

Kol מבשרת קול Mevaseret

A Compilation of Insights
and Analyses of Torah topics

by the students of
Michelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim

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Editors in Chief: Elisheva Ackerman, Ariella Bram
Assistant Editors: Rena Gottesman, Sarah Medved

Hebrew Editing: Mrs. Tzila Cytrin

Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Hillel Horovitz

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מכללת מבשרת ירושלים Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalyim

Rabbi Azarya Berzon – **Rosh Yeshiva**
Rosh Yeshiva, Mevaseret Institutions

Rabbi Baruch Felberman – **Rosh Yeshiva**
Menahel, Mevaseret Institutions

Rabbi Yedidya Berzon – *Director, Mevaseret Institutions*

Rabbi Alan Haber – **Menahel**

Rabbi David Katz – **Menahel**

In Israel:

25 Rabbi Najara Street
Givat Shaul, Jerusalem 95471
Telephone: (02) 652-7257
Fax: (02) 652-7162
E-mail: office@mmy.org.il

In America:

2 Keri Lane
New Hempstead, NY 10977 USA
Telephone: (845) 364-9286
Fax: (845) 364-9287
E-mail: usa@mevaseret.org

Web: www.mevaseret.org/mmy

Designed and Produced by Benjie Herskowitz, Jerusalem Tel: (02) 624-7578

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Every year the students at Michlelet Mevasseret Yerushalayim spend their year learning how to learn. With much of their day spent in the בית מדרש, they develop crucial learning skills that take them far outside of the MMY building. This collection of articles, *Kol Mevasseret*, is a sampling of their skills at work. Spanning תנ"ך, הלכה, and השקפה, the works in this journal were written based on studies and research completed in MMY 5765.

Foremost, we would like to acknowledge all of our teachers, Rabbeim, שואלות ומשיבות, and אסיסטנטיות. All of you have inspired us, and we have learned skills from you that will continually be instrumental in our learning and growth. These articles are proof of your hard work and success; none of this would have been possible without everything you taught us.

We would like to thank all the contributors to this journal. We know how much time and energy was put into your research and writing. It shows, and it is much appreciated.

We extend our thanks to our assistant editors, Sarah Medved and Rena Gottesman. Your willingness to do whatever was needed to compile this journal was exemplary.

This journal would not have been possible without the help and guidance of **Rabbi Horovitz**. Your patience and kindness really went a long way in making this journal a success.

Finally, we would like to thank Hashem for the opportunity to work and learn with these outstanding individuals and for helping us give His Torah a voice.

Elisheva Ackerman & Ariella Bram

Editors-in-Chief
Kol Mevasseret, 5755

INTRODUCTION

Writing Your Own Torah

Ariella Bram, Co-Editor

The רמב"ם¹ (הלכות תפילין ומזוזה וספר תורה פרק ז הלכה א) introduces the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll. According to the רמב"ם, everyone is required to write his own Torah scroll, even if he has inherited one from his father. It seems that the mitzvah is not owning a Torah scroll, rather writing one. However, the רמב"ם does not explain the purpose of each person writing his own Torah scroll.

According to the רמב"ם² (טור יורה דעה סימן ער), each individual must write a Torah scroll in order to learn from it. It is now easy to understand why one must own a Torah scroll, but why does each person have to write his own? The רמב"ם quotes רבי יהושע בן לוי that one must write his own personal Torah scroll because "הלוקח ספר תורה מן השוק כחוטף מצוה מן השוק" ("One who purchases a Torah scroll from the marketplace is like one who steals a mitzvah from the marketplace").

The רמב"ם expands on the concept of the Torah scroll being one's own. One can not sell his Torah scroll, even to replace an old Torah scroll or to buy food. The only exceptions are to earn money so that one will be able to learn Torah or marry.

How does this mitzvah apply to us today? Nowadays, most people do not learn out of a Torah scroll. The Torah scroll is replaced by bookshelves of sefarim and CD-ROM. The רמב"ם explains that today one can

¹ מצות עשה על כל איש ואיש מישראל לכתוב ספר תורה לעצמו ... ואע"פ שהניחו לו אבותיו ספר תורה מצוה לכתוב משלו, ואם כתבו בידו הרי הוא כאילו קבלה מהר סיני. ואם אינו יודע לכתוב אחרים כותבין לו, וכל המגיה ספר תורה ואפילו אות אחת הרי הוא כאילו כתבו כולו.

² מצות עשה על כל אדם מישראל שיכתוב לו ס"ת, ומאד צריך לחזר אחריה, דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: הלוקח ספר תורה מן השוק כחוטף מצוה מן השוק. כתבו או שהגיה בו אפילו אות אחת כאילו קבלה מהר סיני. וכל שכן שאין לו למוכרה אפילו יש לו הרבה מהם ואפילו למכור ישן כדי לקנות חדש אסור אפילו אין לו מה יאכל. ומיהו אם צריך למוכרה כדי ללמוד תורה או לישא אשה ואין לו דבר אחר למכור שפיר דמי.

וכתב א"א הרא"ש ז"ל שזה לא נאמר אלא לדורות הראשונים שהיו כותבין ס"ת ולומדי' בה, אבל האידנא שכותבין ס"ת ומניחים אותו בבית הכנסת לקרות בהם ברבים מצות עשה על כל ישראל אשר ידו משגת לכתוב חומשי התורה ומשנה וגמרא ופירושיהם להגות בהן הוא ובניו. מצות כתיבת התורה היא כדי ללמוד בה, דכתיב ולמדה את בני ישראל שימה בפייהם, ועל ידי הגמרא ופירושה ידע פירוש המצות והדינין על בוריים לכן הן הספרים שאדם מצווה לכתובם וגם שלא למוכרם אם לא ללמוד תורה ולישא אשה:

perform this mitzvah by writing sefarim, including the Chumash, Gemara, and their commentaries, so that we may learn the Torah from them.

The ¹יה יוסף (יורה דעה סימן ער) elaborates on the ר"א's comments. Although in our day the mitzvah is fulfilled through the writing of sefarim, this does not mean that the mitzvah for each person to write his own personal Torah scroll is to be disregarded. Rather, according to the ר"א, the main aspect of the mitzvah remains the writing of a Torah scroll. The writing of sefarim (and the prohibition to sell them) is considered only a partial fulfillment of this mitzvah.

Another halacha will help us better understand the importance of writing one's own Torah scroll. The ²שולחן ערוך (אורח חיים סימן שלד סעיף כא) writes that on weekdays, one must burn כתבי הקודש that were written by heretics, even if the scrolls were properly written (נא ³משה ברורה ס"ק נא). A Torah scroll is not considered holy because it is written on the right type of parchment with the right kind of ink; rather, it also needs to be written by a Jew to be considered holy. The writer of the Torah scroll determines the holiness of the scroll.

The chidushim, insights and interpretations of Torah presented in this journal are a fulfillment of the mitzvah of Talmud Torah. The creativity required in the composition of the following articles echoes the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll as well.

¹ וכתב א"א ז"ל שזה לא נאמר אלא לדורות הראשונים וכו' אבל האידנא שכותבין ס"ת ומניחים אותו בבית הכנסת וכו' עד אם לא ללמוד תורה ולישא אשה. בהלכות ס"ת (סי' א). ויש לתמוה היאך בא הרא"ש לפטור לאדם ממצות כתיבת ספר תורה ולהחליפה בחומשים ומשניות וגמרות ופירושיהן, שהרי לא תלה טעם החילוק בין הדורות הראשונים לדורות הללו אלא שבדורות הללו אין לומדין בהן אלא מניחין אותן בבית הכנסת לקרות בהם ברבים, וא"כ הוה ליה למימר שגם עכשיו חייבים לכתוב ס"ת וילמדו בהם כשם שהיו לומדים בדורות הראשונים, לא לפטרם ממצות כתיבת ס"ת? לכך נ"ל שלא בא אלא לחדש לנו חיוב כתיבת חומשים ומשניות וגמרות ופירושיהם ואיסור מכירתן שגם זה בכלל מצות כתיבת ס"ת ושזה יותר מצוה מלכתוב ס"ת ולהניחו בבית הכנסת לקרות ברבים, אבל לכתוב ס"ת לקרות בו הוא ובניו פשיטא דגם האידנא זהו עיקר קיום מצות עשה שהרי הוא נוהג בו כמו שהיו נוהגים בדורות הראשונים, וכתב רבינו ירוחם (נ"ב ח"ב יז): על דברי הרא"ש שכן כתבו הגאונים:

² האפיקורסים, דהיינו האדוקים בעבודת כוכבים, וכן מומרים לעבודת כוכבים (נא) שכתבו להם כתבי הקודש, אין מצילים אותם, ואף בחול שורפן עם האזכרות שבהן:

³ שכתבו וכו' - אפילו כתב אשורית על הקלף ובדיו:

With these insights in mind, the editors would like to thank all of the MMYers and staff who contributed his/her Torah thoughts to this journal. May G-d grant you continual growth in your Torah studies.

תנ"ך

פרוכת תכלת

Yudit Ebert and Ariella Rosenberg

שמות פרק כו

(לא) ועשית פרוכת תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש משזר, מעשה חושב יעשה אותה כרובים:

(לב) ונתתה אותה על ארבעה עמודי שטים מצופים זהב וויהם זהב על ארבעה אדני כסף:

(לג) ונתתה את הפרכת תחת הקרסים והבאת שמה מבית לפרכת את ארון העדות והבדילה הפרכת לכם בין הקדש ובין קדש הקדשים:

(לד) ונתת את הכפורת על ארון העדות בקדש הקדשים:

(לה) ושמת את השולחן מחוץ לפרכת ואת המנורה נכח השולחן על צלע המשכן תימנה והשולחן תתן על צלע צפון:

(לו) ועשית מסך לפתח האוהל תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש משזר, מעשה רוקם:

(לז) ועשית למסך חמשה עמודי שטים, וצפית אתם זהב, וויהם זהב, ויצקת להם חמשה אדני נחושת:

(31) Make a cloth partition (parochet) out of sky-blue, dark red and crimson [wool, woven together] with twined linen. Cherubs shall be woven into it [so that they can be seen on both sides].

(32) Place it on four gold-covered acacia pillars having gold hooks. [The pillars shall be] set in four silver sockets.

(33) Place the cloth partition directly under the fastenings. Into the space behind this curtain you will bring the Ark of Testimony. This curtain will thus divide between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies.

(34) You will then place the cover on the Ark of Testimony in the Holy of Holies.

(35) Place the table outside the curtain, toward the northern wall of the tabernacle. The menorah shall be opposite the table, toward the southern wall of the tabernacle.

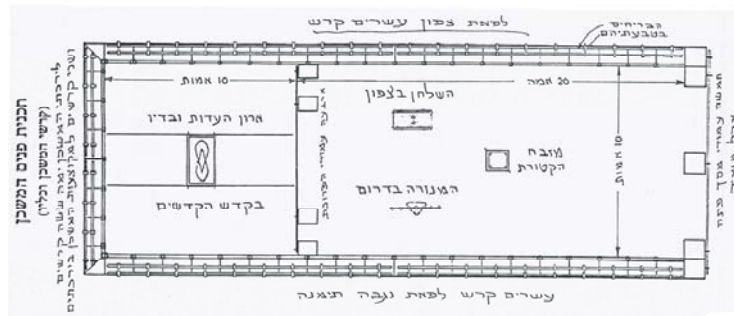
(36) Make a drape (masach) for the entrance of the tent out of sky-blue, dark red and crimson wool, and twined linen. It shall be embroidered work.

(37) Make five acacia pillars to hold the drape. Cover them with a layer of gold and place golden hooks on them. Cast five copper bases for [the pillars].

An overview of שמות (כו:לא-לז) describing the פרוכת prompts a number of questions, both technical and general. The פרוכת serves as a division between the קודש and קודש הקדשים of the משכן. What is the "מסך", "drape", or "פרוכת המסך" which is mentioned in the last two פסוקים of this section and why is its purpose not explicated as it was regarding the פרוכת?

The beginning of פסוק לג implies that the פרוכת must be in place before the ארון העדות may be brought into the משכן. Was the פרוכת *meakev* (מעכב) the ארון? I.e. was the presence of the פרוכת essential for the ארון to exist in its place? Above all, why does the division created by the פרוכת between the קודש and the קודש הקדשים bear such significance? A critical analysis of the verses and the role of the פרוכת will shed light onto the essence of the פרוכת and its function in the משכן.

A diagram of the אהל מועד has been included as a visual for the placement and set-up of the פרוכת and פרוכת המסך in the משכן. The פרוכת is represented by the line to the far right of the diagram at the entrance to the אהל. The פרוכת is further in the אהל, immediately before the beams of the ארון begin, dividing between the קודש and קודש הקדשים.



The chart below outlines the similarities and differences between the פרוכת and פרוכת המסך. Similarities include the language of the command, the materials, and the quality of the thread. Differences include the design embroidered on each curtain, the number of beams and sockets, the quality of the sockets and placement. The final and most significant discrepancy is the stated function of the כלי. Regarding the פרוכת, the text clearly states, "to divide for you between holy and the holy of holies" (Shmot 26:33), while the purpose of the פרוכת המסך is conspicuously blank. This leads the reader to conclude that the פרוכת has

an important and meaningful function beyond that of a mere division. While the technical function of the פרוכת המסך is clear (that it is merely a door in the חצר), the lack of emphasis in the פסוקים about it, especially in contrast to the structure of the פסוקים about the פרוכת, allows the reader to question if its function has inherent meaning at all.

מסך	פרוכת	
ועשית	ועשית	ציווי
תכלת, ארגמן, תולעת שני	תכלת, ארגמן, תולעת שני	חומרים
מעשה רוקם, שש משזר	מעשה חושב, שש משזר	איכות
	כרובים	עיטורים
5	4	עמודים
5 נחושת	4 כסף	אדנים
פתח האוהל	תחת הקרסים	מיקום במשכן
	להבדיל לכם בין הקודש ובין קודש הקדשים	תכלית הכלי

A search in the concordance of the words “פרוכת” and “מסך” displays a pattern in the usage of these words throughout Tanach. “מסך” and “פרוכת המסך” are used in functional contexts, whereas the “פרוכת” always appears in the context of the עבודה. Examples are included below. Additional sources for “פרוכת” may be found in the שמות passage above (26:33) and in ויקרא (16:2,12,15).

מסך:

(1) שמואל ב פרק יז פסוק יט

ותקח האשה ותפרוש את המסך על פני הבאר ותשטח עליו הרפות ולא נודע דבר:

The Woman [of the house] came and spread a sheet over the well.

Then she scattered groats over it, so that nothing could be seen.

(2) ישעיה פרק כב פסוק ח

ויגל את מסך יהודה ...

And he stripped the covering of Yehuda

(3) תהלים פרק קה פסוק לט

פרש ענן למסך ...

He spread a cloud for covering

פרוכת המסך:

- 1) שמות פרק לה פסוק יב
את הארון ואת בדיו את הכפורת ואת פרוכת המסך:
- 2) שמות פרק מ פסוק כא
ויבא את הארון אל המשכן וישם את פרוכת המסך ויסך על ארון העדות כאשר צוה ה'
את משה:
- 3) במדבר פרק ד פסוק ה
ובא אהרן ובניו בנסוע המחנה והורידו את פרוכת המסך וכיסו בה את ארון העדות:

פרוכת:

ויקרא פרק ד פסוק יז
וטבל הכהן אצבעו מן הדם והזה שבע פעמים לפני ה' את פני הפרוכת:

From the comparison chart and the concordance data, it is clear that the essence of the פרוכת is its עבודה, which, as stated explicitly in the text, is "to divide for you between holy and the holy of holies" (Shmot 26:33). The next step is to understand the significance of "והבדילה"; what does it mean and why is it so crucial? A look into the מפרשים reveals two mainstream approaches to the purpose of separation. The first approach is that of separating for כבוד, honor, for that which is holy. ספורנו explains it as separation for כבוד of the שכינה, מקרא, דעת מקרא, שכינה, and ארון הקודש for the דעת מקרא, שכינה, and ארון הקודש. רש"י (verse 31) takes a slightly different approach as he views it as separating for holiness, i.e. the distinction between different levels of holiness, similar to a division created between the king and a nation. This idea will be explored further towards the end of the analysis.

In Shmot 26:33, the mention of the order of placement of the פרוכת and ארון is dually problematic. Firstly, פרשיות תרומה and פרשיות תצוה are not the forum in Tanach for discussions relating to the details of the actual dedication of the משכן. They are more conceptual פרשיות, introducing the פרשיות ויקהל and their important functions for the first time. Only in פרשיות ויקהל and פרשיות פקודי does Hashem finally instruct משה in the details of the dedication. Secondly, there is a contradiction in the order of placement between תצוה 26:33 and פקודי 40:20-21. In תצוה, the פרוכת must be in position before the ארון, while in reality the ארון must be brought in first, as described in פקודי. One concludes that פרשת תצוה does not intend to describe the actual order in which the פרוכת and ארון must be placed, but rather it conveys the idea that the פרוכת should, in theory, be placed in the משכן before the ארון is brought inside. It is a conceptual מעכב. The presence of the פרוכת is conceptually essential for the ארון to exist in its place. The ארון, in reality, is to be brought into the משכן before the פרוכת

but the *idea* of the פרוכת is a prerequisite for the ארון's entry. Somehow, the "והבדילה" function of the פרוכת must conceptually be in place before the קודש הקדשים can exist in the ארון.

An analysis of the role of the פרוכת in the יום כפור service enhances one's understanding of its function as a division. The main event of the unique יום כפור service features two קרבנות taken by the כהן גדול, one destined to be a קרבן חטאת לה' and the other to be sent to עזאזל. The כהן גדול places his hands on the head of the latter and confess the sins of בני ישראל, transferring them onto the goat. In this way the sins of בני ישראל are atoned for, leaving בני ישראל blameless. As a preliminary to the final stage of atonement, the כהן גדול performs a series of ritual sprinklings of blood which acts as purification for impurities which may have occurred in the Temple service throughout the year. Thus the כהן גדול is worthy of performing the special עבודה and בני ישראל are worthy of receiving atonement.

This annual service was commanded by Hashem to משה in exact detail in chapter 16. The פרק opens with: "וידבר ה' אל משה, אחרי מות שני בני אהרן, בקרבנתם לפני ה' וימותו" Hashem's command is immediately connected to the deaths of נדב and אביהוא who by bringing an offering לפני ה' לפני sinned and therefore were killed, "וימותו". The very next פסוק follows with a warning to אהרן that he should NEVER enter past the פרוכת into the threshold of the קודש הקדשים lest he too die, "ימות", the reason being that "כי בענן אראה על הכפורת", "since I appear over the ארון cover in a cloud," the שכנייה is manifest between the כרובים. However, verse 3 supplies the formula for אהרן's safe entry into the קודש הקדשים once a year "בזאת יבוא אהרן אל הקודש ...", יום כפור חס which אהרן must take קטורת and offer it on the burning coals and then "וכסה ענן הקטורת את הכפורת ... ולא ימות" "the smoke from the incense covers the ark cover ... then he will not die". It is interesting to note that the קטורת from the מזבח הזהב serves the same purpose here as the פרוכת serves throughout the year, namely protecting individuals from coming into too close contact with Hashem's שכנייה. In Shemot 30:6, Hashem provides the exact location of the מזבח הזהב לפני, "ונתתה אותו לפני הפרוכת ... לפני מזבח הזהב את הכפורת ...". The connection between these two כלים and the שכנייה which rests on the כפורת has already been drawn.

Vayikra 16:4 continues with instructions that אהרן should wear only the four בגדי לבן when entering the קודש הקדשים. The obvious reason is that the four בגדי זהב are not appropriate for the Day of Atonement since they serve as reminders of the sin of the Golden Calf. However, another possible reason for the absence of the four garments is that the function that they normally fulfill is already fulfilled by other aspects of the יום כפור.

service. These four garments are described as to be worn "לפני ה'" (verse 13), and they bring the כהן גדול close to Hashem. In this פרק, however, many parts of the עבודה itself are described as "לפני ה'" and accomplish the role of the כהן גדול. Therefore, there is no need for אהרן to wear anything more than the בגדי לבן.

With the background to the service, a closer analysis of אהרן's actions from פסוקים 11-19 is now possible. אהרן slaughters the bull previously mentioned in פסוקים 3 and 6 and takes coals from the מזבח together with קטורת and proceeds past the פרוכת into the קודש הקדשים. The cloud formed by the burning incense protects him from the Divine Presence which hovers over the כפורת. אהרן may then perform the first of the sprinklings of blood in the direction of the כפורת, the covering of the קרבן (one time upward and seven times downward) from his own קרבן and repeats the process with the blood of the חטאת of the people (verse 5). Verse 16 describes the second sprinkling which is done in a similar manner "אוהל מועד" – "upon the מועד" – "לאוהל מועד". רש"י explains that this refers to the sprinkling upon the פרוכת. Lastly, the כהן גדול takes blood from both his and בני ישראל and sprinkles over the מזבח "לפני ה'" (verse 18) – the מזבח הזהב found in the קודש.

רמב"ן (verse 18) clarifies the practice of the sprinkling as atoning for impurity which may have defiled the עבודה or כלים of the מקדש throughout the year. The first sprinkling atones for impurity in the קודש הקדשים, the second for the מנורה, שולחן, and their accessories, and the third for the קטורת and מזבח הזהב.

In Shemot 30:10 this annual service of sprinkling is described as "קודש קדשים הוא לה". The lofty description assigned to the procedure causes the reader to question what its great significance is.

The answer is hinted to in the strange phrase which appears at the end of Vayikra 16:16, "השוכן אתם בתוך טומאתם", "Who (שכינה) resides with them (the Israelites) even when they are unclean". What does this expression mean? In what way does the שכינה dwell amongst בני ישראל even when they are impure?

The פרוכת serves the unique role of allowing Hashem's שכינה to constantly manifest itself in the קודש הקדשים even when the בני ישראל are impure and therefore unworthy. Additionally, the פרוכת defends בני ישראל from the dangers of coming into direct contact with the Divine Presence in an impure state. The פרוכת acts a screen for the שכינה from impurity and as a shield for בני ישראל from strict מדה הדין of Hashem.

רש"י's earlier comment in Shemot 26:31 now falls into place. There "דבר המבדיל בין המלך ובין העם" as "פרוכת" – "something that divides between the king and the people". A screen between the royalty

and the masses is not merely for the honor of the king but also for the people whose behavior causes them to become unfit and unworthy of regularly being in the king's presence. In the same way, the פרוכת is a necessary screen for the בני ישראל who are undeserving of the constant presence of Hashem, the King of all Kings.

Recalling the discrepancy between פרשיות תצוה and פקודי about the placement of the ארון and פרוכת in the קודש הקדשים, the "conceptual מעכב" of תצוה may now be understood. Before the Divine Presence may rest in the משכן, the conceptual function of the פרוכת as a screen and shield from בני ישראל's impurity must be in place. Without this, the ארון with the שכנייה resting atop it could not exist in the משכן and among the nation.

On יום כפור, the פרוכת must atone for its purpose, for allowing the שכנייה to rest in the משכן although בני ישראל are undeserving. It atones for an entire year in which the Divine Presence rested among the people despite impurity and sin. Without the protection of "והבדילה" בני ישראל would be inevitably destroyed by such close proximity to Hashem.

The phrase itself in Shemot 26:33 hints to this idea: "והבדילה הפרוכת" "...לכך". The separation is for לכך, for בני ישראל (not for Hashem or כבוד), so that you will not be destroyed. The פרוכת is a gift from Hashem permitting a special closeness that would otherwise be unattainable.

רחב

Alyssa Rottenstreich

At the start of *ספר יהושע*, יהושע prepared the Jewish nation for the conquering of the land of Israel. One of his preparations in this process is to send out two spies to “go observe the land and Yericho” (יהושע ב:א). משה רבינו, יהושע’s teacher and leader, had sent out spies as well, but the mission was unsuccessful. יהושע was therefore very careful when he selected the spies he was to send. רד”ק notes that because the *פסוק* uses the word *אנשים* it implies that these men were good men, unlike the ones sent by משה (פסוק ד). משה רבינו says that these two men were *פנחס* *כלב*.

The verse at the beginning of this reconnaissance mission, tells us “ויילכו ויבואו בית אשה זונה ושמה רחב וישכבו שמה”. What does *אשה זונה* mean? Secondly, why are we introduced to this woman first as an *אשה זונה* and only then by her name? Thirdly, why would these two great men, *פנחס* and *כלב*, representatives of the Jewish nation who was famous for its morality, stay in the house of an *אשה זונה*?

To answer these questions, we must first understand what *אשה זונה* means in this context. The *מפרשים* offer many different explanations. *תרגום יונתן* translates *אשה זונה* as *פונדקיתא* which means innkeeper. Rashi agrees with this explanation and elaborates that an *אשה זונה* is an *אשה שנותנת מזון*, a woman who provides food for others. Other commentators disagree and explain *אשה זונה* in its more common usage, as a prostitute. *אברבנאל* merges the two answers and explains that an innkeeper really is a prostitute and that her brothel was disguised as an inn.

The two different possibilities of what *אשה זונה* means correspond perfectly with the different ways to explain the name *רחב*. The word means wide or broad. On the one hand, she was a wonderful innkeeper who helped and gave with a **wide** and **broad** heart. On the other hand, the word “*רחב*” can mean wide or broad in the sense that she was too giving and open, that she was loose; namely, she was a prostitute.

Assuming that *רחב* really was a prostitute, why would two men of the highest moral standards stay at her inn? Even if these men were so great that they could resist the temptation of a prostitute, it is still wrong to willingly place oneself in a situation of *נסיין*. Why then would they stay at a brothel? Additionally, a brothel isn’t the most private place. People are constantly coming and going. Why would the spies, who

obviously didn't want to be discovered, hide in a public place? The מפרשים offer a number of answers to this problem. The מלבי"ם points out that no one would even think to look for two spies from the Jewish nation (known for its morality) at such a disreputable place. Additionally, at a place like this there was potential to receive a lot of political information. The פסוק alludes to this. It says about the spies "וישכבו", they rested and made themselves look as if they were sleeping and not "וילוו", they slept. The spies feigned sleep so that people would talk freely and they could hear as much information as possible. Furthermore, the spies knew from רחב's name that she was a generous person and that is why they went to her house. "וילכו ויבואו בית אשה זונה ושמה רחב", the spies went to the house of a prostitute only because her name was רחב, only because she was generous. Finally, before one sets out to conquer a nation, they try to find the best way to do this. The enemy would learn this from spending time with the people. The spies knew that many people would frequent the brothel and therefore, it would be a good place to garner information.

The king of יריחו discovered that there were spies within his land (פסוק ב). אברבנאל mentions that the spies were found out because they sinned and did not sleep in the fields. Although the spies were morally great, their decision to sleep in רחב's inn was a sin.

When the king's messengers came to find the spies, רחב lied to them and saved the spies' lives. In פסוק ד, it says: "ותצפנתי", "she hid him" in the singular form. Shouldn't the word be written in the plural since she was hiding two spies? רש"י explains that רחב hid each spy in his own spot. This shows her great kindness that even while hiding them, she showed concern for their comfort.

There is a very fundamental question though that must be answered. Why would רחב, a Canaanite lady, hide these Jewish spies? According to the מדרש that all the kings and important people would visit her, this question becomes even more troubling. Why would a Canaanite lady with connections to important figures hide these two Jewish men? It appears from the rest of the story that רחב truly believed that the Jewish conquest was Divinely ordained and that the Jews had a right to the land. She recognized G-d and realized that the Jews were invincible. In that case, why would she not save the Jewish spies who come from G-d's nation? רחב can be looked upon as a traitor to her city, but if she didn't hide these spies, she would be a traitor to her own inner conviction. Additionally, since רחב believed in G-d's greatness, she wanted to convert, and these men were the perfect people to help her.

Before asking the spies to help save her family, רחב spoke to them (פסוקים ט-יא). The אברבנאל beautifully explains what she is saying. Her speech really has three parts. The first is that G-d has given the land to you. If Hashem could perform the miracle of קריעת ים סוף, then surely He could give His nation the land of Canaan. Secondly, she mentioned the fear that the king of Yericho and his servants have for the Jews. She referred to this when she told what the Jews had done to the אמורי kings. Thirdly, she informed them that the common people were frightened of the Jews. This was some of the information that the spies came for. The spies also learned of her awe of and belief in G-d and of her desire to convert. She was similar to יתרו who also desired to convert when he heard about Hashem's greatness and the miracles that He performed.

רחב saved the spies with three objects, her window, her rope, and her home, which was located within the wall around Yericho. רחב's "high profile customers" had used the **rope** to travel through the **window** unnoticed and leave her home without passing through the main gates. She took the same three tools that she used for evil and used them for good (רש"י פסוק טו). She told the spies to hide in the hills for three days time. רש"י (פסוק טז) notes that she knew it would be three days because רוח הקודש had רוח הקודש. Only by repenting did she merit receiving רוח הקודש.

There is, of course, another way to read the פסוקים that presents a totally different view of רחב: She was a prostitute, who committed a great act of betrayal to the city where she lived by saving the spies. Furthermore, she saved the spies so that they would later save her and her family. In addition, later on in (ספר יהושע ו:כב) רחב is still called a prostitute. If she became such a great woman, wouldn't this title be removed? This title doesn't paint a picture of holiness and greatness.

Although these questions paint a most disparaging picture of רחב, רחב unequivocally conclude that she reached a great level of תשובה and became a great צדקה רחב. רחב married יהושע (דף יד/ב) יהושע and צדקה רחב. How could יהושע, the משרת of משה and a prophet marry an immoral woman? Secondly, the גמרא also mentions that רחב had eight descendants who were both נביאים and כוהנים, among them ירמיה. Finally, חולדה הנביאה is identified as being descended from her. Only a genuine צדקה could merit all this.

It is important to note that like רחב, the other Canaanites also recognized G-d's great powers (פרק ב פסוקים יא, כד). However, only רחב took the necessary action to change and save herself (מכתב מאליהו, חלק א, עמודים 204-205). If רחב was like any other Canaanite, she should have handed the Jewish spies over to the king and not save them. The life she had lived makes her conversion and actions that much more incredible.

In פרק ו' חו, the term זונה is meant as praise to her. It emphasizes that despite the fact that she began her life as a זונה, רחב succeeded to repent.

Jewish people all throughout history look to the Tanach for role models. רחב is one such role model. There is much that we can all learn from this great woman's generosity, her concern for her family, her conversion and her ability to reach the highest levels of תשובה.

דבורה הנביאה

Abby Atlas

INTRODUCTION:

When researching Devorah's relationship with herself, with others, and with Hashem, one must pay special attention to the פסוקים in ספר שופטים. The פסוק (שופטים ד:ד) states: "ודבורה אשה נביאה, אשת לפידות, היא שופטה". This פסוק gives insight into how a person must develop his or her relationships. First, one must develop his own strengths; find out what his priorities are, and what his passions are. "ודבורה אשה", the first two words of the פסוק, show us that first and foremost Devorah had developed herself. With this self-development, one is then able to develop his primary relationship in this world: his connection to Hashem. נבואה is the ultimate relationship between a person and G-d. Through the words "ודבורה אשה נביאה" we learn that when it came to relationships, Devorah's connection to G-d took priority over her relationship with her husband Barak ("אשת לפידות") and her responsibilities to her community ("היא שופטה את ישראל"), which are secondary, mentioned only after her status as נביאה. Once the פסוק has established Devorah's self-knowledge and connection to Hashem, it describes her relationship to her husband and community. With her insightful בין אדם לעצמו, self-development, and בין אדם למקום, Devorah was able to get the most out of her relationships with all others she encountered.

בין אדם לעצמו

When perusing the מפרשים's comments on the beginning of שופטים (פסוק ד) רלב"ג, Devorah's superior מדות are apparent. According to רלב"ג, "אשת לפידות" illustrates that Devorah was a fiery and passionate woman, since the word "לפיד" means "flame". This indicates that she was a woman of convictions, adhering like glue to her beliefs and even advocating them to others. Explained by מצודת ציון, these words indicate Devorah's זריזות, which was "כמו לפיד", like a flame. It is also noteworthy that Devorah was the first of the שופטים to be described as possessing נבואה and as someone whom the nation approached with questions ("ויעלו אליה למשפט", verse 6).

One might associate these qualities with the feminists of the 1960's, who often fought to be equal to men to such an extent that it seems that they must have believed that masculinity was superior to femininity because they made it their ultimate goal. However, Devorah was not this way. Although her accomplishments in the realm of Torah learning were equivalent, if not superior, to those of the established, accomplished men of her time¹, making her more of a public figure than most women of the time, Devorah was not provocative, nor a woman who wanted attention. She understood the boundaries of צניעות that make women special, and looked at those boundaries as something קדוש. In her day-to-day dealings with others, Devorah was careful to make sure that the boundaries of צניעות were upheld. This is apparent in the words "גמרא מגילה דף יד/א and מצודת דוד" which, according to תומר "והיא יושבת תחת תומר" display her צניעות. The תומר (palm) tree offers no seclusion and helped Devorah keep the laws of יחוד. Also, Devorah sat outside. "החכם עיניו בראשו", a wise person thinks ahead; Devorah was able to think ahead and realize that her credibility would be undermined if there was even the slightest suggestion that she was transgressing the laws of יחוד (אברבנאל).

בין אדם למקום

In נבואה says that achieving the level of רמח"ל, מסילת ישרים (פרק א) is the ultimate in one's relationship with Hashem. Therefore, the mere fact that Devorah was one of the select few who were chosen to receive נבואה indicates a lot about her relationship with Hashem.

אברבנאל focuses on Devorah's relationship with G-d. He quotes רלב"ג, who says that her level of נבואה was such "שנראה סביבה לפידים", that the area around her seemed like flames. These words are a bit ambiguous, but it seems that רלב"ג's main point is emphasis on the extremely high level of Devorah's נבואה. אברבנאל's own thesis is that her נבואה reflects her great intellect and her subservience to Hashem. He also agrees with זריזות about Devorah's quality of מצודת דוד. Devorah manifested this trait in her relationship with Hashem, through her constant readiness to serve, and her eagerness in her עבודה. In עבודה רבה (פרק ט) מדרש asks why Devorah הנביאה was the נביאה and שופטת, if at the time she was living, פינחס בן אלעזר was still alive and clearly fit for the job. The מדרש answers that if a person meets his or her potential, whatever that may be, רוח הקודש will be given to him. This reflects another aspect about the

¹ משה קבל תורה מסיני ומסרה ליהושע ויהושע לזקינים וזקינים לעתניאל בן קנז ועתניאל לאהוד לשמגר לדבורה וברק לגדעון ... (פירוש מחזור ויטרי, סדר מקבלי התורה ולומדיה)

spiritual life of Devorah. She must have used all of her potential in her relationship with Hashem in order to achieve such an intense level of prophecy.

בין אדם לחבירו

When discussing Devorah's אדם לחבירו relationships, תנא דבי אליהו, תנא דבי אליהו places great emphasis on her relationship with her husband, Barak. As a wife, Devorah showed that her husband's spiritual well-being was an issue of major importance to her. Barak was an ignoramus and Devorah made up her mind to do something about it. She made wicks for the משכן (another reason that she was called "אשת לפידות") and had her husband bring them there. This way, Barak associated with the כשרים, righteous, who spent time in the vicinity of the משכן. She hoped that these כשרים would exert a positive influence on Barak. Hashem told Devorah that because she and Barak's intentions were לשם שמים, therefore Hashem would make them great in Israel.

The most crucial part of the מדרש follows. "And who caused לפידות, Barak, to associate with the כשרים and merit the World to Come? Devorah, his wife, about whom it is said (משלי יד:א): "חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה". Devorah wisely helped her husband become a צדיק in a way that was subtle enough not to offend him and that also benefited ישראל by adding to the supply of wicks needed in the משכן.

Barak's reliance on and respect for Devorah is apparent when he says to her (ד:ח): "ואם לא תלכי עמי, לא אלך", "if you do not come with me I will not go." The מלבי"ם comments that Barak thought that his merit alone was not adequate to save כלל ישראל from the hands of סיסרא, and he therefore wanted his righteous wife, Devorah, to accompany them. This shows how much respect Devorah must have been accorded even among the elite of the army; respect earned as a result of her sterling character. Abarbanel says that her coming to the war allayed the fears of the nation. They were confident that through her mere presence they would be saved due to her abundant זכויות.

Devorah led a balanced life that allowed her to maximize her relationship with Hashem, her relationships with others, and her own self-development. With her as a role model, we should aspire to reach this incredible balance and channel each and every aspect of our daily lives toward עבודת ה'.

דוד: Daughter of שאול or Wife of דוד? מיכל

Ariella Deyong

מיכל was a צדקה, who helped build the kingdom of דוד. Her personality was strong and her love for her husband was immense. מיכל was able to save דוד from her father time and time again. She was the antidote for her husband against שאול. Her soul was intertwined with דוד's so much so that their love for one another was a love until death. But was this love all a plan by Hashem to save דוד and his kingship, or was it a true love that went even deeper? Was she just an accessory in the story of establishing his empire, or was she a genuine individual whom we all can look up to?

In Shmuel I (17:25), שאול promised the man that defeats גלית great wealth, his daughter's hand in marriage and exemption from taxes for his father's house. מירב, the eldest daughter of שאול was originally expected to marry דוד until שאול gave her away to עדריאל (18:19). How was שאול to fulfill his promise to דוד? ילקוט מעם לועז (verse 20) explains that דוד realized how much מיכל truly loved דוד. Indeed, דעת מקרא (18:20) points out that מיכל is the only woman that Tanach states loved someone. The root, אהב, is repeated in verses 20 and 28. He also knew that if he gave מירב to דוד after annulling her previous marriage, it would be bad in the eyes of Hashem. שאול therefore decided that דוד should marry מיכל (verse 21). His intentions were for the worst, for שאול believed that מיכל would remain loyal to him and encourage דוד to endanger himself in battles with the פלשתים. מיכל truly loved דוד, yet simultaneously was a pawn in the hands of her father, שאול.

דוד (verse 22) says that שאול needed to have his servants convince דוד to marry שאול's second daughter since שאול had so carelessly broken off the first marriage. However, דוד had to fulfill one condition in order to marry מיכל. שאול wanted דוד to obtain 100 ערלות (foreskins) from the פלשתים. Instead of returning with one hundred, דוד brought back two hundred and received מיכל as his wife. Did דוד return with two hundred ערלות in order to illustrate his love for מיכל? Or was דוד more concerned with becoming the king's son-in-law (verse 26)?

When דוד set out to obtain one hundred ערלות, דעת מקרא (verse 26) explains that the words "ולא מלאו הימים", "the days had not yet expired," emphasize דוד's love for מיכל. He did not waste any time and immediately

fulfilled שאול's condition so that he could marry her. In Breishit (29:20-21), רחל worked seven harsh years for יעקב. However, it seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. יעקב said to לבן at the end of seven years, "כי מלאו ימי", "deliver my wife, for my term is fulfilled." The same term is used for דוד. Even more emphasis is added in verse 27 when it uses the word, "וימלאום". דוד fulfilled שאול's condition and now it was time to marry מיכל. He did all this just as יעקב had done, in order to prove his true love for מיכל.

שאול realized that Hashem is with דוד (verse 28). רד"ק points out that שאול now feared דוד for two reasons. Firstly, He saw that Hashem was helping דוד. Secondly, he recognized that מיכל truly loved דוד and would not help him trap דוד. Hashem planned all this in order to prevent dreadful events from taking place in the future (ילקוט מעם לועז).

מיכל was also concerned for דוד and exhibited self-sacrifice. מיכל did not flee with דוד because she would have brought danger upon him. Instead, she delayed those that were chasing him. She could have been killed by remaining at home and experiencing the wrath of her father (19:17). However, מיכל was not concerned with the consequences when she helped דוד escape from the hands of שאול.

מיכל acted out her great love for דוד in chapter 19, verses 9-11, in order to save him from her father. שאול attempted to kill דוד with his spear. דוד barely escaped and ran home. שאול sent messengers to דוד's house and commanded them to keep watch over him until the morning. רד"ק (verse 11) explains that דוד was put under house arrest because שאול did not want to kill him in front of מיכל. מיכל informed דוד that if he does not escape that night, he would be killed the following morning. In this setting we see that the text refers to מיכל as דוד's wife (verse 11), whereas the previous פסוקים (18:20, 27, 28) addressed her as the daughter of שאול. מיכל had more love for her husband at this point than her own father. Love as a wife as well as her action to save him surpassed the love that she had for her father.

In verse 12, מיכל lowered דוד through the window and he fled. ילקוט (verse 12) adds that מיכל herself let דוד down from the window and did not allow any of her servants to help her because she wanted it to remain a secret. מיכל (verse 13) took תרפים and placed them in the bed so that no one would know that דוד was missing. ילקוט מעם לועז explains that the תרפים were an image of דוד which מיכל lovingly looked at whenever דוד was at war for long periods of time. This is another example of מיכל's love for דוד.

מיכל reported to שאול's servants that דוד was sick and not capable of leaving his bed. ילקוט מעם לועז explains verses 14-16 as a ruse that gave

דוד more time to escape. שאול asked his daughter (verse 17), "Why have you deceived me?" שאול was furious that מיכל allowed his enemy to escape. מיכל replied that she was forced to let him go, or else דוד would have killed her. Why didn't מיכל admit to שאול that she loved דוד and was protecting him from שאול's wrath? Why did she have to lie and say that she did it out of self-defense?

In chapter 25 verse 44, מיכל is given to פלטי בן ליש. According to the אחינועם and אביגיל, שאול heard that דוד had taken two other wives, מלב"ם. He was furious that דוד had done this, so he took מיכל and gave her away to someone else. The connection between the families of שאול and דוד was severed. מיכל, it seems, was out of the picture and was not to be used in Hashem's great plans for דוד. Was she used only to save דוד from שאול and then abandoned by being given over to another man?

מיכל reappears in Shmuel II chapter 3, when אבנר decided to switch his allegiance from שאול's son אישבושת to דוד. דוד explained to אבנר that he was willing to reach a treaty with him on one condition. אבנר must return his wife, מיכל. דוד placed the nation's unity on hold until מיכל returned. דוד was king, but cared about his family, too. דוד had many wives, but the love he had for them was incomparable to the love he had for his first wife, מיכל (Shmuel II 3:5).

In verse 14, ילקוט מעם ליעז explains that דוד's love for מיכל, his first wife, still remained strong and intact. In addition, דוד knew that מיכל was his destined wife from Heaven since Hashem performed a miracle for him and he was able to kill two hundred פלשתים for their foreskins.

מיכל is seen in a more negative light in Shmuel II, chapter 6. The ארון was being carried to ירושלים. מיכל, who felt it was improper for the family of a king to mingle amongst the common people, looked from her window and witnessed King דוד dancing. מיכל felt that דוד had desecrated the royal honor and he became contemptible in her eyes (verse 16). Even then, דעת מקרא explains, מיכל did not inform anyone of her feelings, but rather waited to personally tell דוד.

In verse 20, דוד returned home and was greeted by מיכל מעם. ילקוט מעם ליעז explains the phrase, "ותצא מיכל", that מיכל could not restrain herself anymore and rebuked דוד before he even entered the house.

דוד responded to מיכל (verse 21) that he was dancing in front of Hashem, who placed him as king over the people instead of her father. My attitude is different than your father's (רד"ק, verse 20). Interestingly, verses 16, 20 and 23 describe her as שאול's daughter, not as דוד's wife.

The book *אשת חיל* enlightens us about מיכל's personality. She had a daring character before kings, especially her father. She tried to right something she believed was wrong. She was also not afraid to state her

positions. Although her love for דוד was so extraordinary, it did not prevent her from speaking her mind when, in her opinion, דוד was not acting as he should have been. Because this is the only place in Tanach where it explicitly illustrates the love of a woman, one must conclude that her love for דוד was a true and pure love.

Without מיכל, דוד's kingdom would never have survived because she saved him from her father's hands. מיכל had to choose between her father and דוד. The love for דוד was stronger and deeper than the love for her father. Thus, her strong and courageous personality and her love for דוד helped him establish his kingdom.

Light and Darkness

Jeana Beneson

Western culture is filled with the motif of light versus darkness. The media clearly emphasizes that light is associated with positive knowledge and goodness while darkness is a manifestation of evil. Horror movies revolve in shadows and darkness emphasizing the evil characters and plots, while “happier” movies are filled with much more theatrical light and brightness on the screen. Novels follow this same pattern. Authors use darkness to demonstrate evil and light to portray goodness in the characters, setting, or themes of a novel.

In *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, darkness is such a central theme that it is important enough to be part of the book’s title. Taking place in the time of Europe’s imperialism over Africa, darkness engulfs Africa and its natives. The imperialists see the Africans as primitive and describe them as dark, cannibalistic beings living in a sea of darkness. Darkness therefore operates metaphorically and existentially in the novel, portraying a land and a people ignorant and primitive. England and imperialism seem to glow in a ray of light. However, Conrad hints to the darkness and malevolence that he personally feels about imperialism into the novel.

In the novel *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelly, this same idea is conceptualized. The main character, a scientist, is consumed with a pursuit of knowledge, a desire to discover the secrets of life. By trying to create a man, the protagonist follows a ruthless search of “the light” of discovery that in the end becomes lethal. The novel, like a horror movie, however, progresses around shadows that block out the light. The being, the monster, which the protagonist created, becomes an embodiment of darkness, and the protagonist himself becomes a victim to that darkness which he himself created. The motif of light and darkness in non-Jewish society become realities.

While Judaism agrees with this separation of light and darkness, it is not as definitive, nor as rigid. With the Torah and the works of Mussar, light and darkness are manifested in many different ways. The Torah, like Western culture, portrays light at times as a goodness, a following in the ways of Hashem, and darkness as an evil, a digression and sinning against Hashem. Light at times can be signify redemption,

גאולה, a positive reality, and darkness can be seen as exile, גלות, a negative reality. Conversely, many times light, or heat, can be seen as a discomfort to בני ישראל, while darkness, or shade, is something בני ישראל search for and desire. Throughout Tanach and Jewish history, light can be portrayed as a discomfort, a closeness to Hashem, or a symbolic manifestation of redemption. Parallel to this, darkness can represent comfort, a separation from Hashem or an expression of exile. Each of these different outlooks reveals a fundamental truth of Judaism and the relationship between Hashem and בני ישראל. This three pronged analysis of dark and light forms a cohesive portrait, one which is filled with bright colors and dark shades, that allow the beauty in Judaism to emerge.

In שיר השירים, the רעיה, representative of בני ישראל, expresses her desire for shade from the דוד, from Hashem. She describes (פרק א פסוק ו) "אל תראוני שאני שחרחורת, ששזפתני השמש" "do not gaze upon me, because I am black, because the sun has scorched me". This negative statement about her describes how she does not want to be darkened by the sun, rather as it states (פרק ב פסוק ג) "בצלו חמדתי וישבתי, ופריו מתוק לחכי": "I sat down under his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste". בני ישראל want the shade, comfort, sustenance, and protection from Hashem. This can be compared to many verses in תהלים where the shade denotes this protection for which the רעיה longs. עד "ובצל כנפך אחסה, עד" "and in the shadow of Your wings will I take refuge, until the wickedness passes by". בני ישראל desire to be shielded from destruction by Hashem's shade; they crave protection. Similarly, (פרק ח פסוק ח) "כי היית עזרתה לי, ובצל כנפך ארנן" (תהלים פרק סג פסוק ח) "For You have been a help to me, and in the shadow of Your wings I will joyfully sing. Additionally, ה' צלך על יד ימינך. יומם השמש לא יככה, וירח בלילה. ה' (תהלים קכא:ד-ו) "Hashem is your guardian, Hashem is your shade at your right hand. By day the sun will not smite you, nor the moon at night. Hashem will guard you from all evil; He will preserve your soul." Hashem guards בני ישראל and protects them from the sun. The shade, a positive connotation, is protecting בני ישראל from a destructive sun, guarding them from a heat that is synonymous to "מכל רע". It is this sun that the רעיה does not want, and it is this shade for which she pleads. ישעיהו conveys this same idea that it is Hashem's shade that protects בני ישראל "כי היית מעוז לדל, מעוז לאביון בצר לו, מחסה מזרם, צל מחורב". בני ישראל (תהלים פרק כה פסוק ד) "for You were a stronghold for the poor, a fortress for the pauper in distress – shelter from rain and shade from heat". The Torah uses this concept of shade, a type of darkness, to demonstrate

Hashem's protection, and it is the sun, a type of light, from which בני ישראל are being protected.

However, while בני ישראל beg for the shade from Hashem, Hashem requests from בני ישראל to make an effort and come closer to Him. As חז"ל state: "פתחו לי כהודו של מחט, ואני אפתח לכם כפתחו של אולם". In שיר השירים, time after time, Hashem calls out to בני ישראל, as for example in (ב:ג) "קומי לך, בני ישראל, רעייתי יפתי ולכי לך". Yet, בני ישראל do not rise to greet Hashem, and finally, Hashem turns away. Hashem leaves בני ישראל exposed to the heat, with no shade for solace, as it says (ב:ז) "עד שיפוח היום ונסו הצללים", "until the day blows and the shadows flee". Hashem will not freely give the shade that בני ישראל desire. To receive the shade, בני ישראל must make the effort to greet Hashem.

In ספר יונה a similar idea arises. Yonah wants to escape from the scorching heat and be protected by shade. "ויעש לו שם סוכה וישב תחתיה בצל ... וימן ה' אלוקים קיקיון ויעל מעל ליונה להיות צל על ראשו להציל לו מרעתו וישמח יונה על ... He (Yonah) made a hut for himself there and sat under it in the shade ... Hashem the L-rd then summoned a castor-oil plant, which grew up over Yonah to provide shade for his head and alleviate his suffering. Yonah was extremely happy about the castor-oil plant." Yonah desires the shade, the comfort, and when the shade is taken away and the sun beams from above, "וישאל את נפשו למות" (פסוק ח), "so he asked that he might die". The story of the קיקיון reemphasizes what we already know about Yonah's personality. Yonah ran away from Hashem because he did not want to prophesize to the city of נינוה. He didn't believe that Hashem should forgive them and judge them with mercy. Rather, he was convinced that G-d should punish them with strict justice. Yonah wants things to be easy for him; he wants things to be the way that he understands them to be. He wants the shade, the comfort, but like בני ישראל, he too isn't willing to work, as Hashem says to Yonah (פסוק י) "אתה חסת על הקיקיון אשר לא עמלת בו ולא", "you are concerned about the castor-oil plant, though you neither labored over it nor grew it. It appeared overnight, and perished overnight".

In contrast to Yonah, lies the story of Avraham. Still in pain from his ברית מילה, Avraham sat out in the "חום היום" (בראשית יח:א) waiting for the opportunity to fulfill the מצוה of הכנסת אורחים. As Rashi explains, Hashem intentionally caused a heat wave to occur. Hashem wanted to offer Avraham the chance to stay in his tent, in the shade, where he could heal comfortably. However, Avraham so much desired to perform acts of חסד that he did not allow the heat to stop him. In fact, Avraham was so preoccupied with the מצוה that he didn't even ask Hashem for shade.

Similarly, the מצוה of סוכה expresses the same idea of shade and sun-light. בני ישראל clearly want the shade and comfort from Hashem and want to be protected from the heat; however, בני ישראל are willing to sit in the סוכה with little comfort or shade in order to be close to Hashem. This is the effort that Hashem desires from בני ישראל. Even in שיר השירים, the רעייה, who was originally unwilling to rise and greet Hashem, later searches for Him. The sun is no longer an embodiment of sin or badness, but rather it is a discomfort, and בני ישראל are willing to withstand the discomfort for Hashem. בני ישראל describe Hashem כן דודי היער "like an apple-tree among the trees of the forest, so is my Beloved among the sons, in its shade I delighted and sat and its fruit is sweet to my palate" (שיר השירים ב:ג). The apple tree does not provide shade, but בני ישראל still compare Hashem to this. Although they want the shade, they ultimately want the substance from the apples, the Torah. These two views of light and shade exemplify man's relationship with Hashem. Man wants shade and comfort from Hashem, but to get this luxury man must be willing to make the effort. He must be willing to sometimes sit in the sun in order to reach a level of closeness with Hashem.

In contrast to this approach of light and shade, or darkness, exists a deeper and more fundamental aspect in the life of בני ישראל. Exile and redemption follow בני ישראל throughout the ages. From Egypt, to Bavel, to the exile of today, בני ישראל are constantly praying for the light of redemption. In תהלים (פד:יב), Hashem is described as a light and a shield, "כי שמש ומגן ה' אלוקים". Radak explains that בני ישראל are asking Hashem to be a great light for them in exile, and to take them out of the darkness and bring them into the light.

"והיה ביום ההוא ... והבאתי השמש בצהרים, והחשכתי לארץ ביום אור. והפכתי ... On that day ... I will make the sun set at noon, and I will darken the earth on a clear day. I will turn your festivals into mourning and all your songs into a dirge ..." (עמוס ח:ט-י). Rashi explains that "on that day" refers to the day of חורבן. The beginning of the exile will be a day that the sun will leave and the happiness that accompanied בית המקדש will be replaced with mourning. When redemption arrives and Hashem is ready to bring בני ישראל back home, then "לא יהיה לך עוד השמש לאור יומם, ולנוגה הירח לא יאיר לך, והיה לך ה' לאור עולם, ואלקיך לתפארתך" "You will no longer need the sun for daylight or the moon to give light at night. G-d will always be your light, and your G-d will be your glory" (ישעיהו ס:יט). Rashi and Ibn Ezra both explain that ישעיהו is describing the period of redemption. בני ישראל will no longer need the superficial sun for light because Hashem's light, the שכינה, the

eternal light, will have returned to earth. Here, light and dark take on a new dimension. The sun is no longer an unpleasant and undesirable physical discomfort, but rather the sun, the light, is a metaphorical and metaphysical state of redemption. Darkness is no longer a physical comfort that shades man from the sun, but rather representative of exile. In exile, בני ישראל may find some physical comfort. However, it will be a darkness that will always lack the closeness to Hashem that only the light of redemption can bring.

As an extension to this view of light and dark, which, like in Western culture, light is positive and darkness is negative, the Torah builds and reshapes this motif to show another level of the relationship between Hashem and His people. The child lays in the dark, fearing the monster under his bed. It is only when his mother comes into the room and turns on the light that the child's fears dissolve. Darkness, a scary reality, portrays בני ישראל's separation from Hashem, while light denotes their closeness to Hashem. In קהלת (יא:ז-ח) it states "ומתוק האור, וטוב לעינים" and "לראות את השמש" Light is defined as "sweet" and it is good for a person to see this "radiance". However, concerning darkness it is said in משלי (ב:יג) "משלי: "העוזבים ארחות ישר, ללכת בדרכי חושך", "who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness". Those who turn away from the אמת, the truth, the light, walk in a darkness, thereby walking away from Hashem. פרק ג) further this idea by saying that to do good and to find the "light" one must first examine what is truly good and adhere to it, and what is truly evil and run from it. The evil inclination, however, blinds man's eyes, causing darkness and making it difficult for him to see and understand what is truly evil. This darkness can cause man to err in two ways. It can cover man's eyes so that he cannot see what is in front of him at all, or the darkness can deceive man into thinking that a pillar that is in front of him is really a man or the man that is in front of him is really a pillar. It says in משלי (ד:יט) "דרך רשעים: משלי (ד:יט) "The way of the wicked is like darkness; they know not at what they stumble". This represents the first type of error caused by darkness. The רשע is in darkness because he can't see the wrong that he is doing and on what he is stumbling. Secondly, a man who comes to see evil and think it is good or see good and think it is evil is under the influence of darkness and is subject to the rule of the evil inclination. As ישעיהו (ה:ב) says "הי האומרים לרע טוב ולטוב רע, שמים חושך: (ה:ב) "Man sees the good as bad and the dark as light."

Because of this destructive nature of obscurity, one must constantly search for ways to overcome the darkness, "להגיד בבוקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות" (תהלים צב:ג). During the day, when things are clear and life seems easy,

man can see Hashem's kindness; he can see the good. However, at night, when things are distorted and life gets hard, one must have אמונה. In שיר (א:ג) (שיר השירים ג:א), the רעיה goes out in the night to search for the דוד, Hashem. Even in the dark, even though the world at night is filled with robbers and wild animals, she finds the courage and faith to search for Hashem. Like Hashem desires, she is making an effort to find and be close to Hashem, even in the scariest of times. "על משכבי בלילות, בקשתי את שאהבה" (שיר השירים ג:א) "upon my bed at night, I sought the one I love". It is up to man to find a light from within to conquer the darkness, the יצר הרע, which dwells within him. While this approach can be seen as a parallel to Western culture - darkness as evil and light as goodness - the Torah amplifies these terms in a different way. This darkness is not an evil, but an obstacle. Darkness can be compared to this world, and light can be compared to the next world. The Maharal (ספר נצח ישראל) states that in the verse "להגיד בבוקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות", morning refers to עולם הבא and night refers to עולם הזה. In the next world, man will see all the חסד and good from Hashem, but in this world, one must rely on faith, אמונה. One must strengthen that faith, that light, from within to dispel the darkness. True light, the light from Hashem, can only be purely manifested in the world to come, and nature, this world, covers or shades this light. However, this darkness is not bad, but it exists for man to be able to strengthen his faith, and it exists so that one day man will be able to understand and see the true light in עולם הבא. פרק - מסילת ישרים. עולם הבא (פרקי אבות פרק ד משנה כא) (quoting א "העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדור בפני" (עירובין דף כב/א) "היום לעשותם ומחר לקבל שכרם". The darkness is a means to gain greater reward. In addition, "מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל בשבת", (עבודה זרה דף ג/א) (עבודה זרה דף ג/א). Performing מצוות in this world, preparing and working amid the darkness, allows man to enjoy the Shabbat, to enjoy the light of the world to come. While the darkness can cause a separation from Hashem, Hashem places the darkness there for a reason. It is not an evil, but a challenge for man to be able to see the true light in עולם הבא.

Darkness and light are multifaceted concepts. In *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, the thread of darkness is used to express evil during the French Revolution. By being cast in shadows and darkness, the novel manifests the shadowy depths of the human heart. Many characters are consumed with this evil that leads to their ultimate destruction. Similarly, *Lord of the Flies* revolves around this darkness of the human heart. A group of boys stranded on an island become consumed with evil, having no order and society to keep them tamed. Shadows in the forest, tribal rituals held in the dead of the night, portray the boys' loss

of innocence and emergence into their own “heart of darkness.” It is a fire, a light, which saves the remaining boys, and returns them to society. The novels do not stray from the set stigma of light as good and dark as bad. However, the Torah has many approaches to these same terms. Man sees light, the sun, as a discomfort, and shade, darkness, as a desired state of being as well as one that is frightening. To man, both these terms, the sun and the darkness, are a representation of physical states. However, to Hashem, these terms are more than just physical; they are also metaphysical. Light and dark are spiritual states of being, means of closeness to or separation from Hashem, obstacles or rewards from Hashem. Each different approach to light and dark demonstrates the different relationships man has with Hashem. They demonstrate what man should strive for and what man should run from, how man should act and how man should think in relation to Hashem. The world was created with light and darkness. Both are dependent on each other, both build off each other. “ויבדל אלקים בין האור ובין החושך ויקרא אלקים לאור יום ולחושך קרא לילה” (בראשית א:ד-ה).

מחשבה ומעשה

The Issue of השגחה פרטית as Dealt with by Four Major ראשונים

Sarah Willig

In שמות (Chapter 3), Hashem gave Moshe his first mission to go to Pharaoh and take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. In verse 13, Moshe responds: "I will go to Bnei Yisrael and tell them 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they will ask, 'What is His name?' What should I tell them?" If Moshe was worried that Bnei Yisrael wouldn't believe that he was sent by God to redeem them, how would a name dispel their doubt? It must be that Moshe is asking for more than just a name. According to Ramban on this verse, what Moshe really wanted was a clear proof of the existence of God and His Hashgacha, Divine Providence. Hashem's answer was concordant with this deeper question. "אהיה אשר אהיה", I will be with you in this צרה and in other צרות. According to מדרש אגדה, it also means, "As you are with me, I shall be with you. If you open your hands in charity, so too, I will open my hands to you. If, however, you close your hands, so too I will close my hands to you."

Judaism presupposes that God exists and that He knows and cares about mankind's actions and can directly interfere in their lives as a result. Without this belief in Hashgacha and reward and punishment, there is no basis for fulfilling Torah commandments (Rambam, שמונה פרקים, Chapter Eight). Once this is understood, the logic of Moshe's question becomes apparent. Not only did Bnei Yisrael require proof of God's Hashgacha and omnipotence while they were still in Egypt, but they would also require this knowledge in the future in order to accept the Torah. As the redemption process of יציאת מצרים commences, with the ultimate goal of the formation of the nation united by its acceptance of Torah, Hashem provides the name אהיה אשר אהיה in order to establish this essential belief.

Once we accept that there is an omniscient, omnipotent God, questions arise. Is everything that happens, no matter how small and inconsequential, the direct will of God, or do chance and nature exist? Can we perceive God's intervention, and in what manner is it manifest? How do we explain what appears to be Divine injustice, when people do not get what they deserve? It is possible to see various approaches to

answering these and other questions by comparing the philosophies of Ramban, Rambam, Ralbag, and Rav Yosef Albo¹.

The first question to be asked is the extent of Hashgacha over people. None of the Rishonim mentioned states that Hashgacha extends over everyone, always. All suggest that Hashgacha applies only to Bnei Yisrael, and all conceive of levels within Hashgacha, while some Rishonim have starker gradations than others. The broader application of Hashgacha is seen in Ramban and Rav Albo. In his commentary on *Iyov*, Ramban states that the righteous within Bnei Yisrael always have Hashgacha, and evil-doers never have Hashgacha. A middle level Jew, one who is neither completely righteous nor completely wicked, will sometimes have Hashgacha and sometimes not. Therefore, war in Tanach is presented as subject to natural occurrences and Bnei Yisrael are commanded to act within nature in this respect². Rav Albo also presents a rather broad, inclusive perspective on the question of to whom Hashgacha applies. According to him, even doing one mitzvah is enough to merit Hashgacha, just like doing one mitzvah is enough to merit the world to come. If someone does many מצוות well, he is on the level to have Hashgacha over him in all respects^{3 4}. Implied in this

¹ ריה"ל מעיר (ספר הכוזרי מאמר חמישי אות א – כח): "והנה סבות הפעלות מזה וההפעלות מזה לא תקשה עליך הבנתן אם תחקר בהן ויתכן כי תמצא אף סבות סבותן עד שתגיע אל הגלגלים ומהם אל סבות הגלגלים ומהן אל הסבה הראשונה בצדק יאמין אפוא האחד כי הכל בגזרת האלוה ית' ובצדק יאמין אחר בבחירה ובמקרה בלא שיוציא את זו או את זה אל מחוץ לגזרת האלוה ואם תרצה בכך תוכל לקרב לדעתך את ציור הענין הזה באמצעות החלקה שלפנינו המעשים הם אלוהיים או טבעיים מקריים או בחיריים אלהיים הם המעשים הבאים ישר מן הסבה הראשונה שאי אפשר Therefore, even when God does not miraculously intervene in worldly happenings, as when things occur through the laws of nature, by accident, or as a result of man's free will, all happenings ultimately result from God's will. (Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *Handbook of Jewish Thought*, volume 2, pages 286 – 287)

² "מן הטעם הזה ישמור את הצדיקים כי כאשר ליבם ועיניהם תמיד עמו, כן עיני ה' עליהם מראשית השנה ועד אחרית השנה, עד כי החסיד הגמור הדבק באלוקיו תמיד ולא יפרד הדבק במחשבתו בו בענין מענייני העולם, יהיה נשמר תמיד מכל מקרי הזמן, אפילו ההויים בטבע, וישמור מהם בנס יעשה לו תמיד ... והרחוק מן הא-ל במחשבתו ובמעשיו ואפילו לא יתחייב מיתה בחטאו אשר חטא, יהיה משולח ונעזב למקרים... ומפני שרוב העולם מן הכת הזאת האמצעית, ציורתה התורה החלץ הנלחמים... כי ראויים להתנהג בדרך הטבע והמקרה." רמב"ן על איוב לו: (וראה דברי הרמב"ן ויקרא כו:יא).

³ "כי יחשבו, כי לפי שאין מצוה אחת בלבד מספקת אל שתדבק בהם השגחה האלוקית בכל פרטי מעשיהם להצילם מצרתם... ואין בהם כן, כי אפילו מצוה אחת עשויה כהלכתה... תספיק א-ל שיקנה האדם בה לעולם הבא..." אלבו, ספר העיקרים מאמר ג:כט

⁴ "פעמים יגיע רבוי המצוות המקיימות על יד איש אחד אל שיהיה במדרגה שישגח בעולם הזה בכל פרטי עניניו..." אלבו, ספר העיקרים מאמר ד: יא

statement is the middle level of Ramban, with some מצוות done well making the person worthy of a certain amount of Hashgacha.

Ralbag and Rambam, on the other hand, have a much narrower application of Hashgacha. According to Ralbag, individual Hashgacha can be removed if you are part of a collective unit that doesn't deserve Hashgacha. He bases this belief on the story of Achan in ספר יהושע. Before the battle of Jericho, Joshua commanded that none of Bnei Yisrael should collect any of the booty. Achan, however, disobeyed.

At the next battle, which occurred at Ai, 36 men of Bnei Yisrael were killed, the first casualties of war in Eretz Yisrael. Through a lottery, it was discovered that they had lost the battle because of Achan's sin. Ralbag asks, if Achan was the only one to sin, why should 36 men of Bnei Yisrael deserve to die? He answers that as an army, Bnei Yisrael are considered like one body. If all the soldiers are deserving of Hashgacha, all would benefit from it. If, however, one soldier from the unit is unworthy, the whole unit is abandoned to chance⁵.

Rambam has the narrowest application of Hashgacha of all. According to him, only צדיקים of Bnei Yisrael receive Hashgacha. His definition of צדיקים is strongly focused on their intellectual achievements. The state of those who are not צדיקים, the ignorant and disobedient, "is despicable proportionately to their lack of [the divine overflow that distinguishes צדיקים from other men]," and is equivalent to that of animals. Even for the צדיקים who do merit Hashgacha, it is proportionate to the measure of their intellect and righteousness. Even for these צדיקים, Hashgacha is only bestowed on them when they are actively being occupied with G-d. Otherwise, they are left to chance and nature.⁶

If, as all the Rishonim agree, Hashgacha does not apply to everyone, and is even a temporary state, as posited by Rambam and Rav

⁵ "...איך יתכן בזה בחק ומשפט האלקי לענוש על חטא עכן בני ישראל וכבר צותה התורה שלא ימותו האנשים כי אם איש על חטאו ימות... שכאשר החיל בכללו באופן שיהיה מושגח מהש"י השגחה שלימה לא יתכן שתאונה אליו רעה וכאשר חטא אחד מבני החיל חשוב כחיל באופן שתסור ההשגחה האלוקית ממנו מצד שהוא כלו מתאחד... כי הקיבוץ ההוא הוא כמו איש אחד והאיש ממנו הוא כמו איבר מאיבריו וכמו שכשיחלה אבר מה מאברי האדם יזוק בו האדם ההוא בכללו כן שיחטא איש אחד מהקיבוץ ההוא יזוק בו כלל הקיבוץ..." רלב"ג יהושע ז:א

⁶ Rambam, *Guide to the Perplexed*, Trans. Shlomo Pines, Chicago, 1963, Section III:17, 18, 51

Albo, what is its opposite state, chance? For Rambam⁷ and Ralbag⁸, lack of Hashgacha is complete happenstance, following the natural way of the world. Someone abandoned to chance can die, even if he is not deserving of death, if he is in an objectively dangerous situation. So too one who is deserving of death can flourish if he is in a naturally prosperous place. Thus there are two types of “bad” which can befall man: the evil of nature and chance, which strikes indiscriminately, and punishment due to hashgacha/עונש, which only strikes the deserved. Rav Albo differs in that he does not consider the alternative state to Hashgacha to be chance, but rather calls it astrology and מזלות, i.e. fixed fate according to the position of the planets at the time of a person’s birth⁹. Essentially, however, Rav Albo agrees that existence without Hashgacha is determined not by the person’s merit but by arbitrary events.

Ramban’s stance on מקרה is more complicated, as he seems to contradict himself on whether he believes there is a state of nature, or whether everything that occurs is decree from God. In his commentary on ספר שמות¹⁰, he states unequivocally that there is no מקרה¹⁰. Everything that happens is a hidden miracle that is equally as miraculous as a revealed miracle, but only differs in that we were not forewarned about it and therefore do not recognize it. The revealed miracle of יציאת מצרים and קריעת ים סוף were to prove not just that Hashem has power to do massive miracles, but that everything that we see in “nature” is a hidden miracle and equally miraculous. In his introduction to *Iyov*, he further adds that it is heresy to believe in chance and nature¹¹.

⁷“When [man] abandons Him, may He be exalted, and is thus separated from God and God separated from him, he becomes in consequence of this a target for every evil that may befall him.” Rambam, *Guide to the Perplexed*, Section III:51

⁸“קרה שמתו אלו השלושים ושישה איש [בעי] עם היותם בלתי חטאים בזה ולא מת עכן כי לא יקרה רע העדר ההשגחה האלוקית תקף למי הוא ראוי שיבאווהו רע ולפי שעכן לא שם עצמו במקום הסכנה לא מת מפני העדר ההשגחה ממנו ואותם האנשים ששמו עצמם במקום סכנה מתו...” רלבג, יהושע ז:א

⁹“...יש להוכיח שהוראות הכוכבים אינן הכרחיות, ושאף על פי שנראה קצתם מתקיימות כפי משפט האצנגנינים על האנשים, מכל מקום כבר אפשר שיבטלו...בסיבת הבחירה או איזה זכות או מצוה... וכל שכן ברצון הא-ל ית' שהוא הכלל הגבוה על כל, שראוי שיבטלו כל ההוראות מאי זה צד שיהיה ברצונו לסיבה נודעת אצלו בלבד... הש"י יסב סבות להצילו מכל נזק שיש לו במולדו” אלבו, ספר העיקרים מאמר ד:ד

¹⁰“שאין לאדם חלק בתורת משה רבינו עד שנאמין בכל דברינו ומקרינו שכלם נסים, אין בהם טבע ומנהגו של עולם בין ברבים, בין ביחיד, אלא אם יעשה המצות יצליחנו שכרו, ואם יעבור עליהם, כריתנו ענשו, הכל בגזירת עליון.” רמב"ן שמות יג:טז

¹¹See footnote 1

However, in his commentary on *Iyov*, Ramban states that one who distances himself from God is thrown to chance and can be killed with impunity, even if in terms of sin he is not deserving of death¹². In addition, the fact that he believes in gradations of Hashgacha shows that those who do not deserve do not receive Hashgacha, or only receive Hashgacha at certain times. Consequently, whoever doesn't deserve Hashgacha receives מקרה. Also, in שער הגמול, Ramban states that he agrees with Rambam that a great deal of man's suffering can be attributed to his own faulty logic and not to Divine Decree¹³

One is left wondering about Ramban's real position. Dr. David Berger attributes Ramban's strong comments against טבע and those who believe in it as "rhetorical excesses"¹⁴. According to Dr. Berger, Ramban "was forced by the Bible, the halacha, and intuitions influenced by philosophy or common sense or both, to recognize that natural law often does operate..." as seen in what Dr. Berger calls 99% of Ramban's works. He proposes that, in the cases where Ramban claims that nature and chance do not exist, he is referring to cases of reward and punishment only. Reward and punishment refer to Divine decree and is of a miraculous nature. If Dr. Berger is correct, we find agreement among the Rishonim as to the existence of chance and the indiscriminate occurrence of good and bad, dependent on natural courses of events, as opposed to the divinely directed reward and punishment of Hashgacha.

The most pressing question arising from the belief in Hashgacha is that of theodicy, God's justice in what appears to be an unjust world. This can be discussed as two separate issues: רשע וטוב לו, and צדיק ורע לו. Regarding צדיק ורע לו, both Rambam and Ramban place a portion of the responsibility on the צדיק himself. However, their approaches to the question are vastly different. Rambam doesn't say that רע is a punishment at all. Rather, it is an inevitable consequence of the צדיק not actively reflecting on God at that moment. The removal of Hashgacha or the giving of Hashgacha is not only dependent on the overall worth of the person, but rather on his intellectual connection to God at that particular moment. When the צדיק is distracted and not actively focusing

¹²See footnote 1

¹³[רמבם] באר כי רוב הרעות הבאות באישי בני אדם באות מחסרון דעתכם ומסכלותנו נזעק ונשוע... והקב"ה לא יחדש מופת ונס בעולם לעזור המשוגעים על פתיחת מדותיהם... וכל זה ראוי להעלות על לב כל משכיל כדי להבין תקון סדר הבורא יתברך בעולמו" רמב"ן שער הגמול

¹⁴"Miracles and the Natural Order in Nahmanides," by Dr. Berger (published in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, edited by Isadore Twersky)

on G-d, he has the same status of a רשע in terms of Hashgacha, and natural רע can happen to him at that point¹⁵. According to this belief, there is no question of לו רע צדיק. The person is a צדיק, but was not under the benefit of Hashgacha at the moment רע befell him.

According to Ramban, however, there is no punishment without sin. Troubles and יסורים cleanse the צדיק of his sins and increase his reward in the world to come¹⁶. If he is a צדיק גמור, like Iyov, then he must be a reincarnation suffering for sins in a previous life, what Ramban calls יסוד העיבור¹⁷. Hashgacha and divine justice are completely dependent on the individual himself and are not affected by outside influences. A person will receive exactly what he deserves.

The relationship between the individual and community in respect to Hashgacha is not addressed within Ramban or Rambam and is not a factor in their explanation of לו רשע וטוב לו/צדיק ורע לו. Ralbag and Rav Albo, on the other hand, show a very strong interaction between hashgach of the individual and the community, and place the צדיק within a larger context that allows for him to experience רע without directly deserving it. As we have seen, in Ralbag the sins of individuals can remove Hashgacha from the community. The 36 men who died at Ai were not deserving of death and may have been צדיקים. They were subject to chance because of the sin of Achan and therefore died because they were in a place of danger. Achan, who was in fact deserving of death and can thus be considered a רשע, did not die in the battle of Ai, a situation of לו רשע וטוב לו, because he was in the state of chance and was in a less dangerous place.

Rav Albo goes a step further than Ralbag. In his position on צדיק ורע לו, Rav Albo shows both how the Hashgacha of an individual affects the Hashgacha of the community, as well as the opposite effect, how the Hashgacha of the community affects the individual.

According to Rav Albo, an individual צדיק is subject to the general Hashgacha of the community if the צדיק isn't worthy enough to have טבע overridden to save him from רע. Rav Albo gives the example of a צדיק who lives in a lowly nation with evil decrees decreed against it. Because he is a part of the nation, he is subject to the Divine decrees against the nation whether or not he specifically deserves it. This is similar to the cases of Daniel in the exile of Yihoyachin, and Yirmiyahu in the exile of

¹⁵ Guide to the Perplexed, Section III: 51

¹⁶ "אין יסורין של אהבה באים אלא לכפרת חטא...אין רעה באה על האדם, בין בגופו בין בממונו, אלא על פי הדין" רמב"ן שער הגמול

¹⁷ רמב"ן הקדמה לאיוב (עמוד כג במהדורת שוועל) ושער הגמול (עמוד רעה במהדורת שוועל)

Tzidkiyahu, both of whom were exiled from Israel because of a decree on Jerusalem and the nation, even though they themselves were not deserving of exile¹⁸.

Rav Albo offers some other reasons for *צדיק ורע לו*. A *צדיק* can at times be punished with the nation as atonement for the nation, because Hashem wants the world to continue and knows that a *צדיק* will be able to withstand the punishment with sanguinity and not complain against Hashem, unlike the common people of the nation. Similarly, the *צדיק* can receive *רע* because of a *רשע*'s connection to him. For example, a wealthy *רשע* loses his money as punishment. Inevitably, his children also become poor. This is not considered as a case of children being punished for sins of father¹⁹.

The parallel issue of *רשע וטוב לו* is *צדיק ורע לו*. According to Rambam, it is possible to say that the *רשע*, while in a state of *מקרה*, receives *טוב* through natural consequences, just as a *צדיק* who is subject to *מקרה* at a certain moment could receive *רע* through natural consequences. Ultimately, however, Rambam acknowledges that man's understanding of *רשע וטוב לו/צדיק ורע לו* is inherently flawed and incomplete. In his explanation of Sefer Iyov, Rambam states that Divine Hashgacha isn't comparable to what we think of Hashgacha. What Hashem creates is not like what man creates; therefore Hashgacha over His creation is not like our supervision of our possessions. There is indeed divine justice, but due to man's limited understanding, we can't comprehend it²⁰. Ramban, on the other hand, does not include *מקרה* as a possible explanation for *רשע וטוב לו*. Just like a *צדיק* will receive *רע* to purify him from his minor sins and increase his reward in the next world, so too Hashem will withhold *רע* and grant *טוב* to the *רשע* in order to bestow on him all the reward he deserves in this world and deny him the greater reward of the next world²¹.

Like Ramban, Rav Albo agrees that a *רשע* will get all the good that is coming to him, because Hashem in His justice must reward any meritorious act. By receiving that reward in this world, it will lessen the reward of his soul and increase his eternal punishment. However, Rav Albo also presents several alternative explanations for *רשע וטוב לו* that are consistent with his overall position of interplay between individual and community.

¹⁸ Sefer Halkkarim IV: 14

¹⁹ Sefer Halkkarim IV: 14

²⁰ Guide to the Perplexed III:23

²¹ הקדמה לאיוב

If the community in which the רשע lives has good decreed on it, the רשע will benefit from the good bestowed on the community. Individual רשעים can also be saved because of the merits of individual צדיקים who are somehow connected to them, like Lot who was saved in the merit of Avraham. A רשע can also be saved from evil because of a righteous son that he is destined to have, just like Achaz was saved in order to have Chizkiyahu. Sometimes a רשע is empowered in order to punish other רשעים, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Sancheriv, and Titus, who were all used as tools to punish Bnei Yisrael.²²

Another possible explanation for רשע טוב לו is that רשעים receive good in order to increase the reward of צדיקים. If a רשע was punished immediately, a צדיק wouldn't necessarily be able to receive the reward worthy of him, because it could be said that he just worshipped out of fear of punishment. However, when people do not see the direct relationship of reward and punishment, each person can do what is right in his eyes²³. According to this position, we see that absolute justice in this world bends for another philosophically vital principle, that of free will. The axiom that man must have free will sets limits on absolute cause and effect.

A factor to consider in the question of רשע טוב לו/צדיק ורע לו is whether the person is being subject to נסיונות, tests from God, or יסורין, suffering sent to purify. Rav Ami in the גמרא²⁴ asserted that there is no death without sin, and no suffering without sin. This assertion was then followed by a תיובתא, a successful move to disprove the statement by quoting a contradictory tannaitic statement that four died for the sin of the snake (i.e. they died not because they had sinned to deserve death, but rather because it was decreed after the sin of Adam that man would not live eternally). The גמרא then concludes that there is death without sin and suffering without sin. Tosfot comments²⁵, that this is so even though the תיובתא was only against the statement concerning death without sin, and not the statement concerning suffering without sin. However, there is a debate among the Rishonim as to whether the תיובתא really applies to the second statement, whether there is indeed יסורין without sin. Rambam and Ramban both hold that יסורין only comes

²² Sefer Halkkarim IV:12

²³ "כשיראה האדם שאין העונש מגיע לאנשי הרשע מיד על עשותם הרע, חושבים שלעולם לא יגיע עליהם עונש, ובעבור זה יעשה כל איש הישר בעיניו" אלבו, ספר העיקרים מאמר ד:יב

²⁴ "אמר רב אמי אין מיתה בלא חטא ואין יסורין בלא עון... מתיבי ארבעה מתו בעטיו של נחש ואלו הן בנימין בן יעקב ועמרם אבי משה וישי אבי דוד וכלאב בן דוד... ושי"מ יש מיתה בלא חטא ויש יסורין בלא עון ותיובתא דרב אמי תיובתא" מסכת שבת דף נה עמוד א ועמוד ב
²⁵ "ואע"ג דבמאי דקאמר אין יסורין בלא עון לא איתותב" תוספות שם

because of sin. According to Ralbag and Rav Albo, יסורין may also come to increase reward in the next world.

Rambam quotes the prevalent concept of יסורין של אהבה as “calamities [sent] upon an individual without their having been preceded by a sin, in order that his reward is increased²⁶.” He holds that this opinion is incompatible with the statement of the Torah: “The Rock, perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; a God of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He,”²⁷ and also incompatible with the aforementioned גמרא (apparently because he holds that the statement “no suffering without sins” has not been disproved.) Rambam then explains that while יסורין are punishment, נסיונות in Chumash are models to be followed. They are not for Hashem to know how the צדיק will act, because Hashem knows everything, but rather for the generations to see the actions of the אבות as examples to know what to do, “to let people know what they ought to do or what they must believe²⁸”.

Ramban also presents יסורין as atonement for sins²⁹. His explanation of ניסיון differs from Rambam’s in that the purpose of ניסיון is indeed to increase reward by turning the person’s potential to do good into an act of good³⁰.

As we have seen, according to Ralbag, not all רע that occurs is punishment. An example of this is the סורר ומורה בן. He is חייב מיתה, not because he deserves such harsh punishment, but rather to make him an example to the community of Divine rebuke. So too, יסורין are sent to untangle a person from sins, not as punishment but out of Hashem’s infinite chesed³¹.

²⁶ Guide to the Perplexed Section III: 24

²⁷ Deuteronomy 32:4

²⁸ Guide to the Perplexed III:24

²⁹ See footnote 11

³⁰ “ענין הנסיון הוא לדעתי בעבור היות מעשה האדם רשות מוחלטת בידו, אם ירצה יעשה ואם לא ירצה לא יעשה, יקרא ניסיון מצד המנוסה, אבל המנסה יתברך יצוה בו להוציא הדבר מן הכח אל הפועל להיות לו שכר מעשה טוב, לא שכר לב טוב בלבד. ודע כי השם הצדיק יבחן, כשהוא יודע בצדיק שיעשה רצונו וחפץ להצדיקו יצוה אותו בנסיון ולא יבחן את הרשעים אשר לא ישמעו, והנה כל הנסיונות שבתורה לטובת המנוסה” רמב”ן בראשית כב:א

³¹ “בענין בן סורר ומורה שישפטו אותו למיתה בעבור כי שער באחריתו יהיה נבל ויהיה סבת זה כי הש”י לא יביא אלו היסורין על צד העונש, שאם היה הענין כן היה זה העונש עול בחוק הש”י ר”ל שיעניש החוטא יותר מן הראו לפי מריו אבל יביא אותם על צד התוכחה וההשגחה. ואין זה עול אבל הוא חנינה והטבה המשל שאם רצה אדם לפרש בים עם שיירה מה והיה סוף השיירה ההיא לטבוע בים הנה אם יביא עליו הש”י ייסורים ימנעוהו מלכת בשיירה ההיא, לא יהיה זה עונש אבל הטבה וחנינה ההיא (הערה: ראה מסכת נדה דף לא עמוד א) וכן אם נסתבך אדם בעבירות סבוכה מה והיה מפני זה מוכן להמשך אחריהן, אם ישלח לו הש”י ייסורין, יוסר בהם בהמשך אחר הרע שנשקע בו הנה הוא מבואר כי יהיה לו הטבה וחנינה” רלבג, יהושע ז:א

According to Rav Albo, נסיונות של אהבה של אהבה, who worships out of love. Hashem gives him יסורין to cleanse him of sins, for it is impossible even for a צדיק to not transgress some lower-level sins, such as some sins that do not require a sacrifice to atone for them or laziness in the fulfillment of a מצות עשה. Although there would be no sacrifice brought, and the צדיק is not technically deserving of punishment, nevertheless these actions still have a negative impact and lower his level in עולם הבא. While the צדיק might not have any knowledge that he has done these sins, he still needs atonement for them, which Hashem provides out of love. Because the person doesn't realize he has sinned and therefore can perceive no reason for רע to befall him, this רע is called a נסיון³². Thus, according to Rav Albo, יסורין is נסיון for a lower-level sin, unlike the Rambam and Ramban who view יסורין and נסיון as two distinct categories.

However, Rav Albo also quotes the opinion that there is a form of יסורין/נסיון that comes without any sin, to test if the צדיק worships out of love or out of fear. This is seen in the case of יצו. These יסורין are considered יסורין של אהבה because if the צדיק withstands the test, then people will really see how great a צדיק he is. In addition, if the צדיק accepts the יסורין with joy, he will receive more reward^{33, 34}.

If it has been established that the צדיק has no sin, and he has already passed a test to see if he worships from love or fear, then the יסורין come to increase the צדיק's reward by having the שכר of טוב מעשה טוב, and not just שכר of טובה. Hashem knows how we will act and react to any given situation, but the knowledge of our potential actions still generates less reward than if we actually perform the deeds in reality³⁵. While Ramban gave this explanation only for נסיון, Rav Albo applies it to יסורין.

³² "וביסורין... יבחנו האנשים העובדים את השם, שאם הם עובדים מאהבה יקבלו היסורין בסבר פנים יפות לאהבת השם, ואם הם עובדים מיראת העונש ואהבת השכר יקראו תגר על מידות השם וידברו עליו תועה.", ספר העיקרים מאמר ד:יא

³³ "וביסורין... יבחנו האנשים העובדים את השם, שאם הם עובדים מאהבה יקבלו היסורין בסבר פנים יפות לאהבת השם, ואם הם עובדים מיראת העונש ואהבת השכר יקראו תגר על מידות השם וידברו עליו תועה.", ספר העיקרים מאמר ד:יא

³⁴ "ועל כן כשהש"י מביא יסורין מזה המין על הצדיק נקראין יסורין של אהבה, לפי שעל ידם מתברר לבני אדם האומרים על הצדיקים המצליחים שאינן עובדים מאהבה, שמתוך כך יכירו הכל וידעו שהצדיקים הם עובדים השם מתוך הצער כמו מתוך השלוח... כשהאדם מקבל היסורין בסבר פנים יפות מתרבה שכרו, לפי שכל האנשים מכירים על ידו עד היכן ראוי שתגיע אהבתו של מקום ויבאו לעבוד את השם מאהבה גמורה." אלבו, ספר העיקרים מאמר ד:יג

³⁵ "והן היסורין הבאים על האדם, לא למרק חטא, שאין בידו עון אשר חטא כלל שכבר קבל המירוק הראוי לו, ולא לנסותו שכבר נסה, אבל שמחסד השם ואהבתו אותו מביא עליו יסורין... כדי להרבות שכרו, שיהיה לו שבר מעשה טוב ולא שכר מחשבה טובה בלבד" אלבו, ספר העיקרים מאמר ד:יג

We have seen the various approaches of Rambam, Ramban, Ralbag, and Rav Albo to the issue of השגחה פרטית. Some allow for more מקרה and others allow for less. Some apply Hashgacha to a broader range of Bnei Yisrael, and some apply it to only צדיקים, and then only at certain times. Some Rishonim present direct Hashgacha as solely determined by the merits of the individual involved, and some Rishonim allow for interplay between the individual and people around him. We have seen יסורין presented solely as punishment, and we have also seen יסורין presented as in some way benefiting the person being subjected to them. In general, we have seen two schools of thought: For Rambam and Ramban, the state of Hashgacha presents a very strict correlation between the person's individual merits and his fate. According to Rav Albo and Ralbag, on the other hand, השגחה פרטית is not a mathematical formula, but rather a force in constant tension, pulled between individuals and communities, and taking into account consideration of future events and other philosophical issues, such as בחירה. The approach of the Rishonim that one identifies with, based on these distinctions, will have a profound effect on how one views the world around him. This matters, not only on a theoretical/philosophical level, but also in practical terms, as a motive and impetus to keeping the מצוות and coming closer to Hashem. The distinctions between the various approaches of the Rishonim also highlight their agreement about the existence of Hashgacha and Heavenly reward and punishment as fundamental principles of Jewish belief.

כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה

אורה בסין

רב אליהו דסלר בספרו מכתב מאליהו (חלק ג, עמוד 33) מסביר שיש שני יסודות שונים בחיי האדם- יסוד הכלליות ויסוד הפרטיות. מצד אחד, אדם דואג לעצמו, שכל אירוע בחייו יתנהל כמו שהוא רוצה. ומצד שני, אדם דואג לכל הציבור. זה בלתי אפשרי לחיות רק עם אחד מהיסודות הללו, כי בכך אנחנו לא ממלאים את תפקידנו בעולם.

"שאל טורנוסרופוס הרשע את רבי עקיבא, אם אלוקיכם אוהב עניים הוא, מפני מה אינו מפרנסן? אמר לו כדי שניצולו אנו בהן מדינה של גיהנם" (בבא בתרא דף י' עמוד א'). כוונתו של רבי עקיבא כאן היתה שכשיש אנשים אומללים, זאת התכלית שלנו לטפל בהם ולעזור להם בכל אופן שנוכל. בגלל זה יש לנו מצוה גדולה לתת צדקה לעניים- זה התפקיד שלנו לפרנסם אם הם לא יכולים לפרנס את עצמם.

אפילו אם החברים שלנו אינם עניים, חובה עלינו לאהוב אותם, כמו שכתוב (ויקרא י"ט:ח): "ואהבת לרעך כמוך". מהי המשמעות של הצינוי הזה? ספורנו שם מסביר שעליך ל'אהוב בעד רעך מה שהיית אוהב בעדך אם היית מגיע למקומו". זה מאד קשה לנו להרגיש את השמחה או אפילו את הצער של אחרים, אבל אנחנו צריכים להתנהג כלפיהם באותה צורה שאנחנו רוצים שהם יתנהגו כלפינו. וכמו שאמר רבי עקיבא, "זה כלל גדול בתורה". אם קוראים רק את הגמרא בבבא בתרא והפסוקים בספר ויקרא, אולי נוכל לחשוב שהחייב שלנו הוא לטפל, לעזור, ולאהוב רק את העניים בציבור ואת החברים שלנו. אבל זה לא נכון. כתוב במסכת סנהדרין כ"ז עמוד ב' ושבועות ל"ט עמוד א', "כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה". מהציטוט הזה, אנחנו מבינים שאנחנו אחראים על כל עם ישראל, וכל עם ישראל אחראים עלינו.

אנחנו רואים את זה בפרשת ויגש (מ"ה:ב-ג'), כשיוסף מגלה את עצמו לאחיו. "ויתן את קולו בבכי... ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו אני יוסף... ולא יכלו אחיו לענות אותו כי נבהלו מפניו". רש"י מסביר שהם נבהלו מפניו "מפני הבושה". אז למה יוסף בכה? רב וייס מסביר שיוסף בכה כשהוא התגלה לאחיו, בגלל שהוא ראה שהם התביישו. יוסף סבל הרבה בחייו- שנאת אחיו, זריקתו לתוך הבור, מכירתו למצרים, שהייתו בבית-הסוהר, אבל בכל המקומות האלו לא כתוב שיוסף בכה. רק עכשיו כשאחיו התביישו, הוא בכה. זה מראה לנו עד כמה אכפת לו מאחרים. רב וייס כותב: "כאשר יהודים יבכו עבור יהודים אחרים כמו שיוסף בכה על אחיו, הגאולה תבוא".

עוד דוגמה לזה היא הפסוק המפורסם "רחל מבכה על בניה" (ירמיהו ל"א:ד). גם רחל סבלה הרבה בחייה, היא לא התחתנה עם יעקב בהתחלה, היא לא ילדה במשך שנים רבות, אבל כמו שיוסף בכה על אחים מכלל ישראל, כך גם רחל אמנו בכתה על צרות של אחרים.

הרדב"ז (הלכות ממרים פרק ב' הלכה ד') כותב: "אנו רואין את כל ישראל כאילו הם גוף אחד ואע"פ שגופין מחולקין הם, כיון שנשמותיהם ממקום אחד חוצבו הרי הם כגוף אחד כי הנשמה היא עיקר". במלים אחרות, רב משה צוריאל מסביר "כולם משותפים בנשמה אחת כוללת". הרב סולוביצ'יק מדגיש רעיון הזה במאמר שלו "קול דודי דופק". הוא מביא ארבע

נקודות חיוביות על האחדות של עם ישראל, שהם משותפים במאורעות שונות, סובלים ביחד, יש אותם חובות ואחריות, ויש שיתוף פעולה בעם ישראל.

בנקודה הראשונה שבני ישראל הם כעם משותפים במאורעות, הרב סולוביצ'יק מסביר שזה לא משנה אם אתה עשיר או עני, דתי או חילוני, עדיין יש לך אותו גורל של כל שאר בני ישראל בגלל שאתה יהודי. לדוגמה, אסתר היתה מלכה בבגדי מלכות, ודודה מרדכי היה בלבוש שק. שניהם סבלו אותו סבל באותו מאורע אף על פי שהם היו שונים במראה. כולם היה באותו; אותו דבר בשואה. לא היה הבדל בין היהודים העשירים ליהודים העניים מצב בגלל שהם יהודים. "גורל כלנו אחד הוא" (דברי הגות והערכה, עמוד 35).

בנקודה השנייה, הרב סולוביצ'יק מסביר שכל היהודים בעם ישראל סובלים יחד. הוא אומר: "העם המפוזר והמפורד מתאבל וגם מתנחם יחד. התפילה, הצעקה והנחמה נתנסחו במטבע של לשון רבים. התחוננים הבוקעים ממעמקי-הייסורים אינם מוגבלים לסבלו ולצרתו של היחיד הנאנק. כוללים המה את צרכי הציבור כולו". לדוגמה, כשאנחנו מתפללים להקב"ה, אנחנו לא מתפללים רק על עצמנו, אלא מתפללים גם לטובת כל עם ישראל. אנחנו אומרים "רפאנו", "שמע קולנו" וכו', להראות שאכפת לנו על טובת כלל ישראל. אותו דבר, כשמישהו נמצא באבילות, האנשים שבאים לנחם אותו אומרים "המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים", שזה כולל את כל העם ביחד. (דברי הגות והערכה, עמוד 35).

בנקודה השלישית, אנחנו רואים שיש לכל יהודי בעם ישראל אותם חובות ואותה אחריות. כשה' מצפה מאיש אחד משהו, כל העם צריך לפעול לפי זה גם כן בעד הזולת. לדוגמה, בספר במדבר (טז:כב) כתוב: "א-ל אלקי הרוחות לכל בשר, האיש אחד יחטא ועל כל העדה תקצוף?" משה התפלל תפילה זו כשה' חשב להשמיד את כל העדה בענין קורח. אך, למעשה, בדרך כלל כשאישה אחת חוטא, ה' כועס על כל העם. ועוד דבר, יחיד יכול לברך ברכה ולהוציא את חברו ידי חובתו. "פעולת היחיד נזקפת על חשבון הרבים. כל עוול הנעשה על ידו מכתים את שם ישראל בעולם. אחראי הוא היחיד לא רק למצפונו הפרטי, אלא גם למצפון חטא – המיט חרפה; הכללי של האומה. נהג כשורה – קידש שם האומה ושם אלקי ישראל על האומה וחילל שם אלקיה" (דברי הגות והערכה, עמוד 38).

בנקודה האחרונה, הרב סולוביצ'יק מסביר לנו שיש לכל יהודי גם שיתוף-פעולה. לדוגמה, במצות צדקה וגמילות חסדים, ה' מצווה אותנו לדאוג לאחרים בעמנו, שאם חסר להם כסף או כוח, אנחנו צריכים לעזור להם בכל כוחנו. הרמב"ם (הלכות מתנות עניים פרק י' הלכה ב') כתוב: "וכל ישראל והנלוה אליהם כאחים הם, שנאמר בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם, ואם לא ירחם האח על האח, מי ירחם עליו? ולמי עניי ישראל נושאים עיניהם, הלעכר"ם ששונאים אותם ורודפים אחריהם? הא אין עיניהם תלויות אלא לאחיהם". זה מאד מעניין שבתורה, כשה' מצווה אותנו לדאוג לכל האחרים בעם ישראל, הכתוב לא מתייחס לאחרים בעם ישראל כאל "רע", אלא כאל "אח", כמו שכתוב בספר ויקרא (פרק כה פסוק לה): וכי ימוך אחיך ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמך". ברור שזה אחריותנו לעזור לנזקקים בעמנו ולדאוג להם כאחים (דברי הגות והערכה, עמוד 38).

לדעתי, זוהי נחמה גדולה שכולם בעם ישראל דואגים ומטפלים אחד בשני. לפעמים אדם יכול להרגיש בודד ועזוב אבל אנחנו רואים מהרבה מקורות בתנ"ך ובהיסטוריה שלנו שאנחנו באמת לא בודדים אף פעם ש"כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה". אז, כמו ששתיים עשרה אבנים שמתחת לראשו של יעקב התאחדו והיו לאבן אחת, כך אנחנו עם בני נתייחד להיות נשמה אחת.

were the first to sin with פסל מיכה. When ה' arranged the order of the traveling of the מחנות, He established for ה' the place the שבט itself had already chosen.

The opposite case is true with שבט יהודה. בני יהודה traveled in the front, as it says (ב:ט): "ראשונה יסעו". In פסוק ג we are informed that "ונשיא לבני יהודה נחשון בן עמינדב". According to שמות (שמות רבה) משה's command, entered the water and the water reached his neck. He who chose to lead בני ישראל by jumping in the sea first was chosen by ה' to lead בני ישראל as they travelled through the מדבר.

We say ה' writes and seals on גזר דינינו, although truthfully ה' really writes what we have written for ourselves through our actions. As the (שבת קד.) גמרא says: "בא ליטמא פותחין לו בא ליטהר מסייעים אותו". When one attempts to sully himself with sin, ה' opens the way for him to do so. When one decides to "purify" himself through תורה and מצוות, ה' helps him. The מפרשים bring this concept to explain various incidents throughout תנ"ך.

Hashem says to משה, "שלח לך אנשים ויתורו את ארץ כנען", "Send out men for yourself to explore the land of כנען". גור אריה explains that בני ישראל consulted with ה' to know whether or not he should listen to בני ישראל's request to send men to spy out ארץ ישראל. ה' answered, "שלח לך". Based on (שבת קד.) גמרא, גור אריה explains that even though ה' knew that בני ישראל were asking to send spies due to their lack of belief in G-d, nevertheless He allowed משה to send them and create the opening and potential for sin.

אבימלך quotes the above גמרא as well. After דבר (בראשית כ:ו) Hashem appeared to him in a dream and said: "גם אנכי ידעתי כי", "I, too, knew that it was in the innocence of your heart that you did this, and I, too, prevented you from sinning against Me; that is why I did not permit you to touch her". The גמרא explains that since אבימלך did not know שרה was אברהם's wife and truly acted in innocence, ה' helped him retain his innocence. This is another instance of ה' helping us through our actions.

This idea that it is we who often decide our own fates by our actions is an idea of which one should constantly be aware. When one chooses to "hang out" with a certain group of friends, it is not a baseless decree from ה' that may cause him to be involved in activities which are similar to his friends' activities. He chooses the direction and path his life takes. One must always consider the consequences of his actions.

On a more positive note, it's encouraging to know that "הבא ליטהר" ה' is just looking for the littlest effort on our part and He

will help us go the rest of the way. One should never feel that there are too many מצוות or that some are just too hard to keep, because ה' is always willing to lend a hand. He only requires us to make the first move.

כיצד יש להתייחס לאלו שחולקים על דרכי?

רבקה אברמוביץ

הגמרא (ברכות נח/א) פוסקת שצריכים לברך "ברוך חכם הרזים" כשרואה אסיפה גדולה של יהודים. רש"י מפרש שכוונת הגמרא לאסיפה של 600,000 יהודים. המהרש"א (שם) מסביר שהמספר 600,000 מסמל את כלל כל הדעות. התורה ניתנה ל-600,000 אנשים כדי שהתורה תכלול בה כל דעה וחכמה. לכן כל מה שאדם מחדש בדורו, מסיני הוא, לפי שזה הדבר כבר היה בדעת אחד מאותן 600,000 שהיו בסיני.

שלמה המלך כותב במשלי (יד:ב): "הולך בישרו ירא ה', ונלוז דרכיו בזהה". כתוב "ישר" ולא "ישר". למדנו מזה שכל אחד צריך למצוא את הדרך הישר בשבילו (ובתנאי שיהיה על פי ההלכה), ואין דרך אחת לכולנו. ברור שיהיה הרבה דעות שונות בין אחד לשני. כל אחד צריך לדעת שיש הרבה מיני דרכים ורעיונות איך לנהוג בחיינו.

המהר"ל בגבורות ה' (פרק מ"ו) אומר שיש משמעות לעונות השנה שבהן נמצאים המועדים וימי התענית שלנו. המועדים, פסח וסוכות, נמצאים בזמנים בשנה שאורך הימים והלילות כמעט שווים. זה מסמל איזון בין שני כוחות, וזהו סימן טוב ליהודים. להיפך, ימי היום, עשרה בטבת ותשעה באב, נמצאים באמצע הקיץ ובאמצע החורף. בעונות האלו, הימים ולילות אינם שווים. זה מסמל זמן שאין איזון בין שני כוחות, וזה מסוכן ליהודים. העם היהודי צריך איזון בין כל הכוחות כדי להתקיים.

אנחנו רואים את חשיבות של האיזון בדברי זכריה (ח:ט): "צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמעדים טובים, והאמת והשלום אהבו". מה פירושו של "אמת ושלום"?

כתוב בשולחן ערוך (סימן פט סעיף ג) ששלום הוא אחד מהשמות של הקב"ה. למה שלום נבחר להיות שם של ה' ולא מדות אחרות כמו רחמים או חן?

אע"פ שמדות אלו של רחמים וחסד, הן חשובות, הן מתארות רק כוח אחד. לעומת זאת, שלום מסמל את האיזון בין שני הכוחות המנוגדים. המלה עצמה מרמזת למצב דו-צדדי. יש שלום כשיש פשרה בין שני אנשים, קבוצות, רעיונות, וכו'. וכך ה' פועל. הוא גורם לכך שקבוצות בעלות כוחות שונים, פועלים יחד מתוך שתופי פעולה ויוצרים איזון. ניתן לראות את האיזון הזה בכל אופני החיים. לדוגמה, כוחות החשמל ומערכת השמש רק יכולים לפעול בגלל כוחות מנוגדים. גם יש צורך שיהיה איזון במחשבות, ברגשות וברוחניות של האדם. לדוגמה, האדם צריך למצוא את האיזון הנכון בין ההשתדלות לבין אמונתו בה'.

לכן, ה' יצר את העם היהודי עם כוחות מנוגדים בתוכו. זהו מצב טבעי שיהיו דעות רבות והשקפות שונות ביחס לתורה וליהדות.

אנחנו צריכים להשיג איזון. אנו חייבים לעשות שלום ולגרום לכך שכל הצדדים השונים יעבדו יחד מתוך שיתופי פעולה. על ידי זה, נוכל לבטל את ימי הצום ולהפוך את הזמנים הקשים שלנו לזמני שמחה. דבר זה אינו קל, אבל הוא אפשרי.

התוספתא (יבמות פרק א תוספתא ג) מזכיר רעיון זה. איך בית הלל ובית שמאי היו יכולים לחיות ביחד? הם חלקו זה על זה בהרבה הלכות חשובות מאוד, כגון ממזרות, כשרות בכל -- וטומאה. הדעות שלהם היו כל כך שונות שהיה נראה שלחיות ביחד הוא בלתי אפשרי. אופן, הם התגברו על המחלוקת ומצאו איזון ביניהם. לדוגמה, אנשי בית הלל ובית שמאי בדקו שלא יהיו בעיות של ממזרות ואז הם הצליחו להתחתן זה עם זה. הם גם אכלו ביחד, אבל רק דבר היה יותר קל אילו בית שמאי ובית הלל היו נפרדים -- אוכל ששניהם הסכימו שהיה כשר. זה מזה, כדי למנוע מחלוקת ומתיחות. אך הם הבינו שחשוב מאד לעבוד ביחד ולמצוא את האיזון ביניהם.

אנו רואים את הרעיון הזה בהרבה חוויות של החיים, במקרים גדולים וגם קטנים. למדתי את זאת בעצמי. בתחילת השנה היתה לי חברותא בגמרא. היינו חברות קרובות וחשבנו שנצליח ללמוד טוב ביחד. החברותא היתה טובה כי כל אחת נתנה לשניה רעיונות בלימודים שלא יכולנו למצוא לבד. אך אחרי זמן מה היה ברור שהיתה לנו בעיה. היו לנו סגנונות שונים של לימודים. רציתי ללמוד מהר ולסיים הרבה סוגיות. לעומת זאת, החברותא שלי רצתה ללמוד לאט ולהבין כל מלה ומלה בעיון. לא היתה אפשרות למצוא חברותות אחרות, ולמרות זאת נפרדנו זו מזו ולמדנו לבד. מיד ראינו שזאת לא היתה החלטה טובה. כשלמדנו לבד, לא הספקנו להבין את התוכן היטב. החלטנו ללמוד שוב ביחד, וידענו מה עלינו לעשות. למדנו בקצב יותר איטי ממה שרציתי, ויותר מהר ממה שהיא רצתה. זה לא היה כל כך קל בהתחלה, אבל ידענו שאנחנו צריכות למצוא את האיזון כדי ללמוד ביחד.

בתנאים של זמנינו, לא יתכן שלא יהיו כוחות מנוגדים בעם ישראל. כדי שנצליח לפתור את הבעיות הגדולות, אנו צריכים קודם כל לפתור את הבעיות האישיות. אם אני משתדלת להעריך את אלו שחולקים על דרכי, לפחות להקשיב לדעותיהם, זה ישפיע עליהם ג'כ ותהיה אפשרות שנגרום איזון בין קבוצות השונות.

Finding Yourself

Jeana Beneson

הוא (הלל) היה אומר: אם אין אני לי מי לי? וכשאני לעצמי מה אני? ואם לא עכשיו אמתי?
(אבות א:ד)

Who am I? What is my purpose? These are questions that surface in man's mind and heart, and in Judaism the same questions arise. To the secular world, the answer to these questions lies in the Self. The individual is seen through a self-involved prism: What about me? How do I feel? What do I want? Others are only secondary to the needs of one's own ego. While Judaism clearly values the self, it also focuses on others, the כלל. Judaism's dual approach to life helps man find meaning and direction. Judaism helps man create himself. This פרקי אבות in משנה can be interpreted on many levels and through the eyes of many commentaries, each adding a missing piece to the puzzle of how man should look at the meaning of life and how man should regard his own purpose in the world.

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" Rashi explains that if man does not keep the מצוות, who will keep them for him? Man can only depend on himself. However, when man does get up to do the מצוות, then "Who am I?". He is unable to do the מצוות like he should. It's man's goal and struggle to keep the מצוות, to get up and serve Hashem. No one will do them for him and "if not now, when?" Man only has now to live. This world is the time to do the מצוות and in עולם הבא one no longer has the ability to do more מצוות, get more זכויות, and get closer to Hashem. Only when man is alive can he fulfill these goals and fulfill his ultimate purpose which is the world to come. מסילת ישרים (פרק א) explains that this world is preparation for the world to come. "העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדור", this world is like a hallway that leads to the destination, to עולם הבא. In addition, "היום לעשותם ומחר לקבל שכרם", do today, so tomorrow one can get the reward. Man must do the מצוות in this world, for he only has now, this world, to do the מצוות to be able to reap the reward and be close to Hashem in the world to come. Similarly, "מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל בשבת". Man must work and prepare for Shabbat, for the world to come, in order to be able to eat and rest on Shabbat, in עולם הבא. Man only has

now for preparation, and it is the מצוות man does in this world that set his station for the next world. Because after death, man's station is sealed; "if not now, when?"

While Rashi focuses on מצוות, Rambam approaches this משנה from the perspective of מדות. Rambam adds yet another missing puzzle piece to the משנה and to the search of the self. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me" connotes man's job to awaken his soul, for no one will do it for him. Rambam states that man needs to find the inspiration and the light from within to wake up and serve Hashem. (ה:ב) שיר השירים Tells us: "אני ישנה ולבי ער, קול דודי דופק". Hashem is knocking and ישראל עם must wake herself up and go to Him. After man awakens his soul, "כשאני לעצמי" then "מה אני?", what did man do with right intentions? How many of his actions were truly "good"? Man is basically saying who am I? What am I really accomplishing? Am I going in the right direction? (פרק ג) מסילת ישרים explains that man must delve and consider what is truly good and what is truly evil and then he must judge his actions and see in to which category they fall. This is what leads to the trait of זהירות, watchfulness. It is up to man to look at his actions and change his ways, and if he does not do this now, then when will he? Rambam explains that man needs to begin to change now before he gets old. When man gets old it becomes harder to change and to turn from his set ways. One's traits, as the years go by, become too strong and engraved in one's personality.

"חנק לנער על פי דרכו, גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה" it states: משלי (כב:ו) In חובת התלמידים (הקדמת המחבר) explains that it is imperative for man to teach the person as a youth. "תחנכו, אל קרבו תחדור, ואת קדושת ישראל אשר בו בהעלם, תגלה, ורק אז גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה" If one does not receive חינוך while he is young, then when? He will become too old to change. In the introduction to אורחות צדיקים, the author clarifies the idea with a משל. A silver tray is buried in the ground and acquires a thick tarnish over time. This silver then becomes very difficult to polish for the tarnish has stained the tray. This is like a man leading a defective life. The longer he is under the influence of bad ways, just like the longer the silver is buried, the harder it will be for the man to fix himself and regain his luster. It's harder for an older person who is already set in his ways to polish his mind and distinguish anew between good and evil, pure and impure. He is no longer in the position to be able to reflect on "מה אני". Rather, while he is still young, man needs to search his ways, his middot, and find the right path. "וכשאני לעצמי מה אני?" After searching his actions, he must inspect if they are good or evil, pure or impure?

רבינו בחיי (פרקי אבות) also explains, like Rambam, that man must fix himself while he is still young. However, he adds that when man gets

old, his Teshuva can no longer be complete. The יצר is not as strong and the desire for sinning is less. (הלכות תשובה פרק ב הלכה א) explains this further, saying that complete תשובה exists only after man committed a sin and finds himself in the same circumstance, with the same ability, and with the same desire to act wrongfully. If, with all these conditions, he nevertheless does not sin again, then he has done תשובה גמורה. When man gets old these factors may no longer be able to exist, and although any תשובה is accepted, man won't be able to do complete תשובה. Therefore, "If not now, when?"

משנה רבינו יונה provides a different outlook to this משנה. When man gets up, when he has awakened his soul to do the work of Hashem, then "what am I, really"? Man does not do even one one thousandth of what he should be doing, of what Hashem wants him to do. It is similar to a king that gives his servants a field and demands that they produce 30 כור for the year. At the end of the year, after the servants worked and worked, the field only produced 5 כור. When the king asks the servants why they did not accomplish their job, they explain that the field was deficient and that no matter how much they worked they would never be able to finish what was commanded of them. Similarly, Hashem gave man the evil inclination, so that even when man strives for מצוות, he can only do a little of what Hashem really wants. Because 5 כור is better than 30 כור of the field, man must still try and maximize his effort. "When I am for myself, who am I?" Even when man works hard, he still must realize, "who am I really?", for he has accomplished so little of what is wanted from him. However, "if not now, when?" Man can't say that today he will live by his own will and do what he pleases and tomorrow he will fix himself. Not only does man not know what the next day will bring, but the spirituality that man could have reached on that day is forever lost. Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky, in *Growing Each Day*, explains that if man uses the excuse that he will accomplish and do tomorrow then he is losing out on the "now", "the present". What man can accomplish at a certain moment might no longer exist in the future. Man only lives in the present once, and once the present is lost, man no longer has that exact opportunity to grow and to accomplish what he could have achieved at that moment. Man has thereby lost an opportunity he can never retrieve.

While the commentaries describe this משנה according to its simple and practical meaning, it can be seen in a more conceptual light as well. Rabbi Twersky in *Growing Each Day* explains that many people read "If I am not for myself, who will be for me" as a selfish proclamation, and that הלל is advocating selfishness as a positive trait. However, this is not the

case. The Kotzker Rebbe said “If I am I because I am I and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you, but if I am I because you are you and you are you because I am I, then I am not and you are not.” It is through these eyes that one must read this משנה. Every person has his own identity, but many times man finds himself in a position where he becomes molded and manipulated by others. This susceptible man lacks his own existence because he is always becoming what others will him to be rather than forming his own essence. It is these people who let others determine their being and life that usually do not assume responsibility for their actions. One may hear such a man claim, “he made me do it”. What הלל and the Rebbe of Kotzk are saying is that a person must take responsibility for his actions. “אם אין אני לי מי לי?”. Each individual must decide what is expected of him and what he sees as his purpose in life. No one can tell man who he really is except for the individual himself.

Rabbi Akiva Tatz sheds an even stronger light on this משנה by expanding Rabbi Twersky’s idea. In *The Thinking Jewish Teenager’s Guide to Life* (chapter four), Rabbi Tatz explains how every man is unique and it is up to man to discover his personal uniqueness in which he will be able to achieve his life’s purpose. “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?”

No one can fulfill man’s individual role, his specific function in the world; this job is solely up to each individual. However, at the same time, “If I am for myself, who am I?” Man must be part of a group, for he is not the center of the world. He therefore must combine two opposing existences—being unique while being part of a greater whole. “I fit in perfectly so that I become indistinguishable as an individual, and yet in so doing my individuality swells to a proportion of the universe. I am nothing, yet I am everything.” רב בונם מפשיסחא “ואנכי אפר ועפר” (בראשית יח:כז) (גמרא ברכות דף ו/ב) “בשבילי נברא העולם” (משל). In a machine every piece is vital for the machine to work properly. Alone, a nail may not be significant; however, if the machine is lacking the nail, the machine may fall apart. This is the same with man. His individual uniqueness becomes alive in the context of the world, in relation to others. Man must discover his uniqueness and find his particular task: What essential part of the world is his to build? However, concurrently, man must see the importance of the group and the immaturity that lies at stepping out of line in order to experience his own uniqueness. “Immaturity cannot see the beauty in yielding the self in order to actualize the self; in truth, however, that is the only way to genuine selfhood.” This depicts a two pronged approach to man’s

station and outlook on life that the משנה beautifully articulates. "אם אין אני" "אם אין אני", man must find his uniqueness, his goal, his purpose in the world, but also "אם אני לעצמי מה אני?", man is part of a greater world and must cede his distinctiveness to the group in order to actualize his true potential.

Evidently, this משנה yields many significant perspectives to man's purpose in the world. Looking at life through the glasses of the משנה helps each individual find his place and purpose. If man won't get up to serve Hashem, no one can do it for him. If man won't awaken his soul, no one will do it for him. When doing the right thing, is it truly right? When going in the way of Hashem, how much is one fulfilling of what Hashem really wants? If man doesn't change now, will he ever be able to get himself on the right path? Man only lives once, how is he spending his time? These questions and issues flood man's mind and heart and this Mishna fits all these confusions and uncertainties together into a cohesive puzzle. Rabbi Twersky explains the importance of "finding yourself," but how does one accomplish such an abstract concept? Who is the real You? The answer to this question lies in the idea of "creating yourself." Through creating oneself, man will come to find himself. Doing the מצוות, serving Hashem, and being an essential part of a bigger picture, "אם אין אני לי מי לי וכשאני לעצמי מה אני" is the way for man to create his essence. This is man's goal, his purpose, his uniqueness, and it is up to man to constantly be creating and finding himself. "And if not now, when?"

נסיונות

Gabby Soep

Often, the hardest part of our handling the various נסיונות that we face is that we aren't always aware that they are really נסיונות, tests from Hashem. For example, imagine that one were to receive the following letter in the mail: "On Friday morning, you are going to be tested in the supermarket. Someone is going to knock you down with a shopping cart. Then that person will try to apologize. Now, if you smile and forgive them, you will receive a very special reward, but if you get angry, you will be very badly punished."

If one were to receive such a letter, he would be ready and waiting on Friday morning, and would welcome the person who knocked him down. He would be GLAD to be knocked down, get up with a big smile on his face, and pass this "test" with flying colors. If only we would realize that many events in our lives are these kinds of tests. (<http://members.aol.com/gishmak613>)

Another aspect of nisyonot is that it's very hard to understand how the situation one is in is really for his benefit. (בראשית רבה (נה:ב).) says that when a flax maker hits the flax, he hits it hard because it will improve it. Similarly, Hashem tests the צדיקים since He knows that it will help improve them.

If Hashem knows our capabilities, then why does He test us? The Ramban

(בראשית כב:א) explains that the test helps us actualize our potential. The test brings out our inner strengths that would have remained dormant within us. Hashem then rewards us not only for our good heart, but for our actions, too.

The (מסילת ישירים) רמח"ל states that Hashem puts man in certain circumstances where many factors can distance him from Hashem. However, if he overcomes these obstacles, then these same obstacles can bring him closer to the Divine. It can even exalt him to a level where Hashem's name can be attached to his. What does רמח"ל mean?

The גמרא סנהדרין (דף קז/א) relates that David asked G-d: "Hashem, why do we say Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak and Elokei Yaakov, but not Elokei David?" David asked out of humility to know where his service of Hashem fell short. Hashem answered: "They were tested by me, and you

were not.” Immediately, David requested that Hashem test him. Hashem acquiesced and tested David with Batsheva.

In the book *Living Inspired*, Rabbi Akiva Tatz explains that when someone passes a test from Hashem, he is acting beyond the level of normal, expected human behavior, and when this happens, Hashem is revealed. The person is expressing a connection with Hashem, and can therefore have his name attached to Hashem just like our אבות, Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov.

The quintessential test in Tanach is the עקידה. This was the most significant test of Avraham’s life, and the zechut of the עקידה continues to protect our people. This test showed the readiness of Avraham to carry out Hashem’s will, even to the extent of giving up his only son, who he loved so much, as Hashem said: “You did not withhold your only son from me” (בראשית כב:יב).

The עקידה seemed to go against Avraham’s principles and morals. He taught people that to sacrifice one’s child to an idol was wrong, yet, he was now commanded to do the same thing for Hashem. Avraham didn’t even question G-d. Rather, he rose early to fulfill Hashem’s commandment (בראשית כב:ג).

Rav Eliyahu Dessler (191 - 190 עמודים ב, חלק ב, מכתב מאליהו, חלק ב, עמודים 190 - 191) explains that Avraham was afraid that if he were to ask G-d to clear up his confusion, he would become slightly biased by his great love for Yitzchak, and show the smallest element of opposition to G-d’s commandment. This is the deeper meaning of the words: “Now I know that you fear G-d and you did not withhold your only son from me” (בראשית כב:יב). Avraham’s love for his son and his normal human emotions had not the slightest power over him. This was the clearest sign of his great ability to fear and serve Hashem.

After this test, Avraham davened to Hashem that the power to break one’s personal will for the service of G-d would remain with his children throughout the generations. This is why he called the place ‘ה” (בראשית כב:יז) יראה”. Avraham prayed that Hashem would see the spark of spiritual power in every Jew’s heart and enable each individual to overcome his human instincts, his tests, in pursuit of a higher spiritual goal and greater connection with G-d. Due to Avraham’s merit, Hashem answered his prayer. We have it within us to not only withstand any נסיון, but to use it as an opportunity for spiritual growth.

Stem Cell Research

Talya Adler

בן בג בג אומר, הפך בה והפך בה, דכלא בה, ובה תחזי ... (מסכת אבות פרק ה משנה כב)

Ben Bag Bag said: Delve in it [the Torah] and continue to delve in it [the Torah] for everything is in it; look deeply into it ... The Torah deals with everything. What does it say about stem cell research?

To appreciate what the Torah has to say about stem cell research, one must first clarify what stem cells are. Stem cells are unspecialized cells that proliferate, or renew themselves for a long time. They can become specialized through a process called differentiation. Through this process the stem cells can, in theory, become any type of cell. There are two types of stem cells: embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells.

Embryonic stem cells are found in the blastocyst, a three to five day old embryo. The stem cells can be obtained from eggs that are fertilized through in vitro fertilization and are donated to research. Stem cells are not obtained from eggs fertilized in a woman's body. Once obtained, the stem cells are grown in cell cultures in a Petri dish. An embryonic stem cell line is created when stem cells proliferate for six or more months without differentiating. When stem cells proliferate without differentiating they are called pluripotent. Under certain controlled circumstances the stem cells can remain pluripotent unless the cells become clumped together.

Adult stem cells are found in the bone marrow, in muscle tissue, and in brain tissue. The unspecialized cells, the stem cells, are found among the specialized or differentiated cells in the three places mentioned above. Their function is to maintain and repair the tissues in which they are found. The origin of adult stem cells is unknown and there are very few stem cells per tissue. Adult stem cells don't divide until they are activated by disease or injury. For this reason, they generally generate the cell types of the tissues in which they are found. However, there is a phenomenon known as plasticity in which the adult stem cells become a completely different tissue.

Stem cell research has the potential to open many doors in the world of science. However, in the process of the research, the embryo is destroyed. The main halachic question is whether or not one can destroy

the embryos. To deal with this issue, the rabbis look at the הלכות of abortion and in vitro fertilization.

We know that abortions are only permitted if the baby is a danger to the mother (אהלות פרק ז משנה ו). This seems to imply that the fetus is alive because aborting the pregnancy will “kill” the fetus. However, until the 40th day after conception, the embryo is considered to be merely water. A בת כהן can eat from the תרומה if she was pregnant for less than 40 days (גמרא יבמות דף סט/ב). Also, a woman who was pregnant for less than 40 days does not receive טומאת לידה and she does not become טמא from being in contact with a מת (ז משנה ז). The embryos used for stem cell research are three to five days old. That is well under the 40 day point. There is also a Halachic concept that something that is so small that it can only be seen through a microscope or a magnifying glass is considered as if it does not exist. At three to five days the embryo cannot be seen by the naked eye. However, because a fetus has the potential to become a full human being, it is considered to exist in the realm of הלכה (See, for example, פרק לו סעיף ב, שמיירת שבת כהלכתה חלק א פרק לו סעיף ב).

According to the above information, one can understand why it is forbidden to destroy the fetuses because they have the potential for life. However, the embryos used in stem cell research are embryos that will not become human beings. They are either surplus embryos from in vitro fertilization that are not going to be saved for later use and will be destroyed, or they are embryos that do not have the potential for life. If the embryo is going to be destroyed anyway, or it can't possibly survive since it will not be implanted, why can research not be done? There is no life; there is not even the potential for life. Why then should there be any problem killing the embryonic stem cells?

The bottom line is that doing research on adult stem cells is fine, but doing research on embryonic stem cells is more problematic. According to some פוסקים, such as Rabbi J. David Bleich, it is considered killing the embryo. There is debate among Jewish scholars over whether the soul enters the embryo at the moment of fertilization or forty days later. Rabbi Bleich contends that this happens at the moment of conception and therefore there is a problem to kill the embryo. However, according to Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler and as can be deduced from the words of Rabbi Sholom Yosef Eliashiv and Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, it appears that research can be done. The reason for allowing the research is because the embryo is within the first 40 days after conception and because it was never implanted in the uterus. I.e. it never could become a human being.

Sources

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2. Tradition 36:2; "Stem Cell Research" by J. David Bleich;
pg. 56
3. jlaw.com
4. jewsforlife.org

For Every Man There is a Different Path

Michal Lyons

I can see myself as a small child at the airport, looking around, entranced and enraptured at scenes of joyful reunion and tearful goodbyes. I gazed at people waiting at the arrivals gate and imagined who they were waiting for, whom they had left at home and where their family or friends had been. I pictured an airplane winding its way home with hundreds of people on board and thought about how all their paths were crossing at this very moment. I fancied how in the near future, as soon as they stepped off the plane, these people would all continue travelling in different directions all across the country. The purposes of their trips were all very different. Some were travelling for business, some for family smachot and some for other reasons.

I would always conclude my speculations with the same thought. People are so different! And they are so fascinating as a result!

As I grew up I realized that Hashem had in fact created us to be this way.

on רש"י (בראשית א:כז), "ויברא אלוקים את האדם", "And G-d created man" emphasizes that each and every man is created unique and distinct. All creations, apart from man, were formed with the word "ויאמר". Man, however, merited the terminology "ויברא". This, רש"י explains, sets man apart. All creatures were fashioned with a Divine decree, a "word", but each man is molded with "ידיים", the Hands of G-d. Each and every one of us has the print of Hashem's "Hand" on us. He formed us, some with brown eyes and some with blue eyes, some with short noses and some with long ones, some tall and some short, some with dark skin and some light. Each man is created differently; no two men are alike.

If Hashem cared so intensely about our physical forms being different, it stands to reason that our spiritual forms were also created to be absolutely different one from another.

The Gemara (ברכות דף נ"ח עמוד א) discusses this very point. הרואה אוכלוסי ישראל אומר ברוך חכם הרזים, שאין דעתם דומה זה לזה, ואין פרצופיהן דומים זה לזה, if one sees 600,000 or more Jews, he recites "Blessed be G-d who knows what each and every person is thinking" even though they do not look alike or think in a similar way. This teaches us that just like our

faces and external forms are dissimilar, so too our minds and internal cores are not alike. We all work and function differently than each other.

And what a blessing this is! Hashem created us to think differently, work differently, have different ideals and values and, most of all, to have an inherent uniqueness about us that no one else possesses. It is the interplay between all of our different hearts, minds and thoughts that allows the functioning of a society where each person busies and satisfies himself with a different job, creates in a different field, and takes care of a different task for the good of the whole.

The fundamental principle here is that humans were created to be diverse in order for the world to run its course and complete its mission, and for us to have the ability to be satisfied with who we are and that which we possess.

רמב"ן builds on this idea in his commentary on בריאת העולם. He says that the phrase "ומלאו את הארץ" (בראשית א:כח) conveys to us the idea that man is supposed to be diverse and fill the universe, live in different places and build up different societies according to his personality and values.

Our אבות lived by this concept. When יעקב אבינו was on his deathbed, and distributed ברכות to his sons, each שבט received an individual and unique blessing, according to his character strengths and weaknesses. For example, in יהודה, בראשית פרק מט פסוק ח is told that he will rule over his brothers because of his qualities of leadership and גבורה.

The fact that our nation has שבטים is a fascinating phenomenon. Hashem could have swiftly created a nation through the אבות; יצחק, אברהם; אבות. However, He saw fit to create twelve tribes for ישראל, thus illustrating for us the important idea that בני ישראל must use the essence of their individuality to build a collective nation.

A beautiful and poignant portrayal of this idea is the heartwarming relationship between זבולון and יששכר. One learned תורה day and night, while the other was a sea-merchant. The businessman supported the scholar, and in turn received half of his portion of עולם הבא (פרק רש"י דברים פרק) (לג פסוק יח). This is how Bnei Yisrael works best, with each individual contributing that which his נשמה dictates to him and the totality of our qualities and skills form a holy and fulfilled society.

Every single one of our souls has a different makeup. Our uniquely special נשמות cause us to appreciate different pleasures, direct us towards achieving different goals and guide us to different sources of inspiration. This is all as it should be!

This theme repeats itself over and over again throughout תורה "אלו ואלו דברי אלוקים" and שבכתב. Indeed, phrases such as "אלו ואלו דברי אלוקים" (עירובין דף י"ג) "חיים", interpreted to mean that there are many ways to determine the living truth of Hashem's words, and "שבעים פנים לתורה", there are seventy ways to interpret each portion of the תורה, testify to this point.

שלמה המלך also emphasizes this idea that there are different paths and ways to connect to Hashem when he advises us (משלי כ"ו): "חנך לנער אל פי דרכו", "educate the child according to his way". From here we see that each one of us leans towards a different method of instruction and to a different path of spiritual growth. In our own personal quest for Hashem and our desire to connect and relate to Him. This is the approach Hashem wants us to take. By blessing us with different physical forms, minds, and souls, Hashem, in essence, charts for us individual routes as we attempt to achieve our שלימות in this world. It is for this reason that each person feels comfortable with a different Rav, each family feels at home in a different kind of community, and each girl feels a different seminary best caters to her needs for growth.

There is however a fundamental point that cannot be overlooked. All ways and paths to Hashem are equally valid only as long as they are within the boundaries and sanctions of Halacha. We are reminded of this key factor by a beautiful explanation on a verse in תרומה (כ"ג): that describes the יריעות המשכן, the curtains of the משכן. The יריעות were ten individual curtains sewn together, bound and connected by golden rings. Why is there a need for ten curtains? Why didn't Hashem simply command that the Jews make one longer curtain that has the breadth of the ten curtains?

Hashem is teaching all of us an important lesson. Each individual Jew, represented by each curtain, must link his עבודת ה' to the central connecting golden rings, namely Hashem's תורה and Halacha. Then his עבודת ה' will be as valued and as special as that of the Jew next to him. Also, the curtains needed to be bound inextricably to each other to show the power of a united nation that doesn't allow its differences to prevent it from uniting to serve a common and profound purpose and goal.

The פסוק in תהלים (כה:י) states: "כל ארחות ה' חסד ואמת", "All the ways of G-d are kindness and truth". This can be interpreted as: "Your unique way of relating to G-d is truth, if indeed it is a G-dly way."

We must learn to appreciate and love each of our fellow Jews' distinctiveness. May we all direct this uniqueness of our hearts, souls

and talents to the service of G-d and thus fulfill our mission as an עם
סגולה, a chosen nation.

Faculty Articles

Sensitivities

Rabbi Eliezer Lerner

Towards the end of Sefer Bamidbar (35:14), Bnei Yisrael are commanded to establish six cities of refuge: three on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, and three in Eretz Canaan. This even split, however, seems to be unbalanced. After all, only two and one half tribes lived in עבר הירדן, while nine and one half tribes resided west of the Jordan.

The Gemara Makkot (9b-10a) addresses this issue. Divine Providence was aware that in the future there would be many murderers among the residents of Gilad on the Eastern Bank, which required, therefore a greater percentage of the ערי מקלט.

This response, however, does not appear to resolve our problem. After all, the cities of refuge were designed to accommodate only those who were guilty of unintentional manslaughter, not the intentional murderers of Gilad!

Rav Pam ז"ל explains this Gemara based on the commentary of the Maharal in Gur Aryeh. When a person lives in a society that has the utmost regard for the value of human life, he too will tend to adopt this attitude. As a natural consequence, the person will be certain to take the necessary steps to ensure that his actions will not bring harm to others. However, in a society where murder is commonplace, even the average law-abiding citizen will not value human life to the extent that he should. The resulting apathy leads to negligence, which in turn will increase the number of רוצחים בשוגג.

We see how important it is for a person to strive to live in a society that has a positive attitude towards the moral values he adheres to. And it is also imperative to minimize the exposure to the sights, sounds and ideas that are antithetical to Torah. We cannot fool ourselves into thinking that these negative forces do not affect our sensitivities to Kedusha.

The Torah (Bereishit 26:34-35) tells us that when Eisav married the Hittite women, "ותהיין מרת רוח ליצחק ולרבקה". They were a source of spiritual rebellion to Yitzchak and to Rivka. The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 65:2) is curious why the Torah writes "to Yitzchak and to Rivka" and not the simpler "to Yitzchak and Rivka". Evidently, the Midrash explains, the anguish caused by these women did not affect Yitzchak and Rivka

simultaneously. Initially, Yitzchak was bothered. Shortly afterward, Rivka too was troubled. What caused this slight delay on Rivka's part? Rivka grew up in a home where Avodah Zara was prevalent and therefore her reaction was not as swift as Yitzchak's, who was raised in an atmosphere of total Kedusha.

How old was Rivka when she left her parents' home? She was a child (possibly as young as three). A full sixty years pass before Eisav's marriages. And yet, Rivka's sensitivities were not as sharp as those of Yitzchak's.

We might be able to deceive ourselves into thinking that we are less influenced by our surroundings than the residents of עבר הירדן, but who would presume to be on a higher spiritual plane than Rivka אמנו?

The Sweet Taste of the Fruit of Israel

Rabbi Hillel Horovitz

Concerning the text of על המחיה, Rav Moshe of Coucy, Sma"g (Sefer Mitzvot Gadol), writes that although one version of the blessing includes the words "ונאכל מפריה ונשבע מטובה", and let us eat from its fruit and be satisfied with its goodness, he believes these words should be omitted. After all, one should only desire the land of Israel for the possible fulfillment of mitzvot in the land, and not for an "ulterior" motive, such as desiring its fruits (Tur, Orach Chaim, Siman 208). The Gemara (Sota 14a) appears to support this idea. R. Simlai stated: *Why did Moshe desire to enter the land of Israel? To eat of its fruit or be satisfied by its goodness? Moshe hoped to enter the Land so he could fulfill the mitzvot that were only applicable in Israel.*

Many Rishonim, however, disagree with the Sma"g, and recommend the recitation of "ונאכל מפריה ונשבע מטובה". Indeed, common custom follows this opinion. How does this opinion address the Sma"g's issue of "ulterior" or materialistic motive?

Rav Yoel Sirkes (Bach, Orach Chaim, Siman 208) suggests that the land of Israel provides us with **spiritual** sustenance. We eat spiritually enhanced fruit that contains within it קדושת השכינה, when we eat from the Land. R. Yitchak Arieli (Einaim L'Mishpat, Brachot 44a) compares this to מן. Ramban (Shmot 15:6) explains (based on gemara Yoma 75b) that מן is derived from the supernal light that has taken on physical form through G-d's will. Therefore, even angels eat מן! The fruits of the land of Israel replaced the מן (see Yehoshua 5:11-12) and actually give us the opportunity to attach ourselves to the שכינה. Moshe did not require fruits of Israel due to his lofty spiritual level, but we, who are not of such a high level, have much spiritual sustenance to receive by eating of the fruit (Eliyahu Raba, Orach Chaim, Siman 208).

Alternatively, fruit is representative of redemption. R. Abba (Sanhedrin 98a) said, *There is no clearer sign of the end of days than this verse: But you, O mountains of Israel, will give forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are soon to come (Yechezkel 36:8).* Rashi explains, "When Eretz Yisrael gives forth its fruit in abundance the end will be near, and there is no clearer sign of the end of days." Ramban (Vayikra 26:16) notes that the land had remained desolate for

generations, as long as we were in גלות, so that our enemies would not take over the land of Israel and develop it as their own. Now, however, with our return, the Land has begun producing fruit again, signifying that the curse of the Land has fallen away and it is G-d's desire that we return to the Land (Netziv). We exhibit our desire for this redemption by eating of fruits of Israel.

The מרגלים sinned with the fruit by using it to buttress their false report. The sin, leading to Bnei Yisrael's unwarranted tears on Tisha b'Av, is associated with the destruction of the Land. We are able to rectify part of this sin by desiring and eating from the fruit of Israel (Einaim L'Mishpat).

As many of us continue our lives (albeit temporarily!) in חוץ לארץ, we must remember the messages of the blessing of על המחיה. We must recite "ונאכל מפריה ונשבע מטובה" with fervor, praying to G-d that we should all eventually be able to eat from the fruit of Israel once again in ארצנו הקדושה.