become "אב המון גוים" and שרה was promised that she would give birth to a son. In בראשית ל"ב a mysterious "איש" told יעקב that his name would be changed to ישראל. יוסף's name was changed to פנחס by פרעה, and יהושע's name was also changed by משה. Similarly, חנניה, מישאל, and עזריה had their names changed (in ספר דניאל), as they rose to leadership positions.

The מפרשים ask various questions about the name changes, the reasons behind them, and the differences and similarities between them. One of the most striking questions is about the difference between אברהם's and יעקב's name changes. Whereas in אברהם's case the change appears permanent (he is never again referred to as אברם), the names יעקב and ישראל continue to be used interchangeably. ר' יוסף בכור שור discusses this question:

"ולא יקרא עוד את שמך אברם, והיה שמך אברהם" - תיקן את השם והשביחו, ולא זהו שם אחר, אלא אותו שם עצמו שהיה לו קודם, אלא השביחו, ולפיכך לא מצינו שנקרא עוד אברם, שלא היה כי אם שם אחד, אבל יעקב שאמר לו הקב"ה, "לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב כי אם ישראל יהיה שמך", אין השני שייך בראשון כלל, אלא שם אחר שם לו, ולפיכך שני שמות היו לו, ונקרא בזה ובוה, "ולא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב", הכי קאמר: "לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב" לבד, "כי אם ישראל יהיה שמך" כמו כן. (בראשית יז:ה)

According to שור, בכור שור, "אברהם" was not a completely new name. אברהם was given special honor by having the ה added to his name. Therefore, after the name change, it would be inappropriate to call him by the old name אברם. On the other hand, ישראל, יעקב's changed name, is an entirely new

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name, which has no connection to his old name. That is why both names could continue to be used.

He arrives at this idea by looking closely at the language of the פסוקים. In relation to אברהם the פסוק says "והיה שמך אברהם", meaning the name will no longer be אברהם at all, whereas in relation to יעקב the פסוק says "כי אם ישראל", implying that ישראל will be his name in addition to יעקב.

The מדרש also discusses (בראשית רבה מו) the use of the name אברהם after it was changed.

ולא יקרא שמך אברהם והיה שמך אברהם - בר קפרא אמר כל מי שהוא קורא לאברהם אברהם עובר בלא תעשה רבי לוי אומר בעשה ולא תעשה - ולא יקרא עוד שמך אברהם בלא תעשה והיה שמך אברהם בעשה, והרי אנשי כנסת הגדולה קראו אותו אברהם שנאמר (נחמיה ט) "אתה הוא ה' הא-להים אשר בחרת באברהם והוצאתו מאור כשדים ושמת שמו אברהם" דלמא שנייה היא שעד שהוא אברהם בחרת בו.

This מדרש may be another source for בכור שור's commentary, in that the מדרש is based on the language of the פסוקים. Although it seems that the same type of language is used for יעקב's name change, the מדרש only makes its דיוק in regard to אברהם, providing the בכור שור with yet another basis for his interpretation.

The חוקני also adapts the מדרש into his פרוש and further discusses this distinction:

ולא יקרא עוד שמך אברהם והיה שמך אברהם. הקורא לאברהם אברהם עובר בעשה, לפי שנתלווה עמו בגיות... אבל יעקב חוזר וקוראו יעקב לפי ששמו נתלוה עמו ביהדות. ועל ידי שבני אדם קראו שמות לשנים אלו נשתנו שמותיהם, אבל יצחק שהקב"ה קרא לו שם כדכתיב: "וקראת את שמו יצחק" (ויט) שמו לא נשתנה. (בראשית יז:ה)

According to חוקני, אברהם's original name carried with it the status of his old life — the life of a non-Jew. יעקב's name, though changed, still referred to his life as a Jew, so it can still be used. The חוקני also makes an interesting comment about name changes in general. He says that אברהם and יעקב could receive new names because their original names were given to them by אדם בני אדם, but יצחק could never have his name changed because ה' gave him his name.

The מפרשים also discuss the significance behind the new names that

were given to the אבות. From here we can gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the name changes.

The פסוק tells us (בראשית יז:ה) that אברם is changed to אברהם, "כי אב המון גוים נתת". The obvious question is what does "אב המון גוים" have to do with the name אברהם? רש"י explains that the name is a נטריקון (acronym) of אב המון גוים. Before, אברהם was just "אב ארם", and now, even though his status is increased as אב המון גוים, אב המון stayed in the name. Similarly, in פסוק טו רש"י says that שרי was changed to שרה because שרי connotes "just for אברהם" and שרה means that she is for everyone.

In relation to יעקב's name, רש"י says that the significance of the addition of ישראל is as follows:

לא יעקב. לא יאמר עוד שהברכות באו לך בעקבה וערמה כי אם בשררה ובגלוי פנים, וסופך שהקב"ה נגלה אליך בבית אל ומחליף את שמך, ושם הוא מברכך, ואני שם אהיה ואודה לך עליהן וזה שכתוב "וישר אל מלאך ויכל בך ויתחנן לו" (הושע יב:ה) בכה המלאך ויתחנן לו, ומה נתחנן לו: בית אל ימצאנו ושם ידבר עמנו (שם). המתן לי עד שידבר עמנו שם ולא רצה יעקב ועל כרחך הודה לו עליהן וזהו: "ויברך אותו שם" (פסוק ל) שהיה מתחנן להמתין לו ולא רצה. (בראשית לב:כט)

ולא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב, לשון אדם הבא במארב ועקבה, אלא לשון שר ונגיד (בראשית לה:י)

רש"י looks at the meanings of each of the names. יעקב connotes trickery and ישראל is a name showing majesty. יעקב's new name expresses the heightened level of כבוד that he deserved. רש"י explains יוסף's new name, מִפְעֵנַח הַצִּפּוֹנוֹת, to mean "the decipherer of secrets", when he appointed יוסף to a high position in the kingdom. Thus, each of the new names reflects a change in status, elevation to a higher position.

אברם comes to the same conclusion about the meaning of name changes. He writes:

והקב"ה קראן כן לפי שהיה ישר בעצמו והיה דבק בא-ל תמיד...ששם אברם ושרי היו שמות הונחו להם ראשונה ונשתנו כאשר נכנסו בברית א-להים במצוות המילה ולכן היה ראוי שיעזבו שמות הטומאה ויקחו שמות הקדש (בראשית לה:י)

In regard to יעקב's name change, he says that it was because יעקב was "ישר בעצמו ודבק בא-ל תמיד". He sees a connection between the name ישראל

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and the שורש, "ישר", אברבנאל sees name changing as a sign of the person's new, increased relationship with ה'. This can also be seen with אברהם and שרה, whose names were changed when they entered into the ברית with ה'. This is also similar to the חוקוני that was mentioned earlier.

The general consensus of the מפרשים is that whether the name is changed by ה' or a person, the reason behind it stems from a promotion in גדולה. אברהם and שרה both received changes in their names during the time of the ברית מילה. It was then that they were joining into a covenant with הקב"ה and becoming the founders of Judaism. ברכה's יעקב that left him with a new name came as a confirmation of the validity of the ברכות he received in עשו's place. יוסף and יהושע both received new names because of their leadership positions — יוסף over מצרים and יהושע over בניי.

חוקוני summarizes this idea:

שמך אברהם. מנהג הוא לשנות שם לאדם כשהוא עולה לגדולה. וכן לגבי שרה, כמו שמצינו ביעקב, ביוסף, ביהושע, בחנניה, מישאל ועזריה. " (בראשית יז:)

Parallels Meet: A Look at מהר"ל on the Background of Plato

Shira Traison

IT IS HARDLY PRESUMPTUOUS to conclude that as Plato recorded The Symposium in the 5th century BCE, it was without the intention to contribute to Jewish philosophy nearly 20 centuries later. Nevertheless, as מהר"ל composed נתיב אהבת ה', Plato seems to have provided some direction. Through powerfully diverse discussions, both Plato and מהר"ל address the issue of love in terms of its history and purpose to mankind. Their distinctive doctrines and belief systems create obvious differences, but the bottom line is eerily similar. Though Greek philosophy and Jewish philosophy are approached from diverse vantage points, they often frequent common ground. Both the Platonic dialogue and מהר"ל's essay arrive at the verdict that love is a desire for perfection, and though the path taken to each author's decision travels in divergent directions, they often meet along the way.

In a comparative study of the two philosophers, a query inevitably arises. It would appear that Jewish thought, in the very essence that it is monotheistic and considered to be truth beyond doubt, should in no way be influenced by outside thought, least of all the wisdom of the polytheistic Greeks. מהר"ל himself noted concerns involved with secular study.¹ In his division of secular subjects into four sections, he categorized what was appropriate for further investigation, what should be ignored and what should be treated with caution: (1) Anything with regard to the physical environment must be studied, (2) any words of wisdom that may assist in Torah study should be familiar, to aid in the performance of מצוות, (3) anything referred to as "Greek wisdom" should not be studied, as it may steal from the time allotted for Torah study, and (4) anything that includes the study of heretical or immoral doctrines must be left untouched, unless to refute it.

According to מהר"ל,² רש"י,³ and others, "Greek wisdom" is a reference to a now obsolete form of communication through riddles, hints and artful language, as a specific form of ancient communications. Some

ראשונים, like מאירי,⁴ deem it a reference to Greek philosophy, which arguably includes heretical content, yet this opinion is widely rejected. רמב"ם, in מורה הנבוכים, instructed us to "accept the truth from whoever states it". Rav Aharon Lichtenstein⁵ of Yeshivat Har Etzion expounds on this, observing "who can fail to be inspired by the ethical ideals of Plato...there is wisdom among the gentiles, and we ignore it to our own loss." מהר"ם⁶ also affirms: "If someone tells you there is wisdom among non-Jews, believe it." Thus, to be influenced or taught by a gentile theologian may be nothing more than one great mind sharing his view with another, in an attempt to unlock the secrets of the cosmos. The truth is welcomed and nonsense scorned, as long as the bearers of both depend not on their religion, but on the quality of their acumen.

Jewish philosophy is more often than not cross-referenced with ancient thought; although Jewish philosophers certainly did not sympathize with the Greek belief in multiple gods, they did recognize that their ideas are much more than superficial reasoning. Plato began the journey in his dialogues, but it is only truly complete when studied alongside later explications of the same deliberation; later philosophers elaborate on the basis introduced by Plato. For example, מהר"ל's notion of love and its purpose, written from his unique Jewish perspective, can be viewed also as an excellent exegesis of Plato's initial conviction. Both speak of love as a desire for unity and harmony, both speak of humanity as a tripartite entity that must be amalgamated, and both speak of an inherent situation that must be understood. Love, whether in reference to God, a neighbor, or oneself, is an integral component of the human psyche; thus, time, place and theology should in no way thwart its accurate definition.

מהר"ל defined the hierarchical division of Man and the universe into categories of elements, as a necessary tool to enable spirituality's triumph over the physical. He believed that each of God's creations has a function; the more divine the creation, the more divine the function. Each function, rather than being solitary, contributes to the general operation of the world. Water is created to feed the plants, the plants are created to feed the animals, and the animals are created to feed the humans.

Likewise, man's function is to perform מצוות. By means of the physical actions demanded, מצוות allow man to be drawn closer, to penetrate the divine secrets. This is not a choice, but a necessity.⁷ Apparently, it is the only way to bridge the three worlds that coexist in the cosmos: the lower world (עולם השפל), the middle world (עולם האמצעי) and the higher world (עולם העליון). Man does not exist within these three worlds; rather there is a tripartite world existent within him.

This division, while stated in distinctly Jewish terminology, recalls an

earlier framework posited by Plato. In *Phaedrus*, Plato introduces the tripartite soul, consisting of a lower level (*epithumiai*), a middle level (*thumos*), and an immortal level (*logos*). In the *epithumiai*, the soul is closely related to nature and the visible world, ridden with desires, passions, and appetite. The common driving force is the ostensibly unquenchable thirst for pleasure. *Thumos* focuses on behavior and choices. The political society developed as a result of these varying choices, concerning will and decisions. *Logos* is the noblest part of the soul, dealing with universal reason, guiding every aspect of nature. This is the immortal soul that can survey the *world of ideas*, the separate reality behind the material world, the world of sense. This *world of ideas* encompasses the form or ideas that exist and are apparent to man in nature.

In essence, Plato said, man is a dual creature; he exists in the sensory world, which he can identify through his five senses and nothing more. Nothing in the sensory world is permanent, as it is a world of constant change and motion. It is only in the *world of ideas* where he can obtain true knowledge, by use of reason, eternal and immutable. The sensory world is merely a reflection of this world of reason.

מהר"ל's higher world, of truth, is without motion and change, while alternatively, the lower world, of judgment, is with constant motion and change. It is a world of cause and effect, thus if something seems unsatisfying, it is in his power to transform it. It is an expression of the body within the soul (similar to Plato's *epithumai*). The lower world is wrought with desires and appetites, while the upper world is a spiritual haven. The Torah is brought down from this world of truth/intellect, and dressed in a garb of *מעוות* is presented before him, modified beyond recognition from its original form so it can appeal to his physical being.⁸ The ultimate goal is to find unity and harmony between the three worlds.

Regarding the question of the relationship between body and mind, Rene Descartes maintained, "I think, therefore I am".⁹ Despite systematic doubt of existence, one can always be sure of his own existence, since the act of doubting proves action of an existent mind. Descartes believed that nothing could be accepted as true until clearly and distinctly perceived by man. In contrast, מהר"ל contests this, suggesting that man can "think himself out of existence" in a process of self negation. When man possesses a sense of the cosmos as a whole, this leads to "ביטול היש", the negation of the ego.

מהר"ל's portrayal of the creation of human beings is based on a *מדרש*, citing the verse that at the creation of man, "male and female He created".¹⁰ מהר"ל interprets this to mean that there were two faces on one being. מהר"ל explains that it means that upon creation, the form of man could not yet

handle the two separate entities of male and female. Although they were two complete creations within one, man could not yet physically exist as male alone and female alone.

מהר"ל emphasizes that the reason that man merited to begin as one, though every species has male and female members, is because in this physical world he is alone in the high realm of his intellect and knowledge, and this exhibits the unity of the human being. Man is unique, and thus merits unity in his being. Even now, as separate biological forms, the human species is essentially one being.¹¹

To understand Plato's theory of Love and compare it to מהר"ל's conclusions, it is necessary to summarize the narrative of the Symposium, the banquet, was written in 416 BCE. This is a (real or imaginary) record of a dialogue between Socrates, Plato's esteemed teacher, and a number of his guests. It is to be noted that the conversation is pursued because some of the guests are inebriated, and therefore make light of the situation with the proposal that each praise the god Love. Phaidros initiates, describing Love as the most ancient god, one without parents, although it is questionable whether he came before or after Chaos. In a cheerful description, Phaidros praises Love, crediting him with the power to provide virtue and happiness, and ensure an honorable appearance to one's beloved. He says Love guides all mankind, and since ambition is beauty and shame is ugly, lovers turn towards beauty to gratify their adored.

Pausanious, the next speaker, disagrees with Phaidros on the grounds that Love is not one, but two goddesses. The older is the motherless one, Heavenly Love, who causes love of mind, not foolishness, and the younger is the daughter of Zeus, Common Love, who works at random and causes love of bodies, not souls. No action in itself is beautiful, he contends, until it is done correctly. Love, when done correctly, is beautiful. Sometimes people embark on Common Love, supplicating and flattering, behaving as lovers towards an ugly goal. This is at best ephemeral, because Heavenly Love is a result of truth and reality, which is everlasting.

Pausanious is stricken with the hiccups (in a typically humorous Platonic fashion), and so the doctor Eryximachos continues the claim, asserting that his version of medicine and Love are virtually identical; both seek harmony and moderation of extremes. Double Love indeed exists, one in health, which is beautiful to gratify good, and one in disease, which is ugly to gratify the intemperate. The goal is to combine the two; ugly when paired with good will cease to be ugly, hot and cold when paired make good season, high notes when paired with low make harmony, and quick paired with slow makes rhythm. Thus Love, Common paired with Heavenly, makes a controlling power.

Aristophanes, the comic, approaching from a different angle, argues that if mankind truly understood the power of Love they would be worshipping him, since he is the most man-loving, helper and healer of all the gods. When man was created, said he, there were three sexes: male, female and the common sex, hermaphrodite. Male was born of the sun, female of the earth, and hermaphrodite of the moon. With his round body, four arms, four legs, and two heads resting upon one neck, he was a force to be reckoned with, and in his terrible strength attacked the gods with the intent to wage war on heaven. Zeus wanted to prevent this by killing him, but instead had Apollo slice him down the middle, to create two weak creatures from one strong. Each missed their other half, and so they embraced, refusing to function without the other. As human beings still pine for their other half, when forthcoming, Love is the captain who helps them find it. If not, Zeus will merely slice them down the middle again, all in the name of heaven. It is rare, however, to actually be united with one's other half.

Agathon, the final presenter before Socrates, then enters with a beautiful but insubstantial account, claiming that love makes everything seem better. Though all the gods are happy, Love is the happiest, best, most beautiful, and youngest because he flies away from Old Age. He obviously came before Ouranous and Gala, heaven and earth, since they were once at odds until united by Love. Love is soft and graceful, and leaves upon encountering a hard soul. He resides only where it is flowery, fragrant and pretty, and due to his sensitive and delicate nature cannot be in a negative situation. He empties man of anger, fills him with friendliness, and ordains meetings, orgies, dances and feasts. Everyone becomes a poet when touched by love.

When everyone has said his piece, Socrates enters the discussion in an attempt to draw man's thought from vulgarity to noble aspects of love, in seeking for ideal beauty of mind and spirit. Socrates' argument was that just as a father is the father of something (his child), a mother is the mother of something (her child) and a brother is the brother of something (his sibling), Love must be the love of something. Through logical deduction, Socrates disregards the statement of Agathon, and in a series of questions and answers determines that since Love desires the object of his love, and desire can only exist when there is a lack. Love must be a desire of something that is lacking. To desire something one currently has is just a desire that in the *future* he will continue to possess it.

It is here that Socrates introduces Diotima of Mantheia, the mystery woman and legendary priestess perhaps invented by Plato (the mystery woman is commonly found in Greek literature, as a device for emphasis). Diotima taught him that what is not beautiful does not necessarily have to be ugly, just as what is not wise does not necessarily have to be ignorant.

Rather, there is a middle ground. If one displays the right opinion he cannot be ignorant, yet if he cannot explain it, he also cannot be wise. Love may not be good, but he is also not bad. Therefore, Love must not be a god. Since he is obviously not a mortal, it is safe to assume that he is in between. Love is a great spirit, the medium *between* the gods and the mortals.

According to Socrates, when Aphrodite was born, the gods held a great feast and Plenty became intoxicated and fell asleep. Poverty, in all her lacking, lay beside him and conceived. Love was the result (He follows Aphrodite, beauty, because if not for her birthday party Love would not exist). Like his mother he is hard, rough, homeless and dwells with Want. Like his father he has a penchant for desire, intelligence and beauty.

In his rejection of the statements elucidated by his contemporaries, Socrates was philosophizing based on the following principle: All arts are poetry called by different names. Love is the desire of good and happiness, but those who achieve these wants through business, sports, religion, and philosophy, are just lovers by another name. *Love is not seeking your other half, because you do not necessarily find yourself desirable.* Love is simply the desire of having good for yourself always. With love you can create, thus immortalizing yourself, so in effect your immortal self will also only experience good and happiness. *Love is a unification of the soul, resulting in Unity and Harmony.* We desire and die for our offspring, because immortality is what earnestness and love pursue. People are ready to take risks for their children, spend money, endure hardships, and even die for them, because their children are their immortal memory. Man desires good, because he wants to beget to good, so his immortality will live in good. Beauty is different in every body, and the love of a body is a light and trivial thing. Beauty in the soul is much more precious, and the great one will appear utterly perfect. It is impossible to give birth to likeness, only to reality. Ergo, Love is definitely the greatest helper of mankind.

The description in מהר"ל of male and female beginning as one entity which was then split is analogous to the picture drawn by Aristophanes, painting male and female as distinct divisions of the same being. Yet, מהר"ל's analysis travels far beyond the physical depiction. Note that while man was fixed, and thus able to divide into male and female, he continued to strive for perfection. This is vital in the realization that according to מהר"ל, even the union of male and female is imperfect until God enters the equation. It is not merely the search for each other that has significance, but also the search for the deity who created them (or rather, him, as ideally they are one).

A key concept within the philosophy of מהר"ל is that of דבקות. There is no direct definition with which to classify this notion, yet it can best be

described as one becoming more spiritual and less physical, a feat impossible by natural standards. One achieves the image of God by a divine endowment, by living in communion of God.¹² The discussion of love must correspond respectively to man's love of other men and of God. In משלי, the king Solomon professed that lovers are connected, despite any physical separations of bodies, because of the connection of their souls. That which man thinks is separate and unique is limited to a physical sense. Love is not an emotion, rather a cosmic principle that connects. The theory of essentialism, every cosmic detail being connected to its cosmic essence, refers to love as well. משלי continues with the implication that one must save his brother in dire straits, since he is the same as him, and an equal, thus deserving of love. However, man and woman are obviously different, by virtue of the gender distinction alone, and so this does not seem realistic. Perhaps then, Love is a connection of things that are not the same.¹³ A magnet is not attracted to its duplicate, nor does a puzzle piece fit in with its duplicate; so too, opposites attract. Hot desires cold, wet desires dry, polar opposites desire each other in order to find a medium. Man loves and desires God because God is so distant. While God has no physical aspect, man is chiefly material, and correspondingly, the result is love. Thus, Plato's "beauty of the soul" is analogous to מוהר"ל's recognition of God.

Nevertheless, in regard to love between man, history proves otherwise. We are witness to a phenomenon of people being smitten by those most similar to them, in terms of personality, nationality, outlook and status. We do not desire our own selves, because love is a desire for the beloved, the object that is loved. It seems to imply that as a prerequisite for survival, each element has a parallel element that can ensure continued existence. When x needs y to survive, by definition, x loves y. It is neither the attraction of opposites, nor the magnetism of similarities, rather the innate power of need. One cannot achieve perfection as a singular entity, and thus requires/desires another being to complete and perfect. Plato's theory is once again espoused by מוהר"ל: Love is a desire for unity and perfection, a strategy to harmonize the individuals within a cosmic degree. Love (אהבה) is unification at its ideal definition. Hot desires cold not because opposites attract, but because as a combination it elicits an entirely new unit. They perfect one another, and love is a desire for what will accomplish perfection. Just as the Socratic claim illustrates, love is not the search for man's self, because he is aware of his own deficiencies. Rather, it is the exploration for the most ideal entity to perfect those deficiencies, to be investigated and pursued in the endeavor to complete. Love is not the arrival at perfection, but rather the appropriate intermediary with which to pursue good.

The Torah commands man to fear his parents and rabbis, yet says

nothing of love. With respect to God, both love and fear are required. God completes man, as his polar opposite, and de facto, that is Love. When Rabbi Akiva was brought for execution, prior to becoming one of the 10 martyrs, as they combed his skin with iron, he affirmed his willingness to accept עול מלכות שמים with love. His students inquired with shock how he could say that, while clenching his teeth through the torture imposed upon him as a result of that very idea. His answer was simply that he had spent his whole life declaring in the שמע to love God with his whole being, and now he finally had a chance to fulfill what otherwise might be an empty promise. He died in his final utterance of “ה' אחד”, and through that, an exposition of his love, he and God were united. Man alone is nothing; from God he comes, and to God he will return. Nothing exists other than God, and man is merely an extension of Him. The ultimate goal is to realize that and thus return to his original state, in a process that will bring about unity and harmony.

Loving God is therefore different than loving man, because while each man is separate, we are all a part of God. A father loves his son because he came from him, and is a continuation of his self, a proof of his immortality. Once again, Plato is considered, yet the distinction lies in that the Greek sense of immortality is for a continued domination of good for man's eternal self, while the Judaic sense is the continued domination of good for man's eternal self to further serve God. A son cannot love his father with the same strength and conviction, because he does not comprehend that connection. God loves man more than man can love God, or even understand, simply because of the nature of His reality.

We can now see that מהר"ל examined the philosophy and creeds devised by Plato, and categorically accepted and/or critiqued each consideration. He rejected the scheme of Eryximachos that opposites attract, and thoroughly disregarded the insubstantial claims elicited by Agathon, yet meticulously elaborated Socrates's proposal. Beginning with the concept of a tripartite entity, he proved Plato's conviction that love cannot coexist with perfection. Love is the lack of perfection, and will surface only at a unification of the soul; a final approach at precision. While love is not man searching for his other half, it is a unification of the soul, specifically in harmonizing the scattered elements of man's nature. Both philosophers agreed that love is not the degrading vision of man to woman, rather a heartening scrutiny of man from within himself, which can then educe love between all creatures. Regardless of its destination, love serves to unite the lover and beloved, the great medium of mortal to God (whether adopted through a monotheistic or polytheistic stance).

Furthermore, the assertion of man's duality in a constantly changing sensory (Plato), lower (מהר"ל) world is vital in this discussion. Plato's view of

external patterns, that the soul existed before inhabiting the body, is a concept that all living things are the imperfect reflections of the ideal forms found in the world of ideas. Eventually, everything in the sensory world will die and decompose. Man will not achieve true knowledge of anything that is ephemeral, thus only opinions on the sensory world can exist. True knowledge can be understood through reason alone. The soul is immortal.¹⁴ מהר"ל also believes in the duality of man and the immortal soul, as an extension of God. Man is dichotomous: a physical being and a spiritual being. The fact that he is a spiritual creature existing within the physical home (similar to Plato's description of eternal reason and knowledge within a sensory world) proves that the negation of the ego is the recognition of the truly eternal. Since the physical body to which he resorts is ephemeral, though he utilizes it to the best of his ability, it is alongside the awareness that it is not the ideal goal. The idea that מצוות are the world of truth and reason dressed in a garb to entice man echoes Plato's concept of this world being a mere reflection of a higher one. Plato's and מהר"ל's mutual approach to love stems from this depiction of duality. Man lives in an imperfect world of constant motion and change, and by virtue of the fact that he dwells among the physical, he lacks the spiritual perfection he yearns to attain. In an effort of self-negation, of rising above and beyond the imperfection (the sensory world which by definition cannot be utter truth and perfection, only a lower world of constant motion and change) he can perhaps reach the higher world, the world of ideas, the world of truth and intellect. Then man, a formerly dichotomous corporeal, will merge into a harmonious, united creature. Love serves to do just that, and in effect, results in perfection.

1. מהר"ל, נתיבות עולם, נתיב התורה.

2. מנחות סד:.

3. פירוש המשניות, סוף מסכת סוטה.

4. Quoted in *The Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*, xi. Published by Rabbi Jacob Joseph School. 1986.

5. "A Consideration of General Studies from a Torah Point of View", Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, reprinted in *The Torah Umadda Reader*. YU.

6. איכה רבה, ב:ג.

7. תפארת ישראל, פרק שני.

8. מהר"ל, דרך חיים, פרק ראשון.

9. Discourse on Method, Rene Descartes.

10. בראשית א:כו.

11. גור אריה, שם.

12. *Maharal and Early Hasidim*, Bezalel Safran.

Parallels Meet: מהר"ל on the Background of Plato

13. מהר"ל נתיבות עולם - נתיב אהבת ה'. 13.

14. *Sophies World: A novel about the history of philosophy*. Jostein Gaarder. 1991. H. Ascehug and Co. Oslo. p. 81-92.

Why Bad Things Happen to Good People

רמב"ם's Approach to the Problem of עדיק ורע לו

Sarah Gordon

FOR CENTURIES, PHILOSOPHERS have grappled with the concept of עדיק ורע לו. It has been quoted in debates about the Holocaust, and is also the subject of an entire book of תני"ך—ספר איוב. The fundamental problem can be summed up succinctly: how can it be that righteous people suffer, when we believe in a God of mercy and justice?

רמב"ם's approach to this subject is rational and systematic. First, he presents a few "absolute truths," concerning the way in which he believes that God must be viewed and how He governs the world. These truths are considered by רמב"ם to be the fundamentals of Jewish faith and belief; they can therefore never be altered. Also, anything that contradicts these principles must by definition be false.

Before רמב"ם begins his analysis of עדיק ורע לו, he first addresses why God created evil in the first place. It is in this context that רמב"ם states his first principle:

ואחר הקדמות אלו יש לדעת ברור כי ה' יתהדר ויתרומם אין לומר עליו שהוא עושה רע באופן עצמי כלל, כלומר שהוא יתעלה ירצה במטרה ראשונית לעשות הרע, זה לא יתכן, אלא כל מעשיו יתעלה טוב מוחלט, לפי שאינו עושה אלא מציאות, וכל מציאות טוב (מורה הנבוכים חלק ג: פרק ז).

Therefore, according to רמב"ם, it is impossible for God to intentionally create evil. Because we know that God's nature is "absolute good," therefore all His actions must also be absolute good (טוב מוחלט), leaving it impossible for God to create something that by nature is evil. But then how can it be that evil exists, if God is unable to create it? רמב"ם explains that evil does not "exist" in the same way that good does. Unlike good, evil merely exists as a "lack" or "absence" of good, and cannot be created as an independent principle.¹

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רמב"ם then divides evil into three categories: natural evils which man cannot control, evils that men inflict on each other, and evils that a man inflicts on himself, the latter two of which man can control.

רמב"ם explains that God, with His divine wisdom, created all matter with a pre-existing privation, an "absence of good" which is the root from which all natural evils and death stem. This absence of good is necessary according to רמב"ם, because even though it is the source for evil in matter, it is also essential to the cycle of life. If people cease to die, then people will also cease being born, since one is dependant on the other. This privation that man has been created with is what makes him susceptible to natural evils, such as sickness and injury, or on a grander scale, events that occur as a result of a change in the elements of nature, for example, earthquakes or landslides.

This opinion of רמב"ם is clearly stated in the מורה הנבוכים:

ומי שירצה להיות בעל בשר ועצמות ולא יתרשם ולא יארעו דבר ממאורעות החומר, הרי רצה לאחד בין ההפכים בלי שירגיש בדבר? (מורה הנבוכים חלק ג', פרק יב).

Therefore evil must exist. As well, the fact that man was created with this apparent lacking does not take away from the "perfectness" or "absolute good" of all of God's acts. Man, even with his inborn absence of good, is still the most perfect man that could ever be created. This is another one of רמב"ם's absolute truths that is stated in the מורה הנבוכים:

שכל מה שאפשר שיתהווה מאיזה חומר שיהיה, הרי הוא מתהווה בתכלית השלמות האפשרית להתהוות מאותו החומר המיני, וישיג פרטי המין מן החיסרון כפי חסרון החומר של אותו הפרט, ותכלית מה שאפשר שיתהווה מן הדם והורע והשלם שבו הוא מין האדם, כפי שכבר נודע מטבעו שהוא חי הוגה מת, והכרחי למין זה מן הרע שימצא (מורה הנבוכים חלק ג', פרק יב).

Additionally, we see Hashem's abundant mercy even within the bad. Though He decreed that it be necessary for evil to exist, He still limits the amount of evil that presents itself in the world at specific times. רמב"ם explains (מורה הנבוכים חלק ג' פרק יב) that if one looks at the world as a whole, one will see how cities have existed for thousands of years without ever suffering a natural disaster, and how millions of people have been born perfectly healthy, and so forth. Generally in life one will find that natural evils are extremely rare, "שהרעות הבאות על בני אדם מן המין הזה מעטות מאד מאד".

The second type of evil fits into a more social category, namely the evils that men inflict upon one another through war, murder, or general hatred. These evils are in man's control to end, as he is the one who has perpetrated them. רמב"ם does point out however that despite the fact that these evils are man's fault there is hardly any place where this type of evil is predominate, though it is more frequent than the natural evils.

The third type of evil is one that man inflicts or brings upon himself. רמב"ם explains that this evil is the most frequent, and is entirely man's responsibility, as it is brought on only by his own ignorance. Man thinks that he is the center of the universe and that everything revolves around him. He wails and complains about the great evil that has occurred when something does not go exactly as he had planned. Or, a man eats too much and ends up with a stomachache, he will again cry out about this great evil that has unjustly befallen him, when in reality, it is merely a consequence of his failure to consider his own actions before embarking on them.

This is also clearly stated in the מורה הנבוכים:

ומרעות שאנו עושים אותם בעצמנו בבחירתנו אנו מצטערים ומיחסים את זה לה'
יתעלה מכך, כמו שבאר בספרו ואמר שחת לו לא בניו מומם וגו' (דברים כב:ה),
ובאר שלמה את זה ואמר אולת אדם תסלף דרכו ועל ה' יזעף לבו (משלי יט:ג).
(מורה הנבוכים חלק ג' פרק יב)

But how is a man expected to rid himself of this type of evil? רמב"ם's solution is quite simple. All man needs to do is take some time to reflect on how miniscule he is in regard to the entire universe, and then he will come to realize his own personal lack of importance and how his previous judgment that the world is full of evil was completely false. He also must reflect on how "כל אורחות ה' חסד ואמת לנערי בריתו ועדתיו", and how only by concentrating on what is important in life can a man be truly happy.

Now that רמב"ם has explained how evil is able to exist in the world, he can turn back to the original question of לו צדיק ורע.

To answer this question, רמב"ם turns to ספר איוב, which is unique as its entire theme is the problem of לו צדיק ורע:

מה שהאדם הצדיק השלם ישר המעשים ירא החטא ביותר, באים עליו יסורים
גדולים תכופים ברכושו ובניו וגופו לא בחטא המחייב כן (מורה הנבוכים חלק ג'
פרק כב).

רמב"ם then analyzes the different reasons given by איוב and each of his friends as to why these misfortunes have befallen him, and charts each per-

son's opinion as a separate answer or approach to our question of *לֹא יִרְעוּ לֹא*. רמב"ם then uses the method we mentioned originally (that anything that contradicts רמב"ם's principles of absolute truth must by definition be false) as a litmus test to determine which answers to the *לֹא יִרְעוּ לֹא* question are acceptable within Jewish philosophy and beliefs, and which are not.

רמב"ם starts with the opinion of איוב. According to איוב (as רמב"ם understands him), the fact that righteous people suffer is proof that God does not care if men are good or evil, and that God holds the world in contempt and has abandoned it. He backs up his argument by pointing out how there seems to be no end to the prosperity of the wicked, and this would only be possible in a world where God does not care enough about their actions to punish them.

רמב"ם rejects this approach for two reasons. Firstly, this contradicts one of his principles of truth, namely the belief that God punishes those who transgress His commandments, and rewards those who fulfill them. This opinion of איוב also contradicts another fundamental belief, that God is active in the world and is in control of everything that happens; He has not left it to function by itself.²

In addition, רמב"ם has proof from איוב himself that this opinion is incorrect. איוב later on retracts his first opinion, replacing it with an understanding that all God does is good, and that true happiness comes about not through material things, but through knowledge of God.

רמב"ם attributes איוב's previous approach to ignorance:

כִּי אֱלוֹהִים הֵיחָם לֹא הָיָה עֵינָיו קָשָׁה עָלָיו כְּמוֹ שִׁיתְבָּאָר (מִוֶּרְחָה הַנְּבוּכִים חֶלֶק ג'
פֶּרֶק כ"ב).³

The next approach that רמב"ם analyzes is that of אליפז, who believes that איוב must deserve all the suffering that has befallen him, and it must have been brought upon him as a punishment for sins that he has committed. Just because איוב thinks of himself as righteous, does not mean that before God he is considered righteous. According to אליפז's opinion, everything that happens to a man is deserved, but sometimes both the reasons why we deserve to be punished and the way in which we deserve to be punished are hidden from us.

רמב"ם accepts this opinion of אליפז, calling it "in keeping with the opinion of the Torah" (מִוֶּרְחָה הַנְּבוּכִים חֶלֶק ג' פֶּרֶק כ"ג), as it does not contradict any absolute truths and therefore by definition must be acceptable to Jewish belief. This also ties in to the accepted belief that if you see a righteous man suffering and an evil man prospering, soon it will switch around and things will be as they should.⁴

The next opinion is that of בלדד, who believes that if you are innocent of sin and are still suffering, then it must be that Hashem is testing you, so that He will be able to give you a great reward. רמב"ם rejects this concept of "ייסורים של אהבה", stating that only an unjust God would act in this manner. The implication that God causes suffering to the righteous solely to increase their reward is false, as according to רמב"ם, every pain and affliction can only come about as a direct punishment for a prior sin.

Finally, רמב"ם examines צופר's approach. According to צופר, everything that happens occurs because God wills it to be so, and therefore we have no right to question God concerning His actions, as all His actions stem from His great and infinite wisdom that we will never be able to comprehend. This opinion seems to make sense, and it even corresponds with the dictum: "רבי ינאי אומר, אין בידינו לא משלות הרשעים ואף לא מיסורי הצדיקים" (פרקי אבות ד:ט).

However רמב"ם still clearly states that this philosophy is not one accepted by Jewish belief.⁵ This is rather puzzling, but I believe that this problem can be solved quite simply. It is not that this opinion is false, meaning that it does not contradict an absolute truth, but the problem lies in the fact that the opinion is incomplete. There's nothing wrong with stating that it is forbidden to question God—this is true. But what צופר forgot to add was that the reason why we don't question God is because to do so would imply that we do not believe that everything He does is good and for our benefit.

That is why according to רמב"ם the opinion of אליהו's fourth friend אליהוא supersedes all the rest (ג', פרק כג). רמב"ם explains that though the majority of אליהוא's opinion is merely repetition of the main points in the ideas of אליהו's other friends, in אליהוא's final point he introduces a new idea, one that will both complete the idea of צופר's that we mentioned above, and as well point out the key insight into what רמב"ם will develop as his final conclusion concerning ורע לו צדיק.

אליהוא expands on the previous approach of צופר by stating that the primary problem with ורע לו צדיק is perception. The way we understand justice is different from the way that God perceives justice. Just because we understand authority in one particular way based on the way that we govern our respective countries or cities, does not mean that God must rule over His world in that same way as well. As רמב"ם states in מורה הנבוכים:

וכהבדלי הפעולות הטבעיות מן הפעולות המלאכותיות, כך הבדלי ההנהגה האלוהית וההשגחה האלוהית והכוונה האלוהית לאותם הדברים הטבעיים, לבין הנהגתנו והשגחתנו וכוונתנו האנושית למה שאנו מנהגים ומשגיחים בו ומתכוונים בו (מורה הנבוכים חלק ג' פרק כג).

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Add this new thought of אֱלֹהִים' onto צופר's original idea and we are left with an approach that is completely acceptable to Jewish belief according to the רמב"ם.

רמב"ם is saying that the purpose of ספר איוב is to help us reach the realization that we will never be able to comprehend God's acts, mainly because of our inferiority compared to Him, and it is therefore pointless to even try to attempt to find reasons to explain them. Once one reaches this stage, one will find that his אמונה will not be challenged as much whenever he comes into contact with suffering, and that he will be a happier person, since he will have reached a truer awareness of God.

רמב"ם concludes that צדיק ורע לא is not usually what it seems. Either the צדיק is not so much of a צדיק, or the apparent "evil" that is happening is not really evil. Or, in the small minority of times where it actually seems that real evil is happening to a real צדיק, we must realize that it all comes from God, and that even though we are not able to understand the reasons why God is doing this now, we must believe that God does have a reason, and that everything He does is for the good.

Hopefully we will all be able to take חיוון from the רמב"ם's words and be able to see the good in all of Hashem's acts, thereby keeping our אמונה solid during the good times and the bad.

¹ רמב"ם must provide this explanation, because to acknowledge an independent principle of evil would mean denying the uniqueness and omnipotence of God.

² Both of these are included in רמב"ם's עקרים י"ג.

³ רמב"ם, however, does not blame איוב for his previous opinion, as he says it is an understandable response of someone who has experienced misfortunes but cannot think of anything that he's done to deserve them (מורה הנבוכים, חלק ג' פרק כב).

⁴ מורה הנבוכים חלק ג', פרק כב.

⁵ "והשקפת צופר נוטה לשבט האשעריה"-מורה הנבוכים חלק ג': פרק כג.

קרבן עולה וקרבן שלמים:
Analysis of a Midrash Concerning Man's
Progression Towards God

Rachel Horn

THERE IS A lengthy discussion in the מדרש (כב פרשה) between רבי אלעזר and רבי חנינא pertaining to the question of whether or not a קרבן שלמים could be brought before מתן תורה. רבי אלעזר argues that both עולות and שלמים were offered before מתן תורה, and רבי חנינא claims that exclusively עולות were offered. Several cases serve to demonstrate this argument.

"ויבא קין מפרי האדמה מנחה לה" - מן הפסולת, לאריס רע שהיה אוכל את הבכורות, ומכבד למלך את הסייפות, "והבל הביא גם הוא מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהו", ר"א ורבי יוסי בר חנינא, ר"א אמר הקריבו בני נח שלמים ורבי יוסי אמר עולות הקריבו. אתיב ר"א לרבי יוסי בר חנינא והכתיב "והבל הביא גם הוא מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהו" דבר שחלבו קרב. מה עבד ליה לרי' יוסי, עביד ליה מן שמניהון. אתיב ר"א לרבי יוסי והא כתיב (שמות כד) "וישלח את נערי בני ישראל ויעלו עולות ויזבחו זבחים שלמים לה' פרים" מה עביד ליה ר' יוסי בר חנינא, שלמים בלא הפשט וניתוח. אתיב ר"א לרבי יוסי והא כתיב (שמות יח) "ויקח יתרו חותן משה עולה וזבחים לאלהים", מה עבד לה רבי יוסי בר חנינא, כמ"ד לאחר מתן תורה בא יתרו. א"ר הונא איתפלגון ר' ינאי ורבי חייא רבה, ר' ינאי אמר קודם מתן תורה בא יתרו, ורבי חייא רבה אמר אחר מתן תורה בא, א"ר חנינא ולא פליגי מאן דאמר קודם מתן תורה בא, הקריבו בני נח שלמים, ומאן דאמר אחר מתן תורה בא, עולות הקריבו.

והא מסייעא ליה לרבי יוסי בר חנינא (שיר השירים ד) "עורי צפון", זהו העולה שהיתה נשחטת בצפון, מהו עורי דבר שהיה ישן ומתעורר, "ובואי תימן", אלו שלמים שהיו נשחטים בדרום, ומהו ובואי דבר של חידוש, א"ר יהושע דסכנין בשם רבי לוי קרא מסייעא ליה לרבי יוסי בר חנינא דכתיב (ויקרא ו) "זאת תורת

העולה היא העולה" שהיו בני נח מקריבים, כד אתי לשלמים (ויקרא ז) "זאת תורה וזבח השלמים אשר הקריבו" אין כתיב כאן אלא אשר יקריבו מכאן ולהבא.

First let us understand the arguments in the מדרש. The first case described by the מדרש is the קרבנות of קין and הבל. In the case of הבל's sacrifice (בראשית ד:ד), the תורה states that he brought "מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהו", which רבי אלעזר takes to mean עולות (where the actual animals are offered) and שלמים, in which only the fat is offered. רבי יוסי argues that "חלביהו" means "מן" שמיניהו, the fattest and choicest ones.

The next case in the מדרש concerns the sacrifices offered by בני ישראל at סיני (שמות כד:ה). In his attempt to prove that both שלמים and עולות were offered before מתן תורה, רבי אלעזר points out that the פסוק says "ויעלו עולות וזבחו וזבחים שלמים". However, רבי יוסי interprets the word "שלמים" in this פסוק as referring to the animals being offered whole (as opposed to cut up), from the שורש of "שלים", thus keeping his opinion (that in fact no שלמים were offered before מתן תורה) intact.

The last case discussed in the מדרש is found in שמות יט:יב where יתרו brought עולות and "זבחים". רבי אלעזר says that "זבחים" means שלמים. (Rav Hirsch explains that the word זבח refers to any sacrifice, but is often used in conjunction with the שלמים, or is understood to mean שלמים itself.) רבי יוסי concurs with רבי אלעזר — he says that in this case it is possible that יתרו brought both עולות and שלמים, because he believes that יתרו joined the Jews in the desert after מתן תורה. It can be assumed that רבי אלעזר supports the view that יתרו came before מתן תורה, since it is only logical that all non-Jews brought both עולות and שלמים before מתן תורה just as יתרו did.

The מדרש then continues to give two proofs verifying רבי יוסי בר חנינא's view, that שלמים were only offered after מתן תורה. The first can be found in שיר השירים ד:טז where the פסוק states "עורי צפון", "Awake, north wind". This is understood as an allusion to the עולות, which were sacrificed on the northern side of the מזבח. The term "awake" implies arousing from a state of slumber, which means that עולות, although dormant, existed previously. Hence, this is a support for the idea that עולות were already in existence before מתן תורה. The פסוק then states "ובואי תימן", "And come, south", alluding to the שלמים offering, which was sacrificed in the south, or any side of the altar. "Come" connotes something new, implying that שלמים were introduced only after the giving of the תורה.

The second proof is from ויקרא ו:ב, where the תורה states "זאת תורת העולה" "היא העולה". רבי יוסי refers to the sacrifice that בני נח brought. When talking about שלמים, the תורה writes "זאת תורת זבח השלמים אשר הקריבו" "אשר הקריבו" refers to the offerings in the future, those after מתן תורה. Therefore, the מדרש

concludes that מתן בר חנינא רבי יוסי's view, that only עולות were offered prior to מתן תורה, is the correct one.

Through analyzing the scenarios cited by the מדרש and deciphering the significance of the different קרבנות, we can understand why שלמים were prohibited in pre-מתן תורה society, and only permitted afterwards. Furthermore, we will see that the specific קרבנות mentioned by the מדרש, in addition to providing information relevant to the argument at hand, were actually major milestones in mankind's evolving relationship with God. When seen in this light, it will become clear that the argument about עולות and שלמים is more than a technical halachic dispute. It actually highlights a major step in the development of that relationship.

The sacrifices of קין and הבל are the first Biblical accounts of humans bringing sacrificial offerings to God. הבל gave "מבכורות צאנו", while קין's sacrifices were not up to par. The level of quality expected in a sacrifice is outlined in this early episode.

When the תורה discusses the sacrifices of בני נח, it is referring to the offerings of all the non-Jews. One can see a paradigm of this type of sacrifice by looking at נח's own sacrifice after he disembarked from the תיבה (ח:כ: בראשית ח:כ:). The מדרש (בראשית רבה לט:ט) says that the מזבח on which נח sacrificed was actually the same one upon which אדם הראשון brought his sacrifices. A different מדרש (פרקי דרבי אלעזר כז) states that מזבח נח was also the same one that קין and הבל had used. The connection between the various מזבחות shows the continuity man had maintained, while simultaneously highlighting the progress he had made over the generations. Man continued to attempt to seek God and tried to understand how humans should relate to Him. After the sacrifice of נח, God promised never to destroy the world again. Thus, a covenantal relationship began, with man showing recognition to God, and God promising to man. The progression had already begun, from the modest מנחה offerings of קין and הבל to an עולה sacrifice with a resolution attached.

The next disputed sacrifice is the one that takes place in שמות כד:ה. According to the text of the תורה, it would seem as though this sacrifice occurred after מתן תורה. The order of events in the פסוקים is as follows: First, משפטים were given to משה. משה ascended the הר a second time and came down again (כד:ב-ג). Then the account of the sacrifice of בני ישראל is related. At first glance in the מדרש, however, it seems as though this event took place before מתן תורה, because the מדרש agrees with רבי יוסי and describes the sacrifice consisting of עולות only, meaning it took place prior to the giving of the תורה.

רמב"ם, הלכות איסורי ביאה יג:א, in, resolves this contradiction. This sacrifice was the final step of בני ישראל's conversion process. This was the last leg

of the מתן תורה experience. Therefore, this sacrifice was offered after the actual giving of the תורה, but yet can not be considered part of the post-תורה era, when both עולות and שלמים could be given, since the process was not fully complete until the conclusion of this particular קרבן when בני ישראל exclaimed "נעשה ונשמע" (כד:ז).

Like the sacrifice of נח, this sacrifice was also intertwined with a ברית — that of מתן תורה — and a responsibility to follow ה'’s commands. The "ספר" referred to in פסוק ז, which משה read to the people was, according to many מפרשים, a book of laws. For example, רש"י says that this book contained all of ספר בראשית up to events of מתן תורה and all the מצוות commanded in מרה. According to ספורנו, the book contained the words of ה' and the משפטים. This ברית connects the sacrifice to a set of obligations that בני ישראל now needed to follow.

אבן עזרא and רש"י believe, contrary to the Midrashic interpretation, that half of the sacrifices that were offered were עולות and half were שלמים, indicating that this episode took place after the מתן תורה process. Perhaps this is so because they feel that this occurrence was not only the termination of the מתן תורה episode, but the first stage of the period after the תורה was given and started to be observed. Therefore, this sacrifice was grouped with the post-מתן תורה offerings. רש"י and ספורנו say that half of the "דם הברית" (פסוק ח) was sprinkled on the people and half was sprinkled on the מזבח, signifying their entrance into the ברית.

"נעשה בני ישראל" (פרק השלום) ספר דרך ארץ זוטא mentions that when בני ישראל said "נעשה ונשמע" at the end of this sacrifice, ה' blessed them with שלום, alluding to the sacrifice of שלמים. This gives us further proof that the bringing of שלמים was enacted after the מתן תורה ברית was made.

This sacrifice at מתן תורה furthered the relationship that הבל and קין initiated with their first modest attempts of giving gifts to God, and which continued throughout the generations of בני נח. The bond with God became progressively closer and more binding over a span of time. This particular קרבן appears to be the bridge between seeking a general covenantal relationship with God, where one offers and in return receives a promise for a closer association with God, and a type of ברית that requires comprehensive adherence to particular commandments.

The final sacrifice discussed in the מדרש is that of יתרו, משה’s father-in-law (שמות יח:יב). Again, there is some discrepancy as to when this entire event took place. The מדרש concludes that it happened after מתן תורה, since both עולות and שלמים were offered. אבן עזרא and רש"י, who explained earlier that the sacrifice offered at the final stage of the מתן תורה process consisted of half עולות and half שלמים, here state that only שלמים were offered, attesting to the

sumption. The עולה was never removed from the altar because it was the most beloved of all the sacrifices.

It is the most elementary sacrifice, the “bread and butter” element of serving ה'. It was the staple of all the קרבנות, something for בני ישראל to be occupied with when it was not the allotted time for other sacrifices (ויקרא רבה, ויקרא ז:ג). The commandment to bring a קרבן עולה is given after those of the חטאת and אשם. ב. אשם מדרש תנחומא ישן ב. אשם explains that if one steals and receives atonement with these sacrifices, one can then come to bring the עולות with clean hands. The עולה is the symbol of complete surrender to ה' when one is fully pure. It can only exist after the basic moral tenants of the world are firmly established.

One root of the word שלמים is "שלם", indicating the spirit of this sacrifice. When bringing the שלמים, one should feel completely whole, relative to his circumstances. It is a sacrifice brought to show contentment with what one has received from ה'. For this reason, a mourner cannot bring sacrifices, שלמים in particular. He might have a temporary lapse in commitment to his ה' ברית with ה'.

The worshipper has no ulterior motive for bringing a קרבן שלמים. He wants nothing particular from ה' and is not thanking Him for anything in particular. He is just satisfied with life and wants to get closer to ה'.

שלמים also imply a step beyond the letter of the law. The מדרש tells of a man who had four sons, and one loaf of bread for his whole family to eat. If they are not full, and still say ברכת המזון because they are satisfied, ה' will turn towards that person, as it says in ו:כט "ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום", במדבר. In ו:כט (תנחומא זא:ז). שלמים requires conquering one's own desires for concern towards ה' laws.

Another root of the word שלמים, as mentioned earlier, is שלום. This sacrifice promotes peace. Part of the קרבן is given to the מוֹבַח, part to the תנחומא and תוספתא זבחים יא:ה quoting תורה שלמה) כהנים, and part to the owner (ישן צו). Perhaps the fact that it was given only partially to the כהן intrinsically shows that it is less desired than the עולה. It is simply an additional sacrifice for those who are on the level to offer it.

The practical הלכה is in accordance with our מדרש: non-Jews can bring עולות, but only Jews can bring שלמים (ע: מנחות). עולות are the entry-level component to a relationship with God. One cannot even begin to approach God without the fundamental knowledge that he is surrendering the best that he has, denoting his willingness to give of his whole self. (This factor was lacking in קין's sacrifice.) In ו:דד ויקרא רבה a question is posed: Which sacrifices were more beloved to God, those of נח בני or those of בני ישראל? The מדרש responds that בני ישראל's sacrifices were more preferred because they had been

commanded to offer them and therefore had an extra element of obligation. They were not only fulfilling the minimum level of service, but went a step beyond.

שלמים in particular, with their nature of completeness and peace, were only brought after מתן תורה. Rav Soloveitchik compares ברית בין הבתרים with ברית סיני. ברית בין הבתרים focuses on the feelings invested in initiating a rapport with ה'. The pre-תורה מתן sacrifices seem to have similar focuses. ברית סיני stresses the commitment to the fulfillment of the commandments. Only after this ברית was made, בני ישראל could bring the קרבן שלמים. In fact, יתרו only brought שלמים after בני ישראל dedicated themselves to the מצוות. Only then did they have the extra aspects of "שלמות" and "שלום", completeness in their service of ה' and peace in their relationship with Him.

Non-Jewish Names

Sari Dvorin

IN TODAY'S SOCIETY it is not uncommon to find a religious Jew who would generally not be considered "assimilated", yet is called by a non-Jewish name. At first glance, this phenomenon appears to be halachically acceptable. However, is this the case? As the עם סגולה, shouldn't we be differentiating between non-Jews and ourselves? A name is a person's identity. Should we be referring to our children and ourselves with the same names as the other nations? Since the time of the תנ"ך many questions have been raised regarding this practice.

When יוסף went down to מצרים and was given his position of authority, פרעה renamed him. It states in פרשת מקץ: "פרעה קרא שם יוסף צפנת פענח" (מא:מה) "ויקרא פרעה שם יוסף צפנת פענח": פרשת מקץ. רמב"ן believes that this was a Hebrew name, and that פרעה had asked יוסף what a שם נכבד would be in כנעני for a dream teller. However, אבן עזרא, and אבן עזרא both feel that at some point יוסף was given an Egyptian name. אבן עזרא explains that צפנת פענח was either an Egyptian name or the Hebrew translation of one. רש"י says that צפנת פענח is the actual Egyptian name given. Thus, even as early as יוסף, a precedent was set for adopting a name in the vernacular of one's dwelling place.

Another example of this within מצרים might be the name of the greatest Jewish leader, משה רבינו. A פסוק in פרשת שמות reads: "ותקרא שמו משה ותאמר: משה רבינו" (ב:י). According to אבן עזרא, as he said regarding צפנת פענח, this name is translated from Egyptian. Originally his name was "מניוס" but it was translated to "לשון קדרים" which is Hebrew. Therefore, according to אבן עזרא, we have here another precedent for the use of a non-Jewish name. חזקוני, however, believes that בת פרעה adopted the faith of ישראל בני, learned Hebrew, and called the baby משה because of the נס that he was "נמשה" from the water. According to חזקוני, she specifically called him by a Hebrew name to remember that he was an עברי. This illustrates the importance of a Hebrew name. Even someone who according to most, was not a Jew, and according to חזקוני was not originally a Jew, recognized that there was a certain value in a uniquely Jewish name, and named her child accordingly.

Another early example of an "איש יהודי" with a non-Jewish name is מרדכי: "איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדכי בן יאיר בן קיש איש ימיני" (אסתר ב:ה). The commentary דעת מקרא explains here that "מרדכי" is based on the name "מרדוך" or "מרודך", the name of the Babylonian god. Apparently, the people who were exiled in Babylon called their children by the names of the gods because the original meaning was forgotten or lost. This seems to be another precedent for a Jew having a non-Jewish name, even one which may originally have been connected with idolatry. Regarding אסתר, the פסוק says: "ויהי" (שם ה) "אסתר". The author of דעת מקרא quotes an opinion that she was called by both of these two names. "אסתר" was her non-Jewish name and "הדסה" was her Jewish name. He says that "אסתר" might be based on the Persian name of a star, אישתר, and points out that בני ישראל "כמו שהוא מנהג אחינו בני ישראל" equating אסתר's non-Jewish name in her time to contemporary society, when Jews in the Diaspora often have both non-Jewish and Jewish names. Once again, this precedent seems to validate the use of a non-Jewish name.

Rav Moshe Feinstein addressed this issue in אורח חיים חלק ד' in תשובה, noting that over the years, many non-Jewish names have evolved into Jewish names. Rav Moshe seems to say that this practice, while not admirable, is acceptable. He adds that we see numerous examples of this through the years, including names like מיימון, father of רמב"ם, and many of the אמוראים (like רב פפא and רב זוטרא), and of the גאונים. He reasons that if prominent Jewish leaders had these non-Jewish names, we do not have the authority to denounce that practice.

However, there is a difficult מדרש in פרק ד' which says that the Jews were redeemed from מצרים because of four things: They did not change their names, their language, speak הרע, or disregard their basic moral code. The מדרש dramatizes the idea of not changing their names by saying that they came to מצרים as "ראובן" and "שמעון" and did not call ראובן "Rufus", nor שמעון "Luliani", nor יוסף "Listim", nor בנימן "Alexander". Based on this מדרש, it seems that much merit is given to the preservation of Jewish names in a secular society. How then can we ignore this fact and keep giving our children non-Jewish names? Rav Moshe, in the תשובה quoted above, answers that it was especially exemplary for בני ישראל to keep their names in מצרים because it displayed their confidence in being saved. Because they had not yet received the מצות תורה, these names symbolized their connection to ה'. But now that we have the תורה which focuses our entire lives towards a connection with ה', Rav Moshe feels that there is no חיוב upon us to avoid non-Jewish names.

However, this position of Rav Moshe must be reconciled with a הלכה quoted by רמב"ם in הלכות עכו"ם, which describes how careful we are sup-

posed to be not to imitate the גויים in their practices. רמב"ם writes, "לא הולכין בשער" בחקות העכו"ם לא במלבוש לא בשער. While names are not specifically included, it seems that they would fall under the same category. רמב"ם brings his support from two פסוקים in ספר ויקרא (יח:ג): "ובחקותיהם לא תלכו" ו"ולא תלכו בחקת" and "הגוי אשר אני משלה מפניכם..." (כג-כד). Both explicitly tell us to distinguish ourselves from the nations that surround us and not to mimic their practices. רמב"ם continues saying, "אלא יהיה ישראל מובדל מהן". It seems that being called by the same names as the גויים would be at odds with this מצוה in the תורה.

מהר"ם שיק, based on this רמב"ם, feels that using non-Jewish names is אסור מדאורייתא. While he is in the minority, his opinion must be considered and we should give some thought to the severity he attributes to something which is common practice for many observant Jews.

If one examines a different תשובה of Rav Moshe, he seems to lean more towards the opinion of the מהר"ם שיק. In חושן משפט חלק ב' סימן ע"א, although his conclusion is that in certain situations non-Jewish names are acceptable, he begins with the following phrase, "אלו שגולדו אצל אינשי שרצו להשכיח מרוב רשעותם, מזרעם שהם יהודים וקרו להם רק בשמות האנגלים..." This harsh language describes the use of non-Jewish names as an evil act. It is possible that Rav Moshe was referring to people with only English names, but it seems that he feels that giving non-Jewish names in general is a negative practice. Ultimately, however, he concludes his תשובה by saying that it is permissible to use the non-Jewish name one is given on a כתובה because it might be necessary for identification purposes.

After examining the תשובות regarding this question, it seems that Rav Moshe at least feels it is not אסור to have a non-Jewish name. He suggests that perhaps when naming after someone with a non-Jewish name, the middle name given should be from the תנין.

Rabbi Nachum Amsel writes in the *Jewish Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues* that it is מותר to have a non-Jewish name, but choosing to use a Jewish name only may be beneficial to serve as a constant reminder of one's Jewishness, both to the individual and the community around him.

Precedent seems to have been set regarding the use of non-Jewish names, and therefore it is difficult to say that this practice is אסור. There are those who do feel it is unacceptable, but they are the minority. There are also דעות that it is preferable to have only a Jewish name and that there is a certain מעלה in its being used exclusively. Nevertheless, the attitude that calling oneself by a non-Jewish name is acceptable is widespread today. However, these varying opinions should make one conscious of the symbolism of the name he or she chooses and what it represents.

תשס"א

(2000-01)

יואש: Friend or Foe?

Ilana Nattel

AFTER A CURSORY glance at יב-יא and מלכים ב פרקים כג-כד, one is left confused and bewildered. The life of יואש המלך seems to waver dialectically between devout righteousness and dire evil. How could one man vacillate between such extremes?

The מדרש paints a very derogatory picture of יואש. It says:

”וירא ה' כי שנואה לאה...מהו וירא ה' כי שנואה? שראה הקב"ה שהיא עתידה להוציא בנים רשעים, וקרא אותה ישנואה. ואילו הן: יהורם, אחז, **יואש**, מנשה, אמנון, יהויקים, צדקיהו...” (מדרש אגדת בראשית פרק מט).

From where does the מדרש get this idea, to call יואש a רשע? Does the not say “יהי יואש כד:ב and מלכים ב יב:ג) ”ויעש יואש הישר בעיני ה'” נביא?

One possibility is that this מדרש is an example of the concept הולך ונפיל, and since the life of יואש ended off badly, his whole life is viewed in a negative light. Perhaps, however, there is more to this. Upon careful inspection it is possible to see in the beginning of his life characteristics that foreshadow his future downfall.

From the very beginning, the childhood of יואש was quite different than that of most other children. When יואש was an infant, his father אחזיה died and his grandmother עתליה went on a rampage, killing all members of her family to insure her seat on the royal throne. יואש's aunt יהושבע, the wife of יהושפט, took quick action and hid יואש in the חדר מטות (the attic) (בית המקדש explain this to be an attic in the מפרשים). There, his safety was ensured and all of his needs were filled.

During the seventh year of יואש's hiding, יהוידיע decided that it was time to anoint the king. He organized a whole procedure, involving three different groups of guards revolving around the seven-year-old child who was to be anointed king. יהוידיע proclaimed: על דבר ה' על: יהוידיע. בני דוד further explains this connection with דוד. בני דוד... (דה"ב כג:ג).

יואש: Friend or Foe?

It says: "אלמלא הברית שכרת הקב"ה עם דוד, אזי נהרג יואש גם כן ונתבטלה מלכות בית דוד (ג. פרק ג) לגמרי" (תנא דבי אליהו זוטא, פרק ג). This shows that יואש's miraculous survival was not due to his own merits, but was rather due to the promise which ה' had made to דוד that the מלוכה would always stem from him.

Throughout this ceremony, no response by יואש is recorded. The תנ"ך portrays an image of a young child who did not really understand what is going on, yet saw many people making a tremendous fuss over him. After having been isolated from society for his entire life, he now watched in awe as many people worked to execute an intricate plan to crown him as king. He was given the "נידר" and "עדות" (which מעדות דוד explains to be a כתר מלכות and a ספר תורה, respectively.) He was then anointed king, and stood before the nation as they declared "יחי המלך!" and rejoiced in his kingship.

Two בריתות were then made. One was between ה', the king, and the nation, promising that they would be "עם ה'". The second ברית was between the king and the nation. And thus began the "glory years" of יואש. Although he did not deter the nation from sacrificing on במות, he initiated the repair work on the בית המקדש and supervised the work to make sure his plans for the בית המקדש were actualized. Things seemed to be going smoothly—until יהוידע הכהן died.

At this point in יואש's life, there appears to have been a radical change. He left the בית המקדש to take part in the rampant זרה עבודה of שרי יהודה. נביאים rebuked him but their words fell on deaf ears. ה' sent a נביא, none other than זכריה, to tell them that if they continued forsaking ה', He would leave them and terrible things would befall them. Not only did they not accept the words of זכריה, but by the order of יואש, they actually stoned him to death. When there seemed to be an impending attack by מלך ארם, חזאל bribed him with all kinds of valuable riches from the treasuries of בית המקדש and the king's palace. It seems that יואש went from great צדקות to profound רשעות. How did such a dramatic change transpire?

The מדרש says:

"כל זמן שהיה יהוידע קיים היה יואש עושה רצון בוראו... אחרי מות יהוידע באו שרי יהודה וישתחוו למלך אז שמע המלך אליהם—שקבל עליו לעשות אלוה. לפיכך, זאת יואש עשה שפטים" (במדבר רבה כג:ג).

It is clear that the focal point of the change in יואש was the death of יהוידע. The מלביים explains further:

"ויעש יואש הישר... כל ימי אשר הורהו יהוידע הכהן... כי אחרי מותו חטא... ויש הבדל אצלי בין הוראה ובין לימוד... ור"ל שלא למד היטב רק שהורה, והראה לו. ובמות המורה, נטה מן הדרך. מה שלא היה כן אם היה לומד להשכיל להטיב בדרך לימוד".

The מלכים clarifies that the problem actually lay in the fact that יהוידע had shown יואש the proper way to live all of his life. But he had simply *shown* him, not *taught* him. יהוידע did not give יואש the skill to choose the proper path on his own, rather he "dragged him along" in his shadow.

If we scrutinize the פסוקים describing the events of the first part of the reign of יואש, it becomes very clear that יהוידע was the one who was acting, while יואש simply observed.

- **ויכרת יהוידע** את הברית בין ה' ובין המלך ובין העם להיות לעם ה' ובין המלך ובין העם" (מלכים ב יא:יז)
- "ויבאו כל העם בית הבעל ויתעוהו ואת מזבחותיו ואת עלמיו שברו..." (דה"ב כג:יז)
- "וישם יהוידע פקדות בית ה' ביד הכהנים הלויים..." (שם כג:יח)
- "ויורד את המלך מבית ה'..." (שם כג:כ)

In all of these cases, יואש was very passive. He was lingering in יהוידע's shadow, while יהוידע essentially ran the country. יואש never had to develop his own identity. He never had to struggle to win the people's trust, and never carried the weight of making significant decisions on his own. Without the slightest exertion on his part, the nation revered and exalted him. At this point, there was no real problem with this arrangement, because יהוידע was still alive and keeping everything in place.

The one thing יואש initiated on his own during this period was the בדק הבית. Perhaps, since he spent the initial years of his life hidden in the בית המקדש, it was one thing to which he felt personal ties. However, even with this project, יואש leaned on יהוידע as a crutch. יואש instructed the כהנים and לויים to act hastily, but they did not adhere to his words—"ולא מהרו הלויים". The moment things did not run smoothly, יואש panicked and ran to יהוידע: "ויקח יהוידע הכהן ארון אחד ויקב חר בדלתו ויתן אותם אצל המזבח בימין..." (מ"ב יב:י). יואש simply did not know how to run things on his own and deal with obstacles as they came up.

Against this background one can begin to understand the change that occurred within יואש after the death of יהוידע. Suddenly, there were no more

tragically appropriate end to יואש's life—all along these עבדים had been dragging him deeper and deeper into a spiritual abyss until they finally physically killed him.

The נביא then brings us full circle at the end of יואש's life. יואש was now in the same position as עתליה his grandmother. Just like her, he rebelled against that which was good and he killed the innocent for his own glory and survival. Their fate was also the same. In regards to עתליה, the נביא says "מ"ב יב:כא) "מ"ב יא:יד) ויתקרא קשר קשר" and she was subsequently killed. Regarding יואש, "מ"ב יב:כא) "ויקומו עבדיו ויקשרו קשר".

In his book "מקדש מלך", יגאל אריאל casts a slightly different light on this issue. He suggests that יואש did not like the fact that all of his fame and glory emanated from יהוידע who had saved him, raised him, and crowned him. He suggests that this weighed heavily on יואש, for he craved honor and respect in his own right, not merely as a reflection of יהוידע. יואש did not dare revolt during the lifetime of יהוידע, as his greatness depended upon him. However, once יהוידע died, יואש completely turned his life around, in order to affirm his own sense of worth and to prove that he was not just a product of יהוידע.

Subtler manifestation of this inclination can be seen even during the lifetime of יהוידע. יואש felt the need to rebuke יהוידע for not properly tending to the הבית. The פסוק says:

"ויקרא המלך ליהוידע הראש ויאמר לו מדוע לא דרשת על הלויים להביא מיהודה ומירושלים את משאת משה" (ד"ה ב כד:ו).

According to "מקדש מלך", perhaps his intentions were not so pure. All of his terrible actions later in life were part of the process of rebellion. Whether the blame lies on יואש for rebelling, or יהוידע for not teaching him properly, there is a great lesson to be learned. In משה ה' told פרשת בהעלותך, "בהעלותך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות" (במדבר ח:ב) אהרן command "דרך להדליק עד שתהא השלהבת עולה" that "בהעלותך" that מנורה can also be understood metaphorically. When educating, one cannot just be a מורה, but must also be a מלמד. One must lead, teach, explain and guide, until the recipient flame becomes a fire on its own, lighting up the world. When the process of education does not reach this point, as in the case of יואש, the results can be tragic.

יואב בן צרויה: Devoted Hero or Cunning Politician?

Malka Zeiger

יואב בן צרויה, שר עבא דוד's famous דוד, played an integral, albeit ambiguous, role in the establishment of דוד מלכות דוד. In addition to his brothers, אבישי and עשהאל, יואב was an active, if not the most active, character throughout דוד's reign. However, the character of יואב and his brothers is foggy and puzzling. Although many of us have been taught to classify figures in Tanach into the roles of either "צדיק" or "רשע" to further our understanding of the manifest context (פשט) and latent meaning (דרש) of the text, יואב and his brothers are exceedingly difficult to categorize; a simplification of their character would be trivializing and damaging rather than beneficial. This analysis attempts to discover the complexity of יואב's true character and uncover the dynamics of בני צרויה's relationship with דוד.¹

Possibilities

There are two basic approaches that one can take regarding יואב:

One possibility is to suggest that יואב was immoral and power hungry, nevertheless a great soldier upon whom דוד was dependent. This suggestion is supported chiefly by the fact that יואב killed אבנר, אבשלום, and עמשא. As we will later see, אבנר and עמשא were both שרי עבא who were killed by יואב through means of shrewd trickery and cunning deceit. אבנר was the שר עבא of בית שאול, and עמשא was שר עבא of both אבשלום and דוד. It is logical that יואב, considering his unsteady relationship with דוד, would consider both men threats to his esteemed position, and would do anything to maintain his job — even kill them. Indeed, דוד removed יואב from his post after יואב killed אבשלום, and replaced him with עמשא as שר עבא. Although this theory may not be the only possible incentive for יואב's acts, it is consistent with דוד's reactions to the death of these men, all of whom were his political enemies. In fact, it is evident throughout the story of בני צרויה that not only were they not tolerated, but they were perhaps detested by a very forgiving

king. This is also powerfully indicative that יואב led an immoral and irreligious existence.

However, a deeper look into יואב's actions and character reveal a challenge to this theory. Not only did יואב ostensibly accomplish positive things for בית דוד, as we have seen in the list of בני צרויה's appearances in תנ"ך, but he also made three statements that are inconsistent with he who kills in vain:

1) אבנר led יואב - ש"ב ב:כו in a war against דוד in a war against שאול, בית שאול led by אבנר.² יואב's brother, עשהאל killed אבנר and surrounded אבנר, at which point אבנר cried his famous declaration, "הלנצה תאכל חרב?" יואב unquestioningly accepted this offer of peace without questioning, and instead of killing אבנר, responded, "חיי הא-להים כי לולא דברתי!" (ש"ב ב:כו). יואב swore by God that if אבנר would have expressed his desire to stop fighting earlier, he would have agreed then to stop immediately as well. יואב's use of God's Name and his immediate willingness to forgive אבנר for initiating the fight display a significant degree of spiritual greatness.

2) יואב and אבישי led בני עמון into battle against עמון. After separating their army into two camps, one led by אבישי and the other by יואב, they devised a strategy that whichever camp became overpowered by עמון would be rescued by the other camp. It is then that יואב delivered a powerful speech to the army: "חזק ונתחזק בעד עמנו ובעד ערי אלוקינו והי יעשה הטוב בעיניו" (ש"ב י:יב). Rarely in Tanach do we see such a passionate and moving declaration spoken by a Jewish leader or general before war. Perhaps יואב's character is delineated in this statement through his mentioning that although בני עמון must put forth physical effort, they are fighting for the Glory of God rather than their own, and their fate lies in God's Hands, regardless of their physical strength.

3) יואב and אבישי chased after בכרי, who had rebelled against דוד. שבע בן בכרי escaped into מעכה, בית מעכה, and יואב and his men surrounded the city to prevent שבע's escape. A woman called out to יואב from inside the city, "אנכי שלמי אמוני ישראל אתה מבקש להמית עיר ואם בישראל! למה תבלע נחלת היי?" (ש"ב כ:יט). The woman, thinking יואב was about to destroy the city, begged יואב to spare her life because she was a righteous Jewish mother. The woman also pleaded with him not to destroy a city that lies in Israel.³ יואב responded, "חלילה חלילה אם אבליע ואם אשחית" (ש"ב כ:כא). יואב asserted he only wished to kill שבע בן בכרי, who was מורד במלכות and therefore deserved death. His intent was not to kill freely and unnecessarily.

It is clearly problematic to suggest and impossible to prove that יואב was wholly and thoroughly "bad".

We therefore present the second possibility: that יואב was a great person who was tragically unappreciated by דוד.

This theory is of course supported by יואב's three statements listed above, in addition to the fact that יואב was extremely loyal to דוד.⁴ For instance, when יואב fought עמון and led בניי into a sweeping victory, he sent דוד a message at the last moment, saying, "ועתה אסף את יתר העם וחנוה על העיר ולכדה פן, יוסף ה' א-להיך אל, אלכד אני את העיר ונקרא שמי עליה" (ש"ב י"ב:כח) יואב told דוד to fight the final battle against עמון and capture the city himself, so that יואב would not be given credit for the victory. This story expresses the loyalty and faith with which יואב subjugated his prestigious position and the honor it naturally warrants to his king. Similarly, when דוד wanted to count the nation, a terrible sin, יואב did his utmost to discourage דוד, saying, "העם כהם וכחה מאה פעמים...ואדני המלך למה חפץ בדבר הזה?" (ש"ב כ"ד:ג) Although דוד did not heed his advice and it would therefore seem extraneous for the פסוק to recount יואב's plea, perhaps it is stated to infer יואב's desire to abstain from sin and prevent his master and king from sinning.

Of course, it is no surprise that this second possibility concerning יואב's character must be countered by the fact that he murdered three people for no obvious reason, and was, along with אבישי, despised by דוד despite his intense loyalty towards the latter.

Upon examining both theories, it is obvious that neither apply to יואב; he is a much more complicated figure than one that can be called "good" or "bad." In order to successfully discover who יואב was and understand his relationship with דוד, the opinions of חז"ל regarding specific stories concerning יואב must be examined. The four major events in יואב's life that can be analyzed to best uncover his cryptic character are:

- 1) The murder of אבנר (ש"ב ב:ג)
- 2) The murder of אבשלום (ש"ב י"ח:טו)
- 3) The murder of עמשא (ש"ב כ"י)
- 4) יואב's death at the hands of שלמה (מ"א ב:לד)

Each of these stories will be analyzed in depth with the help of the ראשונים, גמרא, and contemporary scholars in attempt to discover whether or not יואב sinned and why דוד hated him. Finally, I will suggest a theory regarding יואב and his relationship with דוד.

אבנר

The ראשונים all maintain that אבנר deserved to die, although there is much debate concerning why he deserved death, and whether it was for this reason that יואב killed him. Also, the question of whether יואב sinned bothers the ראשונים a great deal. The commentaries of רד"ק, רש"י, and רלב"ג are particularly intriguing.

רד"ק attempts to prove that אבנר deserved to die by quoting the fa-

mous exchange between רב יהודה and רב יוחנן.⁵ רב יהודה asks why יואב killed עשהאל for his brother's blood. רב יוחנן replies that יואב killed עשהאל to be avenged because it was an act of defense in wartime. רב יהודה then inquires whether אבנר may have been justified in killing עשהאל because it was an act of defense in wartime. The response to רב יהודה is that אבנר could have defended himself by stabbing עשהאל in one of his limbs, thereby injuring rather than killing him. רב יהודה responds that maybe אבנר had no control over where he attacked עשהאל. רב יוחנן rebuts with a rhetorical question: Could אבנר have managed to injure עשהאל in the חמט, a rib that if punctured one surely dies, but not hit עשהאל in one of his limbs, none of which are fatal?!

The implications of this גמרא are twofold: First, יואב killed אבנר to avenge עשהאל's blood, as opposed to other reasons for which אבנר deserved to die. Second, יואב's reason for killing אבנר is completely justifiable, because עשהאל died an unnecessary death. רב רד"ק then quotes רב יהודה quoting רב, also in סנהדרין מ"ט, who states that all of the curses with which דוד condemned יואב after he killed אבנר, fulfilled themselves in דוד's descendents. רב רד"ק comments that this occurred because דוד did not utilize the characteristic of דין (justice) to curse יואב, and was therefore incorrect to have cursed him. In fact, דוד knew that אבנר deserved to die and was going to command יואב to kill אבנר anyway.

רב רד"ק does not explain whether דוד felt that אבנר deserved to die for killing עשהאל or for another reason, the most obvious being that he was מורד במלכות. Regardless, it is very perplexing why he was angry at יואב if he wanted אבנר killed. דוד's belief that אבנר deserved to die and fury for יואב's act implies that he felt that יואב's motivation to kill אבנר was impure. This could be either the fact that יואב killed אבנר for personal reasons in avenging his brother's blood, or perhaps דוד suspected that יואב felt threatened by a man whose peace treaty had been accepted by דוד and whom דוד might appoint as his new chief general.

In any case, רב רד"ק elucidates clearly that אבנר deserved to die and יואב's act was justified. He does not, however, explain דוד's anger towards יואב satisfactorily.

רב רש"י suggests that יואב killed אבנר to avenge עשהאל's death but אבנר was justified in killing him and is not deserving of death for this act. דוד only wanted אבנר killed if he would be killed for the right reason; consequently, דוד was angry at יואב. רב רש"י quotes a גמרא also from סנהדרין מ"ט that brings another reason why אבנר deserved to die, but this reason, unlike the first, does not justify יואב's act. When יואב sent for אבנר, the latter was taken from the "בזו הסירה" (ש"ב ב:כו), which ר' אבא בר כהנא interprets as being the two incidents in אבנר's service to שאול which made אבנר deserve death. These events were the two confrontations between דוד and שאול in פרקים כ"ד and כ"ה.

and כ"ו, when דוד had an opportunity to kill שאול. In both instances, אבנר did not sufficiently protect and prevent שאול from being vulnerable to דוד. The אבנר cites this as an act of being מורד במלכות that deemed אבנר deserving of death.

However, אבנר killed אבנר because the latter killed עשהאל, as the פסוק recounts, "וימת בדם עשהאל אחיו" (ש"ב ג:כז). יואב maintains that אבנר could not avenge his brother's blood because he was killed in war, during which the halacha does not apply. Therefore, דוד was angry at יואב because אבנר should not have been killed for killing עשהאל but rather for being מורד במלכות.

רלב"ג also comments on אבנר's and דוד's relationship, with the assertions that דוד cursed אבנר to be "זב מערע ומחזיק בפלך ונפל בחרב וחסר לחם" (ש"ב ג:כח) because the bearers of these ailments are considered halachically dead. רלב"ג implies that דוד could not kill אבנר, and the best that he could do is curse him with afflictions that made him "almost dead." Although it is not clear why דוד could not kill אבנר according to רלב"ג, it can only be for one of two reasons: a) דוד needed אבנר; or b) דוד knew "deep down" that אבנר had acted correctly. However, he detested bloodshed too much to admit that אבנר's death was justified. Again, רלב"ג is not clear concerning דוד's feelings towards אבנר.

In fact, there is a general conflict among the פרשנים in terms of reconciling אבנר killing a man who deserved death and דוד's negative reaction. Most agree that אבנר deserved death, and also that דוד was correct to be angry. Thus, the source of דוד's anger must stem from the nature of the act, rather than the act itself.

Two contemporary scholars, Prof. David Seri and Rabbi E. M. Goitein, author of דמויות בתנ"ך, suggest that דוד actually supported and appreciated אבנר, but could not publicly display his alliance with him for political reasons. Specifically, Prof. Seri maintains that although אבנר's motivations for killing אבנר were unclear, he undoubtedly had a justifiable reason.⁶ Moreover, had דוד genuinely felt that אבנר was wrong to kill אבנר, he would have put אבנר to death immediately. Rather, on his deathbed he told שלמה, "ועשית כחכמתך" (מ"א ב:ו), not specifying to kill אבנר. Ultimately, however, שלמה killed אבנר for political reasons, to help establish a peaceful and just reputation for his kingdom.

Regarding אבנר's death and אבנר's guilt, Rabbi Goitein adds that not only did אבנר deserve death because he failed to defend שאול from דוד and killed עשהאל unnecessarily, but also because he sinned in two other areas: a) אבנר suggested that twelve of his men and twelve of אבנר's men fight for pure entertainment: "יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו" (ש"ב ב:ד) and it led to a bloody war, and b) he put his name before דוד's when he proposed a peace treaty to דוד: "וישלח אבנר מלאכים אל דוד תחתיו" (ש"ב ג:יב).⁷ For these reasons, אבנר

felt that אבנר displayed too much loyalty towards בית שאול. Furthermore, as אבנר's cousin, it is highly unlikely that אבנר would have abandoned his royal lineage. Furthermore, another proof that אבנר was not truly seeking peace with דוד is that after אבנר dined with דוד and officially "signed the contract," he returned peacefully to his house (ש"ב ג:כא). If אבנר had truly considered himself a member of בית דוד rather than one of בית שאול, he would not have returned home (certainly not peacefully!) (ש"ב ג:כא) for fear of his life. Rabbi Goitein concludes that although דוד privately sanctioned אבנר's death, he publicly distanced himself from יואב and his aggressive killings to maintain his image of a benevolent and kind leader. However, Rabbi Goitein suggests, יואב committed one fatal error which culminated in his being killed without a trial. This mistake shall be explained when we investigate the story of יואב and his death at the hands of יואב.

In conclusion, if יואב was indeed justified in killing אבנר, דוד's consequent fury towards him is extremely perplexing. Although it can be suggested that יואב was completely wrong and דוד was right to be angry at him, most פרשנים instead go out of their way to justify יואב. Clearly, יואב was a more complex figure than we originally proposed. To further investigate this matter and the general nature of יואב's character, we turn to the second major event in יואב's life, the story of אבשלום.

אבשלום

אבשלום, after being returned from exile by his father דוד for killing his half-brother אמנון, won the hearts of the Jewish people and led a large group of Jews into rebellion against דוד. דוד put אבישי in charge of the army, and sent them to pursue אבשלום and his men after giving them the warning, "לעט לי לער לאבשלום" (ש"ב יח:ה), which is generally understood as a command to spare אבשלום's life. Nevertheless, יואב unhesitatingly killed אבשלום immediately upon reaching him in the forest, despite his awareness that דוד would be less than thrilled. יואב's knowledge of this is evident in his speech to אחימעץ בן צדוק, who asked יואב if he could run to דוד and tell him that the war was over: "ויאמר לו יואב לא איש בשרה אתה...כי על בן המלך מת" (ש"ב יח:כ). When דוד heard from another messenger that although the rebellion had been put down, אבשלום was dead, he lamented bitterly: "בני אבשלום בני בני יואב heard that דוד was in mourning rather than rejoicing that he was still king and the Jewish kingdom was saved and he confronted David with a powerful admonition: "הבשת היום את כל עבדיך...לאהבה את שניאך ולשנא את אהביך...כי לא אבשלום חי וכולנו היום מתים" (ש"ב יט:ו-ה). Although דוד did not respond (perhaps because he recognized the truth of יואב's words and was stunned and embarrassed) he

clearly never forgave יואב for killing his son, to the point where after the rebellion he replaced יואב with עמשא, עמשא's former צבא, as his own. Replacing an extremely loyal and successful general with a man who wanted דוד's life may seem illogical; simultaneously the act elucidates just how angry דוד was at יואב. Furthermore, when דוד instructed שלמה to kill יואב, one of his reasons seems to have been because יואב had killed אבשלום את: "וגם אתה ידעת את: אבשלום יואב".⁸ It is difficult to understand whether יואב was justified for killing אבשלום, and again, why דוד was so angry. The פרשנים, particularly רלב"ג, מלבי"ם, and Rabbi Goitein, have fascinating and helpful insights into this story.

מלבי"ם suggests that יואב was aware of the emotional impact that אבשלום's death would have on דוד; nevertheless he willingly killed him to save דוד's kingdom from the destructive hands of the royal prince himself. From the words "ויתקעם בלב אבשלום..ויכו את אבשלום וימתהו" (ש"ב יח:טו-טז) מלבי"ם extrapolates that יואב struck אבשלום first so that it would be he who would ultimately be held responsible for אבשלום's death, although his soldiers were the ones who actually killed אבשלום. This interpretation implies that יואב was willing to sacrifice his reputation and personal relationship with דוד in order to save the kingdom, in contrast to previous textual implications that יואב acted to gratify his uncontrollable anger, which directly conflicted with the kingdom's welfare.⁹ Although יואב did expect דוד to be deeply saddened at the loss of his son, מלבי"ם adds, he was nevertheless stunned to hear that דוד felt that his son's death was a result of an unjust act. In fact, דוד was enraged not only because he felt that אבשלום did not deserve to die, but because he maintained that אבשלום was actually a זדיק! דוד claimed that his son wanted to rule under him rather than kill him, and he took full responsibility for אבשלום's death because he considered the tragedy his own punishment for taking בת-שבע and killing her husband אוריה אני: "מי יתן מותי אני: אוריה". תחת"ך" (ש"ב יט:א).

Furthermore, דוד's eulogy (ibid.) "בני אבשלום בני בני אבשלום.." highlights דוד's despair that his son, who simply wanted to rule as a son under his father's rule, had been mistaken for a traitor and had been ruthlessly killed. When יואב heard that דוד was mourning his son's death and considered it an unnecessary act of bloodshed, he was shocked, angry, and hurt that דוד was so blind and naive. In his most aggressive and passionate confrontation with דוד, יואב shed his subservient persona towards him by coming uninvited, and expressing how wrong דוד was to have turned the nation's victory into a tragic day of mourning. מלבי"ם divides יואב's speech to דוד into four separate admonitions:

1) אבשלום *did* want to kill דוד and the rest of the royal family. He wanted to be king *right then* (as proof he took דוד's concubines, a defiant act of de-

claring himself king) and if he had succeeded, the rest of בית דוד would be dead, so mourning was highly inappropriate. אבשלום's death was justified not only because he rebelled, but also because he was a רודף, and דוד, as the נרדף, had a halachic right to kill him. This is expressed in יואב's statement, "הבשת" (ש"ב יט:ז):

2) Even if it is assumed that אבשלום did not want to kill דוד, he employed the help and support of דוד's enemies to rebel against the kingdom, and that alone rendered him deserving of death. מלבי"ם interprets the phrase "לאהבה את שנאיך ולשנא את אוהביך" (ש"ב יט:ז) as referring not to דוד but to אבשלום, who considered דוד's friends his enemies, and דוד's enemies, his friends.

3) Even if דוד let his love for אבשלום get the better of him and chose to forgive his son for rebelling, he should have been killed only for the good of the nation and not for the good of דוד himself. As king, דוד was more responsible to his subjects than he was to himself: "כי הגדת היום כי אין לך שרים" (ש"ב יט:ז). ועבדים כי ידעת כי לא אבשלום חיי (ש"ב יט:ז).

4) אבשלום's final argument was a personal defense for his killing אבשלום. אבשלום maintained that if אבשלום would not have been killed, the war would have continued until אבשלום and his army won and inevitably killed all of בית דוד. This is highlighted in the statement, "כי לא אבשלום חי וכולנו היום מתים כי" (ש"ב יט:ז). אז ישר בעיניך. It can be inferred that דוד did not answer יואב because the latter was clearly correct. אבשלום was מורד במלכות and he and his army threatened the welfare of the entire nation. Exceptions, יואב felt, cannot be made whether or not a rebel was heir to the throne.

Moreover, both רלב"ג and Rabbi Goitein support יואב's killing of אבשלום. In fact, they cite the instance of יואב blowing the shofar after he killed אבשלום as proof that he sought only justice and not unnecessary bloodshed, contrary to דוד's perception of him. Immediately after אבשלום died, the פסוק explains, "ויתקע יואב בשופר וישב העם מרדף אחרי ישראל כי חשך יואב את העם" (ש"ב יח:טז). יואב ordered his men to stop chasing אבשלום's army, because all that was needed to stop the rebellion was the death of their charismatic leader. The juxtaposition of אבשלום's death and יואב's blowing the shofar amplifies his focus on executing only the acts that were absolutely necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of peace while sparing as many lives as possible. Again, it is ironic and tragic that דוד hated יואב because he felt that יואב was the cause of sin and death amongst the nation.

Finally, יואב's innocence concerning אבשלום can also be proven from discussion in the גמרא,¹⁰ or rather, the lack of discussion in the גמרא. After אבנר asks why יואב kills אבנר and it is proven that אבנר deserved to die, instead of asking about אבשלום (whose story comes chronologically after אבנר), he addresses the death of עמשא, שר צבא אבשלום, עמשא, whose death at the hands of יואב is of a stranger and less justifiable nature. הרב יהודה's silence regarding

אבשלום implies the explicit cause of his death: אבשלום was a מורד במלכות who threatened both דוד and the nation that he was destined to protect.

עמשא

Far more than אבנר and אבשלום, it is extremely difficult to understand יואב's motivations for killing עמשא. In fact, throughout the whole אבשלום-story, no one succeeded in acting in his own self-interest despite their intentions to do so. Nobody acted in his self-interest, that is, except for עמשא himself, who was strangely passive. The story is as follows: אבשלום was killed and יואב rebuked דוד for mourning him. דוד in turn replaced יואב with עמשא as his new general and helped execute the entire rebellion that led to a civil war and אבשלום's death, but עמשא did not even officially beg דוד's pardon or seek peace with him!¹¹ However, it is clear that דוד's replacing the most excellent and loyal שר צבא in the history of the Jews and hiring instead a potential "shady character" has no relevance to עמשא's credentials; rather, the פרשנים, specifically רלב"ג and מלבי"ם, comment that it was a retaliation against יואב, unforgiven by דוד for the murder of אבשלום. After שבע בן בכרי and יהודה revolted against דוד, the latter instructed עמשא to pursue and apprehend יהודה and return in three days. עמשא obeyed, but returned late. When יואב met עמשא while chasing שבע, he greeted עמשא and took hold of his beard as if to kiss him. As עמשא lost his guard, יואב stabbed him to death with his sword and removed עמשא's bowels from his body. The two most prevalent issues in this troubling tale are whether עמשא deserved to die, and whether יואב killed עמשא for this very reason. Again, it is far more difficult to justify the death of עמשא than the deaths of אבנר and אבשלום, partially because, as opposed to the latter two, עמשא simply didn't do anything. There is nothing in the text that makes it apparent that עמשא deserved death, and what is more, the manner in which יואב killed עמשא is shocking and horrific. In this story, the פרשנים do not jump to יואב's defense. Although most agree that עמשא deserved death because he was מורד במלכות by returning to דוד later than he commanded, the question remains regarding יואב's motivations. Most troubling, however, is the פרשנים's silence regarding יואב's guilt. אברבנאל and רד"ק, one of the few who address this issue, both maintain that יואב killed עמשא because he feared losing his position to the latter. Conversely, the גמרא,¹² in its tendency to defend יואב, states that יואב killed עמשא only because he was מורד במלכות by returning late to דוד. Supposing that this is true and יואב was right to kill him, the cruel manner in which עמשא died must be addressed. סנהדרין מ"ט תוספות imply that יואב's killing עמשא cannot be justified because he gave him no warning.

The issues of יואב's incentives and questionable innocence is addressed the least regarding עמשא, and certainly not answered satisfactorily. Moreover, of all the other stories in which יואב appears, it is here that he is defended the least, which perhaps sheds light on why יואב was condemned and killed by דוד. Although we know from the פרשנים that it is possible to prove that אבנר, אבשלום, and עמשא deserved to die, יואב killed them through unnecessary means of trickery, and for this reason he deserved punishment. We now arrive at our last stop in our journey through the primary events in יואב's life: his death.

יואב's Death

The story, although not surprising, is a tragic and troubling tale. On his deathbed, דוד told שלמה to remember what יואב did to him, אבנר and עשאל, and to act according to his own wisdom. יואב heard that he was a wanted man, and, seeing that it had worked for אדוניו,¹³ ran to the אהל משכן and grabbed onto the קרנות המזבח. שלמה sent יהוידע, commanding him to leave the מזבח and give up his life, but יואב refused. בניהו relayed יואב's refusal to שלמה, and the latter gave בניהו permission to kill יואב at the altar. יואב was thereupon killed and buried in the desert. The two primary issues that present themselves in this story are: a) whether or not יואב deserved to die, and why, and b) whether דוד told שלמה to kill יואב for this reason. Furthermore, the actual content of the story must be examined; namely, יואב's reasoning in running to the מזבח for salvation, the significance in the verbal exchange between בניהו and יואב, and שלמה's speech in which he permitted בניהו to kill יואב at the מזבח. In order to shed light on these issues, it is necessary to analyze a broad range of commentaries. After doing so, we will examine the גמרא regarding the overall character of יואב, and ultimately develop an educated hypothesis as to whether יואב was a devoted hero or a cunning politician.

The Rishonim agree that יואב died because he killed בערמה, with trickery. Their opinions diverge, however, regarding the defense of יואב's character. רלב"ג suggests that the reason why יואב deserved to die and the reason why דוד commanded שלמה to kill him are one and the same: יואב had killed with cunning and trickery. This theory, while acknowledging יואב's sin, does imply that, had אבנר, אבשלום, and עמשא been killed in honest manners, יואב's actions would be justified because these men deserved to die. Although the commentaries do not generally come to the defense of יואב's character at large, they leave room for speculation: If יואב had not killed בערמה, would he have then been considered a spiritual role model and overall hero in Jewish history?

Among others, אברבנאל and רד"ק maintain that although דוד was right to condemn יואב because he killed בערמה, יואב possessed a superior character, even spiritually. אברבנאל proposes that from the words, "ויקבר בביתו במדבר" (מ"א ב:לד), it can be derived that יואב opened a house for the poor and was buried there so that these people could pray that his soul be admitted to the next world. Moreover, רד"ק elaborates by quoting three מאמרי חז"ל on the words, "ויקבר בביתו במדבר", that illuminate יואב's excellent character:

1) "מה מדבר? זה מופקר לכל, אף ביתו של יואב מופקר לכל, כי נדיב היה מאד" (סנהדרין מ"ט)

2) "מה מדבר? זה מנוקה מגול, אף ביתו של יואב מנוקה מגול" (סנהדרין מ"ט)

3) "וכי מדבר היה? אלא כיון שנהרג, נעשו ישראל כמדבר" (ירושלמי, מס' ברכות, פרק ב', הלכה ו')

These statements display יואב's powerful and pervasive role as a political and spiritual leader of the Jews. Overall, it can be safely assumed after examining the commentaries of the Rishonim that although יואב deserved to die because he committed a terrible sin, killing בערמה, he lived an outstanding spiritual existence besides being the physical power behind דוד's throne.

Contemporary scholars also contribute significantly to this chapter in יואב's life. Prof. Seri suggests that because דוד did not specify to שלמה to kill יואב, as he was not necessarily deserving of death. Rather, יואב killed שלמה as a political maneuver to disconnect בית דוד from the deaths of אנור, אנשלום, and עמשא, in an effort to create a reputation of being a just, "people-friendly" king. Seri continues to explain why יואב ran to the מזבח. In שמות כא:יד, God commanded: "וכי יז אש על רעהו להרגו בערמה מעם מובחי תקחו למות". If a murderer runs to the altar to be saved, he should be taken away from it and killed. If יואב ran to the מזבח hoping to be saved, it can be inferred that he did not consider himself a murderer, but recognized that his life was sought for political reasons. Seri suggests that not only was יואב not deserving of death for murder, but he was also not a מורד במלכות for following אדוניוהו, for four reasons:

1) אדוניוהו was the next in line to be the king, because his older brothers אנשלום and אמנון were dead, and the next in line, כלבא,¹⁴ did not wish to be king. (דעת מקרא, מ"א א:ו). This is one reason why יואב believed that אדוניוהו was rightfully deserving of the kingship.

2) אדוניוהו said that he was going to be king and דוד did not protest (מ"א א:ה-ו), which insinuates consent (שתיקה כהודאה).

3) יואב did not necessarily know that שלמה had been appointed king, due to its clandestine nature.

4) אדוניוהו himself was never punished for rebelling against דוד; he was punished only for taking the king's concubine, אבישג השונמית.

Thus, although he does not go so far as to suggest that יואב committed no sin, Seri concludes that, had יואב been given a fair trial, he would have been found completely undeserving of death.

In contrast, Rabbi Goitein assumes that יואב did deserve to die, and suggests two possibilities why:

1) The answer given in the פשט is: *והשמועה באה עד יואב כי יואב נטע אחרי: פשט* "והשמועה באה עד יואב כי יואב נטע אחרי: פשט" מ"א ב:כח) מורד deserved to die because he was מורד by following אדוניהו and killing אבשלום, whose life דוד commanded him to spare.

2) יואב died because he killed using trickery. As opposed to Prof. Seri, Rabbi Goitein quotes the נצי"ב in interpreting שמות כא:יד to be referring specifically to one who kills בערמה,¹⁵ as it says, *והרגו בערמה*,¹⁶ "וכי יז אש..להרגו בערמה".¹⁶ The נצי"ב proposes that יואב ran to the מזבח because he thought that שלמה wanted to kill him for political reasons, including the fact that יואב's loyalty to שלמה was cast into heavy doubt due to his having supported אדוניהו. Knowing the halacha that one who kills with trickery or cunning will not be saved from the altar,¹⁷ it must be inferred that יואב did not put himself in that category; rather, he considered himself a victim of political strategy and assumed that escaping to the מזבח would save his life.

In truth, however, שלמה wanted to kill יואב to punish him for his criminal rather than political acts. Rabbi Goitein quotes the נצי"ב who maintains that יואב was killed solely because he murdered אבנר and עמשא cunningly and without warning. Regardless of these two possibilities for the cause of יואב's death, one political and one criminal, Rabbi Goitein maintains that יואב's character is of outstanding caliber. He quotes the חז"ל, who are quoted by רד"ק and come to יואב's defense, and adds two textual proofs concerning his superior nature:

1) In *מ"א יא:כא* יואב rebelled against שלמה after he saw that דוד as well as יואב were dead: *"כי שכב דוד עם אבותיו וכי מת יואב שר עבא"*.

2) In *אדם שכל* יואב is described as an *אדם שכל* "אדם שכל" יואב, *מכות פרק ב' הלכה ז'*, תלמוד ירושלמי "ישראל צריכים לוי", someone who was needed by everyone in the nation.

These statements are clearly powerful implications of יואב's personal greatness and public influence. They are used by Rabbi Goitein to highlight the fact that יואב was basically good, despite his killing through trickery and deceit; a sin that determined his untimely death.

There are two crucial statements in the גמרא that have not yet been examined; one concerns יואב's death, and one, his overall character and role within דוד's kingdom. Although their implications contradict, it is unnecessary to reconcile them because the statements are made by different people. The first is a statement made by רב יהודה in the name of רב, who extrapolates

יוהשיב ה' על דמו ועל ראשו אשר פגע בשני אנשים, מ"א ב:לב from שלמה's statement in "והשיב ה' על דמו ועל ראשו אשר פגע בשני אנשים, מ"א ב:לב that יואב died because, unlike אבנר and עמשא, he did not seek out every fact and halacha in the Torah, and he obeyed a sinful command that was received through a letter while they disobeyed a sinful command that was verbally related to them. According to the גמרא, this refers to שאול's instructions to kill the priests of Nov because they hid דוד from שאול.

Responding to this גמרא, Rabbi Goitein proposes three proofs regarding why it was easier for אבנר and עמשא to refuse שאול's command to kill the נוב כהני than for יואב to refuse דוד's command to kill אוריה:

1) Everyone, including שאול's servants, knew that כהני נוב were innocent. Conversely, יואב did not know whether or not אוריה deserved to die. It is logical to assume that אוריה did deserve death when taking into account that the message to kill him was from דוד, the last person who would ever consider killing someone if he was even slightly unsure of his being guilty.

2) אבנר and עמשא knew that שאול was acting irrationally and even madly concerning דוד; therefore they did not feel compelled to obey him.

3) אבנר and עמשא knew that שאול wanted to kill דוד because he feared that דוד would overthrow his kingdom, and they recognized that this is an insufficient and blatantly wrong reason to have someone killed.

Even if one does not accept these arguments against the condemning tones of the גמרא, it is crucial to keep in mind that it is contrasted by many other previously explored commentaries on the very same page (סנהדרין מ"ט), that come to יואב's full defense concerning both his acts and his character.

The second statement in סנהדרין מ"ט is made by רב אבא בר כהנא, who derives from the words, "ויהי דוד עושה משפט וצדקה לכל עמו ויואב בן צרויה על העבא," (ש"ב ה: טו-טז) that without דוד, יואב would not have been successful in war, and without יואב, דוד would not have been able to immerse himself in Torah. Although there are numerous other statements in סנהדרין that we have already discussed concerning יואב's spiritual excellence and outstanding persona, רב אבא בר כהנא's statement is exceedingly significant in that it stresses the powerful function and symbiotic dynamics that are at the core of דוד's and יואב's relationship.

In conclusion, the פרשנים that we have examined prove that the men that יואב killed deserved to die. He erred not in the act of killing them but in the nature of his killing them, namely, his use of ערמה, deceit and trickery. However, יואב's sin and the reason for דוד's anger towards יואב are inconsistent. Because the פרשנים do not reconcile this inconsistency or explain יואב's tumultuous and ambiguous confrontations with דוד, I would like to propose a theory concerning their relationship.

Two Antithetical Typologies

דוד and יואב are dichotomous characters who, through their actions and personalities, elucidated each other's tragic flaws, and to a lesser degree, greatness. דוד's ultimate goal as king was to establish a spiritually and physically perfect reign to pave the way for שלמה to build the Temple, a symbol of maximal connection with God through physical means. דוד interacted with man and God primarily on a spiritual level. He was not an ordinary warrior; his greatest fear was bloodshed. However, a physically perfect kingdom had to be established and all enemies had to be eliminated in order to maximize the kingdom's spiritual potential. דוד, therefore, needed someone who could take care of the physical aspect of leadership. This is why יואב was not only an integral member in the group of people who established בית דוד, but a necessary one as well. יואב and דוד each recognized that the other was needed to establish the kingdom, but דוד did not believe that יואב acted in the interest of the nation's welfare. Rather, דוד regarded יואב as a hasty and bloodthirsty warrior while יואב felt that he acted only in the interest of the king and his nation. The result of this friction was a strong mutual distrust and an urge to survive and lead independently of the other, while pretending that the other's contribution was not necessary to establish a perfect kingdom.

There is one inconsistency in the otherwise identical dynamics with which the two related to each other: יואב was in conflict regarding the way he felt about דוד; דוד was clearly not in conflict regarding the way he felt about יואב and his brothers. יואב had a problem: On the one hand, he was a subject and employee of the king, and felt strong loyalty to דוד and his nation. Furthermore, he possessed a deep desire to have the king's approval. On the other hand, he thought that דוד's leadership tactics were harmful to the nation and could barely resist the urge to take the law into his own hands and make all of the major political decisions in דוד's stead. Also, despite his loyalty to דוד and desire for approval, he was regarded with suspicion and contempt instead of gratitude and respect. יואב never resolved this conflict. Ultimately, however, יואב found himself incompatible with דוד and rebelled with אדוניו in the hopes of establishing a more "normal" political system in which he would receive appreciation.

Moreover, דוד's and יואב's major sins lie in contrast to one another and, despite their effort to correct each other's, they not only failed, but plummeted more deeply into the depths of their personal weaknesses. דוד's greatest sin, an event that shadowed over him all of his life, is taking בת-שבט and killing her husband, אוריה. דוד saw בת-שבט bathing, sent for her, and slept with her. He saw her because he was wandering the palace roof at

night, rather than going out to war with the rest of the army, as the king was required to do. דוד's passivity directly led to his greatest sin, for which he and his children were severely punished. In fact, דוד's unwillingness to act regarding what he feared was unnecessary bloodshed, came into conflict with יואב's tendency to act upon his every passionate whim.¹⁸ Both דוד and יואב reprimanded each other for their extreme behavior, but neither of them succeeded in finding a functional medium to integrate a healthy balance of action and passivity, of physicality and spirituality. Nevertheless, דוד and יואב shared the ultimate goal of establishing a kingdom most conducive to serving God.

Finally, there is one other subtle, yet truly striking point that is worthy of notice here. Consistently, throughout the ספר דוד, דוד used the four-letter Name of ה' , while יואב in general referred to Him as א-להים.

In order to succinctly enumerate דוד and יואב's similarities, parallels and differences, a chart is very helpful:

דוד	יואב
Passivity led to his downfall	Action led to his downfall
Forgave his enemies	Did not forgive his enemies
Ruled with mercy	Ruled with justice
Considered יואב destructive for the nation's survival — but was dependent on him	Considered דוד destructive for the nation's survival — but was dependent on him
Blinded by love	Blinded by anger
Relied on spiritual strength	Relied on physical strength
Considered himself maintainer of the kingdom	Considered himself maintainer of the kingdom
Tried to survive independently of יואב	Tried to survive independently of דוד
Relates to "ה'"	Relates to "א-להים"

To better understand how יואב and דוד each envisioned a perfect kingdom and ideal servitude to God, it is crucial to examine the different Godly aspects that they each related to:

א-להים vs ה

There are two popular approaches regarding the antithetical nature of the Names ה and א-להים: One is that ה"י denotes the Divine attribute of mercy while א-להים denotes the Divine attribute of justice. The second is that ה"י is mentioned regarding the interpersonally relating God of the Jews, and א-להים is mentioned regarding an omnipotent Creator of nature. To best grasp this dialectic, one must turn to the two cases in the Torah in which the relationship between ה"י and א-להים most blatantly manifest themselves: the creation of the world and God's presentation of His מידות הדין and מידות הרחמים. The Torah begins with, "בראשית ברא א-להים את השמים ואת הארץ" (בראשית א:א); God, the Mighty Source, created nature. Throughout the entire account of creation, God is quite reasonably referred to as א-להים. In fact, the first time we see the use of ה"י is still in conjunction with א-להים: "וייצר ה' א-להים את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים": א-להים (בראשית ב:ז).¹⁹ As soon as God created and breathed His own breath into man, the latent Name of Hashem, the Connecting Relater, presents itself. However, ה"י is still juxtaposed with א-להים, the Creator. Furthermore, the first time that we see ה"י exclusively is in בראשית ד:א, when אדם and חוה had a child, and חוה named him קין because, "קניתי איש את ה'". רש"י comments that "את ה'" means "עם ה'"; God created and participated in the union between man and woman, and through having children they connected and participated in the act of creation with the ultimate Creator. In other words, ה"י is first used when man discovered his connection and likeness to God through his ability to create.

The second case in which the natures of ה"י and א-להים play a prominent role is the מידות הדין stated in the עשרת הדיברות (שמות כ) and the מידות הרחמים, when God "showed" Himself to Moshe (שמות לד).²⁰ Predictably, א-להים is used in conjunction with מידות הדין (אני ה' אלוך) (שמות כב: is one example) and ה"י is used in conjunction with מידות הרחמים (among others, שמות לד: in ה' ה' א-ל רחום וחנון). Moreover, despite the fact that in the עשרת הדיברות, א-להים is mentioned seven times, it is completely absent when God relates the מידות הרחמים to Moshe. Clearly, these Names present a very powerful dichotomy throughout the Torah that represents the two polar ways in which man discovers God. Finally, among a vast number of commentators and scholars that further pursue this topic,²¹ Prof. U. Cassuto²² succinctly enumerates seven primary differences between ה"י and א-להים that can be beautifully integrated into the characters of יואב and דוד:

1) ה"י conveys the Jewish conception of God, in particular His ethical Character, and א-להים conveys an abstract conception of a Supreme Deity that is the Creator and Ruler over nature.

2) "ה'" is employed when He is depicted as a lucid and clear Being, while "א-להים" is employed when God is depicted as a hazy and obscure Being.

3) "ה'" implies a majestic and glorious God; "א-להים" implies an ordinary God.

4) "ה'" appears in direct relationship with a personal character, and "א-להים" appears as an outside Force above and beyond the physical universe.

5) "ה'" is found in relation to the Jews; "א-להים" is found in relation to mankind.

6) "ה'" is mentioned concerning the Jews' tradition and "א-להים" is mentioned concerning humanity's tradition.

7) "ה'" portrays man's simple and intuitive concept of God, while "א-להים" portrays the philosophical concept of thinkers who ponder the world and humanity.

In short, Prof. Cassuto suggests that the Tetragrammaton (the Name of Hashem), refers to God's relationship with man, His personal connection with the Jews, and consequently, the ethical manner with which He relates to His creatures. In contrast, "א-להים" insinuates God's rule over the general mass of mankind and His role as unattainable Creator, who, because of a lack of connection between Him and His creations, has no compassionate ethical code and acts with objective justice alone.²³

This notion is completely consistent with the characters of יואב and דוד. דוד referred to God as "ה'" because דוד personifies love, brotherhood, and mercy. יואב refers to God as "א-להים" because יואב personifies justice, while דוד referred to God as "ה'" because דוד personifies love, brotherhood, and mercy. The misunderstanding between these two men that results from the tension of this dialectic does not reflect a "right and wrong" situation, in which either יואב or דוד related to God "the correct way." Rather, it reflects a fundamental personality clash. This clash resulted in tragic misunderstanding which led both יואב and דוד to feel that they could not lead the nation together as an integrated duo, but were doomed to exist as opposing forces.²⁴ There are four major instances in which the use of the names of "ה'" and "א-להים" best reflect the opposite characters of דוד and יואב, אבישי, and צרויה בן עשהאל:²⁵

1) דוד fled from שאול and came across his sleeping regime in the middle of the night. אבישי felt that it may be דוד's last opportunity to defend himself against שאול and offered to kill the latter, knowing that although דוד is a נרדף and had a right to kill שאול, he would never do so on his own. אבישי urged דוד (ש"א כו:ח), דוד אבישי. Clearly, אבישי used not only the Name of God that he identified with, but also the One that, due to its objective nature, would justify and approve of דוד's killing שאול. דוד, however, assured אבישי that although technically he could kill שאול, he identified not with "א-להים" but with Hashem, the personal,

loving, and ethical God of the Jews. דוד expressed this by mentioning God's Name Hashem five times in his refusal to אבישי: "כי מי שלח ידו במשיח ה' ונקמה...חלילה לי מה' לשלח ידו במשיח ה'" (ש"ב כו: ט-יא) דוד dissociated himself from צרויה's formal conception of God, manifest in אבישי's use of the Name "א-להים" emphasizing his own passionate relationship with God, manifest in his manipulation of the Name Hashem. This is further highlighted in the second example:

2) יואב and אבנר led the Jews in war against each other. After killing עשאל, אבנר offered a cease-fire to יואב, and the latter responded in emphatic assent, "חיי הא-להים כי לולא דברת כי אז מהבקר נעלה העם איש מאחרי אחיו" (ש"ב ב:כז). It is fascinating that this is the only place in תנ"ך where someone swore by the life of "א-להים". Perhaps יואב was trying to justify his belief in the greatness of God as "א-להים", the just and mighty Creator, while refuting דוד's notion that God could only be related to as the "demeaning" image of a "Father-Figure," implied by Hashem.

3) אשה חכמה sent an "אשה חכמה" to דוד to convince him to allow אבשלום to return to Yerushalayim²⁶ by using a parable in which she described a parallel story that she claimed had happened to her family. In her speech, the woman referred to God as "א-להים", although דוד responded by referring to God with the Name of Hashem. The woman's words can be equated with יואב's, since she functions in the story only to deliver his message, as the פסוק clearly states: "וישם יואב את הדברים בפיה" (ש"ב יד:ג). Although the woman referred to specific entities in a possessive form regarding "א-להים" (i.e., "עם א-להים..."), (נחלת א-להים...מלאך א-להים... פסוקים יג, טז, יז) it is most significant that concerning דוד, she said "ה' אלוקיך" (פסוקים יא, יז). In fact, it is quite possible that דוד suspected that this woman was sent by יואב for the sole reason that the two utilized the Divine Names identically.

4) Despite דוד's express instructions to spare his son's life, יואב killed אבשלום, thereby ending the war and eliminating a national crisis. Instead of allowing his people to rejoice, דוד turned the day into one of mourning and grief, and of course was furious at יואב. The latter in turn severely rebuked דוד for what יואב deemed are backward values, and urged him to reach out to his people: "לאהבה את שנאיך ולשנא את אוהביך כי הגדת היום...כי נהי". יואב pleaded with דוד to stop mourning his son and resume his role as intermediary between God and His people. To stress how strongly he felt, יואב went so far as to swear in the Name of Hashem, expressing his attempt to identify himself with דוד, as if saying, "I am with you, דוד, not against you. Listen to me so I can help you reestablish order and your role as charismatic and optimistic king, which you have temporarily lost. My loyalty to you even brings me to be willing to subjugate my personality to yours, so as not to oppose your will."

Clearly, the Divine Names "א-להים" and "יה" are utilized to elucidate יואב's just nature and דוד's merciful character. יואב related to an abstract omnipotent Creator of humanity, a world in which everyone shares the same code of ethics, while דוד related to a personal Savior, a world in which the Jews have the privilege of having God's love and mercy bestowed upon them. This fundamental difference is portrayed throughout דוד's reign in that he and יואב forever remained opposing forces that could not, or would not, be integrated.

Conclusion

Now that it has been established that יואב's presence was necessary to establish the kingdom because he was an extraordinary military leader, an actor, and a just ruler, and that דוד's presence was equally necessary because he was a spiritual leader and a loving and merciful king, we must now return to the stories in which בני צרויה²⁷ appear and explain them in light of this necessary but ultimately tragic dialectic:

שיב ב-ג

These פרקים recount the war between בית שאול and בית דוד, in which אבנר killed עשהאל and was in turn later killed by יואב. The latter did not kill אבנר immediately for killing עשהאל but instead killed him when the war was over and peace reigned, an act for which דוד criticized him and which is possibly a motivation for condemning יואב to death. However, the text implies that יואב accepted אבנר's gesture of peace because he was not aware that his brother was killed. אבנר probably offered peace to יואב only because he knew that once יואב discovered that אבנר killed his brother עשהאל, יואב would refuse to stop fighting until he defeated בית שאול and killed אבנר. However, the latter's speech to יואב insinuated that the war was יואב's fault:²⁸ "הלווא ידעת כי מרה תהיה באחרונה ועד מתי תאמר לעם לשוב מאחרי אחיהם" (שיב ב:כו). Surprised at אבנר's words, יואב immediately assented that he did not want more bloodshed and agreed to a cease-fire. The irony was further highlighted when יואב himself blew the shofar and called an end to the war. On their return home, יואב gathered his army and counted them to determine the number of war casualties. He then discovered that עשהאל was missing: "ויפקדו...תשעה עשר איש: ועשהאל" (שיב ב:ל). ויעשהאל" (שיב ב:ל). יואב came upon the horrific realization that אבנר killed עשהאל and called for peace before יואב could discover what had happened. יואב probably felt that אבנר was a sly murderer and a selfish liar; meanwhile, אבנר's blood was not avenged and ironically יואב himself was the man who had innocently called off the war.

In פרק ג, when אבנר offered a peace treaty to דוד and it was accepted, יואב of course assumed that it was another plot in which אבנר was pretending

to come peacefully while secretly plotting to manipulate דוד into innocently accepting him just before turning against דוד. Perhaps because אבנר was a מורד במלכות, as well as the fact that יואב had a halachic right to be גואל הדם and avenge his brother's blood, so אבנר killed יואב.

However, דוד typically misunderstood יואב and assumed that אבנר was killed because יואב was angry and lost self-control. This may explain why אבנר's story opens with the story of why אבנר abandoned דוד; we are told that his peace-treaty to דוד was genuine. Furthermore, it is possible that אבנר brought twenty people with him as a symbolic gesture to express his regret for the bloodshed of the twenty men from דוד's house that were killed. This misunderstanding between יואב and דוד laid the groundwork for the rest of their relationship, in which דוד's mistrust of יואב disabled them from working together.

Finally, it is significant that although the Name "א-להים" appears in פרק ה', the Name "ה'" is completely absent. This implies that during this war, דוד (represented by the use of the Name "ה'") was powerless regarding the Jews' fate, and יואב, as physical leader, was in control. The military aspect of establishing the kingdom is, for better or for worse, not in דוד's complete control.

ש"ב י, יב

In יב, דוד led the Jews into a stunning victory over עמון, before which יואב delivered his famous "חזק ונתחזק" proclamation. As the war came to a close and victory was inevitable, דוד arrived to fight the last battle and יואב silently faded out of the picture. This seems to be יואב's ideal function: to fight wars for דוד and give the glory that he earned over דוד and the kingdom. This concept also manifests itself in יב, פרק יב, when יואב fought עמון and sent a message to דוד to come finish the war: "פן אלכד אני את העיר ונקרא" שמי עליה" (ש"ב יב: כח). Again, this reflects what the relationship between יואב and דוד was supposed to be; יואב achieved and utilized material greatness to glorify דוד's spiritually perfect reign.

ש"ב יד

This is the story of אבשלום's rebellion, an event that permanently destroyed any hopes of reconciliation and integration between יואב and דוד. An important factor in אבשלום's rebellion is that it was imminent, and this was probably recognized by both יואב and דוד. The harbinger of the rebellion in which this is most apparent is that, in his father's absence, the manner in which אבשלום spoke to his servants was that in which a king speaks to his subjects: "אל תראו הלוא כי אנכי צוית אתכם" (ש"ב יג: כח).²⁹ Furthermore, the fact

that אבשלום escaped to his gentile grandfather גשור מלך rather than going to a distant city or עיר מקלט in Israel is sufficient evidence alone to assume that אבשלום dissociated himself from דוד. Perhaps the reason why דוד did not want אבשלום to return to him is because he knew that אבשלום would rebel and cause a national state of emergency; even worse, דוד feared that he would be forced to have him killed. Conversely, יואב had no qualms about killing אבשלום, even if he was דוד's son. Consumed with the incentive of getting אבשלום pardoned for being a גואל הדם so that דוד would be compelled to forgive יואב for being גואל דם, יואב plotted to return אבשלום home. When he did, of course, אבשלום slowly began the process of rebellion. Lighting יואב's fields on fire because יואב could not convince דוד to consent to seeing his son, and winning the hearts of the Jews, אבשלום masterfully set the groundwork for his plan. When he finally rebelled, דוד is told, "יהיה לב איש ישראל אחרי אבשלום" (ש"ב טו:ג). From this statement that does not necessarily convey an act of rebellion, דוד knew immediately to evacuate the palace. Due to the imminence of his rebellion, דוד blamed אבשלום's death on יואב for two reasons:

1) יואב knew of אבשלום's plan and still wanted him returned home so that he could be pardoned for killing אבנר, regardless of whether or not אבשלום died.

2) דוד specified to יואב to spare אבשלום's life but יואב killed him nevertheless.

יואב was perfectly aware of דוד's sentiments towards him, and in ט-י confronted him with his famous "לאהבה את שנאיך" speech that we mentioned previously. יואב said "היום" five times to דוד, emphasizing that דוד had to stop mourning immediately and go out to the people that very day, or he would lose the loyalty of the people.³¹ The urgency in יואב's message is further displayed in that he said "כ"י" seven times, reflecting his fragmented stream of consciousness and frantic tone. Although he knew that his killing אבשלום completely severed any remaining bonds between them, יואב remained devoted to דוד and willing to sacrifice his own good graces with the king to save the nation from crisis and help דוד reestablish his kingdom.

ש"ב כ

After killing עמשא, יואב chased the מורד במלכות, שבט בן בכרי, When he arrived at the city wall inside which שבע was hiding, a woman called out to יואב, asking him to spare her life. He responded, "חלילה חלילה לי אם אבליע ואם" יואב was defending himself from those with the impression that he killed freely and thoughtlessly. Furthermore, the term חלילה is used in conjunction with the Name "יה"י.³² Perhaps יואב was utilizing this phrase to

identify with דוד, to indicate that he truly did not want unnecessary bloodshed.

ש"ב כ

דוד wanted to count the people, a grievous sin, and יואב tried to dissuade him. In contrast to the last time that יואב spoke to דוד, in which he harshly reprimanded him for mourning אבשלום, here יואב spoke humbly and formally to דוד, expressing their cold and hostile relationship: "ויספך ה' אלקיך אל העם...ועיני דוד rejected יואב's plea and יואב himself was sent to count the nation; loyalty compelled him to obey the king even though he clearly did not want to sin. In this story we see יואב's basically good character typically conflicting with דוד's will.

מ"א: א

דוד rebelled, partially due to the fact that דוד never rebuked him.³³ Again, דוד allowed his love to blind him from reality. Perhaps this tendency influenced יואב to rebel,³⁴ as if stating, "I have had enough of being on דוד's side where my family and I are not appreciated because דוד loves his enemies and hates his friends, and therefore resents my view on how to run the kingdom. Also, maybe joining אדוניהו will force דוד to take opposition seriously and he will learn from whom he must truly defend himself and act upon it."

מ"א ב

יואב discovered that he was a wanted criminal and ran to the מוכח for refuge, after seeing that אדוניהו, after doing so, was saved. This story is parallel with עשהאל's death to highlight the traits that the brothers shared, and is in contrast with, בית דוד to delineate that, as is typical of דוד, the true enemy was forgiven and יואב never received gratitude or even forgiveness.

Regarding the parallels with עשהאל, both he and יואב rejected opportunities to escape or leave, and stubbornly refused to yield, dismissing the tragedy of losing their lives because they felt justified in their actions. Both עשהאל and יואב are portrayed as zealous and stubborn, manifest in the similarity of the words in each of the stories. "נטה" is used in conjunction with a refusal to yield (כח: מ"א ב: כח), and both were given objects to grab onto as opportunities to be saved. עמשא told אבנר, "אחז לך אחד מהנערים", and concerning יואב, פסוק recounts, "ויחזק קרנות המזבח", (ש"ב ב: כא), and concerning יואב, the פסוק recounts, "ויחזק קרנות המזבח", (מ"א ב: כח). These parallels elucidate the common traits of בני צרויה that are in stark contrast with דוד, and ultimately were the causes of their deaths.³⁵

Furthermore, regarding the contrast between יואב and אדוניהו, they both ran to the מזבח for refuge, (מ"א א:ז, ב:כח), but אדוניהו was saved while יואב was not. In light of דוד's tendency to forgive their enemies and hate ערויה בני, it seems that both יואב and אדוניהו knew that this would occur. This is apparent in that אדוניהו calmly walked to the altar, וייקם "וינס יואב אל: יואב, in hopeless desperation, fled there: וילך ויחזק..." (מ"א א:ז) אהל ה' (מ"א ב:כח). The predictability of יואב's fate is nonetheless tragic; due to the unwillingness of בית דוד to pardon יואב, particularly regarding אבשלום's death, he was not in control of his fate.

We return to our original question concerning whether יואב was a "צדיק" or a "רשע". I believe that the answer is that יואב was a "צדיק," but not a perfect one. יואב did not fulfill his potential to be a great leader and an ideal second in command to דוד for two reasons: He sinned by killing with trickery, and consequently, in addition to him not sparing אבשלום's life, דוד could not reconcile the differences that he had with יואב. Moreover, although they possessed antithetical personalities, יואב and דוד's strengths were both necessary to establish the Jewish kingdom but neither recognized the other as a crucial component in creating an ideal reign. Had they accepted and integrated each other's strengths, יואב and דוד would probably not have sinned in their leadership and would have succeeded in building the ultimate spiritual kingdom.

¹ The stories in which בני ערויה appear and their implications regarding their character must be analyzed:

משיח ה' שאול wanted to kill פרק כו, and דוד refused to allow him to kill the אבישי - ש"א פרק כו = *negative*

אבנר, pleaded with him to run away, he refused, אבנר chased עשהאל - ש"ב פרק ב killed him = *negative*

אבנר suggested that his and יואב accidentally created a war when אבנר and יואב "sport" and יואב agreed = *negative*

יואב gladly accepted, יואב proposed peace, אבנר - ש"ב פרק ב = *positive*

אבנר tricked יואב into speaking to him in private, then killed יואב = *negative*

עמון executed a stunning victory over יואב ואבישי - ש"ב פרק י = *positive*

דוד received a letter from דוד to kill אוריה and he obeyed = *negative*

דוד fought before he was about to win, sent message to עמון and right before he was about to win, יואב - ש"ב פרק יב fought the last battle so he could take the credit for the victory rather than יואב = *positive*

דוד was upset over אבשלום's absence, plotted to get him sent back = *positive*

דוד was furious, דוד cursed after he wanted to kill גרא בני שמעי - ש"ב פרק טז = *negative*

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= *negative*

killed אבשלום after דוד told him not to = *negative*

wanted to kill גרא after he apologized to דוד, דוד was furious = *negative*

= *negative*

rebuked דוד for mourning אבשלום and turning כניי's victory into a tragedy = *positive*

of דוד = שר עבא killed אבשלום, עמשא = ש"ב פרק כ = *negative*

assured the woman he would not kill her or the other inhabitants of the city = *positive*

he saved דוד's life in war against the פלישתים, last appearance = ש"ב פרק כ"א = *positive*

דוד told דוד that he may not fight with them anymore = *positive*

discouraged דוד from counting thenation, דוד did not listen = *positive*

joined אדניהו's rebellion against דוד = *negative*

was condemned to death by דוד on his deathbed = *negative*

wanted to kill him, ran to מובח for refuge, was killed by בניהו בן יהוידע = *negative*

² This war stemmed from the horrific tragedy that occurred at גבעון. בריכת אבנר suggested to יואב, "יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו" (ש"ב ב:יד), יואב and completely unnecessary war erupted.

³ This statement alone suggests יואב's just character; the woman assumed that if she could convince יואב that she is undeserving of death, he would unhesitatingly spare her life and the lives of the other inhabitants of the city.

⁴ Loyal, that is, until he rebelled and joined דוד's son אדניהו in his rebellion. This will be examined further on.

⁵ מסי סנהדרין מ"ט

⁶ עשהאל גואל דם יואב or מורד במלכות אבנר was being דם גואל.

⁷ This is in stark contrast to יואב's fierce loyalty to דוד, especially in war. For instance, in י"ב ש"ב י"ב sent a message to דוד to fight the last battle against אמון, when כניי's victory was clearly imminent. The purpose of this, יואב explained, is so that דוד would get the credit for winning the battle and not יואב: "...פן אלכד אני את העיר ונקרא שמי עליה" (ש"ב יב:כט).

⁸ Mrs. Yael Ziegler

⁹ At first glance at the story of אבנר, it seems that יואב willingly destroyed any possibilities of peace between דוד and אבנר when he killed the latter to avenge the death of his brother עשהאל.

¹⁰ סנהדרין מ"ט

¹¹ As opposed to אבנר in פרק ב

¹² סנהדרין מ"ט

¹³ שלמה's half-brother who rebelled against דוד and whom שלמה saved after he ran to the מובח for salvation, as the halacha prohibits murderers from being killed at God's altar.

¹⁴ Whom many say is בני צרויה, as he is listed as דוד's second son in א דברי הימים א גא.

¹⁵ See Rambam's Hilchot Malachim, פרק ג הלכה י.

¹⁶ Rav Yaakov Medan also makes this distinction.

¹⁷ ראש סנהדרין יואב was חז"ל.

¹⁸ The story of אבשלום is a primary example.

¹⁹ For those who have read Rav Soloveitchik's essay, "The Lonely Man of Faith" it is interesting to note that God creates Adam I with א-להים and Adam II with Hashem.

²⁰ For detailed elaboration, see Rabbi Menachem Leibtag's article on this subject.

²¹ In particular, see Rav Breuer's introduction to פרקי בראשית, as well as his discussion in פרקי מועדות.

²² See his compilation of lectures entitled "The Documentary Hypothesis" in which he refutes the theory that the Torah has multiple authors.

²³ Mrs. Aliza Segal

²⁴ Moreover, the relationship that יואב had with דוד mirrors the relationship that the other בני צרויה had with דוד. This is because all three brothers shared the same basic traits and religious philosophies.

²⁵ For a more in-depth study, compare ש"ב with גלה ש"ב, and ש"ב with ש"ב טז. Also, examine the contexts in which Hashem's Name is mentioned five times in מ"א ב:כב-לג.

²⁶ From exile for killing his half-brother Amnon after the latter rapes Tamar, also his half-sibling.

²⁷ As listed in footnote 1.

²⁸ Although we know that אבנר initiates the war - see ש"ב ב:יד.

²⁹ Mrs. Mali Brofsky.

³⁰ ibid.

³¹ ibid.

³² See דוד's declaration in ב:כא for an example.

³³ מ:א א:ו

³⁴ In addition to what we have said before, that a) אדוניו was next in line to be king so this was not a true rebellion, b) אדוניו proclaimed himself king and דוד did not protest, and c) יואב might not have known that שלמה had already been appointed king.

³⁵ Note also that בני צרויה are almost always mentioned in relation to each other - "אבישי אה יואב", "יואב אה אבישי", etc. This further highlights the point that they shared common fundamental personality traits.

Evolution of the Covenant

Shira Bloch

OVER A PERIOD of hundreds of years ה' made several בריתות with mankind, beginning with the מבול and ending with the entrance of בני ישראל to ארץ ישראל. The central ones are:

- ברית הקשת (בראשית ט:ח-יז)
- ברית בין הבתרים (בראשית טו:ט-כא)
- ברית מילה (בראשית יז:ב-יד)
- ברית סיני 1 (לפי רש"י - שמות יט:ה-כ:כא, שמות כד)
- (לפי רמב"ן - שמות יט:ה-כד:יח)
- ברית סיני 2 (שמות לד:י-כז)
- ברית ערבות מואב (דברים כז:ד-כט:יד)
- ברית שכם (יהושע ח:ל-לה)

Although each ברית was made in an entirely different context, they were not necessarily independent events. In fact, each ברית can be seen as one stage in a process by which ה' refined His covenant with man, building on the previous one in response to historical events, until a functional model was found.

Definition of the Various בריתות

Even though seven such בריתות can be seen in תנ"ך, they do not all have clearly defined texts, and some may not even be new at all.

Firstly, ברית ערבות מואב and ברית שכם are essentially the same covenant. For the purposes of this article we will treat ברית ערבות מואב as the text of שכם, following the opinion of רד"ק.¹

Secondly, there is a מחלוקת between רש"י and רמב"ן concerning what is included in ברית סיני. While this ברית seems to end soon after the הדברות, in time to list the laws of משפטים given to משה on סיני, there is

another פרשה inserted between משפטים and תרומה which seems to return to the same ברית: In מתן תורה there is a “replay” of משה went up and down הר סיני, brought קרבנות and sprinkled the blood on the nation, declaring “הנה דם הברית אשר כרת ה' עמכם על כל הדברים האלה” (כד:ח). He also told the people about מצוות — “ויספר לעם את כל דברי ה' ואת כל המשפטים” (כד:ג) — and read the “ספר הברית” to the people, to which they responded “נעשה ונשמע” (כד:ז).

רש"י and רמב"ן both agree that this section relates to ברית סיני. The מחלוקת arises over what exactly is included in the ambiguous ספר הברית and how much of the תורה so far falls into the category of המשפטים.

רש"י believes that this פרשה appears out of order and actually occurred in פרק י"ט before the עשרת הדברות. Commenting on the words “ואל משה אמר” (כד:א), he says:

“פרשה זו נאמרה קודם י' הדברות ובד' בסיון נאמר לו 'עלה'.”

According to רש"י, the ספר הברית included everything from בראשית until שבע שבועות only refers to the laws received until that point: מתן תורה מרה, and various other דינים given in מרה, and the עשרת מצוות of פרישה and הגבלה at הר סיני. After this ceremony the עשרת הדברות were given, and then משה went up on הר סיני for forty days and nights to learn פרשת תרומה, immediately followed by פרשת משפטים.

רמב"ן, on the other hand, says that this פרשה appears in chronological order, and in fact all of משפטים is included in the ברית of סיני. Under the same דיבור המתחיל he comments:

והנה הפרשיות כלן באות כהוגן, כי אחר מתן תורה מיד בו ביום אמר ה' אל משה “כה תאמר אל בני ישראל”...וצוה אותו ואלה המשפטים...ואמר לו אחרי צוותך זה להם, עלה אל ה' אתה ואהרן.

רמב"ן's opinion is that ברית סיני really includes many מצוות and themes not mentioned in the עשרת הדברות, all grouped together under the title ספר הברית. In the forty days and nights following the ברית, only the details of the מצוות were received.

Terms of the ברית

A covenant is a two-way agreement, involving two entities, both of which are bound by obligations defined in its terms. In the context of these בריתות, the two parties are God and human beings. The people were given certain obligations to fulfill, while ה' was responsible to keep the promises He made in return.

The nature of God's promises and man's obligations over these 6 בריתות form parallel patterns.

ברית הקשת, God made only one promise — that He would never again destroy the world. This is emphasized three times, but it is the only condition contained in the whole text of the ברית.

נח and his sons were given no obligations — although they received several מצוות beforehand, the ברית never specified the requirement to keep these as a condition for God's fulfillment of His side.

ברית בין הבתרים included several promises — אברהם would have children; he would die in old age; his descendants would go into slavery and leave with great riches; they would inherit כנען.

Similarly to נח, אברהם was not given any explicit obligations. However the promises imply that the ברית would demand human participation — he had to have a child and his descendants were forced to endure years of oppression; they could not remain passive as in ברית הקשת.

Shortly afterwards in ברית מילה a level of permanence was added to the promises of ברית בין הבתרים. ה' repeated His promise to give the land of כנען to אברהם's descendants and added that it will be an עולם אחוזת; He promised that not only would אברהם have children, he would be the father of many nations and kings, ה' would be their God and the ברית would be extended to them to become a ברית עולם.

This time ה' spelled out obligations for אברהם and the nation that would come from him. He gave them abstract commands of "ואת בריתי אשר תשמרו" and "זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו" as well as the מצוה of מילה under threat of כרת.

According to ה'רש"י's definition, the promises in ברית סיני developed the "nation" aspect touched on in the two previous בריתות, that בני ישראל would be an עם סגולה, עם קדוש גוי and God would bless them wherever they call on Him.

More emphasis is placed on the people's side of the covenant — again, they were commanded "ושמרתם את בריתי" as well as "שמוע תשמעו בקולי" to behave in such a way that they deserve the titles מלכת כהנים and גוי קדוש. The מצוה section was enlarged to include all the עשרת הדברות, encompassing a wide range of obligations such as בין אדם לחברו and בין אדם למקום and לא תעשה and עשה.

The renewal of ברית סיני after העגל complements the original one, concentrating on the other theme mentioned to אברהם — the "land" aspect. ה' promised to perform unprecedented miracles, to enlarge the borders of ארץ ישראל and drive out all the nations living in כנען and to instill fear in them so that they would not try to invade when the land is unguarded.

The obligations given to בני ישראל also reflect this. They were strictly commanded not to make a covenant with any other nation living in the land and to destroy everything that might lead them to עבודה זרה. They were also

existing one, and was followed by events that demonstrated the success of the new ברית.

During נח's lifetime, ה' saw man's evil — "וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם בארץ" — and destroyed the world, regretting that He had ever created it. (בראשית ו:ה) — and established the ברית הקשת to prevent this from happening again. As such, this ברית was not entirely positive — it was a preventive step to stop future destruction of the world which evidently was inevitable without a covenant as a safeguard. It was a ברית הפרדה, allowing God to separate from a world He had no desire to be involved with, rather than a ברית of partnership. This could be why He gave man no part to fulfill in the ברית, to ensure a total detachment.

The ברית is followed by a description of the renewal of the world, as נח's descendants multiplied, the planet was repopulated and new lands were inhabited.

This state of separation between God and mankind was fine until דור הפלגה. The incident of מגדל בכל demonstrated that humanity needed to relate to something spiritual and higher than itself, and in God's "absence" resorted to building a tower to reach that level on their own. The people themselves stated two reasons for this act: "הבה נבנה לנו עיר ומגדל וראשו בושמים" — they needed heaven to be a tangible part of their lives; and "ונעשה לנו שם" — they needed a central core for all of humanity, something concrete that the whole world could look towards. This indicated two things: first, that ה' had to become visibly involved in the world; and second, that He should choose a specific nation for the rest of mankind to see as leaders in bringing them back to real spirituality, replacing the substitute they created themselves in the absence of a better option.

The stage was now set for ברית בין הבתרים. By singling out אברהם and personally giving him commandments, ה' regained His involvement in the world and selected the father of His chosen nation at the same time. The actual ברית came after אברהם questioned ה' as to why he had seen no evidence of the nation he was promised — "לי לא נתתה זרע" (ט:ג) — when he was told earlier "ויבטן גודל" (יב:ג). It also happened after his separation from לוט, the first step in being set apart from others, and the war of the 4 kings and the 5 kings, which gave אברהם a chance to assert his authority and influence in the world and make a קידוש ה'.

We can now see the promises in the ברית as an answer to the world's needs. ה' confirmed that אברהם would become a nation and would not die before seeing it; this nation would be special from the outset, performing the great feat of surviving slavery and overpowering their oppressors, unlike other nations who all inevitably assimilate; they would inherit כנען, a key geographical point located between the two centers of ancient civilization, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

When ישמעאל was born soon afterwards, it seemed logical for אברהם to assume that this was the son he had been promised. There was no way for him to know otherwise — no other part of the ברית could be actualized in the near future.

Until this point, God spoke in theoretical terms, but now there was a reality to deal with — ישמעאל could have been the start of the chosen nation. ה' needed to quickly clarify that the promises hadn't been realized yet, they would come true through a different son.

The prophecy about ישמעאל's nature before he was born was the first indication that he was not the chosen son — he is described as "פרא אדם" (ידו בכל יד כל בוי' טז:יב). At this point a new ברית was needed to reinstate the promises relating to the unborn son, and to emphasize the permanent nature of these promises, putting recent events in perspective. While at the time it seemed that אברהם, a father at 86, should be content that he was given a son at this age and not hold out hope for another one, when put into the incomprehensible context of eternity it didn't seem so hard to believe.

ברית מילה therefore emphasized the word עולם to impress upon אברהם that these promises should not be taken lightly, they would have an eternal impact — this detracted from the seemingly impossible event of another son being born. More importantly, the new ברית introduced a new concept, that אברהם would be "אב המון גוים" — the father of several nations, not only the singular גדול גוי he was originally told about. He now had a promise that he would have more than one son, and the chosen nation would not have to come from ישמעאל.

This ברית was immediately followed by the prediction of יצחק's birth both by God and the מלאכים, and his name was even given to make it realistic. In this prediction, ה' explicitly stated that He would establish His ברית with this particular son — "והקמתי את בריתי אתו לברית עולם" (וי:ט) — leaving no room for error. He also said that kings would come from שרה — "מלכי עמים" — ברית מילה — which corresponds to the recent promise in ברית מילה (וי:טז) — "ממנה יהיו" (וי:טז) — while ישמעאל would only produce "נשיאים". These statements were not said at the prediction of ישמעאל's birth, they are conspicuous differences between two scenes which are otherwise very similar — both times ה' said that a son will be born, gave a name and a reason for the name, and promised to multiply his descendants. At this stage אברהם knew exactly how the ברית would manifest itself and the only thing left was to wait for it all to take place.

The need for a change only arose again 400 years later, after יציאת מצרים. At this point the בריתות with אברהם were well on their way to being fulfilled — a nation had come from יצחק, they had been given divine help to

survive slavery, they had come out ברכוש גדול and were on their way to inherit כנען.

The transition from one family to an entire nation required the ברית to be reinstated on a national level with modified goals. God was no longer dealing with one faithful servant but with many individuals, each with their own personality and opinions, some more connected to Him than others. This provided ה' with two tasks: He had to forge several million individuals into one cohesive unit, and set out direct, objective guidelines for everyone to follow.

For this reason, ה' emphasized the "nation" aspect at סיני. By giving them collective promises, He forced בני ישראל to see themselves in the long term as a group with a common future making them inseparable. He also introduced formal מצוות to ensure that there were basic unambiguous guidelines that everyone would uniformly abide by, not only vague commands like "ויהיה תמים" which could be open to individual interpretation. The events immediately preceding the ברית show the beginnings of the nation, when they collectively overcame challenges such as עמלק and lack of water, and particularly when יתרו suggested a framework to enable wide-spread and accessible המצוות.

The ברית itself served as an official initiation for the nation and established a set of laws which could be incorporated into יתרו's system. It was followed by more laws which were told to סיני on משה including the establishment of the משכן as a spiritual center to enable national connection to God.

לעגל showed that this ברית was missing a fundamental element — it emphasized only the "nation" theme and neglected the land. At this point, בני ישראל knew only that they had been made into a nation and had certain responsibilities to fulfill, but they had no idea that this God would provide them with a homeland — as far as they were concerned, they could end up living in the מדבר forever. The fact that ה' described Himself as "אשר הוצאתיך" and didn't talk about taking them any further, could have implied to them that the desert was indeed their destination — the point of יציאת מצרים was to take them out of the midst of another people so that they could form their own national identity, but not to lead them anywhere specific. Impatient to leave their static life in the desert where they were totally reliant on God, and to find a place where they could work and build a society, they decided to find the land on their own — with a new god who would actualize the promise to the אבות. They maintained their group identity and did not discard the first ברית. However they also tried to create a new god with a different agenda: finding them somewhere to go. On the words "אלהות הרבה איוו להם", רש"י suggests: "אשר ילכו לפנינו" (שמות לב:א) —

they wanted many gods, not only one. They could retain ה' as the god of their nationhood and at the same time create a god of land. The words "אשר ילכו" indicate a god-like quality, as at no time during חטא העגל did the people specify a destination, leaving it up to the deity which they blindly trusted to lead them. This was not necessarily a change of attitude — it is possible that בני ישראל previously regarded משה as a god and now that he had disappeared they were looking for someone to replace him in this role. They described משה as "אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים", similar to the way ה' described Himself. This may have begun after קריעת ים סוף, where it says "ובמשה בה' ויאמינו" (יד:לא), possibly equating God and משה. This act of עבודה זרה does not show that they stopped believing in ה', but that they did not consider His promises sufficient.

This event demonstrated that the people did not expect ה' to make any more promises to them. He needed to rectify the misconception that He is not all-powerful, to show that He had prepared a destination for them beyond the מדבר, and to assure them that it was not a goal they were expected to achieve on their own.

The ברית made after חטא העגל is traditionally known as the renewal of ברית סיני, yet none of the promises made in the original one were in fact renewed. It is not a renewal in the sense of a repetition, but in the sense that the elements omitted in the first ברית are included so that the two complement each other. This ברית took place right after the concept of תשובה was introduced to עם ישראל, when משה invoked the מידות הרחמים and begged ה' for a national כפרה. This enabled ה' and בני ישראל to establish a new relationship — בני ישראל could now see ה' as a Being of absolute authority to whom they would always be answerable, so that they could be humbled before Him and see that there would never be anyone else equal to Him. ה' made an official ברית introducing the promise of ירושת הארץ both to inform them that it would happen and to assert His authority in deciding when and where they would go.³

אך בני ישראל now realized that they were going to ארץ ישראל and God would bring them there when He saw fit. The מצוות and promises listed were therefore connected not only to the land but also to the integral role God played in its inheritance. He would drive out the nations before them so they could conquer it, and the מצוות they would have to keep once they got there center around Him — appearing before ה' three times a year, redeeming firstborns from His possession and donating to Him the first of all produce.

The sequence of events following this ברית shows the dual effect ה' intended. First משה relayed to the people all the details of the מצוות he was given on הר סיני, testing their subservience. After this the ענן lifted and they began their journey to ארץ ישראל.

When this journey was interrupted by חטא המרגלים, ה' had to intervene with a new ברית. Whereas חטא העגל showed בני ישראל's eagerness to enter ארץ ירושת הארץ, חטא המרגלים showed the exact opposite. After this episode ארץ ירושת הארץ no longer appealed to the nation; they needed to be "forced" to inherit the land. Whether or not חטא העגל was really an act of עבודה זרה, contradicting the מצוה of "לא תעשה לך פסל", it basically stemmed from the nation's devotion to a different מצוה — ירושת הארץ — and they could have justified it in this way. Therefore, in the ברית following this sin, ה' partially acceded to their demands because they were worthwhile to some extent, although He established guidelines to ensure that these demands would be channeled properly. חטא המרגלים, on the other hand, displayed a complete lack of אמונה in an entire element of the ברית, so afterwards ה' had no need to listen to the people, only to impose His own requirements on them.

He did this by increasing the restrictions, detailing all the עריות as an example of pure הלכה and demanding that they keep the entire תורה. However, He also had a new need — to spell out the reverse side of the ברית. This was not necessary before as no previous ברית had ever been rejected. Now, having seen in חטא המרגלים that the nation was prepared to reject His ברית, ה' employed threats in order to dissuade them physically as well as morally from making the same mistake again. In every other ברית there was only a need for "אם שמוע תשמע בקול ה' אלקיך"; this time there was a real possibility of "לא תשמע".

But this would only work for people who wanted to inherit the land. The way things stood after חטא המרגלים, no amount of threatening would have helped without being accompanied by more promises, which would entice the nation to obey ה' despite the new restrictions. ה' needed to increase the appeal of the ברכות He offered them, or else there would be nothing to stop בני ישראל discarding תורה completely. He did this in two ways — by quantitatively increasing the number of ברכות, and by connecting the "land" ברכות to the "nation" ברכות, a ברית that was still intact. ברית שכם, containing both land and nation, was not just a summary of the two בריתות at סיני, but a new way of looking at the two elements. Beforehand, they were treated as two independent concepts. At the final ברית they formed a synthesis.⁴

ברית שכם is the final step in the sequence because of this synthesis. בני ישראל could now make the transition from a nomadic desert tribe reliant on God for their every need, to a self-sufficient society immersed in material as well as religious issues. Without "nation," there would be no continuity; without "land" there would be no achievement. Both of these together — continuity and achievement — when directed toward תורה goals, would provide the basis for the chosen nation God had sought to bring humanity to real spirituality.

Here we can consider the timing of ברית שכם in its own right, not just as the repetition of ברית ערבות מואב. There are several opinions as to when ברית was actually executed — immediately after כניסה לארץ (the opinion of רש"י and רד"ק), after the 14 years of כיבוש (according to רמב"ם) or as it appears chronologically in תנ"ך. Taking the chronological point of view, the ברית is a response to חטא עכן that occurred right before it. עכן showed contempt for the nation, exempting himself from the collective command of "שמרו מן החרם" (יהושע ו:יח), as well as disregard for the land by delaying its conquest, seen in the initial failure at עי. It is possible that ה' did not give clear directions as to when the ברית should be played out, instead leaving it to יהושע's discretion to decide when the nation most needed it. In this light, the slight differences between the instructions in דברים and the actions in יהושע are understandable — for example, בני ישראל were told to stand on certain mountains, yet according to פשט everyone in fact stood down in the valley with the ארון. This could be because specifically at this point in time, after their first failure, they needed an extra measure of חיזוק.

These changes were evidently legitimate, as the events after this ברית reflect its success. The new autonomous society overcame national and territorial challenges. בני ישראל all participated in כיבוש הארץ, single-handedly defeated 31 kings, and went on to complete ישוב הארץ as they were commanded. Their society was stable enough to maintain peace, preventing a civil war breaking out over the מובח built by שבט מנשה. גד וחזי שבט מנשה. By this stage בני ישראל finally accepted the importance, responsibilities and privileges of nationhood and settling the land.

In a sense, all of Jewish history from that point on displays our continued dedication to these ideals. Our inexplicable existence that defies nature, our continued שמירת המצוות and devotion to an ancient תורה and the emphasis placed on the Jewish community until today show that our nationalism is still alive. The centrality of ירושלים and ארץ ישראל in our תפילות, our uninterrupted presence in ארץ ישראל for over 3000 years and our constant longing to return there with משיח display a love for the land which has not diminished despite centuries of גלות. The recent rebirth through ציונות of the ancient ideal of כיבוש וישוב הארץ, focusing as much on the needs of the nation as on the importance of the land and resulting in the establishment of מדינת ישראל as a national homeland, embodies this ultimate ברית manifested in our time.

Communication of the ברית

As these בריתות are between man and God, and it is not always possible for ה' to deal directly with human beings, they were not all delivered in the

same way. In each covenant, both בעלי ברית were represented on some level. The way God manifested Himself, and the people involved in the ברית, follow a sequence.

In Himself spoke directly to נח, while נח sat passively and made no reply, consistent with a ברית הפרדה. The same thing happened in the two בריתות made with אברהם, where ה' personally delivered the ברית, but the human participation increased. In ברית בין הבתרים God spoke to אברהם while he was asleep — "ותרדמה נפלה על אברם" — here אברהם didn't play an active role, but was required to be in a certain state. He also took part in the preparation of the ברית, cutting up the animals. In ברית מילה there seems to be a conversation, even though only ה' words are recorded, as it says "ויפל ה' ויבשר את אברהם" — that ה' spoke **with** אברהם, not **to** him, in response to אברהם's submission to Him.

ברית סיני serves as the transition between ה' and man in communicating the ברית to the people. משה participated in its delivery, either by relaying instructions to the people before הר סיני and passing on the laws he received on the mountain (as רמב"ן believes) or by actually saying eight of the דברות with ה' amplifying his voice (according to רש"י). He also read the ספר הברית to the people, brought קרבנות and sprinkled the blood.

משה's role in the ברית is seen again in its renewal, when ה' concluded by saying "כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתו את ברית ואת ישראל", separating him from the rest of the nation. משה, as part of ישראל בני, also participated in the ברית as one of the human partners, yet his experience was different because he received it directly from God, whereas everyone else got it through him.

In ברית שכם a whole range of intermediaries was used. The text was first delivered by משה and when it actually took place it was repeated by יהושע, also נביא, albeit on a lower level. Other people are mentioned too — the זקנים and הושיע were told to carry the ארון and the זקנים ושופטים are listed separately from the rest of the nation.

There is a pattern formed from this sequence. Over the course of the בריתות more people are involved in the administration of the covenant. On one hand, this shows ה' trying to bring the ברית to the level of the people, encouraging them to be receptive and relaying it to them through intermediaries who they can relate to: from ה' Himself, to משה who was in a higher plane than any other human being, to יהושע and other leaders closer to the people. On the other hand, this also causes ה' to become increasingly distant as the process continues, stepping back to allow the ברית to occur more naturally.

The people included in each ברית also follow this pattern. At first נח and his sons were the only בעלי הברית. אברהם was also alone in His covenants, though יצחק was mentioned at the end. The later בריתות were given

The nature of each ברית also follows this pattern. ברית הקשת is supernatural, and its fulfillment could never be certain; ברית בין הבתרים contains physical promises which were only theoretical at the time they were given — the nation could only evolve once a child was born, and the land could only be inherited after גלות, both of which had not yet happened. ברית מילה too is represented by a physical sign, but the sign is not the ברית itself, just a symbol of the spiritual meaning behind it.

ברית סיני contains both elements — it was a spiritual initiation for the nation, and set out physical מצוות for life. ברית שכם is very practical, listing laws to be incorporated into society, and physical consequences of the מצוות בין אדם למקום.

The בריתות became more in touch with reality, but this is not because God didn't know what reality should be. The situation addressed by each ברית could have lasted, if not for events which show man's inability to live this way. Each ברית built upon the previous one — each did not replace, but enhanced the one before. The תורה says about ברית שכם that this was "מלבד" — another layer added to ברית סיני, which still stood in its own right.

ה' went through several stages of בריתות with mankind, refining them continuously until He created a model man could cope with and remain loyal to. He started with the supernatural and transformed it until He arrived at everyday life of the ultimate quality — the synthesis of תורה, עם, ארץ ישראל and ישראל.

¹On the words "ואחרי כן קרא את כל דברי התורה הברכה והקללה ככל הכתוב בספר התורה" in הוא שאמרו ברוך האיש ארור האיש או...והיה אם שמוע תשמע והיה רד"ק comments: יהושע ח:לד — this refers to the ברכות and קללות listed in ערבות מואב.

The scene in יהושע was also very similar to the way ה' told בניי to play out the ברית in the future. רד"ק says that the שבטים stood in the same positions in יהושע as described in דברים, and the ceremonies were very similar:

ברית שכם	ברית ערבות מואב
או יבנה יהושע מזבח לה' אלוקי ישראל בהר עיבל (יהושע ח:ל)	אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום בהר עיבל (דברים כז:ד)
ככתוב בספר תורת משה מזבח אבנים שלמות אשר לא הניף עליהן ברזל (ח:לא)	ובנית שם מזבח לה' א-לוהיך מזבח אבנים לא תניף עליהם ברזל. אבנים שלמות תבנה את מזבח ה' אלוך (כז:ה-ו)
ויעלו עליו עולות לה' ויזבחו שלמים (שם)	והעלית עליו עולות לה' אלוך. וזבחת שלמים ואכלת שם (כז:ז-ח)
ויכתב שם על האבנים את משנה תורת משה (ח:לב)	וכתבת על האבנים את כל דברי התורה הזאת (כז:ח)

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We can assume that the text of the ברית and the stage directions were given in ערבות מאכ, and then repeated in full when they were carried out in יהושע's time.

²As mentioned above, רמב"ן says that the original ברית סיני included all of פרשת משפטים. Therefore, according to him the progression after ברית מילה is different. ברית סיני includes a heavy emphasis on the "nation" aspect originally mentioned to אברהם, but also mentions the "land" aspect in פרשת משפטים when ה' promised to bring the people to "המקום אשר הכינתי" by sending a מלאך to lead them.

The promises and responsibilities outlined later in the renewal of ברית סיני are not textually new to us. The חידוש in the second ברית סיני is its singular emphasis on ארץ ישראל without connecting it to the nation.

The progression from ברית הקשת to ברית סיני according to רמב"ן follows the same thematic pattern as in שיטת רש"י. The second ברית סיני plays a historical role in the sequence, drawing on the themes already mentioned in response to the chronological context.

³If we follow הרמב"ן, who holds that ברית סיני also included the מצוות of פרשת משפטים, the new ברית served a slightly different function but still led to the same result. At this point ה' was leading a group of individuals aimlessly through the desert. This was a very unsettling time for the people, having been uprooted from מצרים, their homeland as far as they were concerned. ה' needed to cause them to view their futures elsewhere, with a collective purpose in life. It was not enough simply for them to form a unit; they also had to see that this unit would be their "support structure" and would be necessary for significant accomplishment.

As well as giving these individuals a national identity, ה' also had to tell them that they were heading for a specific place. To provide them with a purpose amid the confusion, ה' gave them a destination and involved the people in a system of laws, building on יתרו's framework.

The instruction to build the משכן following the ברית expressed all these elements practically. Not only would the משכן serve as a physical center of national connection to God, it was essential for many מצוות and became a symbol of organized worship. The construction of the משכן itself showed its temporary nature — בני ישראל were embarking on a journey which would require it to be assembled, taken apart and transported many times, until a permanent structure would be built in a designated place.

חטא העגל showed ה' that the people had lost faith in His sincerity concerning the "land" aspect of the ברית. At ברית סיני בני ישראל were informed that they would enter ארץ ישראל led by a מלאך, but there was no way to know how far in the future this promise would be realized, especially because the מלאך's identity was kept vague. At the time, they had every reason to believe it was imminent and the מלאך was משה, but when he disappeared on הר סיני and didn't return they began to doubt whether God was referring to him, or to some other leader. The promise of a land of their own was enticing (כג:כז) — "ונתתי את כל איביך אליך ערף" (כג:כח) — was especially meaningful after their recent encounter with עמלק, and "וברך את לחמך ואת מימך" (כג:כח) appealed to people gradually getting tired of a static life in the desert, eating מן and waiting for משה. Impatient to reach the land and receive these blessings, בני ישראל became convinced

that it was up to them to create a new מלאך, which they made in the form of an עגל, to fill the gap left by משה — לא ידענו מה היה לוי...לא ידענו מה היה לוי" — משה seemed a good candidate because he was the one "אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים"; this qualification was transferred to the עגל when they said "אלה אלוהיך ישראל אשר עבדה זרה" but were attempting to bring about one of God's promises on their own — they only wanted to create a מורה דרך, not a god. רמב"ן explains their reasoning in this way:

בידוע שלא היו ישראל סבורים שמשה הוא האלוקים...היו מבקשין משה אחר, אמרו, "משה שהורה לנו הדרך ממצרים ועד הנה...הנה אבד ממנו. נעשה לו משה אחר שיורה הדרך לפנינו על פי ה' בידו".

The doubt they showed was not a deficiency in their אמונה in God but a lack of patience for His promise to be actualized when they found themselves at a standstill. They stubbornly felt that they had the power to initiate the process of עליה לארץ in order to inherit the land when it suited them. Consequently ה' called them "עם קשה" (לכ"ט) expressing anger at their inability to wait for His signal. He now had to make another ברית reiterating the promise of ירושת הארץ both to reassure them that it would happen and to reassert His authority in deciding when it would be.

The renewal of ברית סיני was a partial renewal, only discussing the aspect of ארץ ישראל. Here the balance of power in the relationship between ה' and בני ישראל was restored. This ברית took place after the concept of תשובה was introduced to ה', so that they were humbled before Him and unlikely to take matters into their own hands again. To stress this point ה' called Himself א-ל-קנא, a term of severity and דין. Although ברית סיני, ה' had shown that they did not have full confidence in all aspects of ה' still catered to their needs by making a new ברית because their feelings were understandable. The process of nationhood and מצוות could begin in the desert; ירושת הארץ would be dependent on faith until they reached the land. The "land" aspect was isolated now to reassure the people and give extra emphasis to this particular promise.

⁴This is relevant even for רמב"ן, who believes that both the "nation" and "land" aspects were mentioned in the first ברית סיני. In ברית סיני they were disjointed, given as two separate parts of one covenant. This allowed the people to discard one and not the other as soon as they were presented with a challenge. In ברית שכם they were inextricably linked. The rewards and punishments of this ברית predominantly relate to the land, but in connection to the behavior of the nation inhabiting it. בני ישראל had never rejected their national identity so far, but this could be because there had been no one else around for a long enough period of time to challenge it. Now they would be entering a situation where they would face at least six other nations, so it was necessary for ה' to refer to them collectively in order to reinforce their unity. He also needed to emphasize ארץ ישראל, a concept they had had trouble accepting. Recognizing that it was a disruption in leadership — משה's disappearance — which had prompted the people's partial rejection of the ברית, ה' delivered the final stage right before משה's death, rather than immediately after העגל, as a form of חיזוק for בני ישראל. He also added a built-in guarantee that this ברית would be repeated once

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again, by יהושע in שכם, upon their entrance to the land, preempting another rebellion which could result from the change in leadership. At that point the land would be a physical entity and בניי would see that they had a competent leader who had brought them there. No amount of national feeling or תורה values could have ensured the success of עם ישראל in the מדבר, while ארץ ישראל was only a theory or a dream — it had to be a practical reality.

This tactic could be the purpose of many נבואות throughout ניך. The conquest of all of ארץ ישראל was a huge task and a big societal change and required an official ברית to provide the חיוק the people would need. After they settled the land, there were smaller challenges from time to time, threats of invasion and internal conflict. To preempt a lack of אמונה or failure to adhere to תורה at these times, ה' sent נביאים to remind the people of whichever part of the ברית needed to be restated — the consequences of their actions, their role as עם סגולה or the importance of fighting for ארץ ישראל.

שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום*

Sheera Hefter

THE גמרא IN 1:1-1 quotes a בריתא in which רבי יהושע בן לוי teaches us that thirty days prior to פסח, one must begin to look into the relevant הלכות of the upcoming holiday. The גמרא brings a proof from the time that בני ישראל were in the מדבר. In פרשת בהעלותך,¹ משה commanded בני ישראל to begin their preparations for פסח thirty days prior to the חג itself: "כדתניא...: "שלושים יום. מאי טעמא דתנא קמא שהרי משה עומד בפסח ראשון ומוהיר על פסח שני..." "ידורש להן בהלכות פסח השני דהיינו שלשים יום שהוא בארבעה עשר באייר"² explains "רש"י. However, a different בריתא in לב-לב: teaches that משה instructed the people to study and explore the "ענינו של יום" on the day of the חג itself: "ת"ר משה תיקן להם לישראל שיהיו שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום הלכות פסח בפסח הלכות פסח בחג" עזרת בעזרת הלכות חג בחג". Are these two statements complementary or conflicting? What, in fact, is the nature of each of these two statements?

I.

א³, addressing a related issue, qualifies the גמרא in פסחים to distinguish it from that in מגילה. He explains that the תקנה of "שלשים יום" is to be applied only in the בית מדרש, whereas that of "בו ביום" applies to the laymen as well. א's explanation is congruous with the משנה in אבות regarding the priority of a student's question before his teacher. The משנה (אבות ה:ז) teaches us that one should be "ענין". "שואל כענין ומשיב כהלכה" is defined as within thirty days. Within those days, a question related to the approaching חג takes precedence over other questions.⁴ ר"ן⁵ also explains the תקנה of "שלשים יום" as applying to the בית מדרש whereas משה's תקנה of "בו ביום" applies only to the laymen and is reserved for the learning of הלכות presumably with an emphasis on practical application. The שאילתות⁶ echoes this idea and explains that the תקנה of thirty days applies to those in the בית מדרש exclusively. The פסחים in ירושלמי⁷ also explains that the הלכה of "שלשים יום", with regard to הלכות פסח, applies only in the "בית ועד". Therefore, the תקנה of שלשים יום seems to refer, according to most ראשונים, exclusively to those in the בית מדרש.

*This article was originally presented in the form of שיעור in MMY on שבועות תשס"א, in honor of a סיום made on the completion of מגילה.

The *quod* quoted above, however, introduces another point of inquiry. Does the *תקנה* of “thirty days” apply only on *פסח* or is it more widely applicable, like *בו ביום*’s *משה* instruction? Although we will see that some sources limit this to *פסח*, according to the literal reading of the *ברייתא* in *רש”י*, *רוקח*⁹ expands this concept to include all of the *רגלים*, as does *מסכת סנהדרין*⁸ adding that this thirty-day *חיוב* applies even for *עזרת* (שבועות). However if this is so, if those in the *בית מדרש* must study the laws of every *חג* from thirty days beforehand, then what does *תקנה*’s *בו ביום* add for them?

One possibility, of course, is that the *תקנה* of *משה* is geared towards the laymen who did not begin thirty days in advance, and has no significance for the *תלמידי חכמים*. Perhaps, however, these two ideas are really not the same at all, but rather fundamentally different. Aside from quantitative differences, there may be important qualitative distinctions as well. Our *גמרא* earlier in *פסחים* strongly implied that the instruction of preparing the *הלכות* thirty days prior to the *חג* applies primarily to *פסח*. *בית יוסף*¹⁰ here as well, quoting *ר”ן*¹¹ in two places, explains that this *תקנה* is limited to study of *הלכות*. Both quote the *משנה* in *אבות* as a proof as well. *דרישה*¹² explains this as well: “*צריך להודיע לעם...לטחון הטחין...ביאור חמץ*”. One requires more time to learn all of the complex *הלכות* of *פסח*.

The *גמרא* in *זרה*¹³ explains that one needs these thirty days in order to properly prepare for the *פסח*. *קרוב* *ב”ח*¹⁴ later echoes these feelings: “*מעיקר הדין אין צריך שלשים יום...משום ביקור מומין*”. It appears therefore that this *תקנה* of “thirty days” is quite logical and seemingly purely functional. *משה*’s *תקנה* may apply in a different realm. This *תקנה* possibly has a more spiritual dimension of being appropriate and befitting to talk about a *חג* on the day itself. *רש”י*, in his commentary on the *גמרא* in *בב”ב*, offers the following interpretation: “*מלמד שהיה מדבר עמהן הלכות כל מועד ומועד בזמן ההודיע חוקי האלוקים ותורתיו*”.

What is the scope of *תקנה*’s *בו ביום*? Interestingly *רמב”ם* utilizes the *תקנה* of *משה* in the context of *תורה*:¹⁵

“*משה תקן להם לישראל שהיו קורין בתורה ברבים בשבת ובשני ובחמישי... ואילו הן הימים שקורין בהם התורה בציבור... במועדים...*”

Within the greater *תקנה* of *משה* to read from the *תורה* on Monday, Thursday and *שבת*, *כדי שלא יהו שלשה ימים בלא שמעת תורה*,¹⁶ we have additional readings on the *מועדים*: “*מפסיקו למועד...בענין המועד...מועד ומועד*”:¹⁷ commenting on these two *הלכות*, quotes the following *גמרא* in *מגילה* as a proof:¹⁸ “*פורים שחל להיות בשבת שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום*”¹⁹ and explains:

“*משה תיקן להם לישראל שהיו קורין בכל מועד בענינו דתנן מה קורא בכל מועד*”

והדר קאמר שנאמר וידבר משה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל מצותו שיהו קורין כל אחד ואחד בזמנו והא דאי אסמכתא היא דקריאת התורה גופא תקנה היא."

It appears therefore that תקנת משה here definitely has a dimension of spiritual significance. The idea of being "מוזכרים ומפרשם ענינו של יום" is quite strong. Our גמרא is a very fitting example of this greater concept:

"אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי פורים שחל להיות בשבת שואליו ודורשיו בענינו של יום מאי אריא פורים אפילו יום טוב נמי דתניא משה תיקן להם לישראל ליהיו שואליו ודורשיו בענינו של יום...פורים איצטריכא ליה מהו דתימא דתניא נגזר משום גזרה דרבה קמ"ל.²¹

One may have thought, רש"י explains, that no שיעורים should be given on פורים itself because of the גזרה דרבה שחל להיות בשבת:

"דגזר לקמן בקריאת המגילה שמה יעבידו ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים אף כאן דדרשה אטו קריאה."²²

However, the גמרא emphasizes, it is in fact important to talk about פורים even when it is שבת, and possibly all the more so because it is שבת. רמב"ם teaches us "שואלים ודורשים...כדי להזכיר שהוא פורים".²³ We see, therefore, that it is of importance to speak about the day even though we cannot read the formal text of the מגילה itself. There is spiritual value in talking about the חג on the חג itself.

An interesting question arises when we talk about expounding upon the חשיבות היום. Should one discuss the spiritual aspects of the day or the technical ones? Most ראשונים assume that תקנת משה refers to the spiritual dimension. ריטב"א and ר"ן hold that once we read the מגילה, the importance of learning the הלכות no longer exists—the implication is that the תקנה of studying the הלכות was instituted because of the spiritual significance of these הלכות, and that can be accomplished by reading the מגילה as well. רשב"א also says something that supports this analysis. He holds that even on שחל להיות פורים "מאי אריא פורים...גס בפה",²⁴ פורים of the הלכות there is value in learning the הלכות of פורים.²⁵ ביומוי

Another example of this can be seen with regard to מרדכי. The גמרא in (in the Aggadic portion at the end of the first פרק dealing with events which took place that are not recorded in the מגילה) teaches us about an encounter between המן and מרדכי.²⁶ "אתא המן ויתיב...מלי קומינא דסוליתא ומתכפר ליה". "דורש בענינו של יום...עד: הלכות קמינא ומתכפר ליה".²⁷ Even though מרדכי and his students were in שושן, and these הלכות were therefore far from practical, מרדכי was busy nonetheless looking into the הלכות of "תנופת העומר בו ביום". מרדכי teaches us that there is an impor-

tant value to being "מזכיר ומפרסם" something significant that would go on in the בזמן החורבן, even בזמן המקדש.

The approach taken by רשב"א, תוספות, and later, the טור, leads one to investigate further the relationship between the two original ברייתות "שלושים" and "בו ביום" and suggest a different approach. Perhaps they are not two unrelated concepts but are really one large תקנה with two subcategories. The מחבר ח"י takes this approach in both his commentaries on אורח חיים. The מחבר quotes²⁸ this law "שואלים בהלכות הפסח קודם לפסח שלושים יום", להלכה. The משנה brings ברייתות together both of the ברייתות:

"שהרי משה עומד בפסח ראשון...ומזהירן על כל הלכות פסח שני והוא הדין בשאר ימים טובים נמי דורשין קודם לכן שלשים יום בהליכות...ויש אומרים החיוב שלשים יום הוא רק בפסח משום דיש בהן הלכות גדולות...משאין כן בשאר ימים טובים די באיזה ימים קודם ועל כל פנים ביום טוב גופא לכלי עלמא עריך לשאול ולדרוש בכל יום טוב בהלכותה...."²⁹

He even clarifies one of our initial ambiguities at the end of סעיף קטן ב: "מכל מקום מצוה לכל אחד לעסוק בהלכות פסח שלשים יום קודם וכן בחג עצמו". We learn an additional piece of information here as well that משה תקנת expresses an equality between the חגים: "ההלכות פסח בפסח, עזרת בעזרת, חג בחג": רגלים. רבי יהושע בן³⁰ "שלושים יום" is seemingly limited only to פסח.

ביאור הלכה explains that the intention of "בו ביום" is not to the exclusion of "שלושים יום"; rather they are to be complementary elements of something larger. One could mistakenly read the ביאור הלכה and think that he is not commenting on the nature of these תקנות. But in fact, he is really keeping the two תקנות separate under one larger category. What is the real driving purpose behind these תקנות in their differing forms? These תקנות come to teach us the practical application required of us to facilitate proper anticipation and readiness for significant times in the Jewish calendar.

It is possible for one to say that תקנת רבי יהושע בן לוי of "שלושים יום" was focusing on the הכנה aspect of the חג whereas תקנת משה of "בו ביום" was aimed at emphasizing the importance of the day itself and that לימוד of בו ביום is a קיום in the מצוה of the חג itself. We must prepare and reinforce the concepts that are important to us.

II.

On ראש חודש אלול, we begin to blow the שופר in shul and ספרדים begin to say סליחות, precisely for the purpose of awakening us to the upcoming holiday of ראש השנה. The עשרת ימי תשובה are vital days in the calendar during which כלל ישראל engage in a most serious involvement in repentance and self-improve-

ment, all leading up to יום כפור. To properly attempt experiencing a meaningful תשעה באב, we start preparing three weeks earlier from תמוז, talking and learning about the בית, חרבנו, and its significance. We have learned above that from ראש חודש ניסן, and really from פורים, one must begin to prepare for פסח. Lastly, we have ספירת העומר, perhaps the most significant example, leading up to שבועות, 49 days dedicated to real spiritual growth as an individual and as a nation. We left מצרים on the 49th level of טומאה and through the 49 days of ספירת העומר, we have the potential to raise ourselves up to the highest level of טהרה necessary for the close encounter with הקדוש ברוך הוא. We bring as the עומר offering on פסח a מנחה of barley, which is animal food. However, by the time we reach שבועות, we have refined ourselves, and therefore our קרבן as well, and we offer up to ה' a מנחה of wheat, fine human food. These times of preparation are built into the calendar. The תורה knew that we cannot jump into important times like these unprepared, rather we are in need of a gradual ascent toward the various high spiritual points in time.

The חג of שבועות completes the חג הפסח. חז"ל teach us אין לך בן חורין אלא מי חז"ל. חג הפסח that we strived to achieve at ומן שפוסק בתלמוד תורה³¹ cannot be totally complete until after מתן תורה. As a preparation for the intensity and magnitude of מתן תורה, ה' gave us the days of ספירת העומר as days set aside for work. Not physical labor, but rather serious טהרה is needed in order to be ready to accept the תורה on חג השבועות.

The זוהר teaches us that the 49 days of ספירת העומר are equal to the פרקי אבות of משנה "לב טוב" גמטריא teaches us

"צאו וראו אזוהי דרך ישרה שידבק בה אדם...רבי אליעזר אומר לב טוב...
ואה אני את דברי רבי אליעזר שבכלל דבריו דבריכם."³²

The לב is the root and source for all מצוות.

"א-ל חי" גמטריא of מ"ט is also the מ"ט of ספירת העומר. The job of the days of טהרה is to purify and refine all of one's מדות, both those that are between people (בין אדם לחברו) as well as those that are בין אדם למקום, all which included in the category of א-ל חי (נתיבות שלום).

ספירת העומר בית אברהם points out that during the time of ספירת העומר, we read in the התורה each week פרשיות that deal with "עניני הנגעים ועניני טמאות וטהרות". Why is this so? The purpose is to help each Jew to purify himself from all these ideas and תאוות. Every time of year has a special סגולה, and this is the time of year that is מסוגל for us to be cleansed from all of these various טומאות. We say in the רצון יהי after counting the עומר,

"רבנו של עולם אתה ציונתו על ידי משה עבדך לספור ספירת העומר כדי לטהרו מקליפתו ומטמאותיו...שבזכות ספירת העומר שסיפרתי היום יתקן מה שפגמתי...ואטהר ואתקדש בקדושה של מעלה."

During the week of פרשת שמייני we read of קדושת האכילה; in פרשת קדושים we read of קדושה מין העריות and קדושה כוהנים; in פרשת אמור we read of the מועדים (קדושת הזמן); in פרשת בהר we read of קדושת הארץ. All these types of קדושה come to teach us the fundamentals behind being proper Jews, and fulfilling our responsibility of being a "קדוש" וגוי.³³

An important textual question arises on the פסוק discussing the מצוה of ספירת העומר:

"וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עומר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה עד ממחרת השבת השביעית תספרו חמישים יום והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה."³⁴

How is the last phrase about the מנחה connected to the rest of the פסוק? Based on the concepts that have been explained above, we can understand it. Only after a Jew purifies himself and refines his מדות can he be זוכה to bring a "מנחה חדשה לה" and accept the תורה.³⁵ After the long process of ספירה, one is able to look into the world around them and see with great clarity "כי ה' הוא האלוקים אין עוד מלבדו".³⁶

Every יום טוב has its own special "ענינים" unique to it. שבועות is a climax of sort. On שבועות, we reach possibly the greatest level of קדושה, as חז"ל teach us "ביום חתונתנו - זו מתן תורה". From here, a Jew needs to draw רוחניות to spill over to the entire year. The phrase "וספרתם לכם" is linguistically related to the idea of "ספיר ויהלום". This time is one whose sole purpose is to light up the rest of the year. שבועות is the culmination of one very long יום טוב. We have פסח and then a חול המועד of sort in the form of ספירת העומר, and we conclude with מתן תורה and חג השבועות.

We say in the תפילות of יום טוב: "והשיאנו ה' אלוקנו את ברכת מועדך": יום טוב in general is to be close with ה' as it says "שלש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך את פני ה' אלוקידך...".³⁷ We ask ה' to grant us an awareness, throughout the whole year, of His constant presence. The feeling of "ה' אלוקנו עמנו" is brought out through the wedding imagery of חג השבועות בני חג הקב"ה. They experienced of "ה' זוכה" were הר סיני at ישראל an encounter with the "שכינה עמכם": "פנים אל פנים דבר ה' עמכם".³⁸ We were and continue to be joined through תורה to an eternal relationship with הקב"ה, even if we sin. ה' is with us in everything that we do. On שבועות we were זוכה to receive The Rule Book, and the דבר ה' that guides us in everything we do, and in our own personal relationship with the עולם של רבונו.

¹ במדבר ט:א-יד

² ד"ה שהרי משה

³ מגילה ד.

⁴ The Rebbe in משנה אבות is also addressing an issue of כבוד. It is not appropriate to ask one's Rebbe a question in a topic that he is not currently studying. Therefore the ריטב"א interprets the אמרא in מגילה ד. as teaching that within 30 days the question is considered within a topic that he should be studying and reviewing.

⁵ מגילה ד. בדפי הרי"ף

⁶ סימן סח

⁷ פסחים פרק א, הלכה א

⁸ סנהדרין ז: ד"ה בשבתא דרגלא

⁹ סימן תכט on ב"ח, quoted in the סימן תמד

¹⁰ טור אורח חיים רכט:א

¹¹ מגילה ב: ד"ה פורים and פסחים ב. ד"ה העושה (סוף)

¹² אורח חיים תכט:א

¹³ עבודה זרה ה: "שואלים בהלכות פסח קודם הפסח שלשים יום...אנן דשכיחי מומין דפסלי אפילו בדוקין

שבועין בעיני תלתין יומין אינהו דמחוסר אבר אית להו בתלתא יומי סגי

¹⁴ טור אורח חיים רכט:א

¹⁵ משנה תורה הלכות תפילה יב:א,ב

¹⁶ הלכה אשם

¹⁷ שם יג:ח

¹⁸ שם

¹⁹ מגילה ד.

²⁰ הלכות מגילה א:יג

²¹ מגילה ד.

²² רש"י שם ד"ה משום רבא

²³ רמב"ם הלכות מגילה א:יג

²⁴ It is noteworthy that the רשב"א's line of thought is utilized by the טור in his discussion of סימן תפא. The טור writes in ליל הסדר on סיפור יציאת מצרים and הלכות פסח:

"ופירוש הרב יונה טעם למנהג לפי שחייב אדם לעסוק כל הלילה בהלכות פסח וביציאת מצרים ולספר בנסים ונפלאות שעשה הקב"ה לאבותינו."

A seemingly radical opinion is brought in the תוספתא יח on תוספתא אבות. The תוספתא teaches "חייב אדם הלכות פסח כל הלילה". One is led therefore to inquire what the connection is between הלכות פסח and הלכות פסח. One answer to this question is found in סיפור יציאת מצרים. There he addresses this question and answers something he was taught by his Rebbe. He teaches that סיפור in fact can be fulfilled by לימוד. His proof is the חכם from the הגדה whom we answer with הלכות!

²⁵ רשב"א מגילה ד.

²⁶ מגילה טז.

²⁷ שם

²⁸ שו"ע אורח חיים תכט:א

²⁹ שם סעיף קטן א

³⁰ מגילה לב.

³¹ אבות ו:ב

³² אבות ב:יג

³³ שמות יט:ו

קרבן עולה וקרבן שלמים:
Analysis of a Midrash Concerning Man's
Progression Towards God

Rachel Horn

THERE IS A lengthy discussion in the מדרש (כב פרשה) between רבי אלעזר and רבי חנינא pertaining to the question of whether or not a קרבן שלמים could be brought before מתן תורה. רבי אלעזר argues that both עולות and שלמים were offered before מתן תורה, and רבי חנינא claims that exclusively עולות were offered. Several cases serve to demonstrate this argument.

"ויבא קין מפרי האדמה מנחה לה" - מן הפסולת, לאריס רע שהיה אוכל את הבכורות, ומכבד למלך את הסייפות, "והבל הביא גם הוא מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהו", ר"א ורבי יוסי בר חנינא, ר"א אמר הקריבו בני נח שלמים ורבי יוסי אמר עולות הקריבו. אתיב ר"א לרבי יוסי בר חנינא והכתיב "והבל הביא גם הוא מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהו" דבר שחלבו קרב. מה עבד ליה לרבי יוסי, עביד ליה מן שמניהון. אתיב ר"א לרבי יוסי והא כתיב (שמות כד) "וישלח את נערי בני ישראל ויעלו עולות ויזבחו זבחים שלמים לה' פרים" מה עביד ליה ר' יוסי בר חנינא, שלמים בלא הפשט וניתוח. אתיב ר"א לרבי יוסי והא כתיב (שמות יח) "ויקח יתרו חותן משה עולה וזבחים לאלהים", מה עבד לה רבי יוסי בר חנינא, כמ"ד לאחר מתן תורה בא יתרו. א"ר הונא איתפלגון ר' ינאי ורבי חייא רבה, ר' ינאי אמר קודם מתן תורה בא יתרו, ורבי חייא רבה אמר אחר מתן תורה בא, א"ר חנינא ולא פליגי מאן דאמר קודם מתן תורה בא, הקריבו בני נח שלמים, ומאן דאמר אחר מתן תורה בא, עולות הקריבו.

והא מסייעא ליה לרבי יוסי בר חנינא (שיר השירים ד) "עורי צפון", זהו העולה שהיתה נשחטת בצפון, מהו עורי דבר שהיה ישן ומתעורר, "ובואי תימן", אלו שלמים שהיו נשחטים בדרום, ומהו ובואי דבר של חידוש, א"ר יהושע דסכנין בשם רבי לוי קרא מסייעא ליה לרבי יוסי בר חנינא דכתיב (ויקרא ו) "זאת תורת

העולה היא העולה" שהיו בני נח מקריבים, כד אתי לשלמים (ויקרא ז) "זאת תורה וזבח השלמים אשר הקריבו" אין כתיב כאן אלא אשר יקריבו מכאן ולהבא.

First let us understand the arguments in the מדרש. The first case described by the מדרש is the קרבנות of קין and הבל. In the case of הבל's sacrifice (בראשית ד:ד), the תורה states that he brought "מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהו" which רבי אלעזר takes to mean עולות (where the actual animals are offered) and שלמים, in which only the fat is offered. רבי יוסי argues that "חלביהו" means "מן" שמיניהו, the fattest and choicest ones.

The next case in the מדרש concerns the sacrifices offered by בני ישראל at סיני (recorded in שמות כד:ה). In his attempt to prove that both שלמים and עולות were offered before מתן תורה רבי אלעזר points out that the פסוק says "ויעלו עולות וזבחו וזבחים שלמים". However, רבי יוסי interprets the word "שלמים" in this פסוק as referring to the animals being offered whole (as opposed to cut up), from the שורש of "שלים", thus keeping his opinion (that in fact no שלמים were offered before מתן תורה) intact.

The last case discussed in the מדרש is found in שמות יט:יב where יתרו brought עולות and "זבחים". רבי אלעזר says that "זבחים" means שלמים. (Rav Hirsch explains that the word זבח refers to any sacrifice, but is often used in conjunction with the שלמים, or is understood to mean שלמים itself.) רבי יוסי concurs with רבי אלעזר — he says that in this case it is possible that יתרו brought both עולות and שלמים, because he believes that יתרו joined the Jews in the desert after מתן תורה. It can be assumed that רבי אלעזר supports the view that יתרו came before מתן תורה, since it is only logical that all non-Jews brought both עולות and שלמים before מתן תורה just as יתרו did.

The מדרש then continues to give two proofs verifying רבי יוסי בר חנינא's view, that שלמים were only offered after מתן תורה. The first can be found in שיר השירים ד:טז where the פסוק states "עורי צפון", "Awake, north wind". This is understood as an allusion to the עולות, which were sacrificed on the northern side of the מזבח. The term "awake" implies arousing from a state of slumber, which means that עולות, although dormant, existed previously. Hence, this is a support for the idea that עולות were already in existence before מתן תורה. The פסוק then states "ובואי תימן", "And come, south", alluding to the שלמים offering, which was sacrificed in the south, or any side of the altar. "Come" connotes something new, implying that שלמים were introduced only after the giving of the תורה.

The second proof is from ויקרא ו:ב, where the תורה states "זאת תורת העולה" "זאת תורת זבח השלמים אשר הקריבו". רבי יוסי explains that "זאת תורת העולה" refers to the sacrifice that בני נח brought. When talking about שלמים, the תורה writes "זאת תורת זבח השלמים אשר הקריבו". "אשר הקריבו" refers to the offerings in the future, those after מתן תורה. Therefore, the מדרש

concludes that מתן בר חנינא רבי יוסי's view, that only עולות were offered prior to מתן תורה, is the correct one.

Through analyzing the scenarios cited by the מדרש and deciphering the significance of the different קרבנות, we can understand why שלמים were prohibited in pre-מתן תורה society, and only permitted afterwards. Furthermore, we will see that the specific קרבנות mentioned by the מדרש, in addition to providing information relevant to the argument at hand, were actually major milestones in mankind's evolving relationship with God. When seen in this light, it will become clear that the argument about עולות and שלמים is more than a technical halachic dispute. It actually highlights a major step in the development of that relationship.

The sacrifices of קין and הבל are the first Biblical accounts of humans bringing sacrificial offerings to God. הבל gave "מבכורות זאנו", while קין's sacrifices were not up to par. The level of quality expected in a sacrifice is outlined in this early episode.

When the תורה discusses the sacrifices of בני נח, it is referring to the offerings of all the non-Jews. One can see a paradigm of this type of sacrifice by looking at נח's own sacrifice after he disembarked from the תיבה (ח: בראשית ח:כ). The מדרש (בראשית רבה לט:ט) says that the מזבח on which נח sacrificed was actually the same one upon which אדם הראשון brought his sacrifices. A different מדרש (פרקי דרבי אלעזר כז) states that מזבח נח was also the same one that קין and הבל had used. The connection between the various מזבחות shows the continuity man had maintained, while simultaneously highlighting the progress he had made over the generations. Man continued to attempt to seek God and tried to understand how humans should relate to Him. After the sacrifice of נח, God promised never to destroy the world again. Thus, a covenantal relationship began, with man showing recognition to God, and God promising to man. The progression had already begun, from the modest מנחה offerings of קין and הבל to an עולה sacrifice with a resolution attached.

The next disputed sacrifice is the one that takes place in שמות כד:ה. According to the text of the תורה, it would seem as though this sacrifice occurred after מתן תורה. The order of events in the פסוקים is as follows: First, משה ascended the הר a second time and came down again (כד:ב-ג). Then the account of the sacrifice of בני ישראל is related. At first glance in the מדרש, however, it seems as though this event took place before מתן תורה, because the מדרש agrees with רבי יוסי and describes the sacrifice consisting of עולות only, meaning it took place prior to the giving of the תורה.

רמב"ם, הלכות איסורי ביאה יג:א, in resolving this contradiction. This sacrifice was the final step of בני ישראל's conversion process. This was the last leg

of the מתן תורה experience. Therefore, this sacrifice was offered after the actual giving of the תורה, but yet can not be considered part of the post-תורה era, when both עולות and שלמים could be given, since the process was not fully complete until the conclusion of this particular קרבן when בני ישראל exclaimed "נעשה ונשמע" (כד:ז).

Like the sacrifice of נח, this sacrifice was also intertwined with a ברית — that of מתן תורה — and a responsibility to follow ה'’s commands. The "ספר" referred to in פסוק ז, which משה read to the people was, according to many מפרשים, a book of laws. For example, רש"י says that this book contained all of ספר בראשית up to events of מתן תורה and all the מצוות commanded in מרה. According to ספורנו, the book contained the words of ה' and the משפטים. This ברית connects the sacrifice to a set of obligations that בני ישראל now needed to follow.

אבן עזרא and רש"י believe, contrary to the Midrashic interpretation, that half of the sacrifices that were offered were עולות and half were שלמים, indicating that this episode took place after the מתן תורה process. Perhaps this is so because they feel that this occurrence was not only the termination of the מתן תורה episode, but the first stage of the period after the תורה was given and started to be observed. Therefore, this sacrifice was grouped with the post-מתן תורה offerings. רש"י and ספורנו say that half of the "דם הברית" (פסוק ח) was sprinkled on the people and half was sprinkled on the מזבח, signifying their entrance into the ברית.

"נעשה בני ישראל" (פרק השלום) ספר דרך ארץ זוטא mentions that when בני ישראל said "נעשה ונשמע" at the end of this sacrifice, ה' blessed them with שלום, alluding to the sacrifice of שלמים. This gives us further proof that the bringing of שלמים was enacted after the ברית מתן תורה was made.

This sacrifice at מתן תורה furthered the relationship that הבל and קין initiated with their first modest attempts of giving gifts to God, and which continued throughout the generations of בני נח. The bond with God became progressively closer and more binding over a span of time. This particular קרבן appears to be the bridge between seeking a general covenantal relationship with God, where one offers and in return receives a promise for a closer association with God, and a type of ברית that requires comprehensive adherence to particular commandments.

The final sacrifice discussed in the מדרש is that of יתרו, משה’s father-in-law (שמות יח:יב). Again, there is some discrepancy as to when this entire event took place. The מדרש concludes that it happened after מתן תורה, since both עולות and שלמים were offered. אבן עזרא and רש"י, who explained earlier that the sacrifice offered at the final stage of the מתן תורה process consisted of half עולות and half שלמים, here state that only שלמים were offered, attesting to the

theory that שלמים were permitted only after the giving of the תורה.

A ברית is not specified in the text of these פסוקים; however, some מפרשים consider this sacrifice a step in a process of conversion. ספורנו suggests that יתרו's sacrifice was an "אות קבלת מלכות שמים". The תורה שלמה quotes the מדרש גירות, which also states that this was a קרבן of יתרו.

All of the circumstances the מדרש discusses are associated with a ברית made by ה'. The ברית became more demanding and intense with each sacrifice. Although an explicit covenant is not found in the פסוקים, the unfolding of events after קין and הבל offer their קרבנות implies that one must have full dedication to ה'. After נח's sacrifice, ה' promised never to destroy this new world, which was no longer contaminated with depravity and corruption, but rather was focused towards ה'. בני ישראל's sacrifice established the מתן תורה covenant of dedication to מצוות in the "ספר הברית". יתרו's sacrifice, according to many, was the last aspect of his conversion process, in which he took upon himself the covenant of the תורה.

This phenomenon was ubiquitous in תמיד. For example, ברית בין הבתרים had dual features. אברהם offered sacrifices to God, and then received the ברית (בראשית טו:ט-כא). Additionally, when שלמה המלך completed building the בית המקדש, a symbol of ה' presence, he offered sacrifices to ה' (מלכים א ח:ה). Even the structure of the תורה reflects the relationship between the ברית and the sacrifice. The ספר ויקרא explains how בני ישראל at the beginning attained a lofty relationship with ה' in ספר שמות and therefore needed to use the קרבנות and ways of עבודה enumerated in ספר ויקרא to solidify the ברית that He had made with them.

Through obtaining an awareness of the fundamental natures of the עולה and שלמים offerings, it is possible to understand why שלמים were excluded from the pre-תורה era and why שלמים were the medium used after מתן תורה.

Rav Hirsch elucidates the concept of עולות. The primary symbolic characteristic of the עולה קרבן is striving to reach higher and taking steps upward to reach ה'. The animal must be תמים, completely without defects. ה' demands the absolute best. This attests to the עולה's motto: ה' demands the whole of the person's hearts; "ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך". The קרבן must also be brought of the person's free will. ה' "לרצונו" wants the worshipper to bring the sacrifice of his own volition.

The מדרשים about עולה קרבנות and שלמים have the same implications. The תורה שלמה quotes מדרש יא in תנחומא which calls the עולה the highest sacrifice. The מנחה was given partially to the owners and the שלמים were eaten partially by their owners and the כהנים. The כהן ate from the אשם קרבן. The עולה was the only sacrifice that was designated completely for ה' con-

sumption. The עולה was never removed from the altar because it was the most beloved of all the sacrifices.

It is the most elementary sacrifice, the “bread and butter” element of serving ה'. It was the staple of all the קרבנות, something for בני ישראל to be occupied with when it was not the allotted time for other sacrifices (ויקרא רבה, ויקרא ז:ג). The commandment to bring a קרבן עולה is given after those of the חטאת and אשם. אשם ב. אשם explains that if one steals and receives atonement with these sacrifices, one can then come to bring the עולות with clean hands. The עולה is the symbol of complete surrender to ה' when one is fully pure. It can only exist after the basic moral tenants of the world are firmly established.

One root of the word שלמים is “שלם”, indicating the spirit of this sacrifice. When bringing the שלמים, one should feel completely whole, relative to his circumstances. It is a sacrifice brought to show contentment with what one has received from ה'. For this reason, a mourner cannot bring sacrifices, שלמים in particular. He might have a temporary lapse in commitment to his ה' with בריית ה'.

The worshipper has no ulterior motive for bringing a קרבן שלמים. He wants nothing particular from ה' and is not thanking Him for anything in particular. He is just satisfied with life and wants to get closer to ה'.

שלמים also imply a step beyond the letter of the law. The מדרש tells of a man who had four sons, and one loaf of bread for his whole family to eat. If they are not full, and still say ברכת המזון because they are satisfied, ה' will turn towards that person, as it says in ויבט: “ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום”, במדבר ו:כט (תנחומא צא:ז). שלמים requires conquering one's own desires for concern towards ה' laws.

Another root of the word שלמים, as mentioned earlier, is שלום. This sacrifice promotes peace. Part of the קרבן is given to the מובח, part to the תנחומא and תוספתא זבחים יא:ה quoting תורה שלמה) כהנים, and part to the owner (ישן צו). Perhaps the fact that it was given only partially to the כהן intrinsically shows that it is less desired than the עולה. It is simply an additional sacrifice for those who are on the level to offer it.

The practical הלכה is in accordance with our מדרש: non-Jews can bring עולות, but only Jews can bring שלמים (ע: מנחות ע:). עולות are the entry-level component to a relationship with God. One cannot even begin to approach God without the fundamental knowledge that he is surrendering the best that he has, denoting his willingness to give of his whole self. (This factor was lacking in קין's sacrifice.) In ויקרא רבה (ז:ד) a question is posed: Which sacrifices were more beloved to God, those of נח בני or those of בני ישראל? The מדרש responds that בני ישראל's sacrifices were more preferred because they had been

commanded to offer them and therefore had an extra element of obligation. They were not only fulfilling the minimum level of service, but went a step beyond.

שלמים in particular, with their nature of completeness and peace, were only brought after מתן תורה. Rav Soloveitchik compares ברית בין הבתרים with ברית סיני. ברית בין הבתרים focuses on the feelings invested in initiating a rapport with ה'. The pre-תורה מתן sacrifices seem to have similar focuses. ברית סיני stresses the commitment to the fulfillment of the commandments. Only after this ברית was made, בני ישראל could bring the קרבן שלמים. In fact, יתרו only brought שלמים after בני ישראל dedicated themselves to the מצוות. Only then did they have the extra aspects of "שלמות" and "שלום", completeness in their service of ה' and peace in their relationship with Him.

בסייעתא דשמיא הרב אליעזר לרנר

בתחילת פרשת שלח, משה רבנו בחר בשנים עשר אנשים לתור את ארץ כנען, וכך מתארת התורה את הנבחרים: "כולם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה". מהי כוונת התורה "כולם אנשים"? אומר רש"י: "כל אנשים שבמקרא לשון חשיבות, ואותה שעה כשרים היו."

שאלה אחת בולטת כאן. אם כולם היו כשרים, מדוע רובם נתקלקלו בתוך זמן קצר, ורק שנים ניצולו מן החטא? ושמה תאמר ששנים אלו היו הגדולים ביותר ולכן לא הושפעו על ידי האחרים – אין הדבר כן! אומר הרמב"ן שהמרגלים נמנו לפי מעלתם, לפי גדולתם בחכמה ובמניין ובכבוד. ואם כן, כלב היה רק השלישי במעלה, ויהושע היה החמישי.

ושבו נשאלת השאלה: למה שנים אלה לא השתתפו באותה עצה? אם נסתכל בפסוקים ובחז"ל, נראה שדבר אחד משותף התקיים דווקא ביהושע וכלב. לפני ששלח משה את המרגלים, אומרת לנו התורה: "ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע" ומסבירה הגמרא (סוטה לד:): "ק-ה יושיעך מעצת מרגלים". כמה פסוקים לאחר מכן, כתוב: "ויעלו בנגב ויבא עד חברון". שואלת הגמרא (שם) מדוע כתוב "ויבא" בלשון יחיד, ולא "ויבאו" בלשון רבים? והגמרא מתרצת שכלב לבד הלך שם, להשתטח על קברי אבות ולבקש רחמים שינצל מעצת המרגלים.

מה היה ההבדל בין יהושע וכלב ויתר האנשים הכשרים שהלכו לתור את הארץ?

אמנם כולם היו חכמים, כולם נבונים, כולם נשיאים, אבל דבר זה גרם להם לטעות. הם חשבו שמפני מעלתם, אין סיבה לחשוש מכל מיני השפעות רעות והשקפות זרות שעלולות לחדור לתוך מחשבות לבם. הלא היו מגדולי האומה, שנבחרו על ידי משה רבינו, ולכן בטחו בעצמם שיוכלו לעמוד בכל הניסיונות שיעמדו בפניהם.

אבל יהושע וכלב ידעו אחרת. למרות גדולתם, הם הבינו שיש צורך בסייעתא דשמיא. בלי עזרתו של בורא העולם, כל אחד ואחד, ואפילו הכשר שבכולם יוכל להילכד בתוך המוקשים שיצר הרע שם בפניו.

לפני שיהושע עזב, לימדו רבו המובהק שצריך לבקש מהשי"ת להינצל מעצות רעות. כלב הבין את המסר והלך לחברון להתפלל שם על אותו עניין. יתר המרגלים, לצערנו הגדול, בטחו בעצמם. וכידוע, שבלי הסייעתא דשמיא המיוחדת, הכשרים אבדו את כשרותם.

יצר הרע אינו לוקח חופשה. הוא פועל בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה. אבל יש זמנים שצריך מאד להיזהר ממנו. ככל שאדם נמצא בתוך קהילת הקודש, ככל שנמצא במחנה קרוב למשכן ולהשראת השכינה, הסביבה הטהורה יכולה להגן עליו. אבל ברגע שעוזב, ברגע שמתרחק מהקודש, יצר הרע הולך ומתגבר, וחייב להתפלל כפל כפליים לבקש את הכח הפנימי והרוחני לכבוש אותו.

וכך אצלנו. אנחנו לומדים הרבה בארץ ישראל במשך השנה. תלמידה יכולה לעזוב בסוף הזמן ולחשוב שהיא חכמה ונבונה, בטוחה בעצמה שיודעת איך להתנהג וכיצד להתמודד עם הקשיים שבחיים. ייתכן שבמידה רבה היא צודקת. אבל זאת תהיה טעות חמורה אם תחשוב שתוכל להצליח בלי סייעתא דשמיא. הבא ליטהר מסייעין לו, ובלי הסיוע, הטהרה לא תתכן.

חייבים אנחנו להרהר בלבנו ולבקש מבעל הרחמים בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה: "קרבתנו מלכנו לעבודתך, וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת".

"אליהו הנביא אליהו התשבי אליהו הגלעדי במהרה יבוא אלינו עם משיח בן דוד"

זה דבר מובן אצלנו שהמשיח שאנו מחכים לו כבר למעלה מאלפיים שנה יהיה מזרע דוד המלך, אבל יש לנו לשאול למה זה דווקא צריך להיות ככה. כנראה, מלכות בית דוד הסתיימה לפני הרבה שנים, ועכשיו אנו כבר לא יודעים מי הוא מזרע המלכות. לכן, למה זה כל כך חשוב שהמלך העתידי יהיה דווקא מזרע דוד? הבה נסתכל בספר בראשית אל הברכה שיעקב אבינו נתן ליהודה לפני מותו במצרים. אולי זה ישפוך אור על העניין:

"יהודה אתה יודוך אחיך ידך בערף איביך ישתחוו לך בני אביך. גור אריה יהודה מטרף בני עלית כרע רבץ כאריה וכלביא מי יקימנו. לא יסור שבט מיהודה ומחקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבא שילה ולו יקהת עמים. אסר לגפן עירה ולשרקה בני אתנו כבס ביין לבשו ודם ענבים סותה. חכלילי עינים מיין ולבן שנים מחלב." (בראשית מט:ח-יב)

הפסוק שחשוב לנו עכשיו זה פסוק י', שמסומן למעלה. הפסוק קצת מבלבל אותנו במבט ראשון – למה הוא מתכוון בדיוק? מה זה "שבט", ובאיזה תקופה אפשר להגיד שהוא "לא יסור" מיהודה? הרבה מפרשים דנים בעניין זה.

נתחיל ברש"י. הוא אומר: "לא יסור שבט מיהודה - מדוד ואילך, אלו ראשי גליות שבבל שרודים את העם בשבט, שממונים על פי המלכות." הוא לא מבין את המלה "שבט" כמלכות אלא כסתם מנהיגות. לדעתו, אפשר אולי להגיד שה"שבט" עדיין קיים באיזה-שהוא אופן היום (כי עדיין יש לנו מנהיגות יהודית) וזה יהיה קיים עד ימות המשיח. בניגוד לשיטה זו עומד הרשב"ם. הוא עונה לשאלתנו באופן שיותר קל להבין בזמננו, כאשר אנו לא יכולים לראות איך המנהיגות של יהודה עדיין קיימת. זה לשונו:

"לא יסור שבט מיהודה - המלכות הניתן לו להשתחוות לו כל אחיו שנים עשר לא תפסוק ממנו כל אותה הגדולה ולא מחוקק ושררה מזרעו עד כי יבא יהודה שילה, כלומר עד כי יבא מלך יהודה הוא רחבעם בן שלמה שבא לחדש המלוכה בשילה, שזהו קרוב לשכם. אבל אז יסורו עשרת השבטים ממנו וימליכו את ריבעם ולא נשאר לרחבעם בן שלמה רק יהודה ובנימין"

לדעתו, המילה "שבט" מתכוון למלכות ממש על כל עם ישראל. המלכות הזאת רק התקיים מדוד עד רחבעם בן שלמה. יש רמז בפסוק שאחרי שרחבעם הולך לשכם (שזה קרוב לשילה) כדי שהעם ימליך אותו, ההבטחה שהמלכות לא יסור נגמרה. אם כן, אין הבטחה כאן לעתיד. אבן עזרא, כמו רש"י, מבין שכוונת הפסוק היא לעולם אבל הוא מפרש את לשון הפסוק באופן דומה יותר לרשב"ם, כי הוא מבין שיש לפסוק שני חלקים שכבר קרו. הוא כותב ככה:

"לא יסור שבט מיהודה - לא יסור שבט גדולה מיהודה עד שבא דוד שהוא תחלת מלכות יהודה, וכן היה הלא תראה כי דגל יהודה נוסע בראשונה (במדבר י"ד), גם אמר השם יהודה יעלה בתחלה (שופטים א:ב)... ואין טעם עד כי יבוא שילה, שיסור השבט ממנו בבוא שילה, רק טעמו, כמו לא יחסר לפלוני לחם עד שיגיע עת שיהיה לו שדות וכרמים רבות, וכמוהו כי לא אעזבך עד אשר אם עשיתי את אשר דברתי לך (ברא' כח, טו) ששיבהו אל הארץ"

לדעתו, הפסוק אומר שה"שבט" שמובנו גדולה, מתחיל עם יהודה ולא יפסוק אפילו עד דוד. וכאשר דוד ימלוך, ההבטחה לא גומרת – מלכותו זה קיום תכלית ההבטחה, לא סופו. בקריאת פירוש הרד"ק על הפסוקים אלו אפשר לראות דבר דומה:

"לא יסור שבט מיהודה: המושל נקרא שבט לפי שרודה על העם ומסירם כמו שמיסר אדם בשבט, וכן דרך המושלים להיות שבט בידם לדמיון זה כמו שאמר: את שרביט הזהב אשר בידו (אסתר ה:כ) וכן אמר: שבט מירושלים (ישעיה יד:ה) שבט מישור שבט מלכותיך (תהלים מה:ז), וכן היה כי מעת הכנסם בארץ היה ראשון לכל דבר כמו שכתבנו... ולו יקהת עמים: יקהת שם, ותבז ליהקת אם (משלי ל:ז) ופירושם משמעות ועבודה, אומר כי העמים יהיו נשמעים אליו ועובדים אותו וזה היה לדוד וכל שכן למלך המשיח"

הוא אומר ש"שבט" זה מושל. הוא חושב שתוקף ההבטחה מתחילה לפני המלוכה עצמה, כמו אבן עזרא. הוא לא מפרש את "עד" כסוף אלא כקיום תכלית גם כן. אז לפי פירושו, המלוכה יתקיים גם בזמן דוד עד תקופת משיח.

עכשיו נקרא את הרמב"ן על "לא יסור שבט מיהודה":

"ואמר לא יסור, לרמוז כי ימלוך שבט אחר על ישראל, אבל מעת שיחל להיות ליהודה שבט מלכות לא יסור ממנו אל שבט אחר וזהו שנאמר (דברי הימים ב יג:ה) כי ה' אלהי ישראל נתן ממלכה לדוד על ישראל לעולם לו ולבניו"

הרמב"ן אומר שיש דרך לשלב את דרך רש"י, אבן עזרא, ורד"ק (האומרים שהשבט לא יסור לעולם) עם הדרך של הרשב"ם שיותר קל להבין בימינו, כשהמלכות לא קיימת. לפי דעתו, כוונת הפסוק היא שהשבט לא יסור לעולם מיהודה אל אחד מאחיו – שבט אחר אף פעם לא ימשול על יהודה. אפשר להבין בדרך זו איך אנו יכולים להיות בגלות עכשיו תחת מושלים לא מיהודה – הבטחה זו לא נוגע למנהיגים מהגויים. (לא ברור מה היה הרמב"ן אומר על הממשלה של מדינת ישראל, אבל אפשר לנחש שהוא היה נותן תשובה כמו מה שהוא אומר על שאול המלך: "וענין שאול היה, כי בעבור שדבר שאלת המלכות בעת ההיא נתעב אצל הקדוש ברוך הוא, לא רצה להמליך עליהם מן השבט אשר לו המלכות שלא יסור ממנו לעולמים, ונתן להם מלכות שעה. ולזה רמז הכתוב שאמר אתן לך מלך באפי ואקח בעברתי (הושע יג:א), שנתנו לו שלא ברצונו, ולכן לקחו בעברתו, שנהרג הוא ובניו ונפסקה ממנו המלכות" הממשלה הזאת היא רק לשעה ובעתיד נראה את המלכות הנצחית.) עכשיו נחזור על המפרשים האלו פעם שנית, וננסה להבין איך הם מסבירים את הביטוי "עד כי יבוא שילה ולו יקהת עמים". רש"י מפרש את "שילה" להיות מלך המשיח, שבזמנו כל העמים יאספו אליו. לפי דעתו, המלכות התחילה עם דוד ועתידה להתקיים עד מלך המשיח:

"עד כי יבא שילה - מלך המשיח שהמלוכה שלו, וכן תרגם אנקלוס. ומדרש אגדה שילו, שי לו, שנאמר (תהלים עו:ב) יובילו שי למורא. ולו יקהת עמים - אסיפת עמים"

כבר ראינו איך הרשב"ם מפרש את זה: המלוכה קיימת מדוד עד רחבעם שכאשר הוא בא למקום קרוב לשילה בזמן המלכותו, הוא הפסיד את המלכות על כל עם ישראל כי ירבעם בן נבט קיבל אז את המלכות על שבטי ישראל.

"יקהת עמים - קבוצת האומות שהיו כפופים תחת שלמה אביו כדכתיב כי הוא רודה בכל עבר הנהר, נתקבצו שם להמליך רחבעם כדכתיב וילך רחבעם שכמה כי שכם בא כל ישראל להמליך אותו"

זה יהיה חלק מההמלכה של רחבעם. הרשב"ם ממשיך בפירושו ומסביר למה הוא מפרש את הפסוק ככה:

"ופשט זה תשובה למינין. שאין כתוב כי אם שילה שם העיר. שאין לעז במקרא [ו]לא "שלו" כתוב כאן כדברי העברים ולא שליו כדברי הנוצרים. ויעקב עיקר הגדולה של יהודה שמדוד עד רחבעם פירש, אבל חוסר הגדולה [לא] רצה לפרש, אלא מכללו של מקרא אתה מדקדק שמשילה ואילך נתמעטה"

הוא צריך לתת הסבר שאומר שהפסוק לא מדבר על המשיח, כדי שיהיה לנו מה להשיב למינים על דבר המשיח. אפשר אפילו שהוא מסכים עם המפרשים האחרים שהפסוק באמת מדבר על המשיח, אבל הוא מרגיש צורך כאן להגיש דרך אחרת להבין את זה על ידי הפשט כדי שיהיה אפשר להתווכח עם המינים בפסוק זה. כבר ראינו למעלה את מסקנתו של אבן עזרא, כדי להבין מה דעתו על התקופה שבה הבטחת "לא יסור" בתוקף. עכשיו נראה את יתר פירושו על "שילה":

"יש אומרים כדרך המתרגם ארמית כטעם שלו. ויש אומרים, שהוא מגזרת ובשליטה (דבר' כח, נז). ויש מי שהוציא מלשון קדמונינו ז"ל שליל. ויש מי שפירש אותו על עיר שילה, ויפרש יבוא כמו ובא השמש (ויקרא כב, ז), או עד כי יבוא - קץ שילה, כי כן כתוב ויטוש משכן שילה (תה' עח, ס), ואחר כן: ויבחר בדוד עבדו (תה' שם, ע), גם זה איננו רחוק. או יהיה שילה כמו בנו, והה"א תחת וי"ו כמו בתוך אהלה (ברא' ט, כא), מגזרת לא תשלח אותי (מ"ב ד, כח) שפירושו לא תוליד. ומלת יקהת. כמו ליקהת אם (משלי ל, יז) והיו"ד משרת לעתיד, וטעמו שיסורו גוים למשמעתו, וכן הי' עמים רבים תחת יד דוד ושלמה בנו"

ראינו למעלה שהוא אומר שהגדולה מתחילה ביהודה וממשיכה עד דוד ואפילו אחרי מלכות דוד. עכשיו הוא מביא כמה אפשרויות איך לפרש את המילה "שילה". תחילה הוא מצטט את אונקלוס כמו שרש"י עשה, ואומר ששילה יכולה להיות "שלו" - מלך המשיח שהמלוכה שלו. ה"יש אומרים" השני שהוא מביא גם כן מתכוון למשיח, והשלישי הוא קרוב מאוד לשני – ההבדל הוא השימוש בשורש אחר - אבל המסקנה היא אותו דבר. אחר כך הוא אומר כמו הרשב"ם שאפשר לפרש את שילה כשם העיר אבל הוא הולך בכיוון אחר, ואומר שאפשר לפרש את מילת "יבוא" כמו "ובא השמש", שזה העזיבה. הוא מוסיף מילה לפסוק ואומר "עד כי יבוא קץ שילה". הוא מבין את זה בתור רמז לסילוק המשכן משילה. לפי מהלך זה, התכלית של הרמז זה להגיד שהשבט לא יסור מיהודה עד דוד ואחר כך ה' יבחור בדוד עוד פעם. (כל הפירוש הזה מבוסס על תהילים ע"ח).

הפירוש הזה פועל יחד עם פירוש שכבר ראינו - שדוד הוא "שילה" ושהשבט לא יסור אחריו גם כן. הוא נותן עוד אפשרויות שאפשר ש"שילה" זה "בנו" מהשורש "שיל". (היה צריך לכתוב "שילו" אם "ה" ולא "ו" כמו

שכותבים "בנו" אבל לפעמים כותבים "ה" במקום "ו" בתנ"ך). הוא מפרש את "יקהת" כמילה בעתיד שמתכוון לעמים שיהיו תחת המלוכה של דוד (ושל שלמה ומלך המשיח).
הרמב"ן אומר ש"שילה" חייב להיות המשיח, ולדעתו "יקהת עמים" זוהי שיחלשו עמים לפניו לפי חרב. בענין "שילה" הרמב"ן מצטט את אבן עזרא ודוחה אותו. הוא אומר שאי אפשר להגיד שהשבט מתחיל מיהודה כי אי אפשר שכוונת "שבט" היא גדולה. שבט, אומר הרמב"ן, פירושה מלך או מושל, ודוד היה הראשון כזה בשבט יהודה, ולפיכך הוא צריך להיות ה"שבט". ואם דוד הוא השבט, אי אפשר להגיד שהוא גם כן שילה. בענין "ולו יקהת עמים", הרמב"ן מתחיל עם ציטוט דברי רש"י שזה אסיפת עמים והוא דוחה את האפשרות הזאת. הוא גם דוחה כמה אפשרויות אחרות, ובסוף מפרש ש"יקהת" זה כמו "תקהינה שניו" – לשון חולשה ושבירה. עכשיו לסיכום, נבאר את הפסוק מילה במילה לאור המפרשים השונים ונראה בבהירות את השינויים שיש בין הפירושים.

רש"י: לא יסור ממשלה מיהודה, ממלוכת דוד ואילך, ומחוקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבוא מלך המשיח ולו יאספו עמים.
רשב"ם: לא יסור שבט מיהודה ומחוקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבוא רחבעם בן שלמה לשילה ולו יקבצו העמים שהם תחת ממשלת שלמה לראות את המלכתו.
אבן עזרא: לא יסור שבט גדולה מיהודה ומחוקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבוא דוד שהוא תחילת מלכות יהודה ועמים יסורו למשמעתו.
רד"ק: לא יסור מושל מיהודה ומחוקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבוא מלך המשיח ולו ישמעו עמים.
רמב"ן: לא יסור המלוכה (שמתחיל עם דוד) מיהודה בשלטון עצמו כאשר המושלים הם מבני ישראל, ומחוקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבוא מלך המשיח אשר לו חולשת עמים ושבירתם שיחליש את כלם לפי חרב.

כנראה לא כולם מסכימים על מה הפסוק מדבר. אנחנו עדיין יודעים שמשיח יבוא מזרע דוד ממקורות שונות. אבל אם נבין את הפסוק הזה כמדבר על מלך המשיח, מענין להסתכל במדבר כד: יז-יח על דברי בלעם כאשר הוא הולך להגיד לבלק מה יקרא לבני ישראל באחרית הימים. נבואותו היא ככה: "אראנו ולא עתה אשורנו ולא קרוב דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מישראל ומחץ פאתי מואב וקרקר כל בני שת. והיה אדום ירשה והיה ירשה שער איביו וישראל עשה חיל." בלעם מדבר על אותם הענינים שבו מדובר בפסוק שלנו. באחרית הימים השבט יקום עוד ויקהת את העמים!
בעזרת ה' נזכה לראות את המשיח (אם הוא שילה או לא) במהרה בימינו אמן.