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Rabbi Yissocher Frand
Parshas Behaaloscha

The Greater the Gavra, the Greater the Gratitude

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly portion: #1340 – Bringing a Sefer Torah to the House of an Avail or Temporary Minyan. Good Shabbos

The pasuk in Parshas BeHa'alosecha says, "And the people were k'mis'onenim (as murmurers), speaking evil in the ears of Hashem; and when Hashem heard it, His anger was kindled; and the fire of Hashem burnt among them and devoured in the

uttermost part of the camp." (Bamidbar 11:1). The Ribono shel Olam became very angry. Moshe Rabbeinu had to pray to Him, and the fire was extinguished. What exactly is the meaning of the word "mis'onenim"? The Ramban quotes the Ibn Ezra that it comes from the word aven (sin), meaning that the people said "sinful things." The Ramban disagrees with the Ibn Ezra because the Torah did not mention any "sinful things" that the people spoke, and the Torah is usually not shy about mentioning what aveira is being punished when there is a Divine punishment.

The Ramban suggests that when the people distanced themselves from Har Sinai and moved deeper into the vast and awesome desert, they panicked and did not know what to do. "How are we going to survive in this desert? What are we going to eat and drink? How will we manage through all the deprivation and suffering that exists in this barren stretch of land? How are we ever going to get out of this place?"

According to the Ramban, the etymology of the word "mis'onenim" is the same as the expression "Mah yis'onen adam chai" (Of what shall a living man complain) (Eicha 3:39), which connotes pain and complaint about a person's situation. A mis'onen is a person who is feeling sorry for himself. "Woe is me that I have such tzores."

The Ramban explains that the Torah is thus teaching us what they did wrong: They acted like the worst thing had just happened to them. The Torah uses a simile here "like mis'onenim." They were not people in desperate straits, but they acted LIKE such people! This upset the Ribono shel Olam, who felt that they should be following Him in joy and rejoicing by virtue of all the positive things they had experienced: Yetzias Mitzrayim (The Exodus from Egypt), Krias Yam Yuf (the splitting of the Red Sea), Kabbalas HaTorah (receiving the Torah), as well as being provided with the mann and the be'er (well)! How dare they complain after all that?

Hashem said that someone who has it so good and nonetheless complains as if he has it so bad is guilty of a terrible aveira. That aveira is the inability to be 'makir tova' (recognize favors), failing to appreciate the positive. The Ribono shel Olam cannot tolerate ingratitude and therefore punishment immediately followed.

The Brisker Rav, zt"l, once said that if a person has a bad character trait (such as being haughty, or having a bad temper), we judge him as an imperfect human being (not an 'adam shalem'), a person who has a fault – perhaps even a bad fault. However, if a person is not makir tova, the Brisker Rav said that he is not merely not an 'adam shalem,' but rather, he is not an adam at all. He lacks the most basic component of humanity! We all have our challenges with certain ideal character traits. We need to work on them. But someone who is an ingrate is not a mensch at all!

The truth of the matter is that the Ramban alludes to this in Parshas Ha'Azinu. The pasuk there says, "Is it to Hashem that

you do this, O' vile and unwise people?" (Devorim 32:6) The Ramban writes that Moshe Rabbeinu is chastising the people: "This is how you treat the Ribono shel Olam after all that he did for you?" What does Moshe Rabbeinu call them? Am naval. The Ramban notes that when an animal dies, it is called a neveilah, indicating it is no longer an animal, but rather it is a dead carcass. So too, a person who is not makir tova is a naval, because he ceases to be a human being. He is no longer a mensch.

That is the meaning of "Vayehi ha'am k'mis'onenim".

In truth, this is not the only example of ingratitude in Parshas BeHa'aloscha. There is a second incident as well:

"And the mixed multitude that was among them felt a longing; and the children of Israel also wept on their part, and said: 'Would that we were given flesh to eat! We remember the fish, which we used to eat in Mitzrayim for free; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all; we have only this mann to look to.'" (Bamidbar 11:4-6) The next pasuk, after those three pesukim is "Now the mann was like coriander seed and the appearance thereof was like the (white and sparkling) appearance of bdellium" (Bamidbar 11:7). The Jews are complaining about their lack of onions and garlic and then suddenly, the Torah makes an editorial comment. What is that all about? Rashi clarifies: In the first three pesukim, Bnei Yisrael were talking. Pasuk 7 is Hashem talking! They are complaining that all they have is mann and then Hashem inserts into the Torah the divine character of the mann, as if to say, "Let the world come and see about what My Children are complaining. The mann is so so special!" If you can complain about mann, you can complain about anything!

I once heard a schmooze from Rav Pam, zt"l (subsequently printed in his sefer), in which he says that he often hears such a bas kol (heavenly Voice) proclaiming "Look at what my children are complaining about!" When a young man comes and complains to him that he comes home from yeshiva or from work and finds the house strewn with toys all over the place, he complains to his wife, "Why can't you keep a neat house?" Rav Pam says that when he hears such complaints, he hears the bas kol: "Look at what my children are complaining about?" How many infertile couples are there who would give their right arms to have a house full of strewn toys lying around! And these fellows are complaining that the house isn't neat!

He goes through several examples in his sefer: A child comes home from school at 5:30. Supper is ready on the table. The mother prepares meatloaf and a plate of vegetables, the child comes home to a set table and a hot meal and he complains. "I hate meatloaf!" Look at what my children complain about! The following very instructive Medrash is not located in Parshas BeHa'aloscha, but I feel it is appropriate to share at this time. The Medrash is in Sefer Shemos (Parsha 4): When Hashem told Moshe that it was time to take the Jews out of

Mitzraim, Moshe responded, "Master of the Universe, I am not able to take on this job. I need to ask permission from my father-in-law, Yisro. If he will not give me permission, I guess You will need to get another man."

The baalei mussar make two very interesting comments on this Medrash: It is our assumption that it is only necessary to show hakaras hatov to someone who is doing something positive for you out of the goodness of his heart. But if a person is doing something because it is his job or it is for his or her own personal reasons, then he or she does not deserve my hakaras hatov. They are just doing what they need to do or what they really want to do anyhow! The baalei mussar infer just the opposite from this Medrash:

Consider: Who owed whom? Moshe did not owe Yisro. Yisro owed Moshe. First of all, Moshe saved Yisro's daughters (Shemos 2:17). But moreover, Yisro could not get a shidduch for his daughters for all the money in the world because he was a pariah. He was ostracized by his community. He had been an idolatrous priest and suddenly, he adopted Judaism! Who wants to marry into his family? Moshe Rabbeinu did Yisro a great favor by marrying his daughter. Nonetheless, Moshe Rabbeinu did not say, "He owes me. I do not owe him." The lesson is that it does not make a difference. If someone has benefited from someone else, he must show gratitude no matter why the other fellow did what he did.

I saw the following incredible story in a sefer:

A Jewish fellow in New York was going to work by subway. He was standing by the side of the tracks and suddenly, he fell onto the tracks and could not get up. Everyone was paralyzed after having witnessed what just happened. An African-American man standing on the platform with everyone else jumped onto the tracks, pulled the fellow up, and saved him, shortly before the next train came riding right over the tracks where this fellow had fallen. The news crews of the New York papers tracked down this fellow and told him, "You are a hero!" He responded "I am not a hero. I did not do this to be a hero. I have a job. I am a dishwasher in a restaurant earning ten dollars an hour. I knew what would happen if this fellow had been run-over. The train would have been delayed for two hours. I would lose twenty dollars off my salary. I did not jump down onto to the tracks to save him. I jumped down there to pull him off the tracks so that the train would not be delayed and I could get to my job on time."

This is not the end of the story. This Jew who had fallen onto the tracks made a neder (vow) while lying on the tracks: "If someone will save me, I will give him \$100,000." He now read the newspaper account where he learned that his savior did not do what he did to save him, but in order to not lose the \$20 from his job! He sent the shaylah to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein: Does he need to give the \$100,000 or not?

Rav Zilberstein paskened that he needed to give 1/3 of that amount. (I am not certain about the logic Rav Zilberstein used to come up with this specific figure.) Rav Zilberstein,

however, then took the shaylah to his brother-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky to see if he agreed with his psak. Rav Chaim told him: The fellow needs to give the entire \$100,000! Rav Chaim ruled that it does not matter why the fellow did what he did. He could have done it to become a hero or he could have done it to save \$20. The reason he did it is not relevant. He saved this Jew's life. The Jew said that if someone will save his life, he will give him \$100,000. The Jew has to keep his neder.

Hakaras hatov does not depend on why the person does it. Hakaras hatov is an obligation regardless of the motive. A person must be a mensch. As the Brisker Rav said, a person who does not appreciate, iz nit kin mensch (is not a person). Over the years, I have read dozens, scores, and perhaps hundreds of stories about how great people were makir tova over things that we might take totally for granted, perhaps not even considering them favors at all. And yet, great people consider these things favors and remember them forever. The understanding of this is simple: Someone who is not a makir tova is not a mensch, and the bigger the mensch, the bigger makir tova a person is. The two go hand in hand. People who are literally gedolim, know what it is to be a makir tova. I once mentioned the story of a bochur in Yeshiva Torah Voda'as who was not coming to minyan. No matter what they tried to do, they could not get him out of bed. The dormitory supervisor came to Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, who was the Rosh Yeshiva at the time, and requested to throw this fellow out of the dormitory for not coming to minyan. Rav Yaakov said, "Yes. If his not coming to minyan affects other people, you can throw him out of the dormitory." But first, Rav Yaakov said, send him in to see me. I want to speak with him. The head of the dorm told the fellow, "You are being kicked out of the dormitory and Rav Yaakov wants to see you." The fellow was literally shaking in his boots. Rav Yaakov said to him, "I understand that you need to leave the dormitory because you do not come to minyan, but tell me, where are you going to sleep from now on?" The boy said, "I don't know. I have no back-up plan." Rav Yaakov said, "You will come to my house. You will sleep by me." (This is what we call an 'upgrade'.)

The boy was astonished: "The Rosh Yeshiva said that I am being thrown out of the dormitory and now he is telling me that I am going from the dormitory to the Rosh Yeshiva's house?"

Rav Yaakov explained, "Yes. It is because I learned in the Kovno Kollel when I was a young man in Lithuania. Your grandfather used to give money to the Kovno Kollel. Therefore, I feel I owe you a debt of gratitude and so therefore, if you don't have a place to sleep, you can sleep by me." This grandfather was not the sole supporter of the Kovno Kollel, but he was on their contributor's list.

This is just an example of the maxim: The bigger the mensch, the bigger the makir tova and the lesser the mensch, the lesser the makir tova.

from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust <info@rabbisacks.org>

subject: Covenant and Conversation
COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

Two Types of Leadership

BEHA'ALOTCHA

In this week's parsha, Moses has a breakdown. It is the lowest emotional ebb of his entire career as a leader. Listen to his words to God:

"Why have You treated Your servant so badly? Why have I found so little favour in Your sight that You lay all the burden of this people upon me? Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who gave birth to them all, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your lap, as a nursemaid carries a baby'? ...I cannot bear all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You treat me, kill me now, if I find any found favour in Your sight, and let me not see my own misery."

Num. 11:11-15

The cause of his distress seems utterly disproportionate to its effect. The people have done what they so often did before.

They have complained. They say:

"We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic! But now our throats are dry. There is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

Num. 11:5-6

Many times Moses has faced this kind of complaint from the people before. There are several such instances in the book of Exodus, including one almost exactly similar:

"If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate our fill of bread. Instead you have brought us out into this desert to starve the entire assembly to death."

Ex. 16:3

On these earlier occasions Moses did not give expression to the kind of despair he speaks of here. Usually, when leaders face repeated challenges, they grow stronger each time. They learn how to respond, how to cope. They develop resilience, a thick skin. They formulate survival strategies. Why then does Moses seem to do the opposite, not only here but often throughout the book of Numbers?

In the chapters that follow, Moses seems to lack the unshakeable determination he had in Exodus. At times, as in the episode of the spies, he seems surprisingly passive, leaving it to others to fight the battle. At others, he seems to lose control and becomes angry, something a leader should not do. Something has changed, but what? Why the breakdown, the burnout, the despair?

A fascinating insight is provided by the innovative work of Prof. Ronald Heifetz, co-founder and director of the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.[1]

Heifetz distinguishes between technical challenges and adaptive challenges. A technical challenge is one where you have a problem and someone else has the solution. You are ill, you go to the doctor, he diagnoses your condition and prescribes a pill. All you have to do is follow the instructions. Adaptive challenges are different. They arise when we are part of the problem. You are ill, you go to the doctor, and he tells you: I can give you a pill, but the truth is that you are going to have to change your lifestyle. You are overweight, out of condition, you sleep too little and are exposed to too much stress. Pills won't help you until you change the way you live. Adaptive leadership is called for when the world is changing, circumstances are no longer what they were, and what once worked works no more. There is no quick fix for such things, no miracle pill, no simple following of instructions. We have to change. What's more, the leader cannot do this for us. He must inspire, but we have to follow through.

The fundamental difference between the books of Exodus and Numbers is that in Exodus, Moses is called on to exercise technical leadership. The Israelites are enslaved? God sends signs and wonders, ten plagues, and the Israelites go free. They need to escape from Pharaoh's chariots? Moses lifts his staff and God divides the sea. They are hungry? God sends manna from heaven. Thirsty? God sends water from a rock. When they have a problem, the leader, Moses, together with God, provides the solution. The people do not have to exert themselves at all.

In the book of Numbers, however, the equation has changed. The Israelites have completed the first part of their journey. They have left Egypt, reached Sinai, and made a covenant with God. Now they are on their way to the Promised Land. Moses' role is now different. Instead of providing technical leadership, he has to provide adaptive leadership. He has to get the people to change, to exercise responsibility, to learn to do things for themselves while trusting in God, instead of relying on God to do things for them.

It is precisely because Moses understands this that he is so devastated when he sees that the people haven't changed at all. They are still complaining about the food, almost exactly as they did before the revelation at Mount Sinai, before their covenant with God, before they themselves had built the Sanctuary, their first creative endeavour together.

He has to teach them to adapt, but he senses – rightly as it transpires – that they are simply unable to change their pattern of response, the result of years of slavery. They are passive, and overly dependent. They have lost the capacity for self-motivated action. As we eventually discover, it will take a new generation, born in freedom, to develop the strengths needed for self-governance, which is the precondition of freedom.

Adaptive leadership is intensely difficult. People resist change. They erect barriers against it. One is denial. A second is anger. A third is blame. That is why adaptive leadership is emotionally draining in the extreme. Many of the great adaptive leaders – among them Lincoln, Gandhi, John F. and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr, Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin – were assassinated. Their greatness was posthumous. Only in retrospect were they seen by their own people as heroes. At the time, they were seen by many as a threat to the status quo, to all that is comfortingly familiar. Moses, with the insight of the greatest of the Prophets, intuitively sees all this. Hence his despair and his wish to die. It is far easier to be a technical leader than an adaptive one. It is easy to leave it to God, hard to realise that God is calling us to responsibility, to become His partners in the work of redemption.

Of course, the Torah does not leave it there. In Judaism, despair never has the last word. God comforts Moses, tells him to recruit seventy elders to share the burden of leadership with him, and gives him the strength to carry on. Adaptive leadership is, for Judaism, the highest form of leadership. That is what the Prophets did. Without relieving the people of their responsibility, they gave them a vision and a hope. They spoke difficult, challenging truths, and they did so with a passion that still has the power to inspire the better angels of our nature. But with devastating honesty – never more so than in its account of Moses' temporary breakdown – the Torah tells us that adaptive leadership is not easy, and that those who exercise it will face anger and criticism. They may come to feel that they have failed. But they have not. Moses remains the greatest leader the Jewish people has ever known, the man who almost single-handedly shaped the Israelites into a nation that never gave up or gave way to despair.

Nowhere is the difficulty of adaptive leadership more simply summarised than in God's words to Moses' successor, Joshua. Be strong and courageous, for you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. But you must be strong and very courageous indeed to faithfully uphold all the Torah that Moses My servant commanded you . . .

Joshua 1:6-7

The first sentence speaks about military leadership. Joshua was to lead the people in their conquest of the land. The second verse speaks about spiritual leadership. Joshua was to ensure that he and the people kept faith with the covenant they had made with God. The first, says the verse, demands courage, but the second demands exceptional courage. Change always does.

To fight an enemy is hard, to fight with yourself harder still. To help people find the strength to change: that is the highest leadership challenge of all.

[1] Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Harvard University Press; Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business Press; Ronald

Heifetz, Marty Linsky and Alexander Glashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Harvard Business Press.

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Rav Yehudah Hachassid and His Shidduchin II By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

In a previous article (now posted on the website RabbiKaganoff.com under the title *Rav Yehudah Hachassid and His Shidduchin*), we discussed the writings of Rav Yehudah Hachassid, who prohibited or advised against many potential marriages that are otherwise perfectly acceptable according to halachah. But first some background on the chassidei Ashkenaz.

Who was Rav Shmuel Hachassid?

Rav Yehudah Hachassid's father, known as Rav Shmuel Hachassid, was a very righteous individual who was a great mekubal, one of the baalei Tosafos, and a highly respected leader of twelfth-century Ashkenazic Jewry. Because of his great levels of righteousness, Rav Shmuel Hachassid was also sometimes called Rav Shmuel Hakadosh or Rav Shmuel Hanavi.

Rav Shmuel Hachassid was born in Speyer, one of the bastions of Torah that then existed on the banks of the Rhine River. (People whose family name is Shapiro and its various pronunciations and spellings are probably descended from someone who lived in Speyer; you might be progeny of either Rav Shmuel or Rav Yehudah Hachassid.) Rav Shmuel was the rabbinic leader of the community in Speyer and the head of a yeshivah. He was also the repository of much kabbalistic knowledge, both oral and written, that had been handed down from the generations of great Ashkenazic leaders before him, including many great baalei kabbalah. He became the recognized leader of a scholarly movement whose members were called the Chassidei Ashkenaz, individuals who lived their lives in an other-worldly existence, devoted exclusively to Torah and growth in yiras shamayim. The lengthy Shir Hayichud, recited in many congregations in its entirety after davening on Kol Nidrei evening, is attributed to Rav Shmuel Hachassid.

One of Rav Shmuel's sons was Rav Yehudah Hachassid, who was born in approximately 4910 (1150). Rav Yehudah Hachassid is also one of the baalei Tosafos, and is quoted several times in the Tosafos printed in the margins of our Gemara (for example, Tosafos, Bava Metzia 5b, s.v. Dechashid; Kesuvos 18b, s.v. Uvekulei). Rav Yehudah Hachassid's students included a number of famous rishonim who are themselves baalei Tosafos, such as Rav Yitzchok Or Zarua, Rav Elazar ben Rav Yehudah (the Rokeach), Rav

Moshe of Coucy (the Semag), and Rav Baruch ben Rav Yitzchok (the Sefer Haterumah).

Rav Yehudah Hachassid also continued his father's role as the head of the Chassidei Ashkenaz. He followed what we would consider an ascetic relationship to this world. For example, he fasted all day the entire week, eating only in the evenings. His disciple, the Or Zarua, records that Rav Yehudah Hachassid fasted two days Yom Kippur (Hilchos Yom Kippur, end of #281).

Rav Yehudah Hachassid also authored works on kabbalah and is commonly attributed as the author of the poem Anim Zemiros, sung in many shullen at the end of Shabbos davening. He was also the source of works that can be easily read by the layman, two of which, the Sefer Chassidim and the Tzava'as [the ethical will of] Rav Yehudah Hachassid, are the subjects of today's article. The Sefer Chassidim includes halacha, minhag, mussar, and commentary on tefillah. This work is mentioned numerous times by the later halachic authorities, as are many of the instructions in his tzava'ah. As we will soon discuss, there is some question as to whether he actually wrote the tzava'ah or whether he transmitted its content orally and it was recorded by his children or disciples.[DB1] Rav Yehudah Hachassid graduated to olam haba on Taanis Esther, 4977 (1217), in Regensburg, Germany. The tzava'ah of Rav Yehudah Hachassid

In his ethical will, Rav Yehudah Hachassid prohibits and/or advises against a vast array of practices for which he is the earliest, and sometimes the only, halachic source. Why did Rav Yehudah Hachassid prohibit these actions? Although we are not certain, because he offered no explanation, many later authorities assume that, in most instances, these were practices that Rav Yehudah Hachassid realized are dangerous because of kabbalistic reasons. Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, author of Shulchan Aruch Harav and Tanya) is quoted as having said that to understand one of Rav Yehudah Hachassid's statements in his tzava'ah would require a work the size of the Shelah, a classic of halachah, kabbalah and musar that is hundreds of pages long.

Reasons for the injunctions

Although the considerations behind Rav Yehudah Hachassid's rulings have been lost to us, several Acharonim proposed various reasons for one of his rulings, that a chosson and his father-in-law or a kallah and her mother-in-law should not share the same given name:

- 1) Some Acharonim maintain that the prohibitions are in order to avoid ayin hara. Due to the novelty of having the same name as an in-law, people would be more apt to talk about such a shidduch and cause an ayin hara (Chida, Peirush Lesefer Chassidim #477; Heishiv Moshe #19; Pri Hasadeh, vol. I, #69).
- 2) Others contend that if the kallah has the same name as the chosson's mother, the chosson will be unable to fulfill the

mitzvah of kibbud eim when his mother dies, since he will not be able to name a child after her (Maharil #17).

3) Another explanation is that it will cause a lack of respect towards the parents. If the chosson's name is the same as the kallah's father, she will inevitably use her husband's name in her father's presence (Even Haroshah #31).

The responsum of the Noda Biyehudah

In my earlier article, I mentioned the responsum of the Noda Biyehudah (Shu't Even Ha'ezer II #79), who explains that the shidduchin that Rav Yehudah Hachassid discouraged are concerns only for his descendants. The Noda Biyehudah also holds that Rav Yehudah Hachassid's concerns apply only to birth names or names given to sons at their bris, but do not apply to any name changes that take place afterwards. And most importantly, the Noda Biyehudah feels that it is more important to marry off one's daughter to a talmid chacham than to be concerned about names.

Double whammy

The Chasam Sofer (Shu't Even Ha'ezer, end of #116) was asked by Rav Shmuel, the av beis din of Balkan, concerning a highly scholarly and qualified bachur whose first name was the same as the father of the girl that was suggested, and whose mother carried the same name as the girl. The Chasam Sofer permitted this shidduch, providing two reasons not cited by the Noda Biyehudah:

The Gemara (Pesachim 110b) explains that sheidim, evil spirits, are concerned only about people who are afraid of them, but that someone not troubled by them will suffer no harm. The Chasam Sofer reasons that the prohibitions of Rav Yehudah Hachassid apply only to people who are concerned about them.

Other authorities accept this conclusion of the Chasam Sofer. For example, after providing an extensive discussion on all the rules of Rav Yehudah Hachassid, the Sedei Chemed (Volume 7, page 20) notes that when he assumed his position as the rav of the Crimea, he discovered that the local populace did not observe any of the rules of Rav Yehudah Hachassid. The Sedei Chemed, who himself was concerned about all of these rules, writes that he thought about mentioning these matters to his community. He subsequently decided against it, reasoning that no harm will come to someone who is not apprehensive.

Following this same approach, Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that such a shidduch should be prevented only if the couple getting married is concerned that one of them shares a name with his or her future parent-in-law. However, if the marrying couple is not disturbed about violating the rules of Rav Yehudah Hachassid, even if the parents are concerned, one may proceed with the marriage, -- the concern of a parent will not bring harm upon the couple (Shu't Igros Moshe, Even Ha'ezer 1:4). Similarly, I found a different authority who rules that when the couple makes the shidduch themselves, there is no concern for the rules of Rav Yehudah Hachassid (Sedei Chemed Volume 7, page 21, quoting Heishiv Moshe).

It is reported that someone asked the Chazon Ish regarding a shidduch where the prospective kallah had the same name as the mother of the suggested young man. The Chazon Ish asked the prospective chosson whether he was apprehensive about this. When he responded that he was not at all concerned, the Chazon Ish told him that he could proceed (Pe'er Hador, vol. IV, pg. 90).

It is interesting to note that, in another instance, someone asked the Chazon Ish about a situation where the prospective chosson had the same name as the prospective kallah's father. The Chazon Ish ruled that as long as they do not live in the same city, they could go through with the shidduch. He explained that the whole reason beyond these rulings of Rav Yehuda Hachassid is ayin hara -- people should not say "Here are the two Yankels." However, if they live in different cities, people will not talk about them (Ma'aseh Ish pg. 215).

Others, however, view Rav Yehudah Hachassid's prohibition differently. For example, some question whether a man whose mother is deceased may marry a woman who has the same name as his late mother. It would seem that, according to most of the reasons mentioned above, one may proceed with this shidduch. Nevertheless, some authorities are opposed, which indicates that they do not accept the reasons cited above (Kaf Hachayim, Yoreh Deah 116:127).

Two versions

Returning to the responsum of the Chasam Sofer, he mentions another reason to be lenient, which requires some explanation. Regarding the concern that a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, or a son-in-law and father-in-law not share the same name, we find that the two sources attributed to Rav Yehudah Hachassid, the Sefer Chassidim and the tzava'ah, quote different versions of the prohibition. Whereas the tzava'ah states that a man should not marry a woman whose father shares his name, and a woman should not marry a man whose mother shares her given name, the text in the Sefer Chassidim (Chapter 477) states that if a man married a woman named Rivkah whose son also married a woman named Rivkah, then the grandson (the son's son) should not marry a girl named Rivkah. The version quoted in Sefer Chassidim seems unconcerned about a man marrying a woman who shares his mother's name or about a woman marrying a man with her father's name. The Chasam Sofer concludes that the tzava'ah of Rav Yehudah Hachassid should also be understood this way.

Similar to the comment of the Chasam Sofer, the Chachmas Odom (123:13) notes that Rav Yehudah Hachassid clearly meant the same in both places, and that the Sefer Chassidim is written more accurately. Therefore, these two great authorities rule that even Rav Yehudah Hachassid was never concerned about a woman marrying someone whose mother shares her name, or a man marrying a woman whose father shares his.

Other lenient reasons

Although these three authorities -- the Noda Biyehudah, the Chasam Sofer and the Chachmas Odom -- are basically not concerned with the commonly understood application of Rav Yehudah Hachassid's tzava'ah, other authorities are concerned, but provide additional reasons and applications when the concerns of Rav Yehudah Hachassid do not apply. Some mention that one need not be concerned where the two parties spell their names differently, even when they pronounce the name the same way (quoted in Sedei Chemed, Volume 7, page 17). However, the Sedei Chemed (Volume 7, page 20) concludes that the spelling should make no difference: either way, one should be concerned.

Variances of the name

The Kaf Hachayim (Yoreh Deah 116:12) mentions a dispute whether there is a concern when the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law have somewhat different names. For example, may a woman named Rivkah Rachel marry a man whose mother's name is Rachel, since their names are not identical? Some feel that this is relevant when the woman now being considered for the shidduch is called Rivkah, but does not provide any basis for lenience if, indeed, she uses Rachel regularly as part of her name. According to this opinion, if she chooses to add another name to avoid the concern of Rav Yehudah Hachassid, she should be called only by the new name (Kaf Hachayim, Yoreh Deah 116:126).

Similarly, some rule that if the son-in-law is known by two different names, some people calling him by one name and others by a different name, there is no concern if the potential father-in-law has one of these names (see Sedei Chemed Volume 7, pages 17).

On the other hand, Rav Moshe Feinstein rules there is concern only if the full given names of both the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law (or the father-in-law and son-in-law) are identical. Prevalent practice follows this approach. An example is that my rosh yeshivah Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman, was not concerned that his daughter marry Rav Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg, notwithstanding that both father-in-law and son-in-law used the named Yaakov alone as their primary name.

Different English names

Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that if the father-in-law and son-in-law (or mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) have different English names, there is no concern, even if they share identical Hebrew names.

Changing the name

Some earlier authorities suggest that the chosson or the kallah change their name or add to it. For example, when someone asked the Chasam Sofer about having his daughter marry someone who shares his name, he advised them to have the chosson change his name (Pischei Teshuvah, Even Ha'ezar 2:7, in the name of the Kerem Shlomo).

Rav Moshe Feinstein accepted this approach of the Chasam Sofer in theory. However, in a responsum on the topic, he wrote not to rely on changing the name since, at the time and

place that he wrote his teshuvah, people would continue to use the original name. A name change means that the person is now called by the new name.

Stricter approaches

As mentioned, there are, other authorities who are highly concerned about violating the instructions of Rav Yehudah Hachassid, and challenge or ignore the above heterim (quoted in Sedei Chemed Volume 7, pages 17 ff. ; Kaf Hachayim, Yoreh Deah 116:125).

In conclusion

I leave it to the individual to discuss with his or her posek whether or not to pursue a particular shidduch because of an identical name or a different concern raised by Rav Yehudah Hachassid. Of course, we all realize that the most important factor is davening, asking Hashem to provide the appropriate shidduchin the right time.

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Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Peninim on the Torah

Aharon did so... as Hashem had commanded Moshe. (8:3)
Rashi writes: L'hagid shevacho shel Aharon – she'lo shinah, "To tell the praise of Aharon, in that he did not deviate." This statement begs elucidation. Would it enter anyone's imagination to suggest that Aharon might have deviated from Hashem's command? A number of expositions explain Rashi's statement. The Sifrei Chassidus have a twist on the definition of the word shinah, deviate. When we take into consideration that Aharon would prepare and light the Menorah twice daily, it might be appropriate to say that he never tired of his function. The same passion and love that he manifested in the morning, he repeated in the afternoon. This went on day in and day out. The "umpteenth" time was no different than the first time that he lit the Menorah. Thus, lo shinah is derived from shoneh, review, repeat, redundant. Every time Aharon stepped forward to light the candles was a new opportunity – not a repeat performance.

In his hesped, eulogy, for Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, the Satmar Rav, zl, offered his explanation of Rashi's comment. It is true that, for ordinary people, to follow the command to the letter of the law is acceptable. It is with regard to someone who is at the apex of spirituality, one who had an acute understanding of the mitzvah, its esoteric secrets, whose devotion to seeing the institution of the mesorah achieve even greater spiritual influence, that she'lo shinah plays a more crucial role. He has every reason to enhance the mitzvah. Aharon HaKohen had every reason to innovate the service ever so slightly. He might have been able to reach one whose affiliation had been, at best, modest. Aharon, however, understood that, regardless of his own understanding of the situation, Hashem had a deeper,

more penetrating perspective. Thus, one does not deviate from the Divine decree. The Satmar Rav explained that Rav Aharon could have instituted changes that would make Torah more acceptable to those on the fringe. He did not, because one follows the mesorah, tradition, as indicated by Hashem. His spiritual integrity guaranteed that the Torah taught in yeshivos has remained pristine and pure.

Furthermore, mesorah, the tradition, must be transmitted from one generation to the next via a rebbe to a talmid. One does not just pick it up on his own. The

Torah was given to Moshe Rabbeinu, who, in turn, gave it to Yehoshua, who was the vehicle that passed it along to the next generation – and the next. The Haflaah (Panim Yafos Parashas Vayechi 48:15) writes: It is impossible for one on his own, without the help of a rebbe, to perceive (and have somewhat of an understanding) of the Creator. One who did not learn from a rebbe is missing a vital component of the process perceiving Hashem.

Horav Moshe Shapiro, zl, taught that one can take a Shas (set of Talmud) with him to a far-off island and sit and learn day and night without interruption, to the point that he becomes an outstanding Torah scholar. Nonetheless, his entire demeanor and way of life are not much different than that of a gentile! Why? He did not learn from a rebbe. Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, would say: “We do nothing significant for which we did not receive guidance from our Rebbeim.”

... ויהי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם ולא יכלו לעשות הפסח... ויאמרו...
אנחנו טמאים... למה נגרע לבלתי הקריב את קרבן ד' במעדו
There were men who had been contaminated by a human corpse and could not make the Pesach-offering... they said, “We are contaminated... why should we be diminished by not offering Hashem's offering in its appointed time?” (9:6,7)

A debate in the Talmud (Succah 25a) concerns the identity of the men who were contaminated. Rabbi Yosi HaGlili says that they were the pallbearers of Yosef's coffin. Rabbi Akiva says they were Mishael and Elitzafan, who were occupied with the corpses of Nadav and Avihu. In any event, these were not ordinary Jews who wanted to display their religious commitment. These were men who were sincerely concerned about being left out as the nation celebrated the offering of the Korban Pesach. We wonder what these men were thinking.

They were fully aware of their situation: they were tamei – end of story. One who is tamei may not offer the Korban Pesach. Did they expect Moshe Rabbeinu to revise the Torah?

Furthermore, is there really a controversy (other than historical) as to who were these men – to the point that Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yosi HaGlili debate their identity?

Horav Shmuel Aharon Yudelevitz, zl (Meil Shmuel) explains that even Chazal wondered why they were making this request. Certainly, they did not expect Moshe to bring down another Torah from Heaven. These men, however, felt that it was inconceivable (to them) that Hashem would prevent them from offering the Korban Pesach. They understood that the way

things stood, there was no logical way for them to offer the Korban Pesach. Nonetheless, they were certain that Hashem would somehow provide a suitable option. Thus, they presented their request to Moshe.

When Moshe saw and understood the sincerity that motivated their request, he did not ignore them, for, he too, felt that, if there is a will – there is a way – and they had an extremely strong will. Moshe turned to Hashem to rule on this issue. The answer came back in the form of Pesach Sheni, a second chance to observe the offering of the Korban Pesach. It was unheard of, but this is the power of ratzon, strong will.

As a result of this thought, Rav Shmuel Aharon explains the debate between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yosi HaGlili. Chazal sought to trace the roots of these men who, despite being tamei, demanded a venue to offer the Korban Pesach. Rabbi Yosi HaGlili felt that, by carrying Yosef HaTzaddik's coffin, they had become inspired to reach higher, to seek the highest levels of sanctified living. They derived from Yosef that lo b'moso yikach ha'kol, one takes nothing (from this world) with him when he dies. Yosef had enormous wealth and unprecedented power, but, at the end, when his tenure in this world came to its conclusion, he lay in a coffin like everyone else. (As the old Yiddish saying goes, “There are no keshenes, pockets, in the tachrichim, shrouds.) We take nothing material on our journey to the World of Truth.

Furthermore, Yosef never bore a grudge against his brothers for the misery they caused him. He understood that this was Hashem's decree. Last, they saw the great merit that Yosef had because he had run away from Potifar's wife. The Red Sea split when his coffin came toward it. Ya'nus mipnei ba'nas; “Run from before the one who ran (away from Potifar's wife).” When they realized the immense distinction of whose body they carried, they decided that they too wanted to make use of every opportunity for spiritual growth.

Rabbi Akiva feels that Mishael and Elitzafan, who involved themselves in caring for the bodies of Nadav and Avihu, were privy to an even greater spiritual lesson. Nadav and Avihu died during their attempt to fulfill Hashem's command on the highest level. The mere fact that Moshe Rabbeinu chose these two to take care of the bodies indicates that they were close with the deceased. Thus, Rabbi Akiva feels that the men who were impure were two individuals who had learned the importance of going to the extreme to fulfill a mitzvah. They could not live with themselves if they were to be deprived of the mitzvah of Korban Pesach.

One thing is for certain: Whether it was Yosef's pallbearers or it was Mishael and Elitzafan – they both strove for perfection in avodas Hashem. They did not settle. They wanted more; they wanted it all! As a result, Chazal established Pesach Sheini.

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Why Are People Afraid of the Truth?

The Anxiety Inside of You is Testimony to Your Search for Authenticity

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

Why Are People Afraid of the Truth?

The Anxiety Inside of You is Testimony to Your Search for Authenticity

The Lie

The joker in town approached a little wise Jewish boy, Hersheleh, and says: I will give you a ruble if you tell me a lie right here on the spot!

To which Hersheleh responds: You said you would give me two!

High Five

In this week's portion, the Torah describes the ceremony by which the Levites were formally consecrated for service in the Sanctuary. G-d describes the selection process as follows:

יט. וְאֶתְנָה אֶת הַלְוִיִּים גְּתֻנִים לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעִבְדוֹת אֶת עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶהֱל מוֹעֵד וּלְכַפֵּר עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶף בְּגִשֵׁת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to perform the service for the children of Israel in the Tent of Meeting, and to atone on behalf of the children of Israel, so that the children of Israel will not be inflicted with plague, when the children of Israel approach the Sanctuary.

Do you notice what is peculiar and awkward about this verse?

In one paragraph, defying all laws of syntax, grammar, diction, and proper writing, the Torah employs the term "Children of Israel" FIVE times. Instead of using the term once and then writing "they," it repeats this title five times.

Rashi presents a lovely interpretation, one that has inspired our people for centuries:

ואתנה וגו': חמשה פעמים נאמר בני ישראל במקרא זה, להודיע חבתן שנכפלו ואזכרותיהן במקרא אחד כמנין חמשה חומשי תורה, וכך ראיתי בבראשית רבה:

"The children of Israel" is mentioned five times in this verse, thus declaring the affection [G-d has] for them, for their mention is repeated in one verse as many times as the five books of the Torah."

The use of the phrase "high five"—the high five is a celebratory hand gesture that occurs when two people simultaneously raise one hand, about head high, and push, slide or slap the flat of their palm against the palm of their partner—as a noun has been part of the Oxford English Dictionary since 1980 and as a verb since 1981. Yet even "high five" originates in Torah. Where? Right here in this verse, the Torah gives a "high five" to the Children of Israel, repeating their name five times in one verse, comparing them to the five books of Moses.

But there are two questions: 1) Why suddenly here? Why, in the middle of the book of Numbers, while discussing the service of the Levites in the Sanctuary, does G-d "remind" us that he loves His people? 2) The significance of mentioning them five times, Rashi explains, is to compare them to the five books of the Torah. But of what significance is it that G-d repeats the term "Benei Yisrael" the same number of times as the number of the Torah books? What is the message being conveyed behind this particular praise?

Love of Truth

The Chidushei HaRim (Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Altar of Gur) presents a beautiful answer:

Let us take a closer look at what is happening at this point in Israel's history. One group of people, the tribe is Levi, has been singled out for a unique vocation: to perform the Divine service in the sanctuary. Now, this position belonged previously to the firstborn of each family (the "bechorim"), as discussed at length in the portion of Bamidbar. Now it was taken from them and given to the Levites. After the sin of the Golden Calf, when the only tribe abstaining and fighting for the truth was Levi, the spiritual service was taken from the firstborn and given to the Levites.

The Gift of Leadership

Now, the Talmud makes an incredible observation:

מנחות קט, ב: תניא אמר ר' יהושע בן פרחיה בתחלה כל האומר עלה לה אני כופתו ונותנו לפני הארי עתה כל האומר לי לירד ממנה אני מטיל עליו קומקום של חמין שהרי שאול ברח ממנה וכשעלה בקש להרוג את דוד. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachya said, "In the beginning, had someone told me go assume a position of leadership, I would have bound and set him in front of a lion. Now that I achieved a high position, anyone who would tell me to give it up and descend from it, I would pour a pitcher of hot water over him. Consider the story of King Saul: First he fled from the position of royalty. But one he became king, he wishes to kill David out of fear that he will usurp his position.

This is a vital insight. Leadership elicits a deep chord in the human psyche; it triggers a "note," which the mystics called "Malchus," royalty. A certain fuse of the human soul is ignited you when you are elevated to a position of leadership. Leaving that behind is painful.

This is exactly what happens in this story: The Bechurim, the oldest members of each Jewish family, were in a position of spiritual leadership. Now, they were instructed to give it all up, transferring the mantle to the Levites.

No Mutiny

And yet, astoundingly, we find no mutiny, rebellion, not even a protest, or outcry. For a nation that did not stop bickering and protesting, for a nation that would produce a Korach who would protest the positions of Moses and Aaron, it is fascinating that the firstborn accepted this transfer with grace and peace of mind, and the entire people of Israel embraced it with serenity.

Why not? The answer consists of one word: Truth.

The firstborn and the Jews at large, realized the truth: The position belongs to the Levites, and it would be best performed by them. What mattered was not personal agendas, but truth. The Levites, as a tribe, professed a level of loyalty, dedication, commitment, and the courage to stand up for truth; they would do the job best.

It is this quality that G-d is praising, by mentioning the Jewish people five times in one verse, comparing them to the five books of the Torah. What is the core uniqueness of Torah? The answer is one word: Truth. "Asher nasan lanu Toras Emes," we recite in the blessing after the reading of the Torah. "He gave us a Torah of Truth." The key ingredient of Torah is Truth. It is interested in nothing else but truth. It speaks the truth, it demands the truth, and it asks of us to live up to truth. Its truth—like all truth—is sometimes harsh. Torah spares no one. Even its own writer and greatest hero, Moses, is not spared by Torah. Adam, Abraham, Moses, and King David—everyone is depicted in Torah with full truth. Their heroism and shortcoming (of course relative to their sublime and lofty spiritual level), their positive actions, and their errors (again relative to their level), are all portrayed unflinchingly in the Torah. The Torah will not bend the truth to make people feel good. It will show empathy, but it will never deceive you into thinking you are doing the right thing when you are destroying yourself because, in the long term, that will cause you far more pain. Empathy means that we appreciate the depth and truth of the struggle, but not that we deceive ourselves and others and bend reality to make us feel good for the moment.

And it is this truth that Torah demands of its students. One of the most inspiring components of Talmud study is noticing the intellectual integrity of the Talmudic sages. What matters in every discussion in the entire Talmud is one thing and one thing only: the truth. Sages may have maintained a position for decades, yet when they discovered their error, they retracted it because it was against the truth.

Retract

The Talmud relates this story:

פסחים כב: שמעון העמסוני, ואמרי לה נחמיה העמסוני, היה דורש כל אתין שבתורה, כיון שהגיע ל"את ה' אלהיך תירא" פירש. אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבי, כל אתין שדרשת מה תהא עליהם? אמר להם: כשם שקבלתי שכר על הדרישה, כך קבלתי על הפרישה. עד שבא רבי עקיבא ולימד: את ה' אלהיך תירא—לרבות תלמידי חכמים.

Shimon the Imsonite—others state, Nechemiah the Imsonite—used to interpret every 'eth' in the Torah, but when he came to the verse You shall fear [eth] the Lord your G-d, he retracted. His disciples said to him: "Master, what is to become of all the ethin you have interpreted?" He replied, "Just as I received reward for the exposition, so I will receive reward for the retraction." When Rabbi Akiva, however, came, he taught: "You shall fear eth the Lord your G-d" implies that the scholarly disciples are also to be feared.

Shimon the Amsonite said these words to his probably stunned disciples who just observed a life-long search go up in flames:

"Just as I received reward for the exposition, so I will receive reward for the retraction." How majestic a response! I am not here to make a name for myself; I am here to search for truth. And if the truth proves me wrong, I am happy to communicate this as well. If the truth wins, I have won. I have been rewarded. To be defeated by truth is the only defeat that spells a victory.

Reb Chaim's Lecture

A story:

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1903-1993) related an incident involving his grandfather, the famous Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, known as Reb Chaim Brisker (1853-1918). When Reb Chaim Soloveitchik started saying Torah discourses in the famed Lithuanian Volozhin Yeshiva, some young, brilliant but arrogant students complained that Reb Chaim was unworthy of teaching in that Yeshiva. Who is this Reb Chaim anyway? They believed that he only received the position because he married the granddaughter of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, known as the Netziv. The resolution of this "complaint" was that the yeshiva brought in three great Torah scholars to rule whether Rabbi Chaim was worthy to give lectures in Volozhin. (One of these great men was Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, the famed Rabbi of the Lithuanian city of Kovne).

The students, some of them great minds, prepared for intellectual "war." They prepared themselves well on the subject he would discuss. They were determined to "bring him down."

Reb Chaim began a shiur on the subject of Aylonis (an adult woman without the signs of maturity in terms of her halachic status) in the Talmudic Tractate Yevomos and was in the middle of reconciling a difficult passage of Rambam in his Mishna Torah (Maimonides in his code of law.)

In the middle of the presentation, Reb Chaim remembered something. He recalled a statement from the Rambam's commentary to the Mishnah, in which the Rambam seemingly advanced a position that was inconsistent with the whole approach that Reb Chaim was trying to develop.

In front of the three sages, present to determine if he was fit for the prestigious job, Reb Chaim gave a bang on his lectern and said, "The shiur that I had prepared is false. My hypothesis was wrong, the Rambam says otherwise in his Mishnah Commentary." He left the lectern.

Some of the students attempted to show that his hypothesis was not wrong; that the contradiction can be reconciled. But Reb Chaim said: All your ideas are sharp answers, but not true answers. I have made a mistake. My lecture was built on a mistaken premise.

Reb Chaim sat down.

His enemies were thrilled. He was defeated. He admitted his own ineptness. Yet to their shock the three great rabbis concluded, "He is worthy to be a Rosh Yeshiva in Volozhin." Any person who cares about the truth so much that he is

willing to suffer the embarrassment of having to admit his own mistake for the sake of truth, is definitely worthy to be a Rosh Yeshiva in Volozhin.

To be a Torah personality, to be a Torah Jew, does not mean to be perfect. It means first and foremost to be a man of truth. To never ever lie. Not to others and not to yourself. It means to demand of yourself the highest and deepest levels of integrity, to be committed to the complete "emes," truth, and to nothing but the truth.

In the words of the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, in his book "Sefer Hachakirah," a work on Jewish philosophy:

אהוב את אריסטו, אהוב את סיקריטוס, אהוב את אפלטון, אבל אהוב את האמת יותר מכולם.

"Love Aristotle, Love Socrates, Love Plato. But love the truth more than all of them."

The Quality of Truth

This is the quality of the Jewish people conveyed in this verse. Truth is the most valuable commodity in life. Because it is reality; it is real. When the Jewish people realized the seed was not growing, the firstborn can't do the job, instead of lying to themselves and to others and saying, "let's maintain the façade," they exposed the barren seed, and declared: Time to move on; time to bring in the Levites. It is this quality that conferred upon our people the number of the five books of the Torah—the Torah of truth.

It is true in each of our lives: Only when you become completely honest with your own condition and reality, confessing that your seed has grown nothing, can you truly make something of yourself and become a genuine source of leadership and inspiration to yourself and others.

Today's Labels

What happened to this obsession with truth in political leadership and the media today? The entire purpose of media is to tell the true story. Yet we painfully wonder: what happened with the search for truth concerning Israel, Hamas, anti-semitism, morality, abortion, transgender, and issues concerning the future of civilization?

We are witnessing a culture in which even media outlets are often ready to eclipse or partially ignore aspects of truth for all types of considerations, chief among them is a lack of respect for truth.

The value of truth is no more—unless each and every one of us will stand up for truth. It begins in our own lives, and it continues to influence communities around us.

The Path of Healing

I have encountered many brave souls who have endured profound trauma and pain. I am in awe of their soul's courageous fight for truth. From childhood, they absorbed many toxic lies, but the anxiety inside of them was begging and fighting for the truth. The truth gave them no solace and rest. What pains them so deeply about so many of their family members and the religious establishment they live in are the

cover-ups, lies, and deception, making them feel that they are crazy.

Those days are over. Healing will only come from all of us confronting the truth and nothing but the truth. If G-d is real and Torah is real, we have nothing to fear when all truth will be exposed.

1 Rashi concludes: I saw this in Genesis Rabbah [3:5]. Note that this is not found in Gen. Rabbah, but in Leviticus Rabbah 2:4.

2 See Talmud Bava Kama 92, as explained at length in Sichas Shabbos Eikev 5748.

3 There may be another hint in the comparison to the five books of the Chumash: Although the Torah divides into five sections, it nevertheless constitutes one, single entity. There is one Torah, not five. Similarly, although the Levites had a unique position, the Jews understood that we are still one. We all together form a single, indivisible nation. The nation is one, and no faction may consider itself inherently superior to any other, even though each one serves G-d in its own unique way. Ironically, this very same principle prompted the disastrous rebellion led by Korach, as we will read in two weeks. Korach and his followers argued that "the entire nation - they are all sacred," and thus challenged the authority of Moshe and Aaron. The rebels failed to realize that equality does not negate the need for authority. Rather, it means that regardless of where one stands on the hierarchy, he ultimately possesses the same, inherent value as everyone else above and below. It means that both the leaders and their constituents share equal responsibility and must view themselves as equally important in the formation and functioning of society.

<https://aish.com/the-secret-jew-incredible-survival-of-his-lost-manuscript/>

The Secret Jew & Incredible Survival of his Lost Manuscript

aish.com/the-secret-jew-incredible-survival-of-his-lost-manuscript/

The amazing story of Luis de Carvajal, a secret Jew who was murdered in the 1500s, and the unlikely survival of his handwritten memoirs.

Nearly five hundred years ago, Luis de Rodriguez Carvajal, a secret Jew living in terror of the Spanish Inquisition, penned the following words at great risk to his life: "To practice Judaism is not heresy; it is the will of the Lord our God." The Jewish book he secretly wrote has been found and is on display for the first time in decades.

Luis de Rodriguez Carvajal and his family lived in the 1500s in Spain. Judaism had been banned in Spain in 1492 but many Jews, including the Rodriguez family, continued to secretly cling to Jewish faith and rituals, while living publicly as Catholics. The fearsome Spanish Inquisition ruthlessly hunted

these secret Jews, torturing and executing anyone suspected of engaging in Jewish rituals.

In the 1580s, Luis de Rodriguez, his mother, father and siblings were invited to settle in the Nuevo Leon, an area in today's Mexico governed by Luis' uncle, Don Luis Carvajal. The family moved, and became close to Carvajal, changing their surname from Rodriguez and publicly embracing their powerful relative's Catholic faith.

In "New Spain", Luis de Rodriguez, now de Carvajal "the Younger," continued to keep his Jewish identity as best he could. On Fridays before Shabbat, Luis' mother and sisters washed the bed linens and prepared festive food, including a chicken dinner for Friday nights. The entire family wore their best clothes on Saturday, and the women of the household refrained from the sewing that customarily kept them busy (though they made sure to keep their sewing handy in case unexpected visitors dropped by).

For a month, he transmitted his knowledge to Luis, preparing him to be the leader of their circle of secret Jews.

Before Passover, Luis and other secret Jews in their Mexican community would slaughter a lamb, roast it and eat it, trying to recreate, as Luis described, the first Passover feast: "On foot, like people about to set out on a journey, staves in hands and loins girded". Their community also secretly celebrated the Jewish holidays Purim and Yom Kippur.

In 1585, Luis and his father, Francisco Rodriguez, who worked as barterers and traders, travelled together to Mexico City for business. There, Francisco became gravely ill. Fearing he might never recover, he told his son Luis all he could about their secret Jewish faith. For a month, he transmitted his knowledge to Luis, preparing him to be the leader of their circle of secret Jews. It was an intense time that profoundly changed the course of Luis' life.

When he returned home, Luis was more committed to his secret faith than ever. He circumcised himself and began to declare his Jewish beliefs publicly. He also encouraged other secret Jews to do the same. Sometime around 1590, Luis and his family were arrested for encouraging Judaism. His mother, Francisca Nunez de Carvajal, was tortured into near madness. The Inquisition authorities later said that under torture she'd implicated her husband and children as secret Jews.

During this time, Luis began writing his memoirs, titled "Memorias", in tiny script on miniature pages, about four by three inches. In this secret book, Luis seemed to give his imagination free reign, calling himself by a new name that might have had some secret meaning in his community, Joseph Lumbroso.

The book begins: "Saved from terrible dangers by the Lord, I, Joseph Lumbroso of the Hebrew nation..." and goes on to address itself to all "who believe in the Holy of Holies and who hope for great mercies."

"Memorias" eventually grew to 180 tiny pages penned in an almost impossibly small script. As well as Luis' memoirs, it

included Jewish prayers, the Ten Commandments, and Maimonides' Thirteen Principles for Faith. Luis painstakingly stitched the book together; its small size implies that it was hidden in a pocket and carried with him.

Luis jumped out of a window to escape his horrific torture. Somehow, he survived.

Luis was briefly released from prison. Some modern scholars think this was so the Inquisition authorities could track his activities. Tragically, in 1596, he was arrested, along with his mother, four sisters, brother and a number of other Jews, and they were tortured. At one point, Luis was shown his manuscript and acknowledged that it was his. He was tortured so severely that he jumped out of a window to escape the agony. Somehow, he survived.

Finally, after weeks of gruesome torture and imprisonment, nine of the Jews were put to death in a mass public burning for the "crime" of being Jewish. The victims included Luis' mother, his sisters Isabel, Catalina and Leonor, and Luis himself. Luis was 30 years old. (Five years later, another sister, Mariana, was publicly burned at the stake.)

Miraculously, Luis' secret book somehow survived. Tattered, well-worn, its pages apparently turned over and over by an unknown number of readers through the years, "Memorias" eventually was placed in Mexico's National Archives, where it remained for hundreds of years, until vanishing in 1932.

For eight decades, "Memorias" remained lost. In Dec. 2015, it suddenly resurfaced in a London auction house.

No one knows who took it but modern scholars have a theory. At the time, at least three academics were researching the de Carvajal family at the National Archives. One historian accused a rival, a Jewish academic from Northwestern University near Chicago, of stealing the book. The Jewish academic spent approximately three months in jail for the theft but no evidence implicated him in the crime. It's thought that the academic who accused him was the true thief.

For eight decades, "Memorias" remained lost. Then, in December 2015, it suddenly resurfaced in a London auction house. Bloomsbury Auctions didn't recognize the book's importance, blandly describing it in their auction listings as "small devotional manuscripts" and pricing it at \$1,500, a small fraction of the work's actual value.

In response to questioning about the document's whereabouts, all the auctioneers would reveal is that it came "from the library of a Michigan family...in their possession for several decades." Timothy Bolton, a specialist at the Bloomsbury Auctions, justified their decision to keep the previous owners' identities private saying "one of the fundamental cornerstones of the auction world is our client's privacy."

"Memorias" was bought in London, then promptly listed for sale in New York. There, Leonard Milberg, a prominent 85-year-old New York collector, saw it and recognized its importance. He consulted with experts who agreed that the tiny book was Luis de Carvajal's, and also cautioned Mr. Milberg

that it had been stolen. “It is the earliest surviving personal narrative by a New World Jew...and the earliest surviving worship manuscript and account of coming to the New World,” explains scholar David Szewczyk.

Mr. Milberg got in touch with Diego Gomez Pickering, the Consul General of Mexico in New York, and arranged to repatriate the book, paying tens of thousands of dollars of his own money to acquire the book so that it could be returned to Mexico’s National Archives. He had only two requests. One was that before its repatriation, “Memorias” would be on view in New York, on display at the New York Historical Society. Mr. Milberg also asked that digital copies of Luis de Carvajal’s book be made for Princeton University and for Manhattan’s Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue. This, Mr. Milberg explained, is a way of “getting back at anti-Semitism. I wanted to show that Jews were part of the fabric of life in the New World,” he explained. “This book was written before the Pilgrims arrived.”

<https://virtualjerusalem.com/my-fellow-rabbis-to-the-land-of-israel/>

My Fellow Rabbis – To the Land of Israel!

The mitzvah of the moment is to awaken your congregations to take immediate steps to begin the process of Aliyah.

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner

IDF Rabbinate

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner is Head of the Ateret Yerushalayim Yeshiva in the Old City of Jerusalem. Author of over 200 books on a wide variety of Jewish themes, he is known to occasionally adopt a literary style to convey an idea, in this call to Diaspora Rabbis he employs a fictitious Rabbi to communicate his message.

For more than twenty years I have been the Rabbi of a very influential shul in the Diaspora.

I call out to you from the depths of my heart – Make haste! Awaken the hearts of the myriads of our people to make Aliyah to our Homeland. I beseech you, not only to perform the mitzvah of living in Eretz Yisrael, a mitzvah which our Sages consider equal to in weight to all of the commandments of the Torah. I understood the vital place of this mitzvah ever since I began to learn Torah, but nevertheless I remained in the Diaspora. I never spoke about the mitzvah to live in Israel, for reasons I won’t specify, for these are the same reasons you too have chosen to remain in foreign lands.

Today I am frightened. It is true that I am not a bold warrior by nature, but now the great increase in anti-Semitism has me truly alarmed. My great-grandfather lived in Germany. When Hitler, may his name be erased, rose to power, the majority of Jews believed that there was no reason to panic, that the troubling period would pass, and so they remained ensconced where they were. The end proved tragic and most bitter.

Fortunately my great-grandfather sensed the coming storm and fled. Because of that wise decision I am here today.

Today’s rampant anti-Semitism isn’t the only reason for concern. You all know as well as I do about the frightening rise in assimilation throughout the Diaspora which increases from decade to decade. Since the Holocaust, six million Jews have assimilated in what is called the “Silent Holocaust,” may Heaven help us. And to our chagrin, the way to the abyss approaches at an unstoppable pace.

Right now I feel that we are facing a dire emergency. In addition to the plague of intermarriage, violence against Jews could break out in all corners of the Diaspora. In order to isolate Israel from the community of nations, foreign governments might close their airports to flights to and from the Jewish State. Diaspora Jews will be stranded, surrounded by wild mobs and unsympathetic authorities.

Therefore, I appeal to you, the mitzvah of the moment is to awaken your congregations to take immediate steps to begin the process of Aliyah as soon as possible by filling out the required documents and whatever papers necessary to have everything ready in order to insure their future, their family’s future, and the future of our nation.

Be strong and of much courage.

With great honor and affection, and with my apology for adopting this literary strategy.

<https://rabbierefgoldberg.org/>

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

Don’t Spike the Ball

Parshas Behaaloscha begins with the mitzva of the kindling of the menorah in the Beis Ha’mikdash. The Torah relates that after the guidelines for the kindling were conveyed to Aharon, the kohen gadol, ויעש כן אהרן – Aharon did as he was told, faithfully complying with Hashem’s command (8:3).

Rashi famously comments that the Torah added this pasuk להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה – “To speak in praise of Aharon, that he did not deviate.” The Torah here praises Aharon for doing precisely as he was told.

Many mefarshim raised the question of why Aharon deserves such שבה , praise, for kindling the menorah according to the rules. Would we have expected anything less from Aharon? And was this really such a remarkable achievement – obeying the rules – that rendered him worthy of praise?

Rav Yisroel Meir Druck, in Lahavos Eish, answers this question based on the background to these pesukim, as Rashi explains earlier. This section is preceded by the Torah’s account of the special offerings brought by the nesi’im – the leaders of the tribes – to celebrate חנוכת המשכן , the inauguration of the Mishkan. Every day for twelve days, the leader of one of the tribes came to the Mishkan with an elaborate series of offerings. The only tribe which was not represented during this process was the tribe of Levi, and this caused the leader of that tribe – Aharon – to feel

uneasy. It troubled him that neither he nor anyone else from the tribe of Levi took part in this celebration of the הנוכת המשכן . Rashi writes that Hashem responded to Aharon's concerns by reminding him of the precious mitzva of kindling the menorah which he was privileged to perform.

Hashem was telling Aharon, in Rashi's words, , שלך גדול משלהם – "Yours is greater than theirs, for you kindle and clean the lamps." On this basis, Rav Druck explains, we can perhaps understand why Aharon is praised הנה , שלא שינה , for not deviating. This might mean that Aharon's attitude toward this mitzva did not change even after being informed that , שלך גדול משלהם, that this was a greater privilege than bringing offerings for the הנוכת המשכן . Aharon could have then looked down on the nesi'im, felt superior to them, and gloated about his special status, which God Himself described as גדול משלהם , greater

than theirs. But he didn't do that. ויעש כן אהרון – he simply continued doing his job, without fanfare, without seeking publicity, without trying to draw any attention to himself, and without any condescension. This is indeed שבה , praise for Aharon, for humbly going about his business without any tinge of competitiveness or one-upmanship. It has been said that this is – or at least was – the difference between football and baseball. When a football player scores a touchdown, he spikes the ball in dramatic fashion, and dances and runs about wildly, trying to make as big a spectacle as he can. But when a batter would hit a homerun, he would simply run around the bases, without fanfare. Rashi here is telling us to be like that batter – to just lower our heads and do our job, without making a public spectacle. We shouldn't spike the ball, create drama in an attempt to attract attention or show off. Our focus should be ויעש כן אהרון – just doing what we're supposed to do, without gloating and without looking for recognition.

This is such a crucial lesson for our time, when our world measures success in terms of fame and notoriety, based on "likes," "followers," and "viral" content. Everyone strives to be an "influencer," to achieve fame, to become known, to garner attention. This is not the way a Torah Jew is supposed to live. We are to simply do our job, to fulfill our duties, without concerning ourselves with whether we are noticed, admired or celebrated. Of course, it is acceptable and even worthwhile to take pride in our achievements. But our objective should never be to attain fame or notoriety, and we must aim instead to be Hashem's faithful servants, doing what we are supposed to do, regardless of whether anyone notices.

The Secret Jew & Incredible Survival of his Lost Manuscript

aish.com/the-secret-jew-incredible-survival-of-his-lost-manuscript/

from: Rabbi Yochanan Zweig <genesis@torah.org>

to: rabbizweig@torah.org subject: Rabbi Zweig

Parshas Beha'aloscha

Rav Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Rosi Behar, Raizel bas Yitzchak.

Not for Profit

Two men remained in the camp, the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other was Medad, and the Holy Spirit rested upon them [...] and they prophesied in the camp (11:26).

After a series of difficult incidents in which Bnei Yisroel acted improperly and were subsequently punished by Hashem, Moshe pleads with Hashem that he was unable to bear the burden of the entire nation by himself (see 11:14). In fact, upon seeing the punishment that Bnei Yisroel were about to receive, he begs Hashem to kill him first (see 11:15 and Rashi ad loc).

Hashem responds that Moshe is to gather seventy men from the elders of Bnei Yisroel who will receive a measure of his increased prophecy and they will share the burden along with him (see 11:18 and Rashi ad loc).

Moshe recognizes that seventy does not divide evenly by 12 and is concerned that there will be some jealousy among the tribes who receive less representation among these seventy elders. Therefore, Moshe devises a lottery to pick who the chosen elders will be (see Rashi 11:26). Eldad and Medad were actually among those who were chosen to join the seventy elders, but they remained in the camp, eschewing this appointment for they felt unworthy of it.

Moshe's son Gershom ran to inform his father that Eldad and Medad were in the camp prophesying. There is some discussion in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 17a) as to what exactly the prophecy was that they were relating. In any event, Moshe's longtime student-attendant Yehoshua Bin Nun was outraged and demanded, "My master Moshe, destroy them!" (see 11:28). Rashi (ad loc) explains that Yehoshua was not asking that they be killed (they hadn't seemed to commit any offense worthy of capital punishment), rather Yehoshua wanted them to be given responsibility to tend to the needs of the community, which would cause them to be obliterated. In other words, the responsibilities of leadership would cause them to self-destruct.

Yet when Bnei Yisroel sinned with the golden calf, "Hashem spoke to Moshe, 'Go, descend, for your nation has become corrupted'" (Shemos 32:7) and Rashi (ad loc) explains that Hashem told Moshe, "descend from your greatness, for I have only made you great on their account."

Does leadership cause one to self-destruct or is it a source of greatness?

The answer, of course, is that there are two types of leaders. There are those leaders who seek positions of leadership primarily as a way of helping others; for whom no sacrifice is too great because their quest for leadership is borne out of a love for the people and community. Given the opportunity to do more they shine and achieve greatness. Not that the course

of their leadership will be easy and without frustration. In fact, leadership can be very painful (as mentioned above, Moshe asks Hashem to kill him before He punishes Bnei Yisroel – presumably so that Moshe won't have to endure the pain of watching Bnei Yisroel suffer). Nevertheless, at the end of the day, these leaders are fulfilled by being able to help others. By contrast, there are others who seek positions of leadership primarily as a means to fulfilling their own ambitions. Yes they agree to serve the people, but their personal agenda is always in the foreground. This kind of leader will be destroyed when accepting the yoke of communal responsibility because being a servant of the people is exactly that – servitude not lordship (see Talmud Horayos 10a).

To fully understand Yehoshua's concern about Eldad and Medad and why he reacts so violently, we must consider the current events at the time. According to Ibn Ezra (and others), the whole sad chapter of Korach and his uprising took place in the weeks before this incident. Rashi also states that the reason Korach was so infuriated was that he felt personally cheated by the appointment of his cousin (instead of him) to head the tribe of Levi – an event that happened in the prior month. Although Rashi seems to hold that the parts of the rebellion took place after the story of the spies, he also states that Korach's rebellion began in Chatzeiros (right after the story of the quail).

Yehoshua must have known about Korach's dissatisfaction and rabble rousing. Perhaps, Yehoshua thought that Eldad and Medad were also trying to undermine Moshe Rabbeinu (one of the opinions in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 17a) holds that they were prophesying the death of Moshe). Yehoshua understood that the only way to deal with these types of personalities is to give them exactly what they desire. That would ensure their destruction and put an end to their challenge to Moshe.

Free for All

Moshe heard the people weeping by their families, each one at the entrance of his tent [...] (11:10).

This week's parsha lists various complaints that Bnei Yisroel leveled at Hashem/Moshe. One of the issues that they complained bitterly about was the miraculous מַן (manna).

Remarkably, one of the pesukim (11:10) that seemingly describes the depths of their unhappiness with the מַן is actually interpreted by Chazal in an entirely different direction.

The Gemara (Shabbos 130a) states: "Any mitzvah that Bnei Yisroel accepted in a quarrelsome manner, such as the prohibition against incestuous relationships, as the Torah (ibid) states, 'Moshe heard the people weeping by their families' (they were weeping because they had been prohibited from marrying their family members) is likewise still fulfilled while quarreling; for there is no kesuvah (marriage contract) that doesn't cause the parties to quarrel."

This seems to be a little odd. After all, a wedding is a time of great happiness. Why should a kesuvah cause quarreling more than any other financial arrangement? Furthermore, what does

this have to do with the fact that they were bitter about the prohibition against incestuous relationships?

We must begin by examining the root cause for having forbidden relationships in the first place. Ramban in Parshas Achrei Mos posits that it would only be natural for people to choose their closest relatives as mates. For example, many of the complications of trying to merge two disparate families, disparate cultures, or dealing with inheritance issues would dissipate if a man were to marry his sister. Why are we forbidden to marry our closest relatives?

In Bereishis (2:18) Hashem said, "it is not good for man to be alone, I will make a compatible helper for him." Rashi there explains that if man were self-sufficient he would be comparing himself to God. Just as God is one above, man is one below. In other words, man would consider himself more or less equal to God on the plane below. This would cause man to become totally egocentric and self-centered.

Therefore, Hashem created a partner for man, someone he would have to merge with to balance him out and become a helpmate and an opposing opinion. This "merger" requires a true partner, one who is a totally separate entity and would not be swallowed up by the merger. Our closest relatives are ones that we are overly familiar with, if we go into our sister's home we feel perfectly comfortable opening the refrigerator and helping ourselves to whatever we want. That is, we would always take what we want because it is just an extension of ourselves. The same is true, of course, with parents, children, aunts, uncles, etc.

On the face of it, completing the kesuvah at a wedding is a very odd custom; imagine if at every non-Jewish wedding there would be a public reading of a financial arrangement (such as a prenup) between the bride and groom. All of the guests would feel uncomfortable and it would be inappropriate. Why is the kesuvah such a central part of the Jewish wedding? The ultimate expression that we are merging with an outside party is the kesuvah. It is a reminder that the husband cannot just be a taker, like one living in a parents' home. The kesuvah is a testament to the fact that the husband has real responsibilities as a giver. It's a reminder that the husband is merging with someone who isn't just an extension of himself; he now has to negotiate his life within someone else's space. Every kesuvah is a reminder of this concept, and can easily become a source of conflict. In this way, the kesuvah becomes the de facto definition of a Jewish marriage.

From Alan Fisher <AFisherADS@Yahoo.com>

Potomac Torah Study Center

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Behaalotecha. Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org.

Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

Hamas continues to manipulate the media while pretending to negotiate with Israel. Hersh Polin Goldberg, cousin of very

close friends of ours and a U.S. citizen, remains a captive. Concerns are increasing that fewer than half of the hostages are still alive. We continue our prayers for the hostages and all our people stuck in Gaza. May our people in Israel wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully – with the continued help of Hashem.

Behaalotecha is a long, complex parsha with numerous episodes and a complete change in mood. The parsha opens with excitement while B’Nai Yisrael complete final preparations to leave the base of Har Sinai and start the final eleven day march to Eretz Yisrael. The sixth aliyah opens with two pasookim in inverted nuns (like brackets) describing how the journey starts and should have gone. Suddenly, without warning, some people start complaining, without any specific reason. Both Hashem and Moshe furiously call this behavior evil. The people complain about eating only manna – Hashem’s food – and long for the variety of foods that they ate in Egypt (while slaves!).

Rabbi David Fohrman and his scholars at alephbeta.org explain that the people who try to grind, pound, and bake the manna, hoping to make it into cakes, are rejecting a gift of pure food from heaven, a treasure from Hashem. This behavior parallels the behavior of Adam and Chava Rishon in Gan Eden. God gives them a choice of any food in the garden, except for the fruit from one special tree. Of course, that is the food that the Rishon family wants, and as a result they are no longer able to live in Hashem’s special place.

Before leaving the camp, the people are excited to be going to the land that Hashem had promised to their ancestors. After starting the journey and complaining, there is a recurring theme of gathering. The people gather manna and quail.

At God’s command, Moshe gathers seventy elders to share the burden of playing nursemaid to the people. After Miriam and Aharon complain about Moshe no longer performing the role of husband to Tziporah, the people wait a week and then “gather” Miriam back to the camp. “Asaf,” the root of the word to gather, which appears as a leitmotif in the parsha, is the term that the Torah uses for a person who dies. The parsha that opens with hope ends with images of death.

Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander, Rosh Yeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone, focuses on the message of Behaalotecha for us today. God directs Moshe to make a pair of silver trumpets to call the people for important announcements. Each generation must craft its own trumpets. Rabbi Brander explains that the needs of the community change over time. The spiritual needs of B’Nai Yisrael during Yehoshua’s leadership are different from what they need during Moshe’s generation. These needs change constantly. Today our people need spiritual leadership, including special trumpet sounds, to help us grow as a people and a Divine Nation. Rabbi Yehoshua Gordon, z”l, focuses on Pesach Sheni, the second chance for those who are tamai and cannot participate in the Korban Pesach with the community

and their families. Pesach Sheni is a second chance. The Rebbe reminds us that the theme of Pesach Sheni is that it is never too late to return to Judaism. In the Midbar, Dan, a large tribe (in population) would travel at the rear and act as a lost and found, picking up items that any of the people lose and returning them to the proper owners. Dan represents the message of Pesach Sheni, always give our people a second chance, an opportunity to repent and return to B’Nai Yisrael.

Although Behaalotecha has positive messages for us, it is the beginning of the end of the generation of the Exodus. Behaalotecha ends with Miriam’s tzaraat for speaking lashon hora. In Shelach, God punishes the ten Meraglim who commit lashon hora against Eretz Yisrael. Shelach concludes with the mitzvah of tzitzit. Korach ridicules Moshe with the requirement of tzitzit at the corners of our garments and concludes that it is ridiculous to require tzitzit for a garment that is completely blue. The thematic connections among these parashot demonstrate that they are closely connected. When Miriam ends up with tzaraat, she must stay outside the camp for seven days. The people wait that week until she recovers. Rabbi Yitzchok Magriso, an 18th Century author from Constantinople, studied the dates and locations of the people at the time carefully and discovered that Miriam’s tzaraat (chapter 12), the departure of the Meraglim (chapter 13), and Korach’s rebellion (chapter 16) all take place during a single week, between 22 and 29 Sivan in the second year after the Exodus. (See Torah Anthology 13: 333-34.) After the Torah reports the law of the Red Heifer (chapter 19), there is a 38 year gap, and the Torah resumes at chapter 20 with the events of the final year. Behaalotecha, Shelach, and Korach fill out the implications of the complaints of the people that start as soon as B’Nai Yisrael leave the base of Har Sinai for the final journey to Eretz Yisrael. The leitmotif of asaf, gathering, shows that the doom of the generation of the Exodus starts as soon as the people look for reasons to complain. By the end of Korach, this generation’s fate of dying in the desert is clear. It will be their children’s generation that will finally be worthy of entering and taking over the land that Hashem had promised to our Avot.

Shabbat Shalom, Hannah and Alan Fisher