Kol Mevaseret
A Compilation of Insights and Analyses of Torah Topics

by the students of
Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim

Jerusalem, 5768
DEDICATION

The entire MMY family remains in shock and mourning at the sudden loss of our 여ACHER, Aliza Chaya בת Nachum Leib Esral (MMY 5764). Aliza was a very special young lady who accomplished great things in her short years. She left behind a legacy and a challenge for all of us to live up to.

Our rabbis teach that a person should always be שמח בחלקו, happy with his lot. Aliza taught this lesson to all who knew her. She always had a gentle smile on her face. Her friends admired her consistency, loyalty, kindness and caring. Her teachers and חברותות were inspired by her dedication, quiet strength and determination.

Aliza was a gifted artist. The portfolio of beautiful paintings she left behind is, in a sense, a mirror of her entire life. She painted as she lived – diligently and carefully, paying attention to every detail. Indeed, her entire life was a work of art, carefully produced with gentle serenity and modesty, humility and grace.

Aliza’s untimely passing leaves all of us with a challenge – to struggle to accomplish as much as we can in our time on this world, despite whatever obstacles may lay in our path, to always look for the good and the beautiful in all things and in all people and to constantly approach life with a positive disposition.

It is with a continued sense of shock, yet also inspired by this challenge, that we dedicate this edition of Kol Mevaseret in Aliza’s memory.

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The commentator מְלִיבָה explains that in this פָּסָק, the קָו of the预报, which is יִרְשָׁלְיָם herself, is telling over a twofold message: the נָשָׁה, and the预报 will return to ציון, and קְבִּיבָה שלומָי will take place. The预报’s dual message contains only good news.

However, asֳ קֵרְד points out, at times a预报 can also relate bad news. This is the case with חֲפֶנִי and פְּנִחֵס. The man who told עוּלֵי about the deaths of חֲפֶנִי and פְּנִחֵס, and the theft of the אָרוֹן is also called a预报.

The כָּרְבָּה שלומָי writes that though it is often difficult to understand, even the most tragic event is ultimately what is best for us. In fact, because לֹאֵשְׁנִי are עם הנבחר, we sometimes suffer more in order to reach even greater heights.
Though human logic often constricts our ability to accept this, we must lead our lives knowing that everything that happens to us, be it good or bad, is ultimately for our own benefit.\(^5\)

The trembling in סֶפֶר שְׁמוֹאֵל corroborates this, demonstrating that even things as catastrophic as death and as terrible as desecration of the holy ארון were ultimately for the good of בני ישראל. Nonetheless, reacted by subsequently falling off of his chair and dying due to his old age, displaying that it is not always possible to see the positive message at the moment of tragedy. But in retrospect, we see that the deaths of חפני and פינחס, which seemed so shattering at the time, did in fact have a constructive purpose, as it set שמואל’s anointment as leader in motion and eventually brought השם to ישראל.

This year, the students at Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim dealt with the pangs of tragedy when eight students from Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav were killed. Located just a short walk from MMY, Mercaz HaRav was an integral part of our MMY experience. Between davening there on our "in" שבתות, hearing מגילת אסתר on פורים, participating in an inspirational tefillah on יום העצמאות, and dancing with all of our might on יום ירושלים, the students of MMY really formed a connection with Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav this year. Because of our strong bond with the yeshiva, the news about the attack hit us that much harder.

Although we cannot fathom אלה’s reasons or actions, and although our human logic often clouds our ability to properly react in times of trouble, we knew that one way we could react was by learning תורה לעילוי נשמת. We hope that our words of תורה will continue the legacy of תורה left behind by these young men.
Segev Pniel Avichayil, Neria Cohen, Yonatan Yitzchak Eldar, Yehonadav Chain Hirschfeld, Yochai Lipschitz, Avraham David Moses, Roey Roth, and Doron Meherete Tronoh.

We thank Rabbi Horovitz for his assistance. We also thank all the contributors who helped enhance this year’s Kol Mevaseret. We are proud to be the Ba’alot Hashachat, the greatest good, because we all know that טובה זו תורה 7.

Adina Erdfarb Tova Esther Gates
Leah Peyman Ahuva Schwartz

7 הלאוד בפלי פס嘲笑 זרבוד:
הביאר
Since birth we recognize that our parents have a natural, unconditional love for us. We are comforted in knowing that no matter what we do, our parents will always love us. However, the relationship between רבקה and עשו seems to contradict this theory.

The says, ורבקה אוהבת את יעקב, ויאحب יצחק את עשו כי ציד בפיו. רבקה לא אהבה את עשו, יעב, but nothing is mentioned about her love for her other son, עשו.

What caused רבקה to go against her natural inclination to love עשו? Was it wrong for not loving עשו? Did this lack of love affect עشو? In order to understand this relationship, or lack thereof, we must first understand who רבקה and עשו were. A better understanding of both רבקה and עשו will help us understand why they had no relationship.

Redis understands that the different מדות of רבקה abound in the פסוקים.  When אליעזר asked רבקה for a little bit of water, she not only brought water for him, but also for his ten camels. She even goes back and forth to bring water to his camels until they have had enough to drink. It takes a lot of water to satisfy ten camels, but this did not bother רבקה; she offers to do it because she was a big חסד בעלת.
When רבקה sees יצחק for the first time, she showed incredible צניעות and ארץ דרך. Once was informed that it was_approaching her, she gets off of her camel, takes a scarf and covers her face. She delayed her journey to ensure that she appeared modest before יצחק.

Once רבקה and יצחק are married, we learn more about the type of person that רבקה was. The verse ותהי לו לאשה ויאוה"ד( סז, כד) shows that noticedדברים טובים וזניעות in רבקה which reminded him of his mother, causing him to love her. The extra word אוהב teaches us that loved רבקה more than the average husband loves his wife because of theדברים טובים that he saw in her. This point is strengthened by the next phrase, וינחם יצחק"ד( שם) which is. 3 Even though three years had passed, only רבקה was able to comfort יצחק for the death of his mother because she was so similar toשרה. 9 יצחק had tremendous love for רבקה that when she was unable to have children, he davened an intense תפילה for her because he did not want to have to marry another woman. 10

When רבקה helpedיעקב trick יצחק into giving him theברכה, רד"ק's view is that was trying to prevent from making a terrible mistake. 11 did not realize that was purposely giving theברכה to אושו, specifically because was aware thatידע וטוב. 12 knew that did not need theברכה since was sure thatיעקב would receiveאברהם ברכת. Furthermore, רבקה also told that ifאושו catches him, and thereupon curses him,
and

she will take the curse. She was the epitome of a woman of action, who was willing to take accountability for her actions.

From the simple meaning of the verses and רד״כ’s explanation we see that רבקה was a woman of רד״כ, צניעות, and ארצות דרך. Her relationship with יצחק also shows us her similarity to שרה, which hints to her greatness. Yet, even with all her great qualities, she was unable to form a relationship with her son, ישע, because of his characteristics.

ישע was very different than his mother. The verses hint at many differences between ישע and ישע, which teach much about ישע’s personality. Even before ישע was born, we already see that he was going to be different than his twin brother, ישע, as it says, ישע was born with a strong red color, covered in a curly, wool-like hair, while ישע looked like an typical baby. To examine a person’s personality, one must look at their name. A name can give insight into the essence of a person. When describing ישע, the תורה gives a very detailed, physical description. This physical description becomes the basis of his name. According to רש״י, רשב״ם and Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, he was named ישע because he was born as a completely made man. He was born covered with hair, which is not very typical of a baby. Even at his birth, רבקה and יצחק realized the strong physical nature of ישע. רד״כ adds that he was nicknamed ישע because of his characteristics.

13 דברים מ‘, ב, כד. 14 البرلمשות, ס, ג. 15 ראו ברכות. 16 רש״י, ב, כד. ‘איקרא שמי ישע — הכל קרא לו כל פנים. ויקראו לו כן לפי היה ישע. 17 רשב״ם, ב, כד. 18 רש״י, ב, כא. ‘איקרא. כל המילים שמי ישע אדום ישע. 19 רש״ק, ב, כא. ‘אלה ויקרא.
strong nature that later becomes a major part of his personality.

But the differences between שֵׁש and his brother were not only in the physical. They were also different in the way that they led their lives; גֶּשֶׁר shows us that they grew up separately. שֵׁש chose to be an האיש and שֵׁש chose to be an המלך. The reason that the word עִכְּבָּב is spelled without the letter אָלֵף is to hint that one of the twins is going to be a רשע and one is going to be a צדיק. Although שֵׁש and שֵׁש were twins, already at birth they were destined to become very different people.

When שֵׁש bought the הבכורה from שֵׁש, he needed שֵׁש to make a שָׁבַע since he knew that he could not trust שֵׁש. Once שֵׁש ate the soup, שֵׁש understood that שֵׁש would try to back out of the sale. שֵׁש knew that he could not trust שֵׁש because he was lacking in so many madim. As much as רבקה excelled in her madim, so שֵׁש was deficient in his.

Even שֵׁש’s attempts to be good fail. He waited to marry until age forty like his father, but married the women of his desires, הבנות, without asking his parent’s opinion. The phrase והיון מרת רוח ליצחק ולרבקה indicates that by marrying women that his parents did not approve of and by bringing them into their home,
caused his parents great anguish. The Midrash tells us that the cause of צדיק’s blindness was the smoke of the קטורת that אשו and Rousseau brought for their זרה.26 Rousseau married women that went completely against his parents’ essence. This sheds a lot of insight into the type of person that he was. Rousseau lived for his own personal reasons instead of thinking how his actions might affect others.

Rousseau did not inherit any of his mother’s מות. He grew up surrounded by גדיקים, but became a רשע גמור. According to the הקרד, the clash in personalities and the difference in their ways of life prevented רבקה and אשו from having a typical parent-child relationship. Rousseau loved since he chose to live aحر, a life filled with הרד ואמונת אדה. Rousseau chose to live aלד, a life filled with רד ו뜸ו שלמה. When Rousseau tried to convince יעקב to give him the lentil soup, he said הנה אני למות.28 Since he put his life in danger every day he did not see any benefit from the הבורה.29 He would rather experience pleasure now then have to wait to experience an even greater pleasure in the future. Rousseau felt that שע Rousseau chose the wrong path in life and she, therefore, was not able to form a normal relationship with him.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch has a different perspective than ורד on Rousseau’s and רבקה’s relationship. He also points out a number of רבקה’s great characteristics. The פסוק describes רבקה as טובת מראה demonstrating that she had a spiritual beauty of the face which was indicative of her character. The verse continues, ולוה איש לא ידע, to tell us that she was so gezhira that no man ever

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26 Rousseau (Braveheart, 5): "rebbeinu – בברכה של אלוהים מ抽查ת ומקשתות לילך." זכ ברך קשמ.  
27 מצורק (בבראה, ח), "ידוה והפקת יהוה אורים ואת יבוק.  
28 רבראריאת, גל, "בראשית קר.
29 רבראריאת, ד, "בראשית קר.
30 רבראריאת, כז, "בראשית קר."
dared to become “friendly” with her.\textsuperscript{31} We again witness her modest nature when she is about to meet יצחק for the first time. She gets off her camel because she does not want to meet יצחק in an arrogant way. Riding would portray רבקה as an aristocratic lady, and יצחק did not want to be viewed that way.\textsuperscript{32}

When רבקה brought water to אליעזר, she only offered to bring water to his camels once he finished drinking because she had the true נפשות and רביות of רבקה. Had she offered והנהיה water and the camels water all at once, she would have appeared to be a braggart about the great הרחמים she was going to do. Later, when she offered to bring the ten camels water to drink, she continued to bring them water until they had finished drinking.\textsuperscript{33} The פסוק adds והנהיה to inform us that רבקה carried out this arduous task with זריזות.\textsuperscript{34} When אליעזר inquired if there is a place for him to sleep that night in her house, we again witness her חסד. Before answering his question, she told him that she also has food to feed the camels even though she had only just finished the tiring job of quenching their thirst.\textsuperscript{35}

Notwithstanding רבקה’s greatness, she came from a family of רשעים. Her background had an effect on her children and was one of the main causes of חשאים. חז״ל say that רוב בנים הולכים אחרי אחי האם, which means that boys take after their maternal uncles. We therefore should not be shocked by the type of person that אליעזר became, since according to חז״ל he emulated רבא בנו. Instead we should be shocked with the type of person that יצחק became.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31} פרושי של הרב שמואל פсалמיעי והרב שלמה סלה, שם פסוק ב.  
\textsuperscript{32} שם פסוק ד.  
\textsuperscript{33} שם פסוקה יז.  
\textsuperscript{34} בראשית יב, כ.  
\textsuperscript{35} הפרושי של הרב שמואל פсалמיעי והרב שלמה סלה, שם פסוק יה ב.  
\textsuperscript{36} שם פסוק כ.  
\textsuperscript{37} שם פרק כ פסוק ב.
prayéd that רבקה should bear children, the תורה says that he davenedtrees focused his prayers on רבקה and less on himself. This was because יצחק knew that he was going to have kids but he was concerned that it would not be through רבקה since she was the sister of לבן. Family can have a very big effect on one’s life, even after separating from them. Even though יצחק’s greatness was clear to רבקה, he was still worried that he would not merit having children from her because of the family she came from. In the end, רבקה’s awful family did not affect her, but it did affect her sonisz.38

During her pregnancy, רבקה learned that her two sons would be very different. שני גוים בבטנך means that her two sons will represent two different types of governments. The nation will become powerful through strength and violence. At their birth, the הפסוק reports והנה תומים, רבקה was shocked. She was not shocked that they were twins since she already knew that she was having twins, but she was shocked at how similar they looked since she already knew they were going to be so different. The missing אלף in תומים hints to the exterior similarity ofisz. There was more developed, but otherwise the twins were physically similar. This surprised רבקה who expected the boys to be completely dissimilar. They were only different with regard to their spiritual tendencies.39

38 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
39 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
40 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
41 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
42 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
43 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
44 בראשית כה, בראשית כה, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
The verses describingISHED’s birth place strong emphasis on the external. The verses describe IISHED as ADOMIMI. He was born red-cheeked and ruddy; a sign of health. כולם כאדרת שער shows a lot of strength and life force since he was able to develop hair all over his body at birth. These פסוקים mainly focus on his physical attributes. This is in contrast to the verses that describe ראבeka which mainly focus on her מדות. IISHED’s strong point was his physicality in contrast to ראבeka whose strong point was her spirituality.

Another factor that contributed to IISHED’s wickedness was due a parenting mistake that ראבeka and יצחק made. They raised their sons the same way without paying attention to details of their personalities and then adjusting their education. They should have studied the nature and character of IISHED and searched for ways that he could use his strengths to serve ה. Together יעקב and IISHED could have used their strengths to serve ה in a most powerful way. Only after ויגדלו, “they grew up”, did everyone realize how different the two brothers were and by then IISHED wanted nothing to do with תורה and מצוות. The difference in the way that יצחק and ראבeka felt about their children also had an impact on them. Their feelings were based on the reality that opposites attract. יצחק enjoyed living life from a distance; he liked being withdrawn from the world. IISHED’s active nature therefore appealed to יצחק. יצחק felt that this active strength that he was lacking could potentially be a positive force in a home. ראבeka came from a family of רשעים. יעקב lived his life in a way that ראבeka had never seen before; it was completely opposite.

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45ankind, בראשית כה
46שם, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
47בראשית כה. כ.
48שם, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
to the family from which she had come. Although these feelings are explainable, they still had a negative effect on ושם.

According to Rav Hirsch, ושם wickedness was partially due to parenting mistakes that וידハン ורבקה and especially וידハン ורבקה made. ורבקה was a woman with many מדות טובות, but her parenting and the negative feelings she conveyed to ושם, affected him negatively. Furthermore, וידハン ורבקה’s family genes and ושם’s strong connection to the physical world also affected him. However, according to the רדוק, more emphasis must be placed on ושם’s evil behavior. It is only as a result of ושם’s actions, that ורבקה felt unable to form a normal relationship with him.

49 שם פסוק כח, פירושו של הרב שמשון רפאל הירש על התורה
Leah Moskovitch

In the Torah, Leah seems to be portrayed as unloved, secondary, and weary. She traded her mandrakes, for a night with Jacob which seems almost desperate. Also, her eyes were tender. In reality, the name Leah does mean “weary”, but she was weary and always toiling in her work. Leah was a “go-getter”, and her main concern was becoming the mother of the Israelites.

Rabbi Shalom Ebenzer points out that Jacob was a man with two sides. Jacob, which is derived from the word עקב, heel, refers to the physical side of Jacob. Jacob had tremendous strength. He was the only one who was able to lift the rock that was covering the well. This status was not good enough to overcome Avrohom, a contraction of two words, means “straight” and totally focused on the Heavenly Father.

A man like Jacob, with two aspects to his personality, needed two wives. Indeed, it is through both Rachel and Leah that the house of Israel was built, כְּרָחלָוֹתָּוָּו שָׁתִיָּו מִלָּו לְבֵיתוֹמָּּו וַיַּעֲמֹּּד בֶּּּוִלוֹ בֵּיתוֹמָּו בֵּיתוֹמָּו.

Rachel represents the more tender, and Leah, the more go-getter.

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1. בראשית ל, שא
2. בראשית ט, שא
3. בראשית ב, שא
4. בראשית כט, שא
5. בראשית כט, שא
6. בראשית כט, שא
7. בראשית כט, שא
physical and revealed side of העבר. Her relationship with העבר is revealed, נגלל, and converse even before their marriage. Leah’s relationship with יעקב was more spiritual and hidden; they didn’t speak before they got married. יעקב didn’t even know he was marrying Leah; their relationship was completely Hosheah writes: Leah, whom יעקב knows, represents the revealed world, while Leah represents the hidden and secretive world. Leah is described as having ועיין, ו-wife, because her eyes seemed unassuming, timid, and mysterious. Really eyes are the window to the soul. She used her eyes to cry and pray to God when she thought she would have to marry עשו, the older, evil brother. Leah’s and רחל’s qualities are reflected in their descendents. משיח בן דוד, the spiritual משיח, will come from Leah’s son יהודה, while the more physical משיח known as משיח ben yosef will come from יהודה.
Because לאה was “unloved”, ë opened her womb before ידה. She gave birth to שמשון, ראובן, and ליה. Then, when she gave birth to her fourth son she named him יהודה because תhya#[16]. The קומטא אמא היא because עצהל לא היה הילדה was that עצהל לא היה הילדה were prophetesses and knew that עצהל לא היה הילדה to have twelve sons. Therefore, לאה only expected to bear three sons. She wasn’t anticipating a fourth son. Therefore, when she had יהודה, she became overwhelmed with הכרת הטוב to הפלס. It’s no surprise that the Jewish nation gets the name יהודי from this episode and that the ultimate and spiritual חסיד הוא is from יהודה.

This הכרת הטוב can be compared to that which היא expressed when she gave birth to קין. She exclaimed, יתיית איש את איה, “I’ve acquired man through ה”.姬yah acknowledged ה, but much of the emphasis was on the fact that the child came from her. לאה, on the other hand, focused only on ה actions, the giving of a fourth child to her. לאה personifies true הכרת הטוב. Indeed, the גמרא states that no one thanked God properly until לאה.

לאה’s act of הכרת הטוב influenced later generations. When ה blessed הניה with the birth ofשמואל, she sang והפטרה and thanked ה to the highest degree. Her答应 was full of thanks to ה for not only giving her a child, but also for his השגחה over this world. Not once did ella focus on her accomplishment of having a child. ella inherited this level of הכרת הטוב from לאה אמא.

לאה also had tremendous בטחן intertwined with proper השמחה. When ראובן picked דודאים, לאה, his mother, desired ברכה.
them and asked Leah if she could have them. She sold her night with יעקב and Leah accepted the offer.21 ספרנין explains that Leah’s agreement was not considered lewd, but rather she acted properly and was fulfilling רצון ה’flutter. It was not enough for Leah to pray for children; she also had to sell her night with יעקב for a night with יעקב so she could have another opportunity to bear one of the בנים י honda. Leah gave up precious ספורנו, but gained the הרד of her בודים and partnership.22

After דינה was born, Leah gave birth to זבולון.24 ר’רשקובאexplains that Leah called her daughter דינה because Leah reasoned with herself, דנה לאה דין בעצמה, and said, “If this child is male, my sister רחל won’t even be like one of the בנות.” She prayed and the fetus was transformed into a girl. As explained above, the אמהות were proph- etesses and knew that Leah already had six, and the שפחות had four. This meant that if Leah were to have a seventh son, רחל wouldn’t even have two sons, and that would be less than each maidservant. Therefore, Leah prayed to God and He changed the fetus in her womb from male to female. This incident

21 טז-יד, ל
22 והם ספורנו ובעברוסף: “לאה תאמר לה.XPathא רבה בראשית ספורנה来临 מגונהrente הפסקה(The)告诉我们 כי היה ענין התולדה. מדעתה ובהסכמתה ל,’’ אבל אצל האבות like he said above, he speaks to the السيدות הנשים declaim. She prayed and the fetus was transformed into a girl. As explained above, the אמהות were proph- etesses and knew that Leah already had six, and the שפחות had four. This meant that if Leah were to have a seventh son, רחל wouldn’t even have two sons, and that would be less than each maidservant. Therefore, Leah prayed to God and He changed the fetus in her womb from male to female. This incident

23 מדרש רב ברשוש (פרשת ב’an הפסקה): “אילא ת公报 את ה切入点 של חפץ י菟ף. מי שפירוש אחר הוא, הרדיאים מעשים של מסות המונים רבנים מסנות את ה(Bit 7). ישכרו ישב וענין הדודיאים נשמעה תפלתם על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי יируד בישע התחלות המכות אפוי נילוי בהשתכורה הם ישלו את התופעת על זה כי רבי י盹אה מביא להשלים את[type]ך.
demonstrates שֵׁהוֹב's selflessness. רְחֵל clearly loved יִצְכּוּב more, yet לאָה willingly gave up her seventh son for רְחֵל to be happy.

Thus, we see that לאָה was spiritual, selfless, had immense הַכְּרֵת תַּנְחָמָה, did proper הַשְּׁתֵּר בַּעֲלֵיהֶנֶּיהָ and was indeed הָדַרְתִּיָּה the worthy mother of רְחֵל. בָּנִי יִשְׁרָאֵל לאָה passed away, she was הָרָבָּה זִכְרָה buried by יִצְכּוּב in the מַעֲרַת הַמִּכְפָּלָה along with אָבְרָהַם וְשֶׁרָה and יַעֲקֹב וְרַבָּקָה. This, too, reflects לאָה's greatness.
When יִּפְלֹה אָבִי fled from לבן, רחל stole הרפִּים from לבן. What are הרפִּים? How could רחל have stolen them? What was רחל planning to do with them?

As punishment, רחל died early during childbirth. When יִּשָׁב הָאָב נֹא of יִּפְלֹה was informed by לבן that someone had stolen his הרפִּים, he pronounced עם אשר תמצא את אלהי לא יחיהיKravish, quoting בראשית רבה says that this was a curse on the person who stole the הרפִּים and that due to this curse, רחל died.

When רחל had a hard time during childbirth, she named her son, בן אוני, רב אמנון בזק sees this as an act of תשובה by רחל for her sin of stealing the הרפִּים. How does this name connect to the הרפִּים? When the prophet זְכָרִיָּה mentions the הרפִּים, he says, כי התרפים דברו און. When מפרשים such as אם"רמב and רבינו בבחיי discuss the הרפִּים, they mention that the הרפִּים speak nothingness, falseness, און. רחל realized on her deathbed that it was wrong for her to take the הרפִּים and named her son בן אוני, the son of און as part of her תשובה.

Obviously רחל did not steal the הרפִּים in order to worship them. Rather, the זוהר explains, although רחל stole the הרפִּים for the correct reason, she was punished for doing it in a way that caused צער to her father. In order to more fully understand justification in stealing the הרפִּים we must study more carefully what the הרפִּים are. Perhaps there was another reason for her actions.
in our story, explains that תרפים are עבודה זרה. Later in Chronicles, however, תרפים has a different meaning.דוד’s wife, מיכל, placed תרפים in his bed so that שאול’s men would think thatדוד was in his bed. This trick helped him escape from שאול.8 י”רש explains thatשאול רכבות תרפים ומיכל הבשה נף האדם תרפים points out that there must be different types of תרפים becauseדוד would definitely not have had תרפים in his house.10

and take a different approach and explain the תרפים as a vessel with which to tell the future. Through the use of magic with the תרפים, people were able to predict the future. This interpretation helps us understand why specifically at this timeדוד feels that she must steal the תרפים so thatClassNotFoundException=1706289166 that she will not know that he is gone and his family are trying to escape. If י”רש is correct that the תרפים are an actual form ofkerjaו in his house, then why didדוד wait until now to steal them?

and אב טור and�"רadin andexplain that according to some opinions the תרפים were clocks made of בצל.12 There are three different ways to use the תרפים. People likeרחל, שמשה andדוד המלך would only use the תרפים as a clock. Others would use magic and the תרפים combined to predict the future. Lastly, there were people who relied so heavily on the תרפים’s predictions that they viewed the תרפים like a god.14 [Indeed, Rav Shmuel David Luzatto notes that many people believed that א"ל expressed His will through the תרפים, just like He did.

-shy, נ"ר (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).

7 י”רש, (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).

8 שמשה, נ"ר 4.

9 שמשה, נ"ר 4.

10טעב, (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).

11טעב, (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).

12טעב, (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).

13א"ל (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).

14א"ל (בראשית, ה': "התרפם והתרפם – לתרפם את האב במ"ט א"נ חותמות (ב"ר).
When He divided Ararat, [2] רחל אמנו והתרפים [3] says that the ר:auto tell the future, but from the word ר:ץ, we see that it was not a clear future. The נבואה רפה, a weak, unclear ר:ץ, describes the רפים based on its root. Despite the fact that there was no clear prediction, many people relied on the prophecy of the רפים, rather than live their life with בטוח in the "ה"ה. It is clear that was on this third and lowest level because he asks, "יזבכ"ק, המנה הגנה אתה לאו. 16 He blatantly calls the רפים his god.

When he finally caught up to רך, why did רחל have to sit on top of them? 17 רב אביגדור נבנצל answers that by sitting on top of the רפים, רחל managed to neutralize their power. In order to prevent from using the power of the רפים, she had to remove their influence. The only reason they had any magical, powerful ability is because people gave them respect and believed in them. By showing tremendous disrespect to them, רחל removed their power.

From the above discussion of the רפים, we must learn not to place our trust in items or people, be it רפים, רפים, אינטרניט, the police or the President of the United States. Too much dependence on any such power is a form of idolatry. Rather, we must rely completely on 'ה. 18

15 ויקסמו בהם לדעת עתידות, והקרוב מה שאומרים שהם כלים לקבל השעות(" יט,בראשית לא)ן "רמב"}}, תרפים"יקראו בהם ( שמות ה יז)נרפים אתם נרפים , (שם ב יז ב)רפה ידים והמלה נגזרת מלשון  – כי ( זכריה י ב)כמו שאמרו , ב ותכזב לעתים רחוקותוא ברותב, לרמוז בשמם כי דבורם כמו נבואה רפה, לא ישאלו בשם הנכבד ולא יתפללו אליו, התרפים דברו און והנה יעשו אותם קטנים אמנה להם לאלהים.
16 "ורחל לקחה את התרפים ותשמם בכר הגמל ותשב עליהם (: "לד, לא)בראשית 17 תהלים , "ח בנדיביםו מבט'הטוב לחסות ב :ח באדםו מבט'הטוב לחסות ב" :(ט-ח, קיח)תהלים ראה ארור הגבר אשר 'הכה אמר (: "ה, יז)ירמיה ו" תשועה אל תבטחו בנדיבים בבן אדם שאין לו (: "ג, קמו)ראה גם ספר ממעמקים על פרשיות התורה מהרב אלכסנדר "ויבטח באדם ושם בשר זראו ומן עמודים , ספר בראשית, מנדלבוים 174-168.
18 בבראשית (אל, "רחל לקחה את התרפים והשהמה בכ בכר הגמל והשב עליה..." "חרות לקחה את התרפים והשהמה בכ בכר הגמל והשב עליה...")}
Ally Willig

עקב – The Heel

The Heel states: ‘…and He will watch over you and protect you from evil and the eye of the Heavens will also watch over you (א)’ What exactly does עקב mean?גives a beautiful insight into the usage of this word. עקב can be translated as heel. י"רש explains that עקב alludes to the מצות that people may regard as seemingly unimportant and tend to tread on them with their “heels”, as they regard them with a lack of seriousness or care. The Heel is telling us that if we carefully observe and perform these seemingly trivial מצות, then י"ה will reward us with His ברית and חסד.

We learn a tremendous lesson from י"רש. Just as a person cannot stand without a heel, עקב, as it provides stability, so too we can not “stand” in this world of הסתר פנים without every מצוה. The מצות provide us with a stable foundation for how we must live our lives. No מצוה is trivial! A person without a heel is not שלם in his גוף. Similarly, a person who does not perform every single מצוה is not שלם in his נשמה and רוחניות. He will never successfully “walk” through life. Rather, he will remain paralyzed and distanced from י"ה.

The Heel states: ‘…that He will love us and bless us (א)’. This is rather unusual since usually the rewards for following the מצות and חוקות of י"ה are physical prosperity. Here the reward is that י"ה will love us.

1 "ראהך בך, ירשו ויריו, ואתה הבך על ידך, ובך משלי ידך..." (ברריה, ז, כה)
2 "אשתך ע賢ו ואתה הבך על ידך, ויריו, ואתה השיא דבך, ובך משלי ידך..." (ברריה, ז, כה)
3 "והיה הָעֵקָב יָתֵם, וְאֶת הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת, וְאֶת הָעֵקָב יָתֵם, וְאֶת הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת..." (ברריה, ז, כב)
4 "וְהָעֵקָב יִשְׁרֵי הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת וְיִשְׁרֵי הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת" (ברריה, ז, כב)
5 "רֵואֶנָּה, וְהָעֵקָב הֶבַךְ, וְיִשְׁרֵי הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת, וְיִשְׁרֵי הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת..." (ברריה, ז, כב)
6 "ודַּרְכַּה, וְהָעֵקָב הֶבַךְ, וְיִשְׁרֵי הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת, וְיִשְׁרֵי הַשִּׁמְשֹׁת..." (ברריה, ז, כב)
The quote refers to the generation of עקובתא דמשיחא who explains that עקב refers to the generation of עקובתא דמשיחא. He compares a person’s head, body, and legs to the generations of בני ישראל. A person’s head has both sensual and intellectual seeing and hearing. A person’s body where the heart is found only has intellectual seeing and hearing, as שלמה beseeched from God a לב שומע. Legs have neither sensual nor intellectual seeing nor hearing.

The quote explains that the early generations had a very clear perception and strong belief in הוהי. They were like the head that saw הוהי so clearly and listened to His laws and mitzvot unwaveringly. The next generations were like the body. They did not see הוהי as clearly, yet they still had a לב שומע, an intellectual and emotional attachment to הוהי. However, our generation, the generation of עקובתא דמשיחא, is like the legs. We do not see nor hear הוהי, as we are unfortunately living in a time of tremendous פנים隱. Just as the heel is the lowest part of the body, we are the lowest generation. We remain completely handicapped and disabled as we are blinded by the darkness of this world, the שקר and גשמיות. Our only “walking stick”, our only “hearing aid” is our אמונה. As low as we are, as lost as we are, we hold on to our אמונה. We declare: אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים. Our deep אמונה in הוהי is our only guiding light. This is what the תורה is telling us. Even in the generation of the עקובתא דמשיחא when we are in such darkness, we must listen to the voice of אמונה inside of us, hold onto it and strengthen it. And if we do, והיה עקב תשמעון, the reward will be madness and כנה עד that הוהי will love us and bless us. This deep אמונה which remains in our hearts even in this dark time where our world is העלם, where the galut is so long and bitter, this ועדucha shows our great love for Hashem. Even though we don’t

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7 ירhetic שניות (مهند), ח"א (א): "הנה הראשה כי כי איה ומשמעת המושנת ובדיה ושפיפה שפילת.
8 והנה הראשה כי כי איה ומשמעת המושנת אכל כי כי איה ומשמעת שפילת (ב"א) (א) בה שפיפה, והנה הראשה כי כי איה ומשמעת המושנת אכל כי כי איה ומשמעת שפילת."
9 דברי (י, ט), הא ח"א (2)
see and don’t hear ה, we remain ח. Therefore, ה tells us that because we love Him, He will love us and bless us.10

We can not only learn a tremendous lesson from this as a generation, as a כל, but also as individuals. During our year in Israel, we were surrounded by the קדושה of ארץ ישראל and were like the “head”. We saw ה clearly through the miracles of ארץ ישראל, through the קדושה of the תורה we learned and through our wonderful teachers and the הגדולה we were privileged to encounter. However, in ארץ ישראל, we might at times feel like the legs, as we are blinded by the גשמיות and find it difficult to hear the voice of ה. We might feel so low spiritually, so far removed from the קדושה we once felt in ארץ ישראל. Yet each one of us needs to hold on to our אמונה in even during these times of personal נחל when we feel distanced from ה. If we do this, then ה will respond מดา and will love us, bless us, and watch over us.
The Strength of Whose Hand?

An Analysis of פרשת עקב

The natural mechanisms of this world demonstrate actions and their subsequent consequences, displaying the false impression of humanity’s own influence. The stubborn Jewish nation, as depicted throughout פרשת עקב, erroneously deems that the accomplishments they have realized in this fleeting world are completed with the might of their own hand. For example, there is the warning that בני ישראל might say, היהכי ועצם ידי עשה לי את החיל. Even nature, the anticipated manner of the universe can be altered or discontinued according to the will of G-d. One should never assume that the strength of his own hand triumphed in accomplishment. Every precise movement, motivating thought and definitive feat can only be completed with the assistance of ה. 

1 ויהי, 44:28; 23:23; 27:23
2isz (שמואל ב: 16:2); המנייה המפורפסים אמוד ממעדו הנ하자יר שנא יד 저희
3מצוי יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות לידע שיש שם מפר.
4ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים אדם מודה בנסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה (: "טז,שמות יג)ן "רמב
חלק בתורת משה רבינו עד שנאמין בכל דברינו ומקרינו כלם נסים אין בהם טבע שאין לאדם, כלה
וגם את (: "כ,דברים ז)פרשת עקב רבינו חיי על אשר ראה " בגברת, ובין ברבים ובו ב الصحفي, והזכיר המפורסמים בפסוק של מעלה, נסים נסתרים ונסים מפורסמים, דע כי הנסים שני חלקים – הצרעה ועזה יזכור מכת הצרעה הוא מן הנסים, הוא שאמר המסות הגדולות אשר ראו עיניך והאותות והמופתים
לפי שאין בשניהם שנוי טבעו של , הנסתרים שנראה לעיני רואיהם היא באה בדרך הטבע כענין הגשמים
ולכו ייביךי כנגד או"וזהו לשון וגם י.CreateIndex ולהפוך יושיעך הש, עולם אבל הם ענין טבעי
”.כלומר אין לירא מהאומות אלא מהשם השוכן בקרבך, תرعاية מפניהם.
While the children of Israel resided in Egypt, they were forced to tend to the crops of their Egyptian masters. Since rain scarcely descended, the crops required advanced technological irrigation systems stemming from the Nile River. With all the toil completed by Jewish hands, the nation reasonably concluded that it was the aptitudes of their own efforts cultivating the crops. Unfortunately, had descended to such a lowly echelon in that they understandably were unable to identify the hand of G-d directing their every accomplishment. Therefore, reminded them in the previous verses of the mighty hand He possesses, causing each occurrence in the world.

As the Jewish people prepared to enter the land, they are told, 

As the intention of mentioning the land of and its dependence upon the rains of, in comparison to the land of, serves as a reminder to that it is not the might of their own hands that facilitate the crop’s growth. Water which descends from the heavens undoubtedly cannot be thought of as a human triumph.

The conclusion of the parsha articulates a that daily reinforces the above concept to .
reiterates the immense power of has over each individual's life. The explains that the reason for the and the of one's eyes and the sins of one's hands. One might suggest that help remind us that it is not the strength of our own hands or our great intellect that facilitate our actions through each demanding day, rather it is the power of . As a Jew binds his arm and head with the and the and the . The Jew consciously apprehends the true source of power in the universe. It is not that influence this world; rather it is that controls every moment of existence.
As the Persian king in the times of מרדכי and אסתר, אחשורוש is a primary figure in מגילת אסתר. However, the אחשורוש we read about is not the man, but rather, the king. In fact, the אחשורוש refers to by his name alone only once in the entire ספר, in its first פסוק.ackets' rule contrasts with what the ideal מלכות אזרח should be. Various aspects of אחשורוש's rule can be compared to and contrasted with those of the three main kings of בני ישראל.

To fully understand how אחשורוש's kingship differed from that of a מלך אזר, one must examine the תורה's command for and description of the מלך אזר as written in ספר דברים.1 A king of Israel is not supposed to have too many riches or wives,2 but אחשורוש had both.3 While sitting on his throne, a king was required to write two ספרי תורה,4 one of which would be kept with him at all times, and one of which would be stored in his Treasury. The המלך אזר, however, was not even kept with him at all times. His servants had to bring it to him.5 The מלך אזר is not supposed to be haughty or think of himself as greater than his peers.6 Yet was so concerned with his pride and self-image that he was convinced by ממזון to kill ושתי for violating his honor.7

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1 פסוק יז
2 פסוק יז (Yechezkel 2:1)
3 פסוק יז
4 פסוק יז
5 פסוק יז
6 פסוק יז
7 פסוק יז

Adina Erdfarb
We can now compare אחשורוש’s actions to specific events that occurred to Jewish kings. After בראשית אחשורוש’s death, and regretted his actions, his servants advised him to search for a new queen. אחשורוש liked the idea and put the suggestion into action, partnering with his servants in the effort to find a new wife. The ultimate selection was up to אחשורוש, who set up a full staff to choose his queen, and specifically sought out the most beautiful girls. אחשורוש also made sure to cater to all of the girls’ physical needs. This selection process unfortunately led to a disgusting prostitution ring that continued in his kingdom even after he chose אסתר.

אחשורוש’s servants’ advice brings to mind two instances in Jewish history in which kings’ servants played a role: when שאול was consumed by רוח רעה and when ודד grew cold in his old age and needed to find a source of warmth. Both of these cases contrast starkly with the selection process that אחשורוש participated in.

In דוד was consumed by רוח רעה. His servants advised him to find a harp-player whose music would soothe his soul and remove the רוח רעה. שאול agreed only out of need, as the רוח רעה was tormenting him. Instead of enlisting an entire staff to gather all of the musicians in the land, שאול simply accepted the suggestion of one of his young assistants that דויד was the harp-player he needed.

The story of דויד contains an even stronger contrast to אחשורוש’s story. דויד had grown old and could not be warmed, so his servants suggested that a young girl could warm him. The story does not mention דויד’s reaction to his servants’ advice; he was not happy with the idea and did not say anything in response.
In fact, did not even make the ultimate choice of .

They did not set up an extensive staff to gather all the women in the land; they went and sought out the perfect girl for .

They found , who was very beautiful, yet was not interested in her physical beauty. Despite their efforts, , “the king was not intimate with her.” The emphasizes this contrast between and .

They did not set up an extensive staff to gather all the women in the land; they went and sought out the perfect girl for .

When his servants were looking for a young girl for him, everyone with a daughter brought her. But refers to .

When he sent out officers to find a wife for him, everyone hid his daughter from him.

It is clear, then, that unlike , was incapable of ruling independently and analyzing advice appropriately.

It is also important to compare to . By noting the similarities between them, their differences become even more pronounced. Both and ruled over extensive kingdoms and taxed their subjects heavily.

ruled over the entire world. According to the , according to the , indicating that ruled over a vast kingdom. Furthermore, everyone under ’s rule became poor because of the taxes he decreed on them.

states that for this reason he...
received the name אחשורוש because everyone became רשם,poor, in his days. Likewise, he taxed his people, as it says, so heavily that and everyone approached the throne, complaining, 

However, the similarities between אחשורוש and שלמה stop there. According to אסתר, though both kings had vast kingdoms, שלמה ruled over all of the 252 provinces in the world, as it says, while אחשורוש eventually only ruled over 127, as it says.

Moreover, by focusing on their thrones, we can see an even further inequality between שלמה and אחשורוש. אסתר writes that wanted to use שלמה’s throne, which had plundered when he destroyed the בית המקדש. However, his advisors would not allow him to do so, claiming that only kings

20 ראה "אחשורוש ממלך מבלע" (ד"א)."งינא אמר שהכל נעשו רשין בימיו שנאמר וישם המלך .(: "אדף י)תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה
21 אחשורוש מס
22 מלכים א, כתב
23 מלכים א, ח
24 שמע מקר
25 מדרש הרב אפרת (פרשת א פסקה א)."שבועות מקום א להג') לאלו בוש לאו כל מה שיאמר שלמה והשיני שם שלום שקרני כותב (מלכים א ד) ושלמה היה מושל כל הממלכות. "והשב פרש את השמע назначен אחשורוש שבריו
26 מלכים א, ה
27 אסתר א, א
28 אסתר א, א
who ruled over the entire world could sit on that throne. Instead,
made his own throne, modeled after סלמה’s throne.

This דרש is even more interesting when viewed in con-
junction with the following disparity. סלמה spent the time on his
throne making a party for all of his servants.29 However, when סלמה was informed by God that he would receive
לך מנון אשר חכם ולא ידיעך למלך ומלכים אשר נבון ידיעו בלבך.30 he celebrated, as it says,31 רבע אשתו ויתיב ליום שלום ושם שבלם ידיעו מלכים למלכים. מַאֲכָל שְׁעֶנֶשׁ שׁעֶנֶשׁ קְרָאָה שָׁלֶם: “from here [we learn] that we make a feast in honor of the completion of המידה”. סלמה spent much of his time connected to the המידה. Also, while sitting on his throne, a king was supposed to write two פרת תורהס, one which would be kept with him at all times, and one which would be stored in his Treasury.34 We can assume that as one of the foremost kings, סלמה adhered to this command of a מלך ישרא.

It is interesting that two kings acted so differently while ruling over kingdoms that appeared so alike. It becomes clear why there is an opinion in the גמרא that סלמה was a מלך פיקח. Conversely, סלמה, as is well known, was extremely wise. It was said about him ויחכם מכל האדם.37

29 אסתר א-ב.
30 מלכים א ב-ב.
31 שם סוף י.
32 פרשה א פסקה מ: “א”ר אולמרב מפסין שם תכונה של המידה של המידה.”
33 במדבר י-ס.
35 ת識ו טנה מעניין "ולא יאא לפסים של חקלה будין."
37 חולין א-א.
There is another difference between the two kings when it comes to the concept of טובה. Concerning אחשורוש it is written, "ביום השביעי כטוב לב המלך ביין." The מגילה writes כטוב and not בטוב. This affirms what the verse in קהלת states, וטוב לא יהיה לרשע, wicked people do not know what טובה really is. On the other hand, בני ישראל's טوبة is complete, as it says, וילכו לאהליהם שמחים וטובי לב על כל הטובה.

According to אסתר רבה, אחשורוש set up a task for each person, which he was fit to fulfill. The המגילה writes כטוב וטוב לא יהיה לרשע, wicked people do not know what טوبة really is. On the other hand, בני ישראל's טوبة is complete, as it says, וילכו לאהליהם שמחים וטובי לב על כל הטובה.

According to אסתר רבה, 'ה set up a task for each person, which he was fit to fulfill. שלמה mentions the word טוב a total of 82 times throughout the three ספרים that he wrote, indicating that he knew what the true meaning of טוב is. Conversely, רבי צדוק הכהן מלובלין writes that אחשורוש wanted to destroy everything for the purpose...
of total destruction. However, eventually, Ahasuerus was unable to actually destroy; he only remained with the desire to obliterate.

As Esther Rabbah writes that Ahasuerus sold the people of Israel to Haman to be destroyed. Ahasuerus was, therefore, the opposite of Solomon, who was the opposite of Ahasuerus.

The mishnah teaches that the juxtaposition of “ו” and “ה” in a verse reflects an abundance of blessing, since the two together comprise part of God’s name. The words “ינשא הרל” in this verse, which appears eight times throughout the Tanakh, contains this juxtaposition. This teaches that there was an abundance of blessing during Solomon’s reign. On the other hand, it says “ויהי בימים אhasuerus” that there was not an abundance of blessing while Ahasuerus ruled; in fact, the Shchina is hidden when the wicked rule.

The main difference between Ahasuerus’ and David’s respective senses of self-importance. Ahasuerus viewed ultimate sovereignty as his goal; as he tried to make his kingdom an alternative to the kingdom of Solomon. On the other hand, David, Solomon, and their descendants were therefore kings of a true kingdom that had a real sense of what sovereignty means: to rule with the will of God always in mind.
Flowers as a Motif in שיר השירים

Ahuva Freilich

The first time the word שושנה appears in שיר השירים is in the רעיה’s statement, "I am a lily of the Sharon, a rose of the valleys." The רעיה would like to be in a valley that is fertile, enclosed and protected from the sun. She proclaims that she is of a delicate nature and would like to be nurtured in the relationship.

The חבצלת is also mentioned by ישעיה, "the desert and wasteland will be happy for them, and the desert will rejoice and blossom like a lily." י”רש explains that ציון, which is called a מדבר, and ירושלים, which is called a הרים, are喜悦, because our enemies fall when fighting the Jews. This נבואה of גאולה is said by ישעיה right before ‘ה destroys the armies of אשור. Thus, the חבצלת refers to a prosperous time in Jewish history. The emotions implied by these words in ישעיה help us better understand the above verse in שיר השירים. The רעיה calls herself a חבצלת השרון because she wants to live in a time when the love of the דוד is obvious, a time where בני ישראל’s relationship with ‘ה will be one of נסים גלויים.
The answers that life, as well as the relationship, will not run as smoothly as the expects. He notes that there will be difficulties, yet it can be said, “Like a rose among thorns, so is my lover among the girls.” According to the interpretation, "ז"ה says here that although other nations will try their hardest to persuade to worship idols, the Jews will stand strong and retain their spiritual ideals. They will be like roses that retain their beauty even when surrounded by thorns.

Although the two do not completely agree on the ease of their relationship, they have a passionate connection and praise each other strongly. The comments, “My beloved is to me, and I am to him, he who shepherds [his flock] among the roses.” Her language emphasizes the singularity of the relationship and the loyalty that both have for one another. The imagery of sheep grazing in a pleasant field of flowers enhances the feelings of love for each other. explains that although the Jews did not always act correctly in the relationship, did not disown them and choose another nation. Rather, He placed his upon and the seventy , whose good deeds give off a sweet fragrance like roses. Alternatively, suggests that the symbolize the entire Jewish people and not just the leaders. claims that refers to the pleasant smell as he stood among the roses. are praising for his acts of charity to them.

Later, says, “Your two breasts are like two fawns, gazelle twins, that graze among the roses.” believes this refers to and , equal in

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4 ר"ו, ש"ח ב ב, ש"ח י, ש"ח כ. ב.
5 ש"ח (לע) "כשתענין בני בתיו, ת凳ק行き אבות וتسجيل שם עתיד בנים אוב徼ות行き ביר.
6 ש"ח, ש"ח ב ב, ש"ח כ. ב.
7 ש"ח, ש"ח ב ב, ש"ח כ. ב.
8 ש"ח, ש"ח ב ב, ש"ח כ. ב."
Flowers as a Motif in "שיר השירים"

greatness, who nurtured בני ישראל and who led them on a straight and true path. ה praises כלל ישראל for giving rise to great leaders who do the will of ה.

The responds with the praise, השיח והשショー, "His lips are roses that drip flowing myrrh." This response flows from the previous appearance of בני ישראל وهذا הוא explains that the words of ה, heard from the נביאים, smell like sweet roses because they predict great success in the future. בני ישראל say that while it is true they had strong leaders, the leaders derive their strength from ה’s beautiful words.

Similarly, "I will be like dew to Yisrael; he will blossom like a rose, and his roots will shoot out like [cedars of] Lebanon." It is true that בני ישראל will have elements of a rose. However, the credit for that beauty rightfully belongs to ה, who nurtured בני ישראל with dew, which is always nurturing and always wanted. Likewise, as בני ישראל emphasize in שיר התנрем, the credit for leaders like משה and אהרן rightfully belongs to God.

After the lovers complete this round of praises, they end up parting ways. The בנות ירושלים ask the ריעה where her דוד went so that they can seek him with her. She replied, שימל את צדי ויודע, "My דוד went down to his garden, to the spice garden, to graze in the gardens and gather roses." She clearly knows where her דוד is, yet she does not immediately follow him there. The verse emphasizes that though the lovers, ה and בני ישראל, are apart, they are not separate. ירש states that refer to the second הבש is brought in the form of the הקדשה, but most of בני ישראל did not follow Him there. Nevertheless, ה makes an effort to be with the Jews still in גלות בבל, who learn תורה and pray in their בתי מדרש and בתי כנסיות. י, the דוד, kindly ‘keeps in touch’

шейיר השירים ג, י 9
шейיר השירים י, י 10
шейיר השירים ב, ב 11
with His רעייה, even though the רעייה does not follow Him to the proper place, to ארץ ישראל, like, as it were, explains that רעייה does not follow Him because that is where He usually spends time. 

The רעייה responds to the ירושו in the next verse: "I am to my beloved, and my beloved is to me, the one who shepherds among the roses." According to the simple meaning of the verse that she did not follow her beloved to his garden, she responds defensively that although the two are not together, they are still in love. In contrast, according to י"רש‘ approach, she is responding with a tone of loving admiration. When the רעייה goes out of his way to be connected to her, it becomes obvious that they are a loving, loyal couple. 

In the meantime, the רעייה describes his actions and analyzes how he feels about the relationship. He says, "I went down to the nut garden to see in the plants of the stream, to see if the grapevine blossomed, if the pomegranates were in flower." The blossoming and ripening of fruit is usually connected to the rebirth and rejuvenation of the spring. The רעייה wants to know if there is any

13 שיר השירים ו, 1.
14 שיר השירים ו, 1.
Flowers as a Motif in סיר השירים

renewal or positive change in the relationship. According to the ideas brought previously, 'יה' wants to know if the learning and ideas that are emanating from the בתי מדרש and the בתי כנסיות are sincere. Are the Jews really connected to the בית המקדש where His שכינה resides?

The language and description used in the above verse is found elsewhere in סיר השירים. In a miracle that confirmed that the Cohenim were chosen by God to serve in the משכן, the לוי tribe states: "the rod of אהרן blossomed for the tribe of לוי; it gave forth flowers, buds sprouted, and almonds ripened." The חזוקי connects the word פרח to the פרחי כהונה, the young Cohenim that assisted in the בית המקדש, the word ציץ to the golden head plate of the כohen גדול, and שקדים to the Cohenim, who were fast and zealous in doing the work of 'יה. The word פרח additionally appears as a description of one of the decorations of the מנורה, מועות ישלשה גב קדים בקנה האחד כפתר ופרחומש, three cups engraved with almonds on a branch with a knob and a flower (on each side of the מנורה). The word פרח is also found by the building of the pillars of the בית המקדש. ושם כמעשה שפת כוס פרח שושן, "Its lip was like the lip on a cup with the design of a rose flower." Also, it says, "A righteous person will blossom like a date tree planted in the house of 'יה, in the courtyards of 'יה they will blossom." The חזוקי connects דציקים to the בית המקדש.

Even the non-Jews realize that the Jews are loyal to 'יה. בנות ירושלים praise the רעייה saying, "A righteous person will blossom like a date tree planted in the house of 'יה, in the courtyards of 'יה they will blossom."

15 חזוקי, שם, כג, במדבר יז
16 חזוקי, שם, כג, במדבר יז
17 חזוקי, שם, כט, יומא פרק א משנה ז
18 חזוקי, שם, כב, שמות כה
19 חזוקי, שם, כג, ים א זמלכ
20 חזוקי, שם, כג, יד-יג, תהלים צב
21 חזוקי, שם, כג, ח, י שיר השירים ז"רש
22 חזוקי, שם, כג, ג, שיר השירים ז
“Your stomach is a field of wheat fenced in by roses.” 23
explains this praise to mean that they even follow light barriers, surrounding the
field of wheat. They avoid going against the will of God at all costs, and the people
notice of this fact.

The רעה wishes to strengthen the relationship. She says,24
"Let us wake up early to go to the vineyards; we will see if the grapevine blossomed,
if the small grapes opened up, if the pomegranates ripened." 25
informs us of the deeper meaning of the verse. The people who study
laws and regulations,
and
are trying to impress Him by showing Him the people who study
laws and regulations in their
and
and

In the next פסוק, the רעה realizes that it is true that flowers have sprouted forth and that she has done something of which
she can be proud. The flowers help bring fertility and are the subject of discussion in

In this story, asks for some of the אוים that

Obviously, these flowers must have
meant something special to רחל, since otherwise, she would not
have given up time with her beloved in order to attain them. On the other hand, there is a negative feeling and attitude about what רחל did, so there is also a negative aspect to the דודאים. The words דודאים could either refer to the sweet smell of the flowers on the tree, or they could refer to the fallen flowers rotting on the ground giving off a putrid odor. Similarly, י"רש explains that the דודאים could refer to the righteous and to the wicked, who both decide to call out to יהוה. Even the wicked have love for יהוה. It is just hidden in their hearts.

Flowers appear throughout the love story of Shir haShirim. Much can be learned about the intricacies and cycles of יהוה and בני ישראל’s relationship by tracing the occurrences of the flowers. They are often compared to שושנים because their מצוות smell sweet like roses. בני ישראל want to be nurtured and have everything come easily, but, instead, יהוה warns them of difficulties ahead. When they overcome challenges, they become even more beloved in His eyes. Roses also emphasize the loyal, singular connection between יהוה and בני ישראל and the way that יהוה cares for בני ישראל like a shepherd cares for his flocks. Although İyi and/Dk are not always together, there is always communication. There is also praise for each other. בני ישראל call יהוה’s words that are delivered through His נביאים roses, while יהוה collects the תפילות and מצוות of בני ישראל. Throughout the history represented in Shir haShirim, both ל andישי analyze their relationship and see how they can improve it and cause it to blossom and bring forth beautiful flowers.
A True

contains the love story between a man and a woman, illustrating the struggles within their relationship, as well as the potential for an intimate connection. The can also be viewed as the trials and tribulations of relationship with is constantly in midst, but they neglect to acknowledge His presence. fail to relate to in the proper fashion; they encounter difficulty and punishment. seek stability and permanence from , who provides for their every need.

Throughout uses metaphors to refer to the male and female, namely and , each connoting a different aspect of their relationship. The female calls out to her lover, "Tell me, You whom my soul loves: Where will you graze your flock? Where will you rest them in the afternoon?" The female refers to her lover as her shepherd. She desires guidance and direction. She appears helpless without her male companion. explains how compare themselves to 's flock of sheep. ' acts as their shepherd, watching over them and guiding them. A shepherd feeds its sheep and provides them with nurture and care. admit to that they need guidance and stability. want permanent shelter under 's protection. refers to

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

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2
or any difficult time period.  

Similarly, later, the female again refers to her lover as a shepherd: "My lover is mine and I am his, the shepherd among the roses". The female emphasizes the intimate bond she feels with her male counterpart. She then reiterates that he is her shepherd and subjects herself to his control.  

The shepherd-flock relationship holds significance because 's greatest leader, , started out as a shepherd. proves himself worthy as the leader of by caring for his father-in-law's sheep. The mentions that when was shepherding the flock of in the desert, one kid ran away
and found a pool of water from which to drink. When he reached the kid, he said, “I didn’t know that you ran away because of thirst. You must be tired.” He lifted the kid, placed it on his shoulders, and carried it back. Once he saw this, He said, “You have such mercy on sheep and therefore deserve to also shepherd My sheep, the בֵּהָר צָאָה.” When he saw the kid, he said, “I didn’t know that you ran away because of thirst. You must be tired.” He lifted the kid, placed it on his shoulders, and carried it back. Once he saw this, He said, “You have such mercy on sheep and therefore deserve to also shepherd My sheep, the בני ישראל.”

He serves as an understanding and merciful leader to the בני ישראל. He escorts them out of slavery in מצרים, and guides them throughout the מדבר. Demonstrating his leadership abilities in a war against עמלק, he ascends to the top of a hill with אהרון and חור. When he lifts his hands, the בני ישראל succeed in battle and when his hands lower, עמלק succeeds. His hands become heavy so each support one hand. They also place a stone under him so he can sit.

Similarly, when he appears to him for the first time, He speaks from a סנה. י”רש comments that he specifically spoke from a סנה because עמו אנכי בצרה, He is together with בני ישראל in their צער.
The Madrasah elaborates that 'יהוה was telling 'משה that just like 'בני ישראל are immersed in the deep pain of slavery, so is He immersed in the pain of a narrow, sharp place of thorns. 'יהוה feels the pain of His nation like a shepherd relates to his flock of sheep. Both 'יהוה and 'משה share this in their ability to relate to their “sheep” in their time of need.

Shepherds also put their flock’s needs ahead of their own needs. Once 'משה accepts the fact that he will not remain the leader of 'שראלבני י in his role as the leader of 'שראלבני י, he submits a request to 'יהוה. The fact that 'משה asks for a successor at the end of his life indicates the level of commitment he exercises as the “shepherd” of his flock. י"רש quotes the Madrasah that explains this request by 'משה as 'שבחן של צדיקים. At the time he is dying, 'משה abandons his own needs and busies himself with the needs of the nation. Additionally, 'משה not only asks for a successor, but more specifically he addresses 'יהוה as 'אלוקי רוחות, 'י"רש, quoting the Madrasah, explains how this description hints to the type of leader 'יהוה should appoint. 'משה tells 'יהוה that because 'יהוה comprehends the minds of all of 'בני ישראל, He should appoint a leader who can relate to every member of the nation. Just as a shepherd guides and focuses on every individual sheep, 'משה wants the next leader of 'בני ישראל to connect to every Jew on an individual level.

11 Madrasah (שמות פרק יד): "ולמה מתוך הסנה ולא מתוך אילן גדול ולא מתוך תמרה אמר הקב: ("שמות פרק יד)מדרש תנחומא הם נתונים בשעבוד אף אני בסנה ממקום צר לפיכך מתוך ( תהלים צא)כתבתי בתורה עמו אנכי בצרה". הסנה שכלו קוצים
12 מדרש תנחומא (שמות פרק יד): "והמאמר שמארא ליו טושארון מאמירותangu
13 ר"ש (במדבר, כז): "ולמה אמר אמר לפניו רבך – אלהי הרוחות ("במדבר, כז)י"רשוראה "]. מניחין צרכן ועוסקין בצרכי צבור ככלי מלא וגדוש ומלאו ה אמר לו וסמכת את ידך והוא עשה בשתי ידיו ועשאו "שהקב. ממה שנצטווה".חכמתו בעין יפה
14 ר"ש (במדבר, כז): "כל אחד ואחד ואינן דומיין זה לשון מנה عليهم מנהיג שיהא סובל כל אחד ואחד לפי דעתו".
משה asks to not allow בני ישראל to be רועה אשר אין להם רועה. יז, במדבר כז

משה recognizes the importance of a leading force to guide spiritually and provide a sense of stability. Without this figure, בני ישראל would fall apart into a state of confusion and conflict. Just as sheep lack purpose and motivation without a shepherd, so too a nation lacks direction and inspiration without a leader.

続 calls on us to have a relationship with the ultimate Shepherd, רועה כלביה. When the female calls her lover a רועה, יז, she desires permanent care and protection. In הנד, we pray to יז, our Shepherd, to provide for us spiritually and physically. We throw our troubles upon Him, hoping He will feel our pain and respond just like a shepherd who understands the needs of each of his sheep. We yearn for an intimate connection with יז and strive to recognize His presence within our lives. This is what the shepherd-sheep metaphor represents. We ultimately aspire to feel and acknowledge יז’s Divine Protection and thereby build upon our personal connection with our Shepherd.
maheshb ha-ma'ashesh
begins with a list of blessings and rewards that will befall them if they follow ה'’s commandments. It then lists the curses and punishments that will befall them if they don’t follow ה’’s commandments. If one takes a close look at the פסוקים, one notices that the blessings and rewards that are promised for following ה’’s commandments are solely material and physical. For example, it says:

1

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While all these blessings are really important and certainly wonderful, why is there no mention of any spiritual blessing and reward that come from following ה’’s commandments? The רמב״ן answers that all of these blessings are general, encompassing material and physical rewards. He explains that the blessings are not specific to following ה’’s commandments, but are rather general blessings that are available to all people, regardless of whether or not they follow ה’’s commandments. This is because the blessings are not connected to any particular act or commandment, but rather to the inherent goodness and beauty of the world.

The רמב״ן argues that the blessings and rewards are not unique to the Jewish people, but are shared by all people, regardless of their faith or belief. He points out that the blessings are not focused on material wealth or physical health, but rather on the inherent goodness and beauty of the world. This is because the blessings are not connected to any particular act or commandment, but rather to the inherent goodness and beauty of the world. This is because the blessings are not connected to any particular act or commandment, but rather to the inherent goodness and beauty of the world. This is because the blessings are not connected to any particular act or commandment, but rather to the inherent goodness and beauty of the world.
the רוחה that are mentioned here are actually נסים נסתרים. It is obvious that one who occupies himself with התורה study and will receive spiritual reward; the revolutionary hüd that is mentioned here is that not only does following Torah and mitzvot provide spiritual rewards, but physical and material rewards as well. Logically, does it make sense that an entire nation should triumph over all their enemies, even though their enemies are much larger? Is it comprehensible that every single person in an entire nation of people will be completely satiated? Yet, this is what God promises us if we follow in His ways! It is truly unbelievable the נסים that בני ישראל merit when they follow ה׳ in His ways!

We clearly see the tremendous power and influence of תורה and mitzvot. The פרשת begins with the words, "אם בחקותי תלכו". רש"י says3 that this specifically refers to engaging in תורה study. However, רש"י does not just say ללמוד תורה; rather, he uses the שפת of עמלים בתורה. It does not mean to just learn תורה, but rather to toil in it. We can’t just learn רוחי passively; rather, תורה needs to be the center of our lives. We need to truly breathe תורה and integrate it into our every action since it is the essence of our being.

There is no excuse for not learning תורה. The גמרא relates that the poor man, the rich man, and the רשע will be asked by שם (שם פסוק כגש) that: "Because all will see and know, that the גויים will ask about whom he did evil to His אבות them, and they will say to the people of Their אבות: Why did You do evil to Your פִּקְדָן?" The poor man, the rich man, and the רשע will be asked by שם that: "Because all will see and know, that the גויים will ask about whom he did evil to His אבות them, and they will say to the people of Their אבות: Why did You do evil to Your פִּקְדָן?"

Rabbi Zvi Akiva says that this refers specifically to Torah study. However, Rabbi Zvi Akiva does not just say ללמוד תורה; rather, he uses the שפת of עמלים בתורה. It does not mean to just learn תורה, but rather to toil in it. We cannot just learn תורה passively; rather, תורה needs to be the center of our lives. We need to truly breathe娞 and integrate it into our every action since it is the essence of our being.

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the heavenly, “Why did you not study the Torah?” The poor man will respond, “I was poor and busy supporting myself.” He will then be asked, “Were you poorer that day who was despite how poor he was?” Each day would only earn a small coin, half of which he would give to the watchman who stood guard by the ba’i. The rich man will respond that he did not study the Torah because he was very wealthy and involved with matters of business. He will then be asked, “Were you richer than who had a thousand cities and a thousand ships, and each day he would take a sack of flour on his shoulders and go from city to city and province to province in order to study the Torah?” The rich will claim that he did not learn the Torah because he was handsome and busy with his labors. He will then be asked, “Were you more handsome than who was extremely handsome and tempted by , yet overcame his desires? Therefore the poor will be punished because of , the rich will be penalized because of , and the evil will be punished because of .

 says that in order to have a true understanding of how much we need to devote ourselves to Torah and mitzvot,

"A man is not considered holy unless he is the poor yeled ha’anan who engages in Torah study despite how poor he is." The heavenly questions the man, "Why didn’t you study Torah on that day when you were so poor?" Each day, the yeled ha’anan would only earn a small coin, half of which he would give to the watchman who stood guard by the ba’i. The rich man, however, will argue that he didn’t study Torah because he was very wealthy and involved with matters of business. He will then be asked, "Were you richer than who had a thousand cities and a thousand ships, and each day he would take a sack of flour on his shoulders and go from city to city and province to province in order to study Torah?" The rich will claim that he didn’t learn the Torah because he was handsome and busy with his labors. He will then be asked, "Were you more handsome than who was extremely handsome and tempted by , yet overcame his desires? Therefore the poor will be punished because of , the rich will be penalized because of , and the evil will be punished because of .

Rabbi says that in order to have a true understanding of how much we need to devote ourselves to Torah and mitzvot,

"A man is not considered holy unless he is the poor who engages in Torah study despite how poor he is."
we must look at the rationalizations given by the רעג, עני, and רשע.
One may think that the עני’s excuse is quite justifiable. He was poor and needed to support himself and his family; surely one is required to support his family. However, the גמרא is not trying to refute that argument. One is definitely required to support his family. Rather, the גמרא is highlighting how little one needs to support himself and his family. הלל רמא that he received so little money and was able to give half of it away for הלל תורה! This is a tremendous lesson for us in the twenty-first century. Many people have become obsessed with money. It is simply out of control! There is a fine line between making money to support oneself and one’s family, and to truly being obsessed with attaining all material pleasures and physical pursuits. We need to seriously reevaluate our lives and priorities to make sure our goals are truly לשה.

The רשע rationalizes that he is unable to overcome the powerful temptations to which he is subjected. These rationalizations are not valid as יוסף was subjected to the great temptation of אשת פוטיפר and was able to not only overcome it, but spend his time in עוסק בתורה.

Once again, we can learn a tremendous lesson. We are all subjected to many temptations of our יצור. Our world is unfortunately full of גשמיות and physicality. Many times we are overcome with desires and temptations that are detrimental to our נפש. We may want to rationalize that we can not overcome these temptations for our desires and הרע יצור are too strong, but these are not valid rationalizations. Rather, we must find a way to overcome our evil inclination and be עוסק בתורה. One of the best ways to ensure this is by placing ourselves in a good environment, surrounded by people who are truly engaged in תורה.⁶

⁶ ראיה רבה להלכה ולתורת דעות, א.
The ילקוט לקח טוב brings down a משל about a group of people sitting around the table. They didn’t notice any difference between themselves as they were all performing the same actions of sitting, eating, and drinking. However, when they all finished eating, all but one person rose to leave. At that moment, they then realized how different that man was. He didn’t rise because he had no legs!

זאב נחום רב, the son of the סבא מקלם, says that this משל teaches us about the nature of man. When friends are together in ישיבה and learning, one doesn’t really notice the difference between them. One seems to be doing the same activities as the other. The real test really comes after they leave ישיבה and each goes off on his own way. It is then that one sees who has the “legs” to stand strong to follow a life of תורה and who doesn’t. This is what אם בחקותי תלכו means. We must have the “legs” to walk and live a תורה life even in a world that at times places obstacles in our path.
The Alternate Window

An Analysis of Studying Secular Subjects and Involvements in the Outside World

A lone pedestrian ambles down a neatly paved walkway, absorbing the view of homes alongside as he passes. The first home is grand with windows that reach from floor to ceiling; the sunlight floods its elegant quarters decorated with elaborate paintings and trinkets. The next home is slightly smaller than the first, with fewer windows and less complexity. Home after home is smaller and smaller. Windows are increasingly scarce. Finally, the very last home on the block is devoid of any opening at all. The pedestrian, perplexed at the lack of even a minute aperture for a small breeze, continues on his way.

As in all aspects of reality, there are always decisions one must make regarding the way in which he leads his life. Each different lifestyle, each diverse style of home has positive and negative aspects. One must weigh these facets with extreme caution. One has the option to set himself aside, completely devoted to study. He will be surrounded by only the four walls of his home, unaware of anything beyond them. In contrast, he may allow the walls of his home to boast expansive windows looking upon the outside world. The sights of secular society will flood his dwelling, and in turn, his very essence will be significantly altered. Balancing these two extremes can be accomplished, but is an arduous task. Similarly, one must ask to what extent should one expose himself to secular knowledge? How many windows exposing the wisdom of the should a Jewish home contain? Should time, better spent on learning, be sacrificed to study other modes of knowledge?
Before exploring the Halachik opinions regarding secular studies, one must first comprehend the value and need to engage in external culture. There are many such instances in Tanach.

אברהם אבינו, growing up in a home occupied with idol worship, was forced to contest the foolish methods of servitude to inanimate objects. Therefore, אברהם became skilled in combating the unreasonable actions of idolatry and was able to draw many people to a monotheistic mentality. 1 Evidently, his exposure to the outside world supported אברהם's quest in discovering and strengthening his belief in G-d. However, there are instances when a person is meant to remain cordoned off from worldly traditions. שרה understood that ישמעאל threatened the purity of יצחק. Therefore, שרה drove both הגר and her son away, thus preventing ישמעאל from influencing her precious child. 2 אברהם could not comprehend raising a son who would not attempt survival in the outside world while maintaining the ethics of Judaism. Therefore, אברהם did not regard הגר and her child as a danger to his son's growth. 3

1 ביתין (הלכות מבית ליהודה פרק ב': "הלכה גהלכות עבודת כוכבים פרק א') 'ומבו הביא ררחכי הגוזר תמיד וללא יהיה לו מנהיג קטן והתחיל לחשוב ביום ובלילה והיו תמיה היאך אפשר יהיה הגלגל הזה נוהג? מה יסבב אותו כי אי אפשר שיסבב את עצמו ולא היה לו מלמד ולא מודיע דבר אלא מושקע באור כשדים בין עובדי כוכבים הטפשים ואביו ואמו וכל העם עובדי כוכבים היא עובד עמהם ולבו משוטט ומבין עד שם אלוה אחד הוא מנהיג הגלגל הוא ברא שהשיג דרך האמת והבין קו הצדק מתבונתו הנכונה וידע הכל ואין בכל הנמצא אלוה חוץ ממנו וידע שכל העולם טועים ודבר שגרם להם לטעות זה שעובדים את הכוכבים ואת הצורות עד שאבד האמת מדעתם ובן ארבעים שנה הכיר אברהם את בוראו כיון שהכיר וידע לערוך דין עמהם ולומר שאין זו דרך האמת שאתם הולכים בה התחיל להשיב תשובות לעונים כשדים וшибור הצלמים והתחיל להודיע לעם שאין ראוי lavor lavoro אלוהי העולם ולו ראוי להשתחוות ולהקריב ולנסוך כדי שיכירוהו כל הברואים הבאים וראוי לאבד ולשבר כל הצורות כדי שלא יטעו בהן כל העם כמו לוהי אלא אלו כיון שגבר עליהם בראהו בקש המלך להורגו ונהגו לו נס אלו שמדמים שאין שם א.ויצא לחרן והתחיל לעמוד ולקרוא בקול גדול לכל העולם ולהודיעם שיש שם אלוה אחד לכל העולם ולו ראוי lavor ויהי מהלך וקורא ומקבץ העם מעיר לעיר ומממלכה לממלכה עד שהגיע לארץ כנען והוא אל עולם. כיון היו העם מתקבצו אליו ושואלים לו על דבריו היה מודיע 'שם בשם הקורא שנאמר ויקרא לכל אחד ואחד כפוף דעתו עד שבירהו לדרך האמת עד שנתקבצו אליו אלפים ורבבות ואשבי ישיביהו עיצה בנו ושתל בלבם העירה הגדול הזה וחבר בו ספרים והודיעו ליצחק בנו.

2 בראשית (א), ז'-'ט, כא)בראשית 'ותאמר לאברהם גרש: "ותרא שרה את בן הגר המצרי אשר ילדה לאברהם מצחק: "(י,ויא)בראשית "האמה הזאת ואת בנה כי לא יירש בן האמה הזאת עם בני עם יצחק".

3 בראשית (א), ז'-'ט, י'"יד אחרeddarioskuni אבודות על אד流逝ב.
intuition, perceived an essential difference between her son’s and husband’s personalities. Perhaps, this was because Ḥiṣḥ was destined to be an olam tamim and therefore required greater shielding from the outside world, just like he was never allowed to leave Ěretz Yisrael.

Evidently, there can be no general rule regarding secular exposure. Each person according to his position in life must ask himself if exposure is appropriate. Initially, it appeared that Ḥiṣḥ would lead a secluded life. Yet, Ḥiṣḥ also possessed the strength to live in a house with big windows. He lived in the company of people from the moment of conception, his first exposure to outside culture. Furthermore, he spent twenty years working for Ḥab

The sons, Ḥisḥer and Ḥivvolon, had a relationship which illustrates the balance of exposure and closure a Jewish community must have. Ḥivvolon, who had tremendous ability in Torah, was supported by his merchant brother. Why was Ḥivvolon not outraged at his inability to also be immersed in a secluded Torah life? After all, if Ḥivvolon was a truly spiritual person, driven by the Torah values, would he not also desire to learn constantly, illuminating the world with...
G-d’s truth? Why explain that צבון implicitly understood that with his vocation, he would enable his brother to learn constantly. With his wealth supporting תלמוד תורה, every action he performed to enhance the success of his business was also considered a merit. צבון shared the merit acquired through תלמוד תורה, despite the external superficiality of his daily actions. From this example, one can clearly perceive the necessity of both seclusion and exposure, which together create a stable basis upon which the world can be sustained.

Yet again, this notion is evident when evaluating the life of יעקב’s beloved son, יוסף. Joseph led his life in מצרים’s repulsive culture. He controlled Egypt’s food supplies during the years of plenty and famine. This position required close contact with secular society on a daily basis. Through all these trials and tribulations, יוסף ingeniously maintained his Yiddishkeit. The importance of filtering one’s self from all the influences of the outside world is visibly depicted by יוסף. Though individuals must be involved with the גוים, like יוסף they must shield their souls, not allowing any negative influences to manipulate their beings.

Furthermore, before משה took the Jewish people out of מצרים, he acted as a diplomat in the king’s court. Without Moses aggressively combating פרעה’s decrees, battling for the rights of his people, and delivering the מכות, the Jewish people could not have exited מצרים with the same radiant flare. משה’s leadership skills and involvement in the political situation was essential.
Now that it has been established that even the Jew’s greatest leaders were involved in the outside world, one must delve further into the matter regarding the wisdom of secular studies. May an individual study such subjects? If so, which subjects are permissible?

Secular wisdom, also called חכמות חיצוניות or חכמות אומות העולם, is surprisingly mentioned nowhere in the תורה. However, one verse in דברים 12 alludes to this topic. One can glean from here the concept of the תורה’s priority over the wisdom of other nations. תורה should be the primary pursuit of knowledge in one’s life, and should not be made secondary to unrelated wisdoms. Furthermore, בן בג says, "Swerve not from the תורה, for there is nothing that exceeds it." Undoubtedly, other wisdoms do not contain the same significance as the תורה. However, the knowledge of secular wisdom plays an imperative role in this world. The א"רמ allows infrequent study of secular subjects. "One is permitted to study the secular wisdoms on an irregular basis as long as he totally refrains from studying heretical books." The א"רמ appears tremendously reluctant to allow a Jew to devote much time to secular studies. As soon as the study of these subjects develops into regular routine, the individual has entered hazardous ground.

Numerous sources in the תלמוד, ראשונים and אחרונים strongly encourage the study of secular subjects. For instance, צאלירב יעקב פרוונ relates, “There is not one instance in the ... Talmud ... where ...
criticize any wisdom”. Moreover, Rav Menahem of Liadi states, “It is well known that each of the seven wisdoms is a ladder on which one can rise to Divine wisdom.” Furthermore, Rabbi Yehudah the Naftali, a student of the Vilna Gaon, quotes in the name of his Rebbi, “that all the sciences are necessary for our holy Torah and are included in it. In order to understand and attain the sublime wisdom, one must also study the seven wisdoms of the lower world of nature.”

The Sanz dividers secular subjects into four categories. The first, man’s physical environment, must be studied in order to identify and love G-d. Secondly, subjects considered as דבר מלתה which aid an individual in the study of דורות, should be studied in order that one can perfect his performance of the ת замечаות. ثנאים. רבי Menahem of Liadi states, “It is well known that each of the seven wisdoms is a ladder on which one can rise to Divine wisdom.” Furthermore, Rabbi Yehudah the Naftali, a student of the Vilna Gaon, quotes in the name of his Rebbi, “that all the sciences are necessary for our holy Torah and are included in it. In order to understand and attain the sublime wisdom, one must also study the seven wisdoms of the lower world of nature.”

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Many rabbis maintain that studying the permissible subjects are not only acceptable, but also an obligation. Rabbi Menahem of Liadi states, “We are obligated... to investigate the creatures of this world and derive from them proof of the wisdom of the creator...” Additionally, the Sanz states, “What is the path to love and fear G-d? When a man contemplates the remarkable creations of G-d...” The Sanz incorporates history amid the studies that are required in order to understand ‘ה י’s ways. “Knowledge of the
history of the world enlightens the path of the wise man....” Furthermore, secular subjects immensely aid an individual to perform the מצוות. As the Vilna Gaon states, “According to how much a man lacks knowledge of other wisdoms, correspondingly he will lack a hundred fold of התורה wisdom.” The study of medicine is specifically permitted in the תורה itself and according to many authorities, is a great מצוות.

Another inquiry arises as to how much time one may spend studying secular subjects. Many authorities declare that one should not take away time that could be better spent learning תורה. The רמב"ם’s ideal distribution of time includes three hours of work and nine hours of learning. notes that if one cannot learn, he should support other people in their learning. The อ”ר elicits that “It is as if he learned himself.” affirms that studying secular subjects to proficiently learn a trade is essentially a מצוות. However, if a boy demonstrates great capabilities in learning, his parents should have him dedicate all his time...
to the learning of Ivrit. One must always maintain an attitude of Ivrit’s priority, keeping in mind that secular subjects are only useful to enhance Ivrit knowledge or earn a living. Only then is one not considered as having been מבטל תורה. Rav Elchanan Vesserman points out that studying secular subjects simply out of pleasure constitutes ביטול Ivrit. Furthermore, a habitual schedule would give secular studies the same recognition and importance as Ivrit which is הנע דעות Ivrit. Rav Avraham Isaac Blouch cautions, “The Ivrit must come first.” This is true even for women. Secular studies should be considered no more than the study of a trade. Rav Moshe Feinstein forbade students to study secular subjects since the added burden of secular studies will prevent them from becoming true תלמידי תורה, which requires all הנפש והמה. Furthermore, the deep attachment to secular knowledge may lead to admission at a secular college ישיש שם כל התועבות. Conversely, Rav Shimon Raphael Hirsh advocates the teaching of secular studies to children, coining the phrase ארץ תורה עם דרך ארץ, with regard to education. This idiom initiated the modern approach to early Jewish education. The Ivrit עם דרך ארץ approach combats the rebellious and heretical thoughts that stream out of every college campus and each contemporary book store.

As the lone pedestrian concludes his leisurely stroll along the block, he fails to notice the size of the skylight each home contained. In some of the largest homes, the radiance from above was worthless due to the ample luminosity streaming in through the colossal windows. However, in the windowless home, the glow from above was the solitary source of light. On the one hand, this tiny shelter basked solely in heavenly glory. Conversely, the inhabitance will never have the pleasure of glimpsing the beauty
and intricacy of the world G-d created. Each way to live may be correct depending on the task of each individual. One must learn to balance both worlds, using the pleasures in this world to enhance his share in the world to come.
Proper Attitudes towards ארץ ישראל

The Marilim had the opportunity to exalt ארץ ישראל, but instead they spoke disparagingly about it and said ארץ אוכלת יושביה היא.1 The מדרש gives a meshulash. A king selects a nice present to give to the person he loves. Another person tells the king’s close friend that the gift is awful, and thereby insults the king himself!

Because of their negative reports, the Marilim were severely punished and died in the desert.2 Similarly, the בני ישראל who believed their report were also doomed to die in the desert.3 Contrary to the Marilim, who praised ארץ ישראל, יהת, who praised ארץ ישראל, were rewarded and entered ארץ ישראל.

From the spies we learn the seriousness of speaking negatively about ארץ ישראל and by inference we also see the importance of speaking in a positive way about the Land.

The book of אסתר, as the king of סנחריב, a name showing great power. Why? The תנובה explains that סנחריב received this title as a reward for not speaking גנות about ארץ ישראל. סנחריב, a non-Jew, received a glorious title by merely abstaining from uttering גנות about ארץ ישראל.

Rabbi Moshe Tzuriel notes that one is also prohibited to compare ארץ ישראל to the wonders of other countries. סנחריב was rewarded for saying עד בואי ולקחתי אתכם אל ארץ כארצכם, whereas בני ישראל were punished because they compared ארצכם to אדרת המלכים of other countries.4

1 ve'la, במדבר יג
2 בתור את שלח (משנה א): "... שאמר מרדכי (ברשימא): "... ונתנה המשנה_namespace="default" 3 לאמר שלח במדבר יד
4 סנהדרין (דף צד)
5 רבי יוחנן מאי מה זכה אותו רשע לקרותו אסנפר ר"א ויקירא והותב המו בקריה די שמרין (: "י, ד)езרא
6 סנהדרין (דף צד)
7 אסתר א, ג: "... והজער תכשיט בנה מעלה אחריםomensארון
8 יらせיות (ברשימא): "... ואמר רבי יוחנן מאי מה זכה אותו רשע לקרותו אסנפר ר"א ויקירא והותב המו בקריה די שמרין "... סנהדרין (דף צד)
9 אסתר א, ג: "... והזער תכשיט בנה מעלה אחריםomensארון
10 אסתר א, ג: "... ואמר רבי יוחנן מאי מה זכה אותו רשע לקרותו אסנפר ר"א ויקירא והותב המו בקריה די שמרין "... סנהדרין (דף צד)
11 אסתר א, ג: "... והזער תכשיט בנה מעלה אחריםomensארון
12 אסתר א, ג: "... ואמר רבי יוחנן מאי מה זכהjerne סנהדרין (דף צד)
punished for comparing ארצ� ישראל to another country; why would one lead to a punishment and the other to a reward?

Both statements equate ארץ ישראל to another country; why would one lead to a punishment and the other to a reward? 

Rav Zechariah answers that everyone has a bias that their own country is the greatest. By admitting that another country is equal to theirs, they are in fact acknowledging that without this bias, the other country would be greater. By not saying גנות, סנחריב was really elevating ארץ ישראל and therefore merited receiving the great title of אסנפר. However, when בני ישראל equated ארץ ישראל to a foreign country, they were lowering ארץ ישראל. Jews must feel connected to ארץ ישראל and treat her as their own land with all the respect she deserves.

Rav Zechariah quotes a story about how רבי אמי and רבי אסי, who lived in ארץ ישראל, would relocate their תלמידים to different places in the בית מדרש each season to ensure that the students were not too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter. The רבני took countless hours away from their תלמוד תורה so that the students would be more comfortable while learning and not complain nor mention anything disparaging about ארץ ישראל. Once again, this story shows us the importance of how we speak about ארץ ישראל.

יוסף merited to be buried in ארץ ישראל because he made it known that he was an עברי. He introduced himself in prison to פרעה's personal cup bearer and said כי גונב גונבתי מארץ העברים. Additionally, אשת פוטיפר identifies יוסף as an איש עברי, however, was referred to as an איש מצרי and does not attempt to specifically label himself as an עברי.
Proper Attitudes to ארץ ישראל

... made swear to bury him in ארץ ישראל. יעקב impressed upon יוסף the strong connection that he constantly felt with ארץ ישראל. יעקב did not want to remain in Egypt and was very adamant about passing this message onto יוסף. fils. Yitschak inculcated his father's words and succeeded to pass this passion for ארץ ישראל down to his descendants, the בני צלפחד, who wished to inherit their father's land out of their love for ארץ ישראל. When יוסף presented himself as an איש עברי, he connected to ארץ ישראל and thus merited to be buried in the holy land of Israel just like his father, יעקב.

יוסף teaches us that every Jew belongs to ארץ ישראל; it is a part of who we are. We might be like משה, who was born in ל"ח, but we must identify ourselves with ארץ ישראל like יוסף because that is part of our essence and where we belong.

The רב רבא מאיר יחיאל מאָסַריאָדְמו answers why משה was punished and not allowed to enter ארץ ישראל for being called an איש מצרי instead of an איש עبري. It was not his fault that he was born in Egypt. It would not be right for him to lie about where he was from. The רֵעָדְמו answers that because 'יה' promised the land to אברהם and his descendants, משה, as well as all of בני ישראל, are connected to the land through this promise and are obligated to associate with it and even view themselves as residents of the Holy Land.

May we all succeed in internalizing love for ארץ ישראל as we strive to live in the Promised Land.
When one thinks about the concept of G-d testing man, one usually ponders the case of ואכזה. It is the epitome of all tests; the essence of man putting ‘רצון ה’ and ‘בטחון בה’ before his own desires. It was a test that was passed with flying colors. Abrams was a man who could not have children; but, after years of yearning, ו’ granted him a child, יצחק. The older his son became, the more attached ואברם became to him, thus making the command to kill his precious child all the more difficult. The Torah informs us that ואברם was testing ואברם. Only later when a מלאך commands him to not kill יצחק do we learn that the test was to show if ואברם was G-d-fearing or not. However, this is difficult to understand. Shouldn’t G-d know before the ואכזה that ואברם was a ירא אלקים? Didn’t everyone recognize ואברם’s tremendous יראת שמים?

The העמק דבר answers the last question with a משל. If a king would command one of the common people to go and slaughter his child, then the man would have no choice but to do as he
was told. He could try and protest, but then both he and the child would be killed. If, however, the king commanded one of his advisors with whom he was very close to go and slaughter his child, then the advisor would not necessarily have to listen at once. He could ask why the king wished for him to kill his child and gradually he may be able to change the king’s mind and persuade him to be merciful. Similarly, אברם was, אצלי, an advisor to ה and one would expect him to beg ה that he should not have to kill יצחק. However, אברם was on such a high spiritual level that despite his closeness with ה, he was able to have יראהbows like a commoner. This then was the נסיון of אברם אבינו.

The first question, however, remains. Why was it necessary for G-d who knows everything to test אברם? ה should have known אברם’s level of יראת שמים! אגר משער declares that ה only tests צדיקים as it says in תהלים, 4 צדיק יבחן ה. ה only tests those whom He knows will succeed. The test isn’t for ה, but for the one being tested. The tests transform the מיבחר, potential, into the מתן, action, to bring a person’s ability to fruition. Without any hardship, a person’s potential would lie dormant and never be actualized. As a result of the test, the person is able to receive reward for a מעשה טוב and not just for a לב טוב. 5

The ל"רמח expounds upon the idea that ה tests in order to reward people. He explains that there is a limit to man’s ability to...
attain perfection. After a certain point of trying, one reaches a level of שלמות and can then enjoy it forever. Thus there are two parts to man’s existence, earning reward and enjoying that reward.

The תלמוד states: that the period of time of good things is, as a general rule, always greater than bad. Therefore, the earning phase is limited, as 'ה sees fit, while the reward phase is unlimited. However, since the time to earn is limited, man must be challenged in order to make the most of this time. “The period of earning must therefore be one where the spiritual and physical are in constant strife”. Both the physical and spiritual aspects of man must “wage war” in order for man to gain reward. One cannot argue, though, that the spiritual should have an advantage over the physical because this would go against the “true purpose” of man that he should earn reward through his own effort.

Mankind exists at different stations in life for exactly this purpose. Each position is a test for the particular people that are in it. They have the ability to overcome these obstacles. For example, rich and poor exist to test man if he will display kindness or apathy. The wealthy are tested in what they will do with their wealth and how they will help the poor, while the poor are also tested in their own way. They face the test of being satisfied with what they have and not disregarding 'ה’s sovereignty in the world.
because of their lack. It is understandable, then, how everything in life is a test and can be geared toward good or toward bad. How each person arrives at his station in life depends on the spiritual Roots of that person. This distribution of challenges takes into account the true nature of all parties and circumstances. Only G-d, in His infinite wisdom, can allot challenges to each individual. Rav Dessler explains that each person has his own purpose in life, and G-d gives him each and every tool that he needs in order to fulfill his purpose, including the right amount and manner of tests. Rav Noach Orlowek asks how tests help one know what his task is. He answers that good indicators are frequency and intensity. If a test in a certain area happens very often or if it hits very hard it can mean that one’s purpose is in that area and that G-d wants something specific from that person.

As a result of the duality of man’s existence, having a time to earn and a time to receive, G-d created two worlds, ים ז(operator) and ים ב(operator). Since only exist in this world in order to give man an opportunity to earn, and everything in life is a test and can be geared toward good or toward bad, how each person arrives at his station in life depends on the spiritual Roots of that person. This distribution of challenges takes into account the true nature of all parties and circumstances. Only G-d, in His infinite wisdom, can allot challenges to each individual. Rav Dessler explains that each person has his own purpose in life, and G-d gives him each and every tool that he needs in order to fulfill his purpose, including the right amount and manner of tests. Rav Noach Orlowek asks how tests help one know what his task is. He answers that good indicators are frequency and intensity. If a test in a certain area happens very often or if it hits very hard it can mean that one’s purpose is in that area and that G-d wants something specific from that person.

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opportunity to figure out his purpose and to gain reward, so that he can have enjoyment in the next world.

'ה improves בני יישראל through many trials and tribulations. Success in these areas enables individuals and the גלל to garner merit from 'ה. For example, בני יישראל are told that if a נביא שקר arises in their midst, they should not listen to him,כי נесь 'ה אלהים והכותם, liền העש בציבור האב ותלוי בלבנו כל המושג in order to ascertain the level of their love for Him and what is truly in their hearts.11 'ה tests בני יישראל in order to improve בני ישראל through many trials and tribulations. Success in these areas enables individuals and the גלל to garner merit from 'ה.

For example, בני ישראל are told that if a נביא שקר arises in their midst, they should not listen to him,אלהיכם אתכם ' כי מנסה ה всё לבבכם ו菘 נפשכם אלהיכם' לדעת הישכם אוהבים את ה.11 'ה tests בני ישראל in order to ascertain the level of their love for Him and what is truly in their hearts.12 ר"ש explains that this test was to help the nation understand that it was the ג低いים to test בני ישראל. In the days of the שופטים, 'ה left some of the nations in ארץ ישראל to test the בני ישראל. ג"רלב comments that this test was to help the nation understand that it was the גל"ה of 'ה, and not בני ישראל' own strength, that won the wars with the nations who were living there.13 Furthermore, ר"רש adds that they actually rebelled against God and therefore required the test.

'ה also uses the גנין to test בני ישראל. In the days of the שופטים, 'ה left some of the nations in ארץ ישראל to test the בני ישראל. ג"רלב comments that this test was to help the nation understand that it was the גל"ה of 'ה, and not בני ישראל' own strength, that won the wars with the nations who were living there.14 Furthermore, ר"רש adds that they actually rebelled against God and therefore required the test.
A second level of the test was to see if בני ישראל would still be able to follow 'ה amidst the other nations, just as with עקידת יצחק, one may wonder, didn’t 'ה know if בני ישראל would follow Him or not? At least according to רמבון, the explanation that 'ה only tests צדיקים whom He knows will pass the test does not fit here. Instead, one may argue, that passing a נסיון can come in many forms. In our instance, because בני ישראל did not pass the test, this led to 'ה becoming angry at them and punishing them. This in turn spurred בני ישראל to do תשובה and to cry out to 'ה. They attained new heights of בדיקת המסדר. Thus, the test from 'ה eventually led to reward for בני ישראל, and as 'רמבון explained, that is exactly our goal in this world, to gain merit. No one would say that the test had negative results when looked upon from that angle.

In order to “shake them” into a proper awareness of G-d, man is tested because a reminder is often needed that 'ה is מלכי המלכים מלך and that our goal in life is to be עובדי 'ה to the best of our abilities. Humanity as a whole requires tests that come in the form of major life events, as well as minor tests, in order to “pull us out of our lethargic acquiescence to the material world”.

17 שפטים ב, ד, "יhook או נתינתם לנהל התשומת את נתינתם עד תכנית ויצרו את אתלאותם.
18 שפטים (ג, ח) "יhook אא� בישרואל ויסר בך מושיט שישים כל אוס נזר ויסר בך ישראל.
19 שפטים (נ, כ), "יhook אא� בישרואל ויסר בך מושיט שישים כל אוס נזר ויסר בך ישראל.
20 שפטים (ב, ג), "יhook אא� בישרואל אא� הורק בך מושיט לכל ישראל ויסר בך את תכנית ויצרו את אתלאותם.
21 נ主要从事 את.
In addition, these tests, depending on their origin and presentation, often teach us another very valuable lesson. Tests such as wars or natural disasters remind people that they cannot trust the government or the military to always protect them. The verse in תהלים 22 says: אל תבטוחו בנדיבים בבני אדם כאשר אין לו תשועה.

It is easy to fall into a form of slumber in the materialistic world. “Bad” things, life-altering events in which one has to stop and take stock of his life are really opportunities for a person to stop and think about ה’ and His greatness. When life is going smoothly, when all we have is “good” that is the time when we need to remember ה’ and thank Him for everything. However, that is when it is most people forget. Therefore, He presents us with tests in order to “wake us up” and give us a taste of the spirituality that our נשמות desire. We need to learn to take the tests that ה’ sends us and turn them around for the better, for our spiritual selves, to be able to better serve ה’.

Tests enable man to see the good that surrounds him and to enhance that goodness. Without a notion of pain, no one can truly experience pleasure for pleasure would just exist as a norm. Differentiation is needed in order to better appreciate the good we have. רמב״ג explains that ה’ accustomed בני ישראל to a hard life in the desert so that they could benefit from the wonders of ארץ ישראל to the fullest. One who is not aware of hardships will have a difficult time adjusting, even in a good land. In the desert, בני ישראל would get a little tired and frustrated from the traveling and wandering. In that way, when בני ישראל entered ארץ ישראל, the hard work that needed to be done would not seem impossible and the fact that they could rest permanently would be more than just an exciting idea. “To pass from weariness to rest is more pleasant..."
than to be constantly at rest.”

Indeed, the \textit{TORA} states that the purpose of \textit{אבות}’s journey in the desert was to bring good to them in the end, and to test \textit{בני ישראל} to have the strength to enter the land and fight for it. Adversity in life must be looked at within the context of the bigger picture, “for prosperity does away with courage, whereas a hard life and fatigue necessarily produce courage.” Ultimately, the bearers of burden have the most objective good in their lives.

\textit{רבינו הבאים} explains\textsuperscript{28} the verse \textit{למען ענותך ולמען נסותך להיטיבך באחריתך} differently. All the suffering in the desert was to test \textit{בני ישראל} and to fortify their \textit{בטחון} and \textit{אמונה} in \textit{יהוה}. Through the hardship, their \textit{עבודת היוה} would become natural and ingrained. Why does the \textit{TORA} then claim that \textit{מן} was a test\textsuperscript{30} if all \textit{בני ישראל}’s food was provided? \textit{רבינוداخل} answers\textsuperscript{31} that every day it was a test because each day they relied on \textit{מן}.
ные are often looked upon negatively. They are seen as punishments from 'ה or as an indifference of 'ה in our lives. Often when people are faced with trials and tribulations they will claim a 'ה of 'ה. Yet, despite the difficulty of a test, one should remember that 'ה tests בני ישראל for the good of the nation and the individual. Our reaction to the tests should help build our relationship with 'ה each and every day.
The Kiss of Death

At the end of the תורה, we are informed of the death of the greatest לם רבינו שמשה. How could somebody die “by the mouth of ה”?

What does this mean? How could somebody die “by the mouth of ה”? Does a mouth have the power to kill? The words ה(old testament) tell us that שמשה went up to הר נבו and die there. The Torah explains that שמשה died through a kiss.

What makes it such an enviable form of death is that the נפש offers no resistance as it leaves the body. It's as if the נפש, without the normal intermediary role of the מלאך המות, was removed. The גמרא describes כמות as the most desirable form of death, like removing a hair from milk. What makes it such an enviable form of death is that the נפש offers no resistance as it leaves the body. It's as if the נפש, without the normal intermediary role of the מלאך המות, was removed.
rushes out of this world to quickly enter the next.\(^6\) Rabbi Zvi Hirsh explains\(^7\) that the less a person attaches himself to his physical and material surroundings, the easier it will be for the נשמא to part from its body, and experience a מיתת נשיקה.

However, the more a person sins and succumbs to his תאוות, then the tighter a connection the נשמא will develop with theגוף and with the גשמי, and the easier it will be for the נשמא to experience a מיתת נשיקה.\(^8\) Rabbi Zvi Hirsh writes that a person’s values from נפש do not automatically change when he dies. A person who spends his life associating with, and obsessing over גשמי items, will still have those obsessions in נפש for a long time.

In the modern, secular world around us, how involved and attached are we to the surrounding גשמי? For example, do we really see טובים ימים as new opportunities to connect to ה“הקב? It is very difficult to maintain a healthy balance between spirituality and physicality, but when we do a חשבון הנפש and analyze our actions, we should witness an apparent shift toward theروحני side.
of the scale. Otherwise, we are too involved in the materialism around us.

So often, we live our lives around the physical pleasures of this world and forget why we're here. We disregard the real significance of the world. Our нешmah slowly gets more and more attached to the physical world around us. When we dedicate such a huge part of our lives to physicality, the нешmah clings to this world and it becomes difficult to enter the Next World. We compare this resistance to trying to remove thorns from wool. The нешmah does not want to give up the גשמיות of this world. For people like מְשָה, אָהָרְון, and מְרָם who died 'על פי ה' , the нешmah had no pain or objections as it left the world to return to its Creator. What will our нשמות feel as they leave this world after 120 years? Will the journey to the Next World be difficult, like removing thorns from wool or, like מְשָה רבן, easy and quick, like removing hair from milk?
FACULTY
Women’s Participation in נורח חנוכה

As a general principle, הלכה absolves women from time-bound מצוות. However, the Rabbis stated that women are obligated to fulfill three distinctly time-bound מצוות as a result of their having taken part in the miracle memorialized by those commandments, These three are נורח חנוכה, פורים, and ארבע כוסות. In the following pages, I will focus on a מחלוקת between י”ר and תוספות concerning the definition of שאף הן היו тому הנס as it specifically relates to חנוכה. After analyzing this disagreement, I will discuss some of its halachic implications.

שאף הן היו тому הנס

The three time-bound מצוות, פורים, נר חנוכה and ארבע כוסות, are rabbinic institutions commemorating historical events. The logic behind the maxim שאף הן היו тому הנס as justification for women’s halachic obligation seems to be that if one participates in a miraculous event, then they must then join in the religious commemoration of that experience. Therefore, if women participated in the struggle against the Greeks that led to the establishment of חנוכה, then they became obligated to fulfill the religious obligations stemming from the victory. The level of women’s involvement in the salvation may also influence the character of their halachic obligation.

1 See משנה קידושין פרק א משנה ז.
2 See אבות תומא ע”ב for פורים and פסחים דף קח for ארבע כוסות.
3 See Uri Erlich, "שאף הן היו тому הנס – לא נותרה על עשה שרווניות תשלסהלנה, ל’א קל.” p. 144, who expounds on the correlation between historical action and religious requirement in our context.
Rabbinic literature associates three heroines with the חנוכה story. The first is the woman whose seven sons were killed by Antiochus for not following his order to violate תורה prohibitions. She resists the king till the last, sacrificing her children and ultimately herself for her faith and commitment to God. This account is first related in the apocryphal work, Maccabees, circa 143 B.C.E.

The second heroine is יהודה, who seduced a Greek general and killed him, thus saving her city from destruction. This account is loosely based on the apocryphal work of ספר יהודה. There is no mention of ספר יהודה in Tannaic literature though the story later found its way into the medieval midrashic compilation of מדרש לchanukah.

The third female חנוכה heroine is the Hasmonean sister, sometimes referred to as יוחנן כהן גדולבת, whose story is first found in מדרש לchanukah. The מדרש relates a Greek decree that any woman engaged to be married must first succumb to rape by the local Greek official. This decree stood for three years and eight months.

4 2 Maccabees 7:1 and יוסיפון relate that the king ordered the boys to eat pig. Later rabbinic sources (see below note 5) change the prohibition to idol worship.

5 2 Maccabees 7

6 Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ca. 215-164 B.C.E.) was the king during the Hasmonean revolt and fits the story as it is related in 2 Maccabees and later in יוסיפון. There are many versions of this story throughout rabbinic and non-rabbinic literature. For example see מדרש איכה ג and także שמעוני איכה, תלמוד בבלי גיטין דף נז, אליהו רבה ל, תכ/מדרש איכה א, ילקוט שמעוני כי תבוא כו, תתרכט, 4 Maccabees 8-12. Though many subsequent retellings of the story associate it with the Roman persecutions following the destruction of the Second Temple, it is clear that it originates during the Greek attacks on Judaism in the second century B.C.E.

7 It is relatively clear now that ספר יהודה is not chronologically related to the Chanukkah story. Rather it takes place during the Persian reign in Israel, between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C.E. See Y.M. Grinz, ספר יהודה, 1957, p. 17.

8 See Grinz,ibid, pp. 196-208.

9 מדרש לוחות, אוצר הדרישות (יאנסטס), כף קוף
until the daughter of the High Priest, who was to be led to the Greek official, bared herself in public while bemoaning the people’s indifference to her plight. Her protest, however, led to the revolt and ultimate salvation of the Jews in Israel. Her act is thus credited with instigating the Hasmonean uprising. These, then, are three women who in Jewish tradition take a very active role in upholding the faith and standing strong in the face of persecution.\footnote{It is worth reiterating that none of these stories is related in classic rabbinic literature to Chanukah and that the last heroine is not mentioned there at all.}

It is against this backdrop that I’d like to approach the \textit{מהלכת רות ש"י} and the tradition regarding the meaning of \textit{שאף הן היו тому הנס} as it relates to \textit{חנוכה}.\footnote{It seems to be referring to the episode of \textit{בת יוחנן כהן גדול} and her protest which led to the revolt and ultimate salvation of the Jews in Israel. \textit{ירוש}’s second phrase is even more fundamental. \textit{על ידי אשה נעשה הנס} implies that women took a primary role in the event and therefore are fully required to fulfill the religious obligations stemming from it.}

Regardless of the identity of the figure, two questions arise regarding \textit{ירוש}’s fundamental statement. The first is raised by...
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Toftot: Tosefit 14. "Sha'eh hannah ba'ekim sechakim. Veho, bibereshlem zehi "sh'eh hannah ba'ekim sechakim." Tosefit point out that linguistically 'yesh' resh's interpretation is difficult to accept, as the word 'even' implies that women were not prominent in the salvation. Furthermore, Tosefit understand the statement to mean that women were passively included in the persecution and the subsequent deliverance. Based on the assumption that participation is the basis for religious obligation, minimizing women's role in the liberation leads to a more limited understanding of women's religious responsibility.

The second issue is with the example 'yesh resh chooses in order to substantiate women's participation in the epic. Whether 'yesh' is referring to bat yochanan kohen gadol or judith, the issue is the same: appearances aside, those two characters are generally marginal to the story. As mentioned, midrash lanuveh was familiar to many halachists in medieval Ashkenaz, but the stories of female valor contained in it do not figure prominently in any discussion, halachic or historical, regarding the institution of the holiday. One certainly cannot claim then that stories of female valor are...
equated in the halachists’ view to the heroism of the Maccabees. Therefore, the Tosafist point leads to a more fundamental argument: women are more bystander than participant, more passive than active when it comes to the deliverance and its halachic implications.

**Maccabean Martyrs as basis for ר"ש**

I would like to suggest that one of the later versions of the narrative of the Mother and her seven sons, found in the book of יוסיפון, can help address the issues raised with ר"ש’s view of שאא ור"ש. As mentioned above, this narrative is possibly the only one of the נнные heroine stories to have any historical connection to that holiday. Nevertheless, due to its chronological relocation to the Roman persecutions, it perhaps is not as commonly associated with נ痱 as the other two. Though first found in 2 Maccabees and subsequently expounded upon in 4 Maccabees, the story is only reconnected with נ痱 in יוסיפון, a tenth-century Italian book of Jewish history. יוסיפון was well known throughout medieval Europe and ר"ש was certainly acquainted with it, using it in his various commentaries as a source for historical data. Thus it is safe to

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19 The story itself provides little historical context. The only historical data mentioned is the name (or title) of the king, thus placing the event in either a Greek or Roman milieu. Therefore the Rabbis could transplant the story to different time periods in order to communicate a certain message relevant at that time. Different versions communicate different messages though all surround the value of martyrdom, sacrifice, heroism, faith and dedication to God.

20 Due to the association with נ痱 in יוסיפון and earlier in Maccabees and despite its later dating by rabbinic literature, the story has come to be known as the story of the Maccabean Martyrs.

21 ר"ש makes many references to יוסיפון, particularly though not only in his commentary on Tanach. For example see י/מלכים ב כ, ד/ישעיהו כא, ב/ישעיהו לט, יד/זכריה ט, ו/חגי ב, כב/דניאל ח, יח,יז,ב/דניאל יא, כט/דניאל ו, ה שמן ארצנו"ד. ברכות מג, ה על מעלות האולם"ד. יומא כג.
assume that י"רש was aware of the Maccabean Martyrs narrative and its connection to חנוכה.22

On the surface, the story focuses on the seven sons more than on their mother, though I would like to suggest that she is the true hero. This can be shown both contextually and textually. In successive chapters, יוסיפון relates two detailed accounts of personal interaction between a Greek antagonist and a Jew, that of אלעזר the Priest and the Mother and her seven sons.23 These two stories are presented as precursors to the Hasmonean revolt. It is clear then that contextually the Mother and her seven sons are not at all tangential to the revolt; they are presented as a primary catalyst to it.

From a literary perspective, the narrative is multi-dimensional and developed. In order to assert the Mother’s prime role I will dedicate some time to a slightly more in-depth analysis of the יוסיפון text.24

The narrative begins with Antiochus choosing to make an example of the woman and her sons by commanding them to eat pig in direct violation of a כשרות law, thus proving that his decrees

Modern scholars trace one of the earlier copies of יוסיפון to אור הגולהрабינו גרשום מרבינו גרשום מארל, probably the text that י"רש had before him. See introduction to יוסיפון, edited by David Flusser (Bialik Institute, 1978-1980), pp. 4-6 and 48. All references made to יוסיפון are from this edition. תוספות in different places make reference to יוסיפון as well, though to a much lesser degree. See ה פסוק הזה שר העולם אמרו"ד. תוספות חולין ס and ג כל נשיאיה"ה ה"ד: ז י"ע.22

22 י"רש’s methodology incorporated external sources to better explain Biblical and Talmudic texts. See Israel Ta-Shma, לستراتيجيית הספרות הפרשנית, Vol. 1, p. 46.

23 Both accounts originate in 2 Maccabees, the Martyrs in chapter 7 of that work and אלעזר, who there is called a scribe but mistakenly identified in 4 Maccabees and יוסיפון (who was not familiar with 4 Maccabees) as a priest, in chapter 6.

24 The account is found in יוסיפון chapter 15, pp. 70-75. I will not quote the entire text, only the part dealing with the Mother, though it is clear from the way she is treated by the text that she is the true protagonist.
supersede those of God. Each son is brought before the king in a parade of execution, with the remaining family members forced to watch. Finally, after witnessing the death of her sixth son, the Mother speaks:

After witnessing six of her sons executed, the Mother is described as saintly and heroic, her heart brave and her soul unwavering. She announces to the king, her seventh son and, perhaps most importantly, to the reader that her sons have returned to God their creator, and that He will restore their souls and give them their due reward. Antiochus clearly expected that the women, as a mother, would convince her sons to choose life over God. He is embarrassed that she has turned into a tougher adversary then he anticipated and that by supporting her sons in

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25 See ז, ויקרא יא, seems to indicate that only the family itself was made to watch, though יוסיפון relates the event as taking place in public. See אגרת השמד, ד, p. 117.

26 יוסיפון, pp. 72-73.
their sacrifice she has, in fact, defeated him. By the way the king refers to the Mother, it is clear that he views the entire episode as a battle of wills between them. Antiochus calls for the youngest son and attempts to bribe him into complying with his wishes. The king beseeches the child to accept his offer and even turns to the Mother to convince her son so that he may be spared and her lineage may continue. She, however, makes no such attempt. She tells her son to recognize God’s greatness and the heroism of his brothers. It is preferable to die in such situations, she declares, than to comply with the evil king’s wishes. She adds that after all her children are gone, she will come join them in heaven. As a result, the king is trumped again. After her seventh son is executed, the Mother stands over her dead children, raises her arms to the heavens and beseeches God that she be allowed to follow in their footsteps. In the midst of her prayers her soul leaves her, thus granting her request.

The Mother is depicted as the true hero of the story, though her sons receive much of the attention. She is the one that stood up to the king throughout, bravely and without any hesitation. By naming her the “Mother”, the text is communicating the magnitude of her sacrifice. She is a mother, yet she sees that her deeds and those of her children transcend the moment. They represent the quest for Jewish independence and religious freedom. She places values over her family and thus elevates herself above what we would normally expect and accept of a mother, to protect her children above all else. Even her plea to God is not a mother’s plea to be with her children, as much as it is a plea to be allowed entry into heaven along with her saintly sons.

Thus the Mother is presented as a heroic figure, one full of resolve and commitment. This is not a tale of martyrdom as much as one of heroism, independence and faith. The Mother is epitomized as a standard for those willing to stand up for what they believe at all costs. This is the banner carried by the Maccabees in their revolt against the Greeks.
When looking to the Mother, one can find justification for seeing women as active participants and central factors in the story. She provides him with historical and religious validation for his statement, showing that women provided the ideological motivation for the revolt. When singling out חנוכה must be seen as using her as an example, not as a lone foundation for his commentary. This example, though perhaps not the best in light of the issues raised by Tosafot, is really just that, and should not be viewed with the finality attributed to subsequent halachists. However, no matter which example chose, what is clear is that he wished to highlight women's activity and valor as relates to חנוכה, be it the provocative statement made by בת יוחנן כהן גדול, the bravery of יהודית or the heroism of the Mother of seven sons.

Women and תהלית נרות

Having discussed the elements of the disagreement between רש”י and Tosafot, I’d like to focus on its halachic importance. If the statement of שאף הן היו тому הנס is interpreted to mean that halachic obligation stems from one’s involvement in the miracle, then the more central role attributed to women in the חנוכה salvation should lead to higher levels of halachic obligation.

The main religious observance on חנוכה is תהלית נרות. The widespread custom among Ashkenazi Jews is to light as many נרות as there are family members, with the number of candles corresponding to the night. Many women, however,

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27 Why chose the example he did is a different question. Perhaps he chose a figure familiar to medieval Jews only in the context of Chanukah, as opposed to the Mother. Whatever his reasoning, this does not detract from the general idea of women’s centrality.

28 One candle is lit on the first night, two on the second etc. See הלכות מגילה, ס”ר רמב"א, והזמנה numérique. א”ר adds that the Ashkenazi custom is for each individual to light their own, though רש”י states that only the head of household actively does the
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customarily do not light their own חנוכיות. The maxim אשתו כגופו explains this discrepancy at least with respect to married women as rooted in the maxim אשתו כגופו, meaning that one’s wife can (though is not required to) fulfill the מצוה through her husband’s action. Several reasons are brought for unmarried women not actively participating in הדלקת נרות חנוכה. One is that since the obligation is fulfilled in public, it is immodest for women to participate. Another is that it is not proper for daughters to light while their mother is not. Still another explanation is that since a woman will probably not light when married, she should not light when single.

These reasons seem lacking, as the concept of נר לכל אחד ואחד requiring all family members to light is fundamental to the מצוה and it is difficult to understand how the essence of the obligation can be undermined by a relatively tangential reason. We may assume that women left their house at other times, so why not for הדלקת נר חנוכה?

There are many מצוות that women fulfill when lighting. See א סעיף א"א אורח חיים סימן תרע"רמ. The Sephardic custom is for the head of household to light one חנוכייה. See שמות תשמ"ד שותו ראש (סך) which is based on seforim which is based on seforim which is based on seforim. Both Ashkenazi and Sephardic custom is to fulfill the obligation on the highest level. Therefore the obligation should preferably be performed in this manner. Thus the directive of נר לכל אחד ואחד according to א"רמ and the Ashkenazim has become central to the מצוה itself.

In order to reconcile the personal obligation to light, נר איש ור"א, with the husband’s ability to light for his wife one might say that the obligation is not on each individual to light but to have a חנוכיה lit for each family member. Therefore a man, by lighting for himself, is also lighting for his wife. See Rav Aharon Lichtenstein’s discussion of א"רמ in הלכות חנוכה, http://www.etzion.org.il/vbm/archive/10-halak/06nashim_hanuka.php. This provides some justification for the מצוה.

For a more in-depth perspective of women’s involvement in everyday life in the Middle Ages and the halachic justification for such involvement, see Avraham Grossman, חסידות ומורדות, pp. 198-209, 312-342.
unmarried. The fact that a woman can fulfill a מצה through her husband does not seem to justify complete cessation of halachic obligation prior to marriage.

Therefore, what seems to be the underlying reason for absolving women of participation in הדלקת נר חנוכה is their relatively insignificant contribution to the חנוכה salvation, consistent with Tosafot’s view regarding שאף הן היו тому הענס that we saw earlier.35 However, once Tosafot’s questions on יש"ר are answered, the reason to limit women’s involvement in the מצה is negated, and women can assume a greater, active role befitting their heroism.36

In practice, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik and Rav Aharon Lichtenstein both advocate for women, married and unmarried, to light their own נר איש וביתו, as this truly fulfills the requirement of נר איש וביתו. This application, as we have seen, complies with יש"ר’s interpretation of שאף הן היו тому הענס and reminds us of the pivotal role of women in the חנוכה revolt. Indeed, הדלקת נר חנוכה and the salvation it commemorates were really brought about by the actions of courageous women, as יש"ר states, לע די אשה נועשה נפש, על ידי אשה נועשה נפש.

35 See also עולת שמואל קי.
36 See Rav Lichtenstein, supra note 20, who explains differently why women should actively participate in הדלקת נר חנוכה.