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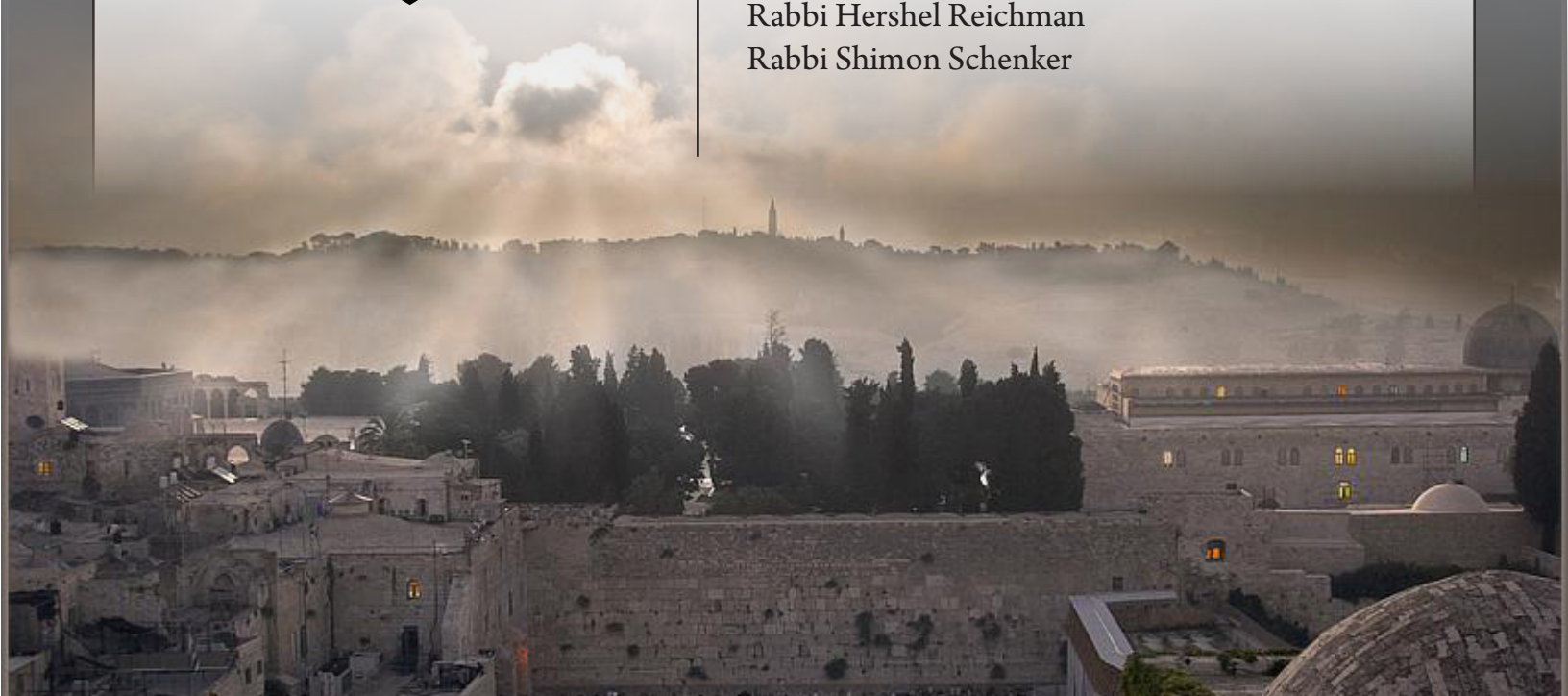
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July 2015 • Tisha B'av 5775



Dedicated in memory of our dear parents
Rabbi Philip (Fievel) and Ruth Cohen
Seymour and Rhea Liebman
by Elaine and Scott Liebman and family

Featuring Divrei Torah from
Rabbi Yosef Bronstein
Rabbi Joshua Flug
Rabbi Meir Goldwicht
Rebbetzin Abby Lerner
Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l
Rabbi Hershel Reichman
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Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future
500 West 185th Street, Suite 419, New York, NY 10033 • office@yutorah.org • 212.960.0074

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Introduction:

Tein li Yavneh vechachameha!

As we read the story of *churban Habayis*, the destruction of the Holy Temple, we learn about a number of leaders who distinguished themselves in navigating the Jewish people through the trauma of destruction, while simultaneously building a foundation for a future survival. Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai, recognizing the danger of the zealots escalating the confrontation with the Romans, clandestinely makes his way out of Yerushalayim. He encounters Vespasian, and immediately predicts the Roman leader's impending ascendancy to the emperorship of Rome. In return for this extraordinary act, Vespasian provides Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai with the opportunity to make three requests. The most ambitious and dramatic request made is "*Tein li Yavneh vechachameha*, Give me [the city of]



Rabbi Yaakov Glasser

David Mitzner Dean, YU Center for the Jewish Future
Rabbi, Young Israel of Passaic-Clifton

Yavneh, and its Torah scholars."

The language seems peculiar; why not simply say "*Tein li chachmei Yavneh*, give me the Torah scholar of Yavneh?" It appears that Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai was trying to convey that not only were the Torah scholars themselves central to the perpetuation of the Jewish people, the community within which they find themselves plays an equal role in the vitality of their leadership. Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai understood that it is the interface between the Torah leaders and the community where the eternal strength of the Jewish people finds its

most poignant expression. He wasn't only trying to save the substance of Torah thought; he was also attempting to rescue the paradigm of communal infrastructure that allows that leadership to serve the community.

On Tisha B'av, we mourn the extraordinary loss of talmidei chachamim, yeshivos, and even seforim throughout Jewish history. Yet some of the Kinnot address the communal contexts within which our scholarship thrived. It is the customs and culture of Jewish communities that provide the framework for the vibrancy of our continued commitment to Torah and mitzvos. The synergy that develops between communal institutions and Torah leaders is paramount to developing a thriving Jewish community. Tisha B'av is a time to reflect on the hundreds of Jewish communities that we have lost over the centuries, and devote ourselves to investing in our own, to ensure an enduring and inspiring impact upon the next generation.

May this be our final Tisha B'av in the Galut, and may we all find ourselves reestablishing our communities in Eretz Yisrael, *bimheira biyameinu*, speedily and in our days.

It is the customs and culture of Jewish communities that provide the framework for the vibrancy of our continued commitment to Torah and mitzvos. Tisha B'av is a time to reflect on the hundreds of Jewish communities that we have lost over the centuries, and devote ourselves to investing in our own, to ensure an enduring and inspiring impact upon the next generation.

The Loss and Revival of Prophecy in the Thought of Rav Kook

In truth, the lack of ru'ach ha-kodesh in Israel is not only a lack of perfection but a blemish and sickness. And in the Land of Israel it is a painful sickness that must be healed, "for I am Hashem your healer."¹

To the spring of prophecy we are summoned. Parched with thirst we are, but the spring of gardens, the source of living water is before us.²

We generally associate Tisha B'av with the destruction of the Beit ha-Mikdash, the loss of Jewish sovereignty and our exile from the Land of Israel. We mourn these losses and pray for their reversal. However, a study of Megilat Eicha and Kinnot illustrates that these processes were accompanied with another loss, one less publicly apparent than a burning edifice or thousands of people being led to exile, but no less significant regarding our relationship with Hashem. I refer to a basic shift that occurred in inner spiritual consciousness of the Jewish people — the loss of *nevu'ah* (prophecy).³ On Tisha B'av, we mourn the loss of our most direct path of communication with Hashem, and pray for its return.

In order to better appreciate the significance of this loss, I will outline aspects of *nevu'ah*'s role based on Rav Kook's spiritual historiography. In Rav Kook's historical essays, the loss of prophecy is not a mere detail but rather is the major fulcrum in the spiritual winds of the world. The



Rabbi Yosef Bronstein

Judaic Studies Faculty, Isaac Breuer College, YU

waning of prophecy represents a basic shift in several key areas of our religious lives, including⁴ the form of Torah that is emphasized⁵ and the primary method of connecting with Hashem.⁶

The Prophet and the Sage

A cursory read of Nach illustrates that the recorded legacy of the prophets focuses on the general values of Torah. The *nevi'im* passionately and lyrically call for a strengthening of our love of Hashem, fear of Hashem and of the high standards of interpersonal morality that the Torah demands. One would be hard-pressed to find a passage in Nach imploring the people to tie their left shoe before their right shoe or any other of the details of halacha.⁷

It was the role of the Sages, beginning with the *Anshei K'nesses ha-Gedolah*, the Men of the Great Assembly, to focus on how these lofty general ideals can become a detailed framework for every aspect of our lives. It was during the post-prophetic period that the halachot of *Torah she-Ba'al Peh*, the Oral Tradition, developed into the mesmerizingly intricate system that we have today. Instead of focusing on

inspiring the people with high ideals, the Sages mainly exhorted the people to meticulously observe the all-encompassing way of life — *halichot olam lo, al tikrei halichot ela halachot*.⁸

Together with this shift in content came a change in method of connection with Hashem. Tanach describes a world permeated with the palpable presence of Hashem. It was a time of open miracles and of clear divine providence, a time in which the masses were able to witness the heavenly fire descending onto the Mizbeach. Prophecy itself is described as a full body experience, a sensuous spirituality that creates a profound sense of contact with the transcendent.

As opposed to this "psychic current of actual spirituality" of the prophets, in the post-prophetic period this level of spirituality was no longer attainable. Instead, the major conduit of connection with Hashem becomes "academic spirituality" or the learning of Torah — *Talmud Torah k'negged kulam*.⁹ This connection is oftentimes less palpable and less overtly spiritual. Academic spirituality is of a calmer nature, more cerebral and less experiential than the practices of the prophets.

The Interdependency of the Prophet and the Sage

According to Rav Kook, both of these time periods contribute crucial elements to the broader panoply of *avodat Hashem*. And yet independent of each other they are severely lacking. The fiery prophets who intimately felt Hashem and beautifully imagined a utopian world still inspire us today, but we must remember that ultimately they utterly failed in their own enterprise.

After eight centuries of continuous prophesy, Jewish society was a complete dystopia from the perspective of the prophets. Every general value that the prophets emphasized was being blatantly violated on a massive scale.¹⁰ Even the sense of palpable spirituality was misused and ended up leading people astray to *avodah zarah* (idol worship).¹¹ Without an emphasis on intellectual *talmud Torah* or the framework created by the details of halacha, prophecy did not have the power to create an ongoing mass movement.

It was only when the spiritual winds of the world shifted to a focus on Torah study and the details of halacha that the Torah way of life had staying power. Perhaps less intensely powerful in the moment, it was these more modest enterprises that kept Judaism alive throughout the long exile, bereft of a geographic cohesiveness. In this sense, “the sage is better than the prophet.”¹²

But even as this shift in emphasis made Judaism more stable and durable, there are inherent shortcomings to this swing of the pendulum. When there is too much of a focus on the details of halacha

then there is a danger that “the general principles begin to weaken; they will be swallowed by the details and not be seen outside.”¹³ When there is too much of an emphasis on “academic spirituality” then “great troubles, the depletion of life will at times cause [the Jewish people] to forget the feeling of the soulful flow and the learning remains dry and alone.”¹⁴ Even disciplines such as Nach, aggadeta¹⁵ and kabbalah,¹⁶ which retain some of the flavor of the prophetic period, were not part of the mainstream curriculum.

The Dream of Bayit Shlishi

The full Judaism can only be expressed by a synthesis of the sage and the prophet, of the details with the general values.¹⁷ It was for this reason that Rav Kook saw the return of Jewish people to the Land of Israel not only as the beginning of the process for political sovereignty, but as a time for the slow reintegration of the prophetic period’s themes back into the limelight of Jewish life. The process that culminates in the establishment of the ideal Jewish state, which is “the foundation for the throne of Hashem in this world,”¹⁸ must be accompanied by a process that culminates in the return of prophecy to the Jewish people.¹⁹

Without abandoning the significance of traditional Torah study and a focus on details, as Jews return to the Holy Land, their souls will demand a broadening of these traditional horizons in terms of both curriculum and experience. Education should include more Nach, aggadeta, Jewish philosophy and Chassidut,²⁰ and the foundations of kabbalah need to be popularized.²¹ The curriculum change should dovetail with a new



Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Kook

Rav Kook was born in Griva, Latvia in 1865. His father was a student of the Volozhin Yeshiva, the center of ‘*mitnagdut*,’ whereas his maternal grandfather was a member of the Hassidic movement. He entered the Volozhin Yeshiva in 1884, where he became close to the Rosh HaYeshiva, Rav Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (the Netziv). Already in his youth, he was well-known as a prodigy. At the age of 23, he entered his first rabbinical position. In 1904, he came to the Land of Israel to assume the rabbinical post in Jaffa, which also included responsibility for the new secular Zionist agricultural settlements nearby. His influence on people in different walks of life was already noticeable, as he attempted to introduce Torah and Jewish Law into the life of the city and the settlements. The outbreak of the First World War caught him in Europe, and he was forced to remain in London and Switzerland for the remainder of the war. While there, he was involved in the activities which led to the Balfour Declaration. Upon returning, he was appointed the Rav of Jerusalem, and soon after, as first Chief Rabbi of Israel (though the State had not yet been born). Rav Kook was a man of Halakha in the strictest sense, while at the same time possessing an unusual openness to new ideas. This drew many religious and nonreligious people to him, but also led to widespread misunderstanding of his ideas. He wrote prolifically on both Jewish Law and Thought, and his books and personality continued to influence many even after his death in Jerusalem in 1935.

(Bard, Mitchel G.) “Abraham Isaac Kook” 1998, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Rav_Kook.html

focus on developing the personal orientation of the student²² instead of a uniform program of Gemara and halacha, allowing for greater positive religious experiences. These processes will provide the necessary skills and broadness to cultivate our sense of the “psychic current of actual spirituality,” and ultimately create a community ready for the return of prophecy.

This process of spiritual redemption is intertwined with the process of material redemption. Part and parcel of Rav Kook’s Religious Zionism was a return to nature and the natural.²³ The natural place for the Jewish people is in the Land of Israel, which embodies *kedushat ha-teva* (the holiness of nature).²⁴ In the Land of Israel, natural forces that in exile needed to be fought and beaten can be embraced and channeled. *Nevu’ah*, the highest expression of the Jewish people’s divine soul, represents the ultimate return to their nature.²⁵

It is no secret that Rav Kook saw himself as part of this process. A study of his personal diaries and correspondences reveals that Rav Kook felt that he merited certain levels of divine revelations.²⁶ Perhaps the most famous passage of this sort relates to the sources of Rav Kook’s Torah. The following passage appears in Rav Kook’s notebook:

And I am attentive and I listen from the depths of my soul, from the feelings of my heart, the voice of Hashem calls. And I am terrified with a great fear — have I descended as such that I will become a false prophet, to say Hashem sent me and the word of Hashem has not appeared to me?

And I listen to the voice of my soul stirring, the sprouts of prophecy are growing, and the children of prophets are arising, the spirit of prophecy is

traveling in the land, searching for itself a refuge, seeking mighty ones, full of strength and holiness, they will know to digest the matter, the truth they will tell, they will relate how the word of Hashem was revealed to them, they will not lie or flatter others, their spirit with faith they will bring out.

And the spirit of faith, precious and necessary, will elevate a nation, and Israel will stand on its feet. It will begin to sense its treasure from ancient days, it will know that not falsehood was clothed in pride... [the nation] will remember that it has a valued land, a land of breadth for it, and family by family, one by one they will gather, and the desolate land will be built, and the spirit of Hashem that is on it will begin to pump in its children that were neglected, and from darkness the eyes of the blind will see.

It is quite clear that Rav Kook realized the innovative nature of many of his ideas and after some hesitation identified their source as “the sprouts of prophecy,” which was to develop into full blown prophecy.²⁷

The Dream Lives On

This goal of Rav Kook was mainly inherited by his student Rav Dovid Cohen, the Nazir. The Nazir spent the majority of his life trying to make Rav Kook’s prediction a reality. By his own admission, his becoming a nazir was a step on his personal journey toward becoming a *navi*.²⁸ To this end he lived a life of holiness, Torah, and abstinence, fasting from food and speech for days on end.²⁹ His diary also reveals that at times he felt that he merited revelations of a sort.³⁰

And even if the Nazir did not fully reach his aim, the dream still lives on in sectors of the Religious-Zionist community. In the last two decades

there has been a marked turn toward Chassidut and spirituality in the younger generation. In the view of some, these new interests are part of the unfolding of the process that Rav Kook predicted.³¹

Only Hashem knows when He will restore His spirit to the Jewish people. Until then we will mourn the loss of our most direct path of communication with Hashem and pray for its return. The desire for the closeness to Hashem that permeates the writings of Rav Kook should inspire us to yearn for the closeness that is *nevu’ah*. May we merit to quickly see the fulfillment of the words of Yo’el 3:1:

וְהָיָה אַחֲרַי כֵּן אֲשַׁפּוּךְ אֶת רוּחִי עַל כָּל בָּשָׂר
וְנִבְּאוּ בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם חֲלֻמוֹת יִחְלְמוּ
בַּחֲזֹרֵיכֶם חֲזִינוֹת יֵרְאוּ.

And it will happen after this, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy; your elders will dream [prophetic] dreams, and your young men will see visions.

Notes

1. Rav Kook, *Shemonah Kevatzim* 1:820.
2. *Shemonah Kevatzim* 4:21.
3. See, for example, Eicha 2:9; Kinnah 12 (pg. 301 in *The Koren Mesorat HaRav Kook* [OU Press, Koren Publishers, 2010]), Kinnah 37 (pg. 571), Kinnah 38 (pg. 579).
4. Another major shift was from a focus on the nation as a whole to a focus on individual people. See Rav Kook’s essay “*le-Mahalach ha-Idiyot be-Yisrael*,” *Orot* 102-118, and especially 109-110.
5. This is discussed in Rav Kook’s essay “*Chacham Adif mi-Navi*,” *Orot* 120-121.
6. This is discussed in Rav Kook’s essay “*Derech ha-Techiyah*,” *Ma’amarei ha-Reiyah* 1-9.
7. “*Chacham Adif mi-Navi*” 120.
8. *Ibid*, 121.

9. “Derech ha-Techiyah” 4-5.

10. “Chacham Adif mi-Navi” 121.

11. “Derech ha-Techiyah” 2.

12. Together with these shifts came a change in the methodology of pesak. Rav Kook elaborates on this theme in his introduction to *Ein Ayah, Berachot* volume 1.

13. Paraphrase of “Chacham Adif mi-Navi” 121.

14. “Derech ha-Techiyah” 6.

15. See *Orot ha-Kodesh* Volume 1, 23; *Igrot ha-Reiyah* Volume 1, Igeret 103.

16. See *Mama'arei ha-Reiyah*, 79; *Shemonah Kevatzim* 3:317.

17. This synthesis ideally takes place at the highest level of *nevu'ah*. Therefore, among all *nevi'im*, it was only Moshe Rabbeinu who was able to deliver both prophetic narrative and detailed halachot in the Chumash. See “Chacham Adif mi-Navi” 121.

18. *Orot Yisrael* 6:7.

19. “Chacham Adif mi-Navi” 121; *Ma'marei ha-Reiyah*, 403.

20. See the planned curriculum for ha-Yeshivah ha-Merkazit ha-Olamit in *Ma'amarei ha-Reiyah*, 62-65.

21. See *Shemonah Kevatzim* 1:597.

22. See *Orot ha-Torah* 9:6; “ha-Oneg vеха-Simcha” in *be-Ikvei ha-Tzon*.

23. See *Orot ha-Techiyah*, perakim 29-35, and especially perek 30.

24. *Orot ha-Techiyah*, perek 28.

25. See *Shemonah Kevatzim* 1:774. See also, *Shemonah Kevatzim* 5:127, where Rav Kook describes *nevu'ah* as flowing from the inner soul of the prophet.

26. See S. Cherlow, *Tzadik Yesod Olam: ha-Shelichut ha-Mistit vеха-Chavayah ha-Sodit shel ha-Rav Kook*, 296-328, who gathers and elaborates on these passages in Rav Kook's writings. See, also, Y. Bin-Nun, *Mekor ha-Kaful: Hashra'ah ve'Samchut be-Mishnat ha-Rav Kook* 99-144 who treats these passages.

27. See also, the testimony of his student and editor, the Nazir, *Mishnat ha-Nazir* (Nezer Dovid, 2004), 89: “The words of [Rav Kook] were said and written with *ru'ach ha-kodesh*, with a vision. And this is what he used to say: ‘In a vision the words were written.’”

28. *Mishnat ha-Nazir*, 70.

29. *Mishnat ha-Nazir*, 67.

30. *Mishnat ha-Nazir*, 69; 73; 100.

31. Statements connecting this turn toward spirituality and Chassidut with the ultimate return of prophecy have been made by rabbis in different corners of the Religious-Zionist community. See, for example, Rav Yehoshua Shapira of Ramat Gan, <http://shaalvim.co.il/torah/view.asp?id=241> (last paragraph) and <http://www.yrg.org.il/show.asp?id=61470>; and Rav Shagar, *Luchot ve-Shivrei Luchot* (2013), 164-179.



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Tisha B'Av and Birkot HaTorah

Letting the Light of Torah Shine Through

We may have noticed that the morning prayer services of Tisha B'Av are somewhat different than the ordinary weekday services. Most notably, the donning of talit and tefillin is delayed until the afternoon. Additionally, certain passages or berachot are skipped, depending on one's tradition. These omissions are a reflection of the fact that Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning and as such, we observe some of the practices of mourners. Yet *Birkot HaTorah*, the blessings recited before learning Torah, are recited as usual, despite the prohibition on Tisha B'Av against studying Torah. While recitation of *Birkot HaTorah* on Tisha B'Av is normative practice, some earlier authorities recommended omitting it precisely because of the prohibition against studying Torah. What is the nature of this dispute?

Why Was the First Temple Destroyed?

Before we answer this question, let us turn our attention to another aspect of Tisha B'Av relating to *Birkot HaTorah*.

In the haftarah for Tisha B'Av morning, which predicts the destruction of the First Temple and the exile, the verses state:

מִי הָאִישׁ הַחֹכֵם וַיְבִן אֶת זֹאת וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר פִּי ה' אֵלָיו וַיִּגְדֶּה עַל מָה אֲבִדָה הָאָרֶץ נִצְתָה כַּמִּדְבָּר



Rabbi Joshua Flug

Director of Torah Research, YU Center for the Jewish Future

מִבְּלִי עֵבֶה וַיֹּאמֶר ה' עַל עֲזָבְכֶם אֶת תּוֹרָתִי אֲשֶׁר נִתַּתִּי לַפְּנִיָּהֶם וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וְלֹא הִלְכוּ בָּהּ. יִרְמְיָהוּ ט:יא-יב

Who is the wise person that can understand this? Who does God speak to that can tell? Why was the land lost, [why has it] become parched like a desert with no passersby? God said, it is because they abandoned My Torah that I gave before them and they didn't listen to My voice and they didn't follow it.

Yirmiyahu 9:11-12

The Gemara presents the following interpretation of these verses:

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב מאי דכתיב (ירמיהו ט, יא) מי האיש החכם ויבן את זאת דבר זה נשאל לחכמים ולנביאים ולא פירשוהו עד שפירשו הקב"ה בעצמו דכתיב (ירמיהו ט, יב) ויאמר ה' על עזבם את תורת וגו' היינו לא שמעו בקולי היינו לא הלכו בה אמר רב יהודה אמר רב שאין מברכין בתורה תחלה. נדרים פא.

R. Yehuda said in the name of Rav, What is meant by the verse "Who is the wise person that can understand this?" This question was posed to the scholars and to the prophets and they couldn't give an answer until God himself gave

an answer as it states, "God said, it is because they abandoned My Torah etc." Isn't this the same as "they didn't listen to My voice and they didn't follow it"? R. Yehuda said in the name of Rav, they didn't recite a blessing on the Torah first. Nedarim 81a

This interpretation requires further clarification. Is it possible that omission of *Birkot HaTorah* is what led to the destruction of the Temple? Does omission of *Birkot HaTorah* warrant such a harsh punishment? Furthermore, the Gemara elsewhere presents a different rationale for the destruction of the First Temple:

מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב מפני ג' דברים שהיו בו ע"ז וגלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים. יומא ט:

Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because of three offenses that were prevalent there: idol worship, incest and murder.

Yoma 9b

If the Jewish people were violating these three sins, why does the Gemara feel the need to highlight the omission of *Birkot HaTorah*? Isn't that omission

negligible compared to these three sins?

The Midrash sheds light on the apparent discrepancy between the two passages in the Gemara regarding the destruction of the First Temple:

ר' הונא ור' ירמיה בשם ר' שמואל ברבי יצחק אמר מצינו שיותר הקב"ה על עבודת כוכבים ועל גילוי עריות ועל שפיכות דמים ולא ויתר על מאסה של תורה שנאמר על מה אבדה הארץ, על עבודת כוכבים ועל גילוי עריות ועל שפיכות דמים אין כתיב כאן אלא על עזבם את תורתם, ר' הונא ור' ירמיה בשם ר' חייא בר אבא אמרי כתיב ואותי עזבו ואת תורת לא שמרו, הלואי אותי עזבו ותורת שמרו, מתוך שהיו מתעסקין בה המאור שבה היה מחזירן למוטב. איכה רבה, פתיחה ב'

R. Huna and R. Yirmiyah said in the name of R. Shmuel son of R. Yitzchak: We find that God forgave [them] for idol worship, incest and murder but did not forgive [them] for the desecration of the Torah as it states, "Why was the land lost?" It doesn't say that it is because of idol worship, incest and murder, but rather "because they abandoned My Torah." R. Huna and R. Yirmiyah said in the name of R. Chiya b. Abba: It states, "They abandoned Me and didn't observe my Torah." If only they would have abandoned Me but observed the Torah, through their involvement in [the study of] Torah, its light would have guided them back to becoming good people.

Eicha Rabbah, Introduction no. 2

This midrash seems to resolve the apparent discrepancy in one of two ways. First, the Jewish people were guilty of the worst transgressions and were deserving of punishment for those transgressions. However, God didn't punish the Jewish people immediately because He hoped that the light of Torah would eventually inspire a teshuva movement. Once the Torah was abandoned and the possibility of a teshuva movement was unlikely, God punished the Jewish people for the terrible transgressions they violated. This approach is espoused by R. David HaLevi Segal, *Taz, Orach Chaim* 47:1, though he doesn't reference the midrash.

Second, the drift of the Jewish people away from the values of Torah was not instantaneous. It occurred gradually and eventually reached a point where violation of the three major transgressions was rampant. The Jewish people were certainly punished for violating these transgressions, but the sages and prophets of the time had difficulty figuring out what led to such a deterioration of morality. To this,



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God responds that if the Jewish people would have embraced the Torah, they would have avoided their deterioration of morality. This approach is espoused by R. Yaakov of Lisa, *Emet L'Yaakov to Bava Metzia* 85b, who also does not mention the midrash.

Birkot HaTorah and the Light of Torah

What these two approaches highlight is that embracing the Torah, specifically through *Birkot HaTorah*, serves as a preventive and corrective measure to combat immorality. What is it about *Birkot HaTorah* that provides these qualities? Rabbeinu Nissim offers the following insight from Rabbeinu Yonah:

אלא ודאי עוסקין היו בתורה תמיד ולפיכך היו חכמים ונביאים תמהים על מה אבדה הארץ עד שפרשו הקב"ה בעצמו שהוא יודע מעמקי הלב שלא היו מברכין בתורה תחלה כלומר שלא היתה התורה חשובה בעיניהם כ"כ שיהא ראוי לברך עליה שלא היו עוסקים בה

לשמה ומתוך כך היו מזלזלין בברכתה והיינו לא הלכו בה כלומר בכונתה ולשמה. רבינו נסים, נדרים פא.

They were definitely involved in [learning] Torah constantly and for this reason, the scholars and the prophets were wondering why the land was abandoned, until God explained Himself that He knows the inner thoughts [of the people], that they weren't reciting a blessing on the Torah first, meaning that the Torah wasn't so important to them that it was worthy to recite a blessing, because they weren't studying it for its own sake and because of this, they were neglectful of its blessing. This is what is meant by "they didn't follow it," meaning that it wasn't with the right intentions and for its own sake.

Rabbeinu Nissim, Nedarim 81a

On the surface, this comment is somewhat puzzling. Does learning with the wrong intentions really lead to the disastrous consequences mentioned above? Don't our rabbis encourage us to learn Torah despite our ulterior motives because that will

eventually lead one to learning with the proper intentions (*Pesachim* 50b)?

R.Shneur Zalman of Lyadi offers the following insight:

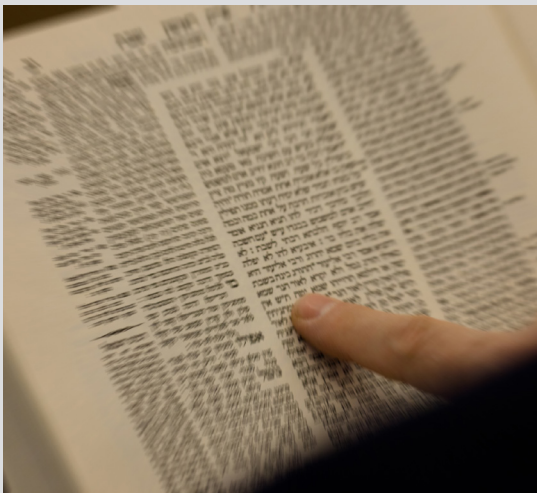
ולא אמרו חכמים לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ובמצות אפילו שלא לשמה אלא כשמקיים המצות שלומד בתורה ... ויש אומרים שאף על פי כן לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה כי מתוך שלא לשמה יוכל לבא לידי לשמה ללמוד על מנת לשמור ולעשות שהמאור שבה מחזירו למוטב.

שלחן ערוך הרב, הל' תלמוד תורה פרק ד

Our rabbis only said that one should be involved with Torah [study] and mitzvot even for the wrong reasons when one is fulfilling the mitzvot that one learns in the Torah ... There are those who say that nevertheless, one should always study Torah because studying for the wrong reasons can lead to studying for the right reasons, learning in order to fulfill mitzvot, because the light of [the Torah] will guide one back to becoming a good person.

Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Hilchot Talmud Torah ch. 4

Laws of Torah Learning on Tisha B'av



- The study of Torah is prohibited on Tisha B'Av because Torah brings joy to those who study it. One may study Iyov, Eicha and the somber portions of Yirmiyahu (*Ta'anit* 30a).
- It is also permissible to study the laws of mourning (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 554:2).
- When studying the appropriate portions, one may also study the commentaries (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 554:2) but one should focus on the simple meaning of the text, not the analysis (*Mishna Berurah* 554:4).
- One may read the portions in the siddur that are recited on a daily basis, such as the sections about the korbanot (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 554:4).

According to R. Shneur Zalman's initial approach, we should not encourage Torah learning that is purely an academic exercise when those who are learning have no intention of keeping the mitzvot. However, he then asserts (based on the comments of Rambam and R. Yitzchak Abohab in his *Menorat HaMaor*) that the messages contained in the Torah have the ability to penetrate and influence even those who don't currently plan on observing what is written in the Torah.

How then should we understand Rabbeinu Yonah's comments? They seem to follow the initial approach presented by R. Shneur Zalman. When there is a lack of observance, learning Torah for academic purposes or ulterior motives is not a recommended course of action. As such, Torah learning was not a mitigating factor when God judged the Jewish people for violating the most serious transgressions. Are Rabbeinu Yonah's comments also compatible with the second approach? If the Jewish people were learning, albeit for ulterior motives, why wasn't there a possibility that the light of Torah would shine and cause them to change?

R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto seems to follow R. Shneur Zalman's second approach but with one limitation:

רז גדול גלו לנו החכמים ז"ל, שאלו לא היו הרשעים עוזבים את תלמוד התורה, סוף שהיו חוזרים למוטב ... ואמנם פשוט שאין הדברים אמורים במי שיתעסק בה דרך שחוק והתול או לגלות פנים שלא כהלכה אלא שיתעסק בה לפחות כמי שמתעסק בשאר החכמות.
דרך ה' חלק ד' פרק ב'

Our rabbis taught us a great secret: if the evildoers did not abandon learning Torah, it would have guided them back to becoming good people ... It is obvious that this does not apply to those who study in a mocking manner or in order to distort the meaning of the Torah, but rather, one must at least study it on the level that one studies other subject matters.

Derech HaShem 4:2

When Torah learning is purely academic or theoretical, the messages and the values of Torah still have the ability to penetrate. However, when there is antagonism or cynicism involved, it becomes more difficult for the light of the Torah to shine through. R. Luzzatto expands on this idea in his *Mesillat Yesharim*:



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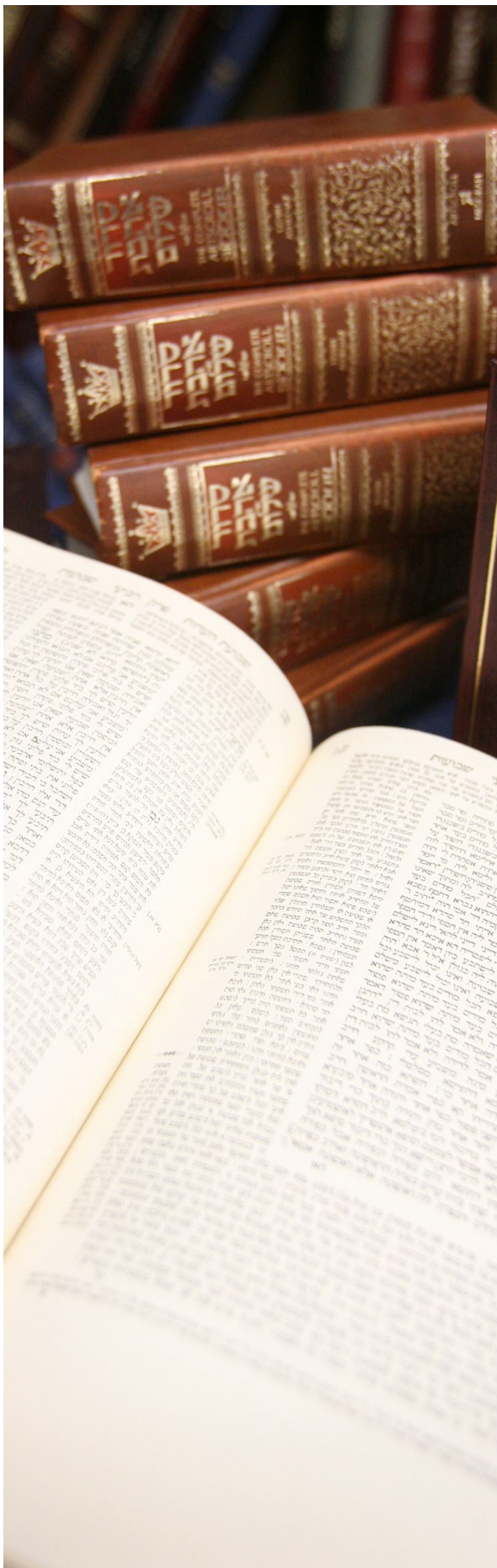
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שכמו שכל מציאות הזהירות תלוי בשימת הלב על הדבר, כן כל עצמו של השחוק אינו אלא מסיר הלב מן המחשבות הישירות והעיוניות, ונמצא שלא יבואו הרהורי היראה בלבו כלל. ותראה קושי הלצון והשחתתו הרבה, כי כמו המגן המשוך בשמן אשר ישמיט ויפיל מעליו החצים ומשליכם לארץ ולא יניח אותם שיגיעו אל גוף האדם כן הלצון מפני התוכחה והמרדות, כי בליצנות אחד ובשחוק קטן יפיל האדם מעליו ריבוי גדול מן ההתעוררות וההתפעלות מה שהלב מתעורר ומתפעל בעצמו מדי ראותו או שומעו ענינים שיעירוהו אל החשבון והפשפוש במעשים, ובכח הליצנות יפיל הכל לארץ ולא יעשה בו רושם כלל. ולא מפני חולשת הענינים ולא מפני חסרון הבנת הלב, אלא מפני כח הלצון ההורס כל עניני המוסר והיראה.

מסילת ישרים פרק ה'

Just as the essence of Watchfulness involves applying one's heart to things, so the essence of laughter is the turning away of one's heart from just, attentive thinking, so that thoughts of fearing God do not enter one's heart at all. Consider the great severity and destructive power of levity. Like a shield smeared with oil, which wards off arrows and causes them to fall to the ground, not permitting them to reach the bearer's body, is levity in the face of reproof and rebuke. For with one bit of levity and with a little laughter a person can cast from himself the great majority of the awakenings and impressions that a man's heart stimulates and effects within itself upon his seeing or hearing things which arouse him to an accounting and an examination of his deeds. The force of levity flings everything to the ground so that no impression whatsoever is made upon Him. This is due not to the weakness of the forces playing upon him, nor to any lack of understanding on his part, but to the power of levity, which obliterates all facets of moral evaluation and fear of God.

Mesillat Yesharim ch. 5 (Translation from Shechem.org)

According to R. Luzzatto, there are no active motives required for Torah study to have an impact. As long as there is no antagonism or cynicism involved, we can be confident that the light of Torah will shine through. Perhaps then, Rabbeinu Yonah's assessment that the Jewish people were learning Torah for the wrong reasons was not intended to criticize those who study solely for academic purposes, but specifically those who study Torah out of cynicism or antagonism. When Torah learning reached such a state of affairs, the possibility that the light of Torah would guide them to a path of teshuva was too small for God to ignore their grave transgressions.

While R. Luzzatto doesn't have any active requirements for the light of Torah to shine through, *Taz*, op. cit., suggests that in order for Torah learning to have an impact, the study must involve rigor. In explaining why the Gemara specifically identifies *Birkot HaTorah*, *Taz* notes that the opening blessing contains the term *la'asok b'divrei Torah*, to engage in Torah matters. *Taz* suggests that Torah learning would have spared the Jewish people had they learned Torah with the rigor reflected in the term *la'asok*. However, since their learning was superficial, the merits of Torah learning did not protect them.

***Birkot HaTorah* on Tisha B'Av**

Based on the comments of *Taz*, we can understand the opinion that one should omit *Birkot HaTorah* on Tisha B'Av. R. Tzidkiyah HaRofei, *Shibbolei HaLeket*, *Seder Ta'anit* no. 269, presents the issue as follows:

יש גאונים ז"ל שאומרים שאין מברכין ברכת התורה שהרי אסורין בדברי תורה והמדרשות בטילין ולי נראה שצריך עיון שהרי הוא רשאי לקרות בתורה ובאיוב ובקניות ובדברים הרעים שבירמיה הלכך מברך ברכת התורה.

There are Geonim who say that one should not recite Birkot HaTorah because there is a prohibition against learning Torah and the study halls are closed. It seems to me that this position is difficult because it is permissible to read the Torah [portion of the day] and Iyov, Kinnot and the prophecies of destruction in Yirmiyah. Therefore, one should recite Birkot HaTorah.

Do we approach Torah study with rigor and passion? Do we walk away from a study session with a sense of inspiration and exhilaration? Are our actions and behaviors reflective of someone who studies Torah? By asking ourselves these questions, we will further enable the light of Torah to shine brightly through.

The argument to omit *Birkot HaTorah* is the prohibition against learning Torah on Tisha B'Av, and the counterargument is that there are portions of Torah that one may learn on Tisha B'Av. The Geonim were certainly aware that one may learn these portions and nevertheless recommended omitting *Birkot HaTorah*. Perhaps the reason for this is that the permissibility to learn these portions is limited. As *Taz*, *Orach Chaim* 654:2, notes, one may only learn the simple meaning of these portions and one may not delve into any analyses of these portions. In other words, one may not study these portions with the same rigor required of ordinary Torah study. As such, the argument to omit *Birkot HaTorah* is that one cannot learn Torah with the rigor reflected in the blessing *la'asok b'divrei Torah*.

Yet common practice is to recite *Birkot HaTorah*. Furthermore, there is no indication that *Taz* requires one to omit it. How can one recite *la'asok b'divrei Torah* when the level of Torah learning that the blessing represents is prohibited? Perhaps *Taz* has a multi-layered approach to the issue. Torah learning, even on a superficial level, is not only part of the mitzvah of *talmud Torah* but is also impactful. When one reads of the trials and tribulations of Iyov or the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza, one should be inspired to reflect on self-improvement. We don't need to deeply analyze these portions to be affected by their content. We can confidently recite *la'asok b'divrei Torah* knowing that our study of the simple meaning of the text is rigorous, not necessarily from an intellectual perspective, but in the way it impacts us. Nevertheless, at the time of the destruction of the Temple, there was a generation that was deeply involved

in serious transgressions and a more comprehensive study of the Torah and its messages was necessary. The superficial study of Torah wasn't sufficiently impacting the people and perhaps if they would have taken a more rigorous approach to Torah study, they would have been able to pull themselves out of the darkness in which they were so heavily steeped.

This Tisha B'Av, as we recite *Birkot HaTorah* and study the portions of Torah appropriate for Tisha B'Av, we should be mindful of the impact our learning can have on us. While the Torah's light can shine even on those who study it for purely academic purposes, with no intent of fulfilling it, its greatest impact can be felt when we specifically look for the values and inspirational messages contained within it. Furthermore, we can take a moment to reflect on how Torah study impacts us the rest of the year. Do we approach Torah study with rigor and passion? Do we walk away from a study session with a sense of inspiration and exhilaration? Are our actions and behaviors reflective of someone who studies Torah? By asking ourselves these questions, we will further enable the light of Torah to shine brightly through.

How Do We Move Past Tisha B'Av?

We are now in a period called *bein hametzarim* when we mourn the destruction of our Holy Temples. How do we leave this period of *bein hametzarim*? How do we move from experiencing oppression to living a meaningful life free of oppression? In this article, I will show how our rabbis have guided us and we will see how these lessons are relevant to our daily lives.

Our rabbis teach us:

שלשה מרחיבין דעתו של אדם אלו הן דירה
נאה ואשה נאה וכלים נאים.
ברכות נז:

There are three things that expand the mind (da'at) of a person: a nice home, a nice wife and nice utensils.

Berachos 57b

The nice home represents our bodies.
The nice wife represents our souls.
The nice utensils are the five senses that we use to connect the body to the soul. If we know how to combine these three things: the body, the soul and the senses, we gain a broad perspective on life.

When our rabbis discuss expanding one's mind, they use the term "*da'at*" — wisdom. What is *da'at*? It is gateway to insight and understanding. The Gemara teaches us:

אמר אביי נקטינן אין עני אלא בדעה במערבא
אמרי דדא ביה כולא ביה דלא דא ביה מה
ביה דא קני מה חסר דא לא קני מה קני.
נדרים מא.

Abaye stated: We are of the opinion that the only way to be considered poor is if one



Rabbi Meir Goldwicht

Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

lacks wisdom. In the West (Israel) they say: He who has this (wisdom) has everything and if he doesn't have it, what does he have? If he acquired it, what is he lacking, if he didn't acquire it, what has he acquired?

Nedarim 41a

When we use the term *naktinan* (we are of the opinion), it is a matter of practical halacha. One who acquires wisdom has everything. One who has not acquired wisdom, hasn't acquired anything. Wisdom represents connection. The first time we find the word *da'at* in the Torah in reference to man is the verse "*Ve'ha'adam yada et Chava ishto*, the man 'knew' his wife." (Bereishit 4:1). This establishes the word *da'at* as a form of connection. A *bar da'at* is someone who becomes *bar/bat mitzvah*. *Da'at* transforms one from a minor to an adult, someone who knows right from wrong. Our rabbis instituted Havdalah in the beracha of Shemoneh Esrei, which discusses *da'at*, because without *da'at* one cannot distinguish between Shabbat and weekday (Yerushalmi, *Berachot* 9:2). Hashem gives us *da'at* and we can distinguish between the holy and the mundane, between darkness and light.

Our rabbis also teach us:

א"ר אלעזר כל אדם שיש בו דעה כאילו נבנה
בית המקדש בימיו.
ברכות לג.

R. Elazar said: Anyone who has wisdom, it is as if the Holy Temple was built in his days.

Berachot 33a

We can infer the inverse of R. Elazar's statement that one who does not have wisdom, it is as if the Holy Temple was destroyed in his days. The Beit Hamikdash is a place where we can see what a nice home really is. We can see what a nice wife is — we see the Divine presence, we see the hand of Hashem, we see the miracles that were a regular part of the Beit Hamikdash. When we look further, we can see what it means to have nice utensils: the Mizbeach (altar), the Shulchan (table), the Menorah etc. The Beit HaMikdash was a place where Jew and non-Jew alike could recognize how a nice home, a nice wife and nice utensils can expand the mind of a person. However, when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, we lost our perspective on the nice home, nice wife and nice utensils.

Whenever someone builds a home, he should leave a small area incomplete as a remembrance of the *Churban*. Why? Because we spend a lot of money, time and effort to build beautiful homes for ourselves, but we can never forget what a nice home really is. A nice home is the body that

houses our souls. Similarly, the Beit Hamikdash houses the Shechina. The small square the we leave over in our homes is to remind us not to forget this concept. We must always remember what a nice home really is.

From the time of the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, we have lost our sense of a nice home, nice wife and nice utensils. However, as R. Elazar taught us, if we want to restore that concept we have to acquire *da'at* and expand our minds. Every person must build a personal temple. We must build within ourselves, the nice home, the nice wife and the nice utensils.

A “nice home” refers to our bodies. First and foremost, we must follow what the Rambam says (*Hilchot Deiot* chapters 3 and 4) that we need to be healthy in order to serve Hashem properly. We have to eat well, sleep well, exercise and realize that all of these activities are part of our service of Hashem.

A “nice wife” refers to our souls. How do we nurture and recognize our souls? Learning Torah is not enough. There are people who spend a lot of time studying Torah, but don't have pure souls. One area that people can work on is how they relate to others. We must recognize that every time we violate an interpersonal law, it is also a violation of a mitzvah between man and Hashem. In order to elevate our souls, we must have greater sensitivity toward others. Part of our time spent learning Torah should focus on how we can be more sensitive to others.

When Hashem kicked man out of the garden of Eden, he gave Adam and Chava “*kotnot or*,” leather cloaks. According to our rabbis, these cloaks were made from an animal called the *tachash*, which has a very colorful skin. Why did Hashem choose the skin of this particular animal? He was giving Adam

and Chava a message. Different color clothing represents different types of people. When you see someone wearing only white, they look like a health care professional. When you see someone in a black robe, it might be a judge. When you see someone wearing green, it is a soldier. Hashem was telling Adam and Chava that they should not let the color of their clothing define them. They should build up their souls from the inside and let that be what defines them. We should be able to see the soul of a person, whether they are learning Torah, working at the office or playing ball.

The nice utensils represent our senses. Hashem wants us to use these senses properly, to connect the nice home represented by our body with the nice wife represented by our souls. With unprecedented access to “see the world,” our eyes are able to see things never seen before in previous generations. This can present a tremendous opportunity to grow our souls, but it also represents a major challenge. The music we listen to can elevate our souls but can also steer people in the wrong direction. Our rabbis have a term called *shevirat hakeilim*, the breaking of the utensils. This refers to times when our senses are not used to connect the body to the soul, when that connection is broken.

How do we use these senses in a way that can elevate our souls? As we mentioned earlier, the first time the word *da'at* appears in the Torah is when Adam “knew” Chava. The second time, it appears in a different context:

כִּי יִדְעֹתָיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוָה אֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ
אַחֲרָיו וְשִׁמְרוּ דְרָוֹ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צִדְקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט
לְמַעַן הִבִּיֵּא ה' עַל אֲבָרָהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלָיו.
בראשית יח:ג

I have known him because he commands his children and members of his household to follow him. They follow the path of

God to perform righteousness and justice in order that God can bring to Avraham, that which He has spoken about to him.

Bereishit 18:19

What is the context of the word *da'at*? How is Avraham being complimented? When we see what Avraham really wanted when he asked for a child, we can see why Hashem gave Avraham this compliment.

After Avram rescues Lot, he makes the following statement:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָם ה' אֱלֹקִים מָה תַּתֵּן לִי וְאֲנֹכִי
הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי וְכֵן מְשָׁק בֵּיתִי הוּא דִּמְשָׁק אֲלֵיעֶזֶר:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָם הֵן לִי לֹא נָתַתָּה זָרַע וְהִנֵּה בֵן
בְּיַדִּי יוֹרֵשׁ אֹתִי:
בראשית טו:ב-ג

And Avram said: God my Lord, what can you give me when I am childless and the possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus. And Avram said, behold you have not given me children and behold the members of my household will inherit me.

Bereishit 15:2-3

The two verses seem repetitive! Why does Avram state twice that he is concerned that he will be inherited by members of his house? Furthermore, why does it state “And Avram said” twice? Wasn't this a single statement?

The Netziv explains that Avram was addressing two separate issues:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָם וְגו': מֵאִמֶּר שֵׁנִי, וְלֹא הִיָּה בִּיחָד
עִם מֵאִמֶּר הָרֵאשׁוֹן, וְהֵינּוּ מִשּׁוּם שֶׁהִשְׁכִּיל
אֲבָרָהָם מִמָּה שֶׁלֹּא הִשִּׁיב הַקֵּב “הָ מֵאֻמָּה כִּי
שֶׁאֵל שֶׁלֹּא כְּהוֹנֵן לֹמֵר “וְאֲנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי”
אַחֵר שֶׁכִּבֵּר הַבְּטִיחוֹ הַקֵּב “הָ עַל זָרַע, מִשּׁוּם הִכִּי
חֹזֵר וּפִירֵשׁ שִׁיחָתוֹ. “הֵן לִי לֹא נָתַתָּה זָרַע” דְּכָל
רְצוֹנִי הוּא לְהַשְׁרִישׁ אֲמוּנָתִי ה' ע"י זָרַע, וְאַחֵר
שֶׁהִגַּעְתִּי לִימֵי זִקְנָה וְעִדְיִין אֵין לִי זָרַע אֲכ"כ אֶפִּילוּ
אוֹלִיד בְּסוּף יָמַי וּשְׁנוֹתַי, הֲלֹא אֵךְ “בֵּן בֵּיתִי יוֹרֵשׁ
אוֹתִי,” הֵינּוּ, עֵיקָר מִה שֶׁיֵּשׁ לִי בַּעֲלֹם שֶׁהִיא
פְּעוּלָה זוֹ תִּגְעַל לְבֵן בֵּיתִי וְלֹא לְזָרַע.

And Avram said etc. This is a second statement and was not said together with the first statement. This is because

Avraham understood from the fact that God had not responded at all, that when he said "I am childless" it was an inappropriate request. God had already guaranteed him that he would have children. For this reason [Avraham] made another statement to clarify. "Behold you have not given me children," my only desire is to instill faith of God through my children and now that I am reaching old age and I have no children, even if I have a child in the last few years of my life, "the members of my household will inherit me." My main legacy in life will go to my household and not to my children.

Avram never doubted that he would have children. This was promised to him by Hashem. He was, however, concerned about the timing of the fulfillment of the promise. If Avram had a child when he was too old, he wouldn't be able to properly transmit his ideals to his child. If he only had a chance to give him a basic education, then the legacy will be passed on through Eliezer, who spent many more years studying with Avram. But Avram wanted a child who could totally incorporate Avram's values and ideals. Someone who could appreciate the concept of the nice home, the nice wife and the nice utensils. To this request, Hashem responds:

וְהָיָה דְבַר ה' אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר לֹא יִירָשְׁךָ זֶה כִּי אִם
אִשְׁרֵי יֵצֵא מִמֶּעֶיךָ הוּא יִירָשְׁךָ.
בְּרֵאשִׁית טו:ד

These are God's words to him saying: This one will not inherit you, but rather one who comes from your guts, he will inherit you.

Bereishit 15:4

What does it mean "who comes from your guts?" Do men bear children? R. Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains:

ממעיק, לא "חלציק" או "ירכיק". חלצים וירכים הם חלקים חמריים גרידא של הגוף; ואילו המעים הם משכן הרגשות - ביחוד: של

השתתפות בצער והמיית רחמים. הרי זו מידה יהודית מובהקת, והיא נחלת כל זרע אברהם (עי' יבמות עט ע"א). אפשר ללמד תורה לאחרים ולמסור להם ערכי רוח. אך קשה לשנות ולזכך את האופי; כי מקור המידות והתכונות הוא בעיקר ממעי אבות. אדם ניכר במידותיו ובתכונותיו, לאו דוקא בשכלו. ובנים חייבים תודה להוריהם - על מה שירשו "ממעיהם". גם זרע כנען יכול להוסיף דעת ולהתחנך לקיום מצוות. אך אי אפשר לחנך אדם להיות בעל רגש יהודי - אנושי. הרגש היהודי עובר בירושה ממעי אברהם אבינו. והקב"ה השתית את בניין עמו על יסוד הנטייה שיש בו מלידה: להתנדב בשמחת לבב לכל מעשה מוסרי וטוב.

"From your guts," not from your loins or your thighs. Loins and thighs are merely physical body parts. The guts are the repository for one's feelings, specifically for feeling someone's pain and feelings of mercy. This is a foundational Jewish trait and it is the legacy of all descendants of Avraham. One can [easily] teach Torah to others and transmit values to them. However, it is difficult to change and sharpen one's character because the source of our traits and proclivities is from the "guts" of our forefathers. A person can be recognized through his traits and proclivities, not necessarily through his intellect. Children must be grateful to their parents for what they inherit from their "guts." The people of C'na'an could have studied and trained to fulfill mitzvot. However, they could not have been trained to have Jewish emotions. Jewish emotions are inherited from the guts of Avraham our forefather. God built His nation on the foundation that there is an innate desire to happily participate in all good deeds and self-growth.

The guts represent our innermost feelings. Let's say you hear really good news. You start dancing in the streets. You are the happiest person in the world and anyone who sees you can see your happiness. However, you feel it on the inside, in the guts. On the flipside, if someone receives bad news, they

also feel it on the inside. This is what is meant by the verse in Eicha (1:20) *"mei'ai charmamaru"* — my guts burn. The guts are the home for our feelings. Hashem told Avram that he will have enough time to pass on the feelings of Judaism to his child. Avram was 75 years old when he made his journey to Eretz Yisrael, Yitzchak was born when he was 100, and Avraham died at the age of 175. Avraham had 75 years to pass on the *Yiddishkeit* to Yitzchak, the feelings and emotions that go along with the laws and traditions. This is why Hashem uses the word *da'at* to describe his relationship with Avraham. Avraham placed such a heavy emphasis on bridging the body with the soul through his senses. He appreciated the effort it took to do this and wanted this to be a major part of his legacy. He personified the message that a nice home, a nice wife and nice utensils lead to an expansion of the mind and for this reason, Hashem describes His relationship with Avraham as one of *da'at*.

If we use our utensils — our senses — properly, without *shevirat keilim*, we can experience the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash. Our rabbis state:

אמר רבי שמעון בן חלפתא, לא מצא הקדוש ברוך הוא כלי מחזיק ברכה לישראל אלא השלום.
עוקצין ג:יב

R. Shimon ben Chalfeta said: God only found one utensil that can hold the blessings of Israel: [the utensil of] peace. Uktzin 3:12

Our rabbis specifically use the word *k'li*, utensil. The nice utensils are the bond between the body and the soul. It is through our senses, through our emotions and the way we connect our bodies to our souls that we are able to create the perfect utensil, the utensil of peace, which ultimately will lead to the building of the Third Beit Hamikdash.

I Betroth You to Me Forever

The Unusual Marriage of Hoshea and What it Teaches Us About Our Relationship with G-d

"Sure you have your marital issues, but on the whole you feel so self-satisfied about how things have worked out that you would never, in your wildest nightmares, think you would hear these words from your husband one fine summer day: 'I don't love you anymore. I'm not sure I ever did. I'm moving out. The kids will understand. They'll want me to be happy.'"

"Those Aren't Fighting Words, Dear," *The New York Times*, July 31, 2009

All throughout Tanach, the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people is often referred to as a marriage. The revelation at Har Sinai — the desert blooming with flowers, the mountain over our heads, the seven rings of Jewish people around the mountain, the greatest document in the history of mankind revealed — all this is the marriage of G-d and the Jewish people; so much so, that every marriage re-enacts the event with flowers, chupah, customs of the bride walking around the groom seven times and the giving and accepting of the ketubah — the marriage contract. Shir HaShirim is the great love story between G-d and the Jewish people and on the negative side, we read of the antithesis of that love during the three weeks and the nine days that precede Tisha B'Av. *"Eicha haytah l'zona kirya ne'emanah?*, How did a



Rebbetzin Abby Lerner

Director of Admissions,
Yeshiva University High School for Girls

formerly faithful city, [like a faithful wife], become a harlot, a prostitute?" (Yishayahu 1:21).

This metaphor reaches its most concrete manifestation in the prophecy and in the life of Hoshea. Hoshea, one of the twelve "minor" prophets, is, ironically, considered by the Talmud (*Pesachim* 87a) as the greatest prophet of his generation. No small claim, since some of Hoshea's contemporaries were Amos, Michah and Yishayahu.

The Gemara in *Pesachim* 87a, states the following:

אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא להושע בניך חטאו
והיה לו לומר בניך הם בני חנוניך הם בני
אברהם יצחק ויעקב גלגל רחמך עליהן לא
דיו שלא אמר כך אלא אמר לפניו רבש"ע
כל העולם שלך הוא העבירים באומה אחרת
אמר הקב"ה מה אעשה לזקן זה אומר לו לך
וקח אשה זונה והוליד לך בנים זנונים ואחר
כך אומר לו שלחה מעל פניך אם הוא יכול
לשלוח אף אני אשלח את ישראל.

The Holy One Blessed Be He said to Hoshea: "Your children have sinned!" [Hoshea] should have responded "They are your children! They are the children of Your favored ones — the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Arouse Your

mercy for them." It was not enough that [Hoshea] did not say this, rather he said before G-d: "Master of the Universe — the entire world is Yours. Exchange them for a different nation." Said the Holy One, Blessed Be He: "What shall I do with this old man? I will tell him: 'Go and take a woman of harlotry, and father children of harlotry.' Afterward, I will tell him: 'Send her away from your presence. If he is able to send [her away], I too will send Israel away.'"

Let's study the first chapter of Hoshea and a good part of the second chapter. It is interesting to keep in mind that the second perek becomes the haftarah for the weekly portion of Bamidbar.

What we are going to see is the marriage of Hoshea to the harlot, Gomer, as well as the birth of their children, as part of the great metaphor of the relationship of G-d and the Jewish people.

Hoshea Builds a Family

The prophecy begins with Hashem telling Hoshea to take for himself a prostitute: *"Lech kach lecha eishet znunim."* What really happened here?



Did Hoshea actually marry this woman — a prostitute? Rambam, Ibn Ezra and Targum Yonatan hold that these words to Hoshea were either symbolic or lived out in a Divine dream — because to say that it really happened would be an embarrassment and a humiliation to the prophet.

Abarbanel, siding with the Gemara, says that in fact Hoshea did marry a prostitute and did have children with her!

Using very powerful language, the Abarbanel states:

כי הוא באמת זמה ועון פלילי להכחיש פשוטי הכתובים.

It is really a terrible sin to contradict the plain meaning of the psukim.

According to the Abarbanel, why must the prophet do this?

כי הדברים הנראים יותר פעלים בלבבות מהדברים הנשמעים.

Things seen have a greater impact on our hearts than things that are heard.

Almost four hundred years later, Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote in his epoch poem, “Enoch Arden,” of the heartbreak of a husband, who was thought to be dead, as he watches his wife engaged in a relationship with her new “husband.” Although he had

known of his wife’s marriage, seeing her from a distance with the other man impacted on him in a way that hearing the news did not: “Because things seen are mightier than things heard.”

The third verse teaches that Hoshea married Gomer bat Divlaim and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son.

Our commentaries discuss the name of Hoshea’s new wife as fraught with meaning. “Gomer”: all can complete (“*ligmor*”) their desire through her (Rashi). “Bat Divlaim”: “Divlaim” is reminiscent of the word “*dibah*” like the words “*dibah ra’ah*” — bad talk about her; bad reputation. Also *divlaim* are figs — sweet in everyone’s mouth like a fig; everyone picks at her, like a fig.

In the fourth verse, Hashem tells Hoshea to call his son Yizrael because Hashem is going to avenge the blood of Yizrael on the house of Yehu. Yizrael has two contradictory meanings, both of which play out in the chapter. It is also a reference to a historical situation. Emek Yizrael refers to the hilly fields where the king Yehu attacked Achav, who was notorious for his evil and his idol worship. But Yehu was also evil.

He, too, was an idol worshipper and therefore he was condemned for the insincerity and hypocrisy of his actions. Yizrael was also the seat of royalty for the kingdom of the northern government — the ten tribes — who separated from the Kingdom of Judah and Malchut Beit David.

The verse concludes “*v’hishbati mimalchut Beit Yisrael*,” that the punishment for the ten tribes will come from the place of the sin itself — the seat of their kingdom. To quote verse 5: “It will happen on that day that I will break the bow of Yisrael in the Valley of Yizrael.”

In verse six, we are told that Gomer gave birth to a daughter: “*vatahar od v’teled bat*.” Note that verse three states “*va’teled lo ben*,” while here it only states “*va’teled bat*” without the word “*lo*.” Commentaries suggest that maybe it was not Hoshea’s daughter. And her name? “*Lo Ruchama*” — no mercy for her, or even worse, not even deserving of mercy. This then becomes the paradigm of the relationship between G-d with the Jewish people “*Ki lo osif od arachem et Beit Yisrael ki naso esa lahem*, I will no longer have mercy on the Jewish people that I should continue to forgive them.”

We are reminded of the verse from Bamidbar 14:19 that carries a request from Moshe to do the opposite — to forgive the Jewish people (*Parshat Shlach* — following the incident of the Meraglim): “*s’lach na la’avon ha’am ha’zeh k’godel chasdecha v’ka’asher nasata la’am hazeh miMitzraim v’ad hena*, Forgive the sin of this people in accordance with the greatness of your mercy as you forgave them from the time of Egypt until now.”

We might also look at “*ki naso esa lahem*” — which we originally translated to mean that I will not forgive them — to actually mean “*ki naso lahem*” that I will indeed forgive them — the comfort being that even in the moments of greatest anger, Hashem says “I will forgive them.” This meaning seems to be borne out by the next verse — “*v’et Beit Yehuda arachem v’hoshatim b’Hashem Elokeichem*, But I will have mercy on the House of Judah and I will save them through Hashem their G-d.”

Once again the name of the child indicates G-d’s disfavor with the House of Israel.

Eheveh: I Will be There for You

The next two verses speak of a third child. Hoshea is told to “call his name Lo Ami (Not My People) because you are not my people and I will not be (*eheveh*) yours.”

The *Da’at Mikra* points out that the use of the word “*eheveh*” hearkens back to the *sneh* — the burning bush, which is the first time the Jewish people were called “*ami*” by Hashem — a term of great endearment: “*Ra’oh ra’iti et oni ami ... va’yomer Elokim el Moshe ‘eheveh asher eheveh*, I have seen the oppression of my people (*ami*)

and Elokim said to Moshe ‘I Shall Be as I Shall Be (*Eheveh*).’” (Shmot 3:7,14)

Rashi comments there (from Gemara *Brachot*) that the name “*eheveh*” means:

אֲהִיָּה עִמָּם בְּצָרָה זֶה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה עִמָּם בְּשִׁעְבוֹד
שָׂאֵר מַלְכוּתוֹ.

I will be with them during this period of suffering as I will be with them during other periods of oppressions.

Essentially, in Shmot, G-d is saying, “I will be with you on your worst day. I will not abandon you.” But here it says the very opposite: “*Ki atem lo ami*,” if you will not be *Ami* — My nation, I will not “*eheveh*” be there for you.

And with this, we begin Perek Bet which is the haftarah for *Parshat BaMidbar*. The opening pasuk about “*mispar Bnei Yisrael*,” the great number of the Jewish people, is the link to the counting of the Jewish people at the beginning of Sefer BaMidbar.

The Comfort

Let’s analyze the *nechama*, the comfort that is presented in this perek:

וְהָיָה בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר לָהֶם לֹא עַמִּי אַתֶּם
יֹאמַר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֵל חַיִּים ... אָמְרוּ לְאַחֵיכֶם עַמִּי
וְלְאֶחָיוֹתֵיכֶם רַחֲמָה:
הוֹשַׁע בֶּן־נָחֲמִי

And it will happen that instead of calling them “not my people,” it will be said of them “children of the living G-d.” ... Say to your brother “Ami” (My People) and to your sister “Ruchama” (Pitied).

The negative names of Hoshea’s children are turned into the most beautiful, positive names.

And then something very strange happens: After mention of the future of comfort, the chapter takes a negative turn — the way one might

suddenly remember the terrible present by speaking of what might be a beautiful future.

Continuing with the metaphor of marriage, it sounds like G-d is putting these good children in between himself and his sinning spouse. In verse four it states “*rivu b’imchem, rivu ...*, go argue with your mother because she is not my wife and I am not her husband.”

Compare this to the verse in Yeshayahu 50:1 “*Aizeh sefer kritut imchem asher shlachtiha?*, Where is your mother’s bill of divorce that indicates that I sent her away?” In other words, in the chapters of comfort in Yeshayahu, G-d says to the Jewish people “You are mine! I never divorced you!”

Some say that in our chapter in Hoshea, the language of “*Ki hi lo ishti v’anochi lo isha*, for she is not my wife and I am not her husband” might be an ancient text of a *get*. In both of these verses, the metaphor of G-d’s “marriage” to the Jewish people is emphasized.

The Disloyal Wife who Returns

It doesn’t take a lot to understand the metaphor of the “wife” of HaShem turning to other lovers — to other gods. Let’s look at the word “*m’ahavai*” in verses 7 and 9:

אֲלֶכָה אַחֲרֵי מְאַהֲבֵי נַתַּנִּי לַחֲמִי ... וְרָדַפָּה אֶת
מְאַהֲבֵיָּהּ וְלֹא תִשָּׁג אֹתָם וּבִקְשָׁתָם וְלֹא תִמְצָא.
I will follow my lovers, those who provide me bread ... She chases her lovers but cannot reach them, she seeks them, but cannot find them.

The harlot is calling for her so-called lovers, but of course she cannot find them because they are not loyal to her;

Sometimes our marriage to G-d is like that. It's only half a marriage. Only one party is truly invested, the other is committed only to him or herself.

they are not there for her. Compare this to Megillat Eichah 1:19, where the city of Yerushalayim calls out for “*m’ahavai*” my lovers — the kohanim and the *zkeinim* — but “*hayma rimuni*” they are not there for me, they have deceived me. In Eicha, we ourselves, the elite of the Jewish people, have become the unfaithful lovers!

On a very positive note, perhaps the opposite of our verse “*U’bikshatam v’lo timtza*, she seeks them, but cannot find them,” can be found in the parsha that we read on *Shabbat Nachamu* — (Devarim 4:29) “*U’bikashtem misham et Hashem Elokecha umatzata*”! The parsha there depicts our disloyalty — our worship of other gods — our harlotry. G-d will then abandon us and scatter us among the nations — and from there we will search for G-d and we will indeed find Him and we will repent with great sincerity and G-d will forgive us and we will be reunited.

In verse 16, the entire tone changes. This last paragraph of the haftarah of BaMidbar is HaShem’s fantasy, *k’vayachol* — His dream of the future.

“*V’Holachtiha hamidbar*, I will lead her to the desert.” Here, the desert is not the place of desolation as it was described earlier, but rather, a hearkening back to the experience of the Revelation of G-d to the Jewish

people in the Desert of Sinai. We are not speaking of a desolate place, but rather of a secluded place, a place of no distractions where the beloved will hear only My voice. A place of romance where I can speak with her alone.

Comparing the harsh verse 4 “*Hi lo ishti v’ani lo isha*, she is not My wife and I am not her husband,” we now have in verse 18 “*tikri’i ishi — v’lo tikri’i ba’ali*, you will call Me, my husband and you will not call Me, my master.” A *ba’al* is a master but I will be her husband. There will be a relationship — not dominance. There is surely a reference here to the idolatry of Ba’al — of *avoda zara*.

The Betrothal

We turn our attention now to the last verses of the haftarah of BaMidbar — famous and romantic verses which sometimes appear on our wedding invitations — but more famous because they are the verses that are recited when tefillin is put on each weekday morning:

וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בְצֶדֶק
וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים: וְאֶרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי
בְאֵמוּנָה וְיָדַעְתָּ אֵת ה':

I will betroth you unto me forever, I will betroth you to me with righteousness and with justice and with kindness and with mercy. I will betroth you to me with faith and you will know G-d.

“I will betroth you unto me forever.” Here we have the closure, the betrothal instead of the divorce (“*Hi lo ishti v’anochi lo isha*”). Let us briefly analyze these two powerful verses:

The Malbim (Hoshea 2:21) discusses the fact that *mishpat*, justice, is doing what is fair — “*shurat hadin*,” and that *tzedek*, righteousness is doing more than what is required — “*lifnim mishurat hadin*.” She, the bride, will

bring *tzedek* and *mishpat* (reminiscent of the first chapter of Yeshayahu that we read on *Shabbat Chazon* — “*Tzion b’mishpat tipadeh v’shaveha b’tzedaka*, Zion is redeemed with justice and charity). “I, the groom, says Hashem (according to the Malbim), will bring *chesed* (kindness) and *rachamim* (mercy).” In our verse, *chesed* parallels *tzedek* — the *lifnim mishurat hadin*; *rachamim* parallels *mishpat* — that which is simply fair. The Malbim suggests that the *ba’al harachamim* (one who is merciful by nature) will see the downtrodden state of he who evokes our mercy and he does for him what he deserves. *Chesed*, however is going beyond what is required. The one who performs *chesed* doesn’t look to see if the person on the receiving end needs anything — he just gives it. He doesn’t wait until his pity or his mercy is evoked.

She (Knesset Yisrael) will bring into this relationship her *emunah*, her faith. In turn, says G-d, I will bring to you the gift of “*V’yada’at et Hashem*, and you will know G-d.” You will not need *emunah*, faith — because you will know G-d — a greater knowledge than faith.

Why are these words the seal after “*v’eirastich li*,” that you will know G-d? Because, *eirusin* (*v’eirastich li*, betrothal) is *kiddushin* — “*harei at mekudeshet li*,” but *v’Yada’at et Hashem* is consummation. “*Ve’ha’adam yada et Chava ishto*, the man ‘knew’ his wife” (Bereishit 4:1). *Yediah* is closeness, love, the ultimate deep knowledge that symbolizes relationship, knowledge of the very significance of the other.

Hashem says of Avraham:

כִּי יִדְעָתִיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא אֶת בְּנֵיו וְאֵת בִּיתוֹ
אֲחֵרָיו וְשִׁמְרוּ דְרָגָה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט
לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה' עַל אֲבִרָהֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עֲלָיו.
בְּרֵאשִׁית יח:יט

I have known him because he commands his children and members of his household to follow him. They follow the path of God to perform righteousness and justice in order that God can bring to Avraham, that which he has spoken about to him.

Bereishit 18:19

Note how righteousness and justice are an integral part of this knowledge.

We say of Moshe, “*Asher yida’o et Hashem panim el panim*, He knew G-d face to face.” (Devarim 34:10).

“*V’Yada’at et Hashem*” is the ultimate consummation of the marriage between G-d and his sometimes wayward people.

Are we Committed to Making the Relationship Work?

At the midpoint of Tisha B’Av day — *chatzot* — something happens. The character of the day changes. We stand up. The Jewish people don their tefillin and as they wrap the tefillin around their finger, like a groom placing the ring on the finger of his bride, we recite — even on this day of destruction: “*V’eirastich li l’olam*, I betroth you to me forever.” These are G-d’s words to a nation of infidels — a nation that said, “I don’t love you. I never loved you.” And we said those words with actions — worshipping the Golden Calf forty days after our betrothal at Har Sinai!

“*V’eirastich li l’olam*, I betroth you to me forever.” Here is the problem: The statement is one-sided. I am yours — but maybe you are not mine! On the day that the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed the Kodesh Kadashim was exposed and there were the *Kruvim* in the form of a man and a woman bound in intimacy. When the *Kruvim* were in this position it was an

indication of G-d’s love for us (*Yoma* 54a). On Tisha b’Av? At the worst moment of Jewish history? Yes! There are a number of responses to this amazing and profound contradiction. Perhaps one can respond that the image that was exposed was Hashem loving us as the Beit Hamikdash was being destroyed — but we were there just lying limply in his arms and not responding.

“I am yours,” says Hashem — but you are not mine ... and where are we? “*V’Radfa et m’ahaveha v’lo tasig otam, u’bikshatam v’lo timtza*” — We are seeking other gods, other lovers, with perhaps every now and then a half-hearted attempt to return because, who knows? — maybe we’ll give the one at home a chance as well.

In *The New York Times* article quoted above, the wife decides to wait out her husband. He wants to move out. She responds: “I don’t buy it.” In the end, he did not move out. “Instead, he spent the summer being unreliable. He stopped coming home at his usual six o’clock. He would stay out late and not call. He blew off our entire Fourth of July — the parade, the barbecue, the fireworks — to go to someone else’s party. When he was at home he was distant. He wouldn’t look me in the eye. He didn’t even wish me ‘Happy Birthday.’”

Sometimes our marriage to G-d is like that. It’s only half a marriage. Only one party is truly invested, the other is committed only to him or herself. A while ago someone termed the problem of texting on Shabbos as “half Shabbos.” How aptly named! It’s not just about texting and it’s not just about Modern Orthodox Jews.

We’re like the husband of the article. We show up but whenever we want to with few rules and fewer

responsibilities and no passion. Half davening, half tzniut, half kashrut. In the marriage, but not really. In many yeshivot and in many shuls, everyone is just sitting there, limply, waiting for the inspiration to just happen, waiting for the turn-on, for the *kavanah*, but investing almost nothing.

It is Hoshea, the prophet who is married to the unfaithful wife and then won’t leave her, who tells us of Hashem’s loyalty to us, the Jewish people. And it is Hoshea who calls to us on the Shabbos before Yom Kippur — Shabbos Shuva: “*Shuva Yisrael ad Hashem*, Return Israel to Hashem!” Yom Kippur is the day when the second *luchot* were given. It is the second betrothal — our second chance. “Go back!” says Hoshea. It is not enough for Hashem to betroth us — we also have to want him! “*U’bikashtem misham et Hashem Elokecha u’matzata, ki tidrishenu b’chol livavcha ub’chal nafshecha*” — You will seek out G-d from there and you will find him. Why? Because you will search for him with all your heart and all your soul.

“*v’Eirastich li b’emunah — v’yada’at et Hashem.*” We need to respond to that with the last words that we read from Eicha: “*Hashiveinu Hashem eilecha, v’nashuva* G-d — return us to you and we will return.” We will finally return the embrace.

The New York Times piece ends as follows: “My husband tried to strike a deal. Blame me for his pain. Unload his feelings of personal disgrace onto me. But I ducked. And I waited. And it worked.”

The Ribono shel olam is waiting — but only we can make it work.

Love and Hate

That are not Baseless

This sicha was delivered on the 17th of Tamuz 5768 [2008] and reprinted with permission from the Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash.

Everything is Based on Interests

The Gemara in tractate *Megilla* (26b) discusses the various situations in which the sanctity of a synagogue can expire. After the Gemara deals with the case of sale, it asks:

מתנה פליגי בה רב אחא ורבינא חד אסר וחד שרי.

[With regard to a synagogue which has been made] a gift, Rav Acha and Ravina disagree: One forbids [it to be used for secular purposes], and one permits this.

A simple explanation of the disagreement might be suggested: The question is whether the sanctity of a synagogue expires only when the congregation receives something in exchange for the synagogue, or whether the act of disowning the synagogue by itself suffices. In the continuation, the Gemara explains the various arguments:

מאן דאסר בהאי תפקע קדושתה ומאן דשרי אי לאו דהוה ליה הנאה מיניה לא הוה יהיב ליה הדר הוה ליה מתנה כזבני.

The one who forbade did so on the ground that there is nothing through which its sanctity can be transferred, while the one who permitted it argued that **if he [the giver] did not derive some benefit from**



Based on a sicha by

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l

Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivat Har Etzion, Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS and Inaugural Rosh Kollel, Gruss Institute

Adapted by Lavi Bigman

Translated by David Strauss

the act he would not give it, so that in the end the gift is equivalent to a sale.

That is to say, the Gemara assumes that people do not distribute gifts freely; they expect to receive some benefit in return. If you like, what we have here is a cynical view of human nature — **everything is based on interests**. This idea is manifestly pessimistic, and therefore anybody driven by those schools of thought that paint a rosy picture of the human soul will be disappointed; the Gemara does not bring an alternative view that adopts a more positive outlook regarding the soul of man.

In tractate *Gittin* (50b) as well, we encounter identical arguments, though they relate to a different law. There the discussion relates to the Mishna's ruling that payment cannot be recovered from mortgaged property when there are free assets available. If the borrower has assets that had been sold to another party, but he also owns free assets, the lender cannot recover his debt from

the mortgaged property in the hands of the buyer. In the continuation the Gemara asks about assets that had been given away as a gift, rather than sold, and the wording is very similar to that found in tractate *Megilla*:

או דלמא מתנה נמי אי לאו דאית ליה הנאה מיניה לא יהיב ליה מתנה והלכך כי פסידא דלקוחות דמי.

Or do we say this even in the case of a gift, **for if he did not derive some benefit from it he would not have given him the gift**, and therefore his loss is on the same footing as the loss of the buyer.

The Gemara here understands the way that a gift operates in the same way that the Gemara in *Megilla* understood it: A gift does not stem solely **from the goodness of the giver's heart**, but also from **self-interest**.

Why have I cited these passages? It is not my intention to deal with *Gittin* or *Megilla*, with the laws of a synagogue or with the collection of a debt. But I wish to understand the Gemara's hidden message. The

Gemara poses the following question: Is it possible to speak of a gift that is given absolutely freely? In these passages *Chazal* examine man's inner world, assessing the extent to which his considerations are idealistic or economic.

During the Three Weeks we remember the shocking and terrifying destruction that befell the people of Israel two thousand years ago. So too must we confront *Chazal's* assessment of the causes that led up to that destruction. *Chazal* distinguished between the circumstances leading to the destruction of the First Temple and those associated with the destruction of the Second Temple. There are dreadful accounts of the First Temple period; even though there were ups and downs, the overall picture is very gloomy. The problems of the First Temple period included idolatry, incest and bloodshed. Anyone who doesn't understand the message in the narrative sections of the books of Melakhim and Divrei Ha-yamim can open the books of Yeshaya and Yirmiya and see the full picture.

The Second Temple period presents a sharply different picture: the institution of the synagogue begins to take hold alongside that of the Temple; Torah study and loyalty to the Sages of Israel are on the rise. Here too there were ups and downs, but the general impression is that during this period the people are clearly committed to the Torah and to observance of the *mitzvot*. *Chazal* understood that in order to explain the destruction of the Second Temple, we must look elsewhere and find problems that differ from those of the First Temple period. As is well known, *Chazal* turned their eyes to what they called *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred.

Getting to the Root of the Problem

Here arise several questions: Granted that baseless hatred is an undesirable phenomenon, but in what way is it so severe that it brought about the destruction of the Temple? There is a prohibition, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart," but is the violation of this prohibition so serious that the Temple should be destroyed on its account? We have it on the authority of Rabbeinu Yona that a negative commandment that does not involve an action is less severe than a negative commandment that involves an action!

It seems to me that there is an important point that must be kept in mind. It might very well be that on the scale of sins and transgressions, baseless hatred does not stand at the top of the pyramid. There is no specific prohibition of "baseless hatred"; there is only a prohibition of hatred. However, in the list of sins composed by the Geonim and recited as part of confession on Yom Kippur (*Al chet*), a distinction is made between **hatred** and **baseless hatred**. What is the difference between them?

The list of sins in the *Al chet* confession is not meant to be comprehensive. We are dealing with a list that relates not only to **sins**, but also to the **sinner**. This confession focuses upon the individual and collective awareness that we are all sinners. Here enter all kinds of problematic qualities and behaviors that are not necessarily included in the list of prohibitions; and even if they are found there, it is not necessarily at the top.

In this connection, I have frequently mentioned the words of the Rambam who noted this point:

אל תאמר שאין תשובה אלא מעבירות שיש בהן מעשה כגון זנות וגזל וגניבה אלא כשם שצריך אדם לשוב מאלו כך הוא צריך לחפש בדעות רעות שיש לו ולשוב מן הכעס ומן האיבה ומן הקנאה ומן ההתול ומרדיפת הממון והכבוד ומרדיפת המאכלות וכיוצא בהן מן הכל צריך לחזור בתשובה ואלו העונות קשים מאותן שיש בהן מעשה שבזמן שאדם נשקע באלו קשה הוא לפרוש מהם.
הלכות תשובה ז:ג

A person should not think that repentance is only necessary for those sins that involve a deed such as promiscuity, robbery, or theft. Rather, just as a person is obligated to repent from these, similarly, he must search out his evil character traits. He must repent from anger, hatred, envy, frivolity, the pursuit of money and honor, the pursuit of gluttony, and the like. He must repent for all [of the above]. These sins are more difficult than those that involve deeds. If a person is attached to these, it is more difficult for him to separate himself.

Hilkhot Teshuva 7:3

When the Rambam writes that these are more difficult, he is not referring to the severity of the prohibition, but rather to the influence that it has on the person. If we ask ourselves what is the place of baseless hatred, the answer is that it involves a violation of a negative commandment. However, it was not the transgression and its severity that brought *Chazal* to list baseless hatred as the cause of the destruction of the Temple, but rather its impact on the individual and upon the nation.

Why is this so? For a simple reason that brings us back to the starting point: What is meant by baseless hatred? Does a person wake up in the morning and decide for no reason that he can't stand his neighbors? If some ulterior motive underlies **unwarranted love** and **unwarranted**

Hatred is a sin, and an unpleasant one at that. But the circumstances which breed such hatred — that hatred referred to as “baseless hatred” because the individual does not understand its source — it is there that corruption thrives. For this we say *Al chet*, and from this it is difficult to set oneself free.

gifts (as we saw in the talmudic passages cited above), there must be some reason behind **unwarranted hatred**. There is really no such thing as baseless hatred; it merely **seems** baseless.

What level of self-interest must a person reach in order to engage in “baseless hatred”? It was because of this lack of sensitivity, because of a disregard of general human ethics, because of a rejection of values — it was because of contempt for all these things and holding fast only to those things that are closest to a person’s heart that the Temple was destroyed.

Hatred is a sin, and an unpleasant one at that. But the circumstances which breed such hatred — that hatred referred to as “baseless hatred” because the individual does not understand its source — it is there that corruption thrives. For this we say *Al chet*, and from this it is difficult to set oneself free.

All this relates to what happened in the time of *Chazal*, but it has ramifications for later generations as well. The Mishna states:

על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים.

אבות א:ב

The world rests on three foundations:

Torah, Divine service and the practice of loving-kindness.

Avot 1:2

These are the foundations upon which the world rests; and when these are undermined, the world collapses.

Introspection

We have learned from the Rambam at the beginning of *Hilkhos Ta’aniyot* that fasting is merely a fulfillment by rabbinic decree of the mitzva of crying out to God. By Torah law the mitzva is to cry out and to sound trumpets **in the event of any distress that arises**. The Rambam emphasizes that this is all part of repentance and introspection:

ודבר זה מדרכי התשובה הוא שבזמן שתבוא צרה ויעקו עליה ויריעו ידעו הכל שבגלל מעשיהם הרעים הורע להן ככתוב עונותיכם הסו וגו' וזה הוא שיגרום להם להסיר הצרה מעליהם:

אבל אם לא יזעקו ולא יריעו אלא יאמרו דבר זה ממנהג העולם אירע לנו וצרה זו נקרה נקריה הרי זו דרך אכזריות וגורמת להם להדבק במעשיהם הרעים ותוסיף הצרה צרות אחרות הוא שכתוב בתורה והלכתם עמי בקרי והלכתי גם אני עמכם בחמת קרי כלומר כשאבאי עליכם צרה כדי שתשובו אם תאמרו שהוא קרי אוסיף לכם חמת אותו קרי:

This practice is one of the paths of repentance, for when distress arises, and

the people cry out [to God] and sound the trumpets, everyone will realize that [the distressing situation] occurred because of their evil conduct. This [realization] will cause the removal of this distress.

Conversely, should the people fail to cry out [to God] and sound the trumpets, and instead say, What has happened to us is merely a natural phenomenon and this distress is merely a chance occurrence, this is a cruel conception of things, which causes them to remain attached to their wicked deeds. Thus, this time of distress will lead to further distresses.

Hilkhos Ta’aniyot 1:2-3

The Rambam emphasizes two points: First, the recognition that the troubles that befall us are due to our immersion in sin; second, the obligation to locate the failing and that which needs correction. The Rambam says the same thing regarding the fixed fasts commemorating events of the past:

יש שם ימים שכל ישראל מתענים בהם מפני הצרות שאירעו בהן כדי לעורר הלבבות ולפתוח דרכי התשובה ויהיה זה זכרון למעשינו הרעים ומעשה אבותינו שהיה כמעשינו עתה עד שגרם להם ולנו אותן הצרות.

הלכות תעניות ה:א

There are days when the entire Jewish people fast because of the calamities that occurred to them then, to arouse [their] hearts and initiate [them in] the paths of repentance. This will serve as a reminder of our wicked conduct and that of our ancestors, which resembles our present conduct and therefore brought these calamities upon them and upon us.

Hilkhos Ta’aniyot 5:1

We see, then, that fast days were instituted for the purpose of introspection. What should we examine on a fast day? There are three layers to this examination. First

and foremost, there should be an examination of **deeds** — “This will serve as a reminder of our wicked conduct and that of our ancestors.”

There is a second layer, that of **introspection** and **soul searching**. On a certain level, introspection relates to a person’s conduct — what he should have done, and what not. But introspection involves not only an examination of the deed, but also of the doer, of his soul. The Rambam speaks of this layer in the passage in *Hilkhos Teshuva* cited above — those evil character traits that dull the soul and destroy every good part of it.

There is, however, also a third layer. In addition to the expression in deed of these negative inclinations, and the negative qualities in themselves, one should examine the **roots** of these traits and actions. What made this possible? From where does the baseless hatred come? We are not dealing with an examination that contents itself with the surface levels, which are more comfortable to deal with. We are dealing with a fundamental examination of the deepest roots of one’s soul. Even the soul has a subterranean layer, from whence comes the drive to sin and perversity.

This point is to a certain degree based on Scriptural verses. The Rambam, in that same introduction to chapter 5 of *Hilkhos Ta’aniyot*, derives the matter from the verse: “And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers” (Vayikra 26:40).

This verse appears at the end of the rebuke in *Parashat Bechukotai*. There is a certain difficulty there regarding the order of the verses, with which the early commentators already struggled. It first says: “And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their

fathers,” which indicates repentance; but immediately afterwards it says: “And I too shall walk contrary to them, and bring them into the land of their enemies.” (v. 41), and only afterwards do we come to repentance on the part of the people of Israel: “Then only will their uncircumcised hearts be humbled” (v. 41), and with it to the hoped-for salvation.

The answer seems clear. Israel did indeed begin to confess their sins owing to their distress and suffering, but the confessors only reached the outer layer. They confessed about the actions that grew out of their uncircumcised heart, but not about the heart itself; they did not deal with the uncircumcised heart. The purification process had clearly not been completed, and therefore God still “walks contrary to them,” and only then is their uncircumcised heart humbled. Only in this way will all the bad qualities be humbled; what we have here is a repair of the soul, rather than merely a repair of deeds.

A person cannot achieve repair without repairing his deeds, but his deeds can be repaired without the person achieving repair. It is possible to repair the sins without repairing the soul.

The end of the verse is unclear — “And they will make amends for their sin.” Are we dealing here with atonement? It seems to me that it would not be far-fetched to understand that here we are dealing with the third layer of man’s self-examination: locating and treating the roots of sin. This is the pinnacle of repair.

If we wish to apply these conclusions to our own circumstances, we should examine ourselves with respect to the three principles upon which the world of the individual and of the collective

stand: Torah, Divine service and the practice of loving-kindness.

A person comes to the Yeshiva in order to build himself in these three realms. He wishes to grow in Torah, in service of God and in his practice of loving-kindness. A person must constantly engage in introspection — how is he progressing, what are his difficulties? If he finds that he is failing, he must ask himself to what extent is he examining not only the external cause, but also the inner layer, the root of the problem.

Repentance — Obligation, Mitzva, Opportunity

Many areas leave room for introspection. We must always ask ourselves the question that arises from the proper understanding of the concept of baseless hatred: not only **what happened**, but also **what is the root of the problem**.

If a Yeshiva student finds that his prayer is a bit dry, that it falls into the category of fixed prayer, of prayer recited by rote — this is certainly something for which he must seek atonement and repair. But the more fundamental question is not how his prayer appears, but why does it appear that way. How is it that a person can sit all day in the *beit midrash*, and yet his prayer is dry? It is possible that he will find an answer in the world of prayer; but it is also possible that the answer lies in the entirety of his soul — the weakness of his prayer might be an expression of the weakness of his Torah. Dryness recognizes no borders.

If a person asks himself regarding his acts of loving-kindness, he might find that he practices kindness, but drags his feet. Perhaps he lacks human sensitivity. And perhaps even when he

exerts himself to do good, there is still something missing in his personality.

If somebody thinks that he came to the Yeshiva to grow in Torah, and that things will be simple and easy — this is a problem. When he encounters difficulties, he will point to various factors: a problem with his *chavruta*, with his *shiur* or the like. But a person must ask himself here as well: What is the root of the problem? What broke him in those crises? Perhaps his roots do not provide him with sufficiently strong foundations. If his learning is defective, the problem is not only in his learning; it might stem from a **lack of love of Torah**. If he is missing a basic sense of connection, this in itself is a spiritual catastrophe; but it also

has practical ramifications, and this influences his entire spiritual world.

We stand today on the threshold of Tisha be-Av. At such a time, we are expected to conduct a fundamental reckoning, in such a manner that we can understand where the problems are located within us.

If someone has been studying in a Yeshiva for more than a year, and is not learning as he should, something is going on, and he must deal with the problem. This is the obligation of repentance, the mitzva of repentance, and this is an opportunity. Perhaps the first root that must be treated is the root of opportunity — its exploitation or its neglect: To what extent does a person who merited to sit in a *beit*

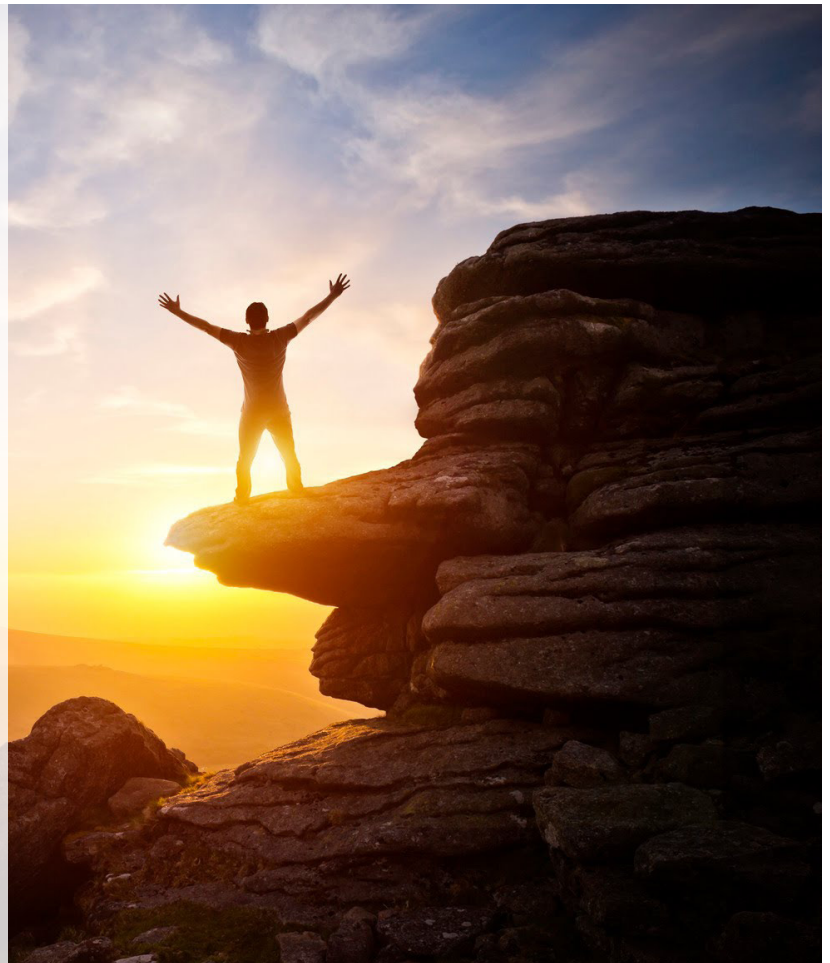
midrash exhaust the opportunities available to him, and to what extent does he allow them to pass him by?

We have been given the great privilege of being *bnei Torah*. This is a privilege that can determine a person's role within the people of Israel and within all of humanity.

Let us hope to find what the Gemara sought but did not find: **baseless love**. In order that we should find it the next time we examine ourselves, we must begin to cultivate it already today.

May it be Your will that we should merit, in this period of trouble for Israel, to rise up, and grow, and aspire increasingly more to be counted among God's servants — with all that this entails.

A person must constantly engage in introspection — how is he progressing, what are his difficulties? If he finds that he is failing, he must ask himself to what extent is he examining not only the external cause, but also the inner layer, the root of the problem.



Tisha B'Av and the Sin of the Meraglim

וַתִּשָּׂא כָּל הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם
בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא.
במדבר יד:א

*The whole community lifted their voices
and the nation cried that night.*

Bamidbar 14:1

מאותו שעה נגזר עליהם חורבן הבית שהרי
ליל ט' באב בכו ואמר הקב"ה הם בכו בכי
של חנם ואני אקבע להם בכיה לדורות.
רש"י, תהלים קו:כז

*At that moment, the destruction of
the Temple was decreed, because the
night that they cried was Tisha B'Av so
HaShem said, "They cried for nothing, I
will establish crying for generations."*

Rashi, Tehillim 106:27

The two Batei Mikdash
were destroyed on Tisha
B'Av and we mourn every
year on this night and day. Yet the
inception of our yearly mourning
was the *cheit hameraglim*, the sin
of the spies recorded in *Parashas
Shelach*. It behooves us to analyze the
connection.

The Purpose of Churban Beis Hamikdash

יש שם ימים שכל ישראל מתענים בהם מפני
הצרות שאירעו בהן כדי לעורר הלבבות
ולפתוח דרכי התשובה ויהיה זה זכרון
למעשינו הרעים ומעשה אבותינו שהיה
כמעשינו עתה עד שגרים להם ולנו אותן
הצרות שבזכרון דברים אלו נשוב להיטיב
שנאמר והתודו את עונם ואת עון אבותם וגו'.
רמב"ם, הל' תעניות ה:א



Rabbi Hershel Reichman

Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

*There are days when all of Israel fasts
because of the troubles that occurred on
[those days] in order to arouse our hearts
to open the paths of repentance and to
serve as a commemoration of our evil
actions and the actions of our forefathers
whose actions, like ours, caused troubles
for them and for us. By commemorating
these things, we will repent and do good
things as it states, "they shall confess their
sins and their fathers' sins."*

Rambam, Hilchos Ta'anios 5:1

It is apparent from the Rambam that
the destruction of the two Temples
and the other disasters associated with
Tisha B'Av have a double function:
1) They are punishments for our
evil deeds; 2) They are stimuli for
repentance and to do better things.

The Sin of the Spies

The original sin of Tisha B'Av was
the *cheit hameraglim*. Within that sin
clearly lies the core cause of all of
the subsequent sins that led to the
churban of the Batei Mikdash. What
was the core sin of the spies? In a very
long analysis of the *cheit hameraglim*,
the Ramban, in his *Commentary on the
Torah*, quotes the verse in Tehillim:

וַיִּמָּאֲסוּ בְּאֶרֶץ חֲמֹדָה לֹא הָאֱמִינּוּ לְדַבְּרוֹ: וַיִּרְגְּנוּ

בְּאֶהֱלֵיהֶם לֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל ה': וַיִּשָּׂא יָדוֹ לָהֶם
לְהַפִּיל אוֹתָם בְּמִדְבָּר: וּלְהַפִּיל זֶרְעָם בְּגוֹיִם
וּלְזַרְוֹתָם בְּאַרְצוֹת:
תהלים קו:כד-כז

*They loathed the precious Land and did
not trust His word, they complained in
their tents and did not listen to the voice
of G-d. He raised His hand for them
to die in the desert and to scatter their
children among the nations and disperse
them in all countries.*

Tehillim 106:24-27

This verse explicitly connects the
cheit hameraglim with the great Exile
and Diaspora of the Jews throughout
the world for centuries, which itself
was the result of the *churban Beis
Hamikdash* (destruction of the
Temple). What is the core sin that is
highlighted in these verses? "They did
not trust His word." The core sin was
a lack of faith in G-d's words, a lack of
trust and reliance on G-d.

It is true that the *meraglim* and the
Jews were terrified by the powerful
native inhabitants of Israel. Thus, a
military and historical perspective
was justified. Yet the Torah demands
of us, the Jewish people, a different
perspective — the perspective of faith.

Our sages say:

בא חבקוק והעמידן על אחת שנאמר וצדיק
באמונתו יחיה.
מכות כד.

Chabakuk established the single most important of all principles when he said, "The righteous person lives with his faith."

Makkos 24a

Whether it is faith in Hashem, faith in the Torah, faith in the Jewish people, faith in Jewish destiny, faith in Mashiach, faith in redemption, or faith in a better, more perfect world, faith is the core belief of the Torah. It is our charge and responsibility. It is central to who we are as G-d's chosen people.

Yes, Eretz K'na'an was terrifying for the *meraglim* and the newly freed Jewish people. But where was their faith? Faith is not just for easy, comfortable times. Faith is true for all times. Faith must be there especially in times of challenge and crisis.

Tzadik be'emunaso yichyeh, the righteous live with faith — at all times, especially in times of crisis. The core sin of the *meraglim* was lack of faith in Hashem during a terrible

crisis. As such, we can conclude that all of the other disasters which we commemorate on Tisha B'Av — especially the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash — were all a result of lack of faith in Hashem and His Torah. Yes, there were terrible crises, foreign dominations, wars, assimilation, internal disunity and dissent among the Jews, which preceded the destructions of the Batei Mikdash. However, had we had sufficient faith, we would have overcome these crises. But we lacked faith. We did not trust G-d's promises, words and protocols sufficiently and the crises overwhelmed us just as that first crisis of faith at the time of the *meraglim* overwhelmed our forefathers in the Sinai desert.

Tisha B'Av as Rectification

As the Rambam points out, the Torah's view of national disasters is twofold: 1) it is punishment for our evil deeds; 2) it challenges us to do teshuva, to rectify our evil-doing.

Certainly the destruction of our Batei Mikdash, the city of Yerushalayim, and our dispersion throughout the Diaspora, wreaked horrific punishment upon us. But how have we used the Diaspora experience as a way to rectify our sins?

The answer is simple. Tisha B'Av is the greatest act of Jewish faith! If the core sin that caused our punishment was lack of faith, then Tisha B'Av is the greatest reaffirmation of our own *emunah* — eternal Jewish faith.

The story is told that Napoleon Bonaparte was fascinated by Jewish survival and wanted to discover their secret of survival. One Tisha B'Av night, he walked to the Jewish synagogue in disguise and saw all

of the Jews on the floor crying by candlelight. He inquired about this and was told that today is Tisha B'Av, the time for national Jewish mourning for the Beis HaMikdash. He then said, "If a nation can mourn and cry for its ancient Temple for more than 1,700 years, then that nation will see its Temple rebuilt." This apparently inspired Napoleon to take an interest in rebuilding the Beis HaMikdash.

Napoleon had discovered the secret of Jewish survival — faith. Despite the Diaspora, Jewish faith was exceedingly strong. The Jews always believed there would be a Third Temple. Therefore, they never stopped crying over the first two Temples.

כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה
בשמחתה.
תענית ל:

He who mourns for Jerusalem will surely merit happiness [when it is rebuilt].

Ta'anis 30b

על המת נגזרה גזרה שישתכח מן הלב ולא על
החי.
רש"י, בראשית לו:לד

When someone dies, there is a heavenly decree that allows the death to be forgotten, but [this decree] does not apply to someone who is alive.

Rashi, Bereishis 37:34

Death is final. We shouldn't mourn the dead forever. Life goes on and the period of mourning for the dead has a limited time frame. If someone is alive but has disappeared, his family must never forget him and must incessantly work for his release!

The Jewish Temple is not dead forever, G-d forbid. It has disappeared only to come back! Therefore our mourning — our commemoration — is unending. Our sages call the mourning of Tisha B'Av "*aveilus*

Tisha B'Av is the greatest act of Jewish faith! If the core sin that caused our punishment was lack of faith, then Tisha B'Av is the greatest reaffirmation of our own *emunah* — eternal Jewish faith.



yeshana” — old mourning. It goes on and on because we believe in the rebuilding of the Temple in our own time.

We believe. We have faith in Hashem, in His words, in His Torah, in the promises and prophecies of redemption. Tisha B’Av is the greatest act of Jewish faith. Faith is the core testimony of Tisha B’Av. Through Tisha B’Av, the ultimate redemption will come.

Jewish Faith Today

When we look at the Jewish people today, we are absolutely astonished at

our people’s incredible faith. We are a scant 70 years since the Holocaust when we lost six million brothers and sisters in an unspeakable unique disaster. Yet today, we have more than six million brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael. Our people did not panic and flee Jewish destiny because of the Holocaust. On the contrary, with incredible faith and courage, we returned with G-d’s help to our Holy Land, rebuilt its wastelands and the ancient holy capital of Israel, Yerushalayim. This despite endless wars and terrorism, animosity and world-wide opposition to our nation. Our return is clearly a miracle after

over 1,900 years of Diaspora. No sea has split, no manna has fallen from Heaven, but yet we are miraculously in Eretz Yisrael. What is the secret of this Jewish return?

Emunah — Jewish faith. The 1,900-plus commemorations of Tisha B’Av have worked. Our faith is still incredibly strong. We have thereby returned to Medinat Yisrael, with G-d’s help, forever. *Tzadik be’emunaso yichyeh*, the righteous one lives with his faith. This is our faithful generation. May G-d bless it speedily with the full redemption.

Awaiting the Arrival of Moshiach

It is said about Rav Moshe Teitelbaum zt”l, the Yismach Moshe, that his longing for Moshiach to come was incredibly intense. He is quoted as saying, “If I had known in my youth that in my old age Moshiach still had not come, I would not have physically survived due to the pain [his delay] would have caused me. My soul would have left me. However, it is only because of my trust and hope in Hashem that he will come that I have survived until today.”¹ This is the delicate emotional balance we all strive for on Tisha B’av. On the one hand, we are sad that we are still in exile, while at the same time, we look toward the future hoping and believing that Moshiach will come.

This idea is punctuated by Chazal in the Talmud Yerushalmi, *Berachos*² and *Eicha Rabbah*³ stating that Moshiach was born on Tisha B’av. This is not merely a description of past history. On the contrary, the intent is that every year Tisha B’av generates a new impetus for the coming of the redemption.

While we wonder at and are inspired by the lofty spiritual level of Rabbi Teitelbaum, one must ask two questions:

1) To what extent is one’s obligation to believe Moshiach is coming? Is it enough to believe that he will come or is there also an obligation to eagerly await his arrival?



Rabbi Shimon Schenker

Associate Principal, Yeshiva University
High School for Boys

2) How does one become a person who truly believes in and awaits Moshiach’s arrival?

Many people are accustomed to reciting daily the version of Rambam’s 13 Principles of Faith printed in most sidurim. There it says,

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ,
וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂתִימָמָהּ, עִם כָּל זֶה אֶחָפֶה לוֹ
בְּכָל יוֹם שִׁבּוּא.

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, I will eagerly await daily for his coming.

This belief is not just a mystical concept or G-d forbid, Jewish myth, it is in fact an obligation. The Gemara states:

אמר רבא: בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין אומרים לו: נשאת ונתת באמונה, קבעת עתים לתורה, עסקת בפריה ורביה, צפית לישועה... מסכת שבת דף לא.

Rava said: At the moment that a person is brought before the Heavenly court, they say to him: Did you deal honestly in business? Did you have set times for learning Torah? Did you engage in producing children? Did you anticipate the salvation (coming of the Moshiach)?
Shabbat 31a

Rambam writes that this Gemara is not just an inspirational concept, rather it teaches that “whoever does not believe that Moshiach will come, or one who does not eagerly await his coming is a *kofer* (heretic) in the prophecy and Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu.”⁴

It is apparent from Rambam that it is not enough to believe that Moshiach will come but to eagerly await his arrival every day. This is clear from the *Pesikta D’Rav K’hana*,⁵ paraphrasing from the verses in Yoel⁶ and Tzeephania,⁷ “Master of the Universe, when will You judge the nations of the world? Hashem answers, when you eagerly await My (and by extension, Moshiach’s) arrival.” It is said about Rav Shmuel of Salant that every day when he would pray Shemoneh Esreh, just prior to reciting the blessing of *Es Tzemach David*, which asks for the coming of Moshiach, he would pause, then look right and then left, then continue praying. His students finally one day asked him why he does such an odd thing when he davens. He answered that he knows that Moshiach will come today, and he doesn’t want to make an unnecessary blessing, so

he pauses to see if he sees Moshiach coming before he makes the blessing.

Rav Ezriel Tauber⁸ challenges us to think about the parameters of this mitzvah. What is unique about the coming of Moshaich that it is not enough merely to believe in the coming of Moshiach? Why do we need to eagerly await his arrival as well?

He provides three unique approaches:

Approach #1 – Personal Growth

Rabbi Dovber Schneuri, the Mittler Rebbe of Lubavitch and son of Shnuer Zalman of Liadi who was the author of the *Tanya*, writes that in the times of Moshaich, people will still be able to perform the commandments and learn Torah as we do now. The times of Moshiach will be different because in the world as it exists currently, there are so many outside stimuli and distractions that prevent us from reaching our potential. This includes wars, suffering, and anti-Semitism. However, when Moshiach comes, we will revert back to a time similar to Adam in the Garden living in an ideal environment enabling us to be engaged in holy actions and to reach our potential.⁹ Therefore, Rav Tauber expands, we need the times of Moshiach to be upon us in order for us to achieve our greatest spiritual heights before we go to the World to Come for eternity.

Approach #2 – World Recognition of the Creator

Even if individually we reach our potential, that still is not enough. The ultimate goal is for all people, regardless of race, creed or nationality, to recognize and to coronate Hashem

as the King of the universe. Rav Shimon Schwab, explains that we see this idea from a passage that we say every day in our morning prayers. In “*Yehi Chevod*” we say:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם ה' מֶלֶךְ ה' מֶלֶךְ ה' מֶלֶךְ ה' מֶלֶךְ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: ה' מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם וָעֶד. אֲבָדוּ גוֹיִם
מֵאֶרֶץ:

And the nations will say, Hashem was King, is King, and will be King, Hashem will be King forever more, the nations of the land will be lost.

Rav Schwab explains that this verse doesn't G-d forbid mean that when Moshiach comes, all the nations of the world will be destroyed. It means that when Moshiach comes, the concept of “the other nations,” which segregates and separates different kinds of people, will be eradicated from the world. Everyone in the world will be united under one common banner of serving the Master of the Universe.¹⁰

Accordingly, each one of us needs to desire and await the coming of Moshiach so that all beings will recognize the Creator.

Approach #3 – Inspire the Generation

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto writes that prior to the end of the days of Moshiach, before the next stage of history, the Jewish people need to become perfected. Moshiach's arrival will inspire the chosen nation to spiritual greatness and will destroy sin and the evil inclination. When people are confronted with the physical truth of a Melech Hamoshiach, they will be spiritually overwhelmed and uplifted to refocus on their spiritual growth and less on their physical and mundane needs.¹¹

Based on the above approaches, Rav Tauber explains that when an

individual doesn't eagerly await the coming of Moshiach and merely knows he is coming, it is a sign that the individual is spiritually stunted. That person is disconnected from the ultimate goal that the Creator has for our world, our people and for us as individuals. His goal is to create a world which will crown Him King, fulfill His commandments, and eradicate evil in order to give everyone their just reward in the World to Come. This sentiment is known widely as the pervasive attitude of the Chofetz Chaim, as illustrated in the following beautiful story:

Rav Simcha Bunim Alter, the Gerrer Rebbe, writes¹² that his father Rav Avraham Mordechai Alter, known as the Imre Emes, met with the Chofetz Chaim at the first Kenessiah Gedolah in Vienna in 1923. The Chofetz Chaim said to the Imrei Emes, “We say (in *Kedusha* of Shabbos Shacharis) to Hashem that ‘we are awaiting you,’ but is this really so? Are we really waiting? We have to feel as if we are lacking and desiring this!” The Chofetz Chaim then raised his hands and asked again, “Are we really waiting?” He told the following parable: “We need to await his arrival like a father and mother who are yearning for the arrival of their only son whom they haven't seen in a long time. They know that at any minute he might arrive, so every carriage and train that passes by, they think might be his. However, even when they realize that their son was not in the carriage or on the train, they still wait for him.”

So far we have seen the levels that our gedolim and Chazal who are so spiritually engaged have reached in terms of their connection to the Moshiach. The question is, how can an average person begin to reach such a level and how should one direct their

mind to begin to intellectually and spiritually connect with Moshiach?

Approach #1 – Living for Hashem

Let us turn our attention to the Gemara in *Bava Metzia* 85b, where we learn two amazing stories about Rabbi Chiya that on the surface seem to be unrelated.

The Gemara states:

כי הוו מינצו ר' חנינא ור' חייא אמר ליה רבי חייא לרבי חנינא: בהדי דידי קא מינצית דעבדי לתורה דלא תשתכח מישראל מאי עבידנא, אזלינא ושדינא כיתנא, וגדילנא נישבי, וציידנא טבי ומאכילנא בשרייהו ליתמי, ואריכנא מגילתא וכתבנא חמשה חומשי, וסליקנא למתא ומקרינא חמשה ינוקי בחמשה חומשי, ומתנינא שיתא ינוקי שיתא סדרי, ואמרנא להו: עד דהדרנא ואתינא - אקרו אהדדי ואתנו אהדדי, ועבדי לה לתורה דלא תשתכח מישראל.
בבא מציעא פה:

When R. Chanina and R. Chiya argued in Torah, R. Chanina said: how do you argue with me? If Torah would be forgotten from Yisrael, I could restore it through my analytical skills! Rabbi Chiya: How do you argue with me? I ensured that Torah will never be forgotten from Yisrael! Rabbi Chiya planted flax, and wove traps from the flax. He caught deer, fed orphans the meat and made parchments from the skin. He wrote five Chumashim and went to a city without teachers for children. He taught one Chumash to each of five children, and one order of the Mishnah to each of six other children. He told them to teach each other what each had learned. Because everything was done for the sake of Torah, this ensured that it would never be forgotten.

Bava Metzia 85b (translation from dafyomi.co.il)

אליהו הוה שכיח במתיבתא דרבי יומא חד ריש ירחא הוה נגה ליה ולא אתא א"ל מאי טעמא נגה ליה למר אמר ליה אדאוקימנא לאברהם ומשינא ידיה ומצלי ומגנינא ליה וכן ליצחק וכן ליעקב ולוקמינהו בהדי הדדי סברי תקפי ברחמי ומייתי ליה למשיח בלא זמניה א"ל ויש דוגמתן בעולם הזה אמר ליה איכא ר' חייא ובניו גזר רבי תעניתא אחתינהו לר' חייא ובניו אמר משיב הרוח ונשבה זיקא אמר מוריד הגשם ואתא מיטרא כי מטא למימר מחיה המתים רגש עלמא אמרי ברקיעא מאן גלי רזיא בעלמא אמרי אליהו אתיוהו לאליהו מחיוהו שתין פולסי דנורא אתא אידמי להו כדובא דנורא על ביניהו וטרדיניהו
בבא מציעא פה:

Eliyahu was regularly in Rabbi's academy. One Rosh Chodesh he was late. He explained that he first had to wake Avraham, wash his hands, and lie him down again after he prayed. He then did the same for Yitzchak, and then the same for Yaakov. Rabbi: Why don't you wake them at the same time? Eliyahu: If they would pray at the same time, this would bring Moshiach prematurely. Rabbi: Is there anyone living today with such a power of prayer? Eliyahu: Yes, Rabbi Chiya and his sons. Rabbi decreed a fast. He asked Rabbi Chiya and his sons to lead the prayer. When they said 'Mashiv ha'Ru'ach,' wind blew. When they said 'Morid ha'Geshem,' rain fell. When they were about to conclude the Berachah 'Mechayeh ha'Mesim,' the world shook. In Heaven, Eliyahu was lashed with fire for having revealed their power of prayer. Eliyahu appeared to them like a bear of fire to distract them. Bava Metzia 85b (translation from dafyomi.co.il)

The Maharsha asks, why is it that Rabbi Chiya has the power to create such powerful prayers, that he can bring the Moshiach prematurely like our forefathers? The Maharsha explains that the key is in the first passage in the Gemara about Rabbi

Chiya producing a sefer Torah for children to be taught with. Each and every step of the production of those Torahs and the teaching of it were completely free and unburdened from any intention except the intention to teach Torah. After he caught the deer, he didn't say, "Maybe I can use some parts of the deer and sell them." Every part and detail was completely focused on the mitzvah *lishma*, for its own sake. That is why Rabbi Chiya's prayers were so powerful, his prayers were also not for himself but rather to bring about the greatest amount of honor for Hashem in this world.¹³

This is one way that we can begin to connect with longing for Moshaich. We need to develop our prayers and longing for Moshiach such that it is not for our own benefit, and what we will gain from Hashem or Moshiach, rather what it will do to accomplish the goals that we mentioned earlier, to bring the greatest glory to the Creator.¹⁴

Rebbe Nochum of Chernobyl once came to an inn in a village. At *chatzos* (midnight) he got up and said *Tikun Chatzos*. He sat on the ground and wept and cried over the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. He was so loud the owner of the inn got up as well. The owner asked him what he was doing, and he told him that he was davening to Hashem that the Melech Hamoshiach should come quickly. When the Jew just sat staring at him with a blank look, the Rebbe said to him, "Don't you want Moshiach to come and for us all to go to Yerushalayim? He answered him, "I don't know I have to ask my wife." He came back and said, "My wife said we can't abandon our ducks, so we are not interested." The Rebbe answered back, "What about when the Cossacks steal

Rebbe Nochum of Chernobyl 1730-1787

Rabbi Menachem Nochum Twerski of Chernobyl was the founder of the Chernobyl Hasidic dynasty. Orphaned as a child, he was raised by his uncle Rabbi Nochum, who sent him to be educated in one of the highly acclaimed yeshivot in Lithuania. After his marriage he earned his livelihood as a teacher of young boys, while continuing his intensive studies of Torah. With the advent of Chassidism, Rabbi Nochum became a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism. After the Baal Shem Tov's passing, R' Nochum accepted the Maggid of Mezritch as his mentor. His book *Me'or Einayim* (Light of the Eyes) was published after his death, and contains a collection of his homilies concerning the weekly Torah portions and selections of the Talmud. The book gained widespread acceptance as one of the major works of Hasidic thought.

your ducks and all your possessions?" He went back and asked his wife, she said, "Ok, daven for Moshiach that he should come and take the Cossacks to Yerushalayim."¹⁵

Approach #2 – Mourning Ourselves

The Gemara, *Sotah* 49a, writes, "From the day the Beis Hamkidash was destroyed... every day, curses (*klalah*) increase more than the previous day." The Ramban in *Devarim*¹⁶ explains that these are the curses found in

the "*Tochacha*," the rebuke found in *Parashas Ki Savo*. Rav Moshe Shapiro explains that the Ramban means to say that these curses affect every aspect of our physical day and are pervasive in our life. It will only end when Moshaich comes and ends the current exile. Rav Shapiro writes: "[In exile] our lives are antithetical to what they should be in every aspect. Man is not a man, friendship is not friendship, truth is not truth, and pleasure is not pleasure. Nothing is the way it should be."

Without a Beis Hamikdash and G-d's presence being seen and felt on a daily basis, we have largely lost touch with man's purpose and role in this world. When we mourn on Tisha B'av, we mourn not only that we are in exile, we mourn for ourselves that we are not who we should be. Rav Shapiro notes a comment from Rav Chaim Vital in the introduction to his work *Shaarei Kedusha*, that in his day, he was witnessing individuals that were not successfully attaining "*ruach hakodesh*." Therefore he wrote his work to help achieve that goal. If today someone wrote that in a sefer, we would think they were joking, but really we should be crying that we have a hard time relating to that kind of holiness. This gives us a glimpse of what we continue to lose as long as we do not have Moshiach to end our bitter exile. In order to really want Moshiach to come, we have to want to end this reality in order to go back to an earlier time in which we can experience Hakadosh Boruch Hu, see his open miracles and reach our potential as individuals as a nation and as a world.¹⁷

It is said about Rav Shlomo Freifeld zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Sh'or Yoshuv, that his office was adorned

with pictures of gedolim. Once, a student in the yeshiva who was new to Judaism came into his office to speak with him. He innocently asked Rav Freifeld who all the people on the wall were. Rav Freifeld sharply answered him, "They are part of a long lost tribe of beings that are very rare today, they are called people." What Rav Freifeld meant to say was that those who truly connect to the Creator, the source of all life, have a greater sense of life's purpose and their own potential.

It should be His will that we should continue to work on ourselves and Hakadosh Boruch Hu will send the Melech Hamoshiach and we too will all become "people" like those on Rav Freifeld's wall.

1. Zakai, *Likras HaGeulah* p. 88.

2. 2:4.

3. 1:51.

4 *Hilchos Melachim* 11:1.

5 *Nepachim* letter *beis*.

6 4:12.

7 3:8.

8 *Pirkei Machshavah*, 13 Principles p. 362.

9. *Toras Chaim Parshas Vayechi*.

10. *Rav Schwab on Prayer*, pg. 165.

11. *Sefer Maamar Haikarim* s.v. *B'geulah*.

12. *Meir Einei Yisrael*, Section Three p. 680.

13. In his commentary to the Gemara there.

14. See *Nefesh Hachaim* 2:11. See also *Sefer Matnas Chaim* by Rav Matisyahu Solomon Shli"ta p. 5, who uses the concept of davening for the sake of the Creator to answer the question of why on Rosh Hashana we don't ask for any specific items even though that is the day we are being judged for physical items.

15. Cited in *Likras Hageulah* p.101.

16. 28:42 and S'forno there.

17. *Ra'ih Emunah* p. 312.

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Anshei Chesed Congregation <i>Boynton Beach, FL</i>	Beth Hamidrash Congregation <i>Vancouver, BC</i>	Congregation Adas Israel <i>Passaic, NJ</i>	Congregation B'nai Torah <i>Springfield, MA</i>
Avenue N Sephardic Congregation <i>Brooklyn, NY</i>	Beth Israel Synagogue <i>Omaha, NE</i>	Congregation Adat Yeshurun <i>La Jolla, CA</i>	Congregation Brothers of Israel <i>Long Branch, NJ</i>
Ayin L'Tzion <i>Thornhill, ON</i>	Beth Israel Synagogue <i>Edmonton, AB</i>	Congregation Adath Israel <i>Elizabeth, NJ</i>	Congregation Dor Tikvah <i>Charleston, SC</i>
BACH Jewish Center <i>Long Beach, NY</i>	Beth Jacob Congregation Of Kitchener-Waterloo <i>Kitchener, ON</i>	Congregation Adereth El <i>New York, NY</i>	Congregation Eitz Chaim <i>Flushing, NY</i>
Bais Abraham <i>St Louis, MO</i>	Beth Jacob Congregation <i>Atlanta, GA</i>	Congregation Agudath Achim <i>Bradley Beach, NJ</i>	Congregation Emek Beracha <i>Palo Alto, CA</i>
Bais Hamedrash Oneg Shabbos <i>Montréal, QC</i>	Beth Jacob Congregation <i>Irvine, CA</i>	Congregation Ahavas Achim <i>Highland Park, NJ</i>	Congregation Ezras Israel <i>Chicago, IL</i>
Baron Hirsch Synagogue <i>Memphis, TN</i>	Beth Jacob Congregation <i>Oakland, CA</i>	Congregation Ahavat Achim <i>Portland, OR</i>	Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe <i>Brighton, MA</i>
Beis Medrash of Harborview <i>Lawrence, NY</i>	Beth Jacob Congregation <i>Beverly Hills, CA</i>	Congregation Ahavat Shalom <i>Teaneck, NJ</i>	Congregation KBY <i>Suffern, NY</i>
Beis Midrash of Bergenfield <i>Bergenfield, NJ</i>	Beth Joseph Congregation <i>Phoenix, AZ</i>	Congregation Ahavath Torah <i>Englewood, NJ</i>	Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun <i>New York, NY</i>
Beis Midrash of Woodmere <i>Woodmere, NY</i>	Beth Ora <i>St. Laurent, QC</i>	Congregation Aitz Chaim <i>West Palm Beach, FL</i>	Congregation Keter Torah <i>Teaneck, NJ</i>
Beis Yosef D'ulem <i>Flushing, NY</i>	Beth Shalom <i>Rochester, NY</i>	Congregation Anshe Sfard Kehillat Torah <i>Glendale, WI</i>	Congregation Kol Israel Brooklyn, NY
Beit Chaverim Synagogue <i>Westport, CT</i>	Beth Tikva <i>Dollard Des Ormeaux, QC</i>	Congregation Anshei Chesed <i>Woodmere, NY</i>	Congregation Machzikei Hadas <i>Ottawa, ON</i>
Beit David Highland Lakes Synagogue <i>Aventura, FL</i>	Beth Zion Congregation <i>Cote-St-Luc, QC</i>	Congregation Bais Efraim Yitzchok <i>Woodmere, NY</i>	Congregation Magen David of West Deal <i>Ocean, NJ</i>
Beit Kneset Emek Refaim <i>Jerusalem, Israel</i>	Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath <i>Seattle, WA</i>	Congregation Bais Torah <i>Suffern, NY</i>	Congregation Mogen David <i>Los Angeles, CA</i>
Beit Kneset Mercazi <i>Yad Binyamin, Israel</i>	Blake Street Hebrew Congregation <i>Melbourne, Australia</i>	Congregation Beit Tikvah <i>Nepean, ON</i>	Congregation Ohab Zedek <i>New York, NY</i>
			Congregation Ohav Emeth <i>Highland Park, NJ</i>

Congregation Ohav Sholom <i>Merrick, NY</i>	EDOS <i>Denver, CO</i>	Kehillat Ohel Ephraim <i>Ariel, Israel</i>	North Shore University Hospital <i>Manhasset, NY</i>
Congregation Ohr Saadya <i>Teaneck, NJ</i>	Eitz Chayim of Dogwood Park <i>West Hempstead, NY</i>	Kehillat Shaareei Torah Of Toronto <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Nusach Hari Bnai Zion <i>St Louis, MO</i>
Congregation Ohr Torah <i>West Orange, NJ</i>	Elmora Hills Minyan <i>Union, NJ</i>	Kehillat Shaarei Yonah Menachem <i>Modiin , Israel</i>	NY Hospital - Queens <i>Flushing, NY</i>
Congregation Rinat Yisrael <i>Teaneck, NJ</i>	Eretz Chemda <i>Katamon, Israel</i>	Kemp Mill Synagogue <i>Silver Spring, MD</i>	Ohab Zedek <i>Belle Harbor, NY</i>
Congregation Rodfei Sholom <i>San Antonio, TX</i>	Etz Chaim <i>Beit Shemesh, Israel</i>	Kenesseth Israel Congregation <i>St Louis Park, MN</i>	Oheb Zedek Cedar Sinai Synagogue <i>Lyndhurst, OH</i>
Congregation Schomre Israel <i>Poughkeepsie, NY</i>	Ezra Bessaroeth <i>Seattle , WA</i>	Kesher Israel Congregation <i>Harrisburg, PA</i>	Ohev Sholom Congregation <i>Williamsport, PA</i>
Congregation Shaar Hashomayim <i>Westmount, QC</i>	Fifth Avenue Synagogue <i>New York, NY</i>	Kesher Israel <i>Washington, DC</i>	Ohr Shalom <i>Bet Shemesh , Israel</i>
Congregation Shaare Tefilla <i>Dallas, TX</i>	Fleetwood Synagogue <i>Mount Vernon, NY</i>	Kew Gardens Synagogue <i>Kew Gardens, NY</i>	Or Chaim <i>Toronto, ON</i>
Congregation Shaare Tzedek <i>Englewood, NJ</i>	Forest Hill Jewish Centre <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Kingsway Jewish Center <i>Brooklyn, NY</i>	Orthodox Union <i>New York, NY</i>
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah <i>Newton Centre, MA</i>	Golf Manor Synagogue <i>Cincinnati, OH</i>	Knesset Beth Israel <i>Richmond, VA</i>	Petah Tikva <i>Toronto, ON</i>
Congregation Sha'arei Torah <i>Cincinnati, OH</i>	Great Neck Synagogue <i>Great Neck, NY</i>	Knesseth Israel Congregation <i>Birmingham, AL</i>	Queens Jewish Center <i>Forest Hills, NY</i>
Congregation Sherith Israel <i>Nashville, TN</i>	Green Road Synagogue <i>Beachwood, OH</i>	Kohelet Yeshiva High School <i>Bala Cynwyd, PA</i>	Rambam Mesivta <i>Lawrence, NY</i>
Congregation Shevet Achim <i>Mercer Island, WA</i>	HAFTR <i>Lawrence, NY</i>	Koschitzky Minyan <i>North York, ON</i>	Riverdale Jewish Center <i>Riverdale, NY</i>
Congregation Shomrei Emunah <i>Baltimore, MD</i>	Hebrew Institute of Riverdale - The Bayit <i>Bronx, NY</i>	KSY <i>Beit Shemesh, Israel</i>	SAR High School <i>Riverdale, NY</i>
Congregation Shomrei Shabbos <i>Far Rockaway, NY</i>	Hebrew Institute of White Plains <i>White Plains, NY</i>	Lechu Neranana <i>Ra'anana, Israel</i>	SCY High <i>San Diego, CA</i>
Congregation Shomrim Laboker <i>Montréal, QC</i>	Heichal Shiloh <i>Rosh Ha'Ayin, Israel</i>	Lido Beach Synagogue <i>Lido Beach, NY</i>	Sephardic Bikur Holim <i>Seattle, WA</i>
Congregation Sons of Israel <i>Allentown, PA</i>	Heichal Shlomo <i>Jerusalem , Israel</i>	Lincoln Square Synagogue <i>New York, NY</i>	Sephardic Institute Synagogue <i>Brooklyn, NY</i>
Congregation Sons of Israel <i>Cherry Hill , NJ</i>	Herzlia - Adas Yeshurun <i>Winnipeg, MB</i>	Lower Merion Synagogue <i>Bala Cynwyd, PA</i>	Sephardic Kehila Centre Synagogue <i>Thornhill, ON</i>
Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem <i>Cote St. Luc, QC</i>	Hildesheimer Shul <i>Jerusalem , Israel</i>	Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School <i>Teaneck, NJ</i>	Shaare Zedek Congregation <i>Winnipeg, MB</i>
Congregation Torah Ohr <i>Boca Raton, FL</i>	Hillel at Brandeis <i>Waltham, MA</i>	Magen David Sephardic <i>Wykagyl, NY</i>	Shaarei Shomayim Congregation <i>Toronto, ON</i>
Congregation Torat Emet <i>Phoenix, AZ</i>	Hoshen Modiin <i>Modiin , Israel</i>	Margolin Hebrew Academy <i>Memphis, TN</i>	Shaarei Tefilla <i>Las Vegas, NV</i>
Congregation Zichron Yisroel <i>Thornhill, ON</i>	The Jewish Educational Center <i>Elizabeth, NJ</i>	Marlee Shul <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Shaarei Tefillah Congregation <i>Toronto, ON</i>
Congregation Israel of Springfield <i>Springfield, NJ</i>	JLI - The Johns Hopkins University <i>Baltimore, MD</i>	Menorat Hamaor <i>Ramat Beit Shemesh, Israel</i>	Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse <i>Dewitt, NY</i>
Darchei Noam Congregation <i>St Louis Park, MN</i>	JLIC at Queens College Hillel <i>Queens, NY</i>	Merkaz Modiin <i>Modiin , Israel</i>	Shaarey Yerushalayim <i>Valley Village, CA</i>
Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn <i>Midland Park, NJ</i>	Joint Distibution Committee <i>Jerusalem, Israel</i>	Mizrachi Bayit <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Shaarey Zedek <i>Valley Village, CA</i>
DAT Minyan <i>Denver, CO</i>	Kehilat Zichron Yosef <i>Jerusalem, Israel</i>	MJE <i>New York, NY</i>	Shalhevet High School <i>Los Angeles, CA</i>
Daughters of Israel <i>West Orange, NJ</i>	Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi <i>Cedarhurst, NY</i>	Moriah Shul <i>Ra'anana, Israel</i>	Shivtei Yisrael <i>Ra'anana, Israel</i>
Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob <i>Savannah, GA</i>	Kehillat Ahavat Tzion <i>Ramat Beit Shemesh, Israel</i>	Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah <i>Baltimore, MD</i>	Shomrai Shabbos <i>Toronto, ON</i>
DRS High School for Boys <i>Woodmere, NY</i>	Kehillat New Hemsptead <i>Spring Valley, NY</i>	Ner Tamid Congregation <i>Baltimore, MD</i>	Simon Wiesenthal Center <i>Los Angeles, CA</i>
		New Toco Shul <i>Atlanta, GA</i>	

SKA High School for Girls <i>Hewlett Bay Park, NY</i>	Yagdil Torah <i>Boca Raton, FL</i>	Young Israel of New Hyde Park <i>New Hyde Park, NY</i>
South Fallsburg Hebrew Association <i>South Fallsburg, NY</i>	Yavneh Academy <i>Paramus, NJ</i>	Young Israel of New Rochelle <i>New Rochelle, NY</i>
Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue Of Montreal <i>Montréal, QC</i>	JLIC at Yale University Hillel <i>New Haven, CT</i>	Young Israel of North Woodmere <i>North Woodmere, NY</i>
Suburban Orthodox Synagogue Toras Chaim <i>Baltimore, MD</i>	Young Israel Of Baychester Traditional Synagogue <i>Bronx, NY</i>	Young Israel of Northridge <i>Northridge, CA</i>
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center <i>Livingston, NJ</i>	Young Israel of Brookline <i>Brookline, MA</i>	Young Israel of Oak Park <i>Oak Park, MI</i>
The Beachwood Kehillah <i>Beachwood, OH</i>	Young Israel of Canarsie <i>Brooklyn, NY</i>	Young Israel of Oceanside <i>Oceanside, NY</i>
The Frisch School <i>Paramus, NJ</i>	Young Israel of Century City <i>Los Angeles, CA</i>	Young Israel Of Orange County <i>Irvine, CA</i>
The Jewish Center <i>New York, NY</i>	Young Israel Of Chomedy <i>Chomedy, QC</i>	Young Israel Of Ottawa <i>Ottawa, ON</i>
The Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach <i>Atlantic Beach, NY</i>	Young Israel of Deerfield Beach <i>Deerfield Beach, FL</i>	Young Israel Of Passaic-Clifton <i>Passaic, NJ</i>
The Jewish Learning Initiative On Campus <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Young Israel of Flatbush <i>Brooklyn, NY</i>	Young Israel of Plainview <i>Plainview, NY</i>
The Roslyn Synagogue <i>Roslyn Heights, NY</i>	Young Israel of Forest Hills <i>Forest Hills, NY</i>	Young Israel of Queens Valley <i>Flushing, NY</i>
The Village Shul <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Young Israel of Fort Lee <i>Fort Lee, NJ</i>	Young Israel of Riverdale <i>Bronx, NY</i>
Thornhill Community Shul <i>Thornhill, ON</i>	Young Israel of Hewlett <i>Hewlett, NY</i>	Young Israel of Scarsdale <i>Scarsdale, NY</i>
Tiferet Israel <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Young Israel of Hillcrest <i>Flushing, NY</i>	Young Israel of Sharon <i>Sharon , MA</i>
Torat Emet <i>Columbus, OH</i>	Young Israel of Holliswood <i>Jamaica, NY</i>	Young Israel of Southfield <i>Southfield, MI</i>
Touro Synagogue <i>Newport, RI</i>	Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale <i>Fort Lauderdale, FL</i>	Young Israel of St. Louis <i>St Louis, MO</i>
Ulpanat Orot <i>Downsview, ON</i>	Young Israel of Houston <i>Houston, TX</i>	Young Israel of Staten Island <i>Staten Island, NY</i>
United Orthodox Synagogues <i>Houston, TX</i>	Young Israel of Jamaica Estates <i>Jamaica, NY</i>	Young Israel of Toco Hills <i>Atlanta, GA</i>
University of Massachusetts JLIC Hillel <i>Amherst, MA</i>	Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst <i>Cedarhurst, NY</i>	Young Israel of West Hartford <i>West Hartford, CT</i>
University of Pennsylvania Hillel <i>Philadelphia, PA</i>	Young Israel of Long Beach <i>Long Beach, NY</i>	Young Israel of West Hempstead <i>West Hempstead, NY</i>
Viewmount <i>Toronto, ON</i>	Young Israel of Memphis <i>Memphis, TN</i>	Young Israel Ohab Zedek of North Riverdale <i>Yonkers, NY</i>
West Coast Torah Center <i>Los Angeles, CA</i>	Young Israel Of Montreal <i>Montréal, QC</i>	Young Israel Shomrei Emunah <i>Silver Spring, MD</i>
Westville Synagogue <i>New Haven, CT</i>	Young Israel of Neve Aliza <i>Karnei Shomron, Israel</i>	YU High School for Girls <i>Hollis, NY</i>

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AND CONGREGATION KETER TORAH PRESENT

Mourning for Jerusalem in 2015

כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה בשמחתה

Tisha B'Av Live Webcast - Sunday, July 26, 2015

www.YUTorah.org/TishaBav



with Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter

*Senior Scholar, Center for the Jewish Future and
University Professor of Jewish History and
Jewish Thought, Yeshiva University*

8:30am **Shacharit**

9:15am **Opening shiur**

11:00am **Kinot recital and discussion**

5:00pm **Mincha**



**Congregation
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