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Divrei Torah

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Barbara and Simcha Hochman & family in memory of:

- Simcha's father, *Rabbi Jonas Hochman a"h* and
 - *Gedalya ben Avraham, Blima bat Yaakov,*
Eeta bat Noach and Chaya bat Gedalya,

who were murdered upon arrival at Birkenau on the 2nd day Shavuot.

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Forward by Rabbi Adler

Chaveireinu HaYikarim,

Every year on the first night of Shavuot many of us get together for the purpose of learning with one another. There are multiple shiurim and many hours of chavruta learning . Unfortunately, in today's climate we cannot learn with one another but we can learn from one another. Enclosed are a variety of Torah articles on many different topics which you are invited to enjoy during the course of Zman Matan Torahtainu.

I take this opportunity to thank Elissa Yurowitz for her efforts to bring this to fruition. She deserves part of the reward for each article presented. I wish you all a Chag Sameach.

Yosef Adler

אכל נפש That which you can and cannot do on Yom Tov

The Torah writes in Parshat Bo (Shemot 12:16) in reference to days one and seven of Chag HaMatzot .
בְּלִמְלָאָה לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה בָּהֶם אֵךְ אֲשֶׁר יַאֲכֵל לְכָל נְפָשָׁה לְבָם . We are going to define which melachot are included in the phrase אכל נפש and demonstrate that the issur melacha of Shabbat is radically different than the issur melacha of Yom Tov.

Tosafot מסכת ביצה זף ג עמוד אלף cite the Yerushalmi that makes a connection between the pasuk quoted above and the very next pasuk which states ושמירתם את המצות that we are required to take special precautions during the baking of Matzah. What connection might there be between the license to cook on Yom Tov and the mitzvah of shemirah for Matzah? Answers the Yerushalmi that it teaches us that the only two melachot of the bread making process permitted on Yom Tov are **ליישה** , **אפייה** , kneading the dough and baking because those are the two stages that require שמירה for matzah (we actually require shmirah from the time of **קצירה** harvesting). Anything that comes earlier in the bread making process such as **בורר** , **טוחן** **קוצץ** harvesting , separating or grinding is prohibited , **מדאוריתא** biblically prohibited

Rambam פרק א מהלכות יומ טוב הלכות ד ה ז disagrees with Tosafot and states that based on Torah law any melacha that handles food is considered מלאתת אכל נפש and is permitted on Yom Tov. So grinding, cutting or separating would be permitted. However, the Rabbanan did not want every husband and wife to spend Yom Tov in the kitchen and stayed that melacha that could have been done Erev Yom Tov and would decrease the quality of the food should

be done on Erev Yom Tov. So for example when deciding whether you can grind grain into flour on Yom Tov or not Rambam prohibits that because Mrs. Rambam told her husband Moshe that the cake will taste as good whether the flour was ground I Yom Tov or erev Yom Tov. However, if you are grinding spices Rambam allows that on Yom Tov because freshly ground spices are better than spices ground the day before. Based on that rationale Raavad challenges Rambam for prohibiting the harvest of fruit Everyone knows that freshly plucked fruit is much tastier than fruit cut before Yom Tov. According to Rambam's criteria it should have been permitted . So it is a little difficult to pinpoint which melacha would make the Rabbanan's standard of tasting better when done on Yom Tov itself. But you have much more leeway than Tosafot offers.

The Torah in Parshat Emor ויקרא פרק כג lists all the holidays of our year. But it opens with a reference to Shabbat . There are several explanations as to why that is done and of them is to teach us the term means on Yom Tov. Aside from אבל נפש all that is prohibited on שבת is prohibited on Yom Tov. However, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein צ"ל believes that there is a fundamental difference between them. On Shabbat each of the 39 melachot are prohibited based on the fact that each one of them is called a melacha. There are other compelling reasons why an activity such making a fire or carrying is prohibited. On Yom Tov the reason is not because each activity is identified as melacha. But rather because it helps further our students creating a day of מקרא קדש

The recitation of Hallel helps create the as does the mitzvah of simcha . Why are melachot of permitted because it enables to observe more fully the of that day. Proof to this idea suggests Rav Aharon is that is permitted on Yom Tov but prohibited on Shabbat. So if there is a non Shabbat and dr says he needs a pound of fresh meat we are obligated to cook the fresh meat for him but can not add an additional steak for myself (see the sugya in (מנחות דף סד עמוד אלף ובר' ז) Because I violate the issur of. As each melacha is independently prohibited you are only permitted to cook exactly what dr ordered. On Yom Tov it is permitted to cook an extra steak for myself in the same as the food for the person who is ill. Once I am permitted to cook the is not compromised if I add an extra piece of meat to the pot. The same is true for the laws of muktzah in a reverse fashion. (עין ביצה דף ב עמוד ב) There are dozens of cases of different types of . On Shabbat with all of its stringencies we are lenient and follow 'שמנו' many times whereas on Yom Tov has a more relaxed atmosphere we are machmir like . ר' הודה Due to the fact that we have created certain leniencies we must protect the integrity of Yom Tov by the rabbanan accepting the stringencies of . This is accepted as law by Rambam and The Shulchan Aruch Baal HaMaor



Shifting voices in the narrative of Tanach—Yaakov Blau

Who is talking? Stories in Tanach often involve several characters, sometimes including the narrator. Keeping track of who is speaking is not always so easy. The *Sifrei* in *parshat Yisakhor* lists several examples of shifting dialogue in either the same *passuk* or consecutive *passukim*. Let us examine several of the *Midrash Halacha's* examples and then as food for thought, please consider whether all of the examples are actually the same phenomenon. Additionally, this *midrash* is a good example of how one *midrash* can influence *parshanut* throughout Tanach. While Rashi on *parshat Yisakhor* quotes the part that is relevant to the "local" *passukim*, he quotes many of the other examples of the *midrash* in their relevant places.

Here is the entire *midrash*, please feel free to read all of it, but we will only deal with several of the examples:

ספרי במדבר פרשタ בהעולה פיסקא פה

אין כל בלתי אל המן עינינו, את סבור מי שאמר זה אמר זה לא מי שאמר זה ישראל אומרם בלתי אל המן עינינו והמקום מפיש את כל בא הולם ואומר להם באו וראו על מה אלו מתרעמים עלי והמן כדרע גד הוא ועינו בעין הבדולח בענין שנאמר זוהר הארץ טוב שם הבדולח (בראשית ב'יב) ביצא בו אתה אומר ייכר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני (שם /בראשית/ לח'כו) והמקום [הכתב] על ידו ולא יסף עוד לדעתה (שם /בראשית ל'ח ב'ו/) כיון שידעו שככלתו הוא לא יסף עוד לדעתה ביצא בו אתה אומר אתה עיף ויגע (דברים בה'יח) על ישראל הוא אומר אתה עיף ויגע ועל מלך הוא אומר ולא ירא אלהים (שם /דברים כ'ה י'ח/) ביצא בו מדוע בושש רכבו לבוא (שופטים ה'כח) אמרה אמו של סיסרא חכמתו שרותיה תענינה אף היא תשיב אמרה לה (שם /שופטים ה' כט) אמרה אשתו הלא ימצאו יחלקו שלל (שם /שופטים ה' ל') נתגלו דברים שאמרה אמו של סיסרא לדברה ברוח הקודש אמרה לה אל תצפי לבנק סיסרא מעתה בן יאבדו כל אויביך ה' (שם /שופטים ה' לא) ביצא בו אווי לנו מי יצילנו מיד האלים האדים האלה (שמואל א' ד'ח) עד כאן אמרה צדיקים אבל רשעים אמרו אלה הם האלים המכבים את מצרים בכל מכבה במדבר (שם /שמואל א' ד' ח'ו/)

אמרו עשר מכות היו לו והבאים על המצריים שוב אין לו מכבה מעטה אמר להם המקום אתם אומרים שאין לי מכבה מעטה מכבה אביה עליהם שלא נהייתה מעולם והוא אחד מהם יושב בטחור ועכבר יוצא מן התהום ושומט את בני מעיו וחוזר לתהום וכן הוא אומר ותכבד יד ה' על האשדדים (שם / שמואל א'/ ה') כיוצא בו ויאמרו השרים וכל העם אל הכהנים ואל הנביאים אין לאיש זהה משפט מוות כי בשם ה' אלהינו דבר אלינו מהו אומר ויקומו אנשים מזקני הארץ ויאמרו אל כל קהל העם לאמר מיבנה המורשתית היה ניבא בימי חזקיה ההמת המיתתו חזקיה מלך יהודה (ירמיה כ' י' י' עד כאן אמרו צדיקים אבל רשעים מהם אומרים גם איש היה מתנבأ בשם ה' אוריה בן שמעיה וגוי וישמע המלך יהויקים וכל גבוריו וכל השרים את דבריו ויבקש המלך להרוג ושלח המלך יהויקים אנשים על מצרים ויצאו את אוריה ממצרים ויביאו אל המלך יהויקים ויכהו אמרו בשם שאוריה נהרג בר ירמיה חייב ליהרג אך יד אחיקם בן שפן הייתה את ירמיה לבلتוי נת אותו ביד העם להמיתו (שם /ירמיה ב' ז/ ב - כג) ביזואו חי ה' שבבי עד הבוקר (רות ג' ג) לפי שהיה יציר הרע יושב ומצערו כל הלילה ואומר לו אתה פניו ומקש אשא והיא פניה ומקשת איש ואתה למד שהאהה נקנית בבעילה עומד ובוא אליה ותהי לך לאשה נשבע ליצרו הרע ואמר לו חי ה' אם אגענה ולאשה אמר שבבי עד הבוקר אף כאן אתה אומר אין כל בלתי אל המן עינינו את סבור מי שאמר זה אמר זה לא מי שאמר זה אמר זה ישראלי אומרים בלתי אל המן עינינו והמקום מפיעס את כל באי העולם ואומר להם בואו וראו על מה אלו מתרעמים לפניכם והמן בזרע גד הוא ועינם בעין הבדלה בעני שנאמר זהב הארץ טוב שם הבדולח (סליק פיסקא).

1]The *Man*

Bamidbar 11:6 first has the quote "we see nothing but the *man*" and then (*passuk* 7) "the *man* was like coriander seed and its color was like ". A description also found in *Bereshit* 2:12 "the gold of that land was good, there is implying that it is something positive)." The *midrash* comments that, at first glance, it would seem that both statements are said by the same people. However, in actuality, the first is the Jews complaining about the *man* and the second is Hashem "appeasing" the rest of the world and saying "look what they are complaining about, the *man* was actually something wonderful."

2]Yehuda and Tamar

In *Bereshit* 38:26, upon learning that Tamar was the person he had slept with, Yehuda says "she is more righteous than I" and the *passuk* then writes "he knew her no more," that once he realized that it was his daughter in law, he longer "knew" her.

3]Amalek

Devarim 25:18, discussing Amalek's initial attack of the Jews says that "you were weary", referring to the Jews, but the end of the *passuk* "they did not fear God," refers to Amalek.

4]Mother of Sisra

Shoftim 5:28 is the end of *shira* that Devorah sang after the defeat of Sisra. It quotes Sisra's mother as wondering "why is his chariot delayed," with her wise ladies comforting her in the subsequent *passuk*. The *midrash* says that Devorah was aware of this dialogue and replied, "do not wait for your son Sisra, so should all of Hashem's enemies be destroyed" (*passuk* 31).

Note: I am skipping several sections of the *midrash* now.

5] Trail of Yirmiyahu

Yirmiyahu 26 has the Jews putting Yirmiyahu on trial for predicting the *churban*. The elders quote the precedent of Micha, who made a similar prophecy and was not killed (*passukim* 17-19), that ends the *tzadikim*'s quote. The wicked people then quoted the case of the *navi* Uriya, who was killed by the king Yehoyakim (*passukim* 20-23). The *passukim* do not indicate a new group speaking in *passuk* 20, it is a *midrashic* assumption.

To show the influence of this *midrash*, here are the Rashis that quote parts of it throughout

Tanach:

רש"י במדבר פרשת בהעלותך פרק יא
(ז) והמן בزرע גד - מי שאמר זה לא אמר זה, ישראל אומרים בלתי אל המן עינינו, והקב"ה הכתיב בתורה והמן בזרע גד וגוי, כלומר ראו בא עולם על מה מתלוננים בני, והמן בר וכך הוא חשוב:

רש"י בראשית פרשת וישב פרק לח
ולא יסף עוד - יש אומרים לא הוסיף

רש"י דברים פרשת כי יצא פרק בה
ולא ירא - מלך, מלאכים, מלהרע לר:

רש"י שופטים פרק ה
(לא) כן יאבדו - דברה אמרה תנחומיں של הבל הן לה כן יאבדו כל אויביך ה', כאשר אבד הוא:

רש"י ירמיהו פרק כו
(כ) גם איש היה מתנבא - מי שאמר זו לא אמר זו עד כאן דברי צדיקים ועמדו רשעים שהיו שם ואמרו גם
איש מתנבא וגוי בשם שאוריה נהרג ירמיה בר מפורש בספר:

While all of the examples have a shift in who is talking, are they actually the same? Why or why not?



The Importance of Teaching Torah to Grandchildren– Leebor Cohen

Based on Harirei Kedem, Volume 2, pp. 256-8, notes on Shiurim of the Rav. (With appreciation to Rav Weiner for introducing me to this dvar Torah.)

The Gemara in Kiddushin 30a writes:

אמר ריב"ל כל המלמד את בן בנו תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיבלה מהר סיני שנאמר והודעתם לבניך ولבני בניך וסmir ליה יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלהיך בחורב (דברים ד, ז)

"Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Anyone who teaches his son's son Torah, the verse ascribes him credit as though he received it from Mount Sinai, as it is stated: "But make them known to your sons and to your sons' sons," and juxtaposed to it is the phrase in the verse: "The day when you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb" (Deuteronomy 4:10), as Horeb is Mount Sinai." (Translations from Sefaria)

It appears from this statement that there is a special significance to teaching Torah to one's grandchildren. On the other hand, we find in the Rambam, Hil. Talmud Torah 1:2:

כשם שחייב אדם ללמד את בנו כה הוא חייב ללמד את בן בנו שנאמר (דברים ד ט) "והזעטם לבניכם ולבני בניכם".

"Even as man is obliged to instruct his son, so is he obliged to teach his son's son, for it is said: "But make them known to thy sons and thy sons' sons" (Ibid. 4.9)."

It appears from the Rambam that the primary obligation is to teach one's child, and that the obligation to teach one's grandchildren is only derived from that primary obligation. How can we reconcile the halachah as stated in the Rambam with the statement of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi?

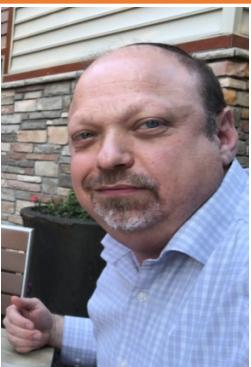
The Ramban, in his list of mitzvot that he believes the Rambam to have left out of his Sefer HaMitzvot, Negative Prohibition 2, writes:

שנמנענו שלא נשכח מעמד הר סיני ולא נסיר אותו מדעתנו אבל היה עניינו ולבנו שם כל הימים. והוא אמרו יתעלה 'השמר לך ושמור נפשך מאי פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך ופן יסרו מלברך כל ימי חייך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלהיך בחורב וכו'.

"The second mitzvah [that the Rambam“ forgot” to include in his Book of Mitzvot] is that we have been warned to never forget standing at Har Sinai, and to never remove this event from our consciousness. Rather, our eyes and our hearts should be directed there all of the days. It is as the Exalted One said, “Be careful, and guard your soul greatly, lest you forget the things that your eyes saw and lest they leave your heart all the days of your life. And you shall make them known to your children and their children - the day that you stood before Hashem your G-d at Chorev, etc.”(Devarim 4:9-10)."

(The Rav notes that the Rambam agrees that there is a prohibition against forgetting our receiving the Torah at Har Sinai, but that he includes it in the general Mitzvah of Talmud Torah, and not as a separate Mitzvah.)

It emerges in this text of the Ramban, as explained by the Rav, that there are two mitzvot in Talmud Torah. One arises from the pasuk **אומתם את בנייכם**, and the other from **והודעתם לבניך ולבני בנייך יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלהיך בחורב.** The obligations created by these two pasukim are different. The first refers to teaching the substance of the Torah; the texts, the halachot etc. This obligation is better taught by the father, and it is *his* primary responsibility. The second, requiring that we remember our receiving the Torah at Har Sinai, this refers to conveying our belief in the veracity of the Torah; this is best taught by a grandparent. It is the grandparent who is closer to Har Sinai, and the grandparent who received this teaching from his or her own grandparent. When children are taught by their grandparents they can understand that what is being passed down to them is more than a syllabus of knowledge, however lofty and beautiful it may be. They can appreciate the truth of the Mesorah because they recognize that they are witnessing an unbroken and faithful chain of transmission, from Har Sinai down to themselves.



Bezchus Rabbi Dr. Baruch Tzvi ben R. Reuven Nassan z"l

Mai Chanukah—Elchanan Dulitz

The famous Gemara in Masechet Shabbat begins: "What is Chanukah? Beginning with the 25th of Kislev, eight days of Chanukah are observed, during which no eulogies are delivered, nor is fasting permitted. When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they defiled all the holy oils used for the Menorah, and when the Hasmonean house prevailed and vanquished them, they searched and found only one remaining jar of oil with the Kohen Gadol's seal. Although it contained enough oil to burn for only one day, a miracle occurred, and the oil burned for eight days. A year later they (the Rabbis) designated these days as *Yamim Tovim* on which praise, and thanksgiving were to be said." (Shabbat 21)

The Yerushalmi mentions the holiday of Chanukah in 29 places (thanks to a search engine) yet there is no description of the story. In fact, Chanukah is known in the Yerushalmi as it was used as a timing tool. For example, when the question of sea travel is discussed, (Shabos 2:6) the time frame for safe travel is between *Shavous* and *Sukkos*. From *Sukkos* to *Chanukah* travel is only allowed if absolutely necessary and after *Chanukah* absolutely no travel. Why is there is no mention of the story, similar to the Bavli?

The simple answer that one could suggest is that the miracle of Chanukah occurred in Eretz Yisroel the same place that the Yerushalmi was written. Therefore, there is no real reason to repeat the story because everyone knew the entire episode. The problem with this solution, is that if it were correct, then it would also answer the more famous question of why the Mishna leaves out the story. Chasam Sofer (among other commentaries) questions why does the Mishna skip the entire story? The answer he suggests is that the author of the Mishnah was Rebbe, who was from the royal dynasty of Dovid Hamelech. The victory of Chanukah was spear-headed by the *Chashmonai Kohanim Gedolim* and they designated a king from among the Kohanim. They refused to relinquish the kingship to the rightful monarchs. As such, Rebbe, a descendant of the monarchy chose to not include the story in the Mishna. If our premises is correct, then why does the Chasam Sofer just simply answer that the Mishna was written in Eretz Yisroel, and they knew the story so there was no need to repeat. He does not accept the simple answer. There must be a more compelling issue at hand.

Professor Levy (Louis) Ginsburg posits that much of the "Tannaitic" braisos regarding Chanukah are actually of Babylonian origin and only makes their way into the Eretz Yisroel corpus via R' Yochanan at a much later stage. Based on this observation, he suggests that the lack of "primary" references in Toras Eretz Yisroel could mean that Chanukah was less observed in Eretz Yisroel. See Vol. 1, JTS, New York 1941, available at http://www.massorti.com/IMG/pdf/ginsburg_yerushalmi_1.pdf). Some associate Ginzburg's theory with the common notion that the Rabbis generally downplayed the accomplishments of the Chashmonaim given their later corruption. However, Gedaliah Alon rejects both the theory that Chanukah was less observed in Eretz

Yisroel and the theoretical underpinnings of the alleged lethargy. See G. Alon, Jews, Judaism and the Classical World, Jerusalem 1977 and his *ההשכיחה האומה וחכמיה את מחקרים בתולדות ישראל החשמוןאים* found in his *מחקרים בתולדות ישראל* (available at <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/vl/mehkarim/mehkarim01.pdf>).

I would like to make another suggestion as to why there is no mention of the *Chanukah* story in the Mishna and the Yerushalmi.

There is a Mishna in *Perek Kol Yisroel Yesh Lahem Chelk Bolam Habah* (Sanhedrin) (please note that it can be the 10th or the 11th perek depending on the pagination.) The Mishna lists the people that lose their place in the world to come. Rabbi Akivah adds people that read “Seforim Hachitzonim” (works outside the fold, to be discussed herein) also lose their place in the world to Come. The question the Gemurah grapples with, is what books does Rabbi Akiva include in his ban.

The Yerushalmi, (Sanhedrin 11:1) records that he is referencing to the books of Ben Sirah and Ben Lanah (Pnie Moshe explains the later was a book known at the time). However, Homer and books written from now on are not included in the ban. The *Shiuri Hakarban* asks why the distinction? He explains that anything written that is close to the Torah, that could be confused with *Torah Mesinia* is a *bizayon* of the Torah and therefore included in the ban. However, books that are far away and could never be mixed up with the *Sefri Kedusha* are not within the aforementioned ban.

By contrast, the Bavli’s starts (100b) by quoting a *Briesa* that says that the ban refers to the books of Minim (the heretics). Rav Yosef adds Ben Sirah. The *Rif* and *Rosh* question what is being added by Rav Yosef? They explain that the ban was on books that explain the Torah with their logic without using the Midrash as a source. Rav Yosef adds that even Ben Sirah is included in the ban because there is no reason to read these types of books. They are a waste of time. The Bavli interpretation of the ban is more inclusive than the Yerushalmi.

There are other known sources for the story about Chanukah contained within the Written Tradition, called “*Megillat Chashmonaim*”. It describes the entire story including the nine wars and the ultimate salvation of the Jews. This book was in circulation at the time of the Mishna and Gemurah. In addition, Josephus has expanded coverage of the war in depth. These books were not included in the Yerushalmi ban but seem to be included in the Bavli ban. Thus, the Mishna and the Yerushalmi had several outside sources for the Chanukah story and did not need to include it in the narrative of their *Halachik* work. The Bavil, by contrast had a ban against the *Megillat Chashmonaim*, therefore they had to add the entire Chanukah story because there was no other source for people to read about this wonderful story.

Perhaps this is also the reason that Rabbi chose to leave out the story of Chanukah, in the Mishnah. The Mishna is a concise *sefer* with absolutely no extra words. In fact, many laws and ideas were left out for latter day scholars to figure out. He did not set a ban on *Megillat Chashmonaim* and therefore people had access to the story without the need to include in the Mishna.

If this is correct, we must ask a more basic question: why was the ban different. What changed between the conclusion of the Yerushalmi and the conclusion of the Bavli that necessitated a more restrictive ban?

Toseftah (Avodah Zarah 1:3) Rabbi Yeshoshua is asked can one teach his son Greek books. He responds that one can teach it at a time that is not day or night, because the Torah commands us to learn Torah day and night.

A similar story appears in the Bavli. (Menahot 99b) Rabbi Yishmael is asked by his nephew if he may learn “*Hokhmat Yevanit*”, since he already completed the entire Torah. Rabbi Yishmael answers him by quoting the verse (Joshua 1:8) “And you shall study it day and night,” – studying anything other than Torah may only be done at a time that is neither day nor night, i.e., never. The Gemurah points out that this is not a unanimous opinion, for there are other explanations of the verse from *Yehoshuah*. *R. Shemuel bar Nahmani* understands the verse as a blessing, not a commandment – God blessed Joshua to merit continuous study of Torah. Rabbi Yishmael’s opinion, is a minority opinion. *Tosefos* (Menahot 99b) (quotes an earlier *Tosefos Menahos* 64b “*Arrur*”) asks how can we even talk about learning Greek if there was a prior ban on learning Greek recorded in the Mishna? *Tosefos* gives several answers, either there was an earlier ban that was not accepted and then a later ban that was accepted. A second answer proposed is one was a curse and the other one was a ban. Regardless, *Tosefos* holds there was a ban on either Greek or Greek Philosophy.

The Yerushalmi version of this story appears in 2 places in the exact same context. (*Pe’ah* 1, 1) (*Sotah* 9,15) “Rabbi Yehoshua is asked can one teach his son Greek. He responds that one can teach it at a time that is not day or night, because the Torah commands us to learn Torah day and night. The conclusion is questioned, doesn’t Rabbi Yishmael teach that we must teach our children a trade (which would allow people to learn Greek to help with the ability to trade)? Rabbi Yochanan explains the reason given for the ban on Greek was because of the fear of treason. Rabbi Avahu adds, since the concern is treason, women were never suspected of treason and therefore we are allowed to teach our daughters Greek. In fact, a woman with this skill is a preferred bride.”

{The treason story is brought down in several places in the Bavli. (*Menahot* 64b) (*Sotah* 49b) (*Bava Kama* 82b). During the *Chashmonaim* rule, there was a power struggle between Aristobolus and his brother Hyrkanos for the throne. One faction controlled the capital and the other being the interloper on the outside. The Brother on the outside made a treaty with the Romans to help take control. Each day, the Jews would place money in a basket and lower it down to the Romans. The Romans would put in 2 goats for the daily *Karbanos*. One day a certain old Jew, who spoke Greek advised the Romans that if they stop the sacrifices then they would be victorious. The next day the Roman besiegers, following the old Jews’ advice, placed pigs in basket in place of the lambs. When the basket reached half-way up the wall, the Jews realized the deception and an earthquake shook the land. At that time, there was a ban placed on learning Greek}

There are many *meforshim* that attempt to address the apparent contradiction between the conflicting ideologies of whether there was a ban against Greek or Greek philosophy. The *Toras Reshonim* tries to explain the difference between the two conflicting *halchos* is Greek vs. Greek philosophy. The GRA explains that the *isur* to learn Greek stems exclusively from the obligation to learn Torah all day. There is no additional limitation or ban on Greek based on the Yerushalmi's understanding of the *Toseftah*. *Rabbi Shlomo Yisrali*, (*Girsah* notations at the end) explains that the concern was not treason, rather the non-Jews would make Jews hand over money from other Jews. This would be stopped if they could not speak the language. He understands that the only ban was Greek and there is no issue with Greek Philosophy.

The discussions of the Bavli and the Yerushalmi reflect the differing concerns of the cultures from which the texts emerged. Ginsberg (supra 1941b) and Gedaliah Alon among others claim that there are many *Halachik* differences based on the life and thought of the times. A comparison of the narrative elements of the two Gemurahs suggests that the rabbis of the Yerushalmi had more interaction with non-rabbis—both Jews and non-Jews—than the rabbis of the Bavli. The Yerushalmi, produced in a place under Hellenistic control, reflects Greek influences, both in its language and in its content.

There is one problem with the entire approach. If in fact there was a ban on Greek, the Yerushalmi, (Sanhedrin 11:1) prohibits Ben Sirah and Ben Lanah but allows Homer and books written from now on are not included in the ban? How can they allow Homer which was assumable written in Greek?

After the destruction of the Mikdash, the Roman persecution of the Jews was very difficult. There was no love lost between the nations and there was little concern of Jews leaving the fold. The only concern was treason. Therefore, the Yerushalmi limited the ban to concerns of treason, and therefore limiting the ban to men not women, yet people did learn Greek. By contrast, the Persians, the World power at the time the Bavli was completed, were much more subdued and even allowed the Jews to self-govern. Perhaps, at the time of the conclusion of the Bavli, several hundred years later, there was a stronger need for separation, which included a renewed ban on foreign ideas and books. The Bavli created stricter limitations and increased the prior ban on all forms of Greek and Greek culture. This new ban included *Megillat Chashmonaim* and other non-Jewish sources. Since the Bavli actively banned all forms of Greek language and Greek culture, there was no source accessible for the Chanukah story without its insertion in the text of the Bavli.

In conclusion, the Mishna and Yerushalmi did not require the retelling of the Chanukah story because there was a very limited ban on Greek and there were several other Greek sources to read the story. By contrast, the Bavli had an active ban on Greek and Greek culture, therefore there was no other acceptable source for the Chanukah story and they had no alternative but to include the story in the text.

Elchanan



Shavuos 5780 D'var Torah – Marty Fineberg

I would like to pose three seemingly unrelated questions, each of which may be answered in similar fashion and hopefully provide insight into the meaning of *chag haShavuos* and, at the risk of being overly ambitious, a fitting approach to life generally.

The first question is why the performance of a *pidyon haben*, redemption of a firstborn male child, is an occasion to celebrate any more so than the performance of other *mitzvos*. The question is amplified according to an explanation of the *Sefer haZohar* (*Bamidbar* 3:13) that firstborn males were, prior to *chait haegel*, to be conscripted to a life of religious service; however, following their participation in this ignominious event, they were stripped of the honor. The *pidyon haben* is, in effect, the religious prerequisite that permits firstborn males to engage in secular pursuits. A celebration of this event is puzzling not only because it may be unnecessary but because it seems the reverse is true—the ideal should be to engage in sacred matters to the greatest extent possible. At best, the new post-*pidyon haben* status should be reluctantly accepted rather than acclaimed.

The second question relates to a *gemorah* in *Menachos* (73b) which states that *korbanos shlamim* or “peace offerings” brought by non-Jews in the *Beis haMikdash* must be *olos*, a type of animal offering that is completely burned, no part of which is shared with the *kohanim* or the person bringing the *korban*. Why must the offerings of non-Jews in the *Bais haMikdash* be *olos*?

The third question, at last, brings us to *inyanei d'yoma*, a more topical subject, and it relates to a specific directive as to the manner in which we celebrate *chag haShavuos*. We will focus on this question and the answer suggested may provide insight to understanding the other two questions.

A *braisa* quoted in the *gemorah* in *Pesachim* (68b) records a debate between *Rebbi Elieazer* and *Rebbi Yehoshua* regarding the proper way in which *Yom Tov* is observed. According to *Rebbi Elieazer*, after fulfilling the specific “*mitzvos hayom*”, one may choose to spend the rest of the day eating and drinking or learning Torah. *Rebbi Yehoshua* maintains that one must divide his time between these two activities. The source of this debate, according to the *gemorah*, is how to reconcile two *pesukim* that seem to contradict one another. One *pasuk* (*Bamidbar* 29:35) states: —לֹא תְעַשׂ מְלָאכָת עֲבָדָה—בַּיּוֹם הַשְׁמִינִי: תָּהִיה לְכֶם עֲצָרָת—“the holiday shall be for you”—this implies that eating and drinking are required; while the other *pasuk* (*Devarim* 16:8) says: מְלָאכָה, לֹא תְעַשָּׂה—עֲצָרָת לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וּבַיּוֹם הַשְׁבִּיעִי; תְּאַכֵּל מְצֻוֹת, נִשְׁתַּחַת וּמִים—“the holiday should be for Hashem, your G-d”—this implies spiritual matters are paramount.

As an aside, in addition to prescribing the proper manner in which to observe *Yom Tov*, this debate serves as an addendum to one of the thirteen principles used to interpret the *Torah*. We are instructed that “*shnei kesuvim hamakchishim zeh es zeh yavo hakasuv hashlishi v'yachriya beineyhem*”—when two *pasukim* contradict each other a third *pasuk* is used to resolve the contradiction. But what happens when there is no third *pasuk*? *Rebbi Elieazer* holds that in such case the *Torah* allows an “either/or” approach affording one the ability to choose the path he will follow. *Rebbi Yehoshua*, however, believes the *Torah* mandates that one find a way to reconcile and adhere to both *pasukim*.

The *gemorah* in *Pesachim* concludes that according to both *Rebbi Elieazer* and *Rebbi Yehoshua*, on *Shavuos* one must include a “*la-chem*” element in his observance; namely, one must eat and drink. The reason offered for this requirement is that *Shavuos* is “*yom she-nitna Torah l’Yisrael*”—the day the Torah was given to the Jewish people. This statement seems to strengthen the question rather than answer it. Because *Shavuos* marks the day on which the *Torah* was given, sitting and learning should be most appropriate. Why does the *halacha* specifically require eating and drinking on *Shavuos*?

Rabbi Yonason Sachs provides an answer to this question based on a *Ramban* at the end of *parshas Mishpatim* on the *pasuk* “*V’yechazu es haElokim, vayochlu vaysihtu*”. Referring to the events connected with *Matan Torah*, the *pasuk* says that the select contingent going up *har Sinai* (some going further than others) “saw G-d and they ate and drank”. The *Ramban* notes that this is the source for people making a *siyum* upon completion of a significant portion of *Torah*. Accordingly, we see that a festive meal—in particular, a *seudas ho-da’ah*, a thanksgiving meal—is an appropriate expression of appreciation for *Torah*. The notion of enjoying a *seudas ho-da’ah* is also endorsed by a *halacha* pertaining to the *korban todah*. The *Netziv* (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin) observes that the *korban todah* is brought by a person who must give thanks for having survived an ordeal and it is accompanied by 40 loaves of leavened and unleavened bread and must be consumed over the course of one evening to avoid the prohibition of *nosar* (leaving over a *korban* past the allotted time in which it must be eaten). This expedited time in which to consume the *korban todah* stands in contrast to other *korbanos* classified as *kadshim kalim* (as opposed to *kadshim kodesh*) which may be eaten over a longer period of time. The *Netziv* explains that the reason for the *korban todah*’s shorter time frame is to compel the person bringing the *korban* to share his joy with many guests over a large meal because gratitude to *Hashem* is best expressed in such a manner.

Accordingly, maintains Rabbi Sachs, the *gemorah*’s answer is well understood. *Simchas Yom Tov* on *Shavuos*, which commemorates the day on which the *Torah* was given, is appropriately observed by eating and drinking as demonstrated by the example at *Matan Torah* noted by the *Ramban* and supported by the observation of the *Netziv* concerning the condensed timeframe in which to eat the *korban todah*.

I would like to offer another approach to the *gemorah*’s enigmatic explanation of why all agree the celebration of *Shavuos* requires food and drink—namely, because *Shavuos* commemorates the day the *Torah* was given.

The daily activities of a person may be divided into two categories: (1) activities that help us grow in a spiritual way, such as learning *Torah*, *davening*, and visiting the sick, and (2) activities that support a person’s physical well being, such as work, education, family time and exercise. Worded differently, life can be bifurcated into a *lashem* component comprised of satisfying one’s spiritual needs and a *lachem* component of taking care of one’s physical needs. Perhaps, the *gemorah* is teaching us that we should not make such a distinction; rather, every aspect of a person’s life, physical and spiritual, should be conducted in accordance with *Torah* values. This is true whether engaging in a “*lachem*” activity or a “*lashem*” activity. The *Torah* provides guidance for every aspect of our lives ranging from abstract issues of a philosophical and existential nature to the most basic elements of daily life. The *Torah* is, on its most basic level, an instruction manual for how we are to live every aspect of our lives in a more elevated and meaningful fashion.

Therefore, on the holiday of *Shavuos*, which is “*yom she-nitna Torah l’Yisrael*”, it is appropriate to engage in activities that satisfy us physically because it is through the principles of the *Torah* that we learn how to infuse every aspect of our daily lives with *kedusha*—even those things we do not think of as being spiritual. For example, when conducting business affairs we must do so honestly and in a manner that complies with *Choshen Mishpat*, the section of the *Shulchan Orech* governing commercial matters, so as to sanctify *Hashem*’s name, rather than desecrate it. The same may be said for the way we dress, eat, speak, treat our friends, and conduct every other aspect of our lives.

This concept may be used to answer a question posed by *Tosfos* in *Brachos* (11b) as to why we do not make a new *bracha* of *birchas haTorah* when learning *Torah* resumes after an interruption. The *bracha* we make before learning *Torah* in the morning covers any learning we do later that night regardless of intervening activities. With respect to other *birchos hamitzvah*, such as eating in a *succah*, a new *bracha* of “*leishev ba-succah*” is required at every meal. *Tosfos* answers that in the case of learning *Torah* no new *bracha* is required because a person never abandons his consciousness of *Torah*; the attachment to *Torah* is ever-present even when not directly engaged in its study. As the Rav explains this unbroken connection, there is always “latent awareness” even if there is not always “acute awareness”. Equipped with our understanding of the lesson of *Shavuos* we can answer *Tosfos*’ question as follows: there is no interruption from *Torah* throughout the day because everything we do should be infused with the values mandated by the *Torah*. The distinction between learning *Torah* and living *Torah* is artificial and, as such, no new *bracha* is required.

A similar notion is found in *parshas Kedoshim*. The opening *mitzvah* of *parshas Kedoshim* addresses the idea of making the daily events in a person’s life holy. The *Torah* tells us: “דְּבָר אֶל כָּל עֵדָת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֹמֵרָת אֲלֵהֶם קָדוֹשִׁים תְּהִיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי הַאֱלֹקִים”—“Speak to the entire congregation of *B’nai Yisrael* and tell them ‘you should be holy because I, *Hashem* your G-d, am holy”. There are two unusual aspects of this *pasuk*. First, the command that *Moshe* tell the message of “*kedoshim tihyu*” to “*kol adas Benei Yisrael*”, “all of Israel”, at one time. *Moshe* is rarely asked to communicate in this manner elsewhere in the *Torah*. The *midrash* explains that the reason *Moshe* is commanded to do so in this case is because this portion of the *Torah* contains “*gufei Torah*” or critical *Torah* principles. Second, the *Ramban* uses a *midrash* to support the idea that *parshas Kedoshim* contains *mitzvos* that hint at each of the *aseres hadibros*. The fact that the *mitzvah* of “*kedoshim tihyu*” is used to introduce a repetition of the themes of *Matan Torah* before the entire nation tells us that its meaning is foundational and profound.

The *Ramban* explains the meaning of *kedoshim tihyu*. He says that when engaging in activities permitted by the *Torah*, one should exercise appropriate restraint and conduct himself in a dignified manner. Just because one is following the letter of the law, it does not permit him to behave in an unfitting manner. One who does so is described by the *Ramban* as a “*navul birshoos haTorah*”—an undignified person who follows the *Torah*’s rules but does not understand and internalize their broader meaning. The instruction of *kedoshim tihyu* applies to all of our actions, whether we are performing a specific *mitzvah* or going about any of the activities that make up our daily routine.

We are now able to return to the first two questions. If the *Seforno*’s explanation of *pidyon haben* is correct, we celebrate the occasion not in spite of the fact, but because of the

fact, that *pidyon haben* serves a *matir*,— a prerequisite— allowing one to engage in matters not considered *meleches kodesh*. The reason for the celebration is because, ultimately, the highest form of living is when we convert the profane into the sacred blurring any distinction between them. Man is not meant to dwell in the exclusive sphere of the hallowed; rather, he is to engage the world around him and improve both it and himself—to take something that is not perfected and perfect it. This notion is reflected in the name given to Primordial Man—Adam—derived from the word “Adama”, dirt, because man’s purpose is to grow and cause growth.

I heard someone ascribe a similar idea to Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky who used it to explain why the personal offerings of non-Jews in the *Bais haMikdash* were limited to *olos*, sacrifices that were completely consumed. The religious dictates of many non-Jews support the notion that the soul and the body are separate—there are holy matters and there are secular matters and they are not, in the most elevated state of religious achievement, intertwined. The *korban olah* which is burned entirely and devoted to G-d is more compatible with this view of the religious ideal. Jews, however, may bring personal *korbanos* that are partly burned and partly eaten—shared between G-d and man. This form of sacrifice reflects the notion that the ideal religious expression sanctifies the mundane.

This idea we developed—merging the profane with and into the holy to achieve an elevated level of sanctity—accords with the *Rambam*’s view that the *nazir* is required to bring a *korban chatas*—a sin offering—among other *korbanos* at the end of his *nazirus*, to atone for the sin of not fully partaking in G-d’s universe. In essence, the *nazir* voluntarily ceded, to some extent, his ability to convert the profane status of everyday life into an expression of holiness and, in doing so, create a *kiddush Hashem*.

Leora and I wish each of you a *chag sameach* and pray that you derive much happiness and joy from your family.

Marty Fineberg



Ruth and Orpah's Wedding Album:
Fake News or Biblical Commentary - Yehuda Halpert

Source Sheet for Independent Guided Learning

תיקון ליל שבעות -- תש"פ

1. Illuminated Naples Bible (Ms. 1191, f.97v): "Wedding of Machlon and Chillion". Color illustration Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna. Date : 1300 – 1400.



וַיְהִי, בַּיּוֹם שֶׁפֶט הַשָּׁפְטִים, וַיְהִי רָעֵב, בָּאָרֶץ; וַיָּלֹךְ אִישׁ
מֶבֶית לְקָם יְהוּדָה, לְגַיְור בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב--הָוָא וְאַשְׁתָּו, וְשָׁנִי בָּנָיו.

ב וּשְׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וּשְׁם אֲשֶׁתָּו נָעָמִי וּשְׁם שָׁנִי-בָּנָיו מַחְלוֹן
וְכָלִיוֹן, אֲקְרָתִים--מֶבֶית לְקָם, יְהוּדָה; וַיָּבֹאוּ שָׂדֵי-מוֹאָב, וַיָּקִיּוּ
שָׁם.

ג וַיָּמָת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ, אִישׁ נָעָמִי; וַתַּשְׁאַר הִיא, וְשָׁנִי בָּנָיה.

ד וַיִּשְׁאַו לְקָם, נְשִׁים מִאֲבוֹזֶת--שְׁם הָאַחַת עֲרָפָה, וּשְׁם הַשְׁנִית
רוֹת; וַיִּשְׁבּוּ שָׁם, כַּעֲשָׂר שָׁנִים.

1 And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem in Judah went to sojourn in the field of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem in Judah. And they came into the field of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth; and they dwelt there about ten years.

- **Question #1.** The upper scene in our illustration appears ambiguous. Try to decipher the scene and place it in the context of the opening of Megilat Ruth.
 - Could it be a description of Ruth 1:1? Why yes and why no?
 - Could it be a description of Ruth 1:2? Why yes and why no?
 - Could it be a description of Ruth 1:3? Seemingly not!
- **Question #2.** The lower scene is visually shocking to the Jewish reader. After recovering from your visceral reaction (and ignoring the ahistorical¹ aspect of the illustration) can you find a textual support that contradicts the depiction of events in the picture?

2. **רות אנד – טו – (ד)** ותקענה קולן ותבכיינה שוד ותתקע ערכיה לסתותה גורחת גבורה באה: ותאפר כתל פְּנָה יְבָטֵחַ
אל עזקה ולא אל קניך נשביב אטבי יכטוף:

(14) And they lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth cleaved unto her. (15) And she said: 'Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god; return thou after thy sister-in-law.'

- **Question #3.** Naomi tells Ruth that Orpah returned to her people and her god and that she, Ruth should also return. What is implied by Naomi's reference Orpah and Ruth "returning"?

3. **אנפ' צורא רות א':ט"ו – אל עמה ואל אלהיה – לעד שהתגירדו.**

"unto her people, and unto her god" – to testify that she [Ruth] had converted.

4. **ר' יוסט קרא פירוש ברות א':ט"ו –** "הנה שבה יבמתק אל עמה" – אין אומר שבה אלא אם כן שלא היה מתחילה כך. מכלל שנתגירדו כשנשאום מוחלון וכליין, ותמה שבה אל עמה לביותה.

"unto her people, and unto her god" – You do not say return unless you were not originally such. From here we see that they converted when they married Machlon and Chilyon, and now she returned to her nation . . .

- **Question #4.** The two sources above try to demonstrate from the conversation between Naomi and Ruth that Ruth in fact converted prior to marrying. If this is true, is "the cure worse than the disease"? What theological/halachik concern does this approach create?

¹ e.g., christological, for a discussion and comprehensive refutation of interpretations of this nature see the Radak's sefer ha'brit available in English translation "The Book of the Covenant of Joseph Kimhi". translated by Frank Talmage

- **Question #5.** Is there an approach within chazal that might vindicate the artist's rendering of the wedding?

5. **במת רבנן במת** "רישאו להם נשים מואביות" תני בשם רבי מאיר לא גיירום ולא הסבilo אוותם (ולא היה להמה להתחודש) ולא היו מעשין עליהם עמנוי ולא עמנית מואבי ולא מואבית

And they took them wives of the women of Moab – It was taught in the name of Rabbi Meir,
they did not convert them and they did not immerse them [in the mikvah] . . .

6. **תניאות בתנורות בנות א' ז'** – עפרה על קנית טיקנא כי ופסיב להן נשין נקראיין מן במת מואב שום טקה
ערקה ונשות פגיניא רות בת עגלון מלכא זמואב וימיבר מפקן פקון צער פנין

They violated the decree of the word of Hashem and they married gentile women from the daughters of Moav, the name of one was Orpah and the name of the osecond Ruth, the daughter of Eglon the King of Moav and the dwelled their a time of ten years.

- **Question #6.** Are there any textual proofs upon which the Targum and the Medrash may rest their understanding of the events?

7. **גילבו"פ רות א' ז'** – וזה הבנים הוסיפו להסוא במת שנשאו נשים מואביות שלא גיירו אותן כמ"ט
... וגם זה מבואר במדרש ועל זה אמרו "שם האחת ערפה", כי בגיןותה היה משנה את שם הקורת והם נשאוו בשם
מלשון "רישאו", שעל לkıודה בקושוין כות בא לשון "לקווה" ולשונו "רישאו" בא לרוב בירושוא של נשים ובירוחם במל
ספר עזרא ונחמייה, ועל אשא שהויתה טפלה כמ"ש בחרוכם (דברי הימים ב י'א) נשים שטונה עשרה נשא ופיגישים
ששים, שrok שתים הדו עקרים שאמר עליהם ויקח . . .

- **Question #7.** Is there a theological/halachik issue which the approach of the Targum and the Medrash solves (see question 4 above)?

8. פרקית יצחן

ב' אולא אשא וכו', רותה נאות, חילקה מ' לישוב שתנשה נאכז
בצלאל ועיל דוד, למסכה אה וווע אוד ווועה ווועה
ה' ישאלן, שטאכז עד לעבד אללה אחים, אלה איז הויה לה
סע צפטל מאג, וככזה נסיבות ז' חותם מורהון, כי אם חורב
דקה, שורמי נמי אלה מ' פעד שלא גאנזיה זיך, ווק מהחוב
ה' סינטער' וווע פלאן לתראי' ולפאת טענה יורה תקופת, איזה
ה' נמי שחשומן פאשי בעז' שמי' פלאה איז עזען אול אולוונן

[ט] ותאמבר. שובי. כתוב ראנציג זיל, אל עטעה ואל
אליהו לעוד שנגנירין, ואחריו נמישך
רב רבי לר' בר גרשון. ומאר אחטלא מוקבליהם דה
לחעוניש את מעטי בחטה משפט מסיט ופדיית, שאט
כדריביהם כן הוא שהוינו כבר בדור ישראל. אך הטיטה
אוזנן לשוט לבנויון, יהורי הוא בכלל כי הוליך תהרונני
(וברטים ז' ז'), וצולילה לה מושע ושדי מעול, כי אלא אמרה
הונה שבת אל עמתה ואל אליהה, בבחינת פה שידורה
בלביה לנצח מה ומדה, והנה זה הוא עד נאפן שלא
נכניירין עריכין.

וזה שורת לא שט שפה כמו אחר שנגניריה פ"א בברכות (ז' ט') מי רות שיצא ממנה זו שירוזה להקב"ה בשירות תשובהות שהקושיםיא [
[פי' רות הדעת למה לא שן שם בירוחה]

- **Question #8.** What does the approach outlined by the Targum and the Medrash tell us about Judaism's view towards proselytizing and the status of the non-Jew?

9. הוּאיל מְשָׁה רֹות א': ט"ו – ואל אלהיה – מכאן לנו שהסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלך לעולם הבא, ושאין מפיצרים בני דת אחרת שייפכו לדתנו. ובודאי ידעה נעמי בערפה שאפ על פי שכזאת שיתה עמה לא עבודה אלילים, מכל מקום לא הבינה אמרת יהוד ה' ולבת אדורק בעבודה זהה

- **Question #9.** So far we have seen a binary approach amongst the commentators; either Ruth and Orpah converted prior to the wedding or they did not convert prior to the wedding. Is there a third option? If yes, what could the middle path be?

10. רַלְבָּג תְּוֻלּוֹת רֹות א': א – התועלת הראשונית – הוא להודיע שאין ראוי לאדם שיתبول בערים אבל יתרחק מזה מפני מה שאפשר. הלא תראה מה שקרה לאלימלך בהטמו בין הגויים כי זה היה סבה אל שנחתנו בנויהם עם בנותיהם ומתו והוא והם בזמן קצר ולא נשאר מהם דבר. ונעמי פשנטיגירן שוקדות שם אצל בני עם ולא היו שולטות לעזוב כל דעותיהם. וכבר הורה שלא עזבו כל דעותיהם כי אמרה להן נעמי שתשובנה והנה יורה שכבר נתגינו מה שאמר נעמי לרות הנה א'

שבה יבמתך אל עמה ואל אלהיה

- **Question #10.** Does the explanation set forth by the Ralbag have implications for the current conversion crisis? If so, how?
- **Question #11.** Does the Ralbag's explanation perhaps provide an alternative understanding to the ambiguous upper scene in the initial illustration?

A Theory: Doubtful if the artist had this in mind¹, but perhaps the picture reflects the regret/trepidation of Elimilech and Naomi as their children venture forth into the non-jewish environment that was fostered upon them as a result of Elimilech decision (and Naomi's tacit agreement) to leave the land of Israel. Whether Ruth and Orpah converted before marriage or not, the marriage was surely not an ideal recipe to facilitate the creation of **בית נאמן בישראל**. This message of the dangers of cutting yourself off from the community is a not so subtle subtext evident throughout Megilat Ruth and perhaps is intended to inform our understanding of kabbalah hatorah as requiring a communal element. At a time when we have witnessed firsthand how much our religious experience is linked to the communal experience this message perhaps rings louder than ever.

חג שמח!!

¹ **Food for thought:** We question whether a diyuk/novel interpretation in the Rambam's Mishnah torah is legitimate if the Rambam likely did not have that diyuk/novel interpretation in mind (seemingly Rav Chaim Brisker was not troubled by this question while HaRav Nachum Rabinovitch zt"l in his Yad Peshutah took a different approach). But, le'havdil, does the same question apply to Art? Is the original intent of the artist relevant in how we perceive the artist's work?

The “Mitzva” of Shavuot - Terry Novetsky

It is understandable that Shavuot is perceived as the “poor cousin” of the Chagim. In order to consider the several comparative deficiencies of Shavuot in contrast to Pesach and Sukkot, let us first review the two core texts¹ presenting Shavuot, found in Parashat Emor and Parashat Re’eh:

- (ז) מופשטייכם אבניאו לחם פנופה שטים שני
עשלונים סלט הוהינה חמץ פאיפינה בפירות לה:
- (ח) והקרבתם על הלחם שבעת כבשים חמיים בני
שנה ופר בן בקר אחד ואילם שיטים יהיו עלה לה
ומונחים ונטפים אשוח ריח ניחת ליהה:
- (ט) ועתיקתם שער עדים אחד להטאת ושני כבשים
בנין שנה לרבנן שלמים:
- (ב) והניר הleinן אתם על לחם היבקרים פנופה לפני
ה' על שני כבשים קדש יהיו לה:
- (כ) וקראתם בעצם היום הזה מקרא קדש יהיה
לכם כל מלאכת עבירה לא תעשה תקנת עולם בכל
מושביהם לדוריכם:
- (כל) ובגזרכם את קיור אריצכם לא תכלה פאות שוד
בגזרך ולקט קידרך לא תלקט לעזינו ולגוז תעוזב אתם
אני ה' א-להיכם:
- (לו) From the land upon which you live, you shall bring two loaves of bread as a wave offering made of two-tenths [of an ephah] of fine wheat meal. They shall be baked as leavened bread. They are the first-harvest offering to God.
- (ט) Together with this bread, you shall sacrifice seven unblemished yearling sheep, one young bull, and two

- (ז) ועשית חוג שבעות לה א-להיך מפת נקבת ירך
אשר תמן פאלשר יברך ה' א-להיך:
- (א) ושמחתך לפני יהוה אלהיך אמתה זבך ובחר
ועברך ואמתך ותלו אטר בשעריך והנור והיתום
והאלמנה אשר בקרוב בפקודם אשר יבחר ה' א-להיך
לשפן טמו טם:
- (ב) וזכרכך כי עברת היות במצרים ושםך ועשית את
תחקים האליה:

(1) יקרא כ"ג

rams. These, along with their meal offerings and libations shall be a burnt offering to God, a fire offering as an appeasing fragrance to God.

(19) You shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

(20) The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before Hashem, with the two lambs. They belong to the priest as something sacred to God.

(21) You shall make proclamation on the same day: there shall be a holy convocation to you; you shall do no service work. This an eternal law for all generations in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

(22) When you reap the harvest of your land, do not completely harvest the corners of your field, also do not gather the gleanings of your harvest: you shall leave them for the poor, and for the stranger. I am Hashem your God.

(2) דברים ט"ז

(10) You shall celebrate the festival of Shavuot to Hashem your God, presenting a free-willed offering according to the extent of the blessing that Hashem your God has granted you.

(11) You shall rejoice before Hashem your God in the place that Hashem your God shall choose to be designated in His name, together with your sons, your daughters, your male and female slaves, the Levites from your settlements, and the converts, orphans and widows among you.

(12) You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt: and you shall carefully guard and observe these statutes.

A sensitive reader will readily identify the many challenges presented by these texts. Let us consider five of these difficulties:

¹ The references to Shavuot in שמות chapters 23 and 34 and במדבר chapter 28 are exceedingly brief and not germane to our discussion. I have modified the translations from the 1917 JPS translation for readability.

1. **Non-Contextual Insertions.** The verses in both sections contain non-thematic textual insertions unrelated to Shavuot. In the Shavuot passage of Parashat Emor, the Torah sets forth the commandment to leave over certain agricultural excess for the poor, specifically Leket and Peah. While undoubtedly essential Torah material, this very command was presented *in near identical language*² just four chapters earlier. On its own, it appears as a redundancy, but specifically to our focus and concern, why here?

This interruption in the Shavuot narrative is replicated, with greater intensity, in Parashat Re'eh, the second text above. There, two of the three verses allocated to Shavuot focus on the seemingly unrelated topic of providing for the needy and socially disenfranchised, and the admonishment to remember that we too were once slaves.

Commandments relating to our obligations to the less fortunate undoubtedly are expressing an essential theme in Torah. It certainly is not in denigration of this significance to nonetheless observe that (i) as a literary matter, these commandments indeed appear out of place in Parshiot HaMoadot, and (ii) these additions are twice specifically placed in subsection assigned to Shavuot.

2. **The Dateless Shavuot Presented as a Textual Afterthought.** Parashat Emor introduces each Holiday with a statement "On [calendar date] it is a [Holiday Name] ... Miqra Kodesh ..."³ with the notable exception of Shavuot.

For Shavuot, the emphasis is reversed and the date is missing. We do *not* read of the Holiday of Shavuot occurring on a date certain, a Miqra Kodesh on which we bring specified Korbanot. Rather the Torah describes in some detail the Korbanot for the fiftieth day of the Omer – a day (with no specific date) which only *five verses later* (verse 21) is declared a Miqra Kodesh. From a dispassionate first reading of Parashat Emor, one could fairly conclude that it is not a text about Shavuot at all! Rather, this text solely provides a detailed description of the Korbanot to be offered on the fiftieth day of the Omer and, seemingly almost as an afterthought, we first read that this day of sacrificial rite is also identified as a "Miqra Kodesh".

3. **No Historical Theme.** The presentations in Chumash for Pesach (the entirety of the 12th chapter of Shemot) and Sukkot (verses 42 and 43) contain rich descriptions of their historical themes. Yet, no historical context is provided for Shavuot in Chumash.

Of course, we identify Shavuot with Kabbalat HaTorah – Revelation at Sinai. Yet, the Torah offers no such historical setting; Shavuot is presented solely in its agricultural context. While the assertion that the seven week period of Sefirat HaOmer reflects an exact timeline between the Exodus and Revelation is certainly defensible, even Chazal are uncertain whether Matan Torah occurred precisely on the sixth of Sivan.⁴

² *ובקנזרתם את קצין ארצכם לא תיכלה פאות שזק ל��ר ולעט קצין לא תולקח - ויקרא יט: ט*

³ See verses 5, 6 (Pesah, Hag HaMatzot), verse 24 (Rosh Hashana), verse 27 (Yom Kippur), verses 33-34 (Sukkot).

⁴ *ומסתת ראש השנה זי: ז ... מותני וב שמייה עצרת פעםיהם ה' פעםיהם ששה פעםיהם שלבעה* *See, also, Moadim BiHalakha on Shavuot.*

4. **No Mitzvot**. Chag HaMatzot celebrates the thematic mitzvot of Pesach, Matza, Maror and Sipur Yitziyat Mitzrayim. Sukkot celebrates the thematic mitzvot of Sukka and the Arba Minim. Yet, with respect to Shavuot, the Torah neither identifies a physical symbolic item to be taken or food to be consumed nor designates any ritual act to be performed.
 5. **Sh'tei HaLehem**. In addition to the more classic animal-based sacrifices,³ the first verse relating to Shavuot in Parashat Emor commands us to bring two loaves of leavened bread as part of the special Shavuot sacrifice. The inclusion of hametz in the sacrificial order is highly troubling – in fact, in the beginning of Vayikra the Torah expressly forbids hametz to be placed on the alter! Particularly in light of the offering of the Omer grain sacrifice fifty days earlier (which is comprised of matza, like all menahot with the exception one of the three menahot offered with a Korban Todah⁴), how do we understand the inclusion of hametz in Shavuot's unique sacrificial rite?

• • • •

Shavuot may seem “poor” in comparison to the other Hagim, given that we do not celebrate a specific historical event nor observe any independent Mitzvot laden with profound symbolism, but we arguably may identify in Shavuot a singular “rich” and deeply meaningful theme encompassing the core aspects of the Holiday, a theme that also could explain the apparent inconsistencies and textual challenges we identified above. I suggest that this theme, the “mitzva” of Shavuot, is the Ribboon Shel Olam’s desire for *each of us to embrace generosity rooted in gratitude* both as a personality trait as well as a foundational value for the society that we build.

Here, I wish to emphasize the distinction between generosity and tzedakah/charity. Tzedakah is the imperative, emphasized repeatedly throughout Torah, to provide for the destitute and needy. Generosity demands more: a spirit of giving, an abiding sense of duty to our fellow man and an internalized relationship with wealth that recognizes that the bounty we have been provided is a gift from God, premised on the condition that we share with those less fortunate. When we acknowledge our wealth as a conditional gift, that those happenstances and coincidences of life that allocated wealth to us are in fact truly the product of the blessings and grace of God, with that recognition comes gratitude, and thus we are generous. Stated simply: within the singular act of giving, the affirmative mitzva of tzedakah rightfully focuses and is concerned solely with the recipient⁷ while generosity considers both the recipient *and* the giver.

⁵ This is not to suggest that the animal sacrifice aspect of the Korbanot Shavuot are typical or customary. In another forum I previously discussed the fascinating character of Kivtzei Atzeret and its interrelationship with Korban Nazir.

⁷ Hence, no *no no* is recited. See בלאה שירוי א' תולק א' טימן טא. שירוי שירוי א' תולק א' טימן טא; שירוי שירוי א' תולק א' טימן טא.

This distinction between recipient-focused tzedakah and donor-focused generosity is expressly recognized in the Halakha. The Rambam in Sefer HaMitzvot sets forth two distinct Mitzvot of Tzedakah,⁸ one positive and one negative:

מצות עשה קדעת
היא שצונו לעשות זדרה וחזק החלשים ולהרוחיב אליהם. וכבר בא המצו במצוה זו במילוט מתחלה, אמרו יתעלה (דברים טו-ח) "פתחו תפחה את ייך" וכו' אמר (יירא כה-לה) "והזקמת בז" ואמר (יירא כה-לה) "יזה אחיך עמר", והכוונה באלו הלשונות כולם אחת והוא שיעור אתם ונוחותם די ספוקם.

מגמות לא-מושתת רשב
זהו הירנו שלא למןעו צדקה והרוחבה מאחינו מההאבירים אשר נזע עניים וככלתו להוציא להם. והוא אמור (דברים טו-ז) "לא תאמץ את לבך", וזה אזכור מלגנות מטעם היכילות ואכזריות.

We are commanded to give charity — to support and relieve the poor. This command is expressed in the Torah in various ways: "Open your hand generously"; "Help him survive, whether he is a convert or a born Jew"; "Help your brother survive with you." These verses all have the same point — that we must provide for our poor and support them in accordance with their need.

We are forbidden from withholding charity and assistance from our needy brethren once we have become aware of their difficulty and know we have the ability to help them. The source of this prohibition is G-d's statement, "Do not harden your heart or shut your hand against your needy brother." This prohibits being cruel and stingy to the extent that we do not give to those who deserve our assistance.

The focus of the positive commandment “to support and relieve the poor” is clearly stated and the prooftext verses also focus on the plight of the poor: “Help him survive ... help your brother ...”. In sharp contrast, the negative commandment’s focus is firmly upon the giver, her attitude and behavior, prohibiting her from withholding assistance and ignoring the plight of the needy. The prooftext verse cited by the Rambam is also “giver-focused” - “Do not harden your heart”.

In his many presentations on charity, ⁹ Rav Aharon Lichtenstein articulated a comprehensive vision of the primacy of tzedakah individually and communally, and particularly the intended impact on the ethical personality of the giver. Rav Lichtenstein often cited the following Rambam:

חיברנו אנו להזכיר במציאות דקה יותר מפל מזוות עשויה. שלבז'קקה סימן לעדיקות וועא אברום שפאמבר (בראשית ז:ט) יוי ויערכו למטען אשר יעכו את בנוו' (בראשית ז:ט) לעשנות דקה. ואנו שפאל מהפונן וודת האמת עמדות אלפא בעדקה שפאמבר (ישעיה ז:ז) בעדקה תפונו' ואון שפאל וגאלין אלא בעדקה שפאמבר (ישעיה א:כ') ציון במשפט פודה ושביה בעדקה: הללו מתנת עיטם - ז:ז).

⁸ It is noteworthy that the Rambam not only counts these two general commandments, but also fourteen additional separate mitzvot relating to charity; others have noted that this broad count is seemingly inconsistent with his general principles set forth in *Avot*, chapter 4. The Rambam also presents this dual vision of tzedakah in *Talmud Yerushalmi* Tractate *Perek 2*. *טפ"ר מצוות לתרביה שלישית ז, ט, י"א*.

⁹ See, e.g., "Jewish Philanthropy – Wither?" in *Varieties of Jewish Experience*, "Tzedaka and Gemilat Chasadim", at <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/tzedaka-and-gemilat-chasadim>; "Tzedaka: Positive and Negative Mitzvot", Daf Kesher #120; "The Responsibilities of the Recipient of Charity" at <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/responsibilities-recipient-charity>; "קידושת בצדקה וטלט", "לפיה על הצדקה" ; ולין ט (ונשי) in "מצוות הצדקה" ; בוארט ליאון ט – VBM.

We are obligated to be careful with regard to the mitzvah of charity to a greater extent than all [other] positive commandments, because charity is an identifying mark for a righteous person, a descendant of Abraham, our patriarch, as states: "I have known him, because he commands his children... to perform charity." The throne of Israel will not be established, nor will the true faith stand except through charity, as states: "You shall be established through righteousness." And Israel will be redeemed solely through charity, as states: "Zion will be redeemed through judgment and those who return to her through charity."

While the Torah's primary focus and concern with charity unquestionably is with the plight of the needy and the socially disenfranchised, Rav Lichtenstein exhorted his talmidim to also embrace the demands in this Halakha, which articulates our duties and responsibilities to develop our human sensitivities and moral standing as a giver, and in which the Rambam identifies Hesed the identifying core value of our cultural heritage.

* * * *

Prior to applying our generosity proposition to each of the questions above, we first must identify the unique character of Shavuot that would support this focus on generosity. This, I believe, can be found in the uniqueness of the Korban Shtei Halehem and its contrast to the Korban HaOmer and specifically the distinction between the Matza of barley and hametz of wheat.

Based on a careful reading of the Exodus parshiot,¹⁰ Matzah represents a product obtained in the middle of a process, one that lacks completion. The Torah itself describes Matzah as Lehem Oni—which may be understood as both the poor (uncompleted) bread as well as the bread of the poor, who in their suffering lack the time and resources to bring the baking process to fruition. In contrast, the ideal and fully consummated baking process produces leavened bread.

This symbolism provides the basis for our understanding of the interrelationship of the Omer offering of non-hametz barley brought on the second day of the festival of Matzot, and the offering of the two loaves following the completion of the fifty day count, in which hametz is mandated. Matzah represents the excitement and potential of the newly freed nation at Yetziyat Mitzrayim while the two loaves of the Shavuot offering represent the initial fruits of fulfillment of that potential that occurred at Revelation.¹¹

¹⁰ This paragraph is a summary of the conclusions presented in Rav Yoel Bin Nun's comprehensive and fascinating discussion of this topic in his article in « מזדים נסחף, בטהרויות ובלקירות הלוות », which can be found online at: <http://www.hatanakh.com/>.

¹¹ Rav Bin Nun carries this analysis further to explain the prohibition of bringing hametz and honey on the alter, (noted earlier in footnote 7) as rooted in humility required during the sacrificial process; these "finished goods" represent human effort and ingenuity (hametz also symbolizes the Yetzer HaRah in midrashic sources), that can be thematically aligned with confidence leading to an arrogance unacceptable in the Mikdash.

Rav Bin Nun identifies "fulfillment" in this context specifically to entry into Eretz Yisrael; a full presentation of his argument will await the appropriate time 'זמן המתא.'

Thus presented, Shavuot is best understood as that transformational moment when potential first achieves its realization. The grain sacrifice is no longer comprised of rough barley – best used for animal fodder – but rather finely ground wheat. The bread of the grain sacrifice is no longer “poor” (*lehem oni*) but rather the finished product of human hands, the culmination of a process that began seven weeks earlier. The bread we wave before the altar on Shavuot is fully risen for it has now achieved its potential.

Consequently, it was not as we leave Egypt nor (as with most mitzvot) at the time we settle in the Promised Land, but specifically at Shavuot, this unique moment in time when we first taste the beginnings of fruits of our labors, *that God first demands that we look beyond ourselves*. These seemingly foreign insertions into our two Torah texts are not interruptions at all – they in fact express and emphasize to the reader the essential theme of this new Holiday.

Particularly, in Parashat Re'eh, the demand upon us is clear: On this day, as you stand at the precipice of achievement, do not turn your back and leave behind the poor, the needy, the widow and the orphan. After all, you too were slaves in Egypt (for us, symbolically continuing to be valid) a mere fifty days ago. This essential idea, specific to Shavuot but relevant to all of our Holidays, is reflected in the Rambam's celebrated passage in the sixth chapter of *Hilkhot Yom Tov*:

וכשהוא אוכל ושותה חייב להאכיל לבור ליתום ולאלמנה עם שאר העניים האמילים. אבל מי שפוגע בדלתות חצרו ואוכל ושותה הוא ובנוו ואשתו ונאנו מאכילים ומשקה לעניים ולמר נפש אין זו שחתות מצחה אלא שחתות בצלם.

When a person eats and drinks [in celebration of a holiday], he is obligated to feed converts, orphans, widows, and others who are destitute and poor. In contrast, a person who locks the gates of his courtyard and eats and drinks with his children and his wife, without feeding the poor and the embittered, is [not indulging in] rejoicing associated with a mitzvah, but rather the rejoicing of his gut.

The relevance of the directive in Parashat Re'eh as articulated so beautifully by the Rambam now being clearly understood, we turn back to Parashat Emor. Here the text does not refer to the general obligation of tzedakah but rather cites the specific examples of Peah and Leket. Why does the Torah here evade the more obvious option of the general mitzva of tzedakah and specify these two examples?

אלו דברים שאין להם שעור. הפאה, והבכורים, אגמילות קסדים, ותלמוד תורה.
These are the things that have no measure: Peah, Bikurim, the appearance-sacrifice, acts of kindness, and the study of the Torah.

As the first Mishna in Peah states, the obligation to leave a corner of the field for the poor has no minimum measure. Similarly Leket can as a practical matter be nearly eliminated through an assiduous and careful harvesting regimen. One could thus conclude that the insertion of

Peah and Leket into this Shavuot text are poor choices indeed because the needy cannot rely on their sufficiency, their base fulfillment being met with minimal amounts.¹²

In order for Peah and Leket to have any practical value to the recipient, these "gifts" are fully reliant on the freely willed generosity of the giver. And that's the point: The "interruption" of the Shavuot narrative of Parashat Emor is specifically with that form of tzedakah whose effectiveness depends on the expression of *generosity based in gratitude*. Thus, Peah and Leket are the ideal forms of tzedakah to be associated with Shavuot, acts not limited to the value to the recipient, but also dependent on the refinement of moral and religious character of the giver through her generosity.

The Halakha expresses these very themes with respect to Peah and Leket in mandating that all "Matnot Ani'im" not be gathered by the field owner for distribution to the poor but rather be abandoned in the field for collection.¹³ Nor does the owner maintain the barest of ownership rights to merely designate her favorite needy neighbor for access to or specific distribution of Matnot Ani'im.¹⁴ These Halakhot all seek to guide the owner towards an understanding that this grain is not hers to give away; the Ribono Shel Olam has already assigned a portion of her bounty, given to her "in trust" for the benefit of the poor. From this recognition arises a free spirit of giving, and from these underpinnings of generosity arises gratitude based in humility, an internalized acknowledgement that, indeed, it is the *entirety* our bounty that comprises a gift from the Ribono Shel Olam.

Shavuot's spirit of generosity is not rooted in a historical moment precisely because it is timeless. It is not reflected in a symbolic act or specific religiously significant item, because it cannot be artificially so limited. Hesed, Gratitude, Generosity cannot be confined to either time or space – thus, most dramatically and uniquely among all Holidays, the day highlighting these themes is not even designated to occur on a specific date. Indeed, the Halakha is cognizant that generosity and kindness by its very nature must be unbounded.

This broader understanding provides us with the essential foundation to address the unique structure of the Shavuot narrative in Parashat Emor. Hag Hamatzot and Sukkot celebrate core formulative historical events; these are foundational moments in time that the Torah instructs us are worthy of eternal commemoration and internalization from generation to generation. The occasion of this commemoration originates and is reflected in specified acts, symbols and sacrifices.

Shavuot shares none of these characteristics. Shavuot is a unique construct – Shavuot does not serve as the cause of any act nor is it reflected within any symbol. Rather, it is Shavuot itself that is the reflection of another dynamic eternal event that is replicated through each

¹² This insight is developed by Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein at <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/shavuot-and-mitzva-charity>.

¹³ This halakha is much discussed in the achronim. See, for example, *מנהגות הירקן מינהל טעם* s. 243, *Kitvei HaGriz Terumah*.

¹⁴ תולכת מטלות עניים - פרק ראשון
ה כל מטלות עניים אלו אין פנוי שולבת בפניהם לפעלים. אלא הפעלים בפועל יונסלו אונן על פניו נעל פalias ונטפל עלי שיפישר אל מזיאנו אהילון פרוץ.

generation: that transformational moment when potential first achieves spiritual realization,¹⁵ which explains one motivation why Hazal brilliantly aligned Shavuot with Kabbalat HaTorah. The text of Parashat Emor can thus be understood by the astute reader, sensitive to our broader understanding of Shavuot, as a manifestation of his dramatic reversal of cause and effect.

We are not surprised when other elements of the Holiday selected by Hazal reflect the proposition of generosity rooted in gratitude. Bikurim, identified with Shavuot but which are not brought on Shavuot specifically, is the quintessential offering of gratitude, recognizing that the fruits reflect the fulfillment of brit Avot, and particularly the Brit Ben HaBetarim.¹⁶ Megillat Rut, of course, is the text in Tanakh most evocative of the attributes of Hesed and gratitude.

Finally, let us consider the interpretation of Rashi on the text in Parashat Re'eh. Commenting on the verse (appearing on page 1):

עֲשֵׂה תִּזְבַּח שָׁבֻעוֹת לְהָאֱלֹהִים מִנְחָת נְדָבָת יְמִינָךְ יְמִינָךְ תַּפְנִין כִּי-אָשֶׁר יִבְרָכֶךָ הָאֱלֹהִים
You shall celebrate the festival of Shavuot to Hashem your God, presenting a free-willed offering according to the extent of the blessing that Hashem your God has granted you

Rashi comments:

מִנְחָת נְדָבָת יְמִינָךְ – דִי נְדָבָת יְמִינָךְ, הַכֵּל לְפִי הַבָּרָכה, הַבָּא שְׁלֵמִי שְׁמָחוֹת וּקְרוֹאִים לְאַכְלָן

The customary translation of Rashi's is "די נְדָבָת יְמִינָךְ" "in accordance with your economic capacity". Based on the arguments set forth above, we can reinterpret Rashi's as "די נְדָבָת יְמִינָךְ" "in accordance with the depth of the generosity found in your heart". All of Shevuot, and certainly the Shalmei Simkha shared with others, must reflect one's commitment, passion, and generosity to our fellow man.

* * * *

We all share the dismay in our muted celebration of Shavuot during this crisis, as we cannot ignore the cries of pain and suffering emanating from our communities, our nation and the entire world, beseeching our empathy and our compassion. As we prepare for and sit down at our Yom Tov tables, may we all aspire to find in ourselves the generosity of spirit rooted in gratitude that defines Shavuot, the sensitivity on Yom Tov to those in need that the Rambam demands of us, and the hallmark of Hesed that defines our heritage as the children of Avraham. That, indeed, will constitute true and abiding **שְׁמָחוֹת יוֹם טוֹב**.

¹⁵ Cf., "להוציאו והדר בון הכהן אל המועל", רמנין בראשית פרק כב ברא antisemitic text.

¹⁶ Compare antisemitic text.

(ג) וְאַמְرָר לְאַבָּתֶם יוֹצֵע פִּי כְּלֵי יְהוָה זְרַח בָּאָרֶץ לֹא לְלִתְמַנְּחָת וְצְבָדָת וְעַזְבָּת אַתָּם אַרְבָּע מְאוֹת שָׁנָה.

דבריהם כ"ז to

(ה) וְיִמְלִיכְתָּא וְאַמְרָת לְפִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱבָר אֱבָר פְּנִירָה וְבָרֶר שְׁמָם בְּפָנָיו מְשָׁט וְיָלִיל שְׁמָם לְאֵל אַזְלָע צְבָב.

(ו) חִבּוּ אֶתְכֶם הַפְּנִירָה וְחִבּוּ אֶלְעָלָיו צְבָבָה.



Parshat Behailotcha - Yitzchak Shulman

Rashi at the beginning of Parshat Behailotcha quotes the Midrash, “Why is the Menorah story after the Nesiyim story? Aaron, the high priest, upon seeing the gifts of the Nesiyim became faint hearted, for he was not included (In their gifts), neither he nor his tribe (Levi). G-d said to him, “On your life, yours is greater than theirs for you light and clean the Candles morning and evening!” Asks the Ramban, “It has not become clear to me why he was not comforted with other holy acts such as the Ketoret, the holy incense, after all, in Moshe’s blessing of the tribe of Levi he say’s “Yasimu Ketoret Beapeha”, they will place the Ketoret in Your nose. (An aside here Apecha also could be a reference to anger, Haron Af, and the Ketoret mitigates Hashem’s Haron Af.) Nor was he comforted with all the sacrifices which Aaron and his family would offer. Nor was he comforted with the Chavitim sacrifice brought by him alone twice daily. Nor was he comforted with the Avodah of Yom Kippur which only he could perform and during which he and only would go into the holy of holies. Nor was he comforted with the fact that he is in a perpetual state of holiness and bless the people with the Name and in His name. Furthermore, asks the Ramban, “what reason was there for Aaron to be so down? His role was in fact already greater than that of the Nesiyim. He brought many sacrifices during the eight days of Meluim. If you argue that his were mandated and theirs were not, but then what does the Menorah do for that, it too was mandated! The Ramban famously refers us to the Nerot of Channukah which was in perpetuity even after the destruction of the Holy Temple.

I would raise the following difficulties with the Ramban. It is somewhat hard to believe that Aaron had petty jealousy towards a largely unimaginative and some may say unnecessary gifts brought by the Nesiyim. The size of those gifts, considering the size of some of these tribes, seems pretty meager. Remembering the recent events wherein the people were well stocked with great wealth “and they emptied out Mitzrayim” these gifts were token at best. Furthermore, the Ramban’s suggestion that Aaron’s comfort was somehow achieved by referring to the Chanukah candles is troubling. What comfort is there at the time of the initial Tabernacle dedication from a prophetic vision of a time after its destruction? It seems the most inappropriate time to be foretelling the destruction and the resultant ceremony of Nerot Chanukah!

It is interesting to note that following the pasuk describing the lighting the Menorah, the Torah tells us of its physical characteristics: And this is its structure “Zeh Maaseh

Hamenorah Miksha Zahav etc.” The psukim seem out of order! The physical structure and detail should have preceded the act of lighting not after. There is in fact a contradiction within the Rashi, first he says it was “Mikshah” or beaten out of a single slab of gold. Then he says “so was the Menorah made”, “it was made by itself.” In other words Hashem made it. Does Rashi mean that G-d beat it? That is in unlikely. More likely it means that Moshe threw gold into a fire and it formed itself into a Menorah. It was beaten and yet was self made.

The self made Menorah entirely from gold reminds us and it also reminded Aaron of the golden calf which you recall made itself from the pot of molten gold. The Menorah stands as a reminder of the sin and of the repair. Sometimes from within the molten gold emerges a golden calf and sometimes emerges a menorah! Which one will it be? That will be depends on you. A portion of the Nesiyim gift was designed to bring atonement for the sin of the golden calf, 12 goats for Chatat. Also see Bamidbar chapter 7 pasuk 3 “and they (the Nesiyim) brought 6 “Eglot Tzav” translated wagons coated in gold. The gift of golden covered wagons could also be to atone for the sin of the golden calf. “Agalot” were delivered to atone for “Egel”.

Aaron’s difficulties with being excluded from the gifts of the Nesiyim can be understood in this context. His anguish was that he had lost two sons in the aftermath of the sin of the golden calf and possibly as a result thereof. **HE WAS CONCERNED THAT HIS BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE GIFTS WOULD MEAN EXCLUSION FROM THE REPAIR.** Hashem responded “yours is greater than theirs, you shall have your atonement.” The Menorah was created from molten gold just like the Egel, only this time it came out right! “Behaalotcha et hanerot” is translated “when you become uplifted along with the nerot”. In this context Aaron himself became uplifted or atoned via the nerot.

The theme of atonement for the golden calf continues immediately in the Parsha. Immediately following the section about the Menorah is the section describing the induction ceremony for the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi’s greatest moment occurred at the Egel. In fact they were chosen at that very moment.

The lighting of the Menorah may also be viewed as a form of memorial candle. “As they go up so shall you go up” along with the souls of those lost. It is instructive in the Ramban’s unintended use of the term “He comforted him” Nachamo”. “Nachem”, is the same term used to comfort the mourner. To this day we light candles as a memorial to the dead. It is interesting that for the remainder of the travels in the desert Aaron himself performed the daily lighting ceremony. The lighting served as a form of comfort for his loss.

The Meaning of Humility - Bernard Stahl

I

Two weeks from Shavuot we will be reading parshat B'haaloscha. There the Torah tells the story of Aharon and Miriam criticizing Moshe, and the *Passuk* says:

וְאִישׁ מִנְשָׁה עַבְדּוֹ עֲבָנָיו מֵאַד מִכֶּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל־פָּנָיו הָאֲדָמָה:

What exactly is *anivut*, humility? Professor George Schlesinger, in an article in Tradition magazine, pointed out that in philosophical literature there are more than a dozen disparate account of this concept. Similarly, in Webster's 9th Collegiate dictionary defines other moral terms with relative ease. "Generosity", for example is defined as "liberality in giving". However, "humble" is defined as "not proud or haughty; not arrogant or assertive".

He quotes Professor Judith Driver who suggests that the definition of our term is underestimating ones true worth. This is probably the most common understanding.

Rav Baruch of Kosov formulates the problem with this definition as follows. If a person is superior to others and knows it, but outwardly pretends that he's not, then he's deceitful. If he knows deep down that he is superior to others, then inwardly he is arrogant, even if he doesn't say so. If he is superior to others, and doesn't realize it, then he's a fool. If he is ignorant , who cares if he's humble. The only reason he's humble is that he is ignorant of his superior traits.

Rav Shagar, after mentioning the question of Rav Baruch of Kosov, quotes our passuk, and asks, "are we really to think that Moshe believed that he was inferior to everyone else?

The difficulty with humility is that it seems to demand from us that we either be ignorant of the truth, or that we lie either to others or to ourselves.

Some want to describe humility as correctly assessing our own traits and those of others as well. The problem with this definition is that this is truthfulness, so how is humility different?

One possibility may be that because humans are egoistic, we may need something like humility in order to enable us to be truthful. Humility, then becomes a hechsher mitzah, a prerequisite for Emes. Another way of putting this is that humility may be another way of viewing the world, perhaps opening up the vision of a deeper truth.

One possible way of understanding humility is based on Rav Shagar's answer to a difficulty in the Rambam. One of the places where the Rambam defines his ethical philosophy is in Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deot.

רמב"ם הלכות דעתות פרק א הלכה ד

הדרך הישירה היא מדה בינוונית שבכל דעה ודעה מכל הדעות שיש לו לאדם, והוא הדעה שהוא רוחקה משתי הקצוות ריחוק שווה אוינה קרובה לא לזו ולא לזו, ודרך זו היא דרך החכמים, כל אדם שדעתו דעת בינוונית /בינווניות/ ממצוות נקרא חכם

The Rambam writes that a wise man should always follow the middle way. This means that there are two extreme opposite poles. The wise man, the *chacham* should stay away from both of these poles and remain in the middle. As examples, the Rambam says that one shouldn't be too stingy, but at the same time he shouldn't be too extravagant. A person should not be melancholic but shouldn't be a party animal (not the Rambam's formulation). In all cases a wise man, a *chacham* chooses the middle.

However, the Rambam then complicates things by presenting another category.

רמב"ם הלכות דעתות פרק א הלכה ה

ומי שהוא מדקך על עצמו ביוטר ותרחק מדעה בינוונית מעט לצד זה או לצד זה נקרא חסיד, כיצד מי שיתרחק מגובה הלב עד הקצה الآخرן יהיה שפל רוח ביוטר נקרא חסיד וזה היא מדת חסידות, ואם נתרך עד האמצע בלבד יהיה עני נקרא חכם וזה היא מדת חכמה, ועל דרך זו שאר כל הדעות,

The Rambam says that there is a category of person called a *chassid*. The *chassid* rejects the middle way for the extreme . To illustrate the stance of the *chassid*, the Rambam uses the example of humility. The *chassid* is extremely lowly. The *chacham* is which is a more moderate form of humility according to the Rambam.

Our first question is a general one. Why does the Rambam have these two categories, *chacham* and *chassid* at all, for any *middah*. How does one know when to be a *chacham*, and when to be a *chassid*. The two categories are contradictory. The *chacham* stays in the middle, while the *chassid* deviates from the middle. But the problem becomes greater when we focus on another halacha that the Rambam mentions further on.

רמב"ם הלכות דעתות פרק ב הלכה ג

ויש דעתות שאסור לו לאדם לנוהג בהן ביבוונית אלא יתרכק מן הקצה האחד עד הקצה الآخر, והוא גובה לב, שאין דרך הטובה שייהי אדם עני בלבד אלא שייהי שפל רוח ותיה רוחו נמוכה למאז, ולפיכך נאמר במשנה רבינו מאז ולא נאמר ענו בלבד, ולפיכך צו חכמים מאז הוא שפל רוח,

Here the Rambam is saying that *אסור* is something repulsive, and it is *אסור* for a person to act in the middle way when it comes to this. Here a person must be a *chassid*.

Now, rules can have exceptions, so it's possible that the rule of the middle way has humility as an exception. However, earlier on the Rambam had said that the middle way is applicable to humility, and a person who

follows the middle way is a *chacham*. So, regarding humility, in one place the Rambam seems to approve of the middle way, and in another it's אסור. Also, we still do not understand why we have these two categories of *chacham* and *chassid* to begin with.

Rav Shagar begins by pointing out that there is a difference between the Rambam's conception of the middle way and Aristotle's. The Aristotelian conception is fundamentally an intellectual esthetic one. The ideal human being is someone who is balanced, and whose actions and character are harmonious.

The Rambam basically agrees with Aristotle, but the Rambam is a fundamentally a religious thinker. The Rambam understands that in order for a thinker to understand deep intellectual concepts about Torah and about G-d, he needs the balance that Aristotle speaks about. So why does he throw this away when he introduces the idea of the *chassid* and especially when he speaks about humility?

In order to answer this, Rav Shagar looks in hilchot Melachim where the Rambam also mentions the concepts of *chacham* and *chassid*.

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק ח הלכה יא

כל המקבל שבע מצות ונזהר לעשותן הרי זה מחסידי אומות העולם, יש לו חלק לעולם הבא, והוא שיקבל אותן ויעשה אותן לפני שצוה בהן הקדוש ברוך הוא בתורה והודיע לנו על ידי משה רבינו שבמי נח מוקדם נצטו בהן, אבל אם עשאן מפני הכרע הדעת אין זה גור תושב ואינו מחסידי אומות העולם ולא מחכמיהם.

This is a well-known Rambam which has raised a lot of questions. Rav Shagar is not interested here in these questions, but just in definition of terms. (For an interesting and original approach to these questions, see Rav Kuk – Igrot Hareiya – page 99-100. Rav Kuk there also says that the correct *girsa* is not *נותולא מחכמיהם*, but – *אבל* – *but from their wise men*)

The Rambam says that if a gentile accepts the seven Noachide mitzvot he is one of the righteous gentiles, *chassidei umot haolam* and has a portion in the world to come. However, this is conditioned by his accepting the seven mitzvot for the reason that Hashem revealed them to Moshe. If, on the other hand, the gentile accepts these mitzvot for rational/philosophical reasons, then he is not a *chassid*, but a *chacham*.

Rav Shagar understands that as opposed to the *chacham* who contemplates the world with his mind, the *chassid* operates via the divine command. The difference between them is not necessarily in their actions. Their actions may be the same, but that which animates them is different. The driving force of *chochma* is contemplation of the world via the mind. The source for *chassidus* is standing before G-d. At first glance, these two types appear to be radically different. However, says Rav Shagar, if we look more deeply it becomes apparent that these two types can coexist.

The *Adam Hashalem*, the complete, perfect man, according to the Rambam is he who contemplates the world, but simultaneously stands before G-d. He is involved in society, but, at the same time, his heart is turned heavenward. This duality doesn't just refer to the man's deeds, but to how he looks at the world. He observes the world around him with a clear, steady mind, but at the same time he stands before G-d in religious ecstasy and self-forgetfulness. The *chacham* understands his self-worth, but he is humble at the same time. To understand the reason for the *chacham*'s humility, we just have to read the book of Kohelet. This book reflects how a *chacham* thinks, and the tragic sense of human life together with the sense of human

limits jumping out on every page. A chacham living in an age of Covid would also understand human limits and finitude. So, the *chacham* does understand very well his own self-worth and as well as his lack of it. However, in standing before G-d the *Adam Hashalem* sees himself as *ayin v'efes*. (see also Moreh Nevuchim – 3:51)

Rav Shagar is answering two questions here. The first is why does the Rambam have these two ethical stances, the *chacham* and the *chasid*. The answer that this reflects a dual stance of man, the rational man and the being who stands before G-d. This is a general approach to *hilchot Deot*. It applies to all middot. The second question has to do with humility in particular. Standing before G-d elicits an extreme approach with regards to man's feeling of self worth, namely a feeling of nothingness. That's why in regard to humility, the Rambam's words about the *chassid* are so extreme.

If we look at the Rambam's words in regard to humility, he speaks about the necessity of someone being very lowly, *תתירה רוח נמוכה למאז*. However, if we look at Rambam, the man, we find someone who composed the Mishneh Torah and the Moreh Nevuchim. He is a man who conveyed a sense of elitism which seems to be the opposite of humility. The Rambam probably understood very well who he was, but, he also had a very strong sense of standing before G-d. This is where the extreme humility comes in.

Rav Shagar, to some extent, is following a path familiar to us. He is giving a type of Brisker answer to a contradiction in the Rambam. It may be a philosophical contradiction, but it's still a similar methodology. Also, the dual typologies remind us of the Rav in Lonely Man of Faith and Ish Hahalacha. Rav Shagar doesn't use the term, dialectic, but says that the *Adam Hashalem* must have the consciousness of the *Chacham* and the *Chassid* synchronously.

We started off with the observation of how difficult it has been for people to define humility and why somebody should be humble. If humility is derived from two very different, perhaps contradictory sources, then the difficulty in defining humility makes sense.

This also helps us understand the anivut of Moshe. If one of the two main components of anivut is the consciousness of standing before G-d, then to whom could this apply more than to Moshe.

Rav Shagar's approach gives us a different way of relating to Rav Baruch of Kosov's difficulties in understanding humility. Rav Baruch asked all kinds of questions about how a superior person should feel in relation to others. This is appropriate for a *chacham*. The *chacham* makes distinctions. Making distinctions is his bread and butter.

However, standing before G-d erases distinctions. Before the infinite G-d, finite distinctions vanish. Either the distinction disappears in relation to the infinitude of G-d or the distinction remains, but is irrelevant. The person's focus is G-d, not his relative status in relation to other people.

III

In the previous section we spoke about how a person should act or see himself in everyday life. However, in addition to this when we think of humility, one of the prime examples is that of a person who is insulted and ignores the insult. This seems to be the case with Moshe. How does humility work in a case like this?

Rav Shagar has shiurim on someone very different than the Rambam, Rav Nachman of Bratzlav. In these shiurim Rav Shagar discusses a person who is insulted and remains silent. Rav Shagar points out that what often happens in such a situation is that the aggrieved person is silent, but, in doing so he has merely taken the pain and pushed it down. Inwardly, he still thinks about the insult, and it bothers him. So the silence is just technical. The person does speak constantly about the insult and screams about it, but he does so inwardly.

Inwardly, the person is obsessing over his kavod, and perhaps, rightfully so. However, in doing so, he is, in a sense, enslaved to the one who insulted him. One of the most basic concepts in Yahadut is not to be enslaved to another human being, *Ki li Bnai Yisrael Avadim*, Chazal say *V'lo avadim l'avadim*. If I'm spending the whole day screaming silently because of what this person said to me, then he has determined and dominated my entire daily routine.

Rav Nachman's approach is that of an inner silence that comes from standing before G-d, so we can't fight the feeling of insult, but perhaps we can transcend it. For Rav Nachman the idea that we can control everything in life is the opposite of Emunah. The silence frees us from enslavement to other people. We are servants of G-d and of no one else.

What Rav Nachman is saying seems to make sense by Moshe. The passuk says that Moshe is the most humble, most *anav* man on earth. However, Moshe seems to do absolute nothing that we can discern. There is only silence on his part. We don't have enough information to know exactly what his anivut consists of, but silence seems to play some part.

Anyone who finds what Rav Nachman proposes to be easy, is either crazy or very spiritual. However, the difficulties involved may be better and perhaps even easier than walking around in life with the voices of everyone who insulted us reverberating in our consciousness. There are two types of ethical characteristics. There are the normal ethical characteristics, but there is also another type called horizon values. The horizon is something that we can sail closer and closer to, but the closer we get, the more it recedes. Horizon values give us a direction, but we never get there unless we're Moshe Rabbeinu. The obvious example of a horizon value is *V'Ahavta L'Reaicha Camocha*. Humility is another.

Again, humility is standing before G-d. According to Rav Nachman, this manifests itself in a deep silence. Someone else may find another way of transcending the hurt other than silence. But the basis of this transcendence according to Rav Shagar's understanding of Rav Nachman is standing before G-d.

IV

Standing before G-d imbues a person with a feeling of nothingness and insignificance. What kind of feeling is this? Is this feeling natural, or does the person have to work towards it. Does the person have to say, "The Rambam said that I must feel like nothing when standing before G-d, so I will work as hard as I can to do so." Are there any times in normal life when we feel like nothing?

Tragedy is such a time. However, I want to focus on something else, the experience of the sublime. When people see vistas such as the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Grand Canyon, or the earth from space, they have a feeling of awe, and often feel existentially insignificant. Arthur Schopenhauer writes, "When we lose

ourselves in the contemplation of the infinite extent of the world in space and time... then we feel ourselves reduced to nothing, feel ourselves as individuals...like drops in the ocean, fading away, melting away into nothing."

The feeling of being nothing before G-d happens when we feel guilty before G-d, the judge. It also happens when we turn to the *Ribbo shel Olam* in times of tragedy. The sublime is different. We run away from guilt, and pray that tragedy doesn't befall us. However, people will travel halfway around the world to have the experience of the sublime. There is also the view that the sublime is actually more profound and satisfying than that of the beautiful.

Kant writes that we call the sublime is that which is absolutely great. Beauty is connected with the form of an object having boundaries, while the sublime is to be found in a formless object represented by boundlessness.

The Rambam, in *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* describes *Ahavat Hashem* as a desire to know Him, a thirst for the living G-d. *Yirah* appears to be a retreat because of man's understanding of his nothingness. Where do these feelings come from?

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה פרק ב הלכה ב

והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו, בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשייו ובחרואיו הנפלאים הגדלים ויראה מהן חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאותה תאوه גדולה לידע השם הגדל א כמו שאמר דוד צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי, וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן מיד הוא נרתע לאחרורי ויפחד ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה שלפה אפלה עומדת בדעת קלה מעועטה לפני תמים דעתות, כמו שאמר דוד כי אראה שמי' מעשה אצבעותיך מה אנוש כי תזכרנו.

The Rambam asks how does one come to love and fear G-d. He answers that when a person contemplates G-d's great, magnificent, wonderful creations and see within them His infinite wisdom, he is overcome by an overwhelming desire to know Him. But this exposure to the wondrousness of G-d and His creation causes the person to step back and realize his smallness and insignificance. As Dovid Hamelech said, "When I see the heavens, the work of Your fingers, what is man that you acknowledge him.

The Rambam seems to be speaking about the experience of the sublime. He could be speaking about studying science, but the experiential dimension here is too pronounced for that to be all. Of course, the sublime can also be experienced from a deep understanding of the sciences.

The sublime is an experiential reaction to G-d's wisdom. The sublime reflects G-d's infinite wisdom, and the human being is overwhelmed by the experience. Humility often gets a bad rap because if a person says "I'm nothing", the tendency will be to recommend that the person should see a good therapist. We don't often appreciate that exposure to grandeur has a positive effect on a person even as it makes clear to him his creatureliness and nothingness.

When a neurotic says, "I'm nothing", this often is the result of a preoccupation with self, the wrestling with inner demons. However, there can also be an external grandeur which lifts someone up. Man feels humbled before such majesty and nobility, and he has a need to actively humble himself before this type of grandeur.

We also feel humbled in the presence of excellence. C. S Lewis once commented on the man who has lost the capacity to "appreciate" how it can be that for a free man to bow in the presence of a great king, far from being "demeaning," is ennobling. "King" here can mean G-d or a great man of noble character. This sensitivity is often lost in a society in which greatness is in short supply.

One problem here has to do with the nature of man. The religious, as opposed to the secular understanding, is that man's deepest wish is to relate to G-d. This means that man has an inner need to humble himself before G-d and things that are Godlike.

What happens if this wish is suppressed? The answer is again expressed very well by Lewis: "Where men are forbidden to honor a king, they honor millionaires, athletes, or film-stars instead: even famous prostitutes or gangsters. For spiritual nature, like bodily nature, will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison."

This problem then gets worse and worse. The more people honor things that don't deserve honor, the more the very idea of honoring that which is greater than us is brought into disrepute.

V

There is another approach that we will finish with. This is an approach mentioned by Rav Kuk in *Ain Ayah*. Rav Kuk is explaining a famous Gemara about Hillel.

תלמיד בבלי מסכת שבת דף לא עמוד א

הלק ו עבר על פתח ביתו, אמר: מי כאן הילל? מי כאן הילל? נתעטף ו יצא לקראתו. אמר לו: בני, מה אתה מבקש? אמר לו: שאלת יש לי לשאול. אמר לו: שאל בני, שאל! - מפני מה ראשיהם של בבלאים סגלגלות? - אמר לו: בני, שאלת גדולה שאלת - מפני שאין להם חייות פלקחות.

The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* is bringing several stories about the humility of Hillel. These stories are meant to be imitated by us. The *Gemara* says that a person should be humble like Hillel. The *Gemara* then tells several stories about Hillel's humility.

The first one is about someone who said that he will give 400 zuz to whoever can get Hillel angry. Someone decided to try for the reward. On Erev shabbos he passed by Hillel's house and asked who here is Hillel, knowing full well who Hillel was. Hillel put on distinguished garments, and went out to greet him. The man then asked him a stupid question, why the heads of the Babylonians are round. Hillel complimented him on his good question and answered it patiently. This happens several times, and Hillel never gets angry.

Rav Kuk explains this *Gemara*.

נתעטף ו יצא לקראתו. דרך העונה האמיתית היא לבבך ג"כ את עצמו במידה הרואיה, כי יסוד העונה היא הכרת האמתalamתתה, ללא שום עורון וערוביה של דמיון, שברוב האנשים האהבה הנפרזה לעצם מסמאת את עיניהם מראות בחסרון הנמצא בעצם, וממילא גם בטובת ריעיהם וביתרונם. אבל הענו רואה את עצמו מכובד מצד צלם

אליהם אשר בו, מצד החכמה והטוב הנקנה בנפשו, ומוקן לראות את חסרונותיו ללא שום משוי פנים, וכן ראה הוא ביתרונו חבריו מצד צלם אליהם וסגולות הנפש. ע"כ בהיותו מכבד את עצמו, יתבונן שייהי בלבבם מכבד אחרים, שיותר ניכר הוא בבוד הבריות כשמcobד מכבד אותם משיבבים בזוו. ע"כ מצא לנדרש שייהי מתעטף, שזהו ראש הכבוד, שיתמיהש לעצמו בהיותו הדור לבשו מעוטף בניום, להורות שאין העונה באה מחסرون הכרה של גג הכבוד כ"א דוקא מהכברתו והכברעתו לטוב ובמדה הוגנת. יצא לקראותו כשהוא עטוף, כדי שייהי הבא אצל מוכבב בלבבם.

According to Rav Gil Dvir, the phrase that Rav Kuk focuses on is **קָרְאָתָנוּ מִתְעַטֵּף וַיֵּצֵא לִקְרָאתֵנוּ** Hillel changed into distinguished clothes. Rav Kuk writes that the true way of humility is for a person to honor himself properly. The foundation of humility is seeing truth properly. Most people have an exaggerated love of themselves. Therefore, their eyes are blinded into not seeing their own faults or someone else's virtues. The true is has reverence for himself because he was created with a **צַלְם אֱלֹהִים**. As a result he has the same reverence for others because they were also created with a **צַלְם אֱלֹהִים**.

Therefore, Hillel dressed well in meeting this person because it is a greater honor to a human being if he is greeted by a distinguished looking person. Also, by Hillel's dressing in a distinguished manner he was showing honor to himself as well.

Rav Kuk, here understands humility as a form of seeing, of wisdom, and of truth. The problems we saw in the beginning with the definition of humility is how a person relates to others who are inferior to him. How does he see himself in relation to them?

In order to answer that question, we have to know what the criteria of superiority are. If the only criteria is *Tzelem Elokim*, then superiority is irrelevant, since everyone has *Tzelem Elokim*.

At the same time, Hillel knew his good points and bad points, and he understands others the same way. Hillel may be showing extreme reverence for this *mechutzaf*, but it is impossible that Hillel would have given him a seat in the *Sanhedrin* since everyone is not the same.

Here, just like by Rav Shagar, there is a dual way of looking at the world. There is a way we value people, and that is by *Tzelem Elokim*. However, a person like Hillel is wise and sees the truth. Therefore, he understands his own good and bad traits as well as those of the other. Rav Kuk seems to be saying that Hillel saw very clearly what this *mechutzaf* was up to. The humility came in because it didn't matter, because this person was created *B'Tzelem*. Therefore, he deserved *kavod*.

Is this the same thing that Rav Shagar is saying? It's hard to tell because we don't know how Hillel became Hillel. Rav Shagar said that one of the main aspects of humility is found in standing before an infinite G-d. What about standing before a finite image of G-d? We said before that one of the reasons that the sublime fills us with awe and makes us feel like nothing is that the sublime reflects the infinite G-d. Well, does not the image of G-d reflect G-d also.

A topic like this requires a book, not an article. However, there is the hope that people got at least food for thought from this.

Jews and Booze—A look at Jewish responses to Prohibition - Murray Sragow

On January 16, 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution became law¹². The Amendment states:

“the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all the territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.”

The particulars of the Amendment, including defining “intoxicating liquors” and “beverage purposes” as well as enforcement, were left to the Volstead Act, which had passed Congress in late 1919.³ Of particular interest to the Jewish community at that time was the fact that wine was among the “intoxicating liquors” that the Volstead Act defined as being prohibited. Wine is, of course, central to many Jewish practices, from weekly Kiddush and Havdalah to special occasions such as marriage and circumcision ceremonies. This did not mean, however, that Jewish practice would be a violation of the Volstead Act. In Section 6 it also gave the Jews (and Christians) an exemption to its prohibitions for “wine for sacramental purposes or like religious rites.” This meant that, in the words of the Act, a “rabbi, minister of the gospel, priest, or an officer duly authorized for the purpose by any church or congregation” could obtain from the government a permit entitling him to buy wine legally for distribution to his group.⁴ Thus wine could be obtained through the proper channels for Jewish practices, and therefore Prohibition did not need to cause a problem for Jewish religious wine consumption.

¹This paper was originally presented at a pair of adult education events in 2017 at Congregation Rinat Yisrael in Teaneck, NJ. The author wishes to express his thanks to Rinat Yisrael’s Rabbi Yosef Adler and Adult Education Committee Chair Bernie Stahl for their encouragement in developing this study. The high standards at this synagogue demanded a level of research that the author truly enjoyed, and looks forward to applying to further studies in the future. The title of this article is borrowed from a much larger look at the role of alcoholic beverages in the life of the Jewish community in the early 1900s, written by Marni Davis.

²The Amendment was ratified when ¾ of the states voted in favor of ratification, which had happened exactly one year earlier, when Nebraska became the 36th of the 48 states to ratify. But the Amendment stated that it would not become law until a year from ratification, presumably so that the country would have a chance to get used to its restrictions.

³Over the veto of President Wilson. The act was officially known as the National Prohibition Act, but it was named for Andrew Volstead, a Representative from Minnesota who was chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the House, who was a primary sponsor of the bill.

⁴This exemption was designed to avoid a conflict between the 18th Amendment and the 1st Amendment’s guarantee against government interference in religion. Without the exemption, Catholics and other Christian sects who use wine for communion, as well as Jews, could claim that their religious rights (and rites :) were being violated.

The problem was that Section 6 was designed with the structure and needs of the Catholic Church in mind, not Judaism. There were two critical ways in which this was so. First, Christians required the use of wine during church services only, as opposed to Jews, who recite Kiddush in the home. This meant that making wine available for Kiddush use would be far more complicated. Rather than simply having wine in the church, supervised by a church official, every Jewish home would need to maintain its own stock of sacramental wine. Second, while Christian denominations, especially Catholic, were extremely hierarchical, Jewish groups were far less well defined. So while it was quite clear who the clergy were that needed to be in charge of wine for communion, it was much less clear who the rabbis were that should control the flow of Kiddush wine. These two issues combined to be an invitation to corruption. Rabbis, or those acting their place, could claim to be “duly authorized for the purpose” without much proof, and because it was impossible to police every Jewish home it was also impossible to make sure that private stocks of wine were being used exclusively for sacramental purposes.

Jewish response to all this was not uniform. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the primary organization of Reform rabbis, immediately recommended that its members waive their rights to wine and make do with grape juice.⁵ The Orthodox rabbis, however, led by the Agudas HaRabonim, were much more interested in controlling the process and obtaining wine than in doing without. The Orthodox were quite successful in this effort, as can be seen from the official regulations governing the enforcement of the Volstead Act. The executive agency created to enforce the Volstead Act was the “Prohibition Unit,” and this unit was assigned to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, itself part of the Treasury Department.⁶ The Treasury Department’s regulations for enforcing Section 6 of the Volstead Act specifically identified the Agudas HaRabonim and its president, Rabbi Moshe Zevulun Margolies,⁷ as officials enabled to grant wine privileges.⁸

Why the difference in attitudes? A look at the motivation behind Prohibition might prove instructive. Prohibition was an extension of a nativist attitude that prevailed in the 1920s, which found expression most significantly in the harsh restrictions on immigration that were part of the National Origins Act of 1924.⁹ Nativists wanted to return to the country’s Puritan roots, which included seeing alcohol as sinful. While Jews tended not to have alcoholism problems as did other immigrant.

⁵CCAR Yearbook 30 (1920): 22

⁶Like many federal agencies, it took on a life of its own and failed to close at the end of Prohibition in 1933. Instead it became part of the FBI and eventually morphed into today’s ATF, or Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

⁷Rabbi Margolies, whose initials were RaMaZ, is the rabbi for whom the upper east side school is named. Its current dean, Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, is the great-grandson of the RaMaZ.

⁸Hannah Sprecher, “Orthodox Rabbis React to Prohibition,” *American Jewish Archives*, 43:2 (1991), 135-179.

⁹The Act was deliberately designed to both severely limit immigration altogether as well as to discriminate against immigrants from countries that Jews were coming from, such as Russia. While the Act was not anti-Semitic per se, there is no doubt that Eastern European Jews were among the “undesirables” that the Act was designed to keep out of the United States.

communities, any use of alcohol, even for sacramental purposes, was seen as un-American. For Reform Jews, who were interested in assimilation and in being as indistinct as possible,¹⁰ their goal was to be seen as totally American and in no way unable to comply with the law. They didn't want an exemption. Therefore they preferred to avoid the problem altogether, by using grape juice. Orthodox Jews, on the other hand, did not see assimilation as a virtue. Mostly immigrant and Yiddish speaking, they held little hope for assimilation and were used to existing in an unfriendly environment, skirting the law when necessary to survive. Therefore their focus was on how to continue their lifestyle despite Prohibition, rather than change to accommodate it.

Orthodox rabbis had an additional problem, which was based on their adherence to halacha. As opposed to Reform rabbis, who were free to adjust their practice as they saw fit, Orthodox rabbis needed to maintain adherence to halachic precedents. Although ancient sources indicated that grape juice was permissible to use for Kiddush,¹¹ for technical reasons it never became popular¹² and a highly respected commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, the Magen Avraham, had specifically stated that fermented (alcoholic) wine was preferable.¹³ This opinion was shared by the Catholic Church, which was also unwilling to use grape juice for communion because of a lack of precedent for it.¹⁴

The Conservative movement straddled the middle on this issue, as was often the case. On the one hand, a guiding principle among Conservative rabbis was the desire to allow their laity to be fully

¹⁰Reform's attitude was codified in the "Pittsburgh Platform" back in 1885, in which Reform Judaism rejected the notion of Jews as a distinct nation, rather than they were Americans of the Mosaic persuasion.

¹¹Bava Batra 97a specifically permits for kiddush "wine from the press," which means fresh grape juice prior to fermentation. The gemara quotes Rava as saying "a man may squeeze a cluster of grapes and recite Kiddush on it."

¹²The science of preventing fermentation was relatively new at the time. Thomas Welch, the founder of Welch's Grape Juice (and a strong advocate of Prohibition), invented in 1869 the process of pasteurization whereby the fermentation process was stopped. But he did not find his company to make grape juice commercially until 1893, and even then it was not commonly available. Pretty much the only way to get grape juice was squeezing it from fresh grapes as Rava described. Since grapes grew in the summertime and were therefore only available fresh in the summer and fall, grape juice was unavailable in the winter and spring. This is why there was no discussion of grape juice's permissibility for the Pesach seder, as there was no grape juice to speak of at that time of year.

¹³Although the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 272:2 and 500:2) quotes the gemara above without stating a preference for wine over grape juice, the Magen Avraham (published in 1692) in both places specifically states that aged wine is preferable.

¹⁴Catholic practice has modified somewhat since then. Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, who for many years directed the Gateways alcohol rehab facility in Pittsburgh, reports that he once had a Catholic priest as a patient. The priest was unwilling to go completely dry in fear that he would never be able to take communion. Rabbi Twerski, who had connection to a cardinal in Rome, arranged for the Pope to grant the priest a dispensation to use grape juice, arguing that since today grape juice is universally accepted by Jews for the Passover seder and since the communion is a reenactment of the last supper, which was a seder, the same rules ought to apply. The Pope agreed, and it has since become standard practice in the Catholic church to permit alcoholics to use grape juice. Rabbi Twerski claims that he told the Pope that he had "done a mitzvah."

American, as was the case among the Reform. But like the Orthodox, the Conservative rabbinate was constrained by halachic precedent. So the matter was referred to the person widely considered the greatest Torah scholar of the time in America, Rabbi Louis Ginzberg, head of the Talmud department of the Jewish Theological Seminary.¹⁵ On January 24, 1922, Rabbi Ginzberg published his response, a 71 page Hebrew volume that painstakingly covered all aspects of wine use in Judaism, and concluded that grape juice was in every way the equal of wine. As for the ruling of the Magen Avraham, Ginzberg asserted that it was based on a misunderstanding of the Maharil¹⁶ and therefore irrelevant.

The Orthodox response to Rabbi Ginzberg was deafening silence. Unlike other Conservative halachic changes, where there were quick and strong Orthodox counterarguments, in the case of grape juice there was no move whatsoever to consider either the permissibility of grape juice or the Ginsberg analysis until a number of years afterward.¹⁷ Some have argued that the main concern of the Orthodox rabbinate in forgoing wine would be a failure to uphold their first amendment rights.¹⁸ The risk, they felt, was that if the Jews allowed their religious rights to be infringed upon, the next thing might be ritual slaughter or circumcision, which indeed had been under attack in other places. As one Jewish writer commented, “one need not be more stringent than the government itself, for why should we be more Catholic than the Pope?”¹⁹

Others have argued that the rabbis were making money in the wine business, and didn’t want to kill the goose that laid the golden egg.²⁰ There was indeed significant money to be made, as is always the case when a contraband item is desirable. Those who are able to provide it can command significant profit from a population starving for it. That is the story of speakeasies and bootlegging and moonshine during Prohibition in the “Roaring 20s” generally. In the case of sacramental wine, in many cases the lure of large profits proved too much for rabbis to resist. Wine producers were desperate for access to

¹⁵The great influx of Eastern European scholars such as Rabbis Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky did not occur until the mid-1930s. In the 1920s, scholarship in America among the Orthodox had not hit its stride.

¹⁶The Maharil (published in 1556) in his section on the laws of Rosh Hashanah argued that one should say Kiddush on old wine on the second night, even though one is using new wine for the blessing of “shehechiyanu”. The Magen Avraham believed that this was an indication that old (fermented) wine is superior. Ginzberg believed this an incorrect reading, instead explaining that the issue was that the blessing on new wine (“haGafen”) can be covered by the one said on old wine, but not the reverse.

¹⁷The first known rabbinic response appears in an edition of Rambam’s Sefer HaMitzvot with a commentary called Yad HaLevi, by Rabbi Simcha Hurewitz. In a note there to the mitzvah of Kiddush he responds to Ginzberg in a very forceful manner. But this is a fairly obscure location, and it was not published until 1926.

¹⁸Shlomit Yahalom in "Jewish Existence in the Shadow of American Legislation: A Study of Prohibition," Tarbiz 53 (October-December 1983): 117-137.

¹⁹Eisenstein, Judah David. “Otzar Zichronotai,” (New York, 1929) p. 142.

²⁰This is Sprecher’s basic thesis. See pp. 163-168.

the market, which rabbis could provide, and alcoholics looking for wine could access it through a rabbi claiming it would be used for sacramental use. In both cases, abuse of the Volstead Act's license to rabbis would be hugely profitable.

This issue came to a head with a series of expose articles written in the New York Times in 1921 and 1922, in which it was shown that unauthorized permits were being used by the Menorah Wine Company in New York City, and as a result federal officials seized \$250,000 worth of the wine. Exposes of white collar crime by Jews were no less embarrassing in 1921 than they are today. Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, principal of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, writing shortly afterward in a popular Yiddish newspaper, pointed out the "Chilul Hashem" inherent in all this, and demanded that the Jewish community find a way to deal with the problem. He wrote:

"How much shame, how much degradation, how much desecration of the honor of the Torah lies therein! Rabbis who ought to be the ones to ensure that the laws of the land are upheld are instead the direct or indirect cause of their violation."

Mendlowitz saw the Volstead Act as being an irresistible cause of chillul Hashem, and therefore the only way out was for Jews to find a way out of using wine altogether. Only by forgoing the sacramental wine privilege would rabbis extricate themselves from this mess. He argued that Kiddush on wine is only a rabbinic mitzvah anyway, and therefore should be eliminated altogether if it causes chilul Hashem, and besides it was possible to use raisin wine (or, presumably grape juice) instead.

Was Mendlowitz admitting to rabbinic inability to resist the temptation of illicit profits? Certainly someone thought so, because he was forced to retract his statement in the following issue, saying that he did not mean to imply that actual rabbis were guilty, only people falsely claiming to be rabbis.

Regardless, Mendlowitz's accusations and the New York Times' reports demonstrated the wisdom of the Reform and Conservative push to find a way around using the Volstead Act's sacramental wine exemption. So why were the Orthodox rabbis so resistant?

Perhaps the answer may be found in the positions and policies of the RaMaZ, the president of Agudas HaRabonim. Rabbi Margolies, known during his life as the "dean of orthodox rabbis in North

²¹For an interesting example of this see Adam Teeter's "How wine bricks saved the U.S. wine industry during Prohibition" in <https://vinepair.com/wine-blog/how-wine-bricks-saved-the-u-s-wine-industry-during-prohibition/>

²²Many synagogues attracted non-Jewish members because each member was entitled to ten gallons of wine per year. See <https://blogs.yu.edu/library/2016/04/18/pesach-prohibition-and-the-grape-juice-wars-of-the-1920s/>

²³New York Times March 30, 1921.

²⁴*Dos Yiddische Licht* 1 (1923): 3-4, quoted and translated by Sprecher in n. 63.

²⁵*Dos Yiddische Licht* 1 (1923): 7, p. 13.

America,"²⁶ took a number of significant progressive steps to alter Jewish life. One which surely did not endear him to many of his rabbinic colleagues, was his effort to organize the kosher meat business in New York. A significant source of income for rabbis came from kosher supervision, and by cleaning up that business he may well have put some rabbis out of work. By supporting the Volstead Act's rabbinic exemption to sell kosher wine, he gave these rabbis a way to support themselves.

It is also possible that his stance on wine was designed to balance two of his most important and controversial stands, his strong advocacy of Zionism and his support of secular college studies at Yeshiva Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan, eventually to become Yeshiva University.²⁷ Neither of these positions was obvious, and surely many Orthodox Jews disagreed with them (many still do today). It could be that he realized that his support for these two causes might erode his standing as leader of the Orthodox, and he felt that he must take a strong stand in support of wine for Kiddush to firm up his base. By refusing to even discuss the possibility of using grape juice, he clearly differentiated himself from the Reform and Conservative Jews. Even though he was comfortable sharing a platform with the Reform Rabbi Stephen S. Wise when it came to their mutual support for Zionism, politics was one thing, halacha quite another. Additionally, by standing firm in this area it demonstrated that he was willing to innovate only where he considered it necessary, but otherwise remained firm in Jewish practice wherever possible.

²⁶This is how the New York Times described him in its obituary following his death in August, 1936. See <https://s3.amazonaws.com/images.shulcloud.com/727/uploads/bulletins/1996/Summer%201996%20-%20Memorial%20Tribute%20to%20Rabbi%20Moses%20Zevulun%20Margolies.pdf>.

²⁷<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/margolies-moses-zevulun>

"Rav Savanu Booze" - Rabbis and Prohibition in the 1920s - Murray Sragow

של ענבים ואומר עליו קידוש היום הוואיל וגבי נזיר קרויין

7. שולחן ערוך אורחה חיים הלכות שבת סימן רעב סעיף ב
יין מגתו מקדשין עליו וסוחט אדם אשכול של ענבים ואומר עליו קידוש היום.

8. מגן אברהם סימן רעב
יין מגתו ומ"מ מצוה בין ישן כמ"ש סימן ת"ר:

9. שולחן ערוך אורחה חיים סימן תר סעיף ב
בקידושليل שני ילبس בגדי חדש או מניה פרה החדש ואומר שהחכינו

10. מגן אברהם סימן תר
אם יש לו תיר罗斯 חדש יקידש על היין ישן וכשיגיע לשחכינו יטול התירוס בידו ואע"ג דמקדשין על תירוס כמ"ש סי' ערך ב ס"ב מ"מ ישן מצוה מן המובהך

11. ספר מהרי"ל (מנחים) הלכות ראש השנה
זמן שמברכין בלילה שני דרא"ה, יש פוסקים שיעשה כל הקידוש אכוס יין ישן ולא אתירוס, דהא התירוס איבנו מוציא את היין מברכתו, כדאי' בירושלמי בא לו יין ישן בתוך הסעודה בריך שנית ע"פ שכבר בריך על החדש. וכיון דיון היין קבוע ברכה עצמו החשוב הוא ומוקדם לקידוש. וכשהגיעו לומר זמן אז יתפוס כס יין חדש בידו, ולא נהרא מנהג זה. אך יניח כס יין החדש לפניו על השולחן ויתן עיניו בו באומרו זמן

12. ראה"ש מסכת ברכות פרק ט סימן טו
אם שתה יין חדש תחללה ואח"כ יין ישן צריך לברך בפה"ג על היין ולא מיפטר בבפה"ג שבירך על החדש דחווב כמוין אחר לגביו חדש לפיו לאישתני טפי לעילויא

13. תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לה עמוד ב
מאי שנא יין? אילימה משום דاشתני לעילויא, אשתני לברכה?
המרא אית בה תרתי - סעד ומשמה

14. Sefer HaMitzvot with commentary of Yad HaLevi, by R. Isaac Simcha Hurewitz, Mitzvah 155

Shira may be said only on wine, as it is both satisfying and intoxicating (Brachot 35b)... and it is therefore understood that if the power to arouse (which is the power of alcohol) is removed, such as in our grape juice, which is pasteurized before it begins to ferment... it loses its specialness and becomes even less than fruit juice, because they at least have a small alcoholic content... it becomes like orange juice or lemon juice that is added to seltzer.

And this drink, lacking both taste and smell of wine, is the subject of the "gaon hakaraim" in our time, who is of the group that seeks to tear away from the Jewish community. He has

1. Amendment XVIII – Constitution of the United States

The manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all the territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited

2. Volstead Act Section 6

Nothing in this title shall be held to apply to the manufacture, sale, transportation, importation , possession, or distribution of wine for sacramental purposes... No person to whom a permit may be issued to manufacture, transport, import, or sell wines for sacramental purposes or like religious rites shall sell, barter, exchange, or furnish any such to any person not a rabbi, minister of the gospel, priest, or an officer duly authorized for the purpose by any church or congregation... The head of any conference or diocese or other ecclesiastical jurisdiction may designate any rabbi, minister, or priest to supervise the manufacture of wine to be used for the purposes and rites in this section mentioned.

3. "Das Neutige Operaziya [The Necessary Operation]" Dos Yiddische Licht I (1923): 3-4, Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz

One need only consider the wine business which many rabbis are heavily engaged in. How much shame, how much degradation, how much desecration of the honor of the Torah lies therein! Rabbis who ought to be the ones to ensure that the laws of the land are upheld are instead the direct or indirect cause of their violation. . . . If truth be told, even if wine for ritual purpose were a biblical commandment, the current desecration of God's name would still not be justified, how much more so that it is only a rabbinic commandment, and it can be fulfilled by using raisin wine! . . . Therefore, I beseech you, my brethren, no matter how great a Torah scholar a rabbi is, if he is a cause for the desecration of Heaven, he must be removed from the community.

4. תלמוד בבלי מסכת Baba Batra דף צז עמוד א

אמר רב ווטרא בר טוביה אמר רב: אין אמרים קידוש היום אלא על היין הרואוי לינסך על גבי המזבח. למעטוי מי ? אילימה למעוותי יין מגתו, והא אני ר' חייא : יין מגתו לא יביא, ואם הביא -
בשר; וכיון דאם הביא כשר, אנן אפילו לכתהלה נמי דאמר רבא :
סוחט אדם אשכול של ענבים ואומר עליו קידוש היום!

5. רשב"ם מסכת בבא בתרא דף צז עמוד א

אין אמר קידוש היום - ובין הרואוי לברך עליו בפה"ג קאמר דאו"ג דمبرכין עליו בפה"ג לקידוש היום מיהא לא חשב

6. ספר הלכות גדולות סימן ב – הלכות קידוש והבדלה

אי לית ליה חمرا מיתתי עינבי ועוצר להדרן במעלוי שבטה ובמעלי
יום טבא ולאורתא מקדש עליה, דאמיר רביה סוחט אדם אשכול

19. New York Times – March 30, 1921

TRACE MANY FORGED RABBI WINE PERMITS

**Prohibition Agents Believe They
Have Uncovered Curb Market
of Sacramental Vintage.**

KRAMER IS HASTENING HERE

**Officials Say Approaching Passover
Holidays Have Accentuated
Activity of Distributors.**

Investigations by prohibition agents on the staffs of both Federal Director Charles R. O'Connor and Federal Supervisor Ernest S. Langley have revealed the existence of what is described as a curb market for traffic in sacramental wine permits. Headquarters of the ring and details concerning the extent of the business carried on by the operators were withheld by the agents until certain other ramifications of the alleged conspiracy have been investigated. Both Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Langley said they had evidence of the extensive use of "fake" rabbi permits for the purchase of sacramental wine for other purposes.

The discovery was made in connection with the seizure on Monday of about \$250,000 worth of wine in the warehouse of the Menorah Company at 110 Bowery.

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15. ש"ת הר צבי אורות חיים א סימן קנה

לרב י'ש הורביך ז"ל, חסן תרכז

מן ענבים אם מקדשין עליו וזה ברכתו .

ת"ר מאיריך בדין הגרייף-יום, הוא מן ענבים, שתיקף לשם התענינים משלים אותו ופי"ז נפקע ממנו מה אלכוהול, וכיוא לרב על זה אמר כי מצווה מן המוחර לקrush על הגרייף-יום, והעליה שם להלכה ואין מברך עליו בפה"ג וכן אין מקדשין עליו וגדרע משאר מי פירות, ע"כ

הנה בזה שהשיג על ההוא מ"ד שהוא מצווה מן המוחර לקדש עליו, בזה והוא הצדק עמו, רם הוא זה שיצא גנד המג"א שפומך דין ישן מצווה מן המוחර אבל מה שמוסיף דעתן לבך ע"ז בפה"ג ואין מקדשין עליו, לאורה הפרוי על המה, שחרי בשו"ע הכריע כדרא"ש דין מבושל ברכתו בפה"ג ומקדשין עליו

16. Kol Dodi Haggada (3:4)

The principle of 'demonstrating freedom' in our performance of the Seder ritual plainly remains unfulfilled with grape juice. Since 'demonstrating freedom' means fulfilling the mitzvah in its most preferable manner (Rashi and Rashbam), my father and master, zt"l, ruled that one does not fulfill the principle of 'demonstrating freedom' with grape juice.

17. Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith



18. Ocean Grove, NJ - July 2, 2017





Mark Teicher

Intertextuality

מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית which is תהילים פרק ל', When I read מה and חייתי מירדי בור, am struck by a few phrases, וlidod, פתחת שקי and בצע בעמי Which remind me of the story of Joseph. Joseph was twice in a pit, once when his brothers threw him in, and subsequently elevated him from the pit, and once when Potiphar put him in a pit and he was rescued by Pharaoh.

מה בצע כי נהרג אחינו וכיסינו את דמו. Judah advises his brothers to sell Joseph saying When the first brother opens his sack and finds his money, it says יפתח האחד את את שקי.

We always read the story of Joseph around Chanukah and we say this each day of Chanukah.

Numerology

יעם Jacob sends his messengers to Esav and quoting Jacob, they say פרשת ישלח, In תרי"ג, The famous drasha is בגורתى is the same gematria and letters as לבן גורתى, meaning that despite the fact that Jacob was with the evil Lavan, Jacob still kept all the commandments.,

Just before this, Jacob and Lavan had made a pact by a pile of stones and Jacob calls it גל עד and Lavan calls it יגר שהדotta, where יגר means a mound.

The difference between יגר and גורתى is the letter ת, which has a Gematria of 400. Jacob fears Esav and his army. How many men are in Esav's army? Four hundred. Where else do we have a many with his own personal army, in the same family, in Esav's grandfather, Abram, fights 4 kings with an army of 318 men. What is the mathematical difference between the two armies? The answer is 82, which is the Gematria of Lavan.



– קרבנות של-tag השבועות – Mark Zitter

I - THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS ACCCOMPANYING THE 2 GRAIN OFFERINGS

Along with the additional offerings (offerings סופר קרבנות מוסף) to the daily offerings שלוש רגלים (the 3 holidays of the Jewish calendar that require pilgrimage to ירושלים), there are 2 more communal offerings, both of which underscore the agricultural aspects of the holiday cycle.

On the 2nd day of נזח (actually, תוצח גג), there is brought the עירך, a barley offering, marking the beginning of the barley harvest and permitting the use of the new crops.

7 weeks later, on the shemitah year, also called שmittah, and שmittah, there is brought the 2 loaves of bread made from the first of newly harvested wheat crop.

Thus, this 7 week period from תשרי ה' through תשרי י' is bracketed by 2 grain offerings that represent the 2 most important crops – the 2 grains, barley and wheat, which are the “staff (stuff?) of life”.

Each of these grain offerings is accompanied by animal offerings – but there is a stark difference between the 2 sets of animal offerings.

The word קרבן עמר is fleshed out (pun intended) by 1 lamb (בָּקָר אֶחָד, ב' בָּקָר).

In marked contrast, the number of animals accompanying the שתי הלוות is considerably larger – 7 lambs, 1 bull, 2 rams, 1 goat, and another set of 2 lambs. The bull, rams and first 7 lambs are קרבנות שלוחה, offerings completely burnt on the altar; the goat is a קרבן חטאת (usually translated, I think poorly so, as a “sin offering”). There are also brought 2 more lambs, as שלם זבור, offerings that are eaten in part by those who brought the קרבן, a unique status, as this is the only incidence of a communal שלמים - קרבן שלמים

וְעַרְכָּם עַל-הַלּוּם שִׁבְעַת אֶבְשָׁלִים פָּמִים בְּנֵי שָׁבָה וְפַר בָּרְזָקָר
אֲסֹד וְאַלְמָן שְׁנִים יְמִין עַל-הַ...

ונעשיםם שער ערים אסף להנחות ושיינן בזמנים בני שעה ליבנה
שלמים (עירא, כ, ג, י"ח-י"ט)

II - THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS IN THE OF THE קרבנות מוסף חיות

What can look like a long confusing list of which animals are offered as the **טוקף** (additional offerings) on the various holidays **במדבר, פרקיים** (in the desert, chapters) - **רash chodesh, Pesach/Chag hamatzot, Chag hashavuot, - (ב"ח & כ"ט** שmini עזרת and **רash hashana, Yom haKippurim, Chag hashocrot** - really reduces to a simple pattern. The table below lists these:

שעירים goats	כבשים lambs	אללים rams	פרים bulls	
1	7	1	2	ראש החדש
1	7	1	2	חג המזות
1	7	1	2	שבועות
1	7	1	1	ראש השנה
1	7	1	1	יום הכיפורים
1	14	2	(14-n) for days n = 1-7	הסוכות
1	7	1	1	שמיני עצרת

It can readily be seen that there are 2 groups of 3 and 1 “outlier”.

וְגַם הַשְׁבּוּתָה רָאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ, וְגַם המזוזות
 which we'll more conveniently designate as 2,1,7,1.
 3 of the fall holidays, יומם והכפורים וָרָאשׁ השנה, and
 סמיני עזרת form a 2nd group, which we'll label
 1,1,7,1.

וְסָכָה is the outlier, but even in the outlier, there is some pattern: the number of sheep and rams is double the usual complement of the other fall גַּם.

III – THE DOUBLE OF כוֹסֵף

ר' יאלק בן טה (in an article available at https://www.etzion.org.il/en/%E2%80%9Cfestival-sukkot%E2%80%9D-and-%E2%80%9Cfestival-ingathering#_fnref12) believes that the reason for the double complement of 2 rams and 14 lambs onrovot is that there are essentially 2 different holidays being celebrated simultaneously – ויקרא) tag ha-sukkot (שנתן, ב' ג' ס' ג' ל' ד' כ' ב') tag ha-azofot (ב' ג' ל' ג').

This dual nature of the תְּנַשׁן of the 15th of תְּשִׁבָּת is one particular of a larger, more general concept. All of the תְּנַשׁן, in fact, are dual in nature – each has both a historical/calendric and agricultural component.

Thus, גג הפסח/המצור commorates our leaving מצרים and freedom from slavery, but it must take place in the spring, in שוטר, כ"ג, פ"ג (חושן האביב, ג"ה; דבָרִים, ט"ז, ז"ה), at the beginning of the barley harvest. This, of course, explains the special קרבן עומר on the 16th day of יי"ט, the 16th of Nisan, which consists of the first of the barley harvest.

Similarly, though the shivat ha-yamim, while it commemorates our receiving and accepting of the torah (a link which has no source in itself), is also called **תְּהִלָּה** (the **קֶצֶף**) and **בְּפִרְיוֹן קָדְשֵׁים**, and, **שְׁמָתוֹת**, **כָּג**, **כָּב** (**בְּפִרְיוֹן מַעֲשֵׂךְ**), **שְׁמָתוֹת**, **לְג**, **לְג**, **לְג**.

Now consider י' זיאר's notion that there is a double set of סוכות on קרבנות because it simultaneously celebrates 2 חגי הסוכות - הגדה and הגדת האסיף. That הגדת האסיף is the agricultural half of the double הגדה is self-explanatory; that הגדת הסוכות is the historical aspect of the double הגדה is strongly supported by the text in פרשיות מועדיהם – there, we are told quite specifically that the reason for (1 of the 2) the central feature(s) of the holiday, dwelling in סוכות, is "כִּי בַּעֲבוּדָה תְּשַׁעַטְתָּךְ" (Exodus, כ"ב, ג"ז) – תְּהִנֵּנִי שֶׁלֹּא תְּשַׁעַטְתָּךְ אֶזְמָמָתֶיךָ (Exodus, כ"ב, ג"ז) an unequivocal assignment to the historical half of the הגדה.

But if, as we believe, all the **רְגִלִּים** share this duality, both calendaric and historical, הַגָּמָן, then why should the double set of **סֻכּוֹת** of קָרְבָּנוֹת not be manifest on the other בָּרוּלִין?

If all 3 are dual, the double קרבנות of רגליים should also appear on פנים/פנים and שורשיות.

Maybe they do

IV- THE ANIMALS ACCCOMPANYING THE מוציא הלהם AS A SECOND

It is not a great leap to consider שבעות as the last day of תרומות. We noted earlier (section I) that the link between the 2 special offerings of the spring holidays, the קרבן שטח הלחם and the קרבן שטח שטח, reflects the agricultural aspect of those holidays – the date of bringing the קרבן שטח הלחם is entirely a function of the date of bringing the קרבן שטח שטח. The קרבן שטח שטח has no “date” of its own – it’s brought 50 days after the קרבן שטח הלחם is brought.

On a more metaphysical plane, we are certainly aware of the notion of receiving the תְּהִלָּה as the end purpose of being redeemed from slavery in Egypt – הַמֵּשֶׁה is told at the תְּבִרְכָה, at the onset of the redemption process, that the purpose of the Jewish people being taken out of Egypt is for them to encounter God at בְּהַזִּיקָה אֶת-קָם מִפְאָרִים פָּעַבְדָּן אֶת-קָאָלָהִים: here סִינִי says, בְּהַזִּיקָה אֶת-קָם מִפְאָרִים פָּעַבְדָּן אֶת-קָאָלָהִים (Num. 14:14), ב (ב' ב' ב' ב').

We noted at the beginning (section I) the great discrepancy between the animal accompaniments to the קרב עלם and the קרב עומר. I would like to suggest that the animal accompaniments to the קרב עלם serve as the missing "second טוֹף", for both תג השבושת המזענת and תג הנטען.

We reprint here the table from section II, with 2 additional rows, one for the animals accompanying the **תנין הלווי** and one for the totals if we see those as an extra **טוויות**.

The animal offerings accompanying the שחי הלות certainly resemble a קרבן מזבח – to use the notation introduced earlier, it's a 1.2.7.1. Admittedly, this is

שעירים goats	כבשים sheep	אילים rams	פרים bulls	
1	7	1	2	ראש חודש
1	7	1	2	חג המצאות
1	7	1	2	שבועות
1	7	2	1	animals with the �� הלחם
2	14	3	3	sum of the above 2 rows
1	7	1	1	ראש השנה
1	7	1	1	יום הכפורים
1	14	2	(14-n) for days n=1-7	הסוכות
1	7	1	1	שמיני עצרת

the animals of the three sacrifices for the calendar and the animals accompanying the�� הלחם

a new and slightly different category – neither 2,1,7,1 nor 1,1,7,1. But I think the critical point is the presence of a שער לכפר – the hallmark of the denominator that the שער talks about - that all of the שער (goats) of the רגלים accomplish the same thing. There is no differentiation between the שער of the קרבנות מוסף of פירש פינחס and the שער accompanying the�� הלחם. פירש אמר הלחם.

We thus have for each of the 3 רגלים an “extra מוסף”, one for the calendaric part of the��, one for the agricultural part.

For whatever reason, the number of rams and lambs (2 and 14 instead of 1 and 7) is doubled, though the number of goats is not, and the number of bulls follow its own unique formula.

For the��, two-as-one unit, the number of goats and lambs is doubled, but the number of bulls and rams does not follow that pattern. The number of bulls increases by a factor of 3, but that of the rams by 1.5.

V – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There is a striking discrepancy between the number of animals brought accompanying the קרבן עומר and the�� הלחם.

The�� הלחם can be viewed as double that of the other fall sacrifice, a manifestation of the dual nature of our – ימים טובים – they are both calendaric/historical and agricultural.

We suggest that השבעות has a “persona” as the last day of תשרי/תבזבז, and that the animals brought as accompaniment to the�� הלחם may be an “extra מוסף”, thus making a parallel in the spring תשרי to the “extra מוסף” of השבעות in the fall.

The parallels are not exact – there is no constant ratio of increase for the various categories of animal.