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from: rabbiefremgoldberg.com <reg-brsonline.org@shared1.ccsend.com>  
date: Aug 28, 2024, 10:06 PM  
subject: Stuck in Space  
August 26, 2024

### "Stuck" and "Stranded" in Space By Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

They went for eight days but will end up being stuck there for eight months. Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore, two NASA astronauts, traveled to the International Space Station in June on Boeing's Starliner spacecraft. However, during the test flight for their return, the propulsion system malfunctioned, and engineers determined it wasn't safe enough to bring the two astronauts back to Earth alive.

NASA and Boeing officials have been careful with their language describing the circumstances, reluctant to use the words, "stuck" and "stranded," which would reflect poorly on them. Describing their predicament, Suni also avoiding those words, saying, "Butch and I have been up here before, and it feels like coming home. It's great to be up here, so I'm not complaining."

Cynics are challenging the diplomatic description of the "extended stay." Delian Asparouhov, a founder and the president of Varda Space Industries, posted on X: "I don't

know about you, but if I got stuck at an airport for seven months longer than expected, that would definitely qualify as 'stranded.'"

Starliner, the spacecraft that brought them, will return to Earth unmanned, and the two astronauts are set to return in February on a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft. The two have plenty of supplies and say they aren't anxious about their extended stay or being stuck. Wilmore's wife Deanna told AP that her husband is "content" at the space station, "neither worrying nor fretting." She said he has faith God is in control, and that this gives his family "great peace."

While it may not be for eight months, many of us feel stranded or stuck in situations or places we find ourselves: a cancelled flight, a hospital stay, an unexpected business trip, a long line, even a traffic jam, and it is hard to just feel that it is an "extended stay." The key is to know and internalize that God is in control and thorough that to find great peace.

In 1967, Mrs. Miriam Swerdlov attended a Chabad-sponsored convention for women and girls in Detroit. After the inspiring event, while waiting to board the plane home, Miriam and about 20 other women learned that the flight was canceled due to a snowstorm. The women were somewhat panicked, feeling their families needed them, they had been gone long enough, and really needed to return home.

The group rushed to a payphone and called the Chabad headquarters in New York to ask the Rebbe what to do. Mrs. Swerdlov recalled how the leader of the group, Mrs. Miriam Popack, spoke with Rabbi Binyomin Klein, the Rebbe's secretary and told him that they were stuck in Detroit. He put them on hold, and a minute later came back on the line: "The Rebbe doesn't understand the word 'stuck,'" he said. Mrs. Popack proceeded to explain what the word stuck meant, to which Rabbi Klein replied, "The Rebbe knows what stuck means. The Rebbe says that a Jew is never stuck."

Caught off guard by the Rebbe's response, the women immediately got the message and rose to the occasion. They spread throughout the airport and began handing out Shabbat candles to the Jewish women they met. The result: "There are women and families today all over the United States lighting Shabbat candles because we got 'stuck' in Detroit." (As told by Mrs. Miryam Swerdlov, Here's My Story (JEM) No. 121)

On Tisha B'av, we had the opportunity to interview Sapir Cohen who was abducted from Nir Oz on October 7 and held by Hamas for 55 days. She described being dragged out from her hiding spot under a bed, placed on a motorcycle between two terrorists, and driven back into Gaza where she was abused by civilians. She talked about her harrowing time being held first aboveground and then in a tunnel where she encountered Sinwar.

Her first few days being held hostage, Sapir described she kept replaying what had happened, second-guessing her

decisions. Why had she and her boyfriend gone to his family for the Chag? Why did she hide under that bed instead of in a different spot? After several days of feeling tortured by her captors but also by her own mind, Sapir had a major paradigm shift. She simply said to herself, if this is where I am and I have no choice but to be here, this is where God wants me to be. Now, the question is why? What is my mission.

Sapir described that she was being held with a teenage girl who was struggling and suffering terribly with their condition. From the moment she went from feeling stuck and stranded to being there for a reason, she became determined to help this girl and get her out of there alive. She took the girl under her wing, encouraged her, and took great risks to ensure she had enough food. When they learned they were being taken into the tunnels, the girl panicked. Sapir told her, we are in Gaza and what is Gaza's biggest attraction? The tunnels. We can't be here and not see them for ourselves! With humor and positivity, she turned the girl's attitude from helplessness to hope and from dread to determination. After an "extended stay" of 55 days, Sapir and the young girl were released in the final swap on November 30. Of course, we continue to daven that Sapir's boyfriend Sasha and all the hostages are released and return home.

The Torah describes, "These are the journeys of Bnei Yisroel" and then goes on to immediately list 42 encampments, 42 stops. Which is it, where they journeys or stops? The Rebbe explained (Likkutei Sichos, vol. 23, pp. 227-8):

This is because these encampments were not seen as ends unto themselves but as way-stations and stepping-stones in the larger journey of the Jewish People to attain their goal of entering the Promised Land. Therefore, the stops themselves are referred to as journeys, because they were part of what brought about the ultimate objective.

The same is true of our journey through life. Pauses, interruptions, and setbacks are an inadvertent part of a person's sojourn on earth. But when everything a person does is toward the goal of attaining the "Holy Land"—the sanctification of the material world—these, too, become journeys of their own. Ultimately, these unplanned stops are shown to have been the true motors of progression, each a catalyst propelling us further toward the realization of our mission and purpose in life.

Like NASA, though for an entirely different and more meaningful reason, we should be intentional and conscious with our language and like Sapir, purposeful with our attitude and approach.

A Jew is always where they are meant to be. Wherever you are, the goal must be to focus on and figure out why, what is your mission, and how can you make the most of this "journey."

from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.or

date: Aug 29, 2024, 7:00 PM

subject: Tidbits for Parashas Re'eh

Klal Gavoha in memory of **Rav Meir Zlotowitz zt"l**

Parashas Re'eh • August 31st • 27 Av 5784

This week is Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Elul. Rosh Chodesh is on Tuesday & Wednesday, September 3rd-4th. The molad is Tuesday afternoon 2:37 PM and 12 chalakim.

Some are particular to observe Yom Kippur Katan particularly for the month of Elul, to inaugurate the month as a month of Teshuvah. Yom Kippur Katan is Monday, September 2nd.

On the second day of Rosh Chodesh, we begin adding LeDavid Hashem Ori at the end of davening. Nusach Ashkenaz adds LeDavid at Maariv and Shacharis, and will begin on Tuesday night during Maariv. Nusach Sefard adds LeDavid at Shacharis and Minchah, and will begin with Shacharis on Wednesday. The Shofar is sounded along with LeDavid at Shacharis on weekdays. LeDavid is added through Shemini Atzeres. Many Sefardim begin saying Selichos on the second day of Chodesh Elul.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is next Motzaei Shabbos, September 7th. The final opportunity is late Tuesday night, September 17th at 2:38 AM EST.

As the precarious situation in Eretz Yisrael unfortunately continues, each person should increase reciting tehillim and performing other mitzvos as a zechus for the many Acheinu Beis Yisrael in travail and captivity as well as for the soldiers in battle.

Pirkei Avos: Perek 6

Shabbos Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Bava Basra 67 •

Yerushalmi: Challah 30 • Mishnah Yomis: Bava Kama 7:4-5 •

Oraysa: Next week is Succah 47b-49b.

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 this Shabbos, Parashas Re'eh, August 31st.

Rosh Chodesh Elul is on Tuesday & Wednesday, September 3rd-4th.

RE'EH: The blessings for those who keep the mitzvos and the curses for those who reject them • Upon entering the land, you must accept the mitzvos upon yourself at Har Gerizim and Har Eival, and recognize their accompanying reward and punishment • Drive out the nations and destroy their gods • In a designated place [the Beis Hamikdash] you will serve Hashem • Laws of Korbanos • Do not practice idolatry • Keeping kosher • Laws of a Jewish slave • Firstborn animals • Yomim Tovim • See Taryag Weekly for the various mitzvos. Haftarah: The haftarah (Yeshaya 54:11-55:5) relays the promise that Hashem will one day redeem us from exile. During all the years of exile He will safeguard us from the spiritual and physical oppression brought by other nations.

Parashas Re'eh: 126 Pesukim • 17 Obligations • 38 Prohibitions

1) Destroy avodah zarah. 2) Do not destroy holy items. 3) Fulfill vows for korbanos or bedek habayis on the first chag after the vow is made. 4-5) Bring korbanos to the Beis HaMikdash; do not bring korbanos elsewhere. 6) Blemished korbanos should be redeemed and purchased anew. 7-9) Do not eat Ma'aser Sheini outside of Yerushalayim. 10) Do not eat a Bechor animal outside Yerushalayim. 11) Do not eat Kodashim outside their designated place. 12) Do not eat from a korban olah. 13) Do not eat meat of a korban before the sprinkling of its blood. 14) Do not eat Bikkurim prior to placing them in the Temple Courtyard. 15) Do not withhold the Levi'im's gifts. 16) Perform Shechitah prior to eating meat. 17) Do not eat Eiver Min Hachai (meat from a living animal). 18) Bring korbanos personally to the Mikdash. 19-20) Do not add or subtract mitzvos from the Torah. 21) Do not listen to a prophet of avodah zarah. 22-26) Do not heed or befriend a meisis (one who influences others to sin); do not absolve your hatred for him; do not save his life or defend him in judgment. 27) Do not missionize for idolatry or become missionized. 28) Review witnesses' testimony. 29-31) Burn down an idolatrous city; do not rebuild it or benefit from its spoils. 32-33) Do not cut yourself or pull out hair in grief. 34) Do not eat disqualified Kodashim. 35) Check birds for signs of kashrus. 36) Do not eat flying insects. 37) Do not eat Neveilah. 38) Separate Ma'aser Sheini. 39) Give Ma'aser Ani. 40,42) Do not collect a debt after shemittah, rather consider it dismissed. 41) Collect debt from a non-Jew promptly. 43-44) Do not withhold charity or kindness from any Jew; give charity generously and graciously. 45) Do not refrain from lending before shemittah. 46-47) Do not send away a servant or maid-servant empty handed; rather, provide them with gifts. 48-49) Do not work with a korban animal or shear its wool. 50) Do not eat chametz after midday on Erev Pesach. 51) Do not leave over meat from the korban Chagigah. 52) Do not sacrifice a korban pesach on a private Bamah. 53) V'samachta B'chagecha. 54-55) Go up for Aliyah L'regel and do not come empty handed.

For the Shabbos Table

"גִּלְקָה אֶתְרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעֶתֶם וַיַּעֲבֹדֵם" Let us seek foreign gods whom are foreign to us and serve them (Devarim 13:3)

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l would explain that this pasuk admonishes an idol worshiper: Aside from the gravity of the sin, a lack of focus and basic "seichel" caused him to overlook the obvious and serve a powerless idol and an entity with no real power. Man's greatness is seen in his ability to override his inclination and desires and act according to his intellect. Any deficiency in this regard is a display of animal-like behavior and a lacking in the greatness of man.

Rav Chatzkel would comment that upon beginning the month of Elul, one must contemplate the absurdity of coming before Hashem on the upcoming holiday of Rosh Hashanah to ask of

him for continued blessing without contemplating and making an accounting of his deeds and activities. Only after stopping and thinking what one can offer Hashem is it possible to ask Him for a sweet new year.

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from: **Rav Immanuel Bernstein**

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date: Aug 29, 2024, 7:14 AM

subject: Meshech Chochmah on Re'eh

MESHECH CHOCHMAH

Parshas Re'eh

The Prohibition of Meat and Milk in Times of Exile

לֹא תֹאכְלוּ כֹל נְבֵלָה... לֹא תִבְשֵׁל גְּדִי בְחֵלֶב אִמּוֹ

You shall not eat of any carcass... you shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk (14:21)

Our verse contains the Torah's third mentioning of the prohibition of meat and milk together. Interestingly, on the first two occasions, the prohibition is stated within the context of bringing bikurim (first fruits) to the Beis Hamikdash,[1] while this third verse begins with the prohibition against eating a neveilah, i.e. an animal that has not been slaughtered correctly. Commenting on this shift, the Mechilta writes: One might have thought that [the prohibition of meat and milk] only applies when the Beis Hamikdash exists and people are bringing bikkurim. To this end, the verse states, "Do not eat of a neveilah... do not cook a kid etc." Just as the prohibition against neveilah applies when there is no Beis Hamikdash, so too, the prohibition against milk and meat.[2]

The Meshech Chochmah is intrigued by this comment of the Mechilta. Why is the message that meat and milk applies even when there is no Beis Hamikdash contained specifically in the third and final verse that deals with the prohibition?

Reverberations from the Sin of the Spies

The Meshech Chochmah explains that in between the first two occasions and the third, something had occurred which had enormous ramifications: the episode of the spies. As a result of the people believing the spies' negative report and crying over their fate, the Gemara states:

That night was the night of the Ninth of Av. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to them: You have cried (on this night) for nothing, I will establish for you (on it) a crying for future generations.

In other words, one of the consequences of that sin was that it was decreed that at some future time, the Beis Hamikdash would be destroyed and the Jewish people would be exiled from their land. This idea is stated explicitly in Tehillim Chap. 106[3] where, relating to that episode, it states:

וַיִּשָׂא יְדוֹ לָהֶם לְהַפִּיל אוֹתָם בְּמִדְבָּר. וְלֹהֲפִיל זְרַעֲם בְּגוֹיִם וּלְזוֹרוֹתָם בְּאַרְצוֹת.

He raised up His hand (in an oath) against them to cast them down in the wilderness, and to cast down their descendants among the nations, and to scatter them among the lands.

This aspect of the punishment for the sin of the spies is not mentioned in the Chumash; possibly because it was not made known to the people at that time. Nevertheless, the notion of the people going into exile had ramifications for how the mitzvos would be presented beyond this point. Specifically, as with milk and meat, if there was room to infer that a mitzvah would not apply in exile, it now became necessary to indicate that it would. At the time the first two verses were written, exile was not an operational worry, and no such message was necessary or relevant. By the time the third verse was written, exile was already "in the air," and related halachic messages needed to be transmitted accordingly.[4]

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from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net> reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net

date: Aug 29, 2024, 5:03 PM

subject: Why the Bias Toward Israel? - Essay by Rabbi YY The Complainer

When All You Can See Are Carcasses, There is Something Wrong With You

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

The Raah Bird

This week's portion Re'eh repeats—for the second time in the Torah[1]—G-d's "Kosher List," of mammals, fish and birds, suitable for Jewish consumption. In the category of birds, the Torah enumerates twenty-four species of birds which are not kosher. One of them is called by three names—the Raah, Dayah and Ayah.[2]

The Talmud explains[3] that these are three names for the same bird. The Torah specifies all of them, because if it would mention only one name, then if someone knows the bird by one of its names not mentioned in the Torah, he might have entertained the idea that it was kosher.

What type of bird is this Raah/Ayah/Dayah creature? Many have translated it as the Vulture or the Hawk. Yet, after all the research, it seems that the most accurate translation for the Raah bird is the Kite, or in its scientific term—the Milvus. Indeed, in Arabic the Kite is known as the "Chadaa" (حداة), quite similar to the biblical Dayah.[4]

Three Names

Why three names for the same bird? "Raah" stems from the verb "to see." "Dayah" is from the verb "to fly, soar, or glide." "Ayah" is from the verb "to wail, scream, cry." All these names describe characteristics of this bird. This Kite indeed is scattered all over the Middle East, feeding chiefly on smaller birds, mice, reptiles, and fish. In the capture of fish, the Kite is almost as expert as the osprey (the "Shalach" in the biblical language), darting from a great height into the water, and bearing off the fish in its claws. The wings of the Kite are long and powerful, bearing it through the air in a peculiarly graceful

flight. That is why it has been called the Glede or the Kite, representing its gliding movements.

The sight of this bird is remarkably keen and piercing. From the vast elevation to which it soars when in search of food, it can survey the face of the land beneath, and detect the partridge, quail, chicken, or other creature that will become its food.

Should the Kite suspect danger near its nest, it escapes by darting rapidly into the air, soaring at a vast height above the trees among which its home is made. From that elevation, it can act as a sentinel, due to its incredible eyesight, and will not come down until it is assured of safety.

The Talmud's Observation

What is remarkable is that seventeen centuries before all of the scientific research, the Talmud described it in a few words: [5] אמר רב אבהו, ראה זו איה, ולמה נקרא שמה ראה? שרואה ביותר. וכן הוא אומר [6] נתיב לא ידעו עיני, ולא שפפתו עין איה. תנא עומדת בבבל ורואה נבלה בארץ ישראל

Rabbi Abahu said, the Raah bird is the same as the Ayah. Why is this bird called "Raah?" Because it sees exceedingly well.

The Talmud proceeds to prove this from a verse in Job: [7]

"There is a path which no bird of prey knows; and which the kite's eye has not seen." The very fact that the biblical verse underscores the fact that the Kite's eye has not perceived the hidden path indicates that the kite usually possesses piercing vision.

The Talmud continues to illustrate the kite's keen eyesight: We have learned that this bird stands in Babylon, and sees a carcass in the Land of Israel!

Now, that's impressive, being that the distance between Babylon (present-day Iraq) and Israel is some 500 miles.[8]

Three Questions

The obvious question is why the Talmud uses such a strange illustration: "This bird stands in Babylon and sees a carcass in the Land of Israel!" It could have used so many more examples of what the bird is capable of seeing and where it is capable of seeing it.

Another, more substantial question: The reason some animals are not kosher is because the negative characteristics these animals possess can have a negative impact on their consumer.

"You are what you eat" is not only a cliché. It is why we are instructed to abstain from eating certain animals whose traits we would not wish to incorporate into our psyche. Kosher animals, on the other hand, are characterized by peaceful traits that are worth imitating. [9]

But why, then, is this bird not kosher? Surely keen eyesight and perception -- the very Torah name and hence the primary feature of these birds -- are worthy traits. Shouldn't this bird then be kosher? [10]

What Do You See?

The Talmud is not only illustrating the keen vision of the Kite, or the Raah; it is also explaining to us why it is not kosher: "This bird stands in Babylon, and sees a carcass in the Land of

Israel!" When you gaze at the land of Israel, you can see many things, including many positive and heartwarming items; yet what does this bird see? Corpses! Being a carnivorous bird, which kills, devours, and eats the meat of other animals, its eyes gaze at Eretz Yisroel but observe only one thing: the carcasses in the land! [11]

This is what makes it a non-kosher animal—because this quality is prevalent among some people as well, and we do not want to "eat" and incorporate this type of behavior into our psyche.

#### Helpless Critics

Some people are simply chronic complainers. They will gaze at their wife, children, relatives, and community members, and all they will see are flaws, deficiencies, mishaps, and negative attributes.

Some people never stop criticizing everybody and everything. While some see the good in everybody, even in the worst situation or person, these characters manage to somehow see the evil in everybody and in everything. They can always show you how everyone has an "agenda," and everyone is driven by ulterior motives; there are smelly carcasses everywhere.

Are they right? They may be partially, or even completely correct. Every person has flaws. Even the greatest saint has demons; even a great man usually has some skeleton—a corpse—in his closet. That is why we need a Torah to guide us, and that is why the Torah asks us to never stop working on ourselves, to challenge our conventions, to scrutinize our motives, to refine our behavior, and to make amends for our mistakes. But why is that the only thing you manage to observe?

#### The "Holy" Preacher

I can't vouch that every detail in the following story is authentic, as I do not know the original source. But the lesson of the story is certainly true. [12]

A renowned Maggid (traveling preacher) arrived one day at the hometown of Reb Shmuel Munkes, a noted disciple of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, who was a deeply pious man with an incredible sense of humor. After reading his letter of approbation, lauding him as a tzaddik went to wander from town to town for the sole purpose of inspiring fellow Jews, the townspeople—who were simple, G-d-fearing, innocent Jews—invited him to preach.

Throughout his sermon, the Maggid berated his fine audience, chastising them for "dreadful sins." He rebuked them, for being such terrible, lowly, and horrendous Jews, evoking G-d's wrath. He proceeded to describe in vivid detail the severe punishment that awaited them as a result of their evil ways. When finished, the proud orator quickly retired to his room, leaving his crestfallen audience to wail over their horrific moral state and the Divine retribution about to befall them. No sooner had he made himself comfortable, when a man walked into his room. It was Reb Shmuel himself.

Reb Shmuel took out a long knife, and a sharpening stone entered his room. He proceeded to sharpen his knife.

After a few tense and wordless moments, the Maggid broke the silence. "What's this all about?" he asked with a look of astonishment.

His eyes still trained on the sharpening stone, Rabbi Shmuel Munkes replied in mock sincerity: "As the honorable Maggid knows, we simple folk never had the merit of having a righteous scholar in our midst. Who knows, perhaps it is because of our wanton sins you just described."

Bemused as to where this was heading, the Maggid replied, "Yes, yes, but what does any of this have to do with the knife you are sharpening?"

"Well," retorted Reb Shmuel, "we were taught by our parents that before Rosh Hashanah one should pray at the gravesites of the righteous. And sadly, we never had in our cemetery the grave of a righteous man. All of our residents—as you have eloquently described us—have been utterly wicked."

"Of course, of course, nodded the Maggid. But why the knife!?"

"It's rather simple," explained Reb Shmuel calmly. "The nearest burial site of a tzaddik is very far from our town. It is extremely cumbersome for the townsfolk to make the yearly trek. We decided that we finally needed to have a righteous man buried in our midst.

"After hearing your speech," Reb Shmuel continued, in a straight face, "I know there is no one more holy and righteous than you in our entire region. So I decided to... slaughter you and bury you right here in our very own cemetery. Finally, before Rosh Hashanah, we will be able to come pray at your sacred grave site."

As the grim reality began to set in, the Maggid adeptly switched course. "Come to think of it," he stammered, "I am not all that righteous after all. I have committed some small sins here and there; they were obviously all inadvertent." Reb Shmuel dismissed the Maggid's confession: "Honored Maggid! You are still very righteous and learned. As for the transgressions? They are so minor; who would even know that these were sins? Your humility is nothing but proof of your exceptional righteousness. Besides, relative to our heinous sins—which you have just described in your sermon—you are, trust me, a complete Tzaadik! You are the man we need buried here."

By now, Reb Shmuel was done with the sharpening of the knife. The "holy preacher" began to panic.

"On second thought," stuttered the Maggid, "Some of my transgressions were a bit more serious, such as..." He went on to share some immoral things he has done in his life, which disqualified him from being a tzaddik. Rabbi Shmuel quickly dismissed these as well: "To us, you are still a great Tzaddik. You are far better than anything we have."

Finally, the Maggid confessed to some rather embarrassing transgressions. He admitted that, in truth, he was far from the

great tzaddik that he portrayed himself to be. He was actually morally disgraceful.

Now, it was Rabbi Shmuel's turn to preach: "How dare you admonish these beautiful, innocent and pure Jews, when you yourself are a despicable, immoral charlatan! How dare you cause such fine, lovely, well-intended Jews so much anguish. It is you who needs to transform his life; it is you who needs to repent for all of his transgressions.

The Maggid got the message. He left the town in deep inner shame. He never again rebuked his audiences with stern, harsh words.

The Mirror

How did Reb Shmuel know that this guy was really playing a game and that he was far from holy?

The answer is simple: When you are pure and holy, you see innocence and purity in others. When you are in touch with your own soul, you sense the soul in others. When you have a genuine relationship with G-d, and your appreciation of the G-dliness within every person is far more palpable. When you don't suffer from an inflated ego, or from terrible insecurity, you will truly appreciate the goodness in others.

To be sure, there are corpses, skeletons, demons, and ghosts in almost every human person; that is what makes them human. Even the Holy Land has its share of carcasses—physical and psychological. But when that is the only thing you see, it means that you are a non-kosher person. You need your own cleansing.

The Bias Toward Israel Today

This insight of our sages concerning the non-kosher Raah bird is so relevant today when it comes to Israel.

Is Israel a perfect country? We all know the answer. Israel has many challenges and problems. Is the government perfect?

Only a fool can think so. Over the last three decades, the Israeli leadership has made some historical errors that created catastrophic results.

But there are those who when they look at Israel see nothing but "corpses." In our day and age, with modern technology, we were all blessed with the eyesight of the Kite. We sit in our homes in Babylon (or US, or Canada, or Europe, Australia, South Africa, or anywhere else in the world), and with the help of CNN or BBC or other news cameras, we can see Israel. But often, all the reporters, journalists, bloggers, academics, and politicians see in Israel are stinky corpses. When they report on Israel, you would think that the country does nothing besides producing Palestinian Children's corpses. You would never guess that they are surrounded by millions of neighbors who would like to see every Jew dead, heaven forbid.

And this is how you know how terribly biased and unfair they are. When someone criticizes Israel—that is legitimate. There is much to comment and argue about. But when one has nothing but criticism for Israel, when there is nothing good to say about Israel, when Israel is portrayed as the most racist

country, engaged in genocide—then you know it has nothing to do with Israel; rather, the person spewing the hate is treif. At the end of the day, it is all a matter of perspective. Each of us has to choose what we are going to see—in ourselves, and in the world around us.

[1] The first time in Leviticus chapter 11, in the portion of Shemini. [2] Deuteronomy 14:13 [3] Chulin 63b, quoted in Rashi to Deuteronomy ibid. [4] The bird is mentioned another two times in the Bible: Isaiah 34:15, "There shall the kites [dayos] also be gathered, every one with her mate." In Job 28:7, there is a similar word, ayah. This verse is quoted below in the essay. [5] Chulin 63b [6] Job 28:7 [7] Job ibid. [8] The Maharal of Prague, in his book Beer Hagoleh, explains this in two possible ways: It means literally that this bird has extraordinary vision. Another possible explanation is that this bird in its most perfect state possesses this ability, though practically, the physical bird is always flawed. This is based on the prevalent idea in Jewish philosophy and in the works of the Maharal that every being and object possesses two dimensions: its tzurah and its chomer. The tzurah is the abstract form of this particular object; it is the concept of this object in its most perfect and ideal form. Chomer is the way it is manifested practically in a concrete and flawed universe. This duality is a major theme in the works of the Greek Philosopher Plato. [9] See Ramban on Leviticus 11:12. See also Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah end of section 81. [10] This bird is indeed carnivorous, which makes it non-kosher (see references in previous footnote.) Yet the fact that the list of non-kosher birds the Torah titles it as "Raah," indicates that this quality itself, its keen eyesight, is part of what it makes it non-kosher. Yet, we would think that keen eyesight is a positive quality! [11] In other words, this bird possesses two negative qualities: it is carnivorous, and it "sees" nothing but the carcasses. [12] I copied some paragraphs of the story from an article by Rabbi Yosef Kahanov

<http://www.crownheights.info/index.php?itemid=23516>

<https://etzion.org.il/en/holidays/elul/elul-trembling-fish>

### **Trembling Fish**

**By Rabbi Moshe Taragin**

August 29, 2024

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I?"

-Hillel the Elder

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

-John Donne

On the day of his death, Moshe Rabbeinu delivered a heartfelt soliloquy. He both relived the highs and lows of the 40-year desert journey, and also warned of the impending dangers of life in Eretz Yisrael. After issuing repeated cautions, Moshe reiterated the entire body of halachot and, for this reason, Sefer



Devarim is referred to as “Mishneh Torah,” or Moshe’s review of the Torah.

Parshat Re’eh marks the transition from Moshe’s nostalgic recollections of the past to his review of the registry of mitzvot. Though Moshe addresses the entire nation in his speech, he intentionally uses a singular verb, “re’eh.” This choice is significant because it directs the list of mitzvot to each individual personally, rather than to the nation as a collective, underscoring that every individual bears personal religious responsibility. In the ensuing sections, Moshe lists both personal mitzvot which govern individual lifestyles and collective national mitzvot which shape our communal experience. Most of Parshat Re’eh and Parshat Shoftim contain collective laws, whereas the concentrated list of commandments in Parshat Ki Teitzei primarily addresses individual mitzvot.

Human identity is shaped by both personal and communal experiences. Each person carries the dignity of individuality, with a life story uniquely their own. Yet we live within larger frameworks which profoundly shape who we are. We belong to families, societies, nations and historical legacies, each of which contributes to our identity. Although our individual paths may vary, we are all part of a larger whole, where personal and collective identities are deeply connected. Identity and experience are shaped by both our personal distinctiveness and our shared collective existence.

This is even more true regarding religious identity. We stand before Hashem as individuals, each commanded to fulfill His will, to strive to understand Him and to shape ourselves in His image. Yet we are also part of a larger historical collective—the Jewish people—chosen to represent Hashem in this world. Religious success depends on striking the proper balance between our personal religious journey and our national identity.

By and large, life in Israel feels more collective, whereas religious identity outside of Israel tends to be more individualistic. Living in Israel, where the Jewish experience is both organic and holistic, encourages us to think more frequently about the larger community of Israel and, by extension, the Jewish people as a whole. Outside of Israel, as it is more challenging to craft a communal identity, individual religious identity often dominates.

This contrast is vividly illustrated by the differing perspectives of Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Kook. Rav Soloveitchik delved into the fabric of an individual’s relationship with Hashem, with his seminal works such as “Halakhic Man” and “Lonely Man of Faith,” focusing on the solitary individual’s role in religious identity. Rav Soloveitchik explored the religious “Man” and his profound encounter with the Divine Other. In contrast, Rav Kook spoke in more collective terms about the larger entity known as “Knesset Yisrael,” encompassing not only the Jews living at any given time but also the cosmic Jewish people, representing a nation of Israel which spans

across history. For Olim who were raised outside of Israel and then moved to Israel, the differences between individual identity outside of Israel and collective identity in Israel are unmistakable.

Striking the balance between individual religious identity and national religious identity is always demanding, but over the next two months, it will be particularly intense. The coming week marks Rosh Chodesh Elul and the beginning of the Yomim Noraim season. These days, and especially the forty days following Elul, are designated for personal introspection, moral inventory, religious improvement and teshuva. They are times for deep soul-searching and heightened religious consciousness.

Yet this year, these days carry an entirely different weight. We approach the holidays with dread, acutely aware that each step of our journey will be overshadowed by the trauma of October 7. As the chagim unfold, the manifold layers of suffering endured by the Jewish people dominate our thoughts. We can only imagine the mix of emotions we will experience during this year’s Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, wrestling with questions about how God could allow such a tragedy to occur. And, of course, no one can truly anticipate what this year’s Simchat Torah will be like.

Over the past year, our experiences have been profoundly collective and national—just as they should be. We have grappled with the echoes of October 7, searching for faith and belief amidst the turmoil. We have mourned national tragedies, weeping with an entire nation which was viciously attacked in their homeland and assaulted around the world. Together, we have engaged in heroic efforts to save our land and safeguard the security of Israel. We have delved into how these events will shape our understanding of Jewish peoplehood and identity. Never have we felt so deeply connected to our Jewish heritage and history. These emotions and reflections have been overwhelmingly collective, resonating with the shared experiences of our nation.

As Elul begins, these emotions and preoccupations cannot and should not come to an end. They should infuse our prayers and permeate our deepest thoughts, reaching the darkest recesses of our soul. Yet, during this month, we are also called to embark on a personal journey of character improvement and spiritual growth. How can we ensure that the overwhelming collective thoughts of the past year do not overshadow or diminish the essential personal transformation that is expected during the Yamim Noraim?

After standing before Hashem as a collective nation for the past 11 months, how can we transition to a more intimate conversation with Him about personal growth and accountability? How can we ensure that our individual religious journey is not overshadowed by the overwhelming national crisis we face? How can we hear Hashem speak to us not merely as a nation, but as individuals? Can we recite Viduy confessions with the same passion that we have read Tehillim

chapters? How can we attune ourselves to His voice amidst the echoes of our collective experience, allowing our personal dialogue with Him to emerge with clarity and depth?

There are no easy answers to this question. We must find a way to personalize October 7. Beyond our prayers for our soldiers, our hostages, our wounded and Jews around the world, it is crucial that we also make October 7 personal. Though these are large-scale events that may not seem directed at us individually, Hashem calls us to seek personal understanding and derive individual lessons from this tragedy. What kind of personal changes and improvements does this require from each of us? What adjustments in our personal lives are necessary in the wake of such a calamity? Have we truly faced and passed the test of faith to which we have all been subjected?

There is a well-known statement of the Chatam Sofer that during the month of Elul “even the fish in the sea tremble.” This imagery captures the profound awe and reverence of this solemn period. The thought of trembling fish serves as a powerful jolt, shaking us from our religious complacency. If that weren’t enough, the plaintive daily shofar further awakens us, urging us to introspection and spiritual renewal. As summer fades and autumn arrives, we turn inward to thoughts of human mortality and religious meaning.

This year, however, we do not need the metaphor of trembling fish to underscore the gravity and solemnity of this period. We have trembled daily for the past 11 months. During Elul, while we continue to tremble together, we must also tremble alone. To tremble for the nation around us and to tremble for the soul within us.

The writer is a rabbi at the hesder Yeshivat Har Etzion/Gush, with ordination from Yeshiva University and a master’s in English literature from CUNY. He is the author of “Dark Clouds Above, Faith Below” (Kodesh Press), which provides religious responses to Oct. 7.

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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>

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**Rabbi Yakov Haber**

**Mikdash: Aspects and Aspirations**

I  
But only to the place which Hashem, your G-d, shall choose from all your tribes to rest His Name there; you shall inquire after His dwelling and come there (Devarim 12:5).

And the place that Hashem, your G-d, will choose to rest His Name in, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you: your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the separation of your hand, and the choicest of vows which you will vow to Hashem (ibid. v. 11).

These verses appearing at the beginning of parshas Re'eh refer to the eventual choosing of a permanent Mikdash in which to offer korbanos. The selection of a central Mikdash would ban the offering of sacrifices on private bamos or altars (ibid. v.

13-14) [1]. The fact that the location of the Mikdash was not immediately revealed coupled with the Torah's commandment "l'shichno sidreshu - inquire after His dwelling" conveys the need to anxiously long for the Temple before it is built and to eagerly seek out opportunities to visit it when it does exist - ultimately encountering Hashem's Presence resting there. (See Chagiga (2a).)

Several additional sections in our parsha also present mitzvos directly or indirectly related to the Mikdash. These include the bringing of the first fruits to the sanctuary and ma'aser sheini to Jerusalem (v. 6 & 17), offering the first-born animal to the kohein to bring as a korban (ibid.), redeeming a sacrifice with a defect before consuming its meat (12:15 and Rashi), offering the korban Pesach (16:1-2, 5-7), and rejoicing before Hashem three times a year while being oleh regel for the festivals (16:1 ff.).

Perhaps we can suggest that whereas last week's Torah reading, parshas Eikev, places a major emphasis on the spiritual and physical aspects of Eretz Yisrael,[2] our parsha focuses on the even more intensely sanctified areas of Yerushalayim and the Mikdash. (See Keilim 1:6 ff.) Much has been written about the interrelationship of kedushas Eretz Yisrael and kedushas haMikdash. Here, we focus on several aspects of the uniqueness of the Mikdash[3].

At first glance, Rambam and Ramban dispute the central purpose of the Mikdash. Ramban (beginning of Teruma) explains that the Mishkan and later the Mikdash was a continuation of the Divine revelation of Sinai. Specifically, the luchos and the sefer Torah housed in the aron were of course the content of the revelation of Sinai; the gold of the keruvim represented the great fire of the Sinai experience[4]. The revelation of the Torah to Moshe Rabbeinu continued at the Mishkan (see Vayikra 1:1 and Rashi there). True, a major aspect of the avodas haMishkan consisted of the offering of korbanos, but, for Ramban, this seemingly was secondary not primary.

By contrast, Rambam (Hilchos Beis Habechira 1:1) seemingly highlights the bringing of korbanos as the raison d'etre of the sanctuary. In his words:

It is a positive commandment to construct a House for G-d, prepared for sacrifices to be offered within. We [must] celebrate there three times a year...[5]

This debate seems to be further underscored by the fact that Rambam includes the construction of all of the klei haMikdash in the one general commandment of building the Mikdash (see Sefer Hamitzvos, Asei 20). By contrast, Ramban (gloss to Asei 33) maintains that the mitzvah of forming each kli is included in the commandment to perform the particular avoda unique to that vessel. For example, the mitzvah to build the shulchan is included in the mitzvah to place the lechem hapanim on it. Since the aron kodesh does not have a particular service associated with it, its construction, in his view, is indeed counted as a separate mitzvah. By highlighting the unique,



separate commandment to build the Holy Ark, Ramban further underscores his thesis that the main thrust of the Mikdash was the continuation of the Sinai experience. Ramban who does not count the building of the aron as a separate commandment seems to have a different understanding of the purpose of the Mikdash.

However, a careful reading of Rambam leads to the conclusion that he also views the aron's role as absolutely fundamental. Rambam carefully outlines the construction of each kli of the Mikdash (Beis Hachochim 1:18-3:18) but says nothing about the construction of the aron although he describes its placement (ibid. 4:1). The simple explanation for this distinction might be based on the fact that the aron of Moshe's time traditionally will never permanently be lost; consequently, there is no need to describe its construction. By contrast, the other keilim might indeed be lost or otherwise defiled and might need to be replaced.[6] But another Rambam would remain cryptic even if we accept this explanation. The Talmud (Yoma 53b) quotes a debate as to what happened to the aron at the end of the first Temple period. One opinion is that it was exiled to Babylon; another states that it was hidden directly underneath the Kodosh Kadashim. The Rambam rules in accordance with the latter view (ibid.). Why does the Rambam deem it necessary to rule concerning this matter which is seemingly only a matter of Jewish history? Rav Y. D. Soloveitchik zt"l explains that the Rambam views the aron bimkom (in its place) as a crucial component of the very definition of Mikdash. However, the halachic tradition states, according to the aforementioned latter opinion, that there are two places for the aron: above and below the ground. Whereas in normal times its proper place is above ground in the kodosh kadashim, in dangerous times, where there was fear of enemy forces seizing the aron, its proper place was geographically in the same location but vertically under it. This approach also helps explain more fundamentally why the Rambam omits the construction of the aron even though he describes that of all the rest of the keilim. The other vessels are spiritual furniture in the Mikdash; the aron is part and parcel of the very definition of Mikdash. When the Torah commands "v'asu li Mikdash," it, in effect, is charging bnei Yisrael to create a place for the aron on which Hashem's Shechina will rest, continuing ma'amad har Sinai as Ramban states. In that Mikdash, defined by the aron, various keilim have to be constructed, all described in turn by Rambam. Thus, when Rambam writes "It is a positive commandment to construct a House for G-d, prepared for sacrifices....," by the phrase, "House of G-d," he means that house containing the aron which defines its purpose - to house the Torah and, because of that, the Shechina. It is at that location that we serve Hashem with the various korban offerings. Thus, Rambam's and Ramban's respective positions can be viewed as essentially similar.

II

The additional prayer of nacheim is recited traditionally only at mincha of Tisha B'Av, the day designated to mourn the destruction of the Mikdash specifically and, more generally, all of Jewish tragedy which is viewed as an extension of the former destruction. The Rosh challenges this custom to recite nacheim only at mincha rather than at all the prayers (see Beis Yosef 557). Ritva (ibid.) explains why, even though, in his view, the "nacheim" prayer should be recited in all the tefilos of Tisha B'Av, the prayer should be introduced with the word racheim (have mercy) at ma'ariv and shacharis; only at mincha should it begin with nacheim (console). The reason he offers, somewhat cryptically, is that the morning of Tisha B'Av is similar to the period of mi shemeiso mutal lefanav, or the time after death but before burial. Only toward evening, at mincha time, when the Mikdash was set aflame by our enemies, does the period similar to burial begin. Nechama, comfort, is only offered after burial; similarly, the word nacheim is only relevant after the "burial" of the Mikdash[7]. Rav Chanoch Sanhedrai shlit"a [8] shared a deeper understanding of the words of Ritva. Before the physical destruction of the Mikdash, Hashem's Shechina, the "soul" of the Mikdash, had already left it. This is directly parallel to the process of death defined as the exit of the soul from the body, yetzias haneshama. Only the "body" of the Mikdash was still there. Its physical destruction toward evening was parallel to burial; hence, that is the time for nechama.

Many sources indicate that the eventual rebuilding of the Mikdash and, indeed, of all of Eretz Yisrael will follow a reverse order from that of their destruction. First, the physical edifice, the body, will be reconstructed. Only then will the neshama, the Shechina or, in the case of Eretz Yisrael, all spiritual matters, return in their fullest capacity. See the footnote for some sources on these concepts.[9] Elsewhere, we have elaborated on the crucial avoda of longing for the building of the Mikdash and how Hashem sometimes will bring about massive unrest among the Jewish people until we do so.[10] May the seven weeks of comfort we are currently in leading up the High Holiday season together with our realization of how much is missing when Hashem's Or Panim (radiating countenance) does not fully shine upon us as it did in the days of the Temple lead to ever increasing longing for this most-central feature of our Divine service!

[1] See Rashi on the first passuk who explains that of the two verses the former refers to Mishkan Shilo - which, although lasting several hundred years, was destined to be replaced - whereas the latter pertains to the permanent sanctuary in Jerusalem. [2] See The Fruits of Eretz Yisrael: Outer and Inner Dimensions for further elaboration on this theme. [3] Most of what is presented here is based on shiurim I was privileged to hear from mori v'Rabi Rav Hershel Schachter shlit"a. Any errors in presentation are my own. [4] See also The Mishkan, Har Sinai, Torah and Eretz Yisrael for further elaboration upon this theme. [5] Translation courtesy of

Chabad.org from the Rabbi Eliyahu Touger edition of Mishne Torah. [6] See Ramban (gloss to Asei 33) as to why this explanation is unsatisfying. [7] This would also explain the common Ashkenazic custom mentioned by Rosh to say the nacheim prayer only at mincha. [8] A dayan in Ramat Beit Shemesh. [9] Concerning the Mikdash see Aruch Laneir (Sukka 41a); concerning Eretz Yisrael see Megila (17b-18a) and Rav Kook's "Hamispeid BiYerushalayim" on the need for mashiach ben Yosef and mashiach ben David. [10] See Thoughts on Shavuot, Corona and Coronation. © 2024 by TorahWeb Foundation. All Rights Reserved

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Making Poverty History (Re'eh)

The Rabbi Sacks Legacy <info@rabbisacks.org>

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

**Making Poverty History**

**Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ztl**

RE'EH

Listen to these stories. Behind them lies an extraordinary insight into the nature of Jewish ethics:

Story 1. Rabbi Abba used to bind money in his scarf, sling it on his back, and place it at the disposal of the poor. (Ketubot 67b)

Story 2. Mar Ukba had a poor man in his neighbourhood into whose door socket he used to throw four coins every day.

Once the poor man thought, "I will go and see who does me this kindness." That day Mar Ukba stayed late at the house of study, and his wife was coming home with him. As soon as the poor man saw them moving the door [to leave the coins] he ran out after them, but they fled from him and hid. Why did they do this? Because it was taught: One should throw himself into a fiery furnace rather than publicly put his neighbour to shame. (Ketubot 67b)

Story 3. When Rabbi Jonah saw a member of a good family who had lost his money and was ashamed to accept charity, he would go and say to him, "I have heard that an inheritance has come your way in a city across the sea. So here is an article of some value. Sell it and use the proceeds. When you are more affluent, you will repay me." As soon as the man took it, Rabbi Jonah would say, "It's yours to keep as a gift." (Vayikra Rabbah 34:1)

These stories are all deeply connected to the mitzvah of tzedakah, whose source is in this week's parsha:

If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need.

Deut. 15:7-8

Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you

to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

Deut. 15:10-11

What we have here is a unique and still remarkable programme for the elimination of poverty.

The first extraordinary fact about the laws of tzedakah as articulated in the Oral Tradition is the concept itself. Tzedakah does not mean "charity". We see this immediately in the form of a law inconceivable in any other moral system:

Someone who does not wish to give tzedakah or to give less than is appropriate may be compelled to do so by a Jewish court of law.

Maimonides, Laws of Gifts to the Poor, 7:10

Charity is always voluntary. Tzedakah is compulsory.

Therefore tzedakah does not mean charity. The nearest English equivalent is social justice.

The second is the principle evident in the three stories above. Poverty in Judaism is conceived not merely in material terms: the poor lack the means of sustenance. It is also conceived in psychological terms. Poverty humiliates. It robs people of dignity. It makes them dependent on others – thus depriving them of independence which the Torah sees as essential to self-respect.

This deep psychological insight is eloquently expressed in the third paragraph of the Grace after Meals:

Please, O Lord our God, do not make us dependent on the gifts or loans of other people, but only on Your full, open, holy, and generous hand so that we may suffer neither shame nor humiliation for ever and all time.

As a result, Jewish law focuses not only on how much we must give but also on the manner in which we do so. Ideally the donor should not know to whom he or she is giving (story 1), nor the recipient know from whom he or she is receiving (story 2). The third story exemplifies another principle:

If a poor person does not want to accept tzedakah, we should practise a form of [benign] deception and give it to him under the guise of a loan.

Laws of Gifts to the Poor, 7:9

Maimonides sums up the general principle thus:

Whoever gives charity to the poor with bad grace and averted eyes has lost all the merit of his action even though he gives him a thousand gold pieces. He should give with good grace and with joy and should sympathise with them in his plight, as it is said, 'Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor?' (Job 30:25)

Laws of Gifts to the Poor, 10:4

This is the logic behind two laws that are otherwise inexplicable. The first is:

Even a poor person who is dependent on tzedakah is obliged to give tzedakah.

Laws of Gifts to the Poor, 7:5

The law seems absurd. Why should we give money to the poor so that they may give to the poor? It makes sense only on this

assumption, that giving is essential to human dignity and tzedakah is the obligation to ensure that everyone has that dignity.

The second is this famous ruling of Maimonides:

The highest degree of charity, exceeded by none, is when a person assists a poor Jew by providing him with a gift or a loan or by accepting him into a business partnership or by helping him find employment – in a word by putting him in a situation where he can dispense with other people's aid.

Laws of Gifts to the Poor, 10:7

Giving someone a job or making him your partner would not normally be considered charity at all. It costs you nothing. But this further serves to show that tzedakah does not mean charity. It means giving people the means to live a dignified life, and within the Jewish value system any form of employment is more dignified than dependence.

We have in this ruling of Maimonides in the 12th century the principle that Muhammad Yunus rediscovered in our time, and for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize: the idea of micro-loans enabling poor people to start small businesses. It is a very powerful idea.

In contradistinction to many other religious systems, Judaism refused to romanticise poverty or anaesthetise its pain. Faith is not what Karl Marx called “the opium of the people.” The rabbis refused to see poverty as a blessed state, an affliction to be born with acceptance and grace. Instead, the rabbis called it “a kind of death” and “worse than fifty plagues”. They said, “Nothing is harder to bear than poverty, because he who is crushed by poverty is like one to whom all the troubles of the world cling and upon whom all the curses of Deuteronomy have descended. If all other troubles were placed one side and poverty on the other, poverty would outweigh them all.”

Maimonides went to the heart of the matter when he said:

The well-being of the soul can only be obtained after that of the body has been secured.

The Guide for the Perplexed, 3:27

Poverty is not a noble state. You cannot reach spiritual heights if you have no food to eat, no roof over your head, if you lack access to medical attention, or if you are beset by financial worries. I know of no saner approach to poverty, welfare, and social justice than that of Judaism. Unsurpassed in its time, it remains the benchmark of a decent society to this day.

The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust

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From: Daniel Kaminetsky <dkaminetsky@...>

**Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg**

**Reeh Shamor Vshamata - Nesivas Shalom**

**Parshas Reeh**

**5774**

we start to get back our hearing and our seeing.

Bein hemitzarim haftaros- navi was telling us listen to Hashem (shimu dvar Hashem), learn how to listen,

See Hashem (Chazon yeshayahu),

Reeh begins with seeing and hearing

First pasuk – Reeh anochi nosen lifneichem bracha vechlala

Getting back to point where hearing and seeing is correct

Big bracha- when a person can hear properly

Ability to listen in right way special

R Shlomo Zalman Auerbach

When it says if you listen you will be blessed and if you don't listen you'll be cursed, we normally understand its based on your conduct. If you do mitzvos reward and if not, No. Rav

Shlomo Zalman says its even more basic than that. **If you're even willing to listen, you are blessed. Ppl who don't even want to hear the dvar Hashem. So scared of poss implications of what listening to Torah might mean, they run in other direction. The bracha is even being receptive to listening.**

The **nesivos shalom** describes a higher madrega of longing to hear the dvar hashem. Even more than presents itself naturally. 12:28 in Devarim: Shamor vShamarta ais kol

hedevaram asher anochi metzavecha lmaan yitav lecha ulevanecha acharecha ad olam ki taaseh hatov vehayashar beinei hashem elokecha. Why the double lashon? Guard it and listen. Also out of order. Make more sense to say hear it and then guard what you just listened to. Its like naaseh vnishma.

Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh raises this question. Nesivas shalom brings an answer from avodas yisrael, koshnitzer magid.

Shamor can mean to guard but it also can mean to long for and look forward to something. Like vaviv shamar es hadavar.

Yaakov knew the nevuah would be fulfilled. And he longed for it. Yaakov rebukes Yosef but

Internally knows the dream will come true, he's looking forward, metzapeh for the dreams So shamor vshamaata means that we should long for it and listen. Should want to hear Hashem. Seek it out

If serve Hashem as eved, hope is do the minimum required.

Only what is asked. He doesn't long for more responsibilities.

But serving from ahava, acting like banim atem lhashem elokeichem (which is in parshas reeh) means we think when will another mitzva come my way. How can I do a drop more? Seek out opportunities to serve Hashem. Like Pesach sheini.

Jews begging Hashem - give us a mitzva- we don't want to lose out. Only people who serve Hashem with ahava say this.

Like King David says in tehilim "laasos retzoncha chafatzti".

Longing for opportunities. Nothing he enjoys more than having another task of Hashem's to fulfill. No greater pleasure. That is perish of shamor shamaata

Gemara in makos, 10, that describes attitude of Moshe Rabbeinu

"Ohev kesef lo yisba kesef". Ppl always want more money.

Have 1 mil, want 2. (Medrash in Koehles). Gemara in makos says this pasuk refers to Moshe Ranbeinu. A person who loves

mitzvos is never satisfied with mitzvos. Moshe knew he wasn't going in to Eretz Yisrael and knew that needed all 6 arei miklat to be set up in order for them to be functional. Setting up the 3 outside of Israel is futile. And yet gemara says from here we see how much Moshe loves mitzvos. A mitzva comes my way, even if it can't function, will not be a complete fulfillment of that mitzva, I want to do it.

And this is what is meant in parshas veschanan "vzos Hatorah Asher sam Mosh lifnei bnai Yisrael" which comes in the middle of the story of the arei miklat. R Moshe says look one pasuk before that. Az yavdil Moshe. Mitzva ba lyadi vakaymena. I have to do what I can. May not be fully functioning or really work as ir miklat. Doesn't matter. Step in right direction. Do what we can. Seek out mitzvos and have desire to do more. This is the great thing Moshe taught. Rav Moshe Soleveitchik of Switzerland says in Sefer called vechaish Moshe: Dayan in Brisk Rav Simcha Zelig would not say "lemalei pgimas halevana" that we look forward to the day when the sun and moon are the same, because he said this would cause there to be one less mitzva and he would not want to miss out on saying kiddush levana. Seeking out mitzvos.

Longing for mitzvos.

So the nesivas shalom says now we understand the pasuk in veschanan: utzedaka tiyeh lanu ki nishmor laasos. When you guard to do. Nishmor - a longing. Burning passion to do what Hahsem wants. What's the great merit? To do mitzvos is expected of us? It's the longing. That's the tzedaka. The great merit. Seeking out opportunities. True mitzva is obligation, not any great merit, Im lamadeta Torah harbeh al tachzik Tova leatzmecha ki lekach natzarta (pirkei avos) That's our job. Tzedaka is burning desire. Longing for mitzvos.

Every month of the year corresponds to a different arrangement of Hashem's name (12 diff ways to arrange Hashem's name). Shem Hashem for Elul is heh heh vav Yud. Each arrangement is alluded to in pasuk. Elul is alluded to in pasuk utzedaka tiyeh lanu laasos. Last letter of last 4 words.

This pasuk teaches us secret of Elul. This is the avoda of Elul. Trying to get to closeness to HKBH of ani Lodi vdodi li.

Emerge from awkward rshp with HKBH from Bain hameitzarim and now we can say we are madly in love with Hashem. Ani Lodi, I am to Hashem like one who only desires to do His will. Greatest pleasure. Don't limit miyztvos. Ratzah HKBH lezakos. Hashem loves us and gave us many mitzvos and we love doing them. All we want. If we understood the sweetness and intoxicating love that is felt in those words we could get drunk on this. Expresses such a deep connection.

All he cares about is us. And all we care about is him. Ani Lodi starts when I can declare to Hashem I want more mitzvos. Longing for mitzvos. Not like an eved. When we express our longing to be close to Hahsem, he responds with vdodi li. Like it says in Toras Avos: we say on Yamim noraim: hayom yaamid bamishpat Kol yetzurai olamim. Im kbanim im kaavadim. Etc. that's what we are being judged on. Are we

sons are slaves? How do we view ourselves? Do we serve Hashem with love or are we like slaves? If we turn to Hahsem and declare ourselves his children and we become servants of Hahsem through love not fear, Hahsem will treat us same way. Kedushas Levi quotes many times, Hahsem tzilcha- how we act to Hahsem, he will act. If we act with love, he will act with love. If we act out of fear, he will have cold relationship with us. When we nurture the father son relationship we are judged that way. Lifnim meshuras Hadin. Im kvanim im kaavadim. We choose our judgment. How do we want to relate to Hashem and his mitzvos. Want to be an eved? Or a son. Yesod haavoda - first of slonimer rebbes: one second of teshuva meahava is greater than 100 fasts. Better one moment where we say we are Hashem's sons than 100 fasts. Once we change that relationship, the whole scale of judgment is changed. This is the avoda of Chodesh Elul. To awaken feelings of nishmor laasos. Serving Hashem out of love.

Demand mitzvos. All of our aveiros can be transformed to mitzvos.

St hard to achieve. Burden on ourselves. Only if ani Lodi do we get vdodi li. Gemara in Shabbos 104: habah letaher msayin oso. If we seek holiness or purity, Hahsem will help but we must initiate. HKBH says shuvu Elai veashuva Aleichem.

But its hard so we say to Hahsem hashiveinu Hahsem ayleycha vnashuva. Help us out. Bring us back. So st we can start with Dodi li.

St by recognizing how much Hahsem loves us, we can come to loving Him.

R Akiva eiger - mitzva to love Hashem. How can there be a mitzva regarding an emotion? How can we demand such a thing. So Rav Akiva Eiger says the mitzva is really to understand how much Hashem loves us. If you know that, memaila you will love Him. So can start with dodi li. Sefer Hachassidus (rebbe of Belz) every night by Maariv right before we are mekabel ol malchus shamayim, we say habocheh amo Yisrael bahava.

Once we understand the degree of how much Hashem selected us, then we can say Shema Yisrael. That's how we would come to love Hashem.

Challenge to waken even for a moment this ahava.

If we don't choose that, and come to Yom Hadin as an eved, judges as eved. Lose Midas harachamim. Spend month trying to get to this level. One sincere moment.

R Avigdor miller - 10 steps to greatness - one step- say out loud Hashem I love you.

Mishnah Berura - hilchos tefilin, siman 25, seif Katan 14- supposed to wear tefilin when u say Shema. So who does not, gemara says is meid sheker batzmo because he says ukeashartem and he doesn't do it. And it's written in Sefer charedim, from this we learn that when you say vahavta es Hahsem elokecha, have to really mean it otherwise you are being meid against yourself. Don't lie. Achieve a sincere moment of Ahavas Hashem.

And this is why the pasuk says lmaam yitav lecha u levanecha acharecha ad olam- why mention children? Bc if we make ourselves like children, Hashem says he will provide for us, and our children and grandchildren. Midah kneged Midah. And make sure the Ahava He has is like a Father, grandfather.

And this is why the pasuk ends ki taaseh hayashar vevatov bainecha hashem elokecha. What does that mean? Not just willing to do mitzvah. Ask ourselves are we doing it in a way that makes hashem proud? Example of child who begrudgingly takes out the trash. This is cont of shamor vshmata, if we really are jews who serve Him from love, we will recognize that hashem gave us mitzvos because He loves us. Rabbeinu Yonah says “anochi hashem elokecha asher hotzaisicha meeretz mitzrayim”. Why does Hashem tie in his introduction with yetzias mitzrayim? Why not creation of world? Hashem took us out of mitzrayim because He loved us. So when Hahsem is abot to give us Mitzvos (10 dibros and 613 mitzvos) those are also borne out of love. Mitzvos are not to punish us. All comes from His love. When we achieve this level of avdus, serve Hashem with Ahavah, we will constantly ask ourselves, is this the way Hashem wanted it to be? With a heavy feeling that I want it to be over? Quotes from Yesod Havodah (Slonimer): Parshas shmini: Vhasair hachatas darosh darash Moshe vhinah saraf. After Aharon’s children died, question about korbonos of the day. Darosh darash Moshe about the korbonos, should it be eaten, be burned and Aharon said if I eat the chatas on the day my children died, would that be right in the eyes of Hashem? And moshe listened and it was good in his eyes. Yesod Havodah explains Aharon has a major chidush. R Tzadok points out first time you say torah shel baal peh logic in torah shebichtav. Aharon created svara. Darosh darash allusion to torah she baal peh. Aharon has svara. But chidush here was that aharon did not say this is what torah says, this is what halacha is. Another aspect of analysis. Is this what Hashem wants? Is it good in his eyes? And Moshe says that is a good way to look at things. So yes, first we must look to see what the torah says and what halacha is. But then have to cheshbon if this is good in Hashem’s eyes. That is serving Hahsem with Ahava. Targum Onkelos on Yirmiyahu 19: Ubanu es bamos habaal lisrof es bnaihem laish olos lbaal asher lo tzivisi vlo dibarti vlo alsa al libi. Says Targum: lo tzivisi- never commended in Torah, lo dibarti- not in neviim, vlo alsa al libi- its not my ratzon. And mepharshim say you have to ask this question. After we figure out whether st if min hatorah, miderabbanan then must ask, is this good in the eyes of Hahsem. Is this what Hahsem intended? Is this the way the mitzvah was intended? Am I doing the mitzvah meahava? Famous story of Rav Leibele Eiger [heard from Rav Eitan Feiner!] and saw in Nachalas Tzvi, Rav Tzvi Pinter: when Rav Leibele was exploring chassidus, went to different cities. Came to certain city. Was there for Rosh Hashanah, beautiful,

decided to stay for Yom Kippur. After shachris commotion, moving tables, asks so next to him what is going on? The man replied Kiddush! Rav Leibele said, its Yom Kippur! The man said yeah but it’s a long day. We’ll make some lechaims – it’ll help for musaph. But its yom kippur! Kares! And the man is not listening. Starts citing gemaras in yoma. And they are setting up Kiddush in the shul! Its no joke. Quotes shulchan aruch! No one stopping. Starts quoting Zohar. And as the shot glasses are rising in the air, Rav Leibele Eiger gives a klop on the shtender in front of all these chassidim who are about to violate Yom Kippur and he screams HKBH says No!!!!!! and the Chasidim look at him and say, now you get it! We can quote sources all day long. And there is TSBP and TSBC but also third dimension. Is it pleasing in my eyes. Is this what HKBH wants. Is it also al libi as Targum Onkelos says.

So as we come to chodesh Elul and attainment of Ani Ldodi Vdodi li, hopefully we can initiate. If not let’s think about Idodi li, how much Hahsem loves us and then it will be that much easier to get to ani Idodi. Lets realize whole judgment of Yamim Noraim is im kbanim im kaavadim. That’s how we are being judged. Do we want to be a ben or an eved? And the way we express this as we get our vision back and ears back is shamor vshamata, not just to be zoche to bracha of being willing to listen, as Rav Shlomo Zalman said, which itself is a bracha, many people can’t even hear but to be people who are shomer mitzvos, like vaviv shamar es hadavar. Seeking mitzvos in connection to HKBH and may we all be zoche to a beautiful din.

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from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>  
date: Aug 29, 2024, 3:32 AM

subject: **Rav Kook on Re'eih**: Searching for the Temple Site  
Re'eih: Searching for the Temple Site Surprisingly, the Torah never spells out exactly where the Temple is to be built. Rather we are instructed to build the Beit HaMikdash “in the place that God will choose”:

“Only to the place that the Eternal your God will choose from all your tribes to set His Name — there you shall seek His dwelling place, and go there.” (Deut. 12:5)

Where is this place “that God will choose”? What does it mean that we should “seek out His dwelling place”?

The Hidden Location

The Sages explained that the Torah is commanding us, under the guidance of a prophet, to discover where the Beit HaMikdash should be built. King David undertook the search for this holy site with the help of the prophet Samuel. Why didn’t the Torah explicitly state the location where to build the Temple? Moses certainly knew that the Akeidah took place on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, and he knew that

Abraham had prophesied that this would be the site of the Beit HaMikdash (see Gen. 22:14 and Rashi ad loc.)

Maimonides (Guide for the Perplexed III: 45) suggested that Moses wisely chose not to mention Jerusalem explicitly. Had he done so, the non-Jewish nations would have realized Jerusalem's paramount importance to the Jewish people and would have fought fiercely to prevent it from falling into Israel's hands.

Even worse, knowledge of Jerusalem's significance could have led to infighting among the tribes. Each tribe would want the Beit HaMikdash to be located in its territory. The result could have been an ugly conflict, similar to Korach's rebellion against Aaron's appointment to the position of High Priest. Maimonides reasoned that this is why the Torah commands that a king be appointed before building the Beit HaMikdash. This way the Temple's location would be determined by a strong central government, thus avoiding inter-tribal conflict and rivalry.

"Between His Shoulders"

In any case, David did not know where the Beit HaMikdash was to be built. According to the Talmud (Zevachim 54b), his initial choice fell on Ein Eitam, a spring located to the south of Jerusalem. Ein Eitam appeared to be an obvious choice since it is the highest point in the entire region. This corresponds to the Torah's description that "You shall rise and ascend to the place that the Eternal your God will choose" (Deut.17:8).

However, David subsequently considered a second verse that alludes to the Temple's location. At the end of his life, Moses described the place of God's Divine Presence as "dwelling between his shoulders" (Deut. 33:12). What does this mean? This allegory suggests that the Temple's location was not meant to be at the highest point, but a little below it, just as the shoulders are below the head. Accordingly, David decided that Jerusalem, located at a lower altitude than Ein Eitam, was the site where the Beit HaMikdash was meant to be built.

Doeg, head of the High Court, disagreed with David. He supported the original choice of Ein Eitam as the place to build the Temple. The Sages noted that Doeg's jealousy of David was due to the latter's success in discovering the Temple's true location.

The story of David's search for the site of the Beit HaMikdash is alluded to in one of David's "Songs of Ascent." Psalm 132 opens with a plea: "Remember David for all his trouble" (132:1). What was this trying labor that David felt was a special merit, a significant life achievement for which he wanted to be remembered?

The psalm continues by recounting David's relentless efforts to locate the place of the Temple. David vowed:

"I will not enter the tent of my house, nor will I go up to the bed that was spread for me. I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor rest to my eyelids — until I find God's place, the dwellings of the Mighty One of Jacob." (Psalms 132: 3-5)

David and Doeg What was the crux of the dispute between David and Doeg? Doeg reasoned that the most suitable site for the Temple is the highest point in Jerusalem, reflecting his belief that the spiritual greatness of the Temple should only be accessible to the select few, those who are able to truly grasp the purest levels of enlightenment — the kohanim and the spiritual elite.

David, on the other hand, understood that the Temple and its holiness need to be the inheritance of the entire people of Israel. The kohanim are not privy to special knowledge; they are merely agents who influence and uplift the people with the Temple's holiness. The entire nation of Israel is described as a "kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6).

The Waters of Ein Eitam

Even though Ein Eitam was never sanctified, it still retained a special connection to the Beit HaMikdash, as its springs supplied water for the Beit HaMikdash. The Talmud relates that on Yom Kippur, the High Priest would immerse himself in a mikveh on the roof of the Beit HaParvah chamber in the Temple complex. In order for the water to reach this roof, which was 23 cubits higher than the ground floor of the Temple courtyard, water was diverted from the Ein Eitam springs, which were also located at this altitude.

Rav Kook explained that there exists a special connection between Ein Eitam and the High Priest's purification on Yom Kippur. While the Beit HaMikdash itself needs to be accessible to all, the purification of the High Priest must emanate from the highest possible source. Yom Kippur's unique purity and power of atonement originate in the loftiest realms, corresponding to the elevated springs of Ein Eitam. (Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Shemu'ot HaRe'iyah (Beha'alotecha), quoted in Peninei HaRe'iyah, pp. 273-274, 350-351. Shemonah Kevatzim I:745)

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from: **Shlomo Katz** <skatz@torah.org>

to: hamaayan@torah.org

date: Aug 28, 2024, 11:38 PM

subject: Hamaayan - Accounting

Hamaayan By Shlomo Katz

**Parshas Reeh Accounting**

BS"D Volume 38, No. 46 27 Av 5784 August 31, 2024

Sponsored by Nathan and Rikki Lewin in memory of his father Harav Yitzchak ben Harav Aharon Lewin a"h (28 Av);

Micheline and David Peller, in memory of their daughter Zipporah a"h bat David שיח ; Rabbi Sanford H. Shudnow and family in memory of his mother Mrs. Rose Herman Shudnow (Rahel bat Shefsil v'Sarah a"h – 2 Elul); Brian and Chaya Rozen on the yahrzeit of her father Moshe Yosef ben Meir Hakohen a"h (26 Av)

R' Moshe Yehoshua Hager z"l (1916-2012; **Vizhnitzer**

**Rebbe**) writes regarding the upcoming month of Elul: It is

well-known that R' Shalom of Belz z"l (1771-1855; R' Shalom Rokeach, first Belzer Rebbe) interprets "Elul" as being



related to the Aramaic root “Aleph-lamed-lamed,” which means “to reconnoiter” (see Onkelos to Bemidbar 13:2). That is the foundation of the coming month, leading-up to the upcoming Days of Awe. One must “reconnoiter” the recesses of his soul. “The heart knows its own bitterness,” in the words of Mishlei (14:10). [In other words, every person can discover what he or she needs to correct, and he or she is better-suited than anyone else to do so.]

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe continues: The accounting that a person must do relates to more than the sins he committed. One also should examine whether his enjoyment of worldly matters is being done to fulfill his pleasures, or for the sake of Heaven. The Mitzvah of Shofar, which awakens us, calls upon us to analyze whether we sleep for the sake of Heaven. And, the Mitzvah to refrain from eating and drinking on Yom Kippur calls upon us to analyze whether we eat and drink for the sake of Heaven. However, Elul is the time to prepare for those accountings.

He adds: We read in our Parashah (12:8), “You shall not do everything that we do here today, every man what is proper in his eyes.” The Gematria of the Hebrew words for “You shall not do” equals the Gematria of “Sha’ah Talmud” / “an hour of Torah study” (adding 2 to the latter, for the number of words). The Gematria of the Hebrew word for “everything” equals the Gematria of “Chessed” / acts of kindness (adding 3 to the former, for the number of letters, and 1 to the latter, representing the 1 word). “Today,” says the Zohar, refers to Rosh Hashanah. The preparations for that big day, our verse teaches, are Torah study and acts of kindness. (Yeshuot Moshe)

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“You are children to Hashem, your Elokim . . .” (14:1)

**R’ David Chai Abuchatzera** shlita (former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Nahariyah, Israel; now a Chassidic rebbe in that city) writes: R’ Elimelech of Lizhensk z”l (1717-1787; early Chassidic Rebbe) relates a parable about a father and son who were traveling a long distance through a forest. Many exotic fruits and berries were growing on the trees and shrubs to the sides of the path, and the father was afraid that his son would become so distracted by them that he would wander off and become lost. Therefore, the father told his son, “Every few minutes, you should call out to me so that I can save you from wandering too far.”

This, says R’ Elimelech, is the purpose of prayer. Rashi z”l writes (in his commentary to Bereishit 30:8) that the name of Yaakov’s son Naftali comes from the root that means “connection.” Targum Onkelos says that that name comes from the same root as “Tefilah.” Putting these together, it appears that the purpose of Tefilah / prayer is connection—i.e., we call out to Hashem several times a day so that we will not become too distracted by the pleasures of this world and become lost. (Sha’arei Tefilah p.1)

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“And you shall eat before Hashem, your Elokim, in the place that He will choose to rest His Name—the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, and the firstborn of your cattle and your flocks, so that you will learn to revere Hashem, your Elokim, all the days.” (14:23)

**R’ Chaim Friedlander** z”l (1923-1986; Mashgiach Ruchani of the Ponovezh Yeshiva) writes: The Bet Hamikdash was the place where one could seek and find Yir’at Shamayim / reverence for Heaven (i.e., Hashem). There, one could literally sense the presence of the Shechinah, thanks to the ten miracles that occurred there on a regular basis (see Avot ch.5). This is why the Torah decreed that a person should take a (second) tenth of his produce, known as Ma’aser Sheni / the second tithe, and eat it in Yerushalayim, so that while he was there he could observe the immense holiness and see the service performed by the Kohanim and be inspired thereby to revere Hashem.

R’ Friedlander notes further: The possibility for inspiration was not limited to the Bet Hamikdash; it was present in all of Yerushalayim. After all, Ma’aser Sheni, of which our verse speaks, was not eaten in the Temple; it could be eaten anywhere within the walls of Yerushalayim. The key, says our verse, is that one’s intention be to “eat before Hashem,” not merely to fill one’s stomach. (Sifte Chaim, Mo’adim III p.320, 344)

A related thought:

R’ Avraham Shalom Lipschitz-Halberstam shlita (Stropkover Rebbe in Yerushalayim) observed: The idea of Kohanim standing around in the Temple courtyard eating meat from the Korbanot sounds, at first, to be very uncouth. However, when done for the sake of Heaven, it elevates the eater to a very high level, as reflected in the fact that the Hebrew words “מאכל” (food) and “מלאך” (angel) have the same letters. (Heard from the Stropkover Rebbe)

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“However, there shall be no destitute among you; rather Hashem, will surely bless you in the Land that Hashem, your Elokim, will give you as an inheritance, to possess it.” (15:4) The Gemara (Shabbat 104a) relates that some small children came to the Yeshiva and expounded on the significance of the letters of the Aleph-Bet in a way that “even in the days of Yehoshua bin Nun—i.e., the successor to Moshe Rabbeinu—such things were not said.” [Until here from the Gemara] Why is Yehoshua singled out in this Gemara? **R’ Meir Margulies** z”l (1707-1790; rabbi of Ostrog, Ukraine; one of the earliest disciples of the Ba’al Shem Tov) explains: One of the expositions that these children made was that the letters Gimel and Dalet (גד) together represent a “Gomel Dalim” / “one who gives to the poor.” (Not only do these two words begin with the letters Gimel and Dalet, respectively, they are phonetically similar to the names of those letters.) The children said, “Why does the letter Gimel (ג) look like a person running after the Dalet? Because the Gomel / giver should run after the

Dal / pauper. Why does the letter Dalet (ד) have its back turned toward the letter Gimel? Because the giver should respect the privacy and dignity of the recipient.”

R' Margulies continues: We read about the days of Yehoshua bin Nun (Yehoshua 21:43), “Nothing of all the good things that Hashem had spoken to the House of Yisrael was lacking; everything came to pass.” This, writes R' Margulies, presumably includes our verse: “There shall be no destitute among you.” It follows that in the days of Yehoshua bin Nun there were no paupers, so there was no need for a “Gomel Dalim,” which is why the exposition made by these children could not have been made in the days of Yehoshua bin Nun. (Yachin U'Bo'az ch.3)

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“Three times a year all your males should appear before Hashem, your Elokim, in the place that He will choose—on the Festival of Matzot, the Festival of Shavuot, and the Festival of Sukkot; and one shall not appear before Hashem empty-handed.” (16:16)

The Gemara (Pesachim 3b) relates a story from which it is clear that the sage Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteirah did not ascend to Yerushalayim for Pesach. The Tosafot ask why he did not do so, and they offer several possible answers. One of those answers is that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteirah did not own land and therefore was exempt from this Mitzvah. The Gemara (Pesachim 8b) derives that one who does not own land is exempt from ascending to Yerushalayim for the festivals from the verse (Shmot 34:24), “No man will covet your land when you go up to appear before Hashem, your Elokim, three times a year”—implying that only someone who could have a fear that someone will covet his land is obligated to ascend.

R' Aharon Lewin z”l Hy”d (the **Reisher Rav**; killed in the Holocaust) cites R' Eliyahu z”l (1720-1797; the Vilna Gaon) as noting that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteirah described himself (Sanhedrin 92b) as being a descendant of the dead that Yechezkel resurrected, the so-called “Dry Bones.” According to our Sages, the Dry Bones belonged to members of the tribe of Ephraim who had left Egypt before the Exodus and were killed in the desert. It follows that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteirah would have no share in the Land, for his ancestors did not experience the Exodus and were not present when the Land was divided. (Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun)

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Teshuvah Rabbeinu Yonah Gerondi z”l (1210-1263; Spain) writes: Know and understand, for this is a great principle—It is true that the righteous sometimes sin, as it is written (Kohelet 7:20), “For there is no person on earth so wholly righteous that he [always] does good and never sins.” However, the righteous subdue their Yetzer Ha'ra / evil inclination a hundred times, and if they succumb to sin once, they do not repeat that sin because they become despicable in their own eyes and repent. But if one does not take care to avoid a known sin and does not take it upon himself to protect himself from it, then, although it

may be one of the lesser transgressions, and although he may take care to avoid all other transgressions of the Torah, the Sages refer to him (Chullin 4b) as an “apostate in respect to one thing.” It is as if a servant would say, “Master, I will do all that you tell me except one thing.” Concerning this it is said (Devarim 27:26), “Cursed is he who does not to uphold the words of the Torah to do them,” i.e., he does not take upon himself the fulfillment of all the words of the Torah from beginning to end.

**Rabbeinu Yonah** continues: Know also, that if one repeats a sin ten times, though he is careful in relation to all other transgressions, he is regarded as having committed distinct transgressions. If it is a sin that carries the punishment of lashes, he would receive lashes for each instance of the sin as if he had eaten multiple types of non-kosher things. We see in our generation, Rabbeinu Yonah writes, that there are those who are not careful with a particular transgression because it has become permissible to them—for example, taking oaths in vain, cursing one's neighbor or oneself with the Name of G-d, taking G-d's Name in vain, saying G-d's Name in an unclean place or when one's hands are unclean, ignoring the poor, Lashon Ha'ra, baseless hatred, haughtiness, gazing at improper sights, and, above all, neglect of Torah study. (Sha'arei Teshuvah 1:6-8)

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**Is Gelatin Kosher?**

**By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Introduction:

Parshas Re'eih discusses at length many of the laws of kashrus. In the contemporary world, many kashrus issues concern gelatin, a product unfamiliar to those of us who are not chemists, food technologists or kashrus professionals. To the biochemist, gelatin is studied in organic chemistry. To the food technologist, it is an ingredient with a wide range of applications. To the nutritionist, gelatin is an incomplete protein. To a manufacturer, it spells tremendous profit. To the kashrus supervisor, it can present a potential nightmare. It is available in a kosher variety, but another form might be treif min haTorah. Whether the gelatin that is available in kosher form is considered fleishig or pareve will depend on which posek you ask. And then there is gelatin that is certainly kosher and pareve.

Let us begin with a bit of an explanation of what gelatin is. What is gelatin? Gelatin, which is usually odorless, translucent, and almost colorless is derived from collagen extracted and processed from the connective tissue and skins of animal body parts, particularly the bones and hide of pigs, cattle and fish. Collagen is an incomplete protein containing most of the essential amino acids, but missing the amino acid tryptophan and with insufficient quantities of several of the others to be a complete protein. In other words, no one can

rely exclusively on gelatin for their protein source. In today's world, the most common sources for gelatin are pigskin and beef hides, although it is also manufactured from fish scales and skins.

Gelatin includes many similar compounds with specific qualities and characteristics. Sometimes, the source of gelatin can be determined by chemical testing. The raw materials from which gelatin is derived are prepared by various curing, acid, and alkali processes employed to extract the collagen. The different processes may have great effect on the properties of the final gelatin products, as does the original source of the collagen. In other words, gelatin is not a specific chemical compound but a raw material. Gelatin is usually stored and shipped as a powder. When it is used, significant amounts of water are added. Gelatin absorbs five to ten times its weight in water and forms a gel. Gelatin is probably the most popularly used gelling agent in food, beverages, candies, capsules, etc. Among the many food products that often use gelatin are puddings, candies, ice cream, sour cream, yogurt, soups, broths, sauces, flavors, vitamins and marshmallows. It is also used to remove the pulp or sediment from wines and juices.

**P'tcha** Boiling animal feet or fish bones also extracts collagen. This is what produces the gelatinous, fatty layer when making p'tcha. "Vegetable gelatin" There is no such thing as vegetarian or vegan gelatin, although there are vegan gelatinous substances, such as carrageen, agar, pectin, arrowroot, guar gum, and xanthan gum. The latter are all derived or processed from vegetable sources, but their use, in general, is more limited than that of gelatin. Although there are literally hundreds of varieties of gelatin, from a kashrus perspective, there are five different categories. I will list them from the most kosher to the least.

**I. Fish gelatin** Gelatin can be manufactured from a wide variety of fish sources, some of them kosher but many of them non-kosher. Contrary to popular opinion, this gelatin was known hundreds of years ago and is discussed in teshuvos from early acharonim. However, since modern gelatin manufacture used other, non-fish sources that produce a more versatile product, the modern gelatin industry did not produce gelatin from fish until a few decades ago. This gelatin does require proper kosher supervision and certification for a variety of reasons, including guaranteeing that it is derived exclusively from kosher fishes, that only kosher equipment and raw materials are used, etc. Today fish gelatin is readily available and is used, although it is a tiny percentage of the gelatin market.

**II. Beef gelatin from kosher slaughtered animals** Gelatin produced from beef bones and hides of animals that were properly shechted and kashered. As mentioned above for fish gelatin, these products require kosher certification. There is a question whether this product is fleishig or can be considered pareve. The primary reason why this beef-based product

might be considered pareve is because it is not produced from the meat of the animal, but from parts that are not usually considered edible. There is also the possibility that, once the gelatin is used in the finished product, it is bateil, and that therefore the finished product is ruled pareve. Those who are interested in researching the details of the halachic rulings on this subject are referred to Shu't Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:37; Shu't Mishnas Rabbi Aharon 1:16.

**III. Beef gelatin but not kosher salted** A third, interesting product is a gelatin made from shechted animals, as described above, but that was not kashered, meaning the bones were not soaked and salted to remove the blood. Instead, the blood was removed chemically during the processing of the gelatin. To the best of my knowledge beef gelatin from shechted animals that are soaked and salted is currently not an available product.

**IV Beef bone gelatin** Of course, gelatin is produced from non-kosher-slaughtered beef bone and hide. This variety of gelatin generated the most halachic literature, since several major halachic authorities ruled that this product is kosher, notwithstanding its origin from a treif animal. Many products labeled as "kosher gelatin" products, which are not treated today as kosher by most kashrus organizations, are based on this heter. The halachic reasoning in this case can be simplified, without going through all the sources and literature on the topic, thanks to a brilliant analysis of Rav Aharon Kotler (Shu't Mishnas Rabbi Aharon, 1:17). Some sources in Chazal indicate that there is no Torah prohibition in consuming non-edible parts of an animal that was not shechted. Why is this permitted?

**A.** Is it because these parts of the animal are not included in the Torah's prohibition of eating meat from a treif animal? **B.** Or is it because, although the Torah prohibits eating such animal parts, consumption of inedible items is not considered eating? Although this might seem like doubletalk, it is not. Rav Aharon notes the halacha of an inedible product subsequently processed into an edible one depends on these two ways of understanding this issue. And this is exactly what happens in the processing of gelatin. If argument A is correct, inedible collagen sources were never included in the Torah's prohibition. Thus, if indeed it is true that the gelatin was manufactured exclusively from parts of the animal that are usually not considered food, the finished, now edible, product is indeed kosher. However, if the Torah's heter is that consuming items that are not normally treated as food is not considered eating, once the collagen is rendered into an edible product, consuming the resultant gelatin is prohibited. After a lengthy analysis of the halachic sources, Rav Aharon Kotler himself concludes that rule B is the correct conclusion, although he recognizes that many prominent authorities did not understand the topic the way he did. Upon this basis, we can understand why many prominent authorities permitted the

consumption of gelatin from non-kosher bovine animals, but why this heter is no longer commonly accepted.

V. Porcine gelatin A common source of gelatin in contemporary manufacture is from pork skin, bone and other offal. Most halachic authorities did not consider this product to be kosher for a variety of reasons, including that the most common source material, pigskin, is considered edible food according to halacha. (In fact, it is fried into a high-cholesterol snack food often marketed as a tastier alternative to potato chips.) Nevertheless, there have been several prominent rabbonim who ruled that this gelatin is kosher based on the following reasons: - In the process of removing the collagen from its source, the skins and other offal are subjected to strong acid and other treatments that render them inedible. - Gelatin itself has no taste, and therefore it is not included in the Torah's prohibition. This argument is a bit specious, because industry experts and consumers will tell you that gelatin does have a mild taste. - In today's world, the source material for gelatin is not usually considered food on its own. The majority of accepted halachic authorities do not accept these arguments and consider porcine gelatin to be non-kosher. Nevertheless, one still finds today some products that are labeled as "kosher gelatin" based on these analyses. The official position of the Israeli Chief Rabbinat to this day is to allow products with porcine gelatin, but they must be carefully labeled that they are kosher only by those who have accepted the heter to consume gelatin. In other words, when purchasing "kosher gelatin," a consumer may have no way of knowing which type of gelatin he is purchasing. The consumer is relying on the hechsher's standard. If the hechsher accepts only types I or II, the gelatin will be accepted by all rabbinic authorities.

#### Conclusion

In the "good old days" of the European shtetl, kashrus was completely the province of the local rav, who oversaw the local shochatim and was available to answer any questions that occurred regarding kashering meat, accidental mixing of dairy and meat products, production of local wines, etc. Most raw materials were readily identifiable and, if any kashrus issues surfaced, the local rav was the source of the answer. How different is today's world in which raw materials can be sourced from literally any place on the planet, processed in numerous other locations, and the final product manufactured in a different continent. For example, gelatin is manufactured literally anywhere around the world. As a result, we need to have access to a rav who is an impressive talmid chacham, and, in addition, either he or we need access to a highly knowledgeable kashrus expert or agency.