Kol Mevaseret
A Compilation of Insights and Analyses of Torah Topics
by the students of Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim
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INTRODUCTION

After a year immersed in Torah study in Yisrael, basking in the “sun” of the light of Torah, it is only natural to become concerned – or even scared – about what awaits us in Eretz Yisrael. For even if one realizes, as hopefully she does, that Torah is meant to be learned, lived and loved in all places and at all times, it still is only natural to feel that that light of Torah in Eretz Yisrael is, at best, like the “rays of the moon”.

How is one supposed to return to a world that is a mere reflection of the main attraction?

After 40 years of רבי משה’s leadership, it is only natural for עם ישראל (and יהושע himself) to be concerned about the transition to being led by יהושע. No matter how great יהושע might be, “The elders of that generation said: מְשֹה’s countenance is like the sun, and יהושע’s countenance is like the moon. Woe for that shame, woe for that disgrace” (בסע באה עה). In response to these human concerns, ה reassures יהושע (and the people) that “No man will challenge you all the days of your life, and as I was with מְשֹה so shall I be with you. I will neither forsake you nor abandon you” (יהושע א:ה).

Just as with יהושע, ה’s reassurance of ואמץ חזק rings true for our students as they leave the walls of the MMY. Although the rays of the sun were very bright and it may have been relatively easy to bask in their glory compared to the challenges that lie ahead, success is out there for the taking with G-d’s support and help.

Rav Soloveichik points out that the הלכות of פרק א ‘who teaches Torah’ of הרמב”ם seems to be repetitious. In the first seven הלכות, הרמב”ם talks about who has to learn Torah and who has to teach Torah. Then in הלכות – the once again says “Everyone in Israel needs to learn Torah”. Why is the רמב”ם going back to the beginning and repeating the very basics that “everyone needs to learn Torah”? The Rav
answers, in classic Brisker fashion, that there are two components to Torah. In the first seven halachot, the רמב"ם is talking about the educational-information necessity of Torah — who needs to learn, who needs to teach, how one decides who gets to learn when there are limited resources for hiring teachers, etc. But starting with הלכות ח, the רמב"ם is referring to the emotional-spiritual side of Torah. This needs to be done consistently, no matter how limited the resources of time or money may be. In the first seven halachot the quantity of Torah is stressed. In the last six halachot the consistency or spiritual quality is what is stressed. In the first section it is obvious that the person who is less intellectually capable is going to be able to accomplish less. After all, learning Torah is an intellectual exercise. However in the second section the רמב"ם emphasizes that all people have to set aside consistent time for learning; all are equal when it comes to the need and ability to grow spiritually from the process. And that process is based on daily, consistent study, even if in small doses.

The main source for an obligation for consistent “daily even if short” doses of Torah was beautifully explained in connection to יומם והגית ולילה ("יהושע א")— you should study it day and night. יהושע, who is assumedly completely engrossed in battle plans and strategy of war, is the one who is told that the secret to his success is twice daily commitment to bits of Torah. The גמרא in נדירים (ח) tells us that this psuk/mitzvah of Torah can be fulfilled minimally by שמע קריאת at night and during the day. Small doses, but consistent doses, even when one is pressured for time and there are other priorities, seem to be the secret to ההיט והגית, and then you will succeed.

As our students go out to a world of שמע — where the light may be dimmer than מֵאָשֶׁר and the tug for one’s time may be more difficult to balance, the messages of והיט והגית, the promise that י"ה will not abandon nor forsake, and the secret to success of ולילה יומם והגית,
of setting aside consistent daily time for study, sets them on a path for continued success.

יִהוּדָה may be compared to the moon, a mere reflection of prior greatness. But it is also יִהוּדָה who merits having the sun stand still for him when needed. This journal is a small reflection of all of the sunlight that shone in the MMY מדרש בית in 5774. But it serves as a reminder of what can be accomplished in relatively short amounts of time, as well as a way to bring a little bit of that sun back with our students to לארץ חוץ. I pray, as they learn from their friends’ articles and bask once again in the rays of the sun, that they allow the sun to stand still just for a little while and let their learning remind them of their time in the MMY מדרש בית. We are also honored to share our students’ hard work and allow the public to get a taste of the אור that exists in that מדרש בית.

As we say in הוי יא רלמע המה, קורדט לבח. May we merit the day that the light of the moon be like the light of the sun.

תודה ואبثון!

Rabbi David Katz
התנ“ך
Moshe, Noach, Avraham and Yonah: Advocates and Agents

There are many details in the פשט of the stories of Noach and Moshe that beg us to look deeper into the connection between them. In specific, there are similarities in the story of Hashem informing Noach of the flood and of Hashem consulting Moshe about His threat to wipe out ישראל עם העגל חטא after the העגל. As well, Avraham’s story with S’dom and Yonah’s encounter with Ninveh shed light on the whole issue of attempting to change Hashem’s decree.

When Moshe is born, his mother puts him in a תבה. This should immediately draw us back to the תבה that Hashem instructs Noach to build. Further, Rashi comments on the the fact that both תבות were waterproof with כפר. The 40 days that Noach was in the תבה, and the 40 days that Moshe spends beseeching Hashem for mercy on Bnei Yisrael also draw the two characters, and specifically these stories, together. Even further, both of them wait seven days before entering the 40 days. With Noach, the hesitation seems to be because Noach doubted that Hashem would bring the flood, so he waits to go in to his תיבה.

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1. PREF-5: EXODUS 2:1-10
2. BRACHOT 1A
3. SHAMAI
4. SULAM: BEREISHIT 19:33
5. SHULHAM: BEREISHIT 2:4
There are many similarities pertaining specifically to the stories of Moshe’s שמע התפילה for Bnei Yisrael after המעגל and the המבול. In both narratives, it says that Hashem ‘sees’ what was going on. ראה ירא עין האור, Hashem sees the abundant evil caused by man in the land. By Bnei Yisrael at המעגל, Hashem tells Moshe, אראתי את העגל והלא את רעהו, I have seen this nation, and they are a stubborn people. As well, in both stories we are informed that Hashem, כביכל, feels regret. By Noach, He regrets creating mankind וינחם. Regarding the המעגל we see that the same לים is used to tell us that Hashem reconsidered his decree of destroying ישראל. Lastly, after the flood ends and Noach leaves the ביה, it says הדומה איש נח והחל. Rashi explains that Noach made himself unholy – חולין – by busying himself with work of the field. But when Moshe begins to beseech Hashem, we have a similar לים that Moshe ויחל is used for a noble purpose.

From all these similarities, it is clear that we can look at Noach as a foil for Moshe. Moshe, upon hearing that Hashem is going to wipe out ישראל and start a new nation from him, prays fervently to remove the decree, and succeeds! Noach, who is also

6 ברכת פרש
7 שמות ד:ט:ו
8 בראשית ט:ח
9 שבת ל:ט
10 בראשית ט:ז
11 דברים יא
12 שמות יא

Sarah Gomolin
told that the world is about to be destroyed, remains completely passive and is seemingly complacent with just saving himself and his family. There is much ground to use Moshe’s incredible success and piety as a means to look down upon Noach’s passivity and many of the meforshim pick up on this. We see in the 13 מדרש that Moshe is considered better than Noach. While Noach merely saved himself from destruction, Moshe had the זכות of saving his entire generation from destruction. Another מדרש that emphasizes Moshe’s superiority over Noach 14, points out that Noach, who was originally called איש צדיק, in the end of his life becomes איש האדמה. While Moshe, who was originally called איש מצרי, over the course of his life becomes איש האלוהים. Clearly there is a progression of growth that Moshe underwent that surpasses the level of Noach, and perhaps the stories of the מבול and העגל חטא highlight that difference between them.

It is no question that Moshe is a greater character than Noach. He was the greatest person in history! Based on the פשט, it is possible to suggest that Noach is not at fault for not praying on behalf of his generation, even though Moshe did pray. Noach and Moshe both served the exact purpose that Hashem intended for them. In the story of Noach, Hashem’s decision to destroy the world happens before Noach is even introduced 15. Hashem sees that not only have the people sinned, but their very nature is evil 16; היום כל רע רק לבו מחשבות יצר כל עבר הארץ רעת והו. This is not just one sin; this is the very essence of the generation; “only evil, all day.” How could Noach argue with Hashem on this? Further,

13 דביהמ רבד לאגי
14 בראשית רבה לובג
15 בראשית chụp-
16 שומ רד
why would Noach want the world to be continued through people whose deepest essence is evil?

The way Hashem presents the sin of Moshe’s generation to Moshe is much calmer.17. “They have strayed from the path in one aspect; they have made an idol,” but nowhere does Hashem proclaim them utterly and inherently evil. As well, with Noach, Hashem makes His decision before Noach is even mentioned. By Moshe, Hashem’s first expression of anger is in His words to Moshe! The decree of the המבול דור seems much more solid than that of the העגל חטא. However, this does beg the question of why Hashem is seemingly so much angrier by the העגל חטא than by the המבול דור. By the המבול דור, it says that Hashem is sad18, איה ויתעצב. But by the העגל חטא, the שלון of איה ויחר anger, is used time and time again. I think the answer lies in the fact that one was a sin of mankind, and the other was specifically ישראל עם עם. By המבול דור, it was sad for Hashem to see that mankind had failed in being moral people. But it makes sense that Hashem has, ובכפי more extreme emotions when His very own עם שנשל zwarte has rebelled against Him and not acted properly, despite the fact that it was ‘less of a big deal.’ Hashem is somewhat dispassionate towards the המבול, as well as Ninveh and S’dom.

The fact that Hashem’s first reaction to the העגל is to tell Moshe, shows us that perhaps it is a decree that Hashem wants to be changed. Hashem and Moshe are כאילי partners in this decree. Rashi, quoting תנחומא מדרש explains that לי הניחה והעתה is an opening for Moshe to daven on behalf of the nation. Hashem is clearly telling him that this matter is dependent on him, so of course Moshe prays! As well, the content of Moshe’s תפילה helps us

17 שמות לב:ת
18 בראשית ז:ו
19 שמות לב:ך
understand why perhaps Noach could not pray. Moshe’s תפילה requests mercy for Bnei Yisrael by mentioning the history of the אבות and מצרים יציאת. Noach had absolutely no history to discuss! All that preceded him wasadam והבל קין, none of whom has merits worthy of saving the world. Even if Noach did attempt to pray, he would have had very little to say and perhaps he calculated that it would not have been a strong enough תפילה to affect Hashem’s decree.

In addition, there were 120 years from the time Hashem made His decree until the mabul actually happened. Within these years, Noach builds the huge תבה. Over these many years, Hashem is giving mankind a chance to see the תבה, inquire and repent! Perhaps Hashem never intended Noach to daven because he gave him a tool to actually fix the problem and inspire everyone to do teshuva. Noach’s role was not to advocate on behalf of the people but rather to be an agent to effect change. In contrast, by העגל חטא, Hashem was prepared at that very moment to destroy the whole nation and start it again through Moshe. Hashem’s quick decision that was going to be carried out right away was an impetus for Moshe to pray immediately. The גמרא tells us that the העגל חטא had to happen in order to teach נפשו בעליה for generations that no one can ever say that they have sinned too immensely to repent. Even though הר רד סיני וזרה עבורה, and Hashem still forgives them. This גמרא indicates that forgiveness was all part of Hashem’s plan and Moshe’s תפילה was just the means in which Hashem was able to bestow forgiveness upon them. Noach was merely an agent in helping the people achieve תשובה while Moshe was an advocate.

Avraham’s story with S’dom adds another layer of depth into the contrast between Moshe and Noach. Again, there are שבעה וזרהו:

20 יסוד שלום, ח.
21 שבעה וזרהו כל זה.
undeniable parallels in the Pesesh that connect Avraham’s story to both Noach and Moshe. When describing the sin of S’dom to Avraham, Hashem uses a similar לשון to that of the sin of the דור המבול. The לשון of לארשי the description of הֹוָא and Moshe is also used by.Hashem.

As well, Noach is described as את,בדורותיו היה תמים צדיק איש נח. And in contrast, Avraham is described והיה לפני התהלך, and they use it to point out a contrast between their two characters based on how they each react to Hashem’s decree. Noach is a passive person. He walks with Hashem in whatever Hashem tells him to do. Avraham, on the other hand: התהלך walked before Hashem. He is an initiator, the antithesis of passivity.

The story of Avraham contains both factors of the stories of Moshe and Noach. In המבול, it seems that Hashem already made up His mind, so too by Avraham it seems that Hashem already made a decision. Hashem tells Avraham about S’dom because He,כביכול, feels bad keeping it from him. Rashi explains that because Avraham was just promised the borders of his land and S’dom was part of it, it would be unfair not to tell Avraham of the events occurring in S’dom. It is not because He was ‘consulting’ Avraham to allow him to have a part in the decision. However, the story contains the opposite element as well, of “doubt” in Hashem’s mind. Just as in Moshe’s story it seems as if Hashem

22 בראשית יב.ב
23 שם זח
24 שם זח
25 שם זיב
26 שם זחא
has not made up his mind yet and is perhaps waiting for a prayer, so too here we have a similar occurrence. "Let us go down and see the cries of S'dom ... If they are not what I thought, I will know." Radak and Ibn Ezra both pick up on the anomaly of this verse. It seems that Hashem is uncertain about the deeds of S'dom and is therefore uncertain as to whether He will destroy it. Even though all is known to Hashem, He makes it seem like there is a chance to save S'dom. Perhaps this is what provoked Avraham to pray. Rashi points out that the language used for Avraham's prayer of war, ויגש, meaning his prayer was incredibly strong and powerful, yet it does not change the decree against S'dom. From this it can be deduced that Hashem's decree against S'dom was not finalized. As well, it is not shocking that Avraham takes on the position of an advocate just like Moshe does. He was just promised to be a goyim av, meaning his mission is to bring people close to monotheism, so of course he advocates for the people by praying for even the worst of cities.

The last character I would like to analyze is Yonah. He is drawn into the comparison by other undeniable parallels in the text. The sin of Ninveh is חמס, which is the same sin as the sin of the people who attempted to destroy the Ar'ur. Why is it though that Ninveh was saved from destruction but the people were not, if the sin was the same? Rav Norman Lamm answers that Ninveh was doing חמס because they had a תאוה for it, but in Noach's generation, חמס is the very essence

27 אכ 28 כג 29 ז 30 גיונה: ט 31 ובראשית: וא
of the people. This goes back to the same argument mentioned previously of the evil core versus an external expression of evil. Additionally, when Hashem tells Yonah about the sin of Ninveh, He uses a similar לשים that He did by המבול דורד המבול. The word י is used by Noach as well. It is also no coincidence that the dove (yonah) is a huge symbol in the story of Noach and that both characters are saved from water. The י is begging us to draw out a lesson from both of them. Perhaps Yonah perceived Noach’s lack of prayer as ‘running away’ from Hashem so he followed suit. In the end, Yonah is forced to fulfill Hashem’s word despite his greatest efforts to escape. In my opinion, Yonah is very different from Noach. Noach simply follows his own destiny based on who he is and what Hashem wanted in that situation. Yonah blatantly denied his destiny and attempted to escape the situation he was placed in.

These monumental events with these four undeniably incredible personalities in מנה are begging us about התשובה, in particular, the difference between Jews and the rest of mankind, and the difference between having an evil root and doing an evil deed. In terms of the evil root and the evil deed, it is evident from these stories that those with the evil core do not prevail. It is because of this fact that Moshe and Yonah were each ‘successful’ in saving the people while Noach and Avraham were not. It is easily justifiable to say that of course Bnei Yisrael does not have an evil core. It is well known that despite our sins, עם will always have a נאות that remains pure and holy. As well, the people of Ninveh, although deeply immersed in sin, were not corrupt at their core because they managed to come back and do התשובה. On the other

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32 יוני ביא
33 עם האות, נאות
34 נותיבות שלום, שמות
hand, Noach’s generation was one that was impure and corrupt at their very essence. By S’dom we have evidence to say that their essence is evil. Many say that the sin of S’dom was that they were against אורים. The מדרש tells us that their legal system was enacted to punish those who did חסד. Lot had to be נפש מוסר to have guests in his home in S’dom. Rashi in Vayikra points out that S’dom was exceedingly evil and wished to rebel against Hashem. S’dom had a backwards moral system in which anything good was seen as bad. A society that sees immorality as moral and morality as immoral is deeply disturbed. Even if the people of S’dom and המבול dor repented from their ways, they would still have the impure, evil root within them.

In terms of גויים and ישראל עם we learn that Hashem is not indifferent towards Bnei Yisrael. He cares about our sins and therefore, cares about our teshuva. When it comes to Bnei Yisrael, Hashem enables us to do teshuva, as we see with Moshe. Hashem opened up an opportunity for him to pray on our behalf. For the גויים, Hashem merely provides an agent to effect change. Everyone is judged on השנה ראש, but ישראל עם has כיפור יום, the ultimate day of תשעה in which תפילה is the central mechanism of attaining repentance. This day was established commemorating the result of Moshe’s תפילה at העגל חטא. That event creates an intrinsic reality on this day forever.
The Role of Physical Beauty in Analyzing our Leaders in Tanah

The presence of physical beauty is paramount throughout Tanah. The text describes the beauty of many of our leaders and role models, such as Sarah, Rachel, Joseph, and David, using terms like תֹּבֹא מָרָאת or מִרְמָת. Outer beauty, while a ברכה, must be viewed and perceived as very much secondary to a righteous inner core. And yet, the תּוֹרָה still makes it a point to explicitly declare many of Judaism's leaders as outwardly beautiful; it must be therefore, that the physical description the תּוֹרָה is giving us serves as an insight into the character, deeper "personality" and nature of the person. Even when there is little else, if anything at all, describing the character, the פָּסֲוָק still takes out words and time to make certain the reader understands the character's beauty, proving the importance of beauty in aiding to analyze the characters and their situations.

Sarah, Rachel, and David, aside from sharing the quality of beauty and physical attractiveness, were all royalty. However, the means through which they became, or attempted to become king, contain essential differences and aid in highlighting their dissimilar natures. It is clear that beauty attracted followers to these figures, but the way in which each individual chose to handle their blessing of good-looks shows the reader their true nature. It is not a coincidence that these kings are all handsome; handsomeness and charisma naturally draw and attract people. It is also not a coincidence that only the kings with inner beauty became celebrated leaders of ישראל.

When שמואל ב' פָּרֶך יֵד son, is mentioned in שמואל, he is explicitly described as uniquely handsome. It is his good
looks and charisma that help draw followers to him when he attempts to take the throne and kingship from his father. He is renowned for his physical attractiveness; he is equally well-known, however, for being corrupt, rash, impulsive, arrogant and power-hungry. His impulsiveness and rashness is evident when he orders his servants to have his brother, Amnon, killed after he raping Tamar instead of having his father handle it. His arrogance is marked when he tries to steal the throne when it is not entitled to him.

The Gemara (Bava Batra) states that there were five people who were created with outstanding features, and it is that very uniqueness that ultimately led to their untimely demise. Shammuel was endowed with great strength, Shaul had his “neck”, (that is to say, his height,) and Absalom had long, flowing, beautiful hair. (The other two were Zecharya (eyes) and Asa (legs).) Absalom’s hair was caught in a tree while fleeing after he was deemed “worthy of death” for being corrupt. His beauty was what eventually led his downfall; it was this very blessing that became his “fatal flaw”. In the Prophets, he is described as handsome and that is all. There is nothing else defining him. His negative qualities, arrogance and rashness, are inferred from his poor choice of actions. He was defined by his beauty, and he was blinded by his beauty, essentially taking his blessing and using it to bring himself down.

Furthermore, another example of the potential negative effects of physical beauty, is David’s son, and like his elder brother, he too was corrupt when he attempted to name himself king when his father was dying. And, like his elder brother, he is described as handsome. It is possible, if not probable, that it was his good looks which helped rally supporters to his side, since he had no other discernible attractive qualities about him to otherwise draw followers. (This is also known as the “halo effect”, the theory that claims that people attribute positive qualities to people who are good-looking, even though in both of their cases, those assumptions could not have
been more incorrect). אדוניה too, had only his outward beauty working for him. He relied solely on his looks and charisma to carry him to the kingship. It can be extrapolated from the fact that the only description of each of them is in regards to their looks, that this is all they had to offer, or rather, all they were offering. The physical beauty they had to offer was not enough to sustain and maintain followers.

On the other hand, the תורה also presents us with leaders that possessed an attractive outer appearance who are role models. יוסף, for instance, can serve as the perfect foil to אבשלום and אדוניה. Like דוד’s sons, he possessed an innate charisma and was physically beautiful as well. In his youth, he was consumed by his good looks, and his brothers despised him because of it. The פסוק calls him a נער; יוסף elaborates and explains that he would curl his eyelashes and put effort into his appearance. He was pre-occupied by his good looks, and his brothers despised him because of it. However, unlike the others, יוסף ultimately matures and understands what אבשלום and אדוניה could not: that he has more to offer than his beauty, and that an effective leader cannot rely on vanity alone. He also does תשובה for his vanity when he does not sin with פוטיפר אשת and thus demonstrates his strong character and morals. Eventually, he becomes viceroy in Egypt. And again he demonstrates his benevolence when he gives food to his brothers during the famine, despite the fact that they had sold him. יוסף’s good looks and his charm no longer defined him. Rather, he used his charm along with his ability to interpret dreams, to rise to a high position of power to help those in need during a famine. This depicts the way beauty can aid or destroy a person and it is up to a person’s strength of character to utilize it, or to be consumed with it.

המלךדוד is also described by the נביא as handsome. However, unlike the previously mentioned people, before the פסוקים describe his outward appearance, he is first declared a shepherd. This
small detail teaches us more than first meets the eye. When he is introduced, his father ushort; affirming he is primarily a shepherd. Only after the אב makes it clear that he is a shepherd, is he described as handsome as well. This offers incredible insight into his character. Shepherd-ing is a job that connotes the trait of humility in a person who performs it, because it is hard and unpretentious work. יושב השר皮革—who is also described as a shepard, embodied the quality of humility. It follows that also, too, was incredibly humble. Unlike his elder brothers, he was not standing and waiting to hear from שמואל if he is the next king, since he assumed his brothers would surely get the job before he was considered. 's appearance is secondary to his righteous nature. While he was handsome, he never defined himself by his looks, and his subjects and people do not define him by his looks. While physically beautiful, he was not arrogant about it, not even in his youth (like יוסף).

An effective leader must be someone who embodies a good self and a good character. He must be able to give back, be gracious and care about others.  for instance, cared about his best friend, יונתן.  too, helped his brothers during the famine. We see with יוסף, to a certain degree, that he presents somewhat of a transition from the way אבשלום and אдонיה handled their physicality to the way  did. In the beginning he was blinded by his looks; he was a טועם. But he ultimately matures and sees that he needs to be gracious too, in order to be a leader, and that it is dangerous to be consumed by looks. אבשלום and אдонיה however, were not able to put others before themselves. They were just physical bodies, without "beautiful insides".

From these characters in תנך we learn that it’s critical to use your outward beauty and your inward beauty together to create the “full package” and to embody the ultimate leader. It is when you define yourself by your physical appearance that you endanger yourself to losing your good character. We learn from יוסף.
The Role of Physical Beauty in Analyzing our Leaders in 

and וְיָדַעְתָּ that you need your inner goodness to work with your attractiveness and charisma. It is clear from אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם and אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם, that good looks and charisma alone are a dangerous mix and a recipe for disaster. The ברכה of physical beauty is just that – a ברכה. It’s extra. Good מידות and a strong moral character however, are not extra; they are indispensable.
Shira Aharon

שירת הים

that those who crossed the sea experienced a greater revelation of Hashem than himself. Now that’s a big statement! What was so great about the sea crossing, as opposed to all the other events that took place right beforehand? One might assume that after Hashem took us out of מצרים, we wouldn’t want to hear about מצרים anymore. Assumedly, the servitude in מצרים wasn’t a positive experience, and one would want to leave it in the past. However, the Midrash explains that the opposite is true. Even יוחא thought to return to מצרים, and the יים were pursuing יוחא. The יים, however, didn’t chase יוחא to return them as slaves. Rather, they wanted to destroy יוחא as a nation and take all their belongings. Therefore, only after יוחא was complete and the יים were dead on the shore was the גאולה complete. יוחא was, in a sense, a continuation of the מכות.

These include the hardening of פרעה’s heart, יוחא’s “hand” hitting מצרים, Moshe’s hand and his staff initiating the מכות, and a special wind starting the punishment. Interestingly, the מכות begin at ים יואיר, a body of water, and end at ים פן, another body of water. יוחא therefore can be seen as praise to יוחא for all the מכות, concluding with יוחא.

Even though פרעה was the one who demanded that יוחא leave, he suddenly regretted his decision. This is not the first time that one of יושב 앞’s enemies reacted in a surprised way to יוחא escaping. The הדרי points out how יוחא closely parallels מכות וpunish יוחא past. The ספוגים in the ים finds out that יוחא left is very similar to the way יוחא left. The הדרי in the ים and their reactions are almost identical! This is one example of אישות אבות של פנים.
Before the sea it says that שיר חדש cried and screamed to ה. Now, after the sea, they are giving thanks in the form of a שיר חדש to parallel the crying out from before the sea. It’s a סימול (斯顿א) how the שיר חדש was said. Some say everyone recited it together, while others believe that it was first recited by a ציבור שליח and then everyone else answered.

Why was it necessary to have a שיר חדש about the falling of רעים? Is it not enough that פרעה was thrown in the sea? The נפש שמשון suggests a beautiful answer. When we are happy about פרעה’s falling, we’re happy about our היה והירח and our מצה. Since ה was defeated and his army, it gave a new שן to the שירך a new שירך. If was still alive in this world, we would never have made it to סיני. By saying שירך we show how happy we are over the nullification of the forces of evil that are preventing us from seeing ה’s revelation.

The זוהר explains that from the phrase לאמר ויאמרו, we learn that when ישראל בני sang שירך, they wanted to be sure that the song would continue with their future descendants. But why is this specific שירך necessary to be recited every morning for all future generations? The נפש שמשון explains that שירך was a new שן for the whole world, and for all generations. We have to feel as if we were there! This שירך is שירך for what we saw with our own eyes – it’s not just any שירך! It’s different than other שירות in דז מראפסוקי! The נפש שמשון says that every Jew is willing to risk his life based on the simple fact that שירך happened. When we say יושיר אז we tell a story that we saw with our own eyes and are ready to testify! The זוהר (בשלח פרשת) says that anyone who says שירך every day with כונה will be זוכה to say it in הבא עולם. From this שירך, we learn that ה is and ה’s rule in the world are prevalent and are really felt by people. We saw the sea split the sea. We saw the horses and chariots in the sea!acimiento of the שירך it is only appropriate to give ה to שירך. The (איזון) and מesteem ויהוה as והיה and, his sins are forgiven.
Rav Schwab (Rav Schwab on Prayer) questions why the first שיר in the תורה is placed at the end of פסוקי דזמרא after the songs composed hundreds of years after the תורה. He answers that the שיר itself was part of the נס, and reciting it last elevates the level of פסוקי דזמרא. The communal recitation of the שיר was a miracle. Either the miracle was that everyone was able to hear well enough to repeat each line after him, or that they all received רוח הקודש and recited it as it was being written. By reciting it in פסוקי דזמרא, we are raising the praise of הוה. The focus of the שיר is the returning of the sea and not the splitting. The parting of the water is supernatural; it is beyond comprehesion and therefore cannot be described in human terms in a רהשי. The returning of the water is returning to the laws of nature. That aspect is readily comprehensible and is the real theme of the שיר. Each day as we recite the same words as our ancestors, we are expressing our thanks to ברוך הוה אמן for the relatable aspects of the miracle, making us more aware of the daily miracles in our everyday lives.
Perspective

Life presents itself very differently depending on a person’s vantage point. An architect perceives a school building very differently from a student who attends classes there. An individual’s education, occupation, experiences and philosophy all play a part in forming the lens through which they view the world. The ability to incorporate multiple perspectives like these is one I strive to attain, often through works of literature which present new angles on aspects of existence. One such work is the biblical book of קהלת.

Easily the most philosophical tract of the קהלת, קהלת is a book of perspectives. The narrator, קהלת (traditionally understood as שלמה המלך), records his search for the ideal lifestyle – “the good life” – so that he can share his discovery with the world. In this quest for the proper approach, he considers a number of alternative philosophical views. The first mentioned is that of the נהנה, the hedonist. This individual, explains קהלת, is someone who understands that all is from G-d. Building on this belief, the hedonist believes that man should enjoy what G-d has given him before it is taken away and given to someone else. Accordingly, the נהנה’s philosophy calls for each man to live life for himself.

He is followed by the עמל, the collectivist, who believes the very opposite – that the best life is one spent working for others. Consequently, the עמל spends his life worrying about the oppressed and seeking companionship, with the view that “two is better than one.” He argues that someone who is raised in a wealthy lifestyle will never understand the poor and thus that the world must be ruled by those who began as mere peasants. He spends his life in open revolt against the status quo.

The עמל is followed by the אלקים ירא, the G-d fearer. He speaks not about working for others, but about working for G-d.
He argues that even if someone is terribly poor, he or she will sleep well knowing that they are serving their Creator. As a result, the "אלקים ירא" does not worry about the oppressed, but rather believes that G-d is watching and will ensure that everyone is treated deservedly.

Lastly, the "חכם", the wise one, dissents from these opinions. He strives to discover truth, and claims that it is found in man’s transient nature. He scorns birth in favor of death and celebrations in favor of houses of mourning. Truth, he explains, is spoken only in times of death, when men acknowledge their finitude.

While none of these philosophies are viewed by most traditional commentators as correct, I believe a contemporary seeker can take a message from each. As a Modern Orthodox Jew, I try to engage with many different philosophies, and incorporate their insights into my traditionally-grounded existence. This is how I read קהלת.

From the "נהנה", we can learn to appreciate the gifts that G-d has given us and to enjoy them in moderation. The "עמל" teaches us the value of looking out for our fellow man and to remember the concept of "כל ישראל ערבים כל ישראל" ("All of Israel is responsible for each other"). The "אלקים ירא" ensures that we never forget that, ultimately, everything we do is for G-d and that G-d has expectations of us. The "חכם" encourages us to search for knowledge and truth. He instills in us the value of intellectual honesty.

Just as each personality in קהלת has a unique perspective on life, so too different personalities view the world differently. In פרק ב שמואל, מיכל disapproves of דויד’s dancing in the street with the קדוש ארון, who grew up as a humble shepherd, finds no fault in his celebration of G-d. דויד, on the other hand, clearly grew up as a princess and frowns upon דויד for his lack of dignity in public. Their respective upbringings impact what they perceive to be proper behavior.

While realizing that every person has a different view based on his personal upbringing, environment, and nature it is
often overlooked that, so too, G-d “sees” the world differently than we do. In דופק דודי קול, the Rav describes how humans cannot attempt to grasp the workings of this world. Humans cannot fathom לו ורע צדיק and cannot begin to understand the ways of G-d. He brings an example comparing the world to a tapestry. Here, in this world, the tapestry is backwards. Humans don’t see the beauty of the art. It is only G-d in his ultimate greatness that “sees” the splendor of the tapestry. In a word, humans do not see the full picture. Only G-d in his omnipotence knows all. Humans must wander along trusting that G-d “paints” a beautiful painting.

Through my study of קהלת, my own personal perspective was complicated and enriched. By combining the insights of its different paradigms into my approach, I closed the book more philosophically mature than when I opened it. I now understand that I must combine multiple perspectives to create my own. And from קהלת himself, I learned the importance of placing value in a variety of ideals, rather than a single narrow approach. My learning of קהלת piqued my interest in the way perspectives impact how an individual views the world. It has inspired me to search out diversity in my attempt to learn of new perspectives. Whether it be enjoying G-d-given gifts, helping others, serving G-d, or striving for knowledge and truth – all have a place in a fulfilling Jewish lifestyle.
ומעשה ומחשבה ומצע
From the very first words we say each morning, a Jew is taught that in order to live a full life and have complete יראת שמים, he must humble himself. When one wakes up, the first thing he thinks of is usually whatever is closest to him. The words אני מודה are usually uttered in a sleep like trance, but even then one must realize that thegravity comes above and beyond everything else. As a Jew, one must realize that he has a G-d and that one needs to fulfill the רצון של ה'. The syntax of the words in this תפילה are a prime example of this. Rather than saying אני מודה, as would be said in conversational Hebrew, אני מודה is said, giving our first moments awake each day to ה', rather than to one's own desires. By doing this, one is reminded throughout the entire day that everything done is for ה', because the רצון של ה' trumps one's own רצון at all times.

What is ענוה? In אראות צדיקים, it says that ענוה is the opposite of גאוה. The root of ענוה is to think: “What am I? Why am I at all deserving of what I get?” We have to be submissive and realize our lowness; that we are like nothing. We have to come to realize how small our abilities are compared to what we are required to do. And even though we are so small and insignificant, our מצוות are desired by ה'. In קהלת it says כי דרכו ענוים וילמד, that ה' leads the humble with justice and will teach the humble His way. Even though we are so small and insignificant, our מצוות are desired by ה'. In קהלת it says כי דרכו ענוים וילמד, that ה' leads the humble with justice and will teach the humble His way. 

In talking about ענוה, אראות צדיקים lists six things one should and can do in order to perfect and humble himself. These include; controlling one’s anger even when publically embarrassed, seeing everything for the good even when
bad things happen, not letting compliments get to one’s head, not taking credit for something one did not do, using gifts from ה in a humble way (recognizing and respecting ה more because of said gifts), admitting to doing wrong and asking for forgiveness, and speaking softly. Living one’s life by these guidelines will lead someone to become a proper ענו. Once a person is living to his utmost humble potential, he can become a proper הירא as well. Inוב realise ראה ה כב (משלי). One who suffers quietly is also considered to be an ענו. We see this quality in Moshe who didn’t care that Aharon and Miriam spoke הרע about him and in Aharon who remained silent and accepted his suffering when his two sons, Nadav and Avihu, died.

The рабן רמב bölges his letter to his son (אר𝖎כ הרב רבן) that an angry man cannot be a humble man. Anger is due to resentment of life failing expectations, and it leads man to an ultimate display of arrogance. Distancing oneself from anger, over time will be lead towards humility. He, too, writes of six ways one can humble himself. This includes: gentle speech, response to success, accepting praise, making amends, avoiding revenge, and acceptance. He writes of the endless cycle between ירא and ענוה. Humility fosters ירא which gives you more humility. This concept is also referred to in Majesty and Humility by Rav Joseph B. Soloveichik. The Rav speaks about how man has a מצוה to strive to emulate ה, so man has to be creative and majestic like ה. But he, also, has to be humble like ה, when He engages in ultimate contraction, צימצום, and retreats from this world. Man’s job is to realize that he is living in ה’s world. He must retreat to do הרצות, as he is reminded each morning when he says אני מודה. He must know when to step back and just fulfill his תפקיד in ה’s world.

In order to achieve full humility, one must recognize his place in this world and his job in life. He should be influenced by people who serve ה properly and be humble in the presence of everyone, yet striving to be like those greater than him. The המידות ספר writes that when the world witnesses a renaissance of the
quality of humility, we can begin to expect משיח. Through our saying אני מודה עם the proper כוונה each morning, may we each bring ourselves closer to the ultimate level of humility and כוונה משיח בימים במהרה.
Balance in Torah

“Being on a tightrope is living; everything else is waiting.”1 I always viewed the concept of balance as an ideal state in every area of life, but does the Torah also view this as a value? I will examine how the Torah approaches this idea and then explain how balance manifests itself within תנ"ך, השקעה, ההלכה, המוסר, מדריד, וה,midodes, and סדודים.

Amongst the many stories in תנ"ך, the story that stood out in my mind was ישראל בניו' s journey in the המדבר. Throughout the forty years, נס tested them several times. The word for “test” in Hebrew is נסוי. R’ Hirsch2 explains the בשור of נס means to habituate; when one practices something, he is attempting to accomplish something he has yet to do. Throughout the course of their stay in המדבר, ישראל בניו were brought into countless dire trials in order to practice the necessary traits to fulfill G-d’s תורה. For example, when they reach סין המדבר, they complain if only we had died in מצרים where we had food to eat rather than in the המדבר to die by famine! In response, נס says הנני, I’m about to make מנה for you. But you have to go out every day to gather it.3 נס made this decree to assess whether or not ישראל בניו would listen to Him.

R’ Hirsch4 then continues on to explain that הנני is not just a response to ישראל בניו’s complaint, but also a statement saying, “I am already prepared.” נס decided beforehand to provide food in the המדבר in this specific way in order to build a foundation of faith for

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1 Karl Wallenda
2 שם של ר"ש
3 שם של ר"ש
4 שם
those who would receive י coTorah. In other words, the were meant to learn how to enjoy today, leaving the worry of any other needs for tomorrow, and trust in G-d without the concern of other necessities. Only this trust would ensure את coTorah of G-d's Torah. But if coTorah haven't learned to trust G-d to support them on the next day, ultimately they are lead astray from G-d and His Torah.

רמב"ן expounds on this idea explaining that י coTorah brought coTorah through the שבט in order to test them. The וק was that food wasn’t in their hands, and all they had was the מ which that rained down from שמים every day. They were tested every day so that they would have everlasting אמונה in י. Similarly, the רשב"ם adds that they were dependent on G-d every day for food so that they would have אמונה and follow the Torah.

Therefore, while coTorah traveled through the מדבר, surrounded by miracles on all sides (literally), the message that the מ was meant to instill was complete אמונה in י. This was a quality that coTorah needed for when they would leave the מדבר and enter the world of אמונה. א eternity in שמים is easy to have when G-d is standing right in front of one’s face; י wanted to take that אמונה from שמים into the world, where י is not outrightly revealed. Bringing the אמונה based on שמים into the world of שמים hopefully leads to an ultimate balance of both שמים and שמים that takes advantage of both.

The concept of having balanced שמים and שמים sounds ideal. However, coTorah failed to integrate the two together. This is what coTorah was all about; י didn’t want to leave the bubble of שמים and enter the scary world of שמים. Honestly, I think the majority of us would have felt the same at the time. However, the

5 שם
6 שם
ideal is meant to be the balance between the אמונה of נס and the אמונה of נבואות. No doubt about it that it is a hard balance, but this is the way G-d wanted it.

In conjunction with that idea, in Rav Kook's השקפה, there are two different perspectives of observing the world: נבואות and חכמה. נבואות, which represents seeing the bigger picture, existed while בני ישראל were growing as a nation. However eventually, the world evolved and therefore the perspective shifted to חכמה, which represents focusing on the smaller picture.

By glancing at בני ישראל's history, one can understand these concepts in context. During the age of נבואות, through publicizing many נבואות, the נביאים were able to fill בני ישראל with the spirit of G-d in order to help everyone see the bigger picture. And yet, sin was highly prevalent, many were transgressing left and right. The Divine Providence of אהנפו was so great; it provided clarity of G-d's existence. Yet the tiny details of everyday life, such as sins, were hidden from נבואות.

The חכמים, on the other hand, were extremely focused on the minute details of life (i.e. ההלכה) and as a result were able to target the individual sins of בני ישראל, but the הנביאים in this case succeeded in eradicating it. Despite the ability to focus in and completely destroy specifics, חכמה still has its downfall. People go off the דרך in small increments; small details can open up a destructive path.

Whether it's meriting to "see" G-d through נבואות or fulfilling all the complicated details of ההלכה through חכמה, one type can seem better than the other, depending on which angle one chooses to focus on. But in truth, the best of both worlds is a combination of both נבואות and חכמה, like the מESSAGES 것으로 רכתי, he had the big picture of נבואות with the details of חכמה, as opposed to נביאי, when one can't see the details. חכמה had its time.
in history and eventually faded into the background. The big picture was weakened and now the world is extremely focused on the small details, making it difficult to focus on anything beyond the here and now.

During **תֵּיתָן הָעַד**, הנבואה will begin to come back and people will be able to focus on the big picture again. However at that point it will not be at the expense of **חכמה**, rather הנבואה and **חכמה** will be combined. People will then learn the big and small picture simultaneously; the ultimate balance of the two.

Furthermore regarding **הלכות**, we have the מצוה of **שבת**, that **מדאורייתא** one is forbidden to transgress in almost all cases. Yet when it comes to **נפש פיקוח**, one can be **שבת מחלל**. Why is this? **שםואל**8 comments on the **ומראים ואו חוק ואו מﬀשינו ארא נעש א,No אדבר הוא ו, כ sufra that “you should live by them,” not that you should die by them! The **שער חדש**9 explains that it’s a מצוה, and the one who hesitates and first asks a Rav, is as if he’s spilling blood!

In truth, it’s not about overriding **שבת**, it’s about balancing between the two. The ultimate reason why **שבת** were created is to be a guide system for our lives. The **תורה**’s halachic system is not unrealistic; G-d is not, **ותלעה** , about to strike us with a lightning bolt every time we do not listen to Him. On the contrary, G-d is Kind and Merciful. He knows when to have **רחמים** and when to have **דין**, and that’s how He runs the world, with a balance between the two.

Regarding **มְשֹׁרְתָה**, **נפש**10 discusses the concept of **דותחסי**. If one desires to be a **חסיד**, he has to understand what the result of

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8 **שםואל**
9 **rike'ah**
10 **ך ששת צרי**
11 **מסילות шירויים פרק ב**
each is in every situation. If being מחמיר ultimately leads to a קידוש, then great, do it! But if it leads to a鎌 on something else, then he should not. If someone wants to be a חסיד, he has to be very though through. מחמיר can go wrong, such as in the גמרא when there was a man who tried being like שמאי, and said קראתי while lying down. However, he was lying down outside, and in doing so put himself in danger. The גמרא says about him that he went against הלל, and it would have been more of חסידת to go according to הלל and say קראתי standing. In short, there is definitely a place for חומרות, but it’s all about balance. One needs to make sure to look at the big picture and make sure that being מחמיר won’t lead to being מקיל.

Lastly, the רמב"ם famously elucidates that a person should balance every מידה of his in the middle, based on the idea of בדרכיו והלכת. Therefore we’re to train ourselves, until it’s regular to act according to this דרך. Accordingly, if one has an inclination towards a certain מידה, he has to go to the opposite extreme to reach the middle ground, the המינונית. Nonetheless, there are two exceptions to this rule; it is אסור to be a המינונית with גאוה and כעס. With both of these מידות, one has to go as far as possible to the opposite extreme. For גאוה, one has to act completely humble, be an ענו, and with כעס, one cannot get angry over something not proper to get angry about.

Therefore, there is no question that the תורה believes in balance as an ideal. However, just as the name implies, there is a time and place for balance too. Sometimes, such as with the examples above of גאוה and כעס, one should pass the middle ground to an extreme place. Across the board, balance is definitely

12 מדרש ט. 13 הלכות ורחמים. 14 דיברות חכמה.
needed. But one needs to keep in mind that there some situations which call for the extreme and not just the middle ground.

Through תָּנֵךְ, השקפה, ההלכה, מוסר, והלכה,文书, and מידה, one can see how balance manifests itself in התורה. Through examining the above examples of balance in התורה, I think there is one common lesson of how to truly keep the התורה: to tread between the different lines of truth within the realm of התורה. Though it may not be easy, ultimately that is what balance is all about.
Discovering the Real You

In (שמות טו) it says, "And it was the first time in history that שירה was sung to the חיות. Why? What is שירה? In (תנ"ך) there is a מדרש that debates the status of the song of man and the song of the angels. The מדרש comments that this is the first time in history that שירה was sung to the חיות.

Why? What is שירה? In (תנ"ך) there is a מדרש that debates the status of the song of man and the song of the angels. The מדרש states three points: firstly, man can sing whenever and wherever he pleases while מלאכים cannot; secondly, man can say 'ה ישראל' is his name after two words (שמות טו) while מלאכים can say 'ה קדוש' only after three words (ברית מיתרים); and lastly, מלאכים cannot sing in the Heavens until man sings on Earth. Clearly, we are being taught that song is quite important. But what is the importance of song? And more specifically, why does man's song take precedence over the song of the angels?

Rav Hirsch (שם טו) defines what he thinks true שירה is: "to express thoughts and feelings that have been called into existence within oneself ... an inspired or rapturous expression of what some external event has revealed to the inner self, that which the physical eye cannot see, but which has become clear to the mind's eye." What is the significance of Rav Hirsch's definition? In order to understand the role that שירה plays in the תנ"ך, we need to look at times that it has been used and the purpose it was serving at that particular instance. In (במדבר ט) were singing שירה to thanking Him for providing them with water. In (שופטים א ח), דבורה and ברק sing שירה after the war was won, a song thanking ה for saving them from the enemy. In (במדבר ו) ז, שיאול was saved from שאר חיות when he sang שירה. Lastly, in (שמואל ה ב), שיר is used as a tool in the salvation and redemption of צור. Given this information we know about שירה, what is the connection between that which is so deep in oneself that the eye cannot see it and salvation?

Ariella Freedman
The moment that יִשָּׁרָה בן נָגָה saw the נְסַיָּה of סוף יִשָּׁרָה, their immediate reaction was to sing שִׁירָה. How does it make sense that the reaction to the most national and revealed (it was surely a נְגָּלֶה) miracle was something so personal and נְסֶת? Wouldn’t we think that the reaction to such an open miracle would be something equally open and revealing? What can we learn from this? I would like to offer an original idea as a possible answer to this question. We needed to learn what שִׁירָה is through something so clearly deserving of this form of לַהְלָּכוֹת. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of דבורה שָׁרִית to בָּשָׂלֶךְ פרשת teaches us the role that שִׁירָה plays in our everyday lives. דבורה שָׁרִית teaches us about our relationship with today’s “real life miracles” – that we must tap into our inner שִׁירָה, even when we cannot necessarily see it. If we are looking for true music in our lives, we have to choose to see the miracles in the world.

The perfect example of one of today’s hidden miracles is הטבע. From my understanding of ט”ו, this holiday helps us relate to the message of שִׁירָה. The first מַשָּׁה in מַשָּׁה states the מִדְבָּר between בָּשָׂלֶךְ and בְּשָׂלֶךְ, böyle as says that the מַשָּׁה for trees should be on the first of בָּשָׂלֶךְ while יִשָּׁרָה says that it should be on ט”ו. The גמרא explains that according to יִשָּׁרָה, by the 15th of בָּשָׂלֶךְ, most of the season’s rain has already passed. The וַיַּעֲצָה writes that the 15th marks the day that the general strength of the winter has passed. We learn here that ט”ו is the turnover of the season. One may think: shouldn’t the celebration of plant life take place when you can actually see nature’s beauty? No. The celebration of trees takes place specifically when you cannot see the beauty, but rather at a time when you know that underneath the ground, the roots are preparing themselves to become beautiful. In essence, the celebration is one of hidden potential.

The תר ה says that the word מִשָּׁה (שמות, ט”ו) comments that the word מַשָּׁה in the phrase מַשָּׁה וְזָרַת עָזִּי connotes the word “pruning” from the פָּסָוק: זָרַת מַשָּׁה יִשָּׁרָה הק (ויקרא, כ”ד). Rav Hirsch says the זָרַת is the melody, the נִגּוֹן, and the שִׁירָה is the lyrics. Rav Shmuel Brazil says that a נִגּוֹן can be
separated into two words: "depression will run away." Through וַיְשַׁוֵּא וַיִּנָּעַ֣שׁ, we are זָמַר ourselves – we are spiritually pruning ourselves.

In יִבְיֹשֵׁע ספר יהושע, יֵחָזֶק יָשָׁר and זָמֵיר, we are זָמַר ourselves – we are spiritually pruning ourselves.

Rashi says that דום means “silence” in this context. What does it mean that he silenced the sun? Why did the sun have to stop singing? What was so special about יהושע’s song that it could replace the song of the sun?!

In the Artscroll introduction to פרשת שירה, it addresses the reason as to why man’s שירה is not included in the פרשת. Animals do exactly what they are commanded to do. They do not have free will! Therefore, they are always on “pitch,” singing their song correctly. Man, on the other hand, does have free will. This allows and causes him to act out of bounds, and sometimes “go off key.” But what does man have that animals do not? What does he have that the sun and the angels do not? Potential. The animal kingdom, the sun, and the מלאכים do not have potential because they have no ability to choose. They have no choice but to do what they were created to do, and therefore have no potential to be anything more than that. Man’s song takes priority because potential is one of ה’ s greatest gifts to man in this world.

The common question asked on שמות טו is: why does it say ישיר אז, “then they will sing”, instead of שר אז, “then they sang”? Wouldn’t the latter make more grammatical sense? To me, this teaches us that in life, we live by a model of “we will.” We should always be looking towards the future, anticipating all of the זמירות and שירה that we have yet to experience and bring into the world.
It says in (Deut. 31:10): The food of the offering is holy, as it is the last step of the offering. R’ Hirsch says that this shows how coming close to God, which is the point of bringing an offering, needs to be attained to the extent that even the enjoyment of a good meal becomes a holy service to God.

For this offering, the area the priests were allowed to eat was extended to the halls built on the sides of the temple that opened to the open space and was not confined the grounds of the temple itself. This is to show that even on private soil, in areas not inherently holy, you need to stay close to God and not let Him “out of sight”.

R’ Azarya Berzon said an idea on Purim that connects with this. He asks what it means when it says (Esther 9:28): The Book of Esther is found in the Torah when it says in Genesis: The Man is found in this world. This shows that the Man’s essence is all about physicality. Maran on the other hand, was a spiritual person who was focused on God. On Purim we are supposed to completely elevate everything physical to God to the extent that we don’t even know what the difference is between physical and spiritual things because all of our physical things are being used for spirituality. This is just what was done with the food of the offering as it elevated the physical to serve God.

Everything physical in our life can be elevated to serve God. When we eat, we say a blessing. When we put on our shoes we tie them in a certain order, etc. A teacher once told us that even going to sleep can be elevated to serve God. She said that before we go to sleep we should ask Him to give us a good night’s sleep in order to be awake and excited for the next day and to have a productive day.
This turns every minute of sleep into a מצה! It is our job to make sure everything we have and everything on our “private soil” is of service to ה.’

This idea can go even further. The פסוק says that the phrase in the מגילה has special significance. The גמרא says (טז מגילה) that this פסוק refers to the מצות of תורה, טוב, יום טוב, and משלי. If this פסוק is supposed to teach us that ישראל accepted these מצות on פורים, why does it only hint to it? The answer is because ישראל always had the מצות, just without enthusiasm. They did actions out of routine but not with any feeling. Now, on פורים, ישראל accepted the תורה with enthusiasm. Now the לתורה became משלי, השמחה came to be פורים, and התפילין became יקר. We celebrate פורים because we defeated the עמלק inside of us who tried to get rid of the enthusiasm we have toward מצות. Now we don’t just go through the motions; we have the attitude of enthusiasm! Not just our physical things that seem to have no holiness can be elevated to serve ה’, but our מצות (which are inherently קדוש) that lack meaning and excitement can be infused with enthusiasm to serve ה’!
When people ask what the difference is between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, the answer is often that it is a matter of observance. Many hold that Orthodox Judaism adheres to Jewish law with greater loyalty than Conservative Judaism does. However, it is not that simple. Conservative Jews may very well think that they are observant. A Conservative Jew who lives miles away from the nearest shul might ask himself: Would G-d rather have me sit at home on שבת and not daven, or would He want me to get in the car and go to shul? This Conservative Jew truly believes that staying at home is in violation of G-d’s will and that it’s preferable to drive to shul. Conservatives believe this is observance, and the fervent Conservative toes the line according to what the conservative tradition is. In his mind, the Conservative Jew is 100% observant.

Orthodoxy would say that the above reasoning is not proper observance. One of the critical differences between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism is the methodology by which a topic is approached and Orthodoxy’s belief in the importance of the Talmud – Oral Law. For centuries, Jewish religious and cultural life has been rooted in the Talmud, and the Talmud has played an integral role in the scheme of Jewish thought. In his article, “Talmudic Judaism,” Rabbi Yisroel Chait explains the importance of the Talmud in Jewish life. Rabbi Chait says that contemporary religious ideas are irreconcilable with the basic method of Talmud investigation – modern religious thinking has totally different goals and objectives than those of the Talmud.
Today, most modern religious practice focuses on finding meaning and spirituality in an attempt to evoke religious feelings. When people approach Talmud learning, they expect the same thing: spiritual emotions. They want the Talmud to conform to their own preconceived religious notions, but it is an attempt doomed to failure. Why is this so? An analogy to the world of physical phenomena may be helpful in elucidating the concept. The question can be asked: Why do we fall back to the ground when we jump up? There are two different answers. One possible answer, the practical “what,” is that gravity exerts a force that attracts our body towards the center of the earth. A second possible answer is the deeper “why” answer – because can you imagine what would happen if we jumped up and never came back down?

People expect religion to focus on the “why,” but the Talmud looks at the “what,” and maintains that there is a deep “what” in the Talmud just like there is in science. The Talmud learner bases decisions off the “what” and not the “why.” The Talmudic Rabbis do not try to decide Jewish law by intuiting what G-d would want (the “why”). The Talmud learner uses intellect: he studies the data of the written and oral law, draws halachic/legal principles from them, and then proceeds to utilize these principles in the resolution of his problems. The Talmudist is not guided by personal feeling. The point is not which conclusion he finds more proper, but which is verifiable in view of the evidence. Rabbi Chait explains that Judaism is a religion of the mind, and that only the dictates of reason may be followed. Intellect, he says, which is usually the adversary of religion, is the Talmud’s ally.

While Orthodox Judaism believes in the importance and legitimacy of the methodology of the Talmud, Conservative Judaism is trying to figure out what is the spiritually important thing: would G-d want us to be stuck at home because we can’t drive, or to go to shul on שבת? In the pursuit of this approach, common sense is employed as a key determinant.
Today, many Conservatives claim the right to exercise their own common sense in determining the relevance and format of contemporary Judaism. They try to reformulate Judaism to fit with modern thought and base decisions on their own common sense. They decide which laws we need not follow anymore because they are no longer relevant. If there is no spiritually emotional meaning behind an act we don’t need to do that act anymore. Rav Soloveitchik, in his ‘The Common Sense Rebellion Against Torah Authority,’ explains that this is not a new phenomenon. The Rav compares the situation now to the rebellion led by קרח in כנופו.

קרח implied that קרח wanted to replace מהתה as the teacher and leader of Israel, publicly challenging the halachic competency of מהתה. קרח, citing the הרש, מדרש התוספות, writes about several of קרח’ s ploys with which he tried to debunk מהתה. In one situation, קרח had all of his men wear completely blue shirts, and then asked מהתה if the shirts still required ציצית. מהתה said that they did, and קרח used his “common sense” to explain why the shirts did not need ציצית. He decided that the whole point of ציצית is to make you think about G-d, and that the completely blue shirts make a person think about the sky and heaven and infinity—so of course they do not need ציצית. It fulfills the same purpose. In his second ploy, קרח filled a house with תורה scrolls and asked מהתה if the house still needed a מוזוזה. מהתה said yes. קרח again used his “common sense” to prove מהתה wrong. He explained that the מוזוזה was on the doorpost so that there would be some תורה in the house, and also as protection. Surely 100 scrolls was better than 1 scroll, קרח explained, and a מוזוזה would not need to be put onto such a house.

קרח, like many Conservative Jews today, chose a slogan that would appeal to everyone: “common sense.” קרח said that all reasonable people should have the right to interpret Jewish law according to their best understanding: ייקרו על מהתה נה אסוכן יאסרה אל.appendChild. This way of thinking is appealing because
it promises freedom from centralized authority, and it flatters people's basic intelligence.

Here the Rav takes issue: Today, he says, reasonable people will concede to the authority of scientists and those who have specialized in a field. The common man has no problem accepting that the studied mathematician is more knowledgeable than he is about advanced math – so why are there so many people who question the authority of the תורה scholar who has specialized knowledge in his field? קרח, like many people today, claimed that only sound practical judgment was needed in application of ההלכה. קרח and today’s Conservatives believe that in judging the relevance and beneficial effects of the מצווה, all intelligent people are qualified to render judgment. קרח and the Conservatives are dedicated to the religious subjectivism: the belief that one’s personal feelings are primary in the religious experience. מצווה are physical acts which help us find our hidden feelings of religious emotion. According to קרח and those who think like him, the value of the מצווה relies on its subjective impact to a person. Observing a מצווה is only justified if it brings an emotional experience. If the מצווה no longer impacts the people, it is subject to new rules and may be modified for times and individuals.

What unites different groups under the banner of Orthodox Judaism is the belief that Jewish law can only be determined through the proper halachic analysis of the "what" through the data found in the תורה. The other way of thinking is not valid. The Rav says that it is important to reaffirm the traditional Jewish position that there are two levels in religious observance: the objective outer מצווה and the experience that accompanies it. One without the other is an imperfect gesture, but the subjective emotional experience is not the primary concern. Religious inspiration is generated by the מצווה – not the reverse. The only solid reality is the מצווה, because emotion is always changing, and what inspires one person may not inspire other people. This was a source of major contention between משה and קרח, as indicated in
Communal worship must be constant. Ṣeṭḥ𝔬's emphasis on emotion would destroy the religious identity of the people and fragment them into sects.

Both The Rav and Rabbi Chait explain that the halachic legal system has its own methodology, mode of analysis, and rationale, just like math and science. The Oral Torah can only be understood by someone who has mastered the Talmud's methodology and material.HALAČA is not just law – it is a complicated system that has a methodology all of its own. Those who don't know about it can find Oral Law confusing and unintelligible, so one cannot simply use subjective common sense and emotion to make a ruling. Ṣeṭḥ оф's approach would not be tolerated in the world of science, and it should not be accepted in the world of HALAČA either.

In summary, Orthodox Judaism holds that it is not legitimate to decide for oneself when a HALAČA no longer applies and is outdated, and that this is the fault of Conservative Judaism. But this conversation still has an issue that needs to be addressed. As Orthodox Jews, we have concluded that it is not okay to decide when a HALAČA does not apply to us. But in the Gemara, the concept of דקראטעמאדרשינן is an accepted notion.

In the Gemara (קתו מציעא בבא), it says: The Rabbis taught that whether a widow be rich or poor, no pledge may be taken from her. There is a debate between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon. Rabbi Yehuda says that one can never take a pledge from a widow, whereas Rabbi Shimon says if she is a rich widow then you can take a pledge. Why does he pasken this way? Because Rabbi Shimon expounds on דקראטעמא: He explains that the reason one cannot take a pledge from a widow is because you might need to return it to her. If she is a poor widow, people will make up rumors about an illicit relationship. However, if the widow is rich, the pledge will not need to be returned to her, and thus there will be no rumors.
Rabbi Shimon is saying that the rule only applies if \( x \) is true (the rule only applies if the widow is poor).

In this case, Rabbi Yehuda does not interpret the reason of the law and Rabbi Shimon does. However, the Gemara raises the point that their opinions are really the reverse. About the Pasuk that a king may not have too many wives, \( (\textit{neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart not turn away}) \) Rabbi Yehuda says that the king may have multiple wives so long as they do not turn his heart away and Rabbi Shimon is the one who says the king cannot take a single woman who is likely to turn his heart away. Says Rabbi Shimon in the Gemara, “what then is taught by the verse, \( \textit{Neither shall he multiply wives to himself?} \) Even such as אביגיל.”

The Gemara says that Rabbi Yehuda is not \( \text{דקראטעמאדריש}. \) He is not interpreting the reason; the reason is given in the Torah itself. Rabbi Yehuda argues that in this case the verse makes it explicitly clear, “why shall he not multiply wives to himself? So that his heart not turn away.” Rabbi Shimon argues that as a general rule, we are \( \text{דקראטעמאדריש}. \) Then the Torah should have written \( (\textit{neither shall he multiply wives...}) \) and the \( (\textit{that his heart not turn away}) \) is superfluous. Rabbi Shimon would have come up with the reason behind not having multiple wives on his own, explaining that obviously it is so that the king’s heart is not turned astray. Rabbi Shimon says that the Torah states the reason to teach that the king must not marry even one single woman who may turn his heart away, and the instruction not to take multiple wives must be forbidding multiple wives no matter how righteous they may be.

There is yet another example of \( \text{דקראטשאמרךרא}. \) (in תומך, which discusses the Pasuk in במדבר about the בפרה and \( \text{תקוה לאך לרדה ראמה המימה אשתימ איבד בם אסרי אל לעה לין} \) that the Cohen will slaughter the black cow or another cow. In this Gemara, there is a rule that the הפרה must be brought outside of the camp by itself: it cannot be brought out with a black cow or another red cow. There is a first opinion brought that says the reason for this is to avoid suspicion that the Cohen will slaughter the black cow or...
both red cows, which is incorrect procedure. Rebbi says that we must accept the law as it is without giving a reason for it. The Gemara says that this first view is the view of Rabbi Shimon, who is ירחי שמשון. Because Rabbi Shimon does expound the reasons of mitzvot, he would allow one to take out a donkey with the red cow because there is no suspicion in that case. Rebbi says we must follow the rule and bring out the cow alone. He would not even allow a donkey to be brought out, because he is not ירחי שמשון.

Again we have a philosophical analysis of a detail in a technical procedure.

In סנהדרין מסכת כא, Rabbi Yitzchak says: "Why were the reasons of some תורת laws not revealed? Because in two verses they were revealed, and they caused the greatest in the world (המלך שלמה) to stumble." Shlomo was רשוד. Explains the Gemara, Shlomo said, "I will multiply wives yet not let my heart be perverted." Yet we read that when Shlomo was older, his wives turned his heart astray. Continues the מראג: אשיב ولא ארביח אני שלמה ואמר סוסים לו ירבה ולא ותיב. Shlomo "fell prey" to דקרא – by applying his own reasons for the laws, he ended up violating them.

I will leave off with these questions: Why is דקרא an accepted notion in the Gemara when it is a rejected view of Conservatism? How and where do the rabbis draw the line with דקרא, and how is this different from what today's Conservative Jews do? We see that Shlomo thought it was okay to marry many wives because his heart would not turn astray. But would he agree with קרח that a house with ספרי תורה doesn't need a מזוזה?

1 It is important to note that although דקרא is used in the Gemara, it is mostly rejected when there is a debate between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon, we almost always go with Rabbi Yehuda, who is not typically ירחי שמשון.
The Role of Food in Yahadut

Overview and the Korbanot

From time immemorial, food has been part and parcel of Jewish culture. It manages to find its place in almost every ritual. The famous line “They tried to kill us, we won, now let’s eat,” playfully pokes fun of what seems to be the ongoing narrative of our history. Food is the focus of so many of our holidays that commemorate our victories over our enemies. To name just a few examples: we eat latkes as a remembrance of the miracle of חנוכה, have a סעודה on פורים as a celebration of the rise and (ultimate) demise of haman and sit down to a פסח סדר filled with many symbolic foods to remember our Exodus from Egypt. For each of these חגים, our main observance seems to emphasize food. We see this trend beginning early on in our history, when the Jewish people are commanded by G-d to sacrifice and eat the פסח קרבן.

We should ask ourselves: what is the underlying message of this commandment to essentially eat some shwarma, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread? Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch comments on שמות (יב:ג)–(יב:יא):

In the Pesach offering, the Jewish nation asserts all its members, assembled in family groups, as being G-d’s flock and at his disposal, and then, in eating the same, it receives itself back, freed from physical and civic death. This is the bond between G-d and Yisrael, which has eternally to be renewed ... only those may take part in it who belong to this Jewish bond with G-d both by nationality and conviction.

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1 שמות יב:ג–יא
Rav Hirsch clarifies to us the purpose of this process of קרבן, that through this physical endeavor, we have created a spiritual connection between us and G-d as well as have aided in the preservation of ישראל בני.

Alternatively, the Maharil offers a different approach. He explains that the purpose of קרבנות in general is to demonstrate to us that we live in a physical world, which is depicted by the animal that we are slaughtering; However, we need the fire of spirituality to come down to sanctify the physicality of הזה עולם. The burning of the sacrifice teaches man that nothing has an eternal existence, besides G-d Himself. As Man watches his animal being consumed by a heavenly fire, he comes to the realization that G-d, who is the source and master over both the realities of the physical and spiritual world, has accepted his קרבן. Of course, G-d does not need our sacrifice; rather, he allows us to offer him the קרבן as a means through which we can relate to Him on a higher level. The word קרבן is derived from the שורש קרב – the קרבן brings a form of closeness and intimacy between man and his Master.

According to רמב"ם, the תורה sanctioned קרבנות for religious purposes to "wean" ישראל בני away from idolatry. This was extremely prevalent in Egypt during מצרים. The focus was not on the actual קרבנות, but rather was a tactic to distance כל ישראל מזרה from idolatry.

**שבת, שמחות, and שבת**

We know that part of the ritual of our חגים and שמחות is the sanctification of wine through קידוש. What is so significant about wine? Is there some intrinsic holiness in the grapes? The נברא in

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1 הבורא א"ת: פרק ג ופרק כא
2 מרדכי מובס ג"ס
The Role of Food in Yahadut

סנהדרין teaches us an important lesson about the complexity of wine. The גמרא quotes from תהלים קד:טוו (_meshum Meshum, והלム (כד): "Wine that gladdens man's heart, to make the face glow from oil."

The גמרא points out that the word ישמח in this context can be read as ישמם – to make desolate. This teaches us that like anything, wine has the potential to either bring a man closer to G-d, or to create a distance from Him. Wine is a beverage which on the one hand can serve as man's medium for sanctification; alternatively, it can unfortunately bring man into a lowered state of desolation and drunkenness.

Wine also plays a role in life cycle שמחות. רמב"ם explains that there is מדרבנן מצוה to make a חתן and כלה happy as part of the מצוה of לרבך עך. The ישד חמיד adds that this מצוה lasts for the entire seven days of ברכות and not just the night of the wedding. This explains why, at the conclusion of each meal of ברכות for a חתן and כלה, a series of seven blessings is recited to honor the occasion. Just like we learned above that celebrating with wine lends importance, so too here we are making the newly married couple happy by showing the importance of their שמחה through the wine of the ברכות.

Central to יהדות is the weekly observance of שבת. שן, we are given an obligation of קידוש – לקדש את יום שבת וזכור – Remember the day to sanctify it. רמב"ם explains that the תורה obligation is merely for one to say the קידוש. קידוש is to say קידוש on a cup of wine. According to the כר, a man can connect and stay focused on the religious significance of his words

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4. ט"ו כ.
5. הלכות אביו ד:א
6. יש ומדא ומדא ח:ל, י.
7. שמואל ב:ח.
only when they are connected to a concrete action. Therefore, we are Rabbinically mandated to recite קידוש over a full cup of wine. The gemara states: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Remember it over the wine at its commencement." One is supposed to consider the wine a means of lending importance to the declaration of קידוש.

In סמיה, מששה says, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field.” This is referring to the commandment of לא תבוא מים קדשים on Friday so they will have for שבת. In the times of the תלמוד, generally only two meals were eaten on a regular day, but this was an additional meal that was unique to שבת. In סמיה, מששה tells us that someone who fulfills the מצוה of having three meals on שבת is spared from three tribulations: (1) The birth pangs of מישא, (2) judgment in גהנה, and (3) The war of גוג and מגוג. We clearly see that this מצוה carries weight based on the great כרש which one receives by fulfilling it. So what is the significance of the three meals eaten over the course of שבת? Perhaps the reason we have the מצוה of eating three meals on שבת is because לא wants us to enjoy the food he has given us especially on שבת, so that we can appreciate and come to enjoy the day He has set aside for us through the מצוה of שבת עונג.

The origin for the concept of שבת עונג is based on a passage found in ישעיה 11: אביך יעקב נחלת הארץ בה tàiובתך נאם חוכה ודרעא:11 ספירי ישעיה כי יר הבדור.

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8Pesukim 8.
9Shemot 14.29.
10Shemot 15.
11Yeshua 14.8.
The Role of Food in Yahadut

The role of food in Yahadut explains that since in Parshat Amor it says: "Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them: Gather to me on the seventh Sabbath, for it is a holy convocation," it is also included based on the words of the Master. He elaborates that this is done by eating special foods to honor Shabbat.

We can use the concept of Shabbat Unog to allow us not only to increase our food intake, but also to decrease it. When it comes to Shelishim Seudah, especially on a short Shabbat in the winter months, we are frankly not that hungry. However, some posekim say that one can fulfill the mitzva by eating other foods. The R.A. quotes in Shelah that it is permissible to eat meat. The R.B. goes on to explain that it is permissible to eat meat. The R.C. is even more lenient and says one can get away with eating just fruit. Therefore in a bonfire situation, one does not have to put themselves through anguish to eat bread, because the food is for one's enjoyment of Shabbat.

Closing Thoughts

You may have heard the line that “you don’t gain weight on Shabbat” as an excuse to indulge more on Shabbat. This myth is falsely derived from the Gemara in Bava Kamma since Rashbi says there that on Shabbat grants man an enlarged soul called Nitir Naasem. Many think that this soul can “absorb” the extra calories eaten on Shabbat.

As we see, the food we are commanded to eat is another means for us to connect to Him. We may not know all the specific

12 רמב"ם
13 ש"י ורא"א
14 ש"י ורא"א
15 ביצה טז.
reasons of why we do and don’t eat certain things, but we do it because G-d commanded us. At the same time, knowing the reason ֶה commands us to engage in physical acts such as eating can help us relate to G-d in a greater way and can give our actions meaning and significance while fulfilling the רצון ה.

An overall approach to food within our העבודת can be gleaned from פסחים גמרא in a discussion of the observance of שבועות. The question there is how much emphasis of שבועות (and other holidays) is ה and how much is לכם. There are some holidays which one might think should be all spiritual and for ה. This might lead one to either fast or eat in a very minimal way. The conclusion is there needs to be a correct balance of the two.哈尔 ויד לכם is appropriate even for holidays where spirituality is more important. This should be a model for us, not only for שבועות but for the way that we approach food in general in the service of G-d.

It has been said that it is easier to "fast לשם שמים than to eat לשם שמים." So, let us all strive to use the food we eat on the חגים and throughout the year as a means to an end in our הработка.
The תפילת עسري, is a gathering of 18 פסוקים in which the name of ה is mentioned in each one. These 18 פסוקים are corresponding to the 18 vertebrae in the spine. This relationship of the body to the spine is important because the spine connects the brain to the rest of the body, and its job is to give the body the ability to stand straight.

The שמשוןנפש continues to explain that this תפילה is an introduction to אשרי and the פרקים following because before we elevate the creation with song, we must connect the existence of creation to ה. Just like limbs cannot fulfill their purpose until they are connected to the brain which gives them life, so too, as humans we cannot fulfill our purpose until we are connected to ה who gives us life.

What is the meaning of הכבוד? When the creations connect to ה, they feel His greatness and His connection to them, and therefore want to honor Him. כבוד is an outcome of connection. In addition, the 18 פסוקים correspond to the 6 combinations of the 3 letters of the name of ה (ש-קי, etc.). This name of ה is the name that shows us that ה created the laws of nature and is outside of them, not guided by them. So, in this תפילה, there are 18 פסוקים that speak about הכבוד in our world, but not in the usual way it is today. We are asking for a time when יי השם מפריך מתנה טובה, ומתרחשת יי השם דרך פעמיים. We are asking that ה will get rid of the laws of nature and put שמים מלכות כבוד גילוי therein in our world and that ה מלך, ה מלך, ה מלך, The י_density is removed. We are asking that through using the name ש-קי He will break the course of nature.

Rav Schwab (Rav Schwab on Prayer) adds that the name of ה is mentioned 19 times in 18 פסוקים — just like 18 ברכות were went from 18 ברכות. He says that this paragraph is of an...
extremely elevated nature and should not be skipped. The entire תפילה reflects the state of the world in the time of משיח when the height of development will be reached and everyone will recognize ה. The paragraph continues with פסוקים from הלל which is the universal recognition of ה. Then the prayer has a description of the happiness of everyone and then finally a declaration of ה's permanent rule. Afterwards is a description of the disappearance of “nations” – separate ruling entities from the world. At the end, we realize that because of our shortcoming we haven’t reached the days of משיח so we call out to ה – whoever is pleased with אדוה will be pleased with והוה ולשם אמור, he will be pleased with us. And only through the אפרוט we can hope for ה.

The בינה נתיב speaks about the central idea of הלל and שבח and the feelings that a person has of how great, high, and respected ה is, combined with a feeling of closeness that ה has with His creations. Because of this always important message, there is no time limit to this תפילה. In addition, the תפילה talks about ה being above the world of the other nations, about משיח, the choosing of ישראל בני as ה's chosen nation, and most importantly, our inability to help ourselves without ישועת and our hope that ה will help us.

The מהר"ל explains how the פסוקים are all שבח of ה. A few examples are:

- מפרידה שמש עד מעבר – from שמי comes praise of ה because the sun shows the strength and power of ה and brings praise of ה into this world
- וה הוא על כל גויים – although there are separate nations, ה rules over all of them and does what he desires with them
- ה מלך עלם ויה – ה is King and all of the creations are for His glory
- והбит את האלהים – ירושלים is watched over by ה and there will be gathered
- ותֵּשָׁבוּ – the מִּסְגָּל is the three dotted vowel. Just like each dot is always between two others, ויִשָּׁאו, who are prized and special, have a value of יהוד מהא, which is always hidden.
In conclusion, this תפילה is powerful because of its messages, structure, and hidden meanings. The understandings and messages of the power, strength, and praise of ה are extremely important. When combined with the hidden meaning based on the 18-פסוק structure and the use of the name of ה, the תפילה reaches its fully elevated status. Only a תפילה of such elevation could serve as the introduction to תמר לְמַמְרוֹם.


A Holiday of Hope

I've been asked before to choose a favorite חג and I responded that 
פסח is definitely my favorite one. It’s right by my birthday, and I 
like מצה, especially with gefilte fish and chicken soup! There’s 
nothing wrong with the גח! But there’s another reason why I 
consider it to be my favorite חג. This holiday gives me hope 
concerning the future of ישראל עם גאולה. At this point in Jewish history, 
we once again find ourselves in גלות waiting for our גאולה to come. 
This is exactly what the Jews went through when they were slaves 
in מצרים. Therefore, I find it comforting that just like they were 
liberated from their גלות, G-d willing, we too will be liberated from 
ובות.

What is so special about the miracle of מצריםיציאת as com-
pared to other נסים that gives us so much hope? The תורתبداות suggests the following answer. It is 3000 years later, and we are still celebrating it. He explains 
further and writes that in each דור, we have a mini-מציציאת, a 
mini-liberation from some type of slavery or גלות. Therefore, it was 
necessary that ו”ט Himself took לישראל out, not a מלאך or שליח, 
because that is what makes it so everlasting. In turn, we need to 
really see ourselves as if we left מצרים, and to learn how to see the 
bad as if it is good. This ability is granted to us on every 
הפסח because ישראל were taken from complete bondage into freedom, 
from bad to good.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in his introduction to the 
פסח מחזור, explains another reason why מציאת is such a huge foundation 
for אמונה. Not only did the exodus happen when ישראל left מצרים, 
but an exodus also happened five times before to the אבות (four 
journeys and a prophecy). Each case was accompanied with the 
message that they would survive and return. So, too, another
exodus happened after it already happened. מֶשֶׁחָה gave a נבואה that they would be sent into גַלּוֹת in order to remind them that it’s not just an act of history that will send them into misery. Rather, it is because of their lack of אָמּוּנָה in Ḥוֹרָה. מֶשֶׁחָה was telling us, that when we will eventually be sent into גַלּוֹת, we need to return to Ḥוֹרָה in order to be redeemed. Only then will He return to us. Throughout נביאים, we see ישראלベンי מִצְרָיִם in distress, yet they always had hope that was grounded in historical and theological experience. Just as Ḥוֹרָה saved us in the past, so too, He will do so now and in the future. We need to hold onto this hope and come close to Ḥוֹרָה so we can reach the final redemption.

It is known that the Jews were supposed to be enslaved for 400 years yet they were redeemed after 210. Why were they redeemed so early? ישראלвенי מִצְרָיִם were in danger of losing their Jewish identity so Ḥוֹרָה had to take them out בַּחֲפַזּוֹן, in a hurry. Because they were taken out prematurely, their גאולה was incomplete and would have to wait for a future redemption to be completed. Yet even though it wasn’t complete, it was a most amazing miracle. והמרוחק in the future, and final redemption, will be that much greater.

Rav Soloveitchik, in his הגדה של שבת, explains an aspect of the redemption that can give us hope for the state that ישראל is in now. He explains that deep inside the heart of each Jew, there is the imprint of Judaism that can never be erased. In מִצְרָיִם, Ḥוֹרָה had to look really hard to find it and the people were saved. Now too, we hope that Ḥוֹרָה can look deep inside each Jew and find that “pintele yid” and through that bring us to our ultimate redemption.

Throughout הגדה, there are passages that give us hope for the final גאולה.

Rabbi Sacks interprets the passage of עניאלחמא as if we’re saying, yes we are in exile now but we’ve been through it before and we’ve returned, so too we shall return again. Rav Soloveitchik explains differently. In מִצְרָיִם, each Jew was enslaved in a different
way yet each of them felt the pain of their friend and that is what
made them merit the redemption. We start off the סדר with break-
ing the מצה and then expound on how they used to share it with
others if someone didn’t have. If we emulate this, and really feel
the pain of each other, then hopefully we will merit redemption.

A popular passage in מגיד is the הנשתנה. It shows the im-
portance of questioning and searching, and the effort man has to
make in order to make a relationship with ר. If we don’t search for
ה and keep in mind that He is our ultimate goal, we won’t ever
merit the final redemption. Perhaps this is why we readשיר הדרים
on פסח because it symbolizes the search for one’s beloved. This
concept of searching is necessary to bring out the גאולה.

In response to הנשתנה, we answer היהי אברהם which shows us
another reason why we merited גאולה. By saying היהי אברהם, we show
that we were slaves to פרעה but we never were פרעה’s slaves and that
mindset helped us get through the slavery. Slavery to them was
extrinsic; they never let it destroy their inner self. ישראל בני נון
were spiritually free which allowed the exodus to happen. But בני נון
were like the burning bush that ר showed to משה. From the
outside it looked dull and dead; they were dead from the slavery.
But in the inside, it was burning with fire. Deep down, בני נון
were burning with desire to serve ר. Inside each Jew there is a
burning bush that we need to tap into now so we too can be
זוכי to the גאולה.

Saying ש://'ו gives us a lot of hope. We don’t only cel-
brate פסח because it happened to our ancestors, but we can truly
experience it because it is an occurrence that happens in every
דו. Yet each time, ר has saved us. The story of צreo is the story of
the Jewish destiny which gives us comfort for all future troubles
we might encounter.

Lastly, we end the סדר not just because we hope to be there but because we know that if we learn
the message from the סדר this year, we WILL be in ירושלים next year!
Perhaps these are all explanations for why Rabbi Sacks labels פסח as “the master narrative of hope”. Its story is the basis for all future hopes of ישראל עם.

I hope all these ideas help explain why I chose פסח as my favorite חג.
The main theme of ויבא ועלה is recited in the ברכה of רצה on holidays when the מוסף קרבן was brought as a sacrifice. In that blessing, we hope and pray for the return of the actualkerja in the TERM דַּעְשׁוֹת. The main theme of ויבא ועלה is זכירה, with the form of the word זכרון mentioned five times. We are acknowledging that all of our actions are remembered and recorded. In (Chayei Adam (ב) and in (ב) it says כל ז réserve שֵׁם כֹּל מִתְנשָׁךְ בְּבֵית נַבֵּהוּ – every word that leaves your mouth is recorded. When our actions are remembered, they are permanent, although recording ourמצוות has limitations. חז"ל say מertia can be extinguished by an מתה. Since a מצווה can be lost as the result of an עבירה, we ask ויהי, it should rise up to be תחתון. Althoughɧלא doesn’t forget, we are asking him to be זוכרים, remember a person’s מצווה, even if he does עבירה.

The interpreter comments on the reason it says זכירה five times and פקדון one time. We find in the תורה phốית לשבח פסוקים אחת: זוכרים כו ופקדונים, והשם ופקדונים, ופקדונים. The word זכירה appears once in פסוקים ואו, and זכירה is mentioned four times in פסוקים. The פסוקים comes from יזערכו פסוקים פסוקים.

Rav Schwab suggests that זכירה refers to the הגילים who might have forfeited מצווה because of their sins, and פקדונים refers to the "special attention" to be paid to the תשובות. The interpreter breaks down the structure of ויבא ועלה in a very precisely way. It begins with eight verbs: יעלה, ויבא, ויכיר, וראה, ורוצה, ושבט, וזכרו, ויפקדו. Then come six ways we beg ה to remember us using six nouns: זכורת, זכירה, זכרי, בנו, תשבוח, זכורה, ופקדונים. Then we say the seven purposes of why we want ה to remember us: לפליטה, לטובה, לחור, ולחסד, ולרחמים, ולשלום, לחיים. Then we mention the special day we are reciting this for and then
We ask for four praises for the future: Let us have good, blessed, and abounding life. We end with two praises of praise: We specify in what we want to remember and and we're remembering the holy city filled with where we can learn to have because it's designed for the purpose of In addition, according to the The Vilna Gaon explains that relate to the 7 heavens named: It refers to the physical sky which separates us from the spiritual heavens. The sky has a physical connotation (the sky) and also refers to the spiritual heavens which we have no understanding. Similarly, the seven reasons we ask to remember also correspond to the seven skies.

We daven that our will be accepted and come – and reach – and be seen – and be willing to do. The 7th level is hopefully our can reach and get to.
After we mention these seven reasons, we hope our good deeds are remembered. We mention the special day, the halachic requirement (שבת כד) to always make note in the halachah of a special day on the Jewish calendar. This day is called because both good and bad deeds go before  ה and we want  ה to remember our good deeds that may have been forgotten because of our sins.

When we have the opportunity to say י всёله  ה we are really asking ה to remember His promises to ישראל, as it says ויבא יעלה: “I will remember the ברית of the ancients; those whom I have taken out of מצרים and I will remember them more and more.” Lastly, in יחזקאל טז it says: “I will remember my ברית with you in the days of your youth and I will establish for you an everlasting ברית.”

Each month and special holiday we have the opportunity to remind ה of these promises. We ask ה to accept our תפילות and we will be able to see the days of the בית המקדש and a rebuilt ירושלים and we will no longer need to remind ה that we are waiting for our lives to be rebuilt.
פסח is a holiday when Jews remember the Exodus from מצרים that occurred so many years ago. The night is the epitome of this remembrance when we read the הניה which narrates the miracles that 'י performed for us in מצרים. However, this need for remembrance isn’t limited to פסח. In fact, one of the six events that one should recount every day is that of יציאת מצרים. One may ask: What is the significance behind this commemoration? What about any other miracle that 'י performed for us throughout the generations? Why shouldn’t those impactful events also be recounted in a סדר which we would use yearly to commemorate the wonders that 'י did for us? What makes the story of the שעבוד and ultimate redemption from מצרים so fundamental that it is supposed to be a part of our daily lives as Jews? The answer I would like to suggest is that the story of פסח teaches us about one of the most critical and important traits there is: הטובה הכרת.

We may not realize it, but הטובה הכרת is an all-encompassing מידה; this means that it involves מצוות, בין אדם לוב Eğ ובין אדם他自己. The relationship to הטובה הכרת is probably the easiest to explain. A sincere “thank you” to a friend, teacher, co-worker, or family member will instantly create a positive bond between those two people. Feeling appreciated means to feel acknowledged – and humans crave positive acknowledgement. It’s clear how הטובה הכרת, or a lack of it, can have a significant and lasting effect on a human relationship. The power of the brit שלーム is so strong that the brit שלーム began because of an instance of כפוי (the opposite of הטובה הכרת).

1 דיברים רבים.
One of the first ספר בראשית begins with פסוק ב of שמות where
the second opinion states that the new king was the same one who had
ruled Egypt, but with renewed decrees. According to the second opinion,
this king witnessed and experienced all that יוסף had done to help
save מצרים from starvation. Now, this same king suddenly “forgot”
all the help that he received and put יוסף’s family into slavery
instead of showing the proper amount of appreciation.

The first opinion also reflects the lack of הכרת טוב found in the Egyptian culture at that time; it’s
hard to believe that this new king never heard of יוסף who saved all
of מצרים! As the king, surely he had learned the recent history of his
own nation! If לא מצוות מצרי יוסי proposes that אונקלוס comments on this saying,
then it means that יוסי chose not to recognize the decrees that יוסי put in
place in order that Egypt would survive the famine. Because the
מצריים expressed such טוב כ폐וי to יוסף, this led to the horrific שעבוד that
began in מצרים.

This is not only limited to the arena of הכרת טוב. It
also has its place in our relationship with and connection to G-d.
There are many things we say in תפילה that are placed in the
category of הודיה, or giving thanks to G-d, including everything from
what we wake up in the morning, to what we eat.

Every food that we eat is prefaced with and followed by a ברכה to
thank ה for what he has given us. In fact, the גמרא tells us that

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2 ספר בראשית א:ב
3 רashi פסוק ב ספר בראשית
4 תח(the
5 אונקלוס ספר
someone who eats without reciting a ברכה is like a person who committed מעילה (the sin of taking something from the המקדש to use for personal benefit).\(^6\) It is crucial for us to understand that all in this world comes from ה and from that we gain appreciation for all that is around us. As Rebbetzin Tzipporah Heller puts it, “blessings are exercises in appreciation”.\(^7\) Once our awareness is concentrated in our verbalization of ה’s presence in this world, we are able to access the המווה of ספס רפס. On פסח, we read the הגדה that recounts all that ה did for בני ישראל. Everyone is encouraged to participate in המווה to Him by remembering what He did for our nation so many years ago. A crucial element of המווה is focusing on what you do have, rather than on what you are lacking. Therefore, during המワイ we sing דיינו. The words of דיינו convey the message that “it would have been enough”; When one is able to say wholeheartedly, “If He had smitten their firstborn, and not given us their wealth – דיינו, it would have sufficed,” then he has reached a level of complete appreciation of what he does have and won’t complain about what he does not have.

The tragedy of בני ישראל in the מדבר is that they became complainers; from complaints about the מана, to the water being too bitter. They had forgotten all that was provided for them by focusing on what they didn’t have. As the ספס writes, נא,_when they reached the מנהה, they became complainers and focused on what they didn’t have. As ה commanded them, read עליך מנה, כל RGBABER ה and the water was sweetened.\(^8\)

\(^6\) ברוח

\(^7\) Let’s Face It, pp. 63-64

\(^8\) דברות ח"ז
the deep and seemingly threatening waters before them and the fierce and angry 
מָצְרִים, אֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל cried out, ישָׂרָאֵל. One can ask: Hadn’t just seen all of the 
wonders that ה did for them in מצרים during the 
מכות עשר? How could it be that they had such little faith to believe that ה would save 
them once more? Additionally, once בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל were in the 
מדבר, the complaining began once more, this time about not having free fish 
like they had in מצרים. Did בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל really believe that they were receiving free fish from the same people who were enslaving them?

לילקוט עיון

says that there were supernatural occurrences where there’d be a multitude of ready fish when בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל drew from the water. But how could בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל possibly have thought this was normal and not have realized that this was 
ה יד? This is a clear lack of הכרת הטוב directed at ה. Therefore, we counteract the 
כֹּם שָׂם יִשְׂרָאֵל that had shown in the past by praising ה during the 
פסח סדר for the wonders He performed for us.

The power of הכרת הטוב manifests itself in a relationship as well. When ה delegated him to be the leader of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, he at first shied away 
from this great responsibility. However, once he accepted his new 
role, his fierce determination to do רצון ה came to the forefront. In 
fact, most of the 
מכות were initiated by משה, except for the first three. Why? The 
רבה שלושה中部ある explains that משה could not hit the 
יאור because it had saved him when he was a baby from the decree
of, Additionally, could not hit the sand during, because when he killed the sand saved him when he buried the body so that no one would see. In this way, showed to inanimate objects that didn’t really need the recognition. The lesson learned from here is that is not just for the benefit of the recipient. It has tremendous power to enhance one’s recognition of the good all around them and can improve one’s personal life. These examples attested to the of and how he enriched his relationship through this high level of .

The Jewish people have a very close connection with the . In fact, Rabbi Shalom Arush explains, the Hebrew word for Jews – – means those who give thanks. Thanking is our national spiritual task. The very essence of a Jew is thanksgiving. This “thanksgiving”, as illustrated through the various examples above, is beautifully expressed through our understanding of the story. While explaining why is included in one of the six remembrances all Jews should remember each day, Rabbi Arush writes about the need “To remember ‘s loving-kindness and all the miracles and wonders that He performed when He redeemed the Jewish people from slavery, made us a nation, gave us the , and more. The remembrance of the exodus from Egypt is the fundamental remembrance upon which all others and our entire existence as a nation are founded. As such, every person must thank G-d for the exodus from Egypt with all his heart.” With this said, it is interesting to note the

14 שמות במדבר
15 רש"י שמות חיב
16 The Garden of Gratitude, p. 77
17 The Garden of Gratitude, p. 59
This verse reflects on how יִשְׂרָאֵל בני should treat any stranger with kindness. The reason behind this מצוה is that we were once strangers ourselves in מצרים. There are two examples of רמב"ן brings forth the idea of מידה כנגד מידה here: Because ה had mercy on us during their time in מצרים, it is important to appreciate that mercy and try to emulate mercy when we encounter גרים. Secondly, this seems to imply that we have a responsibility to show gratitude because of the מצרים who allowed us in their land. From here we can learn that we must show appreciation even when it is difficult, and even when their bad deeds outshine their good deeds. A well-known idea of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov tells us as follows, “Seek the good in everyone, and reveal it, bring it forth.” This “everyone” includes people who may have wronged us in the past. True, רמב"ן is about looking past the bad to be able to recognize the good. For these reasons, it seems that פסח is the perfect catalyst for which we model many different forms of רמב"ן. The theme of ניסן is redemption as it says, "ביסנס נגיאת ביסנס נגיאת". May we all be ניסן to be able to fulfill greater heights with our רמב"ן and experience the final redemption through our actions.

18 שמות בָּכָה
19 ליקוטים פתורין
20 רashi 2:8. א.
Tali Spier

ךazor: Rock Solid

אמונה and בטוחון in Hashem,

Through Nature, Miracles, and the Unknown

Ever since I was a young girl, I always had a particular fascination with imagery and other similar concepts in Tanach. I have no idea why this obsession started but my curiosity in this area only continued to flourish as I was exposed to more and more Torah. There was one image in particular that always sparked my interest: the image of the צazor, the rock. Any time I read a פרק of תהלים, a story in Tanach, or a piece of our תפילה that referred to our ג-d as צazor, questions would bottle up inside of me. Why are we referring to our one and only all-powerful ג-d as a rock?! Rocks sit around and do nothing but הצור does it all! What kind of comparison is that? I knew that it must be that I was looking at it on a superficial level and that there had to be a deeper meaning to this image. Allow me to share my adventure of unraveling the layers behind this imagery and how it can strengthen our relationship with G-d.

Almost every time that it says ובצוח צazor in ישעיהו comments and says that it refers to our ג-d's strength, just like a rock is strong. It is written in תהלים: "Who is a Rock except for our G-d?" expressing that הצור's strength is unique. Additionally, one interpretation of ישעיהו in שמות is that there is no strength that הצור doesn't know about because everyone else's strength comes from הצור. Not only does everyone else's strength come from הצור, but in essence, everything in our lives comes to us from הצור. Building on the knowledge that הצור is compared to a צazor and therefore possesses the ultimate strength, and that all
strength in the world comes from ל, we can get to a level of אמונה and בטון in ל. There is a clear connection between the use of צור in relation to ל and as it appears in ישעיהו as it can we have full and lasting בטון in ל? He explains that when you trust someone, he needs to have two things. Firstly, he needs to possess the ability to fulfill the requests of the person who trusts him. Secondly, there has to be an understanding that nothing and no one can take away his ability or desire to help the person who trusts him. These two criteria can be found only in ל, because He is eternal and all powerful. ל is צור, He possesses and is in control of all the strength in the world, and no one can take that power away from Him. Perhaps this is why, in this case and in many others, the שם of צור is connected to צור because that is the name of ל that represents His eternality. ל is היה, היה, will and will never leave us. Through the good and the bad, we can always trust ל.

In the תפילה of העולם אדון, we discuss this concept of the eternity of G-d and then refer to ל צור ל. This idea is rooted in the word צור itself. Just like a rock is grounded, can’t move, can’t change, and can’t break, so too is ל’s eternality. Through the good times and the bad, one thing will always be there. We can always find a stronghold in ל צור and says that while other nations’ leaders are constantly changing based on successes and other circumstances, as Jews we can be confident that even though our physical leaders may change, ל will always be there. In every generation, no matter what is going on, ל is there, was there, and will be there. The imagery of צור in reference to ל represents His eternal, lasting, and non-changing nature. Just like a rock is “rock solid,” so too must our אמונה in ל be “rock solid” and unwavering because ל’s existence and power is resolute.
Rav Soloveitchik in **משם ובקשתם** (Chapter 2): The Yearning Heart, talks about the need for our אמונה in ה' to be steadfast and unable to be shaken up in any way. He defines it as an intimate knowledge that cannot be changed. He asks a question that I think many people have struggled with before: How can we be faulted for not having אמונה? He answers that it is because if you really took a look at the world and looked at nature, it would be completely clear to you that there is a G-d. To quote the Rav himself,

>If the experience of G-d in man’s confrontation with reality is expressed not by demonstrations based on the complexities of the act of abstraction, but rather by a feeling of the sudden revelation of a direct, unmediated fact within our consciousness of being, then perception of the world itself becomes perception of G-d, and all the demonstrations resurface in a new form… The world is nothing but the glory emanating from the Infinite.

The world is there for us to look at it simply and understand with crystal clear clarity that ה' is there and He must be the creator of it all. Thank G-d we have senses that allow us to find ה' through nature, through הטבע, if we look at the world with the right lens. If we do, we will see that even the simplest things in the world have ה' on them. האל שדך בבר שמעו says (פסקי) that ה' said, בל יצר ואיני יודע.” The אלשיך comments on the spot and explains that thisافق פסוק shows that ה' extends to every single thing in this world, there is not even one little pebble that is left out. A זור, a rock, should act as a mnemonic device for us. Every time we walk past a rock on the ground, it should trigger the remembrance of our steadfast אמונה in ה' and everything that it represents based on his constant and all inclusive השגחה on the world. This model of אמונה in ה' based off of nature, can be found dating way back to אבינו אברהם who found G-d by observing the world. ישעיהו talks to ישראל בני ישראל and tells them that ה'
will comfort Zion. He tells them “Look to the rock from which you were hewn.” And other commentators say that this verse is referring to אבר bowed over G-d. Just like אבר found G-d through observing the world and realized that there must be a G-d, so too if we look around the world and observe nature, we will come to this same belief and be at rest that כל ת行業 will indeed take care of us.

However, since this world is complex, there is a big twist. At first glance, כל doesn’t always seem to operate within the realm of בטוח, nature. And ironically, even when כל acts outside the realm of nature, the word צור is still used! In הכנך, שモא, אבג expresses her gratitude to כל in the form of a שירה for the miracle that He performed for her. In relaying her praise and thanks, she says, “There is no Rock like our G-d.” The רד קיק comments on this פסוק and says that כל’s strength is like none other in that He has the ability to change nature whenever He wants. שMoa was an נקראה, a barren women for whom it was not natural to give birth, and yet, through a נס, she gave birth to a healthy baby, שMoa. The מלבי שMoa on this פסוק asks, how can כל just change nature to do a miracle? Doesn’t that make it seem like כל isn’t eternal and כל is really changing? The מלבי explains that when כל was praising בברא, when כל פסוק, צור as אבר, כל is stating the uniqueness of כל as compared to other gods in terms of His involvement with the world. Whereas other creators create and then leave their creations to survive on their own, כל never leaves his creatures. כל is always upholding what He created, and therefore sometimes He will operate with בטוח which seems “normal” to us and sometimes he will operate with נס. In reality, when it comes to כל, the כשת is also a נס because כל is always upholding it with His utmost השגחה. Therefore, there is no issue of כל changing nature being a contradiction to His consistency and steadfast nature because it is all under the umbrella of כל’s constant השגחה on the world.

Building on this, I think it is incredibly interesting to note that the word צור which means creator has the same שורש as
the word "צור". He is the ultimate and true Creator because He is also, to Him, who is not just a creator, but He is eternal and steadfast, just like a rock. The miracle in the context of letting water flow from the rock is another fascinating one to look at in this context. háyah explained, "They did not thirst, though He led them through parched deserts; He made water flow for them from a rock; He split a rock and water flowed." The explains that háyah is telling over this story because He is asking ‘ו’ that just like He did a miracle and changed nature in the past, so too now He should implore His power and do a miracle. However, I think there is an ironic caveat here that is implied which needs to be met in order for us to merit this השגחה. Originally, when wanted water to come from the rock, he hit the rock. When hit the rock, he was showing that he did not have enough אמונה in ‘ו’. He was trying to prove this “צור eternality” theory wrong. However, really proved himself wrong and we see that was punished for his misdeed. In order for us to merit the constant השגחה and השפעה of ‘ו’ in our lives, we must be full מאמינים in the “צור eternality” theory.

Being that we are limited human beings, we must discuss one more reality. Often times we don’t understand G-d’s ways. However, the image of the "צור" also comes to teach us that even when we don’t understand G-d’s ways and why He acts sometimes with nature and sometimes with miracles, sometimes with seeming רחמים and sometimes דין, that should not shake our אמונה even for one second. It is okay for us to have questions sometimes but that shouldn’t agitate our אמונה and בטחון on a practical level.

Rav Soloveitchik in the same text as before says, “The Deity is not subject to the intellect of His creatures, and the experience of G-d, infinity, and eternity is not confined to the particular extent of the finite, temporal mind.” Just
because we, as mere human beings, cannot comprehend G-d and His intricate way of running the world, it does not mean that He does not exist! Even though sometimes ה' operates through(CC) and sometimes through(ש) and we may not understand why He chooses to act with one over the other in each situation, at the end of the day, we know with certainty that it is all ה' and therefore we can still trust Him and turn to Him at all times.

In (תהלים), י is described as כ וה is our stronghold and we can run to Him whenever we are faced with enemies. (תהלים) says: "He alone is my Rock and my salvation; my stronghold, I shall not hesitate." Upon G-d rests my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength, my refuge is in G-d." Time and time again, we turn to the eternality of ה as our Savior. It is particularly interesting to note that the words מצור meaning defense and תיצור meaning to protect have the same שורש as the word צור. It all comes back to the same idea. As it says in (תהלים): "My flesh and my heart yearn; G-d is the rock of my heart and my portion forever." If we keep close the knowledge of ה' s ultimate strength and divine intervention in every level of nature and every level of our lives, we will be able to trust in G-d FOREVER no matter what life throws at us. Our "rock solid" אמונה and בטון in כ must be the "rock bottom" foundation to our lives.
Rabbi Eliezer Lerner

The Torah tells us in שופטים that אבינויעקב set up a מצבה in אל אבר, and we are forbidden to erect a pillar (i.e., a one stone altar) that ה’ hates. Why does ה’ hate the use of a one stone altar to worship Him? Didn’t אבינויעקב set up a מצבה in אל אבר?

The ספרי comments that although the use of a מצבה was beloved by ה’ during the time of the אבות, it is now hated. What changed? י”י explains that after the time of the אבות, the use of a מצבה became the standard of זרהעבודה. Therefore, the one stone pillar is now forbidden. Instead, מצבה缭א is need to build a מזבח, a multi stone structure.

Rav Moshe Feinstein suggests a homiletical approach to this change in attitude. אבינויעקב actually set up an additional מצבה to the one in אל אבר; the מצבה that he erected over the grave of אמינו רחל. Even though the use of a מצבה for worship was forbidden, the placing of a מצבה on a grave continues to this very day. Why is there such a distinction?

A מצבה is made from a single stone. When one worships ה’ with a מצבה, in essence he is saying: “Here is what I have accomplished.” Based on that, the person desires to have a relationship with the העולם של רבנו. Prior to תורה מתן, this was acceptable. After all, there weren’t תרי מצוות incumbent upon us to fulfill. Anything that we’ve done is already (to a certain extent) above and beyond the call of duty.

Once the תורה was given, however, the situation changed. A person can no longer be satisfied with past accomplishments. He is required to constantly advance in his ה’_work. Saying: “See what I’ve done” is no longer enough. Therefore the מצבה is now forbidden. Instead, one needs to worship ה’ with a multi-level מזבח. The message is that we can and must do more. Yesterday’s levels are
no longer sufficient. Today we need to rise to greater heights, and tomorrow even more.

There is one exception. When a person leaves this world, he leaves behind his ability to achieve greater spirituality. He can no longer perform מצוות. He will merit reward for all that he managed to accomplish, but what was postponed for some later date is now beyond his grasp. That is why we place a מצבה, a one stone pillar on a grave. On the one hand, it is testimony about the deceased, praising all that he has accomplished. But it is also serves as a reminder to the rest of us that now (and only now) is our opportunity to add to our spiritual achievements.

Having spent a year of serious עבודה here in ארץ ישראל, there is a great deal that a תלמידה can be proud of. But don't make the mistake of erecting a מצבה to tout your achievements. At this stage (or any stage) in life, it is something that הקב"ה hates. Build a זבח! Recognize that spiritual growth doesn't end when you board the plane at Ben Gurion airport to return home. The environment may be different, the challenges may be greater, and the progress may be at a different pace, but you can and must continue your growth. Brick by brick, level by level, you have the ability to build a glorious זבח of your own personal עבו; a זבח built with אהבת and in turn, beloved by הקב"ה.