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from: The **Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust** <info@rabbisacks.org>
subject: Covenant and Conversation COVENANT &
CONVERSATION Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l
The Spirituality of Listening EIKEV Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

It is one of the most important words in Judaism, and also one of the least understood. Its two most famous occurrences are in last week's parsha and this week's: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4), and "It shall come to pass if you surely listen to My commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul" (Deut. 11:13) – the openings of the first and second paragraphs of the Shema. It also appears in the first line of the parsha: "It shall come to pass, if you listen to these laws" (Deut. 7:12). The word, of course, is shema. I have argued elsewhere[1] that it is fundamentally untranslatable into English since it means so many things: to hear, to listen, to pay attention, to understand, to internalise, to respond, to obey. It is one of the motif-words of the book of Devarim, where it appears no less than 92 times – more than in any other book of the Torah.

Time and again in the last month of his life Moses told the people, Shema: listen, heed, pay attention. Hear what I am saying. Hear what God is saying. Listen to what he wants from us. If you would only listen ... Judaism is a religion of listening. This is one of its most original contributions to civilisation.

The twin foundations on which Western culture was built were ancient Greece and ancient Israel. They could not have been more different. Greece was a profoundly visual culture. Its greatest achievements had to do with the eye, with seeing. It produced some of the greatest art, sculpture, and architecture the world has ever seen. Its most characteristic group events – theatrical performances and the Olympic games – were spectacles: performances that were watched. Plato thought of knowledge as a kind of depth vision, seeing beneath the surface to the true form of things.

This idea – that knowing is seeing – remains the dominant metaphor in the West even today. We speak of insight, foresight, and hindsight. We offer an observation. We adopt a perspective. We illustrate. We illuminate. We shed light on an issue. When we understand something, we say, "I see." [2] Judaism offered a radical alternative. It is faith in a God we cannot see, a God who cannot be represented visually. The very act of making a graven image – a visual symbol – is a form of idolatry. As Moses reminded the people in last week's parsha, when the Israelites had a direct encounter with God at Mount Sinai, "You heard the sound of words, but saw no image; there was only a voice." (Deut. 4:12). God communicates in sounds, not sights. He speaks. He commands. He calls. That is why the supreme religious act is shema. When God speaks, we listen. When He commands, we try to obey. Rabbi David Cohen (1887–1972), known as the Nazirite, a disciple of Rav Kook and the father of R. Shear-Yashuv Cohen, Chief Rabbi of Haifa, pointed out that in the Babylonian Talmud all the metaphors of understanding are based not on seeing but on hearing. Ta shema, "come and hear." Ka mashma lan, "It teaches us this." Shema mina, "Infer from this." Lo shemiyah lei, "He did not agree." A traditional teaching is called shamaytta, "that which was heard." And so on. [3] All of these are variations on the word shema. [4] This may seem like a small difference, but it is in fact a huge one. For the Greeks, the ideal form of knowledge involved detachment. There is the one who sees, the subject, and there is that which is seen, the object, and they belong to two different realms. A person who looks at a painting or a sculpture or a play in a theatre or the Olympic games is not an active part of the art or the drama or the athletic competition. They are acting as a spectator, not a participant. Speaking and listening are not forms of detachment. They are forms of engagement. They create a relationship. The Hebrew word for knowledge, da'at, implies involvement, closeness, intimacy. "And Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived

and gave birth” (Gen. 4:1). That is knowing in the Hebrew sense, not the Greek. We can enter into a relationship with God, even though He is infinite and we are finite, because we are linked by words. In revelation, God speaks to us. In prayer, we speak to God. If you want to understand any relationship, between husband and wife, or parent and child, or employer and employee, pay close attention to how they speak and listen to one another. Ignore everything else.

The Greeks taught us the forms of knowledge that come from observing and inferring, namely science and philosophy. The first scientists and the first philosophers came from Greece from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE.

But not everything can be understood by seeing and appearances alone. There is a powerful story about this told in the first book of Samuel. Saul, Israel’s first king, looked the part. He was tall. “From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people,” (1 Sam. 9:2, 1 Sam. 10:23). He was the image of a king. But morally, temperamentally, he was not a leader at all; he was a follower.

God then told Samuel to anoint another king in his place, and told him it would be one of the children of Jesse. Samuel went to Jesse and was struck by the appearance of one of his sons, Eliab. He thought he must be the one God meant. But God said to him, “Do not be impressed by his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. God does not see as people do. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

Jews and Judaism taught that we cannot see God, but we can hear Him and He hears us. It is through the word – speaking and listening – that we can have an intimate relationship with God as our parent, our partner, our sovereign, the One who loves us and whom we love. We cannot demonstrate God scientifically. We cannot prove God logically. These are Greek, not Jewish, modes of thought. I believe that from a Jewish perspective, trying to prove the existence of God logically or scientifically is a mistaken enterprise.[5] God is not an object but a subject. The Jewish mode is to relate to God in intimacy and love, as well as awe and reverence.

One fascinating modern example came from a Jew who, for much of his life, was estranged from Judaism, namely Sigmund Freud. He called psychoanalysis the “speaking cure”, but it is better described as the “listening cure.”[6] It is based on the fact that active listening is in itself therapeutic. It was only after the spread of psychoanalysis, especially in America, that the phrase “I hear you” came into the English language as a way of communicating empathy.[7]

There is something profoundly spiritual about listening. It is the most effective form of conflict resolution I know. Many things can create conflict, but what sustains it is the feeling on the part of at least one of the parties that they have not been heard. They have not been listened to. We have not “heard their pain”. There has been a failure of empathy. That is why

the use of force – or for that matter, boycotts – to resolve conflict is so profoundly self-defeating. It may suppress it for a while, but it will return, often more intense than before. Job, who has suffered unjustly, is unmoved by the arguments of his comforters. It is not that he insists on being right: what he wants is to be heard. Not by accident does justice presuppose the rule of *audi alteram partem*, “Hear the other side.”

Listening lies at the very heart of relationship. It means that we are open to the other, that we respect them, that their perceptions and feelings matter to us. We give them permission to be honest, even if this means making ourselves vulnerable in so doing. A good parent listens to their child. A good employer listens to their workers. A good company listens to its customers or clients. A good leader listens to those they are leading. Listening does not mean agreeing but it does mean caring. Listening is the climate in which love and respect grow.

In Judaism we believe that our relationship with God is an ongoing tutorial in our relationships with other people. How can we expect God to listen to us if we fail to listen to our spouse, our children, or those affected by our work? And how can we expect to encounter God if we have not learned to listen. On Mount Horeb, God taught Elijah that He was not in the whirlwind, the earthquake or the fire, but in the *kol demamah dakah*, the “still, small voice” (I Kings 19:12) that I define as a voice you can only hear if you are listening. Crowds are moved by great speakers, but lives are changed by great listeners. Whether between us and God or us and other people, listening is the prelude to love.[8]

[1] See *Covenant & Conversation on Mishpatim*: “Doing and Hearing.” [2] See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, 1980. [3] This appears in the opening pages of his work, *Kol Nevuah*. [4] To be sure, the *Zohar* uses a visual term, *ta chazi*, “Come and see.” There is a broad kinship between Jewish mysticism and Platonic or neo-Platonic thought. For both, knowing is a form of depth-seeing. [5] Indeed, many of the great medieval Jewish philosophers did just that. They did so under the influence of neo-Platonic and neo-Aristotelian thought, itself mediated by the great philosophers of Islam. The exception was Judah Halevi in *The Kuzari*. [6] See Adam Philips, *Equals*, London, Faber and Faber, 2002, xii. See also Salman Akhtar, *Listening to Others: Developmental and Clinical Aspects of Empathy and Attunement*. Lanham: Jason Aronson, 2007. [7] Note that there is a difference between empathy and sympathy. Saying “I hear you” is a way of indicating – sincerely or otherwise – that I take note of your feelings, not that I necessarily agree with them or you. [8] For more on the theme of listening, see above, *Covenant & Conversation on parshat Bereishit*, “The Art of Listening,” and on parshat *Bamidbar*, “The Sound of Silence.”

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein **Home Weekly Parsha EIKEV Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog**

The parsha this week ties together the observance of the Torah commandments, especially the warnings against paganism and idolatry, with the earthly blessings of longevity and prosperity. Over the ages this has caused great philosophic debate and discussion, for this cause and effect relationship is not always apparent in the national or personal lives of the Jewish people. Many commentators hasten to add that these promises refer to biblical times when the Divine Spirit was palpably present amongst the Jewish community and the spirit of prophecy was also prevalent in the Land of Israel. This means that it was applicable to First Temple times only, for in Second Temple times the spirit of prophecy was absent in the Jewish commonwealth. Perhaps this is an insight as to why the rabbis attributed the destruction of the First Temple primarily to idolatry – a fulfillment of the cause-and-effect system of justice as outlined in this week's parsha – while the demise of the Second Temple was attributed to social dispute and baseless hatred, an issue never specifically mentioned in this week's Torah presentation.

It appears that different equations, moral gauges and causes affected the Jewish commonwealth's spiritual status during Second Temple times than were present in First Temple times when prophecy and Divine Spirit were current and abundantly visible. In any event, it is apparent that the direct cause and effect relationship between observance of God's commandments and blessings and prosperity and disobedience causing punishment and disaster has not always been evident in the annals of Jewish history, especially in our long years of exile and persecution. The very fact that the Torah this week makes this cause-and-effect relationship so patently clear, and repeats itself many times, raises the age-old problem of why the righteous suffer and the wicked are rewarded, in this world at least. This basic faith dilemma has its biblical origins in the book of Iyov where the problem is raised but basically left unanswered.

Over the long Jewish exile with its attendant difficulties and pogroms this gnawing problem of faith has always accompanied us in every generation and circumstance. The events of the Holocaust, almost unimaginable in its numbers and horror, has certainly been a test of faith for many Jews, even for those who themselves were spared that actual experience. Yet the faith of Israel is that somehow in the unfathomable system of God's justice, all will be set right. This is the main message of this week. It informs us that our actions have consequences and that there is a guiding hand to Jewish and world history and events that will eventually reveal itself. So our task remains, as it always was – to fulfill God's

commandments and to behave morally and justly. The whole system of God's justice, opaque as it may seem to us to be, is simply to remind us of our potential and greatness, of the importance of our behavior in the grand scheme of things, and to reinforce our sense of destiny as individuals and as a people. Shabat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org> date: Aug 3, 2023, 1:43 AM subject: Rav Kook on Eikev: Blessings Over Bread and Torah

Rav Kook Torah Eikev: Blessings Over Bread and Torah
Bread and Torah Two Blessings from the Torah Most blessings are of rabbinical origin. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule — blessings that are derived directly from the Torah itself. The first is Birkat Hamazon, recited after meals; the second is the blessing said before learning Torah. The obligation to bless God after eating bread is stated explicitly: "When you eat and are satisfied, you must bless the Lord your God..." (Deut. 8:10).

The Sages derived the blessing before studying Torah from the verse, "When I proclaim God's name [or: when I read God's teaching], praise our God for His greatness" (Deut. 32:3). These two blessings differ not only in the source for our feelings of gratitude — one is for physical nourishment, the other for spiritual sustenance — but also in when they are said. Why is Birkat Hamazon recited after the meal, while the blessing for Torah study is recited before studying?

Two Benefits of Food We derive two benefits from food. The first is our enjoyment from the act of eating, especially if the food is tasty. This is a fleeting pleasure, but it nonetheless deserves to be acknowledged. The primary benefit from eating, however, is the sustenance it gives our bodies, enabling us to continue living. This primary benefit reflects the nutritional value of the food, regardless of its taste.

Our recognition of the principal benefit of eating should take place after the meal, when the body digests and absorbs the food. Since Birkat Hamazon expresses our gratitude for physical sustenance, its logical place is at the end of the meal. Parenthetically, there are also blessings that are recited before eating. These blessings are in recognition of our pleasure in the act of eating itself. We acknowledge this secondary benefit of eating with rabbinically-ordained blessings.

Two Benefits of Torah Study Torah study also provides us with two benefits. The first is the knowledge acquired in practical areas of Halachah, enabling us to live our lives according to the Torah's wisdom.

The second benefit lies in the very act of learning Torah. Torah study in itself is a tremendous gift, even if it does not provide any practical applications. When we learn Torah, the soul is elevated as our minds absorb the sublime word of God.

Which benefit is greater? The Sages taught that the unique sanctity of the Torah itself is higher than all deeds that come

from its study: "One who studies Torah for its own sake is raised and uplifted above all actions" (Avot 6:1). The benefit of practical knowledge is important, but is only a secondary gain.

Therefore, we recite the blessing over Torah before studying. If the blessing was meant to acknowledge the practical benefit of how to perform mitzvot, then it would be said afterwards, since this Halachic knowledge is gained as a result of Torah study. But the blessing over Torah refers to the principal gift of Torah study. When we bless God before studying, we acknowledge the spiritual elevation that we enjoy in the very act of contemplating God's Torah.

Now we can understand why the source in the Torah for this blessing reads, "When I proclaim God's name." Why does the verse refer to the Torah as "God's name"? This blessing requires that we recognize the sublime inner essence of the Torah as "God's name." With awareness of this truth, Torah study can enlighten and uplift us "above all actions." (Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 307-309; adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I, p. 103 on Berachot 20.)

From: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net> reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net date: Aug 3, 2023, 8:45 PM subject: Why Israel Must **Reclaim Its Soul Now - Essay by Rabbi YY** Why Israel Must Reclaim Its Soul Now The Split In Israel: Hatikvah Vs. Bentching

On August 24, 1929 (on the **18th day of the Hebrew month of Av**), the Hebron Massacre claimed the lives of 67 Jews. They were axed to death. Since that black day, nine decades later, Jews have not known a day of peace in the Holy Land. Today, deep rifts have opened in Israeli society. The split between the Right and the Left is growing. But a nation that has existed for four millennia has one advantage: perspective. Let us attempt to gain perspective, as we embark on a journey through biblical thought, Talmudic wisdom, Zionist doctrine, and the facts on the ground.

Grace After Meals

In Deuteronomy, in this week's Torah portion (Eikev), the Torah instructs us to bless G-d after eating a satiating meal. "You will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless your G-d for the wonderful land that He gave you[1]."

Thus was invented the ritual of "benching" (Yiddish for blessing), or "grace after meals," recited after every meal of bread, and consisting of a number of sections, or blessings. In the first blessing, we express gratitude for the resources G-d created in the world to nourish His creatures. The second blessing is a thank you for the beautiful land that He gave the Jewish people. In the third, we give thanks and pray for Jerusalem. These three blessings were fashioned to echo the biblical injunction "You will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless your G-d for the wonderful land that He gave

you," linking gratitude for a meal with gratitude for the soil which produced the meal[2].

Yet there is a strange law associated with this ritual. The Talmud states[3] that the second blessing, in which we express our gratefulness for the land, must include a few words about the Covenant G-d made with the first Jew, Abraham. In this Covenant, recorded in Genesis, G-d promised Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan as an inheritance to his descendants (the circumcision of every Jewish male baby represents this Covenant). What is more, in this blessing we must also make mention of the Torah, the divine constitution for the Jewish people, which promises -- scores of times -- the land of Canaan to the Jews.

In other words, the sages are suggesting, it is necessary not only to thank G-d for the beautiful land itself, but we also must articulate the source for our rights for this land: the Abrahamic Covenant and the Torah. Hence, the standard version of the grace after meals: "We offer thanks to You, Lord our G-d, for having given us as a heritage to our ancestors a precious, good and spacious land... for your Covenant which you have sealed in our flesh, and for Your Torah which You have taught us." Benching Vs. Hatikvah

The Talmud is so emphatic about the inclusion of these two concepts -- the Covenant and the Torah -- that it states[4]: "Whoever did not mention the Covenant and the Torah in the blessing for the land (the second blessing in the grace after meals) did not fulfill his obligation." This person must repeat his grace after meals.

This seems strange. The Torah merely states, "You will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless your G-d for the wonderful land that He gave you." The Torah just wants us to express appreciation for the land. Period. Why the absolute necessity to mention the Abrahamic Covenant and the Torah? What is wrong with a simple offering of thanks for a beautiful national homeland?

In fact, the Israeli national anthem, adorning countless Jewish functions over the past 75 years, does just that. It speaks of "The 2,000-year-old Jewish hope to be a free people in its land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem." It makes no mention of G-d's Covenant with Abraham or the Torah as the moral grounds for establishing the modern State of Israel.

Similarly, the signers of the Israeli Declaration of Independence, drawn up in May 1948, made no mention of G-d or Torah. After much debate, it was agreed upon to insert the ambiguous phrase "The Rock of Israel (Tzur Yisrael)," to be interpreted as one desired. "Placing our trust in the Rock of Israel, we set our hand and testimony to this Declaration, here on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this day, the eve of the Sabbath, 5 Iyar 5708, 14 May 1948."

This seems like a rational approach. Why mix religion and statehood? For a democracy to flourish, liberal pluralism must be maintained. Church and state need to be separated.

Introducing biblical notions into the Zionist endeavor would only undermine Israel's success as a liberal democracy. Nachman Syrkin, the preeminent theorist of Zionist socialism, once remarked: "Religion is the major impediment confronting the Jewish nation on the road to culture, science, and freedom."

Torah Vs. the UN

Yet the Talmudic rabbis, 1,800 years ago, apparently understood something about the Jewish psyche and Middle Eastern politics that eluded many of the founders of modern Israel.

The contemporary political conversation has many of us convinced that if Israel would withdraw to its pre-1967 borders, Palestinians will at last make peace with the Jewish state. Hence, the praise in the world and Israeli media for the Gaza evacuation in August 2005: It is a step in the right direction, the beginning of the end of Israeli occupation, and the first mile in the road toward reconciliation and co-existence.

Yet these hopes totally insult Palestinians by making a mockery of their explicitly stated dreams and beliefs. Their words, repeated by their leaders time and time again, leave no room for doubt. "All of Palestine belongs to us," is the Palestinian message. Palestinian leader Abu Mazan said that the Gaza departure was the beginning of a process that would result in all of the Arab refugees returning to their homes of pre-1948.

That is why there was no peace before the 1967 war, a time of no Jewish settlements and no settlers. Gaza belonged to Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem to Jordan, and the Golan Heights to Syria. Why did six Arab countries decide to invade and exterminate Israel? Because, in their belief, the entire Zionist entity is illegal. All of Israel rests on occupied Arab land. According to the Koran, Jews have no right to establish a self-governed homeland on Islamic soil.

This is why following the Gaza evacuation in August 2005, till today, Israel did not enjoy a day of serenity from the new residents of Gaza. Instead of showing the slightest appreciation for Israel ceding all of Gaza, tens of thousands of rockets have been launched with the intent to murder as many Jewish civilians as possible.

Have you heard any Muslim leader suggest that Jews are not, by their very existence on Middle Eastern soil, occupying land that does not belong to them?

Only when Israel ceases to exist will the occupation cease. This is why ceding Gaza and even all of the West Bank and Eastern Jerusalem to Palestinians will not bring about peace. Peace will not come about by Israel giving away territory. Peace will arrive when responsible Arab leaders will reform Palestinian culture so as to not see the Jew as the "devil" and Israel as the "enemy of Allah." Peace will come when the world, instead of pressuring Israel to cede territory, pressures

Palestinian educators and parents to teach tolerance, respect, and civil morality. Till that day comes, Israel's giving away of land will only intoxicate Palestinians with the hope that their agenda of freeing all of Palestine from the Zionist enemy is doable.

The UN and the State Department are apparently not daunted by the "minor" detail that half of the eventual "Palestine" is controlled by the terrorist group Hamas, which clearly states its objective to exterminate all of Israel.

Whose Home Is It?

Yet here is what makes this apparently straightforward idea so complicated. If Muslims in Detroit would begin blowing up busses or pizza shops and demanding a Palestinian State in Michigan, no one would question America's right to eliminate the terrorists and not cede even an inch of land to them. When an enemy wishes to destroy you, you must eliminate it. The reason Israel is treated so differently is because many see Israel as a "partner in crime." Some Palestinians may be terrorists but Israel, too, shares in the guilt. It is an occupying state.

No one doubts that Michigan belongs to the United States. Hence, their right to fight for it and squelch any attempt to seize it. However in the case of Israel, the matter is about the question, does Israel have a right to defend itself while dwelling on stolen property?

Where exactly does Israel draw the line and declare, "From here on we are legal?" And based on which moral grounds can these lines be drawn?

The distinction between post-1967 Israel and pre-1967 Israel is artificial and mythical. The Arabs say that all of Israel is occupied. We must confront the painful truth: If the Jews living in Gaza, West Bank, and Eastern Jerusalem are occupiers, then the Jews living in Tel-Aviv, Yaffa, Haifa, and Rosh Pinah are the same occupiers. Many a city in pre-1967 Israel used to be Arab settlements, now occupied by Israel. According to Arab doctrine, Jews, especially European Jews, are a foreign implant, outsiders who have colonized and occupied native Arab land since 1948. All the reasonable arguments in the world and all the UN resolutions combined will not change the belief that Jews are thieves, occupying the land of millions of displaced Arabs. Is it fair that because the Europeans were guilt-ridden after the Holocaust and were kind enough to give the Jews a slice of the Middle East, the Arabs have to pay the price and suffer?

The Moral Foundation

Here lies one of the greatest failures of secular Zionism. Its philosophy did not possess the tools to instill within its children the moral foundations for calling Israel a Jewish homeland.

If the Jewish people's connection to the soil between Jordan and the Mediterranean stems merely from Theodore Herzl's Zionist dream to give displaced and exiled Jews a national

identity, endorsed by the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1947 United Nations' partition plan, their connection to the land remains fragile and ambiguous. When Palestinians scream "You are stealing our land," and the international community thunders, "Stop the occupation," we have lost the argument. Yet the critical point is missing. For 3300 years, Jews breathed and lived with the conviction that the Creator of the world designated one piece of earth for them. Even in the most hellish moments of Jewish exile, the people of the Book clung to their faith that one day they would return to their Divinely promised land. The only reason Jews returned from Odessa, Vilna, and Warsaw to Israel was because of their passion and belief that the Creator of heaven and earth chose to give His Holy Land to the children of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob, as stated hundreds of times in the Bible. There are three billion people in the world who believe in the Bible, who live with the Bible, and who quote the Bible. Secular Zionists should not have been afraid to bequeath this tradition and faith to their children, for this, and only this, is the moral justification for a Jewish presence in the Holy Land -- in Jerusalem, Hebron, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Gaza all the same.

Paradoxically, it seems the world is waiting for this. Not only the Christian and Islamic world, who view the Bible as the definition of truth. Even the secular world, seems to respect Jews who respect themselves and their faith. The world is waiting for Israel to treat the Land the way Israel should be treated, as G-d's personal gift to the Jewish people.

Blessing or Curse?

That is why the sages said that "Whoever did not mention the Covenant and the Torah in the blessing for the land did not fulfill his obligation." If our sense of gratitude and connection to the land is based on the divine Covenant with Abraham and the Torah, it will remain passionate, morally inspired, and eternal. If not, our loyalty to our homeland hangs on a thread. The Talmudic sages keenly grasped that if the thankfulness of the Jew for the Land of Israel is not based on the covenant G-d crafted with Abraham some 3,700 years ago, and on the Torah, the 3,300-year-old blueprint for Jewish existence, we might one day feel unappreciative -- rather than grateful -- for the homeland flowing with milk and honey. We might feel compelled to rid ourselves of it.

The Sun and the Moon

The Talmud states[5], "Moses is the face of the sun; Joshua is the face of the moon." What is the symbolism behind this poetic statement?

One explanation might be this:

Moses represents Torah; Joshua embodies the Land of Israel.

Moses gave us the Torah; Joshua gave us Israel.

The light of the moon is beautiful, soothing, and romantic.

Moonlight has inspired many an imagination and a heart. Yet the glow of the moon is merely a reflection of the sun. As long as the moon reflects the sun's glow, it casts upon the earth its

own unique poetic luminescence; if the moon is separated from its source of light -- as is the case in a lunar eclipse -- it becomes a large chunk of dark and rocky matter.

The relationship between Moses, the face of the Torah, and Joshua, the face of Jewish statehood, is that of the sun and the moon. As long as Israel reflects Torah -- its faith, its dreams, and its passions -- it is hard to find something more beautiful and inspiring. When Israel, however, ceases to see itself as a reflection of the Torah, but rather as a secular national homeland for Jews, a member of the United Nations, it loses much of its inner glow and beauty. Its very identity and future are put into question.

Every nation needs a soul. Even Israel. And the soul of the Jewish people for 4,000 years has been the Torah.

We cannot afford to lose our soul now. If we get it, the world will get it.

[1] Deuteronomy 7:10. [2] Thus, the first three blessings are biblically required. In the city of Yabneh, around 100 CE, the sages added a fourth blessing, thanking G-d for His kindness during the times of exile following the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (Talmud Berachos 48b). [3] Talmud ibid. [4] Talmud ibid. 49a. [5] Bava Basra 75b.

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/not-on-bread-alone/ending-gracefully-birkat-hamazon/2023/08/04/>

Ending Gracefully: Birkat HaMazon

By **Eliezer Meir Saidel** - 17 Av 5783 -- August 4, 2023 0

Eliezer Meir Saidel (emsaidel@gmail.com) is Managing Director of research institute Machon Lechem Hapanim www.machonlechemhapanim.org and owner of the Jewish Baking Center www.jewishbakingcenter.com which researches and bakes traditional Jewish historical and contemporary bread. His sefer "Meir Panim" is the first book dedicated entirely to the subject of the Lechem Hapanim.

Home in Alon Shvut Photo Credit: Asher Schwartz The Arizal (Rabbi Isaac Luria) explains the true essence of food. On the one hand, you have the physical food -- the skin, flesh, bones, seeds, crust, etc. These are physical manifestations. Just like our bodies are physical manifestations but are only an outer shell for the neshama, so too are the physical manifestations of the food an outer shell for a spiritual essence that exists in every food we eat. The food exists only because Hashem created it, not only during the six days of Creation but every day. A grape grows on Hashem's command, as does a wheat kernel. Every food embodies both the physical shell and the spiritual essence. When we eat food, it nourishes both parts of us, the physical nourishing the physical and the spiritual nourishing the spiritual. We cannot exist with only one part of the equation. We need both to feed our physical bodies and our spiritual neshama. To bring out the spiritual essence, we recite blessings, asking permission before and thanking Hashem after eating food.

“And you shall eat and be satisfied and you shall bless the L-rd your G-d for the good earth He has given you” (Devarim 8:10).

Birkat HaMazon (Grace After Meals) is the only blessing we are obligated to recite D’Oraita, from the Torah, after eating at least a kezayit of bread. (Some opinions say this also applies to Birkat HaTorah (the blessings recited before and after reading the Torah.)

The text we have for Birkat HaMazon today is a cumulative effort. The Gemara says that Moshe Rabbeinu instituted the first blessing, “HaZan,” when we first received the manna. Yehoshua added the second bracha, “HaAretz,” when we entered Eretz Yisrael. Upon becoming king and making Jerusalem his capital, David HaMelech added “Al Yisrael Amecha Ve’Al Yerushalaim Irecha.” Shlomo HaMelech added, “Al HaBayit Ha’Gadol Veha’Kadosh” after the Beit HaMikdash was built. In Yavneh, they added “HaTov Veha’Meitiv” in memory of those killed in Beitar. In the centuries that followed, addenda for Shabbat, Festivals, Rosh Chodesh, the series of passages beginning with HaRachaman, prefaces for weddings, brit milah, etc., were also added according to different customs.

The first to fulfill the mitzvah of Birkat HaMazon, according to our Sages, was Avraham Avinu. In Be’er Sheva, Avraham established an inn in order to spread Hashem’s message in the world and make converts. When a hungry traveler was offered a free meal, he would willingly accept. After the meal, Avraham asked the guest to thank Hashem for the food. If he refused, he had to pay the full cost of the meal. It is not hard to figure out which option most chose. This prompted them to ask, “Who is this G-d you speak of?” and Avraham would explain: “The Creator of heaven and earth, the One who is responsible for the rain that makes the seed grow into our food.” Sarah Imeinu would similarly teach the women. The text of Birkat HaMazon before Moshe Rabbeinu was different, but the essence was the same – thanking G-d for the food you had just eaten.

The Sages and commentators go to great lengths to emphasize the importance and awesome power of Birkat HaMazon. Birkat HaMazon is one of the few mitzvot directly from the Torah that we have the privilege of fulfilling every day, sometimes more than once a day.

In the entire Birkat HaMazon, there is not one occurrence of the Hebrew letter “peh” at the end of a word. The reason it is absent (Rokeach 337, Tashbetz 315) is that the angels of destruction have names ending with this letter (Af, Shetzuf, Ketzuf, Anaf, Za’af, Negef, Reshef). According to the Mateh Moshe, the angel of death has no control over a person while he/she is saying Birkat HaMazon.

Someone who fulfills the mitzvah of Birkat HaMazon the correct way merits longevity (R’ Haim Palachi, Kol HaChaim) and good health (Maor VaShemesh).

The Sefer Hachinuch adds that someone who observes the mitzvah of Birkat HaMazon the correct way will merit livelihood with honor their entire life (from the verse in Proverbs 10:22).

The Maharsha says that providing a livelihood for a person is as difficult for Hashem as splitting the Red Sea because we all have prosecuting angels in Heaven and they pop up when Hashem wants to heap His abundance on us and they provide myriad reasons why He should not do so. Birkat HaMazon neutralizes these prosecutors.

The correct way of reciting Birkat HaMazon is: sitting down suitably attired without distractions with awe and reverence reading it from a written text saying it aloud with joy and singing. The Chassid Ya’avetz criticizes all those who invest lots of time and effort in preparing and eating/enjoying the food but not in saying Birkat HaMazon with the reverence it deserves.

With promises like that – guaranteed longevity, excellent health, livelihood and wealth – who wouldn’t want to bend over backward to fulfill this mitzvah the correct way as often as we possibly can? All it requires is for us to disconnect from everything else for seven minutes a day – no cell phones, no thoughts about anything except reading and singing Birkat HaMazon out loud with joy and in true appreciation for the meal we just ate

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/heavenly-protection/2023/08/03/>

Heavenly Protection

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser - 17 Av 5783 – August 3, 2023
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You will eat and you will be satisfied, and bless Hashem your G-d for the good Land that He gave you.” (Devarim 8:10)
This is the source in the Torah of the positive mitzvah to recite the Grace After Meals. Birkat HaMazon contains four blessings, though only three are Torah-mandated. The Talmud (Brachos 48b) expounds that the first blessing thanks Hashem for our sustenance; the second is the blessing of the land of our inheritance; and the third blessing refers to the rebuilding of Yerushalayim.

The fourth blessing is hatov v’hameitiv, thanking Hashem who is good and does good to all, and it was instituted by our sages in Yavneh to commemorate the miracle of the martyrs of Beitar.

The Talmud (Gittin 57a) relates that the people of Beitar joined Bar Kochba in rebelling against Roman rule 60 years after the destruction of the Second Temple. They were killed by the armies of Hadrian, and their bodies were not buried; instead, they were piled to form a wall around Hadrian’s large vineyard, which measured 18 mil by 18 mil (approximately 11.5 miles). The sages teach that their blood fertilized the fields for seven years.

The Talmud asks: The people of the city were righteous – why were they punished? Rav Yosef says it was because they did not mourn the destruction of the Temple. In the Talmud Yerushalmi (Taanis 4:5), Rav Yosef adds that the people lit lights, indicating unseemly festivities.

Several years later, when the slain of Beitar received a proper burial – one of the six joyous events on the 15th of Av – this blessing was instituted to thank Hashem for the fact that the corpses had not decomposed in all that time and were ultimately buried appropriately.

The question is asked: The death of the people of Beitar was a tragedy, and now they at least merited to be buried. Why do we make a blessing?

The Shvilei Pinchas explains that the essence of the miracle was to demonstrate the incredible hashgacha (Divine Providence). Although the people had to be punished, nevertheless Hashem guarded the corpses and they did not decay despite their years-long exposure to the elements.

What is the connection of this blessing to Birchas HaMazon?

The Baal HaTurim says it is a mussar haskel – a lesson in ethical and spiritual conduct. The Torah warns the Jewish People (Devarim 11:15-16), lest they be led astray and forget Hashem when they “eat and are satisfied,” i.e., when they are living securely and enjoying all of their physical comforts.

Even here, in the recitation of the Grace After Meals – after one is sated and content – one recalls Beitar so as not to forget Hashem.

The Meshech Chachmah comments that this is a blessing to counter despair as we await the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. It evokes hope and faith in the future, that He who is good and bestows good will fulfill His promise and “will forever bestow upon us grace, kindness, and mercy; relief, salvation and success; blessing and deliverance; consolation, livelihood and sustenance; compassion, life, peace, and all goodness.”

When Rav Yaakov Shapiro of Bnei Brak became seriously ill, he and his wife resolved that when he recuperated, they would dedicate themselves to the mitzvah of bikur cholim. Although Rav Yaakov did not merit to recover, his wife Rivka remained true to their commitment.

One day, Rivka was shocked to find a letter from a lawyer in her mail. A woman, Nadrina, claimed that Rivka owed her 30,000 shekel in backpay. A court date had been set, but Rivka had no money for lawyers. Moreover, Rivka asserted that no such woman had ever worked for her. Although her children wanted to accompany her to court, she declined their offers, but she finally agreed to allow her friend Bracha to be there with her.

The day before the scheduled court case, Bikur Cholim called to ask if Rivka could stay with a little girl whose family members were not available to stay the night in the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center.

The hospital was not far from the courthouse, so Rivka spent the entire night in the Medical Center attending to the little girl. When the little girl’s grandmother came to take her place, she urged Rivka to allow her son, Yitzchak, to take her back home to Bnei Brak.

“It’s not necessary,” said Rivka, “I have to go to the court right now and it will only take about ten minutes to get there.”

Rivka began to explain the odd predicament in which she found herself. At that point, Yitzchak interjected that he would take her to the courthouse and help her straighten out the matter.

They met Bracha in the lobby and as they rode up to the courtroom, Yitzchak took the lead. He said he would go into the courtroom by himself, and only after about seven minutes had elapsed should Bracha come in. “You, Mrs. Shapiro,” he said, “should only come in when I come out to get you.”

Court started promptly. The judge asked if the plaintiff was present and Nadrina, standing next to her lawyer, raised her hand.

“Where is the defendant, Rivka Shapiro?” asked the judge.

Yitzchak said, “She was delayed a moment, but she is coming in right now.”

Bracha entered, on cue, as she had been instructed by Yitzchak.

“Do you recognize her?” the judge asked the plaintiff.

“Of course,” said Nadrina. “I worked for her for ten years. How would I not recognize her?”

The judge asked Bracha to produce her identification. “It says here Bracha Levy,” said the judge, and he began to laugh.

Yitzchak then went to the back of the courtroom and opened the door for Rivka, who produced her identification.

“It seems to me that you worked for the lady for ten years, but you don’t even know how this woman looks,” said the judge.

The case was over before it began.

from: **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky** <rmk@torah.org>
reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: drasha@torah.org date:
Aug 3, 2023, 11:51 AM subject: Drasha - Killer Torah **Drasha**
By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Eikev Killer Torah This week’s portion is called Ekev. Simply translated, Ekev means, “if”. The Torah promises its bounty of blessing upon the Jewish nation. Hashem will watch you, love you, bless your children and your flocks — in addition to five other verses all filled with various blessings. There is one caveat, however. These blessing are only bestowed with one condition — “Ekev tishmaon,” if you shall listen to the word of Hashem and fulfill his commandments. Rashi, who usually concentrates on the simple explanations and clarifies nuances in Hebrew terminology, deviates from his norm. In his only commentary to the opening line of the portion, he translates the word Ekev in an entirely different light. He explains that the word ekev translates as

heel. Thus, he explains the verse homiletically. “If you will observe Mitzvos that are ordinarily trampled on by the heel of your foot,” then the blessings of Hashem shall follow. Many commentaries pose the following question: Rashi’s usual modus operandi is to first explain a verse in its pashut p’shat, simple explanation. That achieved, he then proceeds to expound the verse in a Midrashic light. In this case, Rashi uses only a Midrashic explanation. Why? Rav Eliyahu Lopian raised funds for his Yeshiva in England. He once visited one of England’s wealthiest Jews. The man was known to contribute to any Yeshiva or Rabbi who asked. The man himself, however, was not the least bit observant. Other than his adoration of Rabbis and support of Yeshivos, the philanthropist had hardly a connection with anything Jewish. Rabbi Lopian went to visit the man out of respect, but decided not ask him for a contribution. Upon arriving at the opulent mansion, Rav Lopian was greeted warmly, offered hot tea, and was shown to a place in the man’s living room. Rabbi Lopian got to the point quickly. “I see that you are not an observant Jew. However, your magnanimity to Yeshivos and Rabbis is remarkable. Tell me, please, why?” The man settled back and began his tale. “My parents were very wealthy and equally religious. I was very rebellious. They wanted me to go to the Chofetz Chaim’s Yeshiva in Radin. I was not in the least bit interested, but I agreed to take an examination. I failed with flying colors and was ever the more happy for that. But I had one request. It was getting late and I had to sleep over. I asked if I could sleep in the dormitory for the evening. The Rabbi who had interviewed me did not know how to respond. I think he was afraid to have me in the Yeshiva even for a night and I could not blame him! He consulted with the Chofetz Chaim. “The Chofetz Chaim explained to us both, ‘a boy that cannot be in the dorm for a year cannot be there for a night. But that does not mean he cannot stay in my home.’ “The Chofetz Chaim took me to his home. He fed me as if I was the most important visitor in the world. He made a bed for me and made sure I went to sleep. A few hours later, in the middle of the night, I heard the door of the tiny room open. The old man was muttering. ‘Oy, it’s too cold in here. What will I do?’ With that he took off his jacket and put it on top of me and tucked it in. It may not have been the most spiritual act he ever did, but I will tell you one thing. That jacket still gives me warmth whenever I see old Rabbis! Perhaps Rashi is not expostulating. He is telling us the secret of spiritual survival. He is relating the formula that may be the secret to the Jew’s existence and continuity. It’s the small things that merit the blessings. It’s the Mitzvos we tend to forget. Those we trample with our heel. There are certain Mitzvos that anyone who prides himself as a Jew would not forgo. Yom Kippur and Passover are high on the list. Mezuzah and Kosher rank quite high, too. But there are too many others that get trampled. Rashi explains the verse by stating that if the little Mitzvos are ignored, it will not take

long before the major Mitzvos join the little ones on their trek to oblivion. The Torah promises us the bounty of its blessing if we observe the mitzvos. But Rashi gives us a lesson in assuring continuity. Rashi is telling us the Poshut P’shat (the simple meaning)! Don’t tread on the little Mitzvos. Watch the Mitzvos that everyone tends to forget. If those heel commandments will be considered important, then all the Mitzvos will ultimately be observed. That’s not allegorical discourse. That’s the fact! The above story, related by Rabbi Y. Rottenberg, was printed in Shaarei Armon – on the Yomin Noraim (c) 1993 Tvuna Pub. Israel Dedicated by B. David & Shani Schreiber Good Shabbos!

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>

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Weekly Chumash Shiur

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman – Parshas Eikev 5783

1 – Topic – Yerushalayim

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Eikev and I speak to you from the center of HKB”H’s universe right here in Yerushalayim in Yeshivas Ohr Sameach which this year also has nearly 50 young men from Torah Vodaath 11th and 12th graders who came with their Menahel Rabbi Efraim Glassman to spend a few weeks here in Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh. Since Parshas Eikev is much about Eretz Yisrael, I would like to share with you a thought that is very appropriate for Eretz Yisrael. I would like to do it by teaching you a little bit of Nach. This Nach is from the beginning of Malachi and it is actually the Haftorah of Parshas Toldos. We have all read the Haftorah of Parshas Toldos which talks about the love Hashem has for Yaakov as opposed to HKB”H’s relationship with Eisav. However, if you read the Haftorah, there are some difficulties as I would like to explain.

Hashem says to Malachi the Navi, 1:2 (אֶהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל), G-d says to the Jewish people I love you. (וְאַמְרָתֶם בְּמֶה אֶהְיֶה לָנוּ). Klal Yisrael asks, in what way are we able to see the love of HKB”H. HKB”H says contrast Yaakov with Eisav. He says 1:3 (וְאָשִׁים אֶת-הָרְיִי (שְׂנֵאתִי) וְאָשִׁים אֶת-הָרְיִי (שְׂנֵאתִי)). I have a hatred for Eisav. (וְאָשִׁים אֶת-הָרְיִי (שְׂנֵאתִי)). I made his mountains destroyed and desolate. (לְתַנּוּת מִדְבָּר). His land has turned into a place of desert serpents. You see what happened to Eisav.

I don’t understand, the same thing happened to Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael at the time of the Churban also turned into a desolate place. Har Habayis turned into a place that (שׁוֹעֵלִים בּוֹ). The same descriptions are used there. How do we say to Klal Yisrael that I love you and I have a hatred for Eisav? 1:2 (הֲלוֹא-אֶחָ עָשָׂו לִי-עֵקֵב נָאִם-יְרֵרָה, וְאֶהְיֶה אֶת-יַעֲקֹב). How do you know that? (וְאָשִׁים אֶת-הָרְיִי (שְׂנֵאתִי); וְאָשִׁים אֶת-הָרְיִי (שְׂנֵאתִי)). His mountains are desolate. The Harei Eretz Yisrael were also made desolate, as we say in the additions to the Tefillah on Tisha B’av. So what is the Nevua here I love you as opposed to Eisav? Eisav

has a Churban, what do you mean, Klal Yisrael has a Churban too? What is Pshat in Malachi's Nevua?

The answer is that you have to know who Malachi was and at what time he said this Nevua. Chaggai, Zecharia and Malachi were the final Neviim. They were Neviim at the beginning of Bayis Sheini just when the Bayis was being built. At that time Klal Yisrael was returning to Eretz Yisrael. The Nevua of Malachi is not just (אָת-עֲשׂוֹ, שְׁנֵאתָי; וְאֶשִׁים אֶת-הָרִיו שְׁמֵמָה, וְאֶת-) (נִחַלְתוּ לַתְּנוּת מִדְבָּר (1:4), when Edom says (רָשָׁנוּ) we have been destroyed, (וְנָשׁוּב וְנִבְנֶה חֲרֻבוֹת) and we will go back and rebuild the ruin. (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, הִמָּה) (יָבֹנוּ וְאָנִי אֶבְרֹס). HKB"Y says to Edom it will not be, you will never rebuild. In that way, we have to look around. Says Malachi, look Klal Yisrael is returning, Klal Yisrael is coming back. The message of (עֲשׂוֹ, שְׁנֵאתָי) and (אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶתְכֶם) is not that Klal Yisrael didn't have Churbanos. Klal Yisrael had terrible Churbanos. The Churban in the Holocaust was unparalleled for any other nation in the world. The fact that there were Churbanos for Eisav proves nothing. The proof is says Malachi because Eisav says (רָשָׁנוּ) we have been knocked down and we will rebuild again. In history it has not happened that a nation is destroyed, a nation is chased out of its land, a nation is gone and gone for a long period of time and it comes back, it returned. Says Malachi to the people of his generation, 1:5 (וְעֵינֵיכֶם, תִּרְאֶינָה). You will see with your own eyes. (יְגַדֵּל יְהוָה, מַעַל לְגִבּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל), and you will say (יְגַדֵּל יְהוָה, מַעַל לְגִבּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל), on the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael. This is what Malachi is saying to the people of his time. Hear it, (אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶתְכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה).

Now if Malachi could say this after a 70 year Galus, what should we be saying when we see Eretz Yisrael after a Galus of 20 centuries? What should we say, the unlikely event of Klal Yisrael returning. It has never happened. It hasn't happened that a nation has gone and has come back. L'havdil, the Indians are not coming back and rebuilding an Indian civilization here in this country. No such thing is happening in any place in the world. (אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶתְכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה). You walk around Eretz Yisrael and you see what there is to see. It is just absolutely incredible.

I have the Zechus to be here with my grandson. He asked me to go for a walk. I said wait, I have to give a Shiur on the phone. I will take him for a walk. I will take him for a walk to show him what Meah Shearim looks like on a Thursday night. An army of Bnei Torah, an army of Ohavei Hashem and Yir'ai Hashem, incredible. It hasn't existed.

Here in Yerushalayim I have found a print of Kol Kisvei Chofetz Chaim that was put out I believe that it was published in 1990. It has something that I have never seen before. It has a collection of letters from the Chofetz Chaim. The letters are sorted by topic. They have letters about the Chofetz Chaim's desire to come to Eretz Yisrael. They got a letter from two

families that the Chofetz Chaim corresponded with. The first part of the story when he wanted to come and his wife became ill two days before they left is known and it is in the biography of the Chofetz Chaim.

There is another letter. In the biography of the Chofetz Chaim it says that the Chofetz Chaim considered going again 3 or 4 years after his wife's illness. It doesn't say why he didn't go. Here, there is a letter from the Chofetz Chaim where he writes that the poverty and hunger in Yerushalayim is so great that it is impossible to go to Yerushalayim even if I can get there. It is a place of terrible poverty. Yerushalayim is place where people don't have what to eat. When you read that as I did sitting here in a Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael, which is one of many, with plenty of food three times a day. There is leftovers, there is plenty of food. The Beracha that Yerushalayim has. A person sitting here has to stop and think (אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶתְכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה). This is what HKB"Y is saying. (וְעֵינֵיכֶם, תִּרְאֶינָה), your eyes will see. (וְאֶתֶם תֹּאמְרוּ), and you should say, (יְגַדֵּל יְהוָה, מַעַל לְגִבּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל). This is the sense of a person who is here in Eretz Yisrael. This is a way of cheating and getting you to learn six Pesukim of Malachi, and at the same time having a proper appreciation of Artzeinu Hakedosha.

2 – Topic – Yerushalayim

(Ed. Note: Ayin Parshas Re'eh 5781). I often mention that Monday is Yom Yerushalayim for us. We say a Yom that talks about Yerushalayim. Unfortunately most Jews, even Frum Jews read the Yom without any idea of what they are saying. But we know when we say (יְפֵה נוֹף מְשׁוּשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ), the beautiful city that gives joy to the whole land and we talk about the description of Yerushalayim in the Yom, we have a feeling, a longing for Yerushalayim.

I would like to add a Nekuda. (יְפֵה נוֹף) means the beautiful city. The Gemara Darshuns in Rosh Hashana 26a (3 lines from the bottom) says (יְפֵה נוֹף) that (נוֹף) also means Kallah so that it is a bride. (כַּשְׁהַלְכְתִּי לַחֲחוּם קָן נִשְׂרִיִּיא הִיוּ קוֹרִין לְכֻלָּה נִינְפִי). In certain places they would call a Kallah Ninfi. (יְפֵה נוֹף) the beautiful Kallah. So the Gemara is saying poetically that Yerushalayim is the Kallah of the Jewish people. What does that mean that Yerushalayim is the Kallah? It is a nice thing to say, but people and people are a pair not people and a city.

We find another Kallah. We find that Shabbos is considered a Kallah to Klal Yisrael. Shabbos Kodesh is considered a Kallah. How is Shabbos a Kallah to Klal Yisrael? So there, we do find in Chazal that Shabbos complained that every day of the week has a pair, has a second day which is its mate so to speak and me Shabbos is the odd man out as I am number seven and I have no match. HKB"Y said Klal Yisrael is going to be your Zivug, is going to be your match. What does that mean that the days of the week are a Zivug or a match, a bride or groom to each other?

Let me explain what it really means. I have seen this explanation in the name of the GR"A. The six days of the

week are mates. He says what are the pairs of days, it is not Sunday and Monday as a pair, Tuesday and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. No. He says it goes as follows. Sunday Hashem separated the heaven from the earth. On Monday HKB”H separated the water, the Mayim Tachtonim and the Mayim Elyonim and created the oceans and the seas and the rivers. On the third day HKB”H created the vegetation, the trees, everything that grows.

Now those three days each created a certain potential. There is a heaven, there is an earth. So what if there is a heaven and there is an earth? What does that do? On Wednesday, the fourth day, Hashem created the Zivug for Sunday. So that Sunday Hashem created the heavens which is a certain potential and on Wednesday Hashem created the heavenly body, the sun, the moon, the stars, all of which serve as a purpose for mankind, for human beings. On the second day Hashem created the ocean. There is a lot of potential in the body of ocean. The Zug for day 2 is day 5, on the 5th day Hashem created the fish, all the creatures that live in the water, and the birds which we understand are created from a combination of Aretz and Mayim. Which the Baalei Machshava explain that on the third day Hashem created the habitable land, the vegetation, the trees and the Zug to that is the 6th day. So that, the first goes with the fourth, the second day with the fifth, the third day with the sixth. Human beings and animals were created on the sixth day who benefit from the vegetation and the growth of that which is created on the third day. So each of the first three days is potential and it has a Zivug, it has a match.

Now the words of Chazal make a lot of sense. When Chazal tell us that Shabbos complained I have no Zivug, what does Shabbos need a Shidduch, why does Shabbos need Shidduchim? This is because Shabbos is Malei potential, it is full of potential. So Shabbos said who is going to make use of my potential? So Hashem said your Kallah is the Jewish people. The Jewish people are going to make the most of Shabbos. That is the Zivug. Not every Jew makes use of that potential. Not every husband and wife have the awareness to take the potential they give each other and make it positive. But intelligent people do. And so too, thinking people take the Shabbos Kodesh not as a day of Cholent and sleeping, and reading the newspaper over and over. They take it as a day of Kedusha, a day to go to the Beis Medrash, a day to Daven a Geshmake Davening, a day to spend time with friends and people who need the friendship of a Shabbos Kodesh. The same thing is true about Yerushalayim. Eretz Yisrael is Malei potential. It has a closeness to heaven. It has a sense of Kedusha. Somebody comes here and wants, the Davening is a different Davening, the learning is a different kind of learning. The walking in the streets, a person who walks the streets of Yerushalayim and takes a moment to look around to see and appreciate where he is walking, it brings him closer to

Shamayim, it brings him closer to heaven. Eretz Yisrael is in space what Shabbos is in time.

Eretz Yisrael is the place where a person can be connected to Shamayim. It is our challenge. Just like Shabbos is the day to connect to HKB”H, we spend more time in Shul, we spend more time learning, we spend more time doing Mitzvos. So too, visiting or living in Eretz Yisrael is in space what Shabbos is in time. It is the potential. It is the ability to come here and to connect to the Ribbono Shel Olam, to feel the Kedusha, to walk in the streets and look at the Lichtige faces of Yidden in Eretz Yisrael. Millions of Yidden Boruch Hashem in Eretz Yisrael. All types of Yidden in Eretz Yisrael. They are certainly tremendous Mevakshei Hashem in the neighborhoods where I am Zoche to stay. Tremendous Mevakshei Hashem. You come here, you have to make use of it.

Does everyone use the Shabbos? No! Some people are going to come to the day of judgement and Hashem will say okay you were working all week. What happened to Shabbos? You are not going to know what to say. G-d is going to say all week you spent 7 – 10 hours traveling and working. You were off that amount of time on Shabbos. Why didn't you use those hours for me? The person's mouth will hang open and so sadly he won't know what to say. What did he do with his Shabbos? How can he explain what he did with his Shabbos?

Hashem will put him in a Gehinnom. The Gehinnom will be that he will be in a place that is full of Ruchnios and he will have to sit at the table and read the same Yated over and over and over. Like a fool. His Neshama is going to cry. Rachmana Litz'lon. That is what you want to be? That is what you use Shabbos for?

The same thing is true about Yerushalayim. You come to Eretz Yisrael and that is what you use Yerushalayim for? You are coming to Yerushalayim to go boating, to go jeeping, to go funning and eating? That is what you use Yerushalayim for? Yerushalayim is a place of great Kedusha. Admire Eretz Yisrael. Admire the army of G-d fearing Jews that are here. What a beautiful thing.

When the state was established in '48, people complained to Ben Gurion that he is giving control to the Orthodox over certain things in the country. Ben Gurion famously wrote to them three words. Chakei Od Dor. Wait one more generation. He was sure that one generation later Rachmana Litz'lon that the Chareidim would be gone, they would all be part of the society of this country. Look what happened. Baruch Hashem we have grown, we spread, we flourished, we have Yeshivos. You go out and you see armies of people. Chakei Od Dor. Now the same people are saying Chakei Od Dor, wait one more generation and the Frum are going to be the majority of Eretz Yisrael. They are so scared that in their mind such a thing could happen. Chakei Od Dor. We have to go see it and appreciate it. We have to befriend those here who are not Yir'ai Hashem, who are not fortunate enough that they had the

training to be Yir'ai Hashem or the Yeitzer Hora not to be. We have to see the beauty of the land that we are in. So the Navi calls out to you, the Navi Malachi was 2,400 years ago. He calls out to you and he says to you (נְעִינֶיכֶם, תִּרְאִינָהּ). You will see with your own eyes. (לְגִבּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶהְבֶּתִי אֶתְכֶם (אָמַר יְרֵר).

I have to tell you that Eretz Yisrael is more beautiful than ever. Yerushalayim is more beautiful than ever. Taking Seforim and learning here, besides the regular Limudim, learning other Limudim here, everything is just so Geshmak.

And so, prepare for that day. You will come to Eretz Yisrael, someday you will come by Yemos Hamashiach. You don't want them to park you in jeeps. Moshiach will come and will say, go where you went. Why are you going in a jeep, Moshiach is here? Moshe Rabbeinu will be giving Shiur. No, you have to go in a jeep. Go into a Beis Medrash. Join me and have an absolutely wonderful Shabbos Kodesh, just like we prepare for our spouse the Heilige Shabbos, we should prepare for our spouse the Heilige Eretz Yisrael, all of us together B'karov. A Gutten Shabbos!

from: **Rabbi Kaganoff** <ymkaganoff@gmail.com> reply-to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com date: Aug 1, 2023, 10:32 AM subject: Sheva Berachos

Sheva Berachos

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Is it yours? The wedding ceremony begins with two berachos recited by the mesadar kiddushin. Should he tell the chosson to have in mind to fulfill these berachos?

Question #2: Wine on top or bottom? Which is the first of the sheva berachos?

Question #3: Is this deliberate inconsistency? Some of the sheva berachos begin with the words Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam and others don't. Some of them end with Boruch Attah Hashem and a closing, whereas others don't. Is there any rhyme or reason to this seeming chaos?

Introduction: The time in between the Three Weeks and the Yamim Noraim is a popular time to schedule weddings. We find a source for the recitation of sheva berachos in a discussion in Mesechta Kallah. In parshas Chayei Sarah, the Torah discusses the trip that Eliezer takes to find a wife for Yitzchok. Shortly before Rivkah leaves to marry Yitzchok, the Torah mentions that her family blesses her (Bereishis 24:60). In reference to this posuk, we find the following passage at the beginning of Mesechta Kallah: "Where is a source in the Torah for the blessings [which we call the 'sheva berachos'] given to the bride: And they blessed Rivkah." The Mesechta Kallah retorts, "Did Rivkah's family use a cup [of wine when they blessed her]?" Since they did not, this verse is not a source for sheva berachos, but only an allusion to the mitzvah. In

conclusion, the Mesechta Kallah and the Gemara (Kesubos 7b) derive the mitzvah of sheva berachos from other pesukim. Erusin and nesuin There are two stages to a Jewish wedding, and each has its appropriate berachos. The first stage, kiddushin or erusin (not to be confused with the Modern Hebrew word erusin, which means "engagement"), is when the chosson places the wedding ring on the kallah's finger. The second step, nesuin, focuses on the chupah, the kesubah, the sheva berachos and the yichud that takes place immediately after the chupah. In Talmudic times, these two stages were conducted separately – often as much as a year apart. Today, they are conducted as one long ceremony. Each of the two stages has its own berachos, which I will discuss shortly. Birkos erusin Prior to the chosson explaining to the witnesses why he is placing a ring on the kallah's finger, two berachos are recited, borei peri hagafen and the beracha called birkas erusin. They are said by the mesader kiddushin -- the rosh yeshivah, rav or other talmid chacham -- who is "performing the ceremony," as people say in English, or, more accurately, the one who is responsible to make sure that everything is done according to correct halachic practice. According to the Rambam's opinion, the birkas erusin is a birkas hamitzvah, a beracha recited before fulfilling a mitzvah, and that, therefore, it should be recited by the chosson (Shu"t Harambam, quoted by Shu"t Noda Beyehudah Tinyana, Even Ha'ezer, #1). A second approach is that, although the birkas erusin is a birkas hamitzvah, the mesader kiddushin recites the beracha, rather than the chosson, to avoid embarrassing a chosson who does not know the beracha by heart (Even Ha'ezer, Taz 34:1; Beis Shmuel, 34:2). Remember that, in earlier days, there were no printed works, and berachos were recited from memory. Thus, many chassanim would not know, by heart, the somewhat complicated and uncommon beracha that is recited before the erusin. Therefore, the mesader kiddushin is motzi the chosson with the beracha, and the chosson, also, should have in mind to be included in the birkas erusin (Shu"t Noda Beyehudah ad loc.). A third approach disagrees, concluding that the birkas erusin is not a birkas hamitzvah and that, therefore, there is no need for the mesader kiddushin to be motzi the chosson when reciting this beracha (Shu"t Har Tzvi, Orach Chayim #44, quoting many earlier sources). Who drinks the wine? When the mesader kiddushin recites the beracha on the cup of wine, he gives the cup (usually via the parents) to the chosson and kallah, who sip from the cup. Since we may not drink or eat without first reciting a beracha (Berachos 35a), the chosson and kallah should be included in the beracha hagafen of the mesader kiddushin. Thus, we can examine our opening question: The wedding ceremony begins with two berachos recited by the mesader kiddushin. Should he tell the chosson to have in mind to fulfill these berachos? The answer is that he should tell both the chosson and the kallah to have in mind to fulfill their requirement to recite hagafen. Whether he should

also tell the chosson to have in mind to fulfill birkas erusin is disputed.

Text of birkas erusin The Gemara (Kesubos 7b) records a dispute regarding the text of birkas erusin. The first opinion cites the following text: Baruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu al ha'arayos, ve'asar lanu es ha'arusos, ve'hitir lanu es hanesuos lanu al yedei chupah vekiddushin. The second opinion, that of Rav Acha the son of Rava, contends that we add to the above text a conclusion, baruch Attah Hashem mekadeish amo Yisrael al yedei chupah vekiddushin. The first opinion rules that this beracha does not require a concluding part, just as berachos prior to performing mitzvos and prior to eating are berachos structured simply, without any conclusion. Rav Acha the son of Rava disagrees, contending that birkas erusin should be treated like the beracha of Kiddush, which has a concluding beracha, Baruch Attah Hashem mekadeish hashabbos. Why does Rav Acha the son of Rava compare birkas erusin to the beracha of Kiddush? This topic is a subject of dispute. Rashi explains that mentioning the sanctity of the Jewish people, mekadeish amo Yisrael al yedei chupah vekiddushin, is similar in concept to mentioning the sanctity of Shabbos, and therefore this beracha has the added mention of Hashem's Name at the end. Tosafos explains that both these berachos, Kiddush and birkas erusin, contain multiple themes and, therefore, require a closing beracha also. Birkas nisuin Birkas nisuin is another way of referring to what we usually call the "sheva berachos." These berachos are recited as part of the wedding ceremony, or, more accurately, as part of the nisuin, second part of that program. The sheva berachos are also recited at banquets held in honor of the newly married couple. Six or seven Although we are accustomed to referring to this series of berachos as "sheva berachos," people are surprised to discover that this term is of relatively late origin. This is because the Gemara cites a dispute as to how many berachos are recited. When we look at the wording of the berachos, we see that two of them, Asher yatzar es ha'adam, and Yotzeir ha'adam, begin with almost identical statements. The Gemara cites a dispute whether we should, indeed, recite both of these berachos, or just the longer one, Asher yatzar es ha'adam. The dispute concerns whether the way man and woman were originally created should require one beracha or two. According to the opinion that this requires only one beracha, there is no beracha Yotzeir ha'adam and, therefore, there are less than seven berachos. Out of order Since we recite both berachos, Asher yatzar es ha'adam, and Yotzeir ha'adam, we have six berachos, plus the beracha on wine, for a total of seven (that is why we call it sheva berachos). Under the chupah, the first of the seven berachos recited is the beracha on the wine. However, when sheva berachos is recited after a meal celebrated in honor of the new couple, the hagafen is recited after the other berachos. Why is the order changed? The Beis

Shmuel (62:2) explains that hagafen should really be recited first, as it is during the wedding ceremony, because it is recited more frequently, and the rule is tadir ushe'eino tadir, tadir kodem, that which is recited more frequently comes first (Mishnah Zevachim 89a). However, when reciting hagafen after the celebratory meal, someone might think we recite a beracha over wine only because of the bensching, and not because of the nuptials. In order to clarify that the wine is brought, also, because of the wedding celebration, we postpone its beracha until the end of the sheva berachos. Where's the wine? When sheva berachos are recited at the end of a meal, the prevalent custom is to bring three kosos, and fill two of them to the top with wine. One of the filled kosos is held by the person leading the bensching while the second is left on the table until bensching is completed, and then held by each of the honorees who recite the berachos. When those six berachos have been recited, the person who led the bensching recites the beracha of hagafen, pours a bit from his kos into the empty cup, and drinks the majority of the wine in his kos. The wine from the sheva berachos kos and the small amount of wine that was poured into the third kos are then mixed together, and the wine in the two kosos is presented to the chosson and the kallah to drink (Aruch Hashulchan, Even Ha'ezer 62:18). Some poskim recommend that the honoree leading the bensching hold the kos to be used for the sheva berachos while reciting the prayer dvei hoseir, which is inserted before bensching at a sheva berachos meal, and, then, put that kos down and pick up the first kos for bensching (Taz, Even Ha'ezer 62:7). I have never seen anyone follow this practice (see Derisha, Even Ha'ezer 62:4 who disagrees with the Taz's practice). According to a third opinion, the second kos should not be filled until after bensching is completed (Magen Avraham 147:11 and Be'er Heiteiv, Even Ha'ezer 62:11).

According to all three approaches we have mentioned, bensching is recited over one kos, and sheva berachos over a different cup. Why do we use two different kosos? Why not use the same goblet for both bensching and sheva berachos? The poskim dispute this issue: The Gemara (Pesachim 102b) teaches that if someone bensches and recites Kiddush at the same time, he should not recite both blessings over the same cup. Rather, he should recite Kiddush holding one cup of wine and bensch while holding a different one. The Gemara asks why we take two different cups, and answers that we do not "bundle mitzvos together." Using the same kos for both mitzvos implies that we view these mitzvos as a burden, rather than respecting each mitzvah with its own goblet of wine. However, when Yom Tov falls on a Sunday, we recite Kiddush of Yom Tov and Havdalah of Shabbos over the same goblet. This is not considered bundling mitzvos together, since Kiddush and Havdalah are considered one topic (Pesachim 102b).

Are birkas nisuin and bensching considered one topic, or two? This is a dispute discussed in Tosafos (Pesachim 102b s.v. she'ein), in which the first opinion views bensching and sheva berachos over the same cup as bundling mitzvos together, and therefore separate kosos need to be used for bensching and sheva berachos. Rabbeinu Meshulam, however, maintains that this is not considered bundling mitzvossince, without bensching, we do not recite sheva berachos. According to Rabbeinu Meshulam, we fill one goblet with wine and hand it to the person leading the bensching. When he finishes bensching, he hands the kos to the honoree who recites the first of the sheva berachos, who hands it to the next honoree to recite the next beracha, and so on. Eventually, the kos returns to the person who led the bensching, who holds the kos while reciting borei peri hagafen.

The Shulchan Aruch (Even Ha'ezer 62:9) quotes both opinions and observes that custom is to use only one cup for both bensching and sheva berachos, following Rabbeinu Meshulam, which apparently was the prevalent practice among Sefardim at the time of the Shulchan Aruch. The Rema notes that the custom among Ashkenazim is to use two different goblets. The Chida (Shu"t Yosef Ometz #47) notes that, although at the time of the Shulchan Aruch, the custom among Sefardim was to recite the sheva berachos on the same goblet as the bensching, in the Chida's day, a separate goblet was used for sheva berachos. Other Sefardic authors of the last several hundred years (see Otzar Haposkim 62:9:53) record two customs, some following Rabbeinu Meshulam (following Shulchan Aruch) and others using separate cups for the two mitzvos (following Chida).

Inconsistent berachos At this point, let us look at our third opening question. "Some of the sheva berachos begin with the words Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, and others don't. Some of them end with Boruch Attah Hashem and a closing, whereas others don't. Is there a rhyme or reason to this seeming chaos?"

The structures of the six birkas nisuin appear to be inconsistent. The first two, Sheha'kol bara lichvodo, "that everything was created in His Honor," and Yotzeir ha'adam, "the Creator of man," are structured the same way as our berachos before eating food and most of our berachos before performing mitzvos: we recite the words Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam and then the short closing of the beracha (sheha'kol bara lichvodo or yotzeir ha'adam). However, the third and the sixth berachos both begin with the words Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam and also have closings: Boruch Attah Hashem yotzeir ha'adam and Boruch Attah Hashem mesamayach chosson im hakallah, respectively. To make matters more confusing, the fourth and fifth berachos that begin with the words sos tasis and samayach tesamach do not begin with Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, but conclude with Boruch Attah

Hashem, similar to the structure of the berachos of the shemoneh esrei. So we are faced with an obvious question: Why does this series of berachos contain such a potpourri of beracha structures? Among the rishonim, we find several answers to this question. Tosafos (Kesubos 8a s.v. shehakol) explains that, indeed, most of the berachos should have only an ending and no beginning beracha, as we have in the shemoneh esrei. However, since two of the berachos, Sheha'kol bara lichvodo and Yotzeir ha'adam are so small, not providing them with a full beracha would make them almost unnoticeable. Similarly, the beracha Asher yatzar, whose theme is so similar to the beracha before it, Yotzeir ha'adam, would appear to be a continuation of that beracha, if it did not begin with the words Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam. Furthermore, Rabbeinu Chananel explains that, since the recital of the beracha Yotzeir ha'adam, itself, was the subject of a dispute, to emphasize that it is a beracha by itself, it includes the full statement Boruch Attah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam. Tosafos explains further that the beracha Asher bara, the last of the berachos, is sometimes the only beracha that is recited. For example, when there are no new participants, called panim chadashos, this beracha is recited, notwithstanding that the others of the sheva berachos are not. For this reason, it is treated as a full, independent beracha, with both a full beginning and an ending. Rashi presents a more detailed approach. He notes that although all these berachos are recited together, as if they are one unit, most of them are really different berachos on different aspects of the simcha. For example, Sheha'kol bara lichvodo, "that everything was created in His Honor," is really a beracha on the beauty of having so many people joining together to celebrate a mitzvah, and should have been recited as soon as one saw all the assembled people. However, since the other berachos are recited over wine, the independent beracha of Sheka'kol bara lichvodo is included with the other berachos, so that everyone should focus on it. This is similar to the berachos of Havdalah -- which include a beracha on the fragrance and a beracha on the candle -- each of which is, really, a separate beracha that we combine together on the cup of wine in order to focus on all the berachos at one time. Wrong order If someone recited the berachos out of order, he should not repeat a beracha, but should recite the skipped beracha and then proceed to recite the remaining berachos that have, as yet, not been said. Similarly, if the honoree began saying the wrong beracha, and already recited Hashem's Name, he should complete the beracha he has begun, the omitted beracha should then be said, followed by the remaining berachos. If someone began reciting either the beracha of Sos tasis or Samayach tesamach, which do not begin with Hashem's Name, out of order, and has not yet recited Hashem's Name which appears at the end of the beracha, he should stop and recite the correct beracha, in the usual order (Amudei Apiryon, page 76).

Conclusion Above, I quoted Rashi's explanation that the beracha, Shehakol bara lich'vodo, is really for the gathering of the people and not directly associated to the wedding that is taking place. The Hafla'ah (Kesubos 8a) offers a different approach, which makes the beracha directly relevant to the nuptials. Hashem created His entire world for His Honor, and the last of his Creation was man. Man is, of course, imperfect until he is married, which is the celebration of the wedding. Thus, sheva berachos celebrates the completion of Hashem's Creation!

Pshuto Shel Mikra in Ekev Inbox

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PSHUTO SHEL MIKRA From the Teachings of **Rav Yehuda Copperman zt"l**

PARSHAT EKEV

Lashon Tzivui vs. Lashon Sippur — Imperative Form vs. Narrative Form

וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ

And to serve Him with all of your heart (Devarim 11:13)

The Source for the Mitzvah of Tefillah Anyone who is asked the question, “What is the source for the mitzvah of tefillah in the Torah?” will probably respond by quoting three words from our Parsha (11:13), “וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ” — and to serve Him with all your heart,” adding the comment of the Sifrei (Devarim, siman 41): “This refers to tefillah.” To support this teaching we would cite the words of the Gemara in Masechet Taanit (2a), “איזו היא עבודה שבלב? זו תפילה” — what is ‘avodah of the heart’? This is tefillah.” However, when we consult the words of the Rambam in this matter, we will see that while the abovementioned sources may give us the definition of the mitzvah, they do not constitute a Torah commandment to fulfill the mitzvah.

The Rambam (Hilchot Tefillah 1:1) says: It is a positive mitzvah from the Torah to pray every day,[1] as it says (Shemot 23:25), “וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם” — You shall serve Hashem, your God.” Through tradition we have learned that the “avodah” here refers to tefillah, as it says, “וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ,” and the Chachamim explained (Taanit 2a) that this refers to tefillah.

Rav Yosef Karo, in his peirush Kesef Mishneh, asks a question: Why did the Rambam not write that the source of the mitzvah is from the words “וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ,” which explicitly refers to the mitzvah of tefillah? In other words, the question is, why did the Rambam mention the pasuk of “וְעַבַדְתֶּם,” which does not refer explicitly to tefillah, and then bring another pasuk that clarifies that the avodah here is in the heart, i.e., tefillah, when he could have simply just brought the pasuk of “וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ” itself, which would have told us everything?

The Kesef Mishneh answers:

The reason is because the pasuk of “וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ” is not a mitzvah — a commandment, but rather sippur devarim — a narration; וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַע תִּשְׁמָעוּ ... לְאַהֲבָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ ... וְנָתַתִּי מָטָר ... — If you will listen ... to love Hashem your God and to serve Him ... and I will provide rain for your land ... “ The fundamental principle we are being taught here is that a mitzvah of the Torah can only be derived from a pasuk that is phrased as a commandment. This is something that Rambam has set forth in the eighth of the fourteen shorashim with which he prefaced his Sefer HaMitzvot: It is not possible to introduce a commandment [that is to say, a positive mitzvah] within a pasuk of narrative ... and similarly, a prohibition will not appear within a narrative.

The Sefer HaChinuch In a similar vein, the Sefer HaChinuch (mitzvah 3) takes great care in explaining to us how to read the pasuk regarding the prohibition of Gid Hanasheh (Bereishit 32:33), “עַל כֵּן לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת גִּיד הַנֶּשֶׁה ... עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה” — Therefore, B'nei Yisrael shall not eat the gid hanasheh ... until this day.” These are his words:

Not to eat from the gid hanasheh, as it says “therefore, B'nei Yisrael shall not eat the gid hanasheh.” These words “לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ” — they shall not eat” were not said as a narrative, as if to say that since this episode happened to the father, the children refrain from eating the gid; rather, they are Hashem's commandment that it not be eaten.

The Sefer HaChinuch asserts, regarding the source of the mitzvah in Torah SheBichtav, that these words are a commandment[2] and not a narration.[3] [4] Faithful to his approach, the Sefer HaChinuch writes regarding the mitzvah of Milah:

Parshat Lech Lecha contains one mitzvah, namely, the mitzvah of milah, as it says (Bereishit 17:10), “זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו ביני וביניכם ומול בשר ערלתו” — this is My covenant that you shall uphold between Me and you and your descendants after you, every male among you shall be circumcised,” and [this mitzvah] was repeated in Parshat Tazria (Vayikra 12:3), “וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו” — and on the eighth day the flesh of his orlah shall be circumcised.” Many mitzvot are repeated in numerous places in the Torah, each time for a purpose, as our Chachamim, z”l, have explained them.

The Chinuch has taken pains to distance us from the misconception that the source for the mitzvah of milah is from Parshat Tazria (“after Matan Torah”), and not from Parshat Lech Lecha (“before Matan Torah”). This is simply not so! Parshat Tazria is not “after Matan Torah,” but rather “after Parshat Yitro.” Similarly, Parshat Lech Lecha is not “before Matan Torah,” it is simply “before Parshat Yitro.” Both of these parshiyot are part of Matan Torah, and both were transmitted, in the words of the Ramban in his introduction to Bereishit, “from Hashem's ‘Mouth’ to Moshe's ear.” It is

indeed true that the background to Parshat Lech Lecha is historical in nature, and therefore we could not learn the mitzvah of milah from the (narrative) pasuk (Bereishit 17:23), “וַיִּמַּל אֶת בְּשָׂר עֶרְלָתָם — and he [Avraham] circumcised the flesh of their orlah.” Nevertheless, an expression of Tzivui will obligate, even if the background is one of sippur, in the same way that an expression of sippur within a halachic section of the Torah (for example, “וַיִּצְלוּ עֹלֹת — and they offered burnt-offerings,” at the end of Parshat Mishpatim, 24:5) does not result in a mitzvah. We should note that there are numerous pesukim in that section of Parshat Lech Lecha that contain commands regarding milah. The Sefer HaChinuch clearly chose pasuk 10 as his source, since it is the first pasuk in that section that contains a commandment.

Building the Beit Hamikdash Based on this principle, the Kesef Mishneh similarly explains why the Rambam (Hilchot Beit HaBechirah 1:1) derived the mitzvah of building the Beit Hamikdash from the pasuk “וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ — they shall make Me a Mikdash” (Shemot 25:8), which was written within the context of the making the Mishkan in the desert, and not from the pasuk “וְהָיָה הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בּוֹ לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם — it shall be the place that Hashem your God shall choose to cause His Name to dwell there” (Devarim 12:11), which refers explicitly to the Beit Hamikdash in Eretz Yisrael. In fact, the Sefer Mitzvot Gadol (mitzvot aseh 163) mentions this second pasuk as the source for this particular mitzvah! However, the Rambam did not quote the pasuk in Devarim, since it is not written in the form of a commandment but rather describes the Beit Hamikdash as the setting for the bringing of korbanot. The Rambam quotes the pasuk in Shemot, which is stated as a commandment.[5]

A similar idea is found in the peirush of the Ritva to Masechet Yoma (24b), explaining how the Gemara states that lighting the Menorah is not considered an Avodah of the Mikdash, and even a non Kohen is qualified to light. This seems difficult in light of what is said clearly in the pasuk (Bamidbar 8:2) “דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּהִעָלְתָּךְ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת — speak to Aharon, and say to him, ‘when you kindle the lights’”!

To this the Ritva answers:

It is possible to suggest that it is for this reason the Torah did not express this as a commandment, i.e., “Speak to Aharon and he will kindle the lights,” in order to teach us that it is not an Avodah for which a non Kohen would incur liability if he performed it.

We find this idea discussed among the Acharonim as well. Thus, for example, Rav Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk, author of the Meshech Chochmah (Shemot 40:2), writes that the correct source for the halachah that building the Beit Hamikdash must be done by day and not by night (Masechet Shevuot 15b) is the pasuk “בַּיּוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן ... תָּקִים אֶת מִשְׁכַּן מוֹעֵד — on the day of the first month ... you shall set up the Mishkan” (Shemot, ibid.) and not the pasuk “בַּיּוֹם הַקָּדִים אֶת”

הַמִּשְׁכָּן — and on the day the Mishkan was set up” (Bamidbar 9:15), as the first pasuk is written in the form of tzivui, while the second pasuk is written in the form of sippur.

From all these examples we can see clearly that the way the Torah chooses to write something determines whether it obligates on a d’oraita level. Pesukim are deemed to be mitzvot only if they are written as commandments.

[1] This is as opposed to the opinion of the Ramban, who does not count the mitzvah of tefillah in the list of the Taryag. [2] [Reflected in the translation of the words “lo yochlu” as “shall not eat.”] [3] [In which case, the words “lo yochlu” would translate as “will not eat.”] [4] In our humble opinion, it may still be possible to explain the words “lo yochlu” as a narrative on the level of pshat, while the halachah explains it as a commandment, so that there is not necessarily a contradiction between the two peirushim. [5] See, however, Rashi’s comments to that pasuk (s.v. v’hayah); “Build for yourselves a Beit Hamikdash in Yerushalayim.” Nonetheless, it appears that Rashi’s intent is not to emphasize the mitzvah of building, but rather the place where it should be built, i.e., Yerushalayim.

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Parashas Eikev • August 4th • 17 Av 5783
Pirkei Avos: Chapter 4.
Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Gittin 80 • Yerushalmi: Kilayim 20 • Mishnah Yomis: Beitzah 4:2-3. The siyum on Masechta Beitzah is next Thursday, Mazal Tov! The next Masechta is Rosh Hashanah • Oraysa: Rosh Hashanah 25a & 25b
Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well!
Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Elul is next Shabbos Parashas Re'eh.

EIKEV: If you follow Hashem’s commandments, He will display his love for you and bless you • Do not be afraid of the nations • The nations of Canaan will be uprooted little by little to save you from the peril of wild animals • Do not be enticed by idols; destroy them completely • Remember these forty years • Remember the Mann - and that it is not food but Hashem’s word that sustains man • Hashem’s chastisements are those of a loving father • Hashem is bringing you to a good land especially blessed with the Shivas Haminim • Bircas Hamazon • Don’t forget Hashem when you prosper; recognize that everything is from Hashem • If you follow idols, Hashem will utterly destroy you • The great nations will be destroyed

because of their wickedness and not due to your righteousness
• Remember how you constantly provoked Hashem these past forty years (for example, at Taveira, Massah, Kivros HaTaavah and Kadeish Barnei'a) • When I witnessed the idol worship of the Eigel, I shattered the Luchos • Only through intense prayer were you spared from Hashem's wrath • The Second Luchos • "Now Israel, what is it that G-d demands of you..." •

Everything belongs to Hashem, yet He delights only in you, the offspring of the forefathers • Love and fear Hashem with all your hearts • All of you saw Hashem's miracles with your own eyes • If you will listen to Hashem, the land will flourish; otherwise you will suffer (V'haya Im Shamo'a) • If you will carefully heed the words of Hashem, you will triumph!

Haftarah: The haftarah begins with lamenting Hashem's apparent abandonment of His nation, forgetting His chosen people. The pesukim continue to explain that Hashem never forsakes His nation and ultimately happiness and joy will return to Zion. (Yeshaya 49:15-51:3)

Parashas Eikev: 111 Pesukim • 6 Obligations • 2 Prohibitions
1) Do not derive benefit from adornments of avodah zarah. 2) Do not derive benefit from avodah zarah or its accessories and do not bring them into your property. 3) Recite Bircas Hamazon after a 'filling' meal. 4) Love the Ger. 5) Fear G-d. 6) Serve G-d through Tefillah and praise. 7) Attach yourself to Torah scholars and benefit them. 8) When swearing to an oath or promise, do so in Hashem's name.

Mitzvah Highlight: Through davening we inculcate within ourselves a recognition of Hashem's existence and His benevolence in providing for us. This recognition, in and of itself, brings about blessing (Sefer HaChinuch).

כִּי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ רַבִּים הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִמֶּנִּי אֵיכָה אֶכְלֵל לְהוֹרִישָׁם: לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם זָכֹר תִּזְכֹּר אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָרְעֹה וּלְכָל-מִצְרָיִם
"Perhaps you will say in your heart, 'These nations are more numerous than I; how will I be able to drive them out?' Do not fear them, you shall remember what Hashem did to Pharaoh and Mitzrayim" (Devarim 7:17-18)

The importance of believing in Hashem and not fearing our enemies is a basic tenet of faith. As is recalling the miraculous redemption from Mitzrayim. Why does the Torah command this here specifically in response to those questioning the nation's ability to conquer the land?

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that in essence one would think that having experienced so many great miracles in Mitzrayim, as well as in the desert, the nation's faith in Hashem would be strong. Yet in truth, without internalizing the miracles, man's nature is to be weak in faith, to the extent that even a witness to the miracles will question Hashem's future actions. To this end, the Torah implores a person to work on his faith by remembering Hashem and recalling the great miracles we saw in Mitzrayim. This will internalize his faith in Hashem to the point where no adversary can make him feel threatened. While it may be true that there are no atheists

in a foxhole, true believers may not be present either. True emunah and bitachon come from a person training himself to recognize Hashem and His total control overall.