

ABBA ZVI NAIMAN

LANDSCAPES OF THE SPIRIT

THE
CITIES
OF ERETZ YISRAEL
IN JEWISH THOUGHT

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THIS SEFER IS DEDICATED TO
MY DEAR PARENTS

MR. AND MRS.
GERALD E. NAIMAN

WHO SUCCEEDED IN LEADING
THEIR CHILDREN
ALONG THE PATH OF TORAH.

MAY HASHEM GRANT THEM
MUCH NACHAS
FROM ALL THEIR CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN.

הדפסה זו מוקדש לעילוי נשמת אבי מורי
יעקב אליהו בן דוד ע"ה ניימאן

י ליד באלטימאר מעורב עם הבריה

ע וד בנערותו שימש גדולים בתורה

ק יים מצות בשדה מלחמה

ב אשת נעוריו שמח נ"א שנה

א ח נאמן עד דשבק חיים

ל אחר שנעשה ע"ז בשנים

י סורים סבל בסבר פנים

ה ניח אחריו בנים ובני בנים

ו כולם עוסקים בתורה וחסדים

נפטר בשם טוב ח' שבט תשס"ה לפ"ק

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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בע"ה

כ"ח סיון תמש"ה

הנה הבחור החשוב והנעלה הר"ר אבא צבי ניימאן שליט"א,
בא והעלה על שלחן מלכים, מאן מלכי רבנן, מתורתן של
בעלי מחשבה, ובעלי עבודה, מדורות שלפנינו, ערוכים
דבריו ומסודרים על כל פרשה ופרשה, דבר דבור על אופניו
בבנינים נאים, אשר על אדני פז הם מיוסדים, ובודאי
שימצא חן בעיני כל קוראיו, וישר כחו וחילו שמוציאם
לאור ופתח פתח בסקירה פנימית על ענינים רמים ונשגבים,
ויזכה להוציא עוד ממעונותיו חוצה.
הכו"ח לכבוד התורה ולומדיה,

משה פיינשטיין

Letter of approbation by HaGaon Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, for the
author's Hebrew work, *Edrei Tzon*

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הנה הרה"ג הנעלה ויקר ערך מאד חו"ב ה"ר אבא צבי
ניימאן מחשובי לומדי בית מדרשנו נשאו לבו כעת לסדר
כתבי חידושיו והם המה עיונים מחודדים ומפולפלים בהרבה
סוגיות ממדרשי אגדות חז"ל ערוכים על כל פרשיות התורה
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Letter of approbation of HaGaon Rav Yitzchak Ruderman, *zt"l*, for
the author's Hebrew work, *Edrei Tzon*

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Since *Landscapes of the Spirit* resembles to my Hebrew work, *Edrei Tzon*, with some essays built on ideas presented there, I haven't sought new approbations. Those in *Edrei Tzon* include endorsements by HaGaon HaRav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, and HaGaon HaRav Ruderman, *zt"l*. I have taken the liberty of reprinting them in this volume.

I gratefully dedicate this *sefer* to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Naiman, as a humble attempt to thank them for their dedication to my growth.

Theoretically, there is no need to thank one's wife for her help, just as it is unnecessary to thank one's hands for typing on the keyboard; nothing can be fully accomplished without the support of one's other half. However, my wife, Rochel, utilized her knowledge of Torah concepts and linguistic expertise in reviewing the manuscript (except for this paragraph), making valuable comments and contributions throughout. May Hashem help us grow in His service and transmit the *mesorah* to our children.

Finally, I thank Targum Press, a leading publisher of fresh, stimulating Torah works. It is an honor to be in such company.

Abba Zvi Naiman
MarCheshvan 5756

INTRODUCTION

No two people are exactly alike. Everyone accepts this fact, because who wants a clone of oneself? Every person can contribute uniquely to his or her family, community, and nation — and to Hashem.

We also sense this truth about time. No day is exactly like another. Shabbos feels different from a weekday. Pesach feels different from Shabbos and even from other holidays. Someone with extreme spiritual sensitivity can even distinguish one weekday from the next.

This concept applies to space as well. Every country has its own character and lifestyle. For instance, the country best suited to Jewish life is Eretz Yisrael, the only place we can perform all the commandments of Hashem.

So, too, every locale in the Land of Israel embodies a unique aspect of Judaism. This work reveals those aspects.

The idea that each city in Eretz Yisrael possesses its own

spirituality is not new. The Arizal and Maharal identify the essence of various places in Eretz Yisrael. A great early Sefardic Kabbalist, R. Avraham Azulai, articulated the Kabbalistic characteristics of several towns (see *Chessed LeAvraham* 4:13). Later, the Arvei Nachal (“*Shelach*” 26b) wrote that every section of Eretz Yisrael corresponds to a Torah law. Just as each mitzvah causes a distinct effect, each area of Eretz Yisrael promotes a specific type of spirituality.

This work draws on Talmudic and Midrashic sources and the leading commentators of the past several hundred years, including Ramchal, the Vilna Gaon, and their disciples; the Chida and other Sefardic writers; and leading Chassidic thinkers, such as the Sefas Emes and R. Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin. Wherever these sources detail the character of a town, I have simply presented the information accessibly. Otherwise, I have attempted analyses based on principles implicit in these works. My sources appear in the notes following each chapter.

I hope this work increases our awareness of the spiritual treasures of Eretz Yisrael and inspire deeper service of Hashem. May we then long even more for Hashem’s presence to be felt clearly by the entire world, so we can properly serve Him in His Holy Land.



ENTERING THE HOLY LAND

YERICHO: THE LOCK OF ERETZ YISRAEL

It cannot be coincidental that the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael near Yericho, the town of date palms. In fact, the Midrash calls Yericho “the ‘lock’ of Eretz Yisrael,” for once this city was conquered, the whole land could be. Consequently, all seven nations that inhabited Eretz Yisrael at that time had a presence in Yericho. But why was this locale so important? True, it was strategically located near the Jordan River, but an enemy could just as well cross the Jordan north or south of Yericho. The city does not stand on high ground commanding a broad area. Why, then, were Eretz Yisrael’s inhabitants so apprehensive about losing Yericho to the Jews?

Another puzzle is Yericho’s enforced desolation. After capturing the town, Yehoshua forbade any Jew to plunder it for personal use. Yehoshua even declared that anyone who rebuilt Yericho or merely another city named after it would lose his children. What did Hashem foresee for this town? Was it to lack

Jewish life? Surely no area of Eretz Yisrael is so spiritually polluted that it cannot be settled.

To understand Yericho, we will examine a striking aspect of this important city: its connection to the Beis HaMikdash. Our Sages teach that, during Yehoshua's time — when Eretz Yisrael was divided among the twelve tribes — a fertile plot in Yericho was reserved for the tribe whose territory would house the Beis HaMikdash. This plot was 500 square *amos*, the area of the Temple Mount. Apparently, Yericho must have something in common with that holy site.

Furthermore, the Gemara states that each of the twenty-four *mishmaros* (groups of Kohanim who served in the Beis HaMikdash for a week at a time) were divided into two; half the *mishmar* went to the Temple, and half journeyed to Yericho to secure food and water for their brothers in Yerushalayim (see *Taanis* 27a). This procedure, too, links Yericho with the Beis HaMikdash.

The Mishnah provides an even more vivid connection: *Tamid* 3:8 enumerates nine sounds originating from the Beis HaMikdash but heard in Yericho. Among them were the melodious songs of the Levi'im and the blasts of the shofar. Also, in Yericho, one smelled the incense burnt in the Beis HaMikdash. Commenting on this mishnah, Raavad quotes his teacher, who stresses that this phenomenon was miraculous and unique to Yericho: The sounds of the Beis HaMikdash were not audible all around Yerushalayim, *including* Yericho. And the incense could not be detected for miles around. *Only* in Yericho were these sounds and smells experienced. Raavad explains why: The Torah states that, before eating produce grown in Eretz Yisrael, we must first remove a portion — known as *terumah* — for the Kohanim. Since

Yericho was the first territory the Jews captured upon entering Eretz Yisrael, the city was sanctified as a sort of *terumah*. As such, Yericho shared in the experience of Yerushalayim, site of ultimate holiness.

Yericho must have somehow qualified for this honor. Just as inferior grain should not serve as *terumah*, an inferior city cannot be a partner to the Beis HaMikdash. So why did Yehoshua curse anyone who rebuilt Yericho? If it resembled Yerushalayim, Yericho should have been a prime location for a Jewish community.

Let's look at one additional facet of Yericho's early history. Although the Jewish people generally honored Yehoshua's ban on plundering the area, one Jew — Achan — took a Babylonian cloak from the spoils (see Yehoshua 7:21). The Midrash asks how merchandise manufactured in Babylonia was found in Eretz Yisrael. (International trade was not yet so advanced.) The Midrash answers with an astounding ancient belief: Any king who did not control part of the Land of Israel was unworthy of royalty! Kings all over the world therefore attempted to dominate sections of Eretz Yisrael. The king of Babylonia chose Yericho. His governor lived there and sent dates from Yericho — “the city of date palms” (Devarim 34:3) — to his homeland, receiving Babylonian products in return. That is why Achan found a Babylonian cloak in Yericho.

R. Tzadok HaKohen uses this information to explain how Achan's act had cosmic importance:

As we have seen, Yericho is linked with the Beis HaMikdash. Babylonia destroyed the first Temple, opposing any building that united mankind in service of Hashem; such was the essence of this nation. This antipathy had fueled the construction of the

Tower of Babel centuries earlier. Its builders had joined forces to fight Hashem's dominion over them. Their structure was the antithesis of the Beis HaMikdash, through which all nations recognized Hashem.

We now understand Yericho's pivotal role within Eretz Yisrael. Hashem did not promise the Jews this land for its pleasant climate or bountiful produce. Rather, Eretz Yisrael is vital to our serving Hashem. The focus of this service is, of course, the Beis HaMikdash. That building could have taught every nation how to fulfill its God-given destiny. Perhaps Yericho was the location in Eretz Yisrael best suited for mankind to acknowledge the Providence manifest in the Beis HaMikdash. But instead of uniting in Yericho to serve Hashem, the other nations protected Babylonia's presence there. Instead of using the city to support the Jews' Divine service, the nations chose that location to once again attempt subversion against Hashem. As long as this opposition existed in Yericho, the Beis HaMikdash could not be constructed on solid ground. Conversely, if this "lock" on Eretz Yisrael was ever broken, the entire country would fall into Jewish hands.

When Yericho fell, Yehoshua banned its spoils and forbade its rebuilding. He did so to eradicate all vestiges of Babylonian presence in Eretz Yisrael. Only then would Babylonia lose its power, since any nation without a stronghold in Eretz Yisrael was not viable. The Beis HaMikdash could then be built without fear of opposition, and it would become a permanent center of service to Hashem.

By taking the Babylonian cloak, though, Achan foiled Yehoshua's plan. Achan granted Babylonia presence, however small, in Eretz Yisrael. This foothold gave Babylonia a base from which to undermine the building dedicated to Hashem. Thus,

Yericho retained only a shadow of its prospective role: the half of the *mishmar* that stayed there to bolster the other half serving in the Beis HaMikdash. Babylonia's power increased until it eventually destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. R. Tzadok finds further allusion to this thesis in the Gemara's cryptic claim that, after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the Jews were exiled to Babylonia after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash to eat dates (see *Pesachim* 88a). According to R. Tzadok, these dates came from trees planted during the early trade exchanges between Babylonia and its official in Yericho. In other words, the dates of Yericho planted the seeds of the Babylonian exile.

According to this line of reasoning, Yericho was not meant to be desolate. It was to support the Beis HaMikdash by uniting all the nations in recognition of this critical edifice. This idea underlies another fascinating act of Achan. It is known that Yehoshua composed the "*Aleinu*" prayer upon conquering Yericho. But some early commentators contend that Achan composed its second paragraph, "*Al kein nekaveh...*," after realizing the impact of his violation of the ban on Yericho. (The initials of נקוה על כן נקוה spell עכן, Achan!) Indeed, this prayer speaks of all the inhabitants of the world acknowledging the kingdom of Hashem. Yericho was to be where all nations would endorse Hashem's house in Yerushalayim.

However, Yericho became so contaminated by its Babylonian presence that Yehoshua banned its spoils and its reconstruction. Had this ban been faithfully observed, the Beis HaMikdash would have been built with the unanimous consent of Eretz Yisrael. And possibly all of Yericho — not just 500 hundred square *amos* — would have become a city in which all the nations of the world could unite in revering the Beis HaMikdash.

NOTES:

איתא במד"ר (טו טו) יריחו נגרא של ארץ ישראל, אם נכבשה יריחו מיד כל הארץ נכבשת, לפיכך נתכנסו לתוכה ז' אומות, ע"כ. והובא ברש"י על ספר יהושע (כד, יא).

עיי ספרי פ' בהעלותך (פ' פא) בענין דושנו של יריחו, ובגמ' תענית (כז). בענין המשמרות שהיו מתחלקות בין ירושלים ויריחו. ועיי בנחלת שמעון לספר יהושע, ס"י כ"ו, בטעמים איך באמת נתיישבה יריחו. עיי ב"ר (פה, יד) בענין אדרת שנער שמצא עכן.

איתא בתנחומא (ראה ח) כל מלך שהיה בחוץ לארץ אם לא היה קונה עיר אחת בארץ ישראל לא היה נקרא מלך...אלא שהיה מלך בבל לשם וקנה עיר בארץ ישראל.

כותב הראב"ד בשם רבו (תמיד ג, ח), ודוקא היה ביריחו נשמע ולא בשאר צדדים מפני שיריחו היתה כמו ירושלים מפני שהיא היתה תחלת כבוש א"י, וכמו דתרומת דגן צריך לתרום כן נתרמה א"י עצמה ובשביל כך התרימה יהושע להיות קודש לפי היא כמו ירושלים ע"כ.

דברי הרב צדוק הכהן נמצאים בפרי צדיק (הושענא רבה [כט]). וע"ע דברי הרב חיים פלאג'י בספרו ארצות חיים שמביא (עמ' כט), כשהיה מלך בבל הולך שם היה לובש אדרת שנער שלקח עכן וברוך היודע דבשביל זה זכה לכבוש אותנו מא"י לבבל בחרבן בית א' ובבלה יובאו עם כלי בית האלקים, דהוא נתן כבוד לא"י ולכליו, ע"כ.

כותב המגלה עמוקות (אופן רמ), יריחו היא כלל כל הארץ, ואיתא שכל מלכים שבעולם היה להם בתים ביריחו וכל מי שלא היה לו בית אין נקרא מלך, ע"כ. וכותב עוד (אופן ריד), סוד יריחו כנגדה בקדושה מלכות נקראת יריחו ובה כלולה כל הספירות מכתר ועד מלכות גדול וקטן שם הוא ולכן קילל שימותו הבנים מגדול ועד קטן כשיחזרו ויבנו אותה העיר שהיתה מקדם כח הטומאה בה ועתה נתייסדה בקדושה. ע"כ. ועוד (אופן רמ), אילו בא משה לא"י לא היה עכן נכשל בחרם שלקח אדרת ונתן כח בקליפה של אדרת להחריב ב"ה, ע"כ.

ועוד בכח הכלליות של יריחו עיי לקוטי תורה (יהושע ו, א), ויריחו סוגרת

ומסוגרת הנה הירח נקרא יריחו ואז המ"ל דקליפה סובב לה בסוד נוגה הסוגר ומסגר אותה, ועיי השופר המכניע החיצון נשברה הקליפה משם. וע"ע בספר אוהב ישראל (פרי ויחי כג.) בענין הקשר בין יריחו לירח.
עיי סדר היום בענין על כן נקוה ועכן.

וליתר אריכות בענין זה עיי עדרי צאן פ' מסעי

בשולי המאמר נביא דבר מעונין בענין שם יריחו מדברי הרד"ל (הגה ה' לפי"ח של פרקי דר"א), זהו שכתוב בסי יהושע יריחו בחירי"ק הרי"ש ע"ש הריח ולא בציר"י כמ"ש בתורה כי כאשר הגיעו סמוך ליריחו והריחו בריח האפרסמון הוא שהסבו שמה כן תחת אשר תחלה היה נקראת יריחו בציר"י הרי"ש אפשר ע"ש שהיו עובדין בה הכנענים לירח וכמו בית שמש ועיר שמש שהיו עובדין שם לשמש.

GERIZIM: MOUNTAIN OF TRADITION

The Jews' first experience after entering Eretz Yisrael appears mysterious. As described in the Torah (see Devarim 11:29-30 and 27:11-26), six tribes were to ascend Har Gerizim (Mount Gerizim), and six the adjacent Har Eival (Mount Eival). The Kohanim and the elder Levi'im would stand in the valley between the two mountains. The Levi'im would turn to Har Gerizim and bless one who fulfills a certain commandment, and the tribes on both mountaintops would answer, "Amen." The Levi'im would then face Har Eival and curse one who neglects that precept, and again the tribes would say, "Amen."

What was the purpose of this exercise? And why two mountains? Why not have everyone ascend one mountain and respond, "Amen," to all the statements of the Levi'im? For that matter, why climb any mountain?

Har Gerizim plays another role later in Jewish history. After

Judge Gidon died, his concubine's son Avimelech gathered some natives of Shechem, killed his father's family, and proclaimed himself the ruler. Only one child of Gidon's, Yosam, survived. He stood atop Har Gerizim and cursed those who'd committed this slaughter (see Shofetim 9).

The Midrash asks why Yosam chose Har Gerizim to administer this curse; Har Eival would seem more appropriate, since that is where those who violated the Torah were cursed. The Midrash explains that Yosam knew the Kusim (Samaritans) would claim Har Gerizim, because blessings were bestowed there when the Jews entered Eretz Yisrael. To expose their folly, he pointed out that, when the tribes on Har Eival responded to the curses, they addressed those standing on Har Gerizim. Therefore, Har Gerizim is fit for curses, not blessings.

This Midrash demands much explanation. True, Yosam cleverly demonstrated that the mountains could reverse their roles. But doesn't the verse command the Jews to issue blessings on Har Gerizim and curses on Har Eival (see Devarim 11:29)? Also, why does Yosam invoke the Kusim here? Why not just explain why Har Gerizim is suitable for cursing? What does he teach by asserting that the Kusim will misunderstand the two mountains in the future?

R. Yosef Karo (author of *Shulchan Aruch*) explains the purpose of the Jews' encounter at Har Gerizim: Hashem wanted them to accept the Torah in Eretz Yisrael just as they had on Har Sinai. (There the Jews *saw* thunder, something normally invisible. Similarly, at Har Gerizim and Har Eival, the Jews were to *see* the blessings and curses generated by keeping or violating Hashem's commandments.) If so, we can see the need for a mountain on which to reaffirm the Torah, which was originally

given on a mountain. But why *two* mountains along with the entire procedure?

The Sefas Emes elaborates upon the theme that Har Gerizim facilitated a reacceptance of the Torah in Eretz Yisrael. He first cites the Midrash, which emphasizes the importance of answering, “Amen,” as the Jews did on the two mountaintops. “Amen” stems from the Hebrew word “*emunah*” (faith). One who answers a statement with “amen” affirms his faith in that utterance.

In the wilderness, there had been no need for faith; Hashem’s presence was clear to everyone because of His constant miracles. The clouds of glory surrounded and protected the Jews; *man* descended from heaven every day to feed them, and Miriam’s well followed them everywhere. In Eretz Yisrael, these miracles ceased, and faith became necessary, in the form of “amen.”

The Sefas Emes then distinguishes between the two acceptances of the Torah. At Sinai, the Jews accepted based on their clear perception of Hashem. They accepted the clear manifestation of the written Torah, which Moshe transcribed exactly as Hashem dictated it. At Gerizim, the Jews pledged to adhere to the Torah even in Eretz Yisrael, where Hashem is not always so evident. They accepted the oral Torah, which defines Hashem’s will when it is not clear-cut. The rabbis must transmit the written Torah and its explanation to each generation. If a new situation arises, they must use the thirteen principles of Biblical exegesis (for example, *kal vachomer*, *gezerah shavah*, etc.) to derive the correct law. Rabbinic rulings must be upheld faithfully. The Jews made that commitment on Har Gerizim by saying, “Amen.”

A corollary of this distinction between the two events is the

function of the Jews in each. At Sinai, only Moshe ascended to receive the Torah; he then taught it to the Jews exactly as he'd heard it from Hashem. In contrast, the acceptance of the oral Torah at Har Gerizim presupposed input by the Jewish nation: its leaders and those who obey them. Therefore, everyone climbed the mountains to receive this Torah. Why divide the people between two mountains? Although separated from one another, these two groups constituted a single nation, each member responsible for the other's adherence to the Torah. Though only six tribes assembled to hear the blessings on Har Gerizim, it was as if all twelve stood there. That's why all twelve answered, "Amen."

Har Gerizim was conducive to faith in Hashem when His presence was no longer as clear as it was in the wilderness. It was thus an appropriate location for commitment to Hashem's oral Torah.

We now understand the perversion of the Kusim on that mountain. The Assyrian king Shalmanesser had brought them there to settle the part of Eretz Yisrael left desolate by the exile of the ten tribes (see *Melachim II* 17:24-41). After lions attacked them, the Kusim converted to Judaism but rejected the oral Torah, which explains the written one. In fact, R. Meir discovered the Kusim worshipping the image of a dove atop Har Gerizim (see *Chullin* 6a). They did not believe the rabbis were transmitting Hashem's oral explanations of the written Torah. Accordingly, the Kusim saw no reason for both Har Gerizim and Har Eival. These people claimed only Har Gerizim, a mountain of blessings. Surely no harm could befall the Kusim there, even if they practiced idolatry.

Yosam foresaw their error. For Har Gerizim is also a moun-

tain of curses. Because the Jews on Har Eival were united with those on Har Gerizim, when the curses were pointed to Har Eival, the Jews on both mountains responded, "Amen." Har Gerizim and Har Eival are inseparable. In the glare of this revelation, the Kusim's treachery becomes clear. Adherence to the written Torah is worthless — and even leads to idolatry — without a faithful acceptance of the oral Torah and its transmitters, the rabbis of each generation.

Yosam invoked the Kusim to exemplify the perfidy of Avimelech and his cohorts from Shechem. To defy Gidon's leadership was to reject the rabbis who relay the oral Torah. The Jewish people cannot exist in Eretz Yisrael without unified acceptance of its leaders. Har Gerizim was the perfect place to make that point. Together with Har Eival, it represented the Jewish nation's faithful acceptance of the oral Torah and those leaders who transmit it from one generation to the next.

NOTES:

הילקוט שמעוני מביא (בספר שופטים שם), וילך יותם על הר גריזים ויקלל, והלא נתנו הקללה על הר עיבל, אלא כך אמר, אתם הכותים עתידים לומר הר גריזים שלנו ששם ניתנו הברכות, ואינם יודעים ששם ניתנו הקללות שהיו עומדים על הר עיבל ומקללים, למי היו מקללים לא לאלו שהיו כנגדן נמצאת הקללות על הר גריזים והברכות על הר עיבל.

הבית יוסף כותב בספרו מגיד מישרים (פ' ראה), כי היכי דישראל קבלו אורייתא בטורא דסיני וכל העם רואים את הקולות מה שאין יכולים לראות ה"נ בעי הקב"ה בעבר הירדן יקבלון נמי אורייתא כהאי גוונא גופא, ע"ש עוד בענין קבלת התורה על הר עיבל והר גריזים עיי' בשפת אמת פ' כי תבא (שנת תרמא). ועיי' עוד בבאר יצחק על מים אדירים עמ' רכה.

ויש להוסיף דברי ספר תפארת ירושלים (דף יז.), מסורת ביד יושבי אה"ק שעל הר גריזים הכין אאע"ה להקרבת יצחק בנו. ע"כ. וגם זה מעין מסורה מדור לדור שאחריו.

ועיי' עוד בדברינו בעדרי צאן, פ' ראה.

SHILOH: CITY OF AWE

Shiloh is synonymous with the Mishkan. After Yehoshua conquered and apportioned the land among the tribes, this city housed the Mishkan for most of the period before the Shechinah's permanent home — the Beis HaMikdash — was built in Yerushalayim. There are two striking aspects of Shiloh: one quality it possessed and one it lacked. The relationship between them illuminates the essence of this town.

The Mishnah states that Shiloh and its Mishkan had one advantage over Yerushalayim and its Beis HaMikdash. The meat of various low-level offerings could be eaten anywhere in Yerushalayim. In Shiloh, however, they could be consumed even outside the city, as long as it could be seen from there (see *Megillah* 9b and *Zevachim* 112b). This ruling seems strange, for surely Yerushalayim should surpass Shiloh. Yerushalayim was Hashem's permanent home, while Shiloh featured only a temporary dwelling place for the Shechinah. Yet Shiloh sanctified

its environs, whereas Yerushalayim did not.

Now we come to Shiloh's "shortcoming." The Mishnah in *Zevachim* (ibid.) adds that tall planks of acacia wood overlaid with gold enclosed the Mishkan in the wilderness. In Shiloh, stone walls replaced these planks. Only the roof retained its original constitution of woven curtains. Was Shiloh's Mishkan to be permanent, as its stone walls suggest? If so, why was it roofed with curtains? And if it was to replicate the initial Mishkan, why not use acacia planks?

Fortunately, the Gemara gives us a clue by explaining that sacrifices could be eaten outside Shiloh because its territory belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Yosef. In Egypt, Yosef persistently rebuffed the advances of his master Potifar's wife. The Gemara states that, by denying himself the pleasure of even looking upon something (or someone) not his, Yosef gained the right for sacrifices offered in the Mishkan of Shiloh to be eaten anywhere the city could be seen, even in areas ruled by his enemies (see *ibid.* 118b).

The Sochatchover Rebbe, the Avnei Neizer, delves into this reward. Normally, a holy item is restricted to clear boundaries, lest it become debased by the mundane. (For example, no one would consider taking a Torah scroll into a bathroom.) Sacrificial meat therefore belongs within the city where it is offered. Yosef, however, defied this "law of nature." He was one of Yaakov's twelve holy sons but was taken from Eretz Yisrael to the most promiscuous country of the time, Egypt. The constant threat of seduction should have diminished Yosef's stature. But he transcended his surroundings. So, too, sacrifices taken from Shiloh transcended theirs, as long as the city remained visible.

This special characteristic of Yosef, the Avnei Neizer relates,

aided the Jews at Yam Suf (the Red Sea). The Gemara relates that, upon seeing Yosef's casket, Yam Suf split, allowing the Jews to complete their escape from Egypt. His merit neutralized the forces of nature (in this case, the waters of Yam Suf), which inhibit spirituality. Similarly, nothing near Yosef's Shiloh could desecrate a sacrifice. No wonder, the Sochatchover Rebbe concludes, Shiloh was destroyed prematurely when the sons of Eli the Kohen treated the sacrifices disrespectfully (see *Yoma* 9a). Since this misconduct undermined the essence of the city, the sacrificial service had to be moved elsewhere until the Beis HaMikdash was built in Yerushalayim.

The Sochatchover Rebbe's son and successor, the Shem MiShmuel, expresses this concept succinctly. Shiloh inspired awe of Hashem. Anyone who even glimpsed the town from afar was moved. Therefore, no harm could befall sacrificial meat taken from there.

We can now understand why the Mishkan in Shiloh lacked acacia walls. According to R. Tzadok HaKohen, the planks of the Mishkan sweetened the bitter — not by removing the source of the bitterness but by transforming it into a source of sweetness. For example, after Yam Suf split, the Jews came to a place called Marah (Hebrew for “bitter”), where they found the water too bitter to drink. Moshe then cast wood into the water, and it became sweet. He did not remove the water's bitter elements, nor did he overpower them with desalinizing agents. He turned the bitter water into sweet water. R. Tzadok finds an allusion to this power of the acacia planks in the word קרש (plank), for its letters also spell שקר (lie). The wood turned the bitterness of “lies” into planks for the Mishkan.

Although this idea may seem abstract, we find a similar

thought in the classical Mussar works. Based on *Mesillas Yesharim*, R. Eliyahu Dessler (in his *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*) explains that there are two ways to combat an evil urge. The first is simply to kill it. For example, someone with an unhealthy desire to eat can concentrate on how it drags him down and makes him sick. Eventually, no longer relishing food, he'll eat only to survive. A righteous person, though, can make the pleasure of eating into something positive. He can think how Hashem gave him food and the ability to enjoy it. This awareness leads him to recognize other unsolicited benefits Hashem grants him. The pleasure of food is thus transformed from a harmful influence into a source of appreciation for Hashem and His creation. Such a person does not say a *brachah* in order to eat; he eats in order to say a *brachah*. R. Dessler finds this concept in the word רע (evil). Reversed, its letters spell ער (awakening). So, too, negative stimuli can be “reversed” and made positive. R. Dessler concludes that, although this approach is only for people of extremely high caliber, everyone should know the levels a human can reach.

The acacia planks represented this notion in the Mishkan. Usually, logs are stacked horizontally to build walls. Here, the planks were placed vertically; the Torah calls them “standing” (Shemos 26:15, 36:20). They reached Heavenward, illustrating the ability to transform even a base desire into an instrument of serving Hashem.

Returning to Shiloh, we now realize why acacia planks were superfluous there. The city inspired an awe of Hashem that subdued any opposing force. That is why sacrificial meat could be eaten even outside its confines, as long as Shiloh was still seen. If harmful desires and influences could not survive in this

town, there was no need to use them in serving Hashem. The absence of acacia planks, then, indicates no lack of holiness in Shiloh. Rather, it underscores the city's unique strength: the ability to render evil impotent.

The perceptive reader may have one last question. Shiloh sanctified its surroundings by virtue of its owner, Yosef. This edge over Yerushalayim also expressed itself in Shiloh's ability to forgo the acacia planks of the Mishkan. Why, then, did the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim lack these planks? Though it outshone Shiloh in all other ways, there is no indication that Yerushalayim can neutralize evil. The Beis HaMikdash should therefore have featured acacia planks, symbolizing the sweetening of the bitter.

The Midrash links *shittim* (acacia) to Shittim, a place in the wilderness where Jews committed adultery. The Midrash states that the Jews sinned in Shittim and were punished with death, but the *shittim* wood of the Mishkan purified the nation. The Midrash concludes that Hashem will eventually provide a permanent antidote: A river originating from a spring in the Beis HaMikdash will water the valley of Shittim (see Yoel 4:18). Thus, though the Beis HaMikdash has no acacia planks, it will attend to evil its own way, cleansing Shittim with life-giving waters.

NOTES:

בענין מדרגות של משכן המדבר, משכן שילה, ובית המקדש ע"י בטעמי המצות בלקוטי תורה פ' תרומה.

לדברי האבני נזר ע"י בנאות דשא (ח"א פ' ראה).

כותב השם משמואל (פ' ראה עמ' צא), כל הרואה את שילה היה נופל פחד ואימה עליו וע"כ אין צריכין לחומה לשמירה מהחיצונים. ויש להוסיף בזה

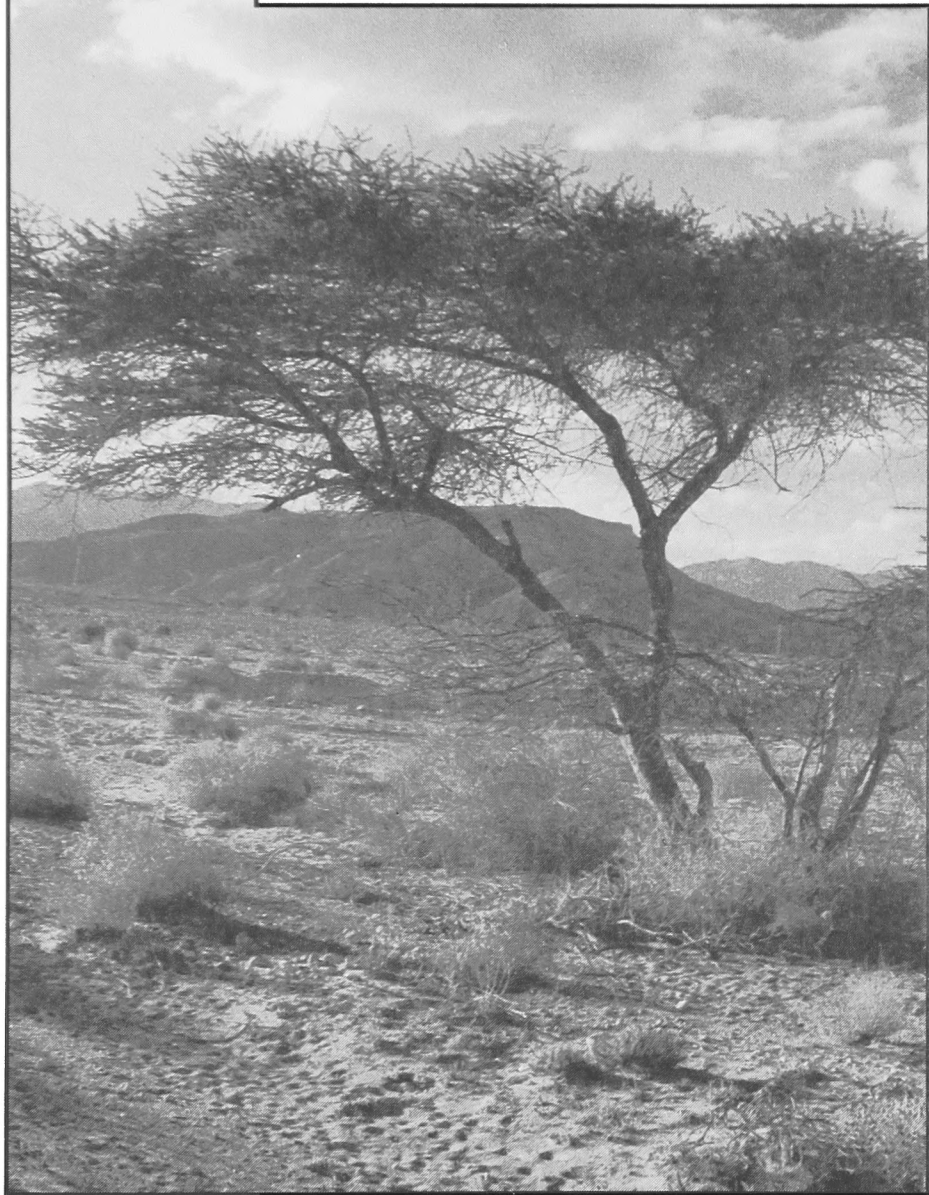
דברים כי כמו שהיה פחד אלקים לנגד עיניו של יוסף כן נמי היה שכרו שנפל פחדו על כל כחות החיצונים.

בענין ממתיק המר של הקרשים עיי' דברי ר' צדוק בספר לקוטי מאמרים (קי). ועיי' גם בדברי הבעל התניא בלקוטי תורה (פי' במדבר א: ופי' נשא כ:): שמבאר שנושאי הקרשים ממשפחת מררי היו גם כן במדרגת מרירות, ואיתא במדרש (במד"ר יב, יט), אבל לבני מררי שהיתה עבודתם קשה וכבידה קרשים ובריחים ועמודים ואדנים ויתידות ומיתרים לכל כליהם ולכל עבודתם נתן להם ארבע עגלות הה"ד ואת ארבע.

עיי' מכתב מאליהו ח"ג עמ' 148 בענין כבישת היצר.

איתא במדרש תנחומא (תרומה ט), חטאו בשטים ולקו בשטים ולקו בשטים ומתרפאין בשטים...אמר הקב"ה לעולם הבא אני מרפא את השטים שנאמר (יואל ד, יח) והיה ביום ההוא יטפו ההרים עסיס והגבעות תלכנה חלב וכל אפיקי יהודה ילכו מים ומעין מבית ה' יצא והשקה את נחל השטים. ועי' עוד דברינו בספר עדרי צאן על פי' תרומה.

FROM DAN TO BE'ER SHEVA



DAN: A TOUCH OF FOOLISHNESS

Nevi'im is replete with references to Be'er Sheva as the southern border of the Jewish presence in Eretz Yisrael. For example, after the tragic episode of the concubine in Givah, all the Jews "from Dan until Be'er Sheva" gathered in Mitzpah (Shofetim 20:1); all the Jews "from Dan to Be'er Sheva" knew Shmuel was a prophet (Shmuel I 3:20); David's monarchy was established "from Dan to Be'er Sheva" (Shmuel II 3:10); and, during the reign of Shlomo, all the Jews lived in peace "from Dan to Be'er Sheva" (Melachim I 5:5). Because they constitute the borders of the Holy Land, these cities must be holy enough to secure it. Yet Dan exemplifies Eretz Yisrael's unfulfilled potential, especially when compared to Be'er Sheva.

Dan housed one of two golden calves that Yaravam ben Nevat, leader of the northern kingdom of Israel, erected to replace the Beis HaMikdash. As the more popular of the two

centers of calf service, Dan was a greater source of punishment to the Jews, leading to the exile of the ten tribes from their northern kingdom.

To grasp the essence of this town, it is important to review its founding (see Shofetim 18). The tribe of Dan deemed its allotted area — in western Eretz Yisrael — too small, so five spies sought additional land. They traveled through the territory of Efraim, where they lodged with Michah, who was notorious for his idol. The spies asked the idol's Levite priest to inquire of Hashem if their mission would succeed. (Though such augury is not idolatry — for they worshipped Hashem, not the idol — it is prohibited.) Assured of success, they headed north to a town then known as Layish. There they discovered a nation living as securely as the residents of Tzidon, an important Phoenician city on the Mediterranean. Quiet and self-sufficient, the people of Layish had no treaties with other nations. The spies returned home, reporting that this territory would meet their need for expansion. Dan sent 600 soldiers (and the five spies) to take Layish. On the way, they appropriated Michah's idol and its priest. After easily destroying the city, the people of Dan rebuilt it and renamed it Dan. They installed Michah's idol in this new town, and there it remained as long as the Mishkan stood in Shiloh.

Dan was founded on idolatry. That's why Yarovam ben Nevat established a golden calf there, prompting the eventual destruction of the kingdom. But why was the land of Dan intrinsically conducive to idol worship?

Surprisingly, in this attraction to idolatry, R. Tzadok HaKohen discerns Dan's greatness. The Land of Israel was created for service to Hashem. Two opposing traits threaten this service:

cynicism and foolishness. A cynic belittles anything of value, including service. A fool, on the other hand, imbues each nonsensical rite with utmost importance; he will eventually bow to an idol he carved himself. True service eschews these extremes, dismissing nonsense for what it is but pursuing genuine communion with Hashem. Since Eretz Yisrael is the land of Divine service, its extremities comprise the most extreme distortions of this worship. The southern border, Be'er Sheva, was the land of the Pelishtim, who cynically claimed that Yitzchak was the son of their own king, Avimelech, not Avraham. The northern border, Dan, was the home of idolatry.

It would seem that these borders should be avoided. After all, why live amid cynicism or foolishness? Yet R. Tzadok explains that these locales can improve one's service to Hashem:

A cynic minimizes his efforts to support himself. Realizing that more hours at the office do not necessarily translate into more money in the bank, he finds it easy to rest on Shabbos. Be'er Sheva reinforces this attitude, for "*sheva*" (seven) alludes to the seventh day of the week (see the following essay).

Similarly, a touch of foolishness is necessary to transcend our limited intellect. The Midrash relates that, when Moshe was told to build the Mishkan, he could not fathom how Hashem, Who fills the entire creation, could dwell in a small structure; when Shlomo built the Beis HaMikdash, he wondered the same thing. But somehow, though we may not understand it, Hashem "inhabits" these structures, enabling us to "visit" and serve Him. We must be "gullible" enough to trust that our Mishkan or Beis HaMikdash accomplishes something.

The benefit of subordinating one's intellect is evident in prayer, today's replacement of service in the Beis HaMikdash.

Logically, Hashem does not need us to ask that He provide for us or end our long exile, thereby increasing His honor in the world. He knows what is good for Him and for us, what we do and don't deserve. Since He desires our prayers, however, we must abandon "reason" and speak to Him daily, seeking what we need and suggesting how He should run His world.

This anti-intellectualism, allowing for the construction of a house where Hashem can be served, is strengthened in Dan. The people of Dan ignored all rational difficulties and committed to any project that would enhance their service to Hashem. Hence their prominence in building the Mishkan (in the person of Aholiav ben Achisamach [see Shemos 31:6]). They therefore deserved the territory of Dan, which nurtured their inborn naivete and motivated them towards a major role in erecting the Beis HaMikdash (in the person of Churam [see Melachim I 7:13 and Divrei HaYamim II 2:13]). Unfortunately, Dan perverted its capacity and descended into utter foolishness: service to idols.

R. Tzadok's explanation clarifies another detail of Dan's foundation. As noted, the region's original pagan inhabitants resembled the people of Tzidon, artisans who carved the wood for the Beis HaMikdash (see Melachim I 5:20). In other words, the people of Layish, too, had some connection to constructing a house of service to Hashem. They did not enter into treaties, for they served their idol so ardently that they acquired a false sense of security. Layish means "lion," because that's how strong they felt. This overconfidence led to their downfall when Dan captured the city. Had the people of Dan used this area properly, they themselves would have been privileged to supply the wood for the Beis HaMikdash. But by embracing the idol of Michah, they forfeited this opportunity to the residents of Tzi-

don, and Dan became the site of Yarovam's calf, the antithesis of the Beis HaMikdash.

Dan's debut in the Torah hints at this catastrophe. When four powerful kings captured Avraham's nephew Lot and took him north, the Patriarch chased them until what later became the city of Dan. There, as the Gemara tells us, he weakened because he foresaw his descendants serving Yarovam's golden calf at this spot (see *Sanhedrin* 96a). Although Avraham persevered, miraculously defeated the enemy, and rescued Lot, the victory was incomplete. The Torah reports that Avraham tracked the kings "...until the city of Chovah, which is to the left of Damesek" (Bereishis 14:15). Why this detail? Rashi equates Chovah with Dan, mentioned in the previous verse, and we already know where that is. And even if these two are not synonymous, why must we know where Chovah is? It never appears elsewhere in the Tanach, Gemara, or Midrash. The commentators therefore explain that, if not for Avraham's despair in Dan, he would have pursued the kings all the way to Damesek, consummating his victory. The *chovah* (culpability) of Dan's idolatry denied him this triumph.

The premature end to the war was costly. Since the actions of our forefathers shaped the future of their descendants, had Avraham subdued the kings in Damesek, the Jewish nation would later have dominated it. Instead, Damesek remained beyond Jewish reach, excepting a relatively brief period during the reign of King David. Due to the paganism in Dan, Damesek became a bastion of idolatry and eventually corrupted Israel. The Midrash relates that Damesek boasted 365 houses of idol worship, one for each day of the solar year. On a certain day (according to Rashash, it was the day added to make a leap year

every four years), the residents of the city worshipped in them all. The Midrash then states that Jews also served those deities in Israel.

Like Dan, Damesek dramatizes how an area intended to be used to serve Hashem in the Beis HaMikdash can squander its potential on idolatry. Hashem says of the Jewish nation, "...your nose is like the tower of Levanon, which looks towards Damesek" (Shir HaShirim 7:5). The Midrash explains that the tower symbolizes the Beis HaMikdash. It faces Damesek, to which the sanctity of Yerushalayim will someday extend; the exiles will return and rest there. Even Dan cannot become as sacred. But when Damesek's spirituality is distorted, this site becomes a hive of idol worship.

Presumably, rather than remain the northernmost border of Eretz Yisrael, Dan was to be the gateway to Damesek. Had the Jews successfully exploited Dan, they would have gained control of Damesek, the ultimate place to subordinate one's intellect. Had they used Dan to help build the Beis HaMikdash, the sanctity of Yerushalayim would have stretched to the gates of Damesek. However, by devoting Dan's resources to the strange service of idols, the Jews allowed Damesek to become a stronghold of the utter foolishness of idolatry, thwarting the spread of Yerushalayim's holiness and even weakening Israel's hold on the Beis HaMikdash.

Dan's role as the stunted northern border can help us understand why the city contains the major source of the Yarden River. In fact, as explained by the Gemara, "Yarden" is a contraction of "*yarad Dan*" (descended [from] Dan) (see *Bechoros* 55a). What does Dan supply the Yarden besides water?

The Yarden divides between the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael and

the lands to the east. Though the tribes of Gad, Reuven, and half of Menashe populated this east bank, it lacked some of the holiness of the west. As the Midrash observes, Eretz Yisrael proper can house the Shechinah, while the territory to the east cannot.

Thus, Dan demarcated the Land of Israel not just to the north but to the east, by means of the Yarden. Had Dan used its potential properly, Eretz Yisrael's sanctity could have extended beyond any river. This expansion must now wait.

NOTES:

בעוולה היותרת של דן על בית אל עיי' זוה"ק (ח"ב קצג:).

עיי' רב צדוק הכהן בקומץ המנחה (כג.), פתי מאמין לכ"ד ומלא עבודות לכ"ד (ויתרו לא הניח ע"ז כו' עיי' שמו"ר כז, ו)...ודן הוא לי ע"ז וכן הם הראשונים לע"ז בפסל מיכה ומלאים עבודות.

ועיי' גם בבית הלוי פי' בא (יג.).

איתא במדרש (שמו"ר לד, א) בשעה שאמר הקב"ה למשה עשה לי משכן התחיל מתמיה ואומר כבודו של הקב"ה מלא עליונים ותחתונים והוא אומר עשה לי משכן, ועוד היה מסתכל וראה ששלמה עומד ובונה בית המקדש...

וההשקט ובטח של הצידונים מוצאים גם כן ביתרו שנקרא גם הוא פתי כנ"ל. ועיי' פסיקתא דר"כ (פי"ב, קו.) אמר שלמה (משלי יד, י) לב יודע מרת נפשו, לפיכך ובשמחתו לא יתערב זר, אמר הקב"ה ישראל היו משועבדים בטיט ולבנים במצרים. ויתרו ישב בתוך ביתו השקט ובטח ובא לראות בשמחת תורה עם בני לפיכך וישלח משה את חותנו ואחר כך בחדש השלישי

במדרש תנחומא (כי תשא יג) איתא, אין לך גדול מכל השבטים משבט יהודה ואין לך ירוד מן שבט דן...המשכן נעשה בשני שבטים אלו ואף בית המקדש כן עשוהו.

עיי' בפ"ז של ספר נפלאות מתורת ה' יתברך בענין הצורך לכתוב שחובה (דהיא דן לפי רש"י) היא משמאל של דמשק. ויש להוסיף על דבריו שמיד אחר

זה אברהם התפלל לה' שדמשק אליעזר לא יירש אותו, שהכיר שלא הכניע את טומאת דמשק.

עיי איכ"ר וז"ל (פתיחתא י), שלש מאות וששים וחמשה בתי עבודת כוכבים היו בדמשק וכל אחת ואחת היו עובדין אותה יום אחד והיה להם יום אחד והיו כולן עובדין באותו היום. ועיי דברי הרש"ש שם.

עיי שיהש"ר וז"ל (ז ד"ה צוארד), אפך כמגדל הלבנון זה בית המקדש, מה האף הזה נתון בגבהו של אדם כך בית המקדש נתון בגבהו של עולם... צופה פני דמשק, א"ר יוחנן עתידה ירושלים שתהא מגעת עד שערי דמשק.

איתא בגמ' (בכורות נה.), א"ר חייא בר אבא א"ר יוחנן למה נקרא שמו ירדן שיורד מדרן, א"ל ר' אבא לרב אשי אתון מהתם מתניתו לה אנן מהכא מתנינן לה (יהושע יט, מז) ויקראו לו ללשם דן בשם דן אביהם וא"ר יצחק לשם זו פמייס, ותניא יוצא ירדן ממערת פמייס. אמר רב כהנא זכרותיה דירדנא (רש"י: עיקרו של ירדן) ממערת פמייס היכא דאמר לא שתינא מים ממערת פמייס איתסר ליה בכוליה ירדנא.

הגר"א על הגדה של פסח כותב על מ"ש בעבר הנהר ישבו אבותיכם מעולם שכמו שבארץ למטה הירדן מפסיק בין חו"ל לארץ כמו כן למעלה... ועיי ביאור לדבריו בבאר יצחק על ליקוטי הגר"א (דף מג:).

איתא במדרש (בדמ"ר ז, ח) ארץ כנען מקודשת מעבר הירדן ארץ כנען כשרה לבית שכינה ואין עבר הירדן כשר לבית שכינה.

BE'ER SHEVA: THE WELLSPRINGS OF LIFE

From Dan to Be'er Sheva." As we saw in the previous essay, these words signify the entire Land of Israel. Although the Biblical border of Eretz Yisrael extends well beyond Be'er Sheva, the Jews settled farther south. We should therefore treat Be'er Sheva as the border and explore its qualifications for this role.

Let us begin with a brief history of Be'er Sheva and its naming. During Avraham's stay in the area, Avimelech, king of the Pelishtim, asked to establish a treaty with him in the form of an oath. Avraham first protested that Avimelech's servants had seized a well of water he himself had dug. Only after authenticating his claim to the well did he make peace with the king. Avraham called the town Be'er Sheva (well of an oath).

This incident concludes with his planting an *eshel* in Be'er Sheva (see Bereishis 21:22-34). According to the Gemara, this *eshel* was either an orchard, whose fruits Avraham served his

guests, or an inn (see *Sotah* 10a). The Midrash cites a third opinion: The *eshel* was an orchard of acacia trees, which Yaakov uprooted and took to Egypt for future use in constructing the Mishkan.

Avraham's son Yitzchak also called the area Be'er Sheva. He, too, dug wells. He first excavated those dug by Avraham, which the Pelishtim had filled with dirt after his death. After digging three wells, the first two disputed by the Pelishtim, Yitzchak settled in Be'er Sheva. His servants dug a well there. Lest his behavior towards Yitzchak abrogate his treaty with Avraham, Avimelech came to Be'er Sheva and renewed the pact. That day Yitzchak learned that the new well contained water. He called the well Shivah in honor of the oath, whereupon the city became known as Be'er Sheva (see Bereishis 26:15-33).

Yaakov did no digging in Be'er Sheva, but this town — and wells — played an important role in his life. From Be'er Sheva, he escaped his brother, Esav. The Midrash relates that the well of Be'er Sheva followed Yaakov for the first two days of his journey. When he arrived in Charan, he met his future wife Rachel at a well and rolled away a stone covering it. Later, he again left Eretz Yisrael via Be'er Sheva, this time to live with his son Yosef in Egypt because of the famine in the Holy Land.

Before understanding the essence of this town, we must examine the importance of wells. Yitzchak's wells contained "living waters" (ibid. 26:19) — a constant source of fresh water — and the Navi calls Hashem "the source of living waters" (Yirmeyahu 17:13). As such, Ramban writes, these wells foreshadowed the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash.

Additionally, the Midrash likens Yitzchak's wells to the five books of the Torah. Torah is elsewhere compared to water, the

source of all life. The Midrash also points out that the Torah mentions wells forty-eight times, corresponding to the forty-eight methods of acquiring Torah, which appear in the sixth chapter of *Pirkei Avos*.

How does digging a well simulate the heights of spirituality? The Baal Shem Tov notes that digging turns earth into water. The digger keeps displacing dirt until he reaches the subterranean water level. That point of discovery, until now only a clod of earth, is transformed into a source of life-giving water.

The Chassidic masters build on this explanation:

The Sefas Emes notes that Hashem took earth and formed Adam's body. He then blew life into it in the form of the *neshamah*. By digging wells, Avraham and Yitzchak replicated the creation of man's spirituality for the benefit of their descendants. These Patriarchs created living waters in what was previously only earth.

The Pelishtim wished to reverse this process by refilling Avraham's wells with dead earth. Yet Yitzchak restored them and dug his own. He was so successful in bringing life into the world that Yaakov had no need to dig wells. He had only to remove an obstacle blocking the well in Charan.

Besides "recreating" mankind via wells, Avraham and Yitzchak used them to keep man alive. As the Shem MiShmuel explains, one unfortunate aspect of our physical world is that even the most exciting products eventually grow stale. People influenced by secular society become convinced that their clothes, cars, and favorite potato chips are out of style. Even their spouses need replacing. This malaise curbs spiritual growth. Someone once captivated by a dynamic rabbi can grow bored by him; a study session begun with much enthusiasm can

become burdensome; the excitement of a first prayer experience can turn into misery. That's because we are physical beings. The only antidote is fresh spirituality, which enlivens our moribund existence. A well symbolizes that constantly renewable source of growth. Living waters replenish themselves even in dirt.

So, too, the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash were places of vitality, where spiritual batteries could always be recharged. Someone who experienced the Beis HaMikdash was almost recreated. Seeing each day as an opportunity to achieve closeness with Hashem, a person never became jaded.

Even today, when we lack the wellsprings of the Beis HaMikdash, one "well" simulates the exhilaration felt there. When we learn Torah with an awareness that the flow of Hashem's "thoughts" is constantly available to us, we revitalize ourselves. The Shem MiShmuel quotes his father, the Avnei Nezer, who finds a hint of this power of Torah in the *berachah* preceding its study. We bless Hashem, "Who *gives* the Torah." We don't say Hashem *gave* us the Torah some 3,300 years ago. He is still giving it today! Even our speech reflects this ongoing revelation of the Torah. We state, "the Gemara *says*," "Rashi *says*," "the Gaon *says*." We do not quote statements made centuries ago; we tune in to the Torah being transmitted now.

With these ideas in mind, we can return to Be'er Sheva. If Avraham and Yitzchak dug wells there, Be'er Sheva must be where a person can rise above his earthly existence and renew his soul. This concept may remind us of Shabbos. During the first six days of the week, we are occupied with physical acts of creativity, the thirty-nine *melachos*. On Shabbos, we refrain from these activities in order to contact a more spiritual part of our essence, the additional soul received on Shabbos. We pray more;

we read from the Torah; we learn more deeply than during the work week. Shabbos is the seventh day of the week, and the “Sheva” in Be’er Sheva can also mean “seven.” Thus, Be’er Sheva is to space what Shabbos is to time.

Be’er Sheva was the ideal place for Avraham to establish his *eshel*, entertaining wayfarers and showing them how to thank Hashem. Avraham revitalized these spiritually dead people precisely where he had dug his life-giving well. Here, the king of the Pelishtim sought eternal meaning by making a treaty with Avraham and then Yitzchak. These two therefore called it Be’er Sheva, “well of an oath.” It gave life, motivating people to connect with spirituality.

As noted, Yaakov embarked upon his excursion to Egypt from Be’er Sheva. We now understand why. Be’er Sheva teaches us how to turn dead earth into living waters. Likewise, Yaakov was to turn the spiritual wasteland of Egypt into a place where his descendants could maintain their vitality and even coalesce into the nation of Israel. His trip parallels our long exile. We, too, must preserve our Torah life in the most hostile places, where natives block every attempt at spirituality. With Yaakov as our model, we can remove all obstacles to our essential growth.

But Yaakov went even further; he brought to Egypt the acacia trees Avraham had planted in Be’er Sheva. Their wood would be used in constructing the Mishkan in the wilderness. Despite the most adverse conditions, his descendants would build a place from which the Source of All Life would teach them how to live and come closer to Him.

It is now clear why Be’er Sheva is the effective border of Eretz Yisrael. This city trained its inhabitants to cope with the deathly

horrors outside it. Perhaps, had we not been exiled, Be'er Sheva would have been our beacon, rousing the entire world from its moral decay and infusing its deadening materialism with life.

NOTES:

איתא בב"ר (צד, ד), ויסע ישראל וכל אשר לו ויבא בארה שבע, להיכן הלך אמר רב נחמן שהלך לקוץ ארזים שנטע אברהם זקינו בבאר שבע, היך מד"א (בראשית כא) ויטע וגוי.

עי' פדר"א (פל"ה), בן שבעים ושבע שנה היה יעקב בצאתו מבית אביו והיתה הבאר מהלכת לפניו מבאר שבע עד הר המוריה מהלך שני ימים והגיע לחצי היום ופגע הקב"ה בו.

בב"ר (סת, ה) איתא, א"ר הושעיא כבר כתיב וישמע אל אביו ואל אמו ומה תי"ל ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע, אלא אמר אבא בשעה שבקש לצאת לחוץ לארץ מהיכן הורשה לא מבאר שבע, אף אני הריני הולך לבאר שבע.

איתא בב"ר (סד, ח), וישב יצחק ויחפור וגוי, כמה בארות חפר אבינו יצחק בבאר שבע...רבנן אמרי חמש כנגד חמשה ספרי תורה, ויקרא שם הבאר עשק כנגד ספר בראשית שבו נתעסק הקב"ה וברא את העולם.

איתא בשיהש"ר (פ"ד), מעין גנים באר מים חיים א"ר יוחנן ארבעים ושמונה פעמים כתיב בתורה באר כנגד ארבעים ושמונה דברים שנקנה בס התורה, הה"ד מעין גנים באר מים חיים. (ועי' רד"ל שם ושפ"א על פי תולדות שנת תרמ"ח).

כתב השפת אמת (תולדות תרנ"ג) כתיב ויברא את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים...וצריך האדם להוציא הארת הנר"נ מתוך הגוף שהוא מעפר...וזהו רמז באלה הבארות שסתמו פלשתים וגברה ידו של יצחק אח"כ וחזר והוציאם אל הפועל.

עי' זוה"ק (ח"א קמא). יאות עבד יצחק דהא בגין דידע רזא דחכמתא אשתדל וחפר בירא דמיין בגין לאתתקפא במהימנותא כדקא יאות וכן אברהם אשתדל וחפר בירא דמיא, יעקב אשכח ליה מתתקן ויתיב עליה וכלהו

אזלו בתריה, ועיי גם בדברי הרב צדוק הכהן ברסיסי לילה (דף מ.).

השם משמואל כותב (פי תולדות רפג) הנה דבר חידוש הגורם התפעלות ורגש הנפש אם האדם יתמיד ויהיה רגיל בזה לא יתפעל ולא יתרגש כ"כ...וע"כ חששו האבות אברהם ויצחק לזרעם אחריהם פן כשיתגדלו ויתחנכו על ברכי הענין האלקי ויהיו מורגלים בו שוב לא יהיה הדבר גורם להם התפעלות ורגש הנפש כ"כ. לזה עשו פועל דמיוני בבארות מים חיים הנובעים תמיד מחדש וכך יהיה בית האלקים...ורבנן סברי שענין הבארות הוא שתהיה העבודה תמיד בהתחדשות ובחיות וחביבה כל שעה ושעה כשעה ראשונה וזהו ע"י התורה שאנו מברכין נותן התורה שהוא לשון הוה והגיד כ"ק אבי אדומו"ר הטעם מפני שבכל עת יש בה חיות חדשה ונתינה חדשה.

בענין קשר באר שבע לשבת עיי שפת אמת (פי ויצא תרל"ב), שם משמואל (פי תולדות עמי רצה), והרב צדוק בספר קומץ המנחה (כג.).

עיי בשער הליקוטים (יד.) איך אברהם ויצחק עשו גרים ע"י הבארות בבאר שבע. וע"ע בדברי הרי"א חבר בבאר יצחק על ספר מים אדירים (עמי סד-ה) בענין חפירת בארות על יד האבות.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS

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CHEVRON: TRANSCENDING THE PHYSICAL

Chevron evokes images of the burial grounds of our ancestors. The Gemara calls this area the most barren in Eretz Yisrael, eminently suitable for graves (see *Kesubos* 112a). Laid to rest in Me'aras HaMachpelah are our Patriarchs (Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov), three of our Matriarchs (Sarah, Rivkah, and Leah) (Rachel's absence is discussed in the essay on Beis Lechem), and Adam and Chavah, the progenitors of mankind. Let us examine the purchase of this holy site.

The Torah recounts how, after Sarah's death, Avraham beseeched the people of Cheis to give him this burial ground for his wife. After much effort, he finally procured the cave from Efron the Chiti.

Why did Avraham want Me'aras HaMachpelah? True, sterile Chevron is fit only for a cemetery, and Sarah died there. But why was the place to inter her and our other forebears?

A related mystery involves the hermeneutic principle of *gezerah shavah*: “Taking” (*kichah*), used in Avraham’s acquisition of this land, also appears in reference to a man “taking” a wife. Therefore, the Gemara says, just as Avraham purchased Chevron with money, one may acquire a wife by giving her money or anything of monetary value, such as a ring (see *Kiddushin* 2a). Why should one of the most auspicious occasions in life, marriage, be linked with death? Furthermore, is betrothal comparable to acquiring property? Does a man *purchase* a woman?

Let us recall Avraham’s first encounter with this hallowed site, after circumcising himself at age ninety-nine. The Torah relates that he was recuperating outside his tent in Chevron when he extended his famous hospitality to three passersby (see Bereishis 18). The Midrash reports that, while chasing a calf he hoped to serve them, he stumbled onto the graves of Adam and Chavah. Candles were lit around them, and Avraham detected a special fragrance. That’s when he resolved to bury his family there.

Our Patriarch desired this place because it encapsulated his life’s work:

Avraham had always looked beyond the physical, recognizing that Hashem had created the world and continued to run it. Furthermore, he knew there was a spiritual world to come, which he could reach only after serving the Creator in this world. With this knowledge in mind, he set out to spiritualize the physical.

Me’aras HaMachpelah had preserved Adam and Chavah so well that they appeared to be merely asleep. As Ramchal explains, when a person sleeps, part of his *neshamah* leaves his body and rises to a more spiritual realm. (In this state, a great

tzaddik can understand esoteric concepts that elude him while awake, when his soul is more bound to his body.) But he retains a life-support system, for part of his spirit remains within him. Only upon death does the body lose this component as well. However, in Me'aras HaMachpelah, part of the *neshamah* stays with the deceased. Hence the lit candles, which often represent the soul.

Thus, Me'aras HaMachpelah is where life does not end. This is the site Avraham desired for his family.

That's why our Patriarch discovered Me'aras HaMachpelah when he did. His three angelic visitors had come to inform him and Sarah of the birth of their son, Yitzchak. He was to succeed Avraham in teaching about serving Hashem. Yitzchak would immortalize his father in this world, much as Avraham was to reach that state in Me'aras HaMachpelah. Therefore, after encountering the place on earth where a person does not completely lose his soul even after death, Avraham learned that his mission would continue even while he "slept."

Let us delve more into Avraham's discovery. Since he had never met Adam and Chavah, how did he recognize the couple "sleeping" in the cave?

According to the Zohar, when Avraham entered the cave, a "doorway" of Gan Eden was revealed to him. Through this portal, he saw the likeness of Adam, the only man who ever lived in Gan Eden. That's how Avraham identified the man in the cave, his wife, and the scent of paradise. Me'aras HaMachpelah was thus a gateway to the spirituality experienced only by Adam and Chavah before their downfall.

Evidently, this cave connects the physical and spiritual worlds. Perhaps for this reason, it lies in Chevron, related to the

root “*chibbur*” (connection).

Significantly, the people of Cheis owned the area then. *Cheis* is the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Created in seven days, the physical world is built on the number seven; eight, on the other hand, transcends the physical. As Maharal writes, this is why the Chanukah miracle lasted eight days; the oil lit the menorah beyond its normal physical properties. This is also why a child is circumcised at eight days old; that is the proper time for transforming physicality into a receptacle for spirituality. Surely it's no coincidence that Chevron, linked to the purely spiritual plane of Gan Eden, belonged to people associated with “eight.”

Not only does Chevron connect the physical and spiritual, it teaches us that marriage must do the same. As implied earlier, a man does not “purchase” a woman. Rather, through his act of acquisition, they become one, united in service of Hashem. This union cannot succeed on a purely physical basis. Husband and wife must spiritualize their lives with Torah and mitzvos, which allow them to transcend the difficulties of the physical world.

Avraham and Sarah exemplified this principle. They used their possessions not for physical pleasure but to develop spirituality. They shared their tent and their food with guests, always offering a blessing to the One Who provides these resources.

For this reason, Chevron is barren. This rocky land adjoins lush Gan Eden, heightening the contrast between physical and spiritual. Chevron's unique connection to the spiritual world makes the city a fitting resting place for Avraham and Sarah.

NOTES:

איתא בפרקי דר"א (פל"ו), כאשר רץ אברהם להביא בן בקר להאורחים ברח לפניו ונכנס למערת המכפלה ונכנס אחריו שם ומצא שם אדם וחוה שוכבים על המטות וישנים ונרות דולקים עליהם וריח טוב עליהם כריח ניחוח.

בענין ההשגות של שינה עיי' דברי הרמח"ל בדרך ה' (ח"ג פ"א).

בענין הפתח לגן עדן עיי' זוה"ק (ח"א קכז.; ועיי' זו"ח כא.), הפתח הראשון נכנסת הנשמה במערת המכפלה שהיא סמוכה לג"ע ואדה"ר שומר עליה.

ואיתא בספר חסד לאברהם (מעין שלישי, נהר יג), מערת המכפלה שבחברון אשר שם קבורת האבות כבר נודע אשר משם הוא מעבר אל גן עדן התחתון כי עובר לסוחר גימטריא אור"ח לגן, גם גי' חצ"ר כמו לסחר לרמוז כי המערה לגן עדן הוא כמו חצר לבית.
וע"ע בספר עדרי צאן פ' חיי שרה בענין הזה.

SHECHEM: CITY OF INDIVIDUALITY

Shechem seems an ill-fated city. There, Yaakov's daughter Dinah was violated by the town's namesake, Yosef's brothers sold him into slavery, and, centuries later, the northern kingdom of Israel broke away from the kingdom of Yehudah. The Gemara calls Shechem destined for calamity (see *Sanhedrin* 102a); murder is common there (see *Makkos* 9b).

However, Shechem was also Avraham's first stop in Eretz Yisrael (see Bereishis 12:6) and Yaakov's first home when he and his family returned from Lavan's house (see *ibid.* 33:18). Additionally, the Midrash points out that our ancestors purchased three places in the Land of Israel, hoping their ownership would never be contested: Me'aras HaMachpelah in Chevron, acquired by Avraham; Yosef's burial plot in Shechem, obtained by Yaakov; and the Temple Mount in Yerushalayim, bought by King David. Why should Shechem rank among such hallowed cities? How can Yosef's grave compare to the Beis HaMikdash

and Me'aras HaMachpelah, two locations essential to the Jewish nation? And why was Shechem Avraham and Yaakov's first destination in Eretz Yisrael?

The Gemara states that Yosef was buried in Shechem because that is where he was sold, so he had to be "redeposited" there (see *Sotah* 13b). The town suits him so well that it almost owns him, reclaiming him like lost property. The Midrash explains that, having resisted seduction by his master's wife in Egypt, Yosef belonged in Shechem to counteract Dinah's violation there. Consequently, Yaakov purchased the city as the place for Yosef's service. Let us clarify this idea.

The Shem MiShmuel notes that "*shechem*" means "portion," for Shechem is where one discovers his role in the world. Avraham and Yaakov entered Eretz Yisrael via Shechem because the beginning of any project requires enthusiasm, and a person is most enthusiastic if his purpose seems special, even unique. Unfortunately, continues the Shem MiShmuel, one can overestimate his capabilities. That was Shechem's mistake in wanting to marry Yaakov's daughter.

This concept strengthens Yosef's connection to Shechem. In Egypt, he apportioned the proper provisions to each individual. More important, in providing for his family, he assessed everyone's needs and talents. He was the person best suited to utilize Shechem, the place that reveals our abilities.

Furthermore, individuals can coalesce into a nation only when each understands his function. Yosef thus forged the sons of Yaakov into the people of Israel. The Hebrew word "*Shechem*" also means "shoulder," for in Shechem every Jew found his niche, which enabled him to "rub shoulders" — i.e., join forces — with his brethren. Similarly, Shechem borders Har Gerizim,

where the Jews accepted responsibility for each other. (See our essay on that location.)

In Shechem, Yosef's brothers realized their unique functions within the budding Jewish people. But Yosef had dreamt of their bowing to him, insinuating that he was to control the nation. Thus, they rebelled and sold him. But in Egypt, Yosef indeed saved his clan. His brothers' descendants then returned his bones to Shechem.

With Yosef buried there, Shechem could have become the place to discover one's national role. The city's ability to forge individuals into a people certainly ranks with the resources of Me'aras HaMachpelah and the Beis HaMikdash. That's why Yaakov purchased Shechem, just as his grandfather Avraham had acquired Chevron and his descendant King David would secure Yerushalayim.

Yet Yaravam, a descendant of Yosef, exploited Shechem to split the nation. The town's mission must therefore wait until the tribes of Yehudah and Yosef reunite, allowing Yosef to help each Jew fulfill his potential as part of the Jewish people.

NOTES:

בסנהדרין איתא (קב.) וילך רחבעם שכם כי שכם בא כל ישראל להמליך אותו (מלכים-א יב, א), תנא משום רבי יוסי מקום מזומן לפורענות, בשכם עינו את דינה, בשכם מכרו אחיו את יוסף, בשכם נחלקה מלכות בית דוד. ואיתא במדרש (בר"ר עט, ז), ויקן את חלקת השדה אשר נטע שם אהלו וגוי במאה קשיטה. א"ר יודן בר סימון זה אחד משלשה מקומות שאין אומות העולם יכולין להונות את ישראל לומר גזולים הן בידכם, ואלו הן מערת המכפלה ובית המקדש וקבורתו של יוסף...וקבורתו של יוסף (בראשית לג) ויקן את חלקת השדה, יעקב קנה שכם.

ואיתא עוד (בר"ר צז, ו), בין שהשכים ולא עשית כמעשיהן לפיכך תהא השכם בחלקך, א"ר פנחס בשכם נפרצה הערוה וגדרת אותה לפיכך תהא בחלקך

ע"י שם משמואל (פ' וישלח עמ' יג), המקום באשר שמו שכם נמי יש בו הטבע ההוא, היינו שטבע המקום גרם ביושביו התנשאות שיהיה כל אחד בפני עצמו חלק ולא יבטל עצמו בפני כל. ועיי"ש עוד. וכותב עוד (פ' וישב עמ' סז), גודל מעלת המקום הוא מעורר ביושביו מעלת הצורה להיות נחשב צורה שלימה בפ"ע. והוא גורם התחלקות וכמו ששכם הוא לשון חלק.

וכותב החסד לאברהם (ג, יג) כי שכם הוא סוד יוסף הרומז ליסוד, וכן ניתן שכם אל יוסף שמדתו יסוד. ע"כ. וע"י גם בכתבי הרמדי"ו (פ' לך לך עמ' קפד). וע"י בספר אמונת עתיד (פ' עקב) בענין שכם.

BEIS LECHEM: AMALGAMATION OF ROYALTY

Beis Lechem is probably best known for the fact that our Matriarch Rachel is buried nearby. Yet the story of Rus also unfolds here. Interestingly, the Tanach identifies the town as both Beis Lechem and Efras. First, the Torah states that Rachel died “...on the road to Efras, which is Beis Lechem” (Bereishis 35:19 and 48:7). Later, Megillas Rus calls Elimelech’s family “Efrasim from Beis Lechem, Yehudah” (Rus 1:2), and the locals bless Boaz, “...be prosperous in Efras, and become renowned in Beis Lechem.” Beis Lechem’s two names reflect its dual character. They can also clarify why Rachel never enters the city, even posthumously.

Ramchal writes that Efras represents Efraim, son of Yosef, son of Rachel; Beis Lechem, Yehudah, represents Yehudah, son of Leah. Although Jewish history has seen tension between Yosef and his siblings (led by Yehudah), who sold him into slavery, the two brothers will eventually unite. To symbolize this recon-

ciliation, the family of Elimelech is deemed both "Efrasim" and "from Beis Lechem, Yehudah." Taking Ramchal's explanation one step farther, if a town is called both Beis Lechem and Efras, Yehudah and Yosef must be destined to join forces there.

Let us survey the interaction between these forces throughout history. Yaakov considered Rachel his mate, but her father, Lavan, tricked him into marrying her sister Leah first. She bore Yaakov six sons, with Yehudah their leader and the progenitor of royalty. Rachel gave birth to two children, Yosef being the principal.

Yosef dreamt he was to dominate his brothers, and he told them so. They eventually sold him to Egypt. This estrangement continued until famine forced them down to that country. There, the brothers reunited, though Yosef's dream had come true: He now ruled Egypt.

History repeated itself centuries later. David became Israel's first king descended from Yehudah. David's son Shlomo built the Beis HaMikdash, inaugurating a golden age. But a descendant of Yosef, Yarovam ben Nevat, rebelled against Shlomo's son Rechavam and became king over ten of the twelve tribes. The nation was divided between the kingdom of Yehudah and the kingdom of Israel.

At first glance, Yehudah seems more virtuous than Yosef. Yehudah is royalty; Yosef's dream should not alter that. And Rechavam was the indisputable king of the Jewish nation; it was Yosef's descendant who established a rival kingdom.

Yet Yosef also deserves some kingship. Surely his dream was not meant only to predict his temporary leadership of Egypt. Rather, this vision teaches us that Yosef is to dominate the Jewish people. Yaakov himself favored him with a special cloak.

The Midrash points out that Yosef's life even paralleled his father's, suggesting a successor role. No wonder the prophet Achiyah HaShiloni sanctioned Yarovam's rebellion against the Davidic dynasty (see Melachim I 11:29).

The Chassidic masters devote much space to the roles of Yosef and Yehudah. Yosef is the sinless tzaddik; Yehudah is the *baal teshuvah*, who restores his bond with Hashem after transgression. Yosef acted righteously even in Egypt, resisting the temptations of his master's wife. Yehudah had to repent, first for selling Yosef and subsequently for apparent indiscretion with his own daughter-in-law Tamar. And Yehudah's descendant King David was the consummate *baal teshuvah*, from whom we learn much about repentance.

This dichotomy extends to the mothers of Yosef and Yehudah, the Matriarchs Rachel and Leah. According to Ramchal, these women personify our two relationships with Hashem. One is based on serving Him: When we perform mitzvos, we are rewarded; when we don't, we are punished. Just as Yaakov received Rachel only by working for her, we deserve closeness with Hashem only when we do His will. But even if a Jew abandons all observance, he remains a Jew, important to Hashem. Just as Yaakov married Leah without "earning" her, all Jews — even the irreligious — are bound to Hashem. Like Yaakov and Rachel, however, Hashem's "Rachel" relationship to us is primary; He generally reacts to our service. Through the "Leah" relationship, He gives everyone a chance to return to Him.

We now understand the roles of Yehudah and Yosef. Yehudah must be king, because his *teshuvah* can lead the nation to Hashem. Yet Yosef is even more relevant today, for he teaches

us how Hashem responds to our every decision: When we perform mitzvos properly, Hashem brings rain on time; when we err, we forfeit that blessing.

These differing roles can lead to friction, beginning with Yosef's complaints to Yaakov that his brothers were remiss. Ideally, though, both forces should coalesce into a single governing power. This fusion will occur with Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef. As prophesied, "...I will take the stick of Yosef, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions, and I will place them and it together with the stick of Yehudah to form one stick; they will be one in My hand" (Yechezkel 37:19).

The place for this amalgamation is Beis Lechem/Efrat. There, David's royal line began with the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. Had Leah and Rachel entered this town together, perhaps this fusion could have taken place at the Jewish people's inception. But Rachel never reached Beis Lechem. She is buried just outside, waiting for her children — the nation of Israel — to return to their land under the unified leadership of Yehudah and Yosef.

NOTES:

לדברי הרמח"ל ע"י בפירושו על רות, נדפס בספר אוצרות רמח"ל. ועיי גם בדברי הגה"ר ר משה וואלפסאן שליט"א בספרו אמונת עתיד (ח"א עמ' קעח-ט).

עיי ב"ר (פד, ו) בדמיון חיי יוסף לחיי יעקב.

בענין הנהגות הקב"ה אלינו בבחינת רחל ולאה עיי דברי הרמח"ל בדעת תבונות (עמ' קפא), ובספר כללים (סי' לב). ובספרו באדיר במרום כותב (עמ' קצג), על כן תראה שהשבטים הוציאם יעקב בסוד רחל, כי השנים הראשונים היו בעבור רחל, אלא שאחר כך ניתנה לו לאה, וזה סוד (בראשית כט, יח)

ויהאב יעקב את רחל. והוא כי כשעבד את לבן לא עבדו אלא בעבור רחל ונמצא שלא נהנה לו בכח רחל כי היא העיקרית. וע"ע בספר קנאת ה' (עמ' קא).

וע"י גם בפתחי שערים (ח"ב קי.) בענין שתי ההנהגות האלו.

והבן איש חי כותב (בספרו אם המלך על רות ב יב, עמ' ל), שלא די שידור בני לאה שרחל היא עקרת הבית, אלא גם המלך עצמו צריך לכלול בו מדרגת רחל.

בענין הצורך לחבר בחינות לאה ורחל ע"י בביאור הגר"א לספד"צ (פ"א עמ' טו בדפוס החדש). וע"ע בדברי הלשם בספר הדע"ה (ח"ב קלא.) בביאור דבריו שם.

GERAR: THE CROSSROADS

The strip of land surrounding the town of Gaza has plagued the Jewish people since Biblical times. It was the home of the Pelishtim, who fought Jews from Shimon to King David. But this area also includes the town of Gerar. Surely Avraham and Yitzchak would not have dwelled there had Gerar been only a danger zone. Yet this city seemingly plays no role in history. The Tanach never deems Gerar a stronghold of the Pelishtim. In fact, Scripture barely mentions the place. How did this area serve the destiny of Eretz Yisrael?

After the destruction of Sedom, Avraham traveled south from his home in Chevron to Gerar. Realizing the immorality of this locale, Avraham introduced Sarah as his sister, lest the natives abduct her. Avimelech, king of Gerar, seized her anyway. Fortunately, Hashem intervened, and he released her. To atone for this indiscretion, Avimelech gave Avraham property and invited him to settle in the best area of Gerar (see Bereishis 20:1-15).

According to the Midrash, Avraham rejected the king's offer and left Gerar. Shortly thereafter, Yitzchak was born. Later, Avimelech asked Avraham to pledge that he and his descendants would not fight the king's progeny for three generations. The Patriarch agreed, whereupon Avimelech returned to Gerar. Avraham's area was named Be'er Sheva because of this oath (see our essay on Be'er Sheva). Ramban infers that Gerar was the center of the Pelishti monarchy, while Be'er Sheva was simply within the territory of the Pelishtim. In Be'er Sheva, Yitzchak was born and raised.

Apparently, Avraham had chosen Gerar as Yitzchak's birthplace and first home. Avimelech foiled the plan by abducting Sarah. To raise Yitzchak, Avraham then moved to an area less controlled by the Pelishtim.

Famine in Eretz Yisrael later brought Yitzchak to Gerar. He'd intended to travel to Egypt with Rivkah, as Avraham had done with Sarah during the famine in his life. However, when Yitzchak reached Gerar — home of Avimelech, king of the Pelishtim — Hashem told him to stay there. Yitzchak could not proceed to Egypt, because Avraham had bound him on the altar during the *akeidah*. Just as a sacrifice is restricted to the Beis HaMikdash, he was confined to Eretz Yisrael.

Yitzchak told everyone Rivkah was his sister. When Avimelech discovered her identity, he forbade his people to touch her and her husband.

Next, Yitzchak became so prosperous in Gerar that envious Avimelech expelled him. Yitzchak settled in Be'er Sheva, where history repeated itself even more: Avimelech came to renew the treaty established by their fathers. (Most commentators identify this Avimelech as the son of the one who took Sarah.) Yitzchak

consented, and Avimelech left peacefully. (See Bereishis 26:1-33.)

Yitzchak, too, was seemingly to accomplish something in Gerar, but his stay was shortened. His relocation to Be'er Sheva also prompted a pact with Avimelech.

These twin stories reinforce our question at the outset: Why Gerar? We know our Patriarchs sought to pave the way for our inhabitation of Eretz Yisrael, but — as stated — Gerar appears insignificant in history.

Perhaps Avimelech truncated not just the stays of Avraham and Yitzchak in Gerar but the role of the city itself:

When the Jews left Egypt, the Torah tells us that Hashem did not lead them straight into Eretz Yisrael via the land of the Pelishtim, because it was too close. The Midrash explains that the problem was closeness in time: It was too soon after Avimelech's treaty with Avraham for the Jewish people to fight the Pelishtim, because the king's grandson was still alive. This pledge denied the Jews quick access to Eretz Yisrael. Maybe Avraham had moved to Gerar to plant the seeds of his descendants' entry into the Land of Israel, but he had to leave. Gerar, then, is the pressure point of the Pelishtim, the place that could have facilitated our nation's passage from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael.

Let us develop this idea with a principle found throughout Torah literature. Hashem does not want us, His chosen people, merely to follow His dictates; He seeks, so to speak, a relationship with us. He wants us to be both His servants and His children.

Our prayers reflect this twofold bond. On Rosh HaShanah, we ask Hashem, "If [You judge us] as children, be merciful with us, as a father is merciful with [his] children; if [You judge us]

as servants, our eyes depend on You to be gracious to us.” In “*Avinu Malkeinu*,” we address Hashem as our Father (*avinu*) and our King (*malkeinu*). Even in our daily Shemoneh Esrei, we beseech Hashem, “Bring us back, our *Father*, to Your Torah, and bring us near, our *King*, to Your service.” We are royal children. We serve our King by performing mitzvos, but Hashem is our Father as well, always seeking our good.

Our status as children is manifest primarily through the Torah Hashem gave us. (“Bring us back, our *Father*, to Your *Torah*.”) Our servitude actualizes itself through sacrifices in the Beis HaMikdash and, nowadays, through prayer. (“Bring us near, our *King*, to Your *service*.”)

Our “childhood” was clearest in the wilderness. Hashem provided *man* for food, Miryam’s well for water, and protective clouds that also kept our clothes fresh. In this “womb,” everything was warm and peaceful. Here we received the Torah, a present only a Father would give His child.

But Hashem wants us to earn our eternal reward of *olam haba*, not receive it as a handout (see our essay on Gei ben Hinom). That is why He gave us Eretz Yisrael, where our “child-like” relationship with Hashem yields to our serving Him.

Gerar and the land of the Pelishtim could have transformed the Jewish people from Hashem’s “children” in the wilderness to His servants in Eretz Yisrael. In fact, “Pelishtim” relates to the Hebrew word “*pilush*” (thoroughfare). This territory connected the wilderness and the Land of Israel.

Likewise, “Avimelech” combines “*av*” (father) and “*melech*” (king). As such, he could prevent the Jews’ much-needed fusion of the two modes. Subjugating him would have allowed us quick access to the land, where we would have become Hashem’s

servants by erecting the Beis HaMikdash. Of all places in the land of Pelishtim, Gerar — Avimelech's domain — must have been especially suited to this transition. Avraham settled there to lay the groundwork for the Jews' entry into Eretz Yisrael.

The Patriarch's mere presence in Gerar might have accomplished this feat. However, we can go one step deeper. As explained, the Jews are Hashem's children and His servants. Avraham exemplified the "Father" relationship. He was always entertaining in his home, filling his life with the kindness normally dispensed by a father. Yitzchak, on the other hand, personified Hashem's "King" relationship, agreeing to sacrifice his life for Him at the *akeidah*. Therefore, the transition from Avraham to Yitzchak parallels that from the wilderness to Eretz Yisrael, from childhood to servitude. Had Yitzchak been born and raised in Gerar, it would have insured swift entry into the Holy Land. Furthermore, in Gerar any Jew could have intensified his service of Hashem. Avimelech prevented all this.

Yitzchak hoped to reverse this decree. Perhaps by settling in Gerar, he could supply it with a servitude component, complementing the child factor provided by Avraham's short stay there. Gerar could once again foster a twin relationship with Hashem. But here, too, Avimelech prevailed.

Having failed to become the crossroads between the wilderness and Eretz Yisrael, Gerar plays no role in Jewish history. Dramatizing this lost opportunity, the Kabbalists write that, though Gerar is within Eretz Yisrael, the Jews never conquered it. It remains inert, potentially greater than foreign areas but lacking the spirituality of the Holy Land.

NOTES:

בפרשת נח (י, יט) מצידן באכה גררה עד עזה, משמע שגרר קרוב הוא לעזה. אמנם האור עולם על בראשית (מרמ"ד וואלי הנדפס מחדש) כותב (כ), (א), גר"ר הוא ג"ת של פלשתים הנזכר בנביאים והראיה שעולה כמוהו. ואולי נקרא גרר בהיותה מטרופולין ועיר המלוכה שכל שאר הערים נגרים אחריה, ע"כ.

בב"ר איתא (נד, ב), מה חסד עשה לו אלא שאמר לו הנה ארצי לפניך ואעפ"כ לא קבל עליו. ומבאר המ"כ, לא קבל עליו אברהם וחלך לו חוץ לגרר אף על פי שבחר בישיבת גרר בראשונה.

בב"ר איתא (נד, ו), ימים רבים רבים מאותן שעשה בחברון בחברון עשה עשרים וחמש שנה וכאן עשה עשרים ושש שנים. והרמב"ן מפרש שאבימלך ופיכל שר צבאו היו יושבים בגרר שהיא מדינת המלך והוא יושב בבאר שבע שהיא בארץ פלשתים בנחל גרר

ברש"י (תולדות כו, ב) אל תרד מצרימה, שהיה דעתו לרדת למצרים כמו שירד אביו בימי הרעב. אמר לו אל תרד מצרימה שאתה עולה תמימה ואין חוצה לארץ כדאי לך.

המתנות כהונה (ב"ר סח, ז) כותב שיצחק לא נשבע מחדש רק אמר לו השבועה הקדומה שהיא בינותינו מאביך תהא בינותינו ואל תפר אותה.

בענין הפילוש של ארץ פלשתים עי' בתורה אור מבעל התניא (פ' בשלח סא:) ובדברי ר' צדוק (קה"מ כט.).

בב"ר איתא (נד, ב), למה לא נחם אלקים דרך ארץ פלשתים שעדיין נכדו קיים.

בענין אי-כיבוש גרר על ידי עולי מצרים ועולי בבל עי' אור החמה בשם הרמ"ק (זוה"ק ח"א קמא.). וע"ע מקדש מלך וניצוצי אור שם. ועי' ב"ר (סד, ג), וילך יצחק אל אבימלך גררה, לגרדיק. רבי דוסתאי בשם ר' שמואל בר נחמן מפני מה גזרו על הנוה שבגרדיקי מפני שהוא נוה רע. ועי' גם בסי' עדרי צאן פרשת וירא עוד בענין גרר וארץ פלשתים.

SEDOM: GAN EDEN IN THIS WORLD

In a work extolling the virtues of Eretz Yisrael, it may seem inappropriate to discuss Sedom, whose moral decay destroyed it. Sedom's legacies are sodomy and "*midas Sedom*," a refusal to assist others, even when one would lose nothing by helping.

A few brief examples from the Gemara portray this mentality in all its shocking reality. If a poor person came to town, the citizens of Sedom gave him coins bearing their names but would not sell him food. When he eventually died of hunger, they reclaimed their money. They had a special bed for guests. If it was too short for a particular tourist, they amputated his legs; if it was too long, they stretched him to the right size. If someone injured a pregnant woman, causing her to miscarry, the judges required the aggressor to reimpregnate her. (See *Sanhedrin* 109b.)

Sedom epitomizes corruption. As the Torah says of wicked

Jews, “their vine is of the vine of Sedom and the fields of Amorah” (Devarim 32:32). Morally and geographically, Sedom is the lowest point on earth. Its fate is also paradigmatic. The Torah warns that, if idolatry overtakes Eretz Yisrael, the land will be destroyed “like the upheaval of Sedom and Amorah” (ibid. 29:22).

However, when performing the mitzvah of salting a sacrifice, it is preferable to use the salt of Sedom (see *Menachos* 21a). True, this salt is the most potent of its kind. But why should any product of wretched Sedom be brought to the holy Beis HaMikdash?

Even more amazing, the Midrash states that whoever performs the commandment of dwelling in a sukkah will be rewarded in the next world with a share of the foliage of Sedom! (As the Midrash explains, seven layers of fruit trees overhung every path in the city.) Why would anyone want trees from the most immoral area in the world? And why is this dubious reward reserved for someone who fulfills the mitzvah of sukkah?

Sedom demands recognition. Though desolate, it provided the salt for the Beis HaMikdash. And in the future, it will apparently regain its glory by rewarding those who observe the mitzvah of sukkah. In fact, the Navi predicts Sedom’s revival (see Yechezkel 16:55), with the Midrash confirming that the town and its environs will be rebuilt.

To understand the role of Sedom, it is worth examining the city before its downfall. According to the Midrash, Sedom was so rich that its dirt contained gold. The Zohar even notes that every pleasure in Gan Eden was available in Sedom. Yet the Gemara and the Zohar report that, to avoid sharing their wealth, the people of Sedom discouraged travelers from passing through

(see *Sanhedrin* 109a). Prosperity broke down all moral barriers, leading to adultery and sodomy. As the verse describes the scene, "They were haughty [and] committed abomination before Me..." (Yechezkel 16:50). "Abomination" usually connotes illicit relations. Even without this key word, it takes little imagination to picture an affluent society catering to sensuality rather than ethics.

Sedom was to be a place where the righteous could sample their reward in Gan Eden. This magnificent area should have inspired the fulfillment of Hashem's mitzvos. But Sedom became so immoral that it had to be destroyed, lest it corrupt the rest of Eretz Yisrael. Even in its devastation, however, the town retained a fraction of its grandeur by supplying salt to the Beis HaMikdash. And its original state will ultimately be restored. Its opulence will then be understood as the lot of the righteous.

We still need to know why Sedom's riches will reward people who fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah. As mentioned, the salt of Sedom plays a role in the Beis HaMikdash, itself called a sukkah. According to the Midrash, when Hashem created the world, He made a sukkah in Yerushalayim. There He "prayed," "May it be My will that My children do My bidding, so I will not have to destroy My Beis HaMikdash." As the verse states, "His sukkah was in Shalem" (Tehillim 76:3). Shalem is the original name of Yerushalayim (see our essay on that city), and its "sukkah" is the Beis HaMikdash. We even say in Maariv, "Blessed are You, G-d, Who spreads the sukkah of peace upon us, upon all His people, Israel, and upon Yerushalayim."

Furthermore, as the Kabbalists stress, Sedom spawned the royal house of David: Before this town was destroyed, Lot and his two daughters escaped to a nearby cave. After catastrophe

befell the area, the daughters believed they were the only ones left in the world. To rebuild mankind, they had relations with their father and bore Moav and Ammon. Moav was the ancestor of Rus, whose famous conversion led to the birth of her descendant King David; Ammon produced Naamah, who also converted, married King Shlomo, and gave birth to his successor, Rechavam. Avraham protected Lot precisely because of these regal genes. The resulting dynasty constitutes another “sukkah” in Yerushalayim. As Hashem promises, “On that day, I will raise the fallen sukkah of David...” (Amos 9:11).

Sedom now has two links to a sukkah: the royal line of David and the Beis HaMikdash. We can therefore understand why, when people fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah, Sedom will reward them with new sukkos. But what does all this mean? How does this commandment correspond to Sedom conceptually?

Sukkos is called “the festival of ingathering,” when the year’s crops are stored for the winter. It is a time to celebrate, having amassed the provisions to sustain one’s family for the next year. Hashem commands us to spend this *yom tov* in a sukkah roofed with the byproducts of this harvest. Leaving our houses reminds us that our material possessions won’t last, since our very life in this world is only temporary. This feeling is reinforced by living in a flimsy home covered with worthless vegetation. We move there to remember that our existence does not depend on farming or any other livelihood; it depends on Hashem’s wanting us to survive another year. As we learn from Koheles, read during Sukkos, material well-being is nothing (*hevel*) compared to faith and trust in Hashem.

This lesson is crucial to properly enjoying the luxury of Sedom. The denizens of that city saw their largesse as perma-

nent and all-important in its own right. This misconception caused their infamous excesses, which led to their annihilation. That could be why the area turned to salt, a mineral valuable only when used to enhance *other* food.

Sedom is beneficial only where the message of the sukkah is clear. In the Beis HaMikdash, for example, we feel Hashem's presence most in this world; certainly Sedom's salt cannot harm that "sukkah." And the "sukkah" of King David's royal line has no independent value; its significance derives from its adherence to Hashem and His Torah. David's ancestor Lot could therefore dwell in Sedom.

We, too, can learn from the sukkah that material indulgence has no value in its own right; such pleasure should be used only to strengthen our relationship with Hashem, to appreciate Him for what He has bestowed upon us. Thus, we employ physical objects — even the lowliest — in constructing a sukkah, where our every act is a mitzvah.

Someone who properly performs the commandment of sukkah will not misuse the pleasures of Sedom. Hashem will therefore reward him with a sukkah made of the trees of that city.

NOTES:

ע"י סנהדרין (קט.-קט:) בענין מדות של אנשי סדום.

איתא בפסיקתא דר' כהנא (פכ"ט), כל מי שמקיים מצות סוכה בעוה"ז אף הקב"ה נותן לו חלק לעתיד לבא בסוכתה של סדום...ומהו ועמק סוכות אמדד (תהלים ס, ח), זו סוכתה של סדום שהיתה מסוככת שבעה אילנות שהיה מסוככים זו על גב זו, וזו על גב זו. וכן איתא במדרש (ב"ר מב, ה), עמק סוכות, שהוא מסוכך באילנות. א"ר תנחומא גפן ותאנה ורמון אגוז ושקד תפוח פרסק, ע"כ. ומפרש רש"י שם שאין לך כל שביל ושביל בסדום שלא היו

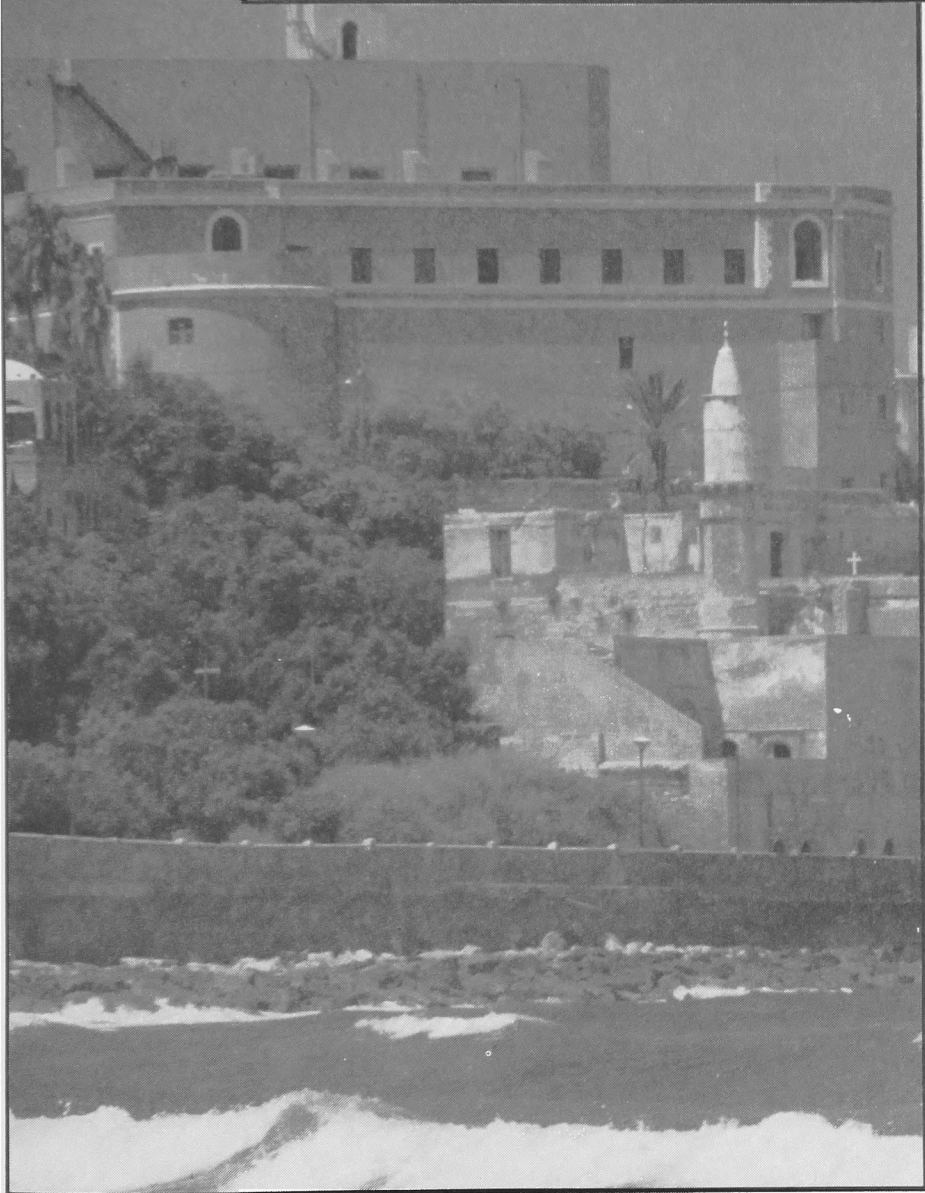
בו שבעה מיני אילנות זה למעלה מזה שהיה כל השביל מסוכך ועי' גם ויק"ר (ה, ב).

איתא במדרש (ויק"ר ה, ב) הדין בר הדיא הוא צופה מאכלו מי"ח מיל...כיון דהוה קאי על אילניא דסדום לא הוה יכיל למחמי על ארעא מן חיליהון דאילנייא. מקום ספיר כשהיה א' מהן הולך אצל הגן ונותן לו ירק באיסר היה מוצא בעפרו זהב כדכתיב ועפרות זהב לו. ע"כ. וע"ע בזוהר הק' דאיתא (ח"א קט). כגן ה' דאית ביה ספוקא ועדונא דכלא הכי נמי הוה סדום. איתא במדרש (ב"ר מא, ה), מצאתי דוד עבדי היכן מצאתיו בסדום. ע"כ. וכותב ספר הלכותים (פ' וירא), בהיות שכאן נתבשר ביצחק וזרע ישראל כולם נמצאו בו כדכתיב כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע ג"כ רצה הקב"ה שנשמות של משיח שהיתה ג"כ גנוזה קודם בריאת העולם וראה וימצא כי היתה אבודה בסדום, ואחד להפוך את סדום כדי להוציא משם לוט כדי להתחבא במערה. ושם זימן לו יין ויצא משם דוד משיח. עכת"ד.

עי' מדרש שוחר טוב לתהלים עו לדרשה על הפסוק ויהי בשלם סכו.

ועי' עוד דברינו בעדרי צאן, פ' ויקרא.

THE COASTAL CITIES



ASHKELON: CITY OF LOGIC

Ashkelon is the scene of an amazing incident reported in the Gemara, which explains how much one must honor his parents (*Kiddushin* 31a). Roman official Dama ben Nesina of Ashkelon once forfeited a tremendous business opportunity, since the key to the chest containing his merchandise lay under his sleeping father's pillow, and Dama would not awaken him. The next year, the official was rewarded when a rare *parah adumah* (red cow used for ritual purification) was born into his herd. The Sages sought to purchase the cow, knowing he could name his price. Dama realized why he had merited this animal, though, and charged only what he'd lost by honoring his father the previous year.

The Gemara then relates another episode: Dressed in a gold-embroidered silk cloak, Dama ben Nesina sat among the nobles of Rome. His mother stripped him of this garment, struck him on the head, and spat in his face, yet he did not shame her.

Certainly many Jews honored their parents under the most difficult circumstances. Why, then, does the Gemara choose a Roman to epitomize this mitzvah?

Interestingly, we also learn the importance of honoring one's parents from Esav, progenitor of Rome: The Midrash states that Esav dressed royally when serving his father, Yitzchak. The Zohar confirms that no one honored his father as Esav did. Another Zohar quotes Yaakov's acknowledgment that his brother never angered their father. Why must the Romans teach us how to revere our parents?

Maharal notes that this mitzvah is exceedingly logical. As the people who bring us into the world, raise us, care for all our needs, and teach us good values and good sense, parents deserve our complete respect. Even someone who denies Hashem and Divine reward and punishment will accept this precept. In fact, such a person should find it particularly easy to honor his parents, because he lives only for this world, in which his parents have given him everything he has. But we know there is a third partner in every birth: Hashem provides the *neshamah*, enabling us to transcend this world. This contribution potentially weakens our appreciation of our parents' this-worldly role. (Of course, when we imbue our children with love of Hashem and His Torah, we minimize this dichotomy.) This, Maharal writes, is why we find such extraordinary parental honor among Esav and his descendants. Uninterested in higher realms of existence, Esav sold his share of *olam haba*. Devoted to this world, he honored his father to the utmost. Later, in Ashkelon, Dama ben Nesina followed suit and was rewarded with a red cow, used for a mitzvah that defies logic.

According to Maharal, Ashkelon corresponds to this ideal,

because "Ashkelon" 's root is "*shikul*" (taking, accepting). Ashkelon and its inhabitants accept the consequences of logic.

An interesting passage in the *Talmud Yerushalmi* concerns two wealthy Jewish brothers in Ashkelon. Their neighbors knew the Jews traveled to the Beis HaMikdash three times a year (Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot), as the Torah requires. These gentiles therefore waited for the next holiday to ransack the unprotected house. However, when the brothers left, Hashem sent human-looking angels to the house, so the neighbors would not realize its occupants were gone.

Based on Maharal's explanation, we understand why this incident took place in Ashkelon, bastion of empiricism. Unable to perceive Hashem, the gentiles saw no reason not to plunder Jewish houses during the holidays. But Hashem is, of course, always involved in the world, facilitating the Jews' observance of His Torah. Furthermore, the mitzvah of visiting the Beis HaMikdash demonstrates respect for our Father. It is a kind of homecoming for those who trust in Him, bolstering Ashkelon's connection to honoring one's parents.

As we have seen, parental honor is easier for a Roman idolater than for a Jew. Yet a trip to Ashkelon in all its holiness can underscore the rationale of this crucial mitzvah and inspire us to observe it as unstintingly as Dama ben Nesina.

NOTES:

ע"י קדושין (לא). במעשה דדמא בן נתינא. ובירושלמי שם מוסיף שהפרקמטיא שבקשו החכמים היתה אבן ישפה של חשן המשפט המיוחס לשבט בנימין. ומעונין להעיר שמפרש הר"י בחיי (שמות כח, טו), והיא כלולה מגווני הרבה וסגולת האבן הזאת לעצור הדם, ונתנה לבנימין לפי שנשתנה לבו לגווני הרבה וחשב מחשבות במכירתו של יוסף אם יגלה הדבר לאביו

אם לא, עכתי'ד ואם כן האבן המסוגל לעצור דם נמצא אצל איש הנקרא דמא, וזה שהיה מיוחד לבנימין שהיה לו שאלה איך לכבד את אביו נמסרה לדמא שמלמד לנו גדרי כבוד.

(בר"ר סה, טז) אמר רשב"ג כל ימי הייתי משמש את אבא ולא שמשתי אותו אחד ממאה ששמש עשו את אביו...עשו בשעה שהיה משמש את אביו לא היה משמשו אלא בבגדי מלכות.

(זוה"ק ח"א קמו:) לא הוה בר נש בעלמא דיוקיר לאבוי כמה דאוקיר עשו לאבוי, וההוא יקירו דאוקיר ליה אשליט ליה בהאי עלמא...ואוריך ליה כל הני זמנין דישלוט בעלמא דא.

(זוה"ק ח"א קסו.) אמר יעקב ידענא דעשו חייש ליקרא דאבא ולעלם לא ארגיז קמיה.

עיי מהר"ל בפירושו על הגמ' (קדושין לא: ועיי' בתפארת ישראל פמ"ב), מן אב ואם נוצר הגוף והנשמה נותן הש"י ומפני שהגוי עיקר שלו הגוף, וסבתו הוא האב ואם לכך מכבד אב ואם ביותר, ואין עיקר של הגוי הנשמה ואין מכבדין את אביהם שבשמים, אבל ישראל עיקר שלו הוא הנשמה והש"י נותן הנשמה לא אב ואם...מפני שהמקום מקבל הדבר נקרא בשם אשקלון מלשון שקל והוא קבלה ולקיחה כי האדם שוקל ומקבל דבר שכל נותן השכל. עיי' ועיי' עוד

ויש להוסיף על דברינו בפנים שבתני"ך מוצאים שמשון ירד לאשקלון לקחת שלשים חליפות בגדים, ופרשה זו מדגשת את מסירותו לכבוד אביו ואמו, וכמעט אין פרשה בתני"ך שיש בה כמה פעמים הזכרת אב ואם ביחד.

YAFFO: GATEWAY TO YERUSHALAYIM

Our first record of Yaffo involves a trauma that must have indelibly marked this port city. According to most commentators, the incident preceded Noach's generation. Europe and Africa were one land mass. The Midrash relates that, because of spiritual corruption, Hashem warned the ancients against further misdeeds. He swept the Atlantic through what is now the Straits of Gibraltar. The waters formed the Mediterranean but subsided when they reached Akko and Yaffo. As a verse states, "...until here shall you come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves be stayed" (Iyov 38:11). "*Ad po*" (until here) alludes to Akko — a contraction of *ad ko* (until here) — and "*u'fo*" (and here) to Yaffo. What can this remarkable story teach us about Yaffo? (Akko will be discussed in its own essay.)

Perhaps the most famous story about Yaffo occurred many centuries later with Yonah the prophet. Hashem commanded

him to exhort Nineveh to repent or face destruction. Yonah worried that, if that city repented, it would reflect poorly on the Jews, who had ignored the admonishments of the prophets. He therefore “escaped” to the sea, where a person does not normally receive prophecy; this way, he would not hear any further directives from Hashem. Yonah set sail from Yaffo (see Yonah 1:3).

If Yaffo is the place to attempt to flee Hashem’s presence, the city presumably suffers from a dearth of Providence. Yet Hashem stopped the world’s inundation in Yaffo. What, then, is its true character?

According to the Zohar, waves symbolize Divine justice. They are destructive. However, Hashem can quiet them by mercifully delaying punishment. This, the Zohar says, was the case with Yonah. Waves threatened him. As he himself says, “all Your breakers and waves passed over me” (Yonah 2:4). But Hashem protected him. So, too, Yaffo was where Hashem calmed the waves and saved the world.

The Vilna Gaon elaborates upon the symbolism of waves and the sea in the story of Yonah. Yonah represents the soul, and his boat the body. Land signifies eternal life in the world to come, while the sea — inhabited only temporarily by travelers — parallels this transient world. The soul, the Gaon writes, leaves its pure spirituality and closeness to Hashem to enter the body briefly in this world. Here, body and soul brave the stormy seas of the *yetzer hara*.

Thus, Yaffo is the point of departure from a purely spiritual existence to one shared with physicality. The Gaon connects the name Yaffo to *yafeh* (beautiful), suggesting physical desires. But Yaffo is also where Hashem stills the waves with His mercy. He

shields a person from the excesses with which the *yetzer hara* can deluge him. Yaffo, then, is where Hashem helps us serve Him by limiting our evil inclination and our punishment.

The Tosefta relates the story of the doors of Nikanor, which separated the Beis HaMikdash proper and its main courtyard from the outer courtyards of the Temple Mount. In Alexandria, a Jew named Nikanor had purchased two magnificent, bronze doors for the Beis HaMikdash. When gales threatened his voyage to Eretz Yisrael, the sailors threw one door overboard to save their ship. They were about to cast away the other when Nikanor grabbed it, saying, "If you throw this one over, throw me with it." The storm immediately stopped. Nikanor wished he had risked his life for the first door. However, when his party arrived in Yaffo, that door miraculously surfaced from beneath the boat. (According to another version, a giant sea creature had swallowed it and disgorged it upon reaching Yaffo.) Because of this miracle, when the doors in the Beis HaMikdash were upgraded to gold, Nikanor's bronze ones remained.

(According to the *Talmud Bavli*, Akko was the port of arrival [see *Yoma* 38a]. But the *Talmud Yerushalmi* records the port as Yaffo. Since no major commentators emend either version, each must reflect a distinct aspect of the incident. We now deal with the Yaffo aspect; we will address the Akko aspect in the essay on that city.)

This story and that of Yonah are remarkably converse. Yonah escaped Eretz Yisrael from Yaffo and was pounded by a storm at sea; only when he was thrown overboard did the tempest relent. Nikanor was traveling *to* Yaffo and encountered similar rough weather; only when he sought to be thrown overboard did the storm abate. To understand this link, we must digress.

Jewish history is filled with exiles from country to country, continent to continent, and even neighborhood to neighborhood. The Kabbalists explain that various parts of the world require a Jewish presence to fulfill their purpose in creation. The mitzvos performed in each location mount until Jews are no longer needed there. Providence then propels them to their next “station.” (This idea does not contradict the classic reason for exile: the indiscretions of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael. If not for these offenses, the mitzvos fulfilled in the Land of Israel would have perfected the whole world.) Alternatively, sin scatters some of the holiness of Eretz Yisrael throughout the world. By performing mitzvos in the Diaspora, we reclaim that sanctity. Then there is no longer any reason for a Jewish presence there.

The prototype of this system was the exile in Egypt. When the Jews were redeemed, that country resembled a trap without bait and a deep sea without fish (see *Berachos* 9b). The children of Israel had nothing else to accomplish there. That is why Hashem forbade them to return to Egypt; they would serve no purpose in the region.

Yet the Jews defied the word of Hashem and moved to Egypt after the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash. Their misguided presence caused new problems, the Chida writes in the name of the Arizal. Holiness belonging in Eretz Yisrael was once again lost in Egypt. To restore this sanctity and once again empty Egypt of all need for Jewish life, Nikanor took the beautiful doors fashioned there and erected them in the Beis HaMikdash.

Apparently, Yaffo not only bars the *yetzer hara* and subsequent harsh judgment from Eretz Yisrael. The port is also the gateway to Yerushalayim, where lost holiness returns to the Beis HaMikdash. Yaffo guards against undesirable external forces

while admitting desirable ones.

The city played this role during the construction of each Beis HaMikdash. Twice, the kingdom of Tzor sent the requisite cedar wood to Yerushalayim via Yaffo (see Divrei HaYamim II 2:15 and Ezra 3:7). In both cases, through this port, the wood returned to the sanctity of the Beis HaMikdash.

This process takes us back to Yonah. He used Yaffo for the opposite of sanctification: to avoid helping Nineveh repent. To escape prophecy, he *left* Eretz Yisrael through Yaffo. But Hashem prevailed. And according to the Midrash, the port resumed its traditional role. For when the sailors saw Hashem halt Yonah's flight and miraculously save him, they sailed back to Yaffo and proceeded to Yerushalayim to convert to Judaism. Yaffo once again was the gateway to Yerushalayim, restoring lost holiness — be it in bronze, wood, or people — to Eretz Yisrael.

NOTES:

עיי ב"ר (כג, ז) עם המפרשים שם בענין הצפת הים על יפו ועכו.
 בענין הגלים עיי זוה"ק (ח"א סט:); עם פיי האור החמה שם, לקוטי תורה
 על תהלים (פט, י).
 בענין משל הגלים ביונה עיי פי הגר"א על יונה, וגם בפירושו על ב"ב עג.
 ועיי גם במהרש"א שם, וביערות דבש ח"ב דרוש הי'.
 בגמ' איתא (סוכה נב:), יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום...ואלמלא
 הקב"ה שעוזר לו אינו יכול לו.
 עיי דברי החיד"א בפתח עינים על יומא שם. ובבן יהוידע מוסיף שזה ענין
 של הנחשול של ים (לשון נח"ש) שרצה להטביעו, שקטרג השטן שנקנור עבר
 על האיסור לשוב מצרימה. ועל כן היו השערים נחש"ת דוקא. ויש להוסיף
 דאיתא בזוה"ק (ח"ב קלה. וקלט.) שענין נחשת בכלל היא ההשפעה לאומות
 העולם בימי סוכות. ויש להוסיף עוד שיפו הוא משבט דן. ותפקיד של דן היא

להיות מאסף לכל המחנות, ולחזור המציאות לקדושת ישראל. אבל יש סכנה בעבודה זה כדמצינו שהיו עוברי ע"ז בדרך שפלטם הענן. ועל ע"ז של דן קרא יעקב לדן בשם נח"ש.

ויש להעיר עוד ששמה יפ"ו שייכת להמכלל יופ"י של ירושלים.

בשולי המאמר נביא מש"כ החסד לאברהם (עין הארץ נהר כב) וז"ל, כל כסף וזהב אבנים טובים ומרגליות הנטבעים בכל ים מן הימים הנה אותו הים מושבע להביא הכל אל ים יפו כי כל מה שנטבע מששת ימי בראשית עד זמן שלמה המלך ע"ה הכל הקיא ים יפו אל שלמה המלך ע"ה ומשם נתעשר ומן אותו עת שמת שלמה המלך ע"ה עד עתה שהוא זמן קיבוץ גליות הכל יבא לעתיד לבא אל ים יפו והוא יקיא אותה אל היבשה ומלך המשיח יחלק לכל צדיק וצדיק לפי חלקו הראוי לו, ע"ש עוד. [נדבריו מיוסדים על הספרי לדברים פל"ג פי"ט]. ועיי' בדברי הילקוט (ישעיה רמז תעב) שכותב שעתידה ירושלים להתרחב על שיחי דיפו. ע"כ.

AKKO: FOOTHOLD AND FORTRESS

A kko: R. Abba kissed its rocks, and R. Chanina cleared its pathways. Thus does the Gemara describe the Jewish people's love for its land (see *Kesubos* 112a). But why should Akko epitomize this love? And why lavish affection upon stones and paths?

Another incident concerning Akko sharpens these questions. When the Romans destroyed the second Beis HaMikdash, Nakdimon ben Gurion was one of three rich men in Eretz Yisrael. Once Nakdimon lost his wealth, his daughter Miryam scrounged for barley kernels among the horse hooves in Akko (see *ibid.* 67a). Why did this misfortune occur in the city synonymous with the Jewish people's desire for the Land of Israel?

The Gemara declares Akko the northern limit of Jewish sanctity in Eretz Yisrael (see *Gittin* 7b). (The Biblical border is much farther north, but Akko was the extent of Jewish conquest upon our second entry into the land, after the Babylonian exile.)

However, a strip of holy land stretched north to the town of Keziv. Someone walking northward along the eastern border of this strip found unsanctified lands to his right and Eretz Yisrael to his left. The Arvei Nachal (author of *Levushei Serad* on *Shulchan Aruch*) explains that this extension represents sanctity's ability to reach out and overpower the mundane. Akko wields this *retzuah* (strap) to subdue the profane.

The Arvei Nachal adds that the Hebrew alphabet manifests Hashem's connection with this world, for through these letters He fashioned creation and communicates to man in prophecy. The last letter, the *tav* (ת), features a left "foot" pointing away from the other characters. Like Akko, this "foot" embodies the opportunity to extend sanctity — in this case, the sanctity of Hebrew. Though venturing beyond the confines of holiness may diminish one's own spirituality, the *tav* must face this danger and spread sanctity.

We can apply this principle to the contemporary scene. Many countries boast major Torah centers, where one can live a fully Jewish life (except, of course, for the traumatic lack of a Beis HaMikdash). Torah pioneers left their citadels of study to "plant" Judaism in these once barren areas. Though it is easier to remain pious in an established Torah community, these trailblazers extended Jewish life at great personal sacrifice. (Of course, they acted under the direction of the sages of their time.) This is the lesson of the *tav*. Its foot extends away from the other holy letters, attempting to stretch their holiness yet farther.

With this explanation, we can understand Akko's role during Rome's domination over Eretz Yisrael. In those times, R. Yehoshua ben Levi traveled to Rome (presumably to intercede with the authorities on behalf of the Jews). The Midrash relates that,

when this Sage reached Akko, R. Chanina noticed he was limping and compared him to our forefather Yaakov, who hobbled toward Esav, the progenitor of Rome. Another Midrash recalls how, before traveling to Rome, a certain Jewish leader used to review the Torah's account of Yaakov's meeting with Esav. He once neglected this study and ended up selling his horse before even reaching Akko.

Evidentially, Akko was the place to confront Roman officials. For Akko held the "strap" capable of defeating an adversary. It reclaimed holiness from the mundane, even when that task required meeting the enemy head on. But this strap is also a foot. From Yaakov's encounter with Esav to Rome's conquest of Eretz Yisrael, the Romans attempted to prevent this foot from stepping forward. (If we may be so bold, Rome itself occupies a peninsula best known for its boot-like shape, including its well-defined foot.) To defeat Rome, it was necessary to step outside safe, familiar surroundings and do battle.

If Akko was the place from which to attack the Roman Empire, when Rome triumphed, the Israeli city naturally felt it. There Nakdimon ben Gurion's daughter scavenged for food. Appropriately, she did so among the hooves of horses, for Akko's foot had failed to stride forward against Rome.

We now appreciate the distinctive love for Akko. This town represented the hope to restore the borders of the Jewish nation. In Akko, therefore, R. Abba and R. Chanina showed their passion for Eretz Yisrael. And once again we see foot imagery: R. Abba kissed the stones — at foot level — and R. Chanina removed any obstacles from the footpaths.

Perhaps Akko received its special capacity early in history. In our essay on Yaffo, we cited the Midrashic depiction of

Hashem's warning to the corrupt ancients: He swept the Atlantic through the Straits of Gibraltar. The turbulent waters formed the Mediterranean but subsided in Akko and Yaffo. In a certain sense, Akko fortified Eretz Yisrael, preventing the ocean from destroying it. The city retained this ability by repelling foreign marauders, especially the Romans.

In that essay, we noted that — according to one opinion — the port of Akko welcomed Nikanor and his bronze doors from Egypt (see *Yoma* 38a). During a storm at sea, this Jew risked his life to save one of the doors. By virtue of that selflessness, the other door, thrown overboard, resurfaced at Akko. For this town empowers Jews to combat and sanctify outside forces. As stated, this activity is perilous — Esav's angel leaves Yaakov limping. At times, though, we must have the fortitude and courage of Akko (and the consent of Torah authorities) and rise to that challenge. No wonder Akko received Nikanor's doors: They became a sacred part of the Beis HaMikdash because of his self-sacrifice; Akko represents that ideal.

NOTES:

איתא בכתובות (ק"ב), ר' אבא מנשק כיפי דעכו, ר' חנינא מתקן מתקליה, ע"כ. וכותב רש"י ד"ה מתקן, משה ומתקן מכשולי העיר מחמת חיבת הארץ שהיתה חביבה עליו ומחזר שאל יצא שם רע על הדרכים, ע"כ. ומשמע מדבריו שזו היתה הנהגת ר' חנינא תמיד, לתקן מכשולות העיר ולא רק פעם הראשונה כשירד מן הספינה בנמל עכו. וכן ר' אבא היה דר בעכו, ומשמע שהנהגתו התמידית היתה לנשק את אבניו.

בענין קדושת ארץ ישראל בעכו עיי' הנושאי כלים למס' שביעית פ"ו ה"א. ותפסנו פירוש רש"י לגיטין שם.

עיי' ספר ערבי נחל (פרי בשלח פז), כל שיעור קומה דקדושה הוא כ"ב

אתוון מאל"ף עד תי"ו וראש הקדושה האל"ף והסוף שהוא התי"ו ורגל התי"ו עקום לחוץ ויצא מכל הקומה והוא בסוד רגליה יורדות מו"ת...וענין זה מצינו בעולם והוא אומרם רצועה נפקא מארץ ישראל, ר"ל שעכו הוא גבול א"י ומתפשטת ויוצאת רצועה קצרה וארוכה השייך לא"י ונכנסת בתוך ארץ העמים.

איתא במדרש (ב"ר עח, ה), ריב"ל הוה סליק לרומי וכיון דאתא לעכו נפק ר' חנינא לקדמותיה אשכחיה מטלע על ירכו, א"ל את דמי לסבך והוא צולע על ירכו. ע"כ. ואיתא עוד (עח, טו), רבינו כד הוה סליק למלכותא הוה מסתכל בהדא פרשתא ולא הוה נסיב ארמאה עמיה, חד זמן לא אסתכל בה ונסב עמיה רומאין (ארמאין) ולא הגיע לעכו עד שמכר הסוס שלו.

למראה מקומות של הצפת הים עד עכו ויפו וגם בענין מסירת נפשו של נקנור, עיי' בדברינו על יפו.

CARMEL. THE SECOND REVELATION

The Gemara relates that Mount Carmel originated in distant Aspamya, which many commentators equate with present-day Spain, the extent of civilization when the Jews left Egypt (see *Megillah* 29a). When Hashem gave us the Torah at Mount Sinai, Mount Carmel came from afar for that revelation. To reward this initiative, Hashem reestablished the mountain in Eretz Yisrael. (The Gemara and Midrash note that Mount Tavor also came to Sinai and was rewarded with establishment in Eretz Yisrael.) According to one midrash, Carmel even fought to have the Torah given on it rather than on Sinai, but Hashem deemed this rival mountain too haughty. Nevertheless, He blessed it with an occurrence similar to receiving the Torah: the prophet Eliyahu defeated the priests of baal on Mount Carmel, and everyone said, "Hashem is the Lord; Hashem is the Lord" (Melachim I 18:39), just as Hashem had declared at Sinai, "I am Hashem, your Lord..." (Shemos 20:2, Devarim 5:6).

(Of course, mountains have no free will. However, Hashem moved Mount Carmel to teach us certain lessons.)

Although the similarity between the first commandment at Sinai and the proclamation at Carmel is striking, something deeper must connect these otherwise disparate events. After all, Sinai was the climax of the miraculous exodus from Egypt. For the only time in history, Hashem communicated with a nation, teaching us His commandments. How does Eliyahu's experience at Carmel compare? And how is his confrontation with paganism a fitting reward for the mountain's trip to Sinai? Even the Midrashic link appears forced, because on Sinai *Hashem* announced, "I am Hashem, your Lord...," whereas on Carmel the *people* affirmed, "Hashem is the Lord; Hashem is the Lord."

Shir HaShirim likens Hashem's relationship with the Jews to marriage. At Sinai, we entered into the covenant of the Torah with Hashem. Some communities actually read a "*kesubah*" between Hashem and the Jews — the ultimate Groom and bride — on Shavuot, the holiday of receiving the Torah.

If a husband and wife look at each other when they communicate, they are pleased with one another; their union is vibrant, fulfilling, and strong. However, when they are upset, they avoid each other's gaze. They interact just enough to keep their relationship intact.

The Nefesh HaChaim writes of a similar phenomenon in the Beis HaMikdash. When the Jews adhered to Hashem's mitzvos, the *keruvim* on the *aron* faced each other. But when we sinned, they looked away, sometimes even turning their backs to one another, signifying that Hashem was barely sustaining His people.

During the times of Eliyahu, the relationship between

Hashem and the Jews was strained. Many worshipped baal, causing the Almighty and His people to be, as it were, back to back. This breach led to a long, deadly drought. According to Ramchal, idolatry became so strong that Providence was hard to see. In stark contrast, when the Jews received the Torah, “Face to face God spoke with you on the mountain amid the fire” (Devarim 5:4).

Eliyahu could not restore this closeness. Instead he sought to demonstrate that Hashem remained the only power, maintaining the sanctity of His nation even in those dark days and even far from the Beis HaMikdash. He challenged the priests to place a bull on an altar and pray that their idol ignite it. The priests postured from morning to noon to no avail. In fact, Hashem quieted the world — as at Sinai — to prove His mastery over creation. That afternoon, Eliyahu offered his own sacrifice, poured water all around it, and prayed, “Answer me, Hashem, answer me, that this nation will know that You, Hashem, are the Lord, and You have turned their heart backwards” (Melachim I 18:37). Though the Jews had turned away from Hashem, they were still His people. When Hashem burned the offering, the wood, and even the water, the nation proclaimed Him the eternal Master of the Universe.

Ramchal adds that prayer, which Chazal term “the service of the heart,” is the best remedy for a heart turned backwards. It is the only mitzvah that requires us to remove all extraneous thoughts of business, family, and even Torah and concentrate on approaching the King. Prayer brings us “face to face” with Hashem. And the afternoon Minchah prayer is the best time to repair a back-to-back relationship with Him. As the sun sets, and shadows lengthen, Hashem may seem elusive. But when we turn

to Him in prayer, we demonstrate — as Eliyahu did at Mount Carmel — that Hashem is always the sole Master of the Universe.

We can now understand the deep link between Sinai and Carmel. At both locations, Hashem revealed His unique mastery over the universe. At Sinai, this revelation involved the Ten Commandments, instructing the Jews how to behave towards their King, Who desired closeness with them. At Carmel, Hashem reaffirmed His unbreakable bond with His people even when their relationship was strained. It was then up to the Jewish nation to respond with resounding faith, “Hashem is the Lord; Hashem is the Lord.” The place to reestablish the pact of Sinai was Carmel, which itself had shown deep commitment by traveling from afar to witness that initial revelation.

Another curious detail: The Gemara states that, in order to see Miryam’s well (which accompanied the Jews in the wilderness), one should climb Mount Carmel and look in the sea (see *Shabbos* 35a). What connects Carmel and the well?

According to the Midrash and the Zohar, Miryam’s well took the form of a rock in the Mishkan courtyard. Only when the Jews prayed properly was this rock transformed into a well. The Zohar deduces from here that Hashem grants our requests only if we pray wholeheartedly. Ramchal adds that, when the collective heart of the Jews is sincere, nothing can block Hashem’s bounty — not even a rock.

This idea is reason enough to place Miryam’s well near Mount Carmel. For Carmel was where Eliyahu successfully invoked Hashem’s response. The prophet’s prayer even generated rain clouds in the stony heavens.

The Zohar concludes with an amazing fact: Even sorcerers and idolaters are effective when they act wholeheartedly. In fact,

the priests of baal might have succeeded had they been more earnest. But the Master of the Universe turned their hearts backwards, sabotaging their service. (We must stress here that the efficacy of sorcery and idolatry does not diminish their status as capital crimes. Hashem forbade these practices just as He forbade murder, though it is possible to take a gun and shoot someone.)

We now see an even deeper rationale for placing Miryam's well at Mount Carmel. Both the well and Carmel teach us the value of sincere prayer. The Jews of the wilderness turned a rock into a well, while the priests at Carmel could not summon any response from their god.

NOTES:

בענין כרמל בהר סיני עיי' יל"ש ח"ב מז. במגילה (כט.) ובבמד"ר (יג, ג) איתא שכרמל נפסל מחמת גאותו, אבל בב"ר (צט, א) איתא שנפסל מחמת העבודה זרה שנעבדה עליו. ועיי' מאה קשיטה (סי' ע) דמשמע דרך לשכר שמיעת התורה זכה כרמל לנס של אליהו.

בענין ריחוק אספמיה עיי' ברכות (סב.). יבמות (סג.), נדה (ל:), ופסיקתא רבתי (פרשה לא).

בענין השייכות בין מתן תורה בסיני למעשה אליהו בהר הכרמל עיי' שמו"ר (כט, ט) ופסיקתא רבתי (ד, ב). בענין בחינת איש ואשה בין הקב"ה וכלל ישראל עיי' נפש החיים (שער א, פ"ח). ועיי' עוד בפתחי שערים (ח"ב פט.). לדברי הרמח"ל בענין אליהו על הר הכרמל עיי' ספרו אדיר במרום (מהדורה חדשה עם רמא-רמה). ודבריו מיוסדים על ספה"ק שער הפסוקים (דף מג:) ופע"ח (שער ק"ש פ"ח).

יש להוסיף שבדברים אלו מובנים דברי המדרש (ויק"ר לא, ד), ודלת ראשך כארגמן אמר הקב"ה לישראל הרשים שבכם חביבין עלי כאלהיו שעלה לכרמל, ע"כ. שהר הכרמל מלמד שאפילו כשישראל ירודים ורשים בבחי'

אחור באחור מכירים שליטת ה' כמו שהוכיח אליהו בהר הכרמל.

בענין באר של מרים עי' מד' תנחומא (במדבר ב) וזה"ק (ח"ג קפג:).

ואפשר להוסיף שהשם של עבודה זרה זו, בעל, מעיד על דברינו. שהעובדי ע"ז רצו ח"ו לינשא לבעל אחר חוץ מהקב"ה, ולא רצו לשייכות איש ואשה שיש בין הקב"ה ועמו.

איתא בפסיקתא דרב כהנא (פרשה כא ד"ה [ד]), ר פנחס בשם ר' ראובן אמר עתיד הקי' להביא סיני ותבור וכרמל, ולבנות בית המקדש על גבי ראשיהם. ומה טעמ', והיה באחרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית ה' בראש ההרים (ישעיהו ב, ב) ע"כ. וכן מוצאים בבארה של מרים (תוספתא סוכה פ"ג ה"ג), למה נקרא שמו שער המים...מלמד שכל מימי בראשית עתידין להיות יוצאין כמפי הפך הזה. וכך היתה הבאר שהיתה עם ישראל במדבר דומה לסלע מלא כברה מפרפרת ועולה כמפי הפך הזה, ע"כ.

בשולי המאמר יש להעיר פירוש מעניין בהסתירה מהגמרא לשאר מדרשי חז"ל אם בארה של מרים היא בים הגדול אצל הכרמל או בים הכנרת אצל טבריה. והרג"ה מראזין מתרץ (עין התכלת אות א), וז"ל, בזמן החורבן שמעוף השמים עד בהמה נדדו מבואר בירושלמי ומדרש שגם הדגים גלו דרך התהום, וכבארה של מרים שהיתה מקודם בים טבריא וגלתה לים הגדול וגם החלזון שהתקיים ע"י סגולת בארה של מרים נדד עמה לים הגדול. ע"כ. אבל לכאורה דבריו צ"ע ממעשה המובא בנגיד ומצוה איך האריז"ל הביא הרח"ו לטבריא לשתות מבארה של מרים. וזה היתה אחר החורבן.

TZOR. CITY OF BEAUTY

The Jews never conquered Tzor, a city in Asher's territory. Instead, 'Tzor is probably best known for its king Chiram, who befriended Jewish kings by sending cedar wood for building King David's palace and for the Beis HaMikdash. Tzor supplied wood for the second Beis HaMikdash as well. Considering these contributions, we understand why Tzor should be included in Eretz Yisrael. Yet the town symbolizes the consummate adversary of Yerushalayim, and Chiram was a great enigma.

The *navi* Yechezkel condemns Tzor for celebrating the fall of Yerushalayim at the hands of Nevuchadnetzar and gloating, "I shall be filled by her who is destroyed." Just as the sea brings up its waves, Hashem promises to raise up nations against Tzor and demolish it (see Yechezkel 26:1-6). The Midrash considers this punishment fitting. For Yerushalayim had been called the "perfection of beauty, joy of all the earth" (Eichah 2:15; also see

Tehillim 50:2), but Tzor took that appellation for itself because of its development at sea (see Yechezkel 27:3-4). For upstaging Yerushalayim, Tzor was destroyed with the fury of the sea.

The Gemara (*Megillah* 6a) takes this competition one step further. Equating Tzor with the Roman Empire, the Gemara expounds the city's proclamation, "I shall be filled by her who is destroyed," as follows: "If Israel is filled, Rome is laid waste, and if Rome is filled, Israel is laid waste." Israel and Rome cannot coexist equally; one must dominate.

Why should the most fundamental conflict in history revolve around beauty? Don't Israel and Rome argue about whether to worship Hashem or some god? Don't they disagree on whether the Torah contains the absolute truth? If we can uncover the secret of Tzor, we will better understand our mission on earth and its greatest threat.

Chiram spanned Tzor's entire history. The Midrash informs us that he lived almost 500 years, from before David's reign until the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash and the collapse of his own empire. A study of Chiram will surely illuminate the character of Tzor.

As stated, Chiram aided in building the Beis HaMikdash. Consequently, according to one view of the Sages, he was one of the only nine people privileged to enter Gan Eden alive. Hashem calls him full of wisdom and "perfect in beauty" (Yechezkel 28:12-13), the latter phrase approximating the description Tzor sought to seize from Yerushalayim. But the *navi* prophesies, "Your heart rose because of your beauty; you have corrupted your wisdom because of your brightness; to the ground have I thrown you; before kings have I set you, that they may gaze upon you" (ibid. 28:17).

Chiram's pride led him to erect a tremendous structure out of precious metals. Its seven stories paralleled the seven firmaments, and it produced thunder and lightning. The king sat atop it and declared himself a god. Because of this self-delusion, Chiram was ruined. The Midrash adds that, since he helped build the Beis HaMikdash, it, too, was tainted and had to be destroyed.

Tzor was indeed a source of beauty. Its artisans and those of its ally Tzidon were superb. Shlomo hired these artists to fashion a Beis HaMikdash of unsurpassed beauty. But they could not create inner *yofi*, the Jewish concept of beauty. The splendor of Yerushalayim was so powerful that it spiritualized the world. In the Beis HaMikdash, a person could bring a sacrifice and cleanse his inner self of imperfection. Yerushalayim beautified one's soul.

This, then, is the conflict between Tzor and Yerushalayim. Rome pursues only outer trappings. Life itself is meaningless. Yerushalayim cares about the inner workings, the essence of existence. Throughout history, only one of these world views can prevail at a time. Civilization can exploit technology to create more and greater luxuries. Then people fight over these delights. Or man can use his knowledge to recognize Hashem as the source of all life, to follow His dictates and become the best he can be. Then people will unite, realizing that Hashem's bounty is endless and that everyone can work together to attain it.

Tzor fostered architectural ingenuity. As R. Tzadok HaKohen observes, "צר" is a Hebrew root connoting form and creativity. King Shlomo, the wisest of all men, wanted to use this aesthetic sense in the Beis HaMikdash. He wanted the outer beauty of Tzor to reflect the internal perfection of Yerushalayim. But Chiram arrogantly demanded that outer beauty reign supreme. The

creativity of Tzor turned into a *"tzar"* (enemy). As enemies of the Jews and the world, Chiram and Tzor had to be eliminated. With them went the Beis HaMikdash, because Hashem could not tolerate a house built under such harmful influence.

We now understand why Tzor's downfall suggests rising waves. Consumed by haughtiness, the city had to be destroyed by the majestic pride of the sea.

Had Tzor been in Jewish hands when Shlomo built the Beis HaMikdash, history could have been different. The town would have provided an exterior befitting a perfect interior, and the Beis HaMikdash would have stood indefinitely. This synthesis will now have to wait for the third Beis HaMikdash.

NOTES:

בענין אם צור הוא באמת נכלל בגבולי ארץ ישראל עיי בכפתור ופרח (פי"א), ובמור וקציעה (סי' שו), ובחזון איש (שביעית ג, יט). ועיי גם בנחלת שמעון על מלכים א- (סי' לד) לפלפול ארוך בענין זה.

במדרש תנחומא איתא (בשלח יב), וכן בצור במה שנתגאה נפרע ממנו, צור את אמרת (יחזקאל כז, ג-ד) אני כלילות יופי בלב ימים גבולך בוניך כללו יפיד, (יחזקאל כו, ג) הנני עליך צור והעליתי עליך גוים כעלות הים לגליו. וכן בנגיד צור במה שנתגאה בו נפרע ממנו, בן אדם אמר לנגיד צור כה אמר ה' אלקים יען גבה לבך ותאמר אל אני מושב אלקים ישבתי בלב ימים ואתה אדם ולא אל ותתן לבך כלב אלהים וגו' מותי ערלים תמות ביד זרים (יחזקאל כח, ב-י). ועיי גם בשמו"ר (לו, א).

בענין חיים הארוכים של חירם עיי בב"ר (פה, ד). ובענין אם זה צריך להיות מובן כפשוטו עיי בפיי מו"ר הר"מ אייזמאן שליט"א על ספר יחזקאל (הוצאת ארטסקראל).

בענין ישיבת חירם בגן עדן עיי מס' דרך ארץ זוטא (פ"א).

עיי ביל"ש (יחזקאל שסז) על גאות חירם ובנינו. והתם איתא, אמר

הקב"ה הריני מחריב את ביתי שלא יהיה חירם מתגאה עלי. ובענין גאותו עיי גם בשער הפסוקים (יחזקאל כח). ובמדרש תלפיות כותב שחמ"ץ הוא ראשי תיבות חירם מ'לך צ'יור שכל דבו המץ מתגאה.

כתוב בספר חבת ירושלים (ה:), כששומעים בצפת קול רעמים אינם מברכים תכף ואומרים שחוששים אולי זה קול רעש גדול מן הרעמים של ז' רקיעים שעשה חירם מלך צור

עי בשמו"ר (לו, א), הה"ד (תהלים מח) יפה נוף משוש כל הארץ מהו יפה נוף לשון יוני קורין לכלה נמפי, משוש כל הארץ שלא היה אחד מישראל מיצר כשהיה ביהמ"ק קיים למה שהיה אדם נכנס לשם מלא עונות והיה מקריב קרבן ומתכפר לו אין שמחה גדולה מזו שהיה יוצא צדיק, הוי יפה נוף משוש כל הארץ.

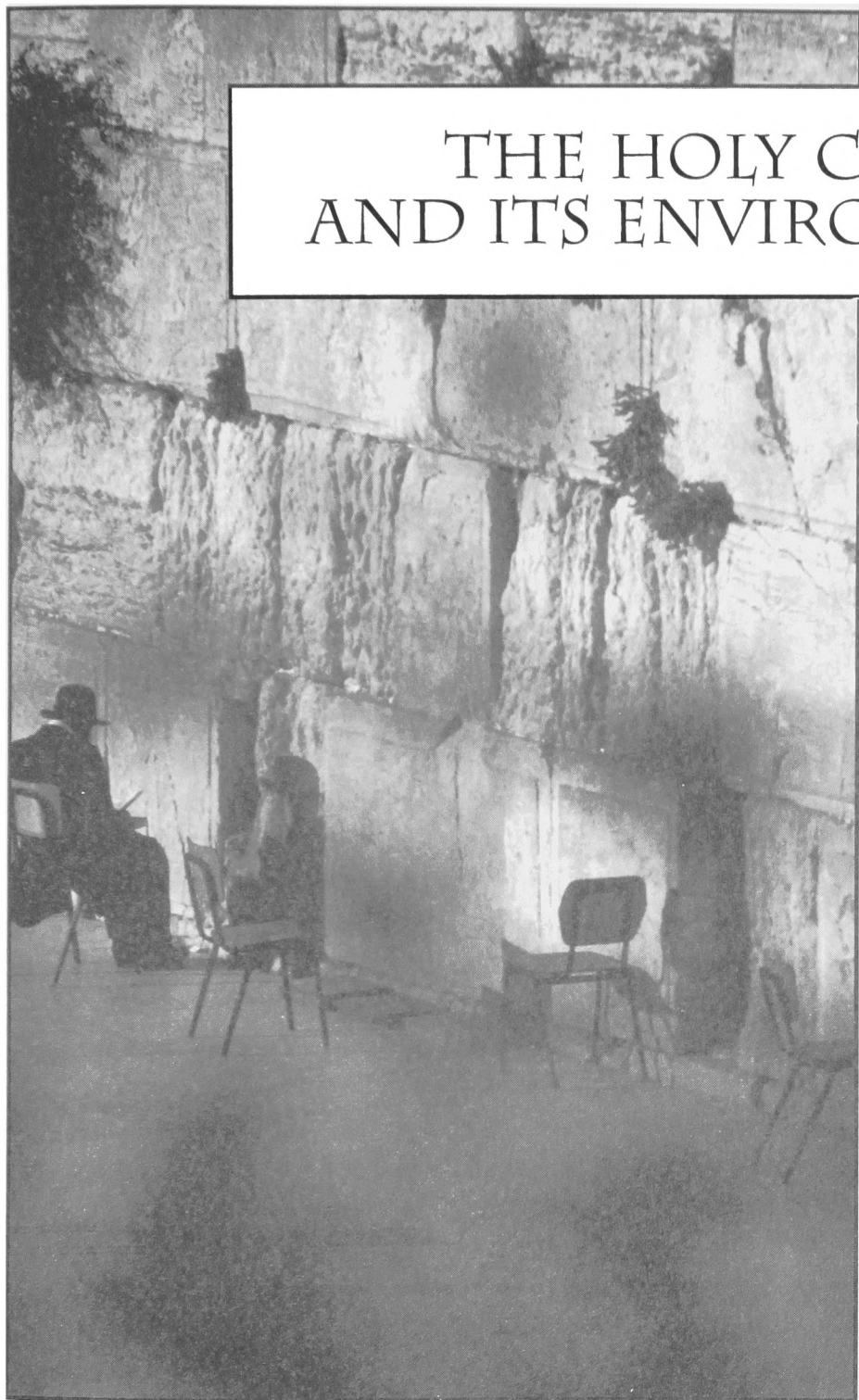
בענין יופי עיי דברי הרב צדוק בספר יש"ק (כה:; סד:;) ובתה"ש (יד:; לא:, מז:)

עיי דברי הרב צדוק בצה"צ (סיי קנ) בענין לשון של צור ובל"מ (נה.) כותב שחירם היה הזה לעומת זה של שלמה בחכמה.

בענין גאות של גלים עיי למשל בתהלים פט, י ובספר איוב לח, יא. ועיי בשער הפסוקים הנ"ל.

ואפשר להוסיף על דברינו בפנים ששלמה לקח איש משבט דן שנקרא חירם לעשות מלאכת הבית. ואפשר ששמו מרמז על מה שהיה יכול להיות אם היו זוכים בני ישראל לכבוש את צור ולשלח את העצים למקדש מקדושת ישראל. שאז חירם משבט דן היה עושה את הבית בלי עזר של חירם מלך צור ובמאמר על עיר דן ראינו ששבט דן כבש את העיר מגוים שהיו יושבים כצידוניים, וכתבנו שלולי החטא של פסל מיכה שם היו זוכים שבט דן לעשות המלאכה של הצידוניים (שעבדו עם יושבי צור) לבנין הבית. ואם כן אף אחר החטאים נשאר רמז למה שהיה יכול להיות עם חרים משבט דן.

THE HOLY CITY AND ITS ENVIRONS



YERUSHALAYIM: THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in writing about Yerushalayim is limiting oneself to one chapter. Throughout its two golden ages of the Beis HaMikdash and in its longer exile, the Jewish people has focused on Yerushalayim. When the Temple stood in Yerushalayim, the entire nation celebrated Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos there. Sinners traveled to Yerushalayim to atone with a sacrifice. Imagine the spiritual boost this holy city provided. We constantly pray for its rebuilding. “Next year in Yerushalayim!” concludes the day-long Yom Kippur service as well as the Pesach seder. At weddings, we break a glass to recall the city in ruins. Because of the immenseness of this topic, we will confine our analysis to the name “Yerushalayim,” since we have seen that the names of people and places embody their essence.

“Yerushalayim” is a contraction. The Midrash explains that Noach’s righteous son Shem called the city “Shalem” (perfect).

Later, after binding his son on the altar during the *akeidah*, Avraham called the place “Hashem Yireh” (Hashem will see) (Bereishis 22:14), for here Hashem showed him where He, so to speak, sees what is happening in the world. To slight neither Shem or Avraham, Hashem called this city “Yerushalayim,” combining Yireh with Shalem. Yet what did Avraham’s name add? Once a place is perfect (Shalem), what can be improved?

The Vilna Gaon writes that Yerushalayim manifests Providence. Avraham added this aspect to the name because, through his lifelong Divine service — culminating in his tenth test, the *akeidah* — the world could recognize Hashem’s dominion over creation. The Gaon alludes to a midrashic statement that Hashem’s presence on earth was initially obvious. However, when man defied His will (by partaking of the Tree of Knowledge, bringing on the flood, building the Tower of Babel, etc.), He placed the seven heavens between Himself and the world. Avraham made Hashem more accessible again, a process completed by Moshe’s Mishkan, where His presence became clear. When Avraham realized at the *akeidah* that he had brought Hashem’s presence one heaven closer, he called that spot Yireh.

Yerushalayim, then, is where Hashem “relates” to mankind. When man does not merit this relationship, the town cannot fulfill its function. Only when Avraham passed the supreme test of submission to Hashem’s will could Yerushalayim recapture its purpose. Avraham showed the world that Hashem still communicates with people. He added Yireh to the perfection of that location.

The Gaon expands on this duality of Yerushalayim. In the Beis HaMikdash, the *Kohen gadol* wore a breastplate known as the *choshen hamishpat*. The breastplate contained twelve

stones, each bearing the name of a tribe. This arrangement was called the *urim vetumim*, through which Hashem addressed the Jews by illuminating letters on the stones. The *tumim* aspect of this system was the way the letters were perfectly arranged (*"tam"* meaning "perfect") to insure readability. The *urim* aspect was the illumination (*"urim"* meaning "lights"), so the *Kohen gadol* could see them. Hence the the two parts of the name Yerushalayim: Shalem means perfection, and Yireh denotes the illumination that allows it to be experienced.

Shalem is almost a sterile perfection; everything is in place, but no one can benefit from it. The Yireh of Avraham enables man to relate to perfection, to perceive Providence. This opportunity exists even if man betrays the Creator. Yerushalayim teaches us that Hashem responds to man's repentance by restoring His close relationship with him.

This idea explains why the Beis HaMikdash is in Yerushalayim. Here a person can best sense Hashem's connection to this world. (That link can be felt even today, when only the Western Wall of the Beis HaMikdash stands.) In Yerushalayim, he could also gain atonement through sacrifices, returning to Hashem's good graces.

We can now understand another profound description of Yerushalayim. The Zohar writes that this city is the "heart" of the world: Just as the heart pumps life-giving blood throughout the body, Hashem uses Yerushalayim to pump life into creation. This image supports what we have learned about Yerushalayim. The city is Shalem, perfect, because through it Hashem grants existence to the whole world. And it is also Yireh, where we can experience Hashem's direct input.

Yerushalayim is a heart on an even deeper level. The heart

is the seat of emotion. It is the driving force behind everything a person accomplishes. One becomes broken-hearted when he loses something he treasures. He isn't "broken-headed," because his feelings never entered his head. One agrees wholeheartedly, not "wholeheadedly," for knowledge is often less compelling than beliefs. One says of a kindred spirit, "He's a man after my own heart." When someone knows something deep in his memory, he knows it by heart, not "by head." And if something requires serious consideration, he takes it to heart rather than just "bearing it in mind."

As stressed by every *mussar* work since the classic *Chovos HaLevavos* (Duties of the Heart), we must control and direct our heart. If we cater only to our intellect — even if we know all the right answers — we are doomed. When the surgeon general warns about the dangers of smoking, he speaks to the head, but cigarette ads are more persuasive, because they speak to the heart. When a person must choose between head and heart, the heart always wins. It is relatively easy to prove to any intelligent listener that Hashem created the world and gave us the Torah at Har Sinai; but unless that person takes the information to heart, it will not affect him. And for those already committed to observing Hashem's Torah, the litmus test of closeness to Him is prayer, "the service of the heart." One must offer heartfelt praise to the One Who gives us everything; he must pour out his heart.

Since the heart is our compass, it is there that the evil inclination preys on our service to Hashem. As the Gemara states, the *yetzer hara* resembles a fly wedged between the openings of the heart (see *Berachos* 61a). It promotes harmful activities and thoughts. We must ignore it and control ourselves.

Then we can serve Hashem with all our heart, as we say in Shema.

If Yerushalayim is the heart of the world, a universal evil impulse should be found there. And indeed, when our Sages prayed that Hashem remove man's idolatrous urge early in the second-Temple era, this inclination departed first from the holiest section of the Beis HaMikdash (see *Yoma* 69b). This diabolical *yetzer hara* had been hiding in the place of ultimate service to Hashem.

Divine service takes us back to where we started. Yerushalayim was where Avraham proclaimed the beginning of Hashem's "return" to earth. Hashem had withdrawn because generations had followed their *yetzer hara*. Avraham reversed this process by wholeheartedly serving Hashem. Avraham then added Yireh to Shalem to teach us that, despite sin, we can renew our relationship with Hashem through heartfelt repentance. Then Hashem's providence can be seen (Yireh) clearly by those who have perfected (Shalem) themselves.

NOTES:

איתא במדרש (בר"ר נו, י) אברהם קרא אותו יראה שנאמר ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא ה' יראה, שם קרא אותו שלם שנאמר (בראשית יז) ומלכי צדק מלך שלם. אמר הקב"ה אם קורא אני אותו יראה כשם שקרא אותו אברהם שם אדם צדיק מתרעם. ואם קורא אני אותו שלם אברהם אדם צדיק מתרעם, אלא הריני קורא אותו ירושלים כמו שקראו שניהם יראה שלם ירושלים.

ע"י בפירוש הגר"א לשיה"ש (ז,א) שובי שובי השולמית, פ"י כי ירושלים שם העצמי הוא שלם כמ"ש ומלכי צדק מלך שלם ות"א מלכא דירושלים. ואברהם קרא אותה יראה שהקב"ה רואה דרך שם כל מעללי גבר ומצעדי כמ"ש ויקרא אברהם כו' אשר יאמר כו' וביאורו כי אברהם הוריד השכינה לארץ שידעו הכל איך שהוא משגיח בכל וידע רזי עולם ומשה הוריד השכינה

למשכן ביננו ששיגו הכל אותו כמ"ש ראתה שפחה על הים וכו', וזה ביאורו ויקרא אברהם וכו' יראה שהקב"ה רואה בכל.

בענין המדרש של הז' רקיעים עי' מדרש רבה (ב"ר יט, ז). ובתנחומא (פקודי ו ונשא טז) איתא שאברהם הוריד את שכינה לרקיע הוי' ע"י מעשיו הטובים ויצחק הוריד אותה לרקיע הה' במעשה העקידה.

הגר"א כותב באדרת אליהו (זאת הברכה לג, ח), ותומים ואורים הוא נגד ב' קדושות שנתן הקב"ה לישראל...אורים שמאירים דבריהם ותומים שמשלימים דבריהם וזהו מצטרפות ובולטות, מצטרפות היינו משלימות דבריהם שיוכל לקרותן ובולטות היינו מאירים דבריהם שיוכלו לראותן, וכנגד זה ירושלים יראה שלם שקראו אותה שם בן נח ואברהם.

והבאר יצחק מבאר שם, בבית שני לא היו אורים ותומים אף שהיו אבני החשן עם האותיות אבל לא היו מאירים שהיא היתה אז בסוד קטנות לבד אבל לעתיד לבא אז קומי אורי כי בא אורך כו', יתגלה גם דרגא דאורים ולכן נגדס ד' פעמים שובי נגד ב' גליות הראשונים דב' מלכיות בבל ומדי שאז אחר זה נבנה הבית ואז נק' שולמית בסוד שלם אבל אחר ב' גליות השניים אז ונחזה בך בסוד אורים שהוא ירא"ה. וע"ע בדברי הרב י"א חבר בבאר יצחק על ספר מים אדירים (עמ רמה) לדרך אחרת של השמות ירא"ה ושל"ם.

בדמיון ירושלים ללב עי' זוה"ק (ח"ג רכא; ; ח"ב קצג; ; ותקו"ז כא מט:).

בענין העבודה בראש ובלב שמעתי הרבה שיחות מוסר מאת מו"ר הגה"ר רבי שמואל יעקב וינברג שליט"א, ראש הישיבה של ישיבת נר ישראל. בענין העבודה שבלב של תפילה עי' במכתב מאליהו ח"ד מכתב לג.

בטעם למה נקראת ירושלים ולא ירושלם ככתוב בתנ"ך עי' תוס' לתענית (טז. ד"ה הר). ועי' מדרש תלפיות, חומת האנך על יהושע ומנחת שי שם. וע"ע בספר ארצות החיים (עמ כו וכח).

ובענין שם ירושלים עי' דברי הרמ"ע מפאנו בספרו מאה קשיטה (סי צט), ומה שמוסיף עליו החיד"א בספרו דבש לפי (מער' יו"ד אות כ"ט).

GEI BEN-HINOM. VALLEY OF COMMITMENT

We associate Gei ben-Hinom — the southern suburb of Yerushalayim — with Gehinom, that fearful place awaiting those who do not meet Hashem's standards. In fact, the Navi uses Gei ben-Hinom and Gehinom interchangeably as part of the border between the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin (see Yehoshua 15:8 and 18:16). Likewise, the Gemara relates that two date palms stand in Gei ben-Hinom, smoke rising between them, marking the doorway of Gehinom (see *Eruvin* 19a). Why should such a fiery gateway be so close to Yerushalayim?

The aforementioned Gemara states that Gehinom has seven names, but “Gehinom” itself is not among them. The Gemara offers two explanations for this omission: That name is simply a contraction of Gei ben-Hinom, meaning that Gehinom is deep below the valley (*gei*) of ben-Hinom. Alternatively, it is called Gehinom because people descend there for acts of nothingness

(*chinam*), which Rashi understands as illicit relations. So if there are two good reasons to label that realm Gehinom, why isn't "Gehinom" a bona fide name? And if it isn't, why does everyone know this region as Gehinom? Even the Gemara calls it that, noting that "Gehinom" has seven names.

To answer these questions, we must clarify Divine reward and punishment. Some people think Hashem placed us in this world to test us: If we fulfill His mitzvos, He rewards us with a place in *olam haba* (the world to come). If we don't, He punishes us in Gehinom.

If so, Ramchal counters, why isn't the world an eternal testing ground, with people either entering Gan Eden as their reward or falling into Gehinom as their punishment? Instead, as the prophets assure us, Mashiach will eventually herald an era of recognition that Hashem created and rules the world. The Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt, the dead will be resurrected, and there will be no further obstacles — internal or external — to Torah observance. Six thousand years after Creation, Hashem will begin transferring life from this world to *olam haba*, where there will be no mitzvos. In that world, Hashem will reward all who observed the Torah.

Therefore, says Ramchal, this world is more than a test site. Hashem created man to bestow His goodness upon him. Lest we be embarrassed to receive this "handout," Hashem lets us "earn" it by fulfilling the Torah. If a person errs, Hashem nudges him toward the right path, so he can get his "paycheck." Only if he proves incorrigible must he be punished in Gehinom. This outlook transforms the world from a frightening testing ground into a potential paradise, where opportunities abound to earn eternal reward relatively easily.

Ramchal adds that this reward is not arbitrary. When we perform mitzvos, we build our eternal abode in *olam haba*. Each Shabbos we observe adds another “brick”; every time we refrain from *lashon hara*, we improve our “real estate.” That is why the righteous have an other-worldliness about them. They are already connected to their future by their commitment to its preparation.

Thus, the punishments of Gehinom cannot merely be spiteful retaliation for disobeying the King. Hashem did not create us just to see how many would make it to *olam haba*. He created us to receive reward. If someone falters, Hashem gently sends corrective messages via some suffering related to his shortcoming. If he dies without heeding these messages, Hashem punishes him in Gehinom, so afterwards he can receive at least some eternal existence in *olam haba*.

Gehinom is therapeutic. Just as different ailments require different treatments, so do different offenses. Gehinom therefore cannot be a monolithic torture chamber. It is more like a hospital with wards for various diseases.

Hence the seven names of Gehinom: Our Sages even say Gehinom has seven chambers. Interestingly, the *yetzer hara* has seven names, too (see *Sukkah* 52a), intimating that seven drives keep a person from *olam haba*. Some commentators maintain that each of Gehinom’s seven sectors repairs the damage inflicted by one of the seven aspects of the *yetzer hara*. The cured person then leaves Gehinom to receive reward for his mitzvos.

This scenario leads us back to our original question: Why isn’t “Gehinom” a name? Let’s take the Gemara’s second answer first. “Gehinom” represents a more fundamental malady than the seven drives of the *yetzer hara*. It constitutes disconnection

from Hashem. This break, involving illicit relations, becomes clearer from another Talmudic insight: Avraham can save any Jew from Gehinom after only a brief sojourn there (see *Eruvin* 19a). One approach to this statement is that, merely by virtue of one's filial connection to Avraham, a Jew is well on the way to eternity in *olam haba*. Any blemishes he has can be quickly cured in the appropriate chamber of Gehinom. But the Gemara makes one exception. If a person has engaged in illicit relations with an idolatress, his foreskin covers his bris; since Avraham no longer recognizes him as a Jew, he cannot escape Gehinom. In other words, this offender has gone beyond surrendering to his physical drives. He has abandoned Hashem.

This profound estrangement cannot be remedied by any of the seven chambers of Gehinom. Such a sinner requires general therapy. This broad cure is called "Gehinom," the antidote to acts of "*chinam*," the illicit relations that destroy all vestiges of Jewishness. One who engages in such acts has "nothing" left of his commitment to Hashem. This title is not among the seven names of that realm, because the seven represent particular forms of punishment, while "Gehinom" provides total rehabilitation.

The Gemara's other explanation of the name "Gehinom" concerns the valley of Gei ben-Hinom. What do we know about this area?

Gei ben-Hinom was the site of the *molech* ritual, consisting of passing one's child through fire in defiance of Hashem (see Melachim II 23:10 and Yirmeyahu 7:31). The Gemara considers this ceremony atypical idol worship (see *Sanhedrin* 64a), and, according to some, it is not idolatry at all. Meiri, for example, understands the *molech* as an initiation rite. Before worshipping

a deity, one would commit to it via this ritual. Therefore, although this act is not actual idolatry, it is perhaps even worse than a one-time service of some idol, because it is a pledge of allegiance. When someone practices the *molech* rite, he renounces his allegiance to Hashem.

Apparently, the twin derivations of the name "Gehinom" are two sides of the same coin. "Gehinom" is for people who require general therapy after breaking their *bris* with Hashem. And "Gehinom's" counterpart in the physical world is the valley of ben-Hinom, where the *molech* ritual likewise expressed total rejection of Hashem.

Our first question remains. Why was this spiritually bankrupt valley adjacent to the holiest of places, Yerushalayim? In fact, why was Gei ben-Hinom in Hashem's Holy Land altogether? How does this valley enhance Eretz Yisrael?

Based on the Zohar, Rema MiPano translates "Gehinom" as the valley of "*hinam*" (here they are). The messengers that escort cleansed souls out of Gehinom tell the guards of Gan Eden, "Here they are, the souls that have been cleansed; they are now ready to enter Gan Eden." Furthermore, he contends, the fires of Gehinom will eventually be extinguished, and it will acquire the sanctity of Gan Eden! Here the righteous will "encircle" Hashem and say, "Behold, this is our Lord; we hoped for Him, that He might save us; this is Hashem, for Whom we hoped; let us exult and be glad in His salvation" (Yeshayahu 25:9).

This newly sanctified locale will be better for this celebration than even Gan Eden. For Gehinom is the place of Hashem's ultimate salvation, in which the most wicked were rehabilitated before entering Gan Eden.

If this is the future of Gehinom, Gei ben-Hinom must play a

similar role. This valley can also absorb the sanctity of neighboring Yerushalayim. Then, instead of becoming initiated into the *molech* sect, people will commit themselves to Hashem on that spot. From there, in the times of Mashiach, Jewish children will continue on to Yerushalayim and the courtyards of the third Beis HaMikdash, witnessing the Temple service in all its glory.

NOTES:

ביאור של תכלית בריאת העולם מיוסד על דברי הרמח"ל בכ"מ בספר דעת תבונות.

איתא בזוה"ק (ח"ב קנ:), שבעה פתחין אינון לגיהנם ושבעה מדורין אינון תמן. שבעה זיני חייבין אינון... וכלהו לקבליהו אית דורין לגיהנם כל חד וחד כדקא חזי ליה.

איתא בזוה"ק (ח"ב ריא:), ההוא זוהמא בתרי זמני אתלבנת בנורא זמנא קדמאה כיון דקבילת עונשא בגופא אזלא נשמתא ונטלי לה ואעלין לה בגו אתר חד דאקרי בן הנם, ואמאי אקרי בן הנם, אלא אתר חד איהו בגיהנם דתמן אתצריפו נשמתין בצרופא לאתלבנא עד לא עאלין בגנתא דעדן... והאי נשמתא עד לא אתלבנת בנור אינון שליחן צווחין לגבייהו ואמרי הנם, ובזמנא דהיא אתלבנת אינון ממנן נפקין עמה מההוא אתר וזמיני לה לגבי פתחא דגנות דעדן דתמן אינון שליחן ואמרי לון הנם, הא אינון נשמתין דהא אתלבנו.

עי דברי העשרה מאמרות במאמר חיקור הדין (ח"ה פ"א) וז"ל, אמנם סוף סוף הם אינם כלים וגיהנם גופיה נקרא כן שהיא גי של הנם ופירוש שוחה עמוקה שירדין לה על עסקי חנם והנשמות שנטהרו מעלין אותן לשלוחי גן עדן ואומרים הנם הא אתלבנו. ע"כ. ומפרש היד יהודה שם, ועוד שנית נקרא כן בשביל שאחר שנתלבנו הנשמות אומרים הממונים עליהם הנם.

ובענין גיהנם לעתיד לבא כותב (מאמר חיקור הדין ח"ה פ"ה), אמרו חכמים אין גיהנם לעתיד לבא הכונה על אור דידה דאיברי בשני אבל חללה

שנברא קודם העולם עתיד להתקדש בקדושת הגן כמו שנזכר ושם יהיה מחול הצדיקים והקב"ה ראש חולה וכתוב [כי ערוך מאתמול תפתה] גם היא למלך היכן, ע"כ ומפרש היד יהודה, חללה של גיהנם שהוא אחד מז' דברים שנבראו קודם העולם אין קיומו תלוי בקיום העולם אבל גם אחר שיתבטל העולם יתקיים לעד ועתיד להתקדש בקדושת גן עדן... כי אמנם המחול הזה לא יהיה בגן עדן ממש אלא בחללה של גיהנם שיתקדש לעתיד בקדושת גן עדן. ע"כ, ועיי דברי בעל הלשם בספר הדע"ה (ח"ב יב:) בענין הזה.

ויש להעיר עוד שלומדים אודות קדושת גיהנם מהפסוק כי ערוך תפתה גם היא למלך הוכן, אחד, שזה גם כן שם לגיהנם שאינו בכלל השבע, כדאיתא במס' ערובין שם. ועוד, שתחת היותו הוכן למלך מלכי המלכים, השמתשו בו לעבודת המולך.

HAR HAZEISIM: MOUNTAIN OF HOPE

The predominant Biblical reference to Har HaZeisim — the Mount of Olives, east of Yerushalayim — is the extraordinary prophecy of Zecharyah familiar to us as the haftarah for the first day of Sukkos:

Hashem shall go out and fight those nations.... That day, His feet shall stand upon Har HaZeisim, which is before Yerushalayim, to the east; Har HaZeisim will be split along its middle by a very great valley from east to west; half the mountain will move north, and half south. You will flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uziah, king of Yehudah. ... It shall be one day — known to Hashem — that will be neither day nor night, but at evening time, there will be light. ... Hashem will be King over all the earth; that day, Hashem shall be One, and His name One.

(Zecharyah 14:3-5, 7, 9)

What can this prophecy mean? What are Hashem's "feet"? Why should this earthquake strike Har HaZeisim? What does this cataclysm teach us about the mountain? And what kind of day is neither day nor night but becomes light in the evening?

Let us first examine the quake of King Uziah's day, which shook the portals of the Beis HaMikdash. When Uziah dared to burn incense there, where only a Kohen may serve, the Midrash relates that heaven and earth shook, and the king contracted *tzaraas*. This catastrophe began the Jewish people's decline, which led to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the nation's exile centuries later.

Har HaZeisim played a fundamental role in Hashem's withdrawal from that Beis HaMikdash. The Midrash explains that the Shechinah exited in ten stages, giving the Jews every opportunity to repent. Finally Hashem retreated from Yerushalayim to Har HaZeisim. There He waited three-and-a-half years, pleading with His people to reform. Then He left Har HaZeisim as well. Devoid of its glory, the Beis HaMikdash fell, and the people were exiled.

We can now partly grasp Zecharyah's prophecy. Har HaZeisim was the Shechinah's last dwelling place before the demolition of the Beis HaMikdash, which started with the earthquake in the times of King Uziah. Therefore, Hashem's return will take the same route — on Har HaZeisim amidst an earthquake. But why was that mountain the last stop for the Shechinah?

It is worthwhile to review another episode involving Har HaZeisim. King David's son Avshalom had rebelled against his father and appeared to be winning the nation over to his own side. Forced to flee his house in Yerushalayim along with his servants, David tearfully ascended Har HaZeisim barefoot, his

head covered (see Shmuel II 15).

The Ozrohvtzer Rebbe (in his work *Be'er Moshe* on Melachim) explains that Har HaZeisim takes its name from the olive trees that grow there. Olives symbolize Mashiach (see Zechariah 4:3 and commentaries there), who will lead us out of exile. By climbing Har HaZeisim, David assured himself that his troubles were temporary; his future promised his return from exile and, later, the glorious era of Mashiach. Yet why should olives, and consequently Har HaZeisim, represent homecoming?

After the great flood, Noach sent a dove to see if the land had dried. Eventually the bird reappeared with an olive leaf. The Midrash comments that this leaf came from Har HaZeisim. Amidst annihilation, olive trees stood firm on this mountain, signaling the reconstruction of the world. Here, too, Har HaZeisim was a place of hope when all else was lost. This is where David ascended when his throne appeared to be gone.

Furthermore, we remember from the Chanukah story that olive oil is the quintessential fuel for lighting up the night. Even in the darkest times, there is always hope. Indeed, "The dove came to [Noach] in the *evening*..." (Bereishis 8:11). The cold, dark night is a time for sleeping, symbolizing passivity, stagnation, and even exile. That is when the dove returned with the olive leaf, for the warm glow of a flame can brighten even the darkest period. Har HaZeisim, then, signifies Hashem's ability and desire to help us under all circumstances. No wonder David climbed this hill when his future seemed threatened.

As stated, Hashem waited three-and-a-half years on Har HaZeisim before removing His Shechinah from Yerushalayim and the Jewish people. Those were dark days. Given the sins of the nation, Hashem could no longer remain in the Beis HaMik-

dash. Therefore, He urged repentance from Har HaZeisim. Then the Temple was destroyed.

Even in our dark exile, we can internalize the lesson of Har HaZeisim. Whenever we near despair, we must remember that Hashem is still watching us and will one day (hopefully soon) restore our closeness with Him. By then, the world will scarcely differentiate right from wrong, morality from depravity. Hence Zecharyah's prophecy of a period that is neither day nor night. But there will be light in the evening, paralleling the evening return of the dove bearing the olive leaf. The dark exile will end, and there will no longer be any obstacles to Hashem.

As for Hashem's "feet," let us recall an idea developed by Ramchal and cited in the previous essay (on Gei ben-Hinom): Mitzvos are not arbitrary exercises for which we will be rewarded; rather, they are the building blocks of that reward. Through the commandments themselves, we connect to Hashem and prepare creation to reflect Godliness. When we pray on Rosh HaShanah that every creature should recognize Hashem, we realize that our mitzvos help this dream come true.

The Chassidic masters emphasize how Hashem controls the world according to our actions. For example, if we overlook someone's faults, Hashem will "overlook" some of ours (see *Rosh HaShanah* 17a). Therefore, Hashem's revelation in this world depends on our connection with Him.

Some facets of the universe encourage this contact more than others. In space, Eretz Yisrael is closest to Hashem. In time, Shabbos is. With regard to people, those who observe mitzvos reach Hashem more easily than others do. Then there are those places, times, and individuals that undermine recognition of Him. Auschwitz, Tishah B'Av, and Amalek come to mind. Even

within a single human being, the head and heart are more spiritual than, say, the feet.

Thus, if Zecharyah prophesied that Hashem's "feet" will stand on Har HaZeisim, he must have envisioned a revelation so clear that even those farthest from Hashem will achieve closeness.

We can now understand one more detail of that event. According to the Midrash, the ten tribes were divided into three groups, each exiled to a more distant and formidable land. The last group became so assimilated that these Jews are almost unrecognizable. One day, though, Hashem will create tunnels through which they'll crawl to Har HaZeisim and rejoin their nation. When Hashem returns to this mountain, even they will experience it. And just as the Jewish people will finally unite in unequivocal awareness of Hashem, so will all creation.

NOTES:

בענין התחלת החורבן ממעשה עוזיה המלך עיי דברי מו"ר הר"מ אייזמאן שליט"א בביאורו לספר דברי הימים-ב (הוצאת ארטסקרול) קאפיטאל כו, ובפירוש נחלת צבי של הרש"ר הירש זצ"ל על ספר ישעיה.

עיי במד' תנחומא (צו, יג), וינעו אמות הספים (ישעיה ו, ד), הם המזוזות מזוזות ההיכל, מקול הקורא, מקול המלאכים הקוראים הוא היה יום הרעש שנאמר בו (זכריה יד, ה) ונסתם כאשר נסתם מפני הרעש בימי עזיה מלך יהודה וגוי. כי ביום שעבד עזיה להקטיר בהיכל רעשו שמים וארץ.

עיי במד' איכ"כ (פתיחתא כה), מן העיר להר הזיתים...א"ר יונתן שלש שנים ומחצה עשתה השכינה יושבת על הר הזיתים סבורה שמא ישראל יעשו תשובה ולא עשו והיתה בת קול מכרזת ואומרת (ירמיה ג) שובו בנים שובבים.

עיי אור עולם של הרמ"ד וואלי שכותב אע"פ שחזרה אליו היונה כי עדיין לא מצאה מנוח לכף רגלה עם כל זה הביאה לו סימן של אור ושל שלום, כי

הזית רומז לשנים אלו כידוע לפי שממנו השמן המאיר והגורם את השלום...ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב. וענין אמרו לעת ערב הוא בסוד והיה לעת ערב יהיה אור, כי גילוי אורו של האי דרגא עילאה כופה את הדינים אפילו לעת ערב שהוא זמן שלטתן.

בענין הרגל יש להעיר עוד שדוד המלך עלה על ההר יחף. וגם היונה לא מצאה מנוח לכף רגליו.

ע"י דעת תבונות (עמ' רג), כשירצה האדון ב"ה להראות כבודו לנביא כמו מטיב ומרחם יתדמה לו כזקן...וכשירצה להראותו כמו גבור על איוביו יראה כבחור איש מלחמה...

ע"י פסק"ר (לב, י), מהו לאמר לאסורים צאו, ששלש גליות נעשו עשרת השבטים אחת גלתה לסמבטיון ואחת גלתה לפניו מסמבטיון ואחת גלתה לדפנו של רבלתה ונבלעה שם (הושע ח, ח) נבלע ישראל...ואילו שנבלעו ברבלתה הקב"ה עושה להם מחילים מחילים מלמטן והם מחלדין בהם עד שהם באים תחת הר הזיתים שבירושלים והקב"ה עומד עליו והוא נבקע להם עולים בתוכו כמו שזכריה אומר ועמדו רגליו ביום ההוא על הר הזיתים אשר לפני ירושלים מקדם ונבקע הר הזיתים חציו מזרחה וימה וגו'.

וכתוב בספר צח ורדום (הובא בחבת ירושלים מב.), נראה שקבורת הר הזיתים שהוא מקום קבורת מתי ירושלים עדיפא בזה משאר הארצות שבא"י שהיינו בשביל גלגול מחילות דמשמע ששם תחת הר הזיתים יהיה להם קומה לכל מתי עולם. ע"כ.

וע"י דברי מהר"ל בספר נצח ישראל פל"ד



CITADELS OF TORAH IN EXILE

YAVNEH: THE BACKBONE OF THE EXILED NATION

Give me Yavneh and its Sages,” R. Yochanan ben Zakai asked of the Roman emperor Vespasian. The Beis HaMikdash was to be destroyed, and R. Yochanan wanted to preserve Torah life even without it. History has vindicated his request. Yavneh’s scholars enacted many laws basic to Jewish survival and guided the Jews through a stormy period, transmitting Torah to the next generation.

To uncover the essence of Yavneh, let us examine several statements originating there. The Gemara recollects that one student in Yavneh offered 150 reasons a dead *sheretz* should be ritually pure (*tahor*) (see *Eruvin* 13b). Yet a *sheretz* is any of eight small animals (e.g., mice) that the Torah declares unclean (*tamei*) (see VaYikra 11:29ff.). What did this pupil attempt to accomplish through his mental gymnastics? No logic can change the Torah!

The Gemara attests that the Sages of Yavneh used to say:

I am a creature, and my unlearned friend is a creature. I work in the city, and he in the field. I rise early for my work, and he rises early for his. Just as he doesn't interfere with my business, I don't interfere with his. Perhaps you will say he is correct, because, even if he studied Torah, he would not excel. That is not true, for whether one learns a lot or a little, he is rewarded if he is sincere.

(*Berachos* 17a, as explained by Rashi)

This saying certainly makes sense, but why is it unique to Yavneh?

R. Tzadok HaKohen explains the first Gemara by stating that a Jewish soul is inseparable from Hashem. Therefore, however bad things may seem, deep down all is well. Even the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash is only temporary and will allow for an even holier edifice in the future. This is why our Sages tell us Mashiach will be born on Tishah B'Av: The destruction on that date facilitates the birth of this ultimate Jewish leader. Similarly, R. Tzadok continues, the student in Yavneh demonstrated this principle with his 150 reasons for purifying a *sheretz*. He knew his expositions did not affect the law, but he wanted to show that even an impure animal has redeeming features. Yavneh itself teaches this idea. The root of "Yavneh" (יבנה) means "build" (בנה) for there the Sages "rebuilt" the Jewish people.

In light of R. Tzadok's view, we realize the wisdom of Yavneh's aphorism. If a Jew is inextricably bound to Hashem, he need not accomplish anything to retain His favor. He must merely try his best to carry out the Divine will.

We think we must produce something to succeed: An employee must make a certain number of sales, repair a set number of cars, or complete a fixed number of tax returns; in most schools, a pupil must receive a passing grade to graduate. In day-to-day living, we set standards of success: Is my car as well-equipped as the one next door? Did I finish enough pages in my study session?

Yavneh refutes all such yardsticks. Even as the Beis HaMikdash burns — the ultimate failure — Mashiach is born to start rebuilding an even loftier structure. Hashem demands only that we do our utmost, using the talents and strengths He has given us to perform His mitzvos. It doesn't matter if our Torah study is limited; what matters is sincerity and maximum effort. They make us truly successful.

This notion leads us to one more crucial legacy of Yavneh — the completion of the Shemoneh Esrei, the core of our thrice-daily prayer service. This prayer asks that Hashem provide all the essentials of our well-being, and it acknowledges Him as our only help. Though “*shemoneh esrei*” means “eighteen,” the original number of blessings in this prayer, the Gemara explains that a nineteenth was introduced: One day a sage named Shimon HaPekuli was reciting the existing eighteen before Rabban Gamliel. Rabban Gamliel asked if anyone present could add a blessing for protection from heretics, whereupon Shimon HaKatan rose and composed one (see *Berachos* 28b). The prayer, remains the Shemoneh Esrei, however.

The Gemara informs us that the original eighteen blessings correspond to man's eighteen vertebrae; the nineteenth blessing parallels a small nineteenth vertebra.

The Shemoneh Esrei is indeed the “backbone” of our exist-

ence, the vehicle through which we communicate our needs to Hashem, much as the spinal nervous system tells the brain what each part of the body requires. The Kabbalists observe that our recitation of this prayer also perfects the world at the highest level, rectifying any defects caused by human failure and allowing our needs to be met. So, too, the brain uses the nervous system to meet the body's needs. According to the Ben Yehoyada, Shimon HaPekuli and Rabban Gamliel were delving into these depths of the Shemoneh Esrei.

Various commentators understand the nineteenth vertebra as the indestructible *luz* bone, from which (according to the Midrash) Hashem will resurrect the dead in the future. Likewise, with the Beis HaMikdash destroyed and the exile beginning, malignant heresy could have caused the "death" of the Jewish people. By adding a blessing for protection from this insidious force, the Sages sought to "resurrect" their nation and render it indestructible as well. What better place for this enactment than Yavneh, where destruction has no meaning?

One more interesting fact about the *luz* and Yavneh: The Midrash states that this bone is named *luz* because it resembles the *luz* nut (a type of almond). To reveal the fate of the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem showed the prophet Yirmeyahu a stick fashioned from an almond tree (see Yirmeyahu 1:11). The *Talmud Yerushalmi* explains that, just as the *luz* takes twenty-one days to ripen once it has blossomed, there were only twenty-one days from the breach of Yerushalayim (on 17 Tammuz) to the fall of the Beis HaMikdash on Tishah B'Av. Yet the *luz* also represents the revival of the Beis HaMikdash and the Jewish people. This process began even before the destruction, when R. Yochanan ben Zakkai rescued Yavneh and its Sages.

NOTES:

איתא בגמרא (גיטין נו:), [אספסינוס] אמר [לרי יוחנן בן זכאי], מיזל אזילנא ואינש אחרינא משדרנא, אלא בעי מינאי מידי דאתן לך. אמר ליה תן לי יבנה וחכמיה.

לדברי הרב צדוק ע"י תקנת השבין שמאריך בענין זה וכותב (פא:), ועל שם זה נקרא יבנה שהם העוסקים בבנינו של עולם ובית השלישי שיבנה במהרה בימינו שלתכלית זה היה החורבן. ע"כ. ואם זה שם העיר מסתברא הוא שזה גם הכח של אותו מקום.

(בר"ר כח, ג) אדריאנוס שחיק עצמות שאל את רבי יהושע בן חנניא א"ל מהיכן הקב"ה מציץ את האדם לעתיד לבא, א"ל מלוז של שדרה. ע"כ, ועי' רד"ל שם שמביא בשם הרוקח שזה החוליא קטנה שבשדרה שבברכות (כח:). ועי' גם מגדים חדשים על ברכות (כח:) בענין זה.

ועי' בזוה"ק (ח"א קלז.) ובתפארת צבי שם לאריכות בענין הלז.

במדרש (קה"ר יב, א; ועי' גם ויק"ר יח, א), וינאץ השקד (קהלת יב, ה), ר' לוי אמר זה לז של שדרה.

איתא בירושלמי תענית (פ"ד ה"ה), אמר רבי אבונה סימנא (ירמיה א, יא) מקל שקד אני רואה, מה הלז הזה משהוא מוציא את ניצו ועד שהוא גומר את פירותיו עשרים ואחד יום כך מיום שהובקעה העיר ועד יום שחרב הבית עשרים ואחד יום. (ועי' גם בכורות ח:).

ויש להוסיף על דברינו בפנים דבזוה"ק (ח"א קלז.) איתא דלז הוא כרישא דחויא. וגם יודעים מהגמרא שמי שלא כרע במודים שדרתו נעשה נחש. וראינו מדברי ר' צדוק החשיבות במה שהתלמיד ותיק טיהר השרץ בק"ן דרכים ביבנה. והאור החיים הק' כותב בפי' שמנה שרצים דנחש הוא המקור של השמונה שרצים (עי' בספר עדרי צאן על פי' שמיני עוד מזה). ואם כן גם בזה יש קשר בין יבנה ללז של שדרה שהיא המקום שיכול להחיות הבית המקדש ממיתתו. ולא הארכנו בפנים בענין הלז כי יש גם עיר בארץ ישראל שנקרא לז, והיא בית אל ככתוב בתורה. אבל רואים שגם ליבנה יש בחינה מאותו לז.

BETAR. CITY OF PRIDE

The city of Betar is embedded in the Jewish national consciousness. Even when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Torah study continued in Betar. The Gemara reports that Betar boasted 400 schools, with 400 teachers in each (see *Gittin* 58a), symbolizing — according to Maharal — the city's total commitment to Torah scholarship. Furthermore, the Bar Kochva revolt ended in Betar (on Tishah B'Av, over fifty years after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash). Following this defeat, hundreds of thousands of corpses remained unburied by order of the victorious Roman general Hadrian. When permission was finally granted, the Jews discovered a great miracle — the corpses had not decomposed. In recognition of this event, the Sages of Yavneh added a new blessing to the Grace after Meals, "Blessed are You, Hashem,... Who is good and does good." The Gemara explains that this twofold blessing represents a twofold miracle: First, the bodies remained intact; sec-

ond, they were eventually laid to rest (see *Berachos* 48b). This event took place on Tu B'Av (15 Av) and is one reason for the semi-holiday that day.

The miraculousness of this incident notwithstanding, why institute a blessing to remember it, and why in the Grace after Meals? Why not in our daily prayers? Alternatively, why not compose a commemorative prayer to be said on Tu B'Av? Perhaps even more difficult, not a hint of Betar is found in the blessing in question; someone could recite it all his life without realizing its history. If this miracle is so important, why not mark it more clearly?

Let us recount the events leading to Betar's defeat, as described by the Gemara (see *Gittin* 57a). For every baby born, the people of Betar planted a cedar. When a couple wed, they made the wedding canopy out of the wood of these trees. One day, the Roman emperor's daughter was passing by when her carriage broke. To repair it, her attendants cut down a cedar planted for a local boy. The Jews fought this entourage until they retrieved the tree. Upon hearing about this scuffle, the emperor destroyed Betar.

From this account, R. Tzadok HaKohen derives the essence of Betar: pride.

Pride is necessary in serving Hashem. Sometimes we feel unimportant, our actions mere twitters in the colossal cosmos. But we must realize that what we do matters to Hashem and affects the universe. The people of Betar understood this truth and therefore built a gigantic infrastructure for Torah scholarship, the most potent method of interacting with the world. Similarly, the cedars planted at the birth of a child symbolized the lofty heights he could reach by living a full Jewish life.

Yet earthly pride can be dangerous. When Betar succumbed to this pitfall, one of its cedars was felled and used for the emperor's chariot. The pride of Betar now enhanced the enemy's arrogance and led to the ill-advised skirmish that caused the city's downfall.

R. Tzadok writes that this misdirected pride prompted the ultimate degradation: to be left unburied and unattended amid wild animals. But part of Betar's pride was justified, since every Jew should be proud of his special relationship with Hashem. Hence the city's mitigated punishment: The bodies did not deteriorate, and finally they were buried with dignity.

This fate, R. Tzadok says, is best remembered in the Grace after Meals, because eating habits reflect pride. We imagine a glutton clutching a whole leg of lamb in one hand and a huge mug of beer in the other. Someone can boast of his affluence by serving the most expensive delicacies. Simply put, food can make a person haughty. After eating, we therefore remind ourselves that Hashem's goodness provides our food, so we should pride ourselves only on serving Him. We need not mention the miracle of Betar; it's the lesson that matters. The Sages grasped the opportunity to interject this idea into a most crucial area of everyday life.

This explanation clarifies another reason for the destruction of Betar. The Midrash describes how, when the Beis HaMikdash stood, certain high-handed residents of Yerushalayim swindled visitors from Betar. Thus, when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the people of this town lit candles in celebration. Because of this disregard for national tragedy, Betar, too, perished. This fault is another manifestation of misguided pride, for the residents of Betar expected to prosper without Yerushalayim.

With this flaw in mind, we can understand the rise and fall of Bar Kochva and his army. Bar Kochva was more than a strongman whose bare hands caught Roman-catapulted stones and hurled them back at the enemy. R. Akiva considered him a possible Mashiach, who would lead the Jews back to Hashem. Bar Kochva was a great man, excelling in all areas of Torah. But the Midrash records that his forces told Hashem, "Don't help us, but don't help the enemy either." Bar Kochva and his men were confident that, if Hashem would not interfere, they could win without His assistance. Theirs was a grave blunder.

This arrogance was also the source of Bar Kochva's own fatal mistake. When informants falsely accused his uncle R. Elazar HaModai of collusion with the enemy, Bar Kochva overreacted, causing this great scholar's demise. The Midrash reveals that R. Elazar's Torah study was actually protecting Betar from the Romans. Bar Kochva's strength blinded him to this fact.

Betar's Jewish pride could have speedily rebuilt the Beis HaMikdash. Instead it doomed the nation to prolonged exile. Reciting the relevant blessing in the Grace after Meals can help rectify this error, reminding us to appreciate both the Jewish people and its Source.

NOTES:

איתא בגמ' (ברכות מח:) הטוב והמטיב ביבנה תקנוה כנגד הרוגי ביתר. דאמר רב מתנא אותו היום שניתנו הרוגי ביתר לקבורה תקנו ביבנה הטוב והמטיב, הטוב שלא הסריחו, והמטיב שניתנו לקבורה.

לדברי ר' צדוק ע"י פרי צדיק ח"ה (כא:), ומביא מהגמרא (סנהדרין מו:) שקבורה משום בזיוני.

בראש השנה (יח:) אמר רב פפא שאני תשעה באב, הואיל והוכפלו בו צרות, דאמר מר בתשעה באב חרב הבית בראשונה ובשניה, ונלכדה ביתר,

ונחרשה העיר

בענין ט"ו באב ע"י תענית (לא), רב מתנה אמר יום שנתנו הרוגי ביתר לקבורה.

בגיטין (נז.), אשקא דריספק חריב ביתר, דהוו נהיגי כי הוה מתיליד ינוקא שתלי ארזא, ינוקתא שתלי תורניתא, וכי הוו מינסבי, קייצי להו ועבדו גנא.

ושם (נח.) אמר רבה בר בר חנה א"ר יוחנן ארבעים סאה קצוצי תפילין נמצאו בראשי הרוגי ביתר רבי ינאי ברבי ישמעאל אמר שלש קופות של ארבעים ארבעים סאה. במתניתא תנא ארבעים קופות של שלש סאין. וע"י מהר"ל בח"י אגדות שם.

וע"י גם שם לענין בתי כנסיות בביתר, ובמהר"ל שם. ואיתא עוד (סנהדרין יז:), אמר רב יהודה אמר רב כל עיר שאין בה שנים לדבר ואחד לשמוע אין מושיבין בה סנהדרין. ובביתר הוו שלשה.

במדרש (איכ"ר ב, ד), חמשים ושתים שנה עשתה ביתר אחר חורבן הבית ולמה נחרבה על שהדליקו נרות לחורבן בית המקדש, ולמה הדליקו, אמר הבוליוטין שבירושלים היו יושבין באמצע המדינה...

וכן (איכ"ר ב, ד), בשעה שהיו יוצאין למלחמה היו אומרים לא תסעוד ולא תכסיף.

ושם במדרש, שלש שנים ומחצה הקיף אדריאנוס קיסר לביתר והיה שם רבי אלעזר המודעי עסוק בשקו ובתעניתו ובכל יום ויום מתפלל ואומר רבשי"ע אל תשב בדין היום ולבסוף נתן דעתו לחזור...מיד גרמו עונות ונלכדה ביתר ונהרג בן כוזיבא.

עוד בענין בר כוכבא ע"י בספר הליקוטאים (פ' וישב כג:), ודברי ר' צדוק באז"ל (ט:) תה"ש (יח:), ויש"ק (יב:).

BNEI BRAK: HOME OF R. AKIVA

Bnei Brak is synonymous with Torah scholarship, being the home of the Chazon Ish and Ponovezh Yeshivah. The city is perhaps less well-known as belonging to the tribe of Dan (see Yehoshua 19:45). R. Akiva's court was also located there (see *Sanhedrin* 32b). To understand Bnei Brak's essence, let us focus first on other Talmudic references to this town and then on R. Akiva.

The Gemara relates that Rami bar Yechezkel once saw goats eating figs in Bnei Brak (see *Kesubos* 111b). The figs were so fresh that they oozed honey, and milk poured from the goats' udders. When the honey and milk intermingled into a stream, Rami bar Yechezkel remarked that this was the "land flowing with milk and honey" the Jews were promised.

Why should this promise be fulfilled in Bnei Brak? And what is so special about milk and honey? The Torah praises Eretz Yisrael as "A land of wheat, barley, vine, fig, and pomegranate;

a land of oil olives and honey” (Devarim 8:8). Milk is not mentioned, and though honey is, it comes from dates, not figs. Finally, why must the milk and honey intermingle?

Let us examine another appearance of this combination. Describing the nation of Israel, Shir HaShirim states, “Your lips, my bride, drip honey; honey and milk are under your tongue, and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Levanon” (4:11). Midrashim find this verse symbolic of Torah, which synthesizes sweetness (honey) and purity (milk). “Under your tongue” alludes to the oral Torah.

At first glance, it seems strange to compare the Torah to milk and honey. No one would make such a declaration about the American Constitution or any other code of law. A similar anomaly occurs on Simchas Torah, when we dance holding Torah scrolls. Did anyone dance with the Magna Carta? What makes the Torah different from other legal systems?

Before giving the Torah on Mount Sinai, Hashem said, “And now, if you surely listen to My voice [and] observe My covenant, you shall be My treasure among all peoples, for Mine is the entire world. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...” (Shemos 19:5-6). Clearly, the Torah is no mere civil law designed to insure national harmony. Such a system would not be called a “covenant” with Hashem, nor would it turn its adherents into “a beloved treasure,” “a kingdom of priests,” and “a holy nation.” A covenant implies a relationship with Hashem Himself. The Torah therefore governs every aspect of life, changing a mundane existence into a sacred mission. Thus, the Torah becomes an entity in itself, almost a living organism. Its covenant elevates us to the pinnacle of human potential. It is something worth dancing for.

Hashem gave a dual Torah at Sinai: the Torah written in our Torah scrolls and the oral explanation thereof, subsequently recorded in the Mishnah. Which is more precious: the written Torah, the exact words of Hashem as dictated to Moshe; or the oral Torah, subject to human interpretation and transmission? The Sefas Emes answers with a midrash:

Before the Jews entered Eretz Yisrael, after eating the *man* that had fallen from heaven, they recited only the first blessing of Grace after Meals — the blessing that ends, “Blessed are You, Hashem, Who nourishes all.” When they came into the land and ate its produce, however, they added the second blessing, which concludes, “Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for the nourishment.” Hashem favors this second blessing, for nothing is as dear to Him as Eretz Yisrael, the land He chose for us. As the *navi* writes, “On that day I raised My hand to them to bring them out of the land of Egypt [and] into a land that I had spied out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is an ornament for all the lands” (Yechezkel 20:6).

The Sefas Emes explains that the *man* fell from heaven, whereas the bounty of Eretz Yisrael was cultivated by human hands. Similarly, the written Torah was given verbatim by Hashem. The oral Torah, though, must be transmitted faithfully from teacher to disciple, from one generation to the next. Hashem prefers the second blessing of Grace after Meals over the first, for He prefers the fruits of our labors in Eretz Yisrael over the sustenance He provided in the wilderness. The verse proves this fact by calling Eretz Yisrael a land “flowing with milk and honey.” Likewise, concludes the Sefas Emes, the “honey and milk under our tongues” — the oral Torah — pleases Hashem even more than His written Torah. For we must strive to convey

the oral tradition.

Eretz Yisrael, then, represents the opportunity to learn and fulfill the laws of the oral Torah. And since milk and honey flowed together in Bnei Brak, that city must be a primary site of oral Torah study. That's why R. Akiva located himself there.

Rema MiPano notes that Moshe Rabbeinu personifies the written Torah, known as "the Torah of Moshe" (Malachi 3:22). R. Akiva epitomizes the oral Torah, for any anonymous portion of the Mishnah, Tosefta, Sifra, or Sifri is attributed to his disciples (see *Sanhedrin* 86a). R. Tzadok HaKohen adds that the aggadic account of receiving the Torah appears in the ninth chapter of tractate *Shabbos*, which begins and is called, "R. Akiva Says"! (R. Tzadok writes that this source also connects the two forms of Torah, since the chapter named for the preeminent teacher of the oral Torah discusses mainly the giving of the written Torah.) Bnei Brak was the rightful home of R. Akiva. Since it stimulated study of the oral Torah, it was perfect for the primary transmitter of that Torah. We can also understand why the Haggadah teaches us that R. Akiva and the other Tannaim conducted the Pesach seder in Bnei Brak. The seder is a primary vehicle for transmitting Torah orally to one's children and disciples. To paraphrase the Haggadah, the more one *speaks* about the exodus, the more praiseworthy he becomes. In fact, the Kabbalists view "Pesach" as a contraction of "*peh sach*" (speaking mouth). Perhaps only Bnei Brak was worthy of R. Akiva's distinguished seder.

One last reference to Bnei Brak in the Talmud: Astoundingly, descendants of Haman taught Torah in this city (see *Gittin* 57a). Haman, the Amalekite who wanted to destroy the Jews, spawned others who transmitted Torah. And where? In Bnei Brak! Why?

The Gemara states that the Jews reaccepted the Torah — the oral Torah, say the commentators — after the Purim miracle (see *Shabbos* 88a, in the chapter of R. Akiva). The rabbis themselves instituted Purim, exercising their authority to enact laws as part of the oral Torah. It is therefore befitting that Haman's progeny taught Torah in the citadel of the oral Torah, Bnei Brak. And since the city belongs to Dan, whom Haman's ancestor Amalek attacked in the wilderness, Bnei Brak is the perfect place for the Purim villain to make restitution.

NOTES:

איתא במדרש (שהש"ר א' דף ו.), אי מה השמן מר מתחלתו ומתוק בסופו יכול אף דברי תורה כן ת"ל דבש וחלב, מה הם מתוקין אף דברי תורה מתוקין. וע"ע בשיהש"ר (כח.) ובילקוט שמעוני (ח"ב תתקכט).

בענין שייכות זבת חלב ודבש לתורה עיי בספר ארצות החיים שמביא (עמ' לה), ס"ת [זבת חלב ודבש] שב"ת, עמ"ש רז"ל דאמרה תורה זה הולך לשדהו וזה לכרמו תורה מה תהא עליה ואמר הקב"ה נתתי השבת לעסוק בתורה. איתא במדרש (במד"ר כג, ז), עד שלא נכנסו לארץ ישראל לא היו מברכין אלא ברכה אחת הזן את הכל, משנכנסו לארץ ישראל היו מברכין על הארץ ועל המזון.

עיי דברי השפת אמת בפי' מסעי (שנת תרס"ד).

עיי דברי העשרה מאמרות (מאמר חקור הדין ח"ה פי"א)

לדברי הרב צדוק הכהן עיי פרי צדיק (ח"ב מב).

הקשר בין דן לעמוקה שמעתי ממו"ר הרה"ג רנ"מ לנסקי שליט"א.

TEVERYA: NAVEL OF THE LAND

Teverya is the city of the Jewish people's future. Once uprooted from the Beis HaMikdash, the Sanhedrin endured ten exiles (see *Rosh HaShanah* 31b). The last was Teverya, where the Gemara promises the Sanhedrin will be reestablished. Rambam explains that it will reconvene in Teverya and then return to the Beis HaMikdash. Additionally, the Zohar states that Mashiach will reveal himself in the Galil region of Eretz Yisrael, which most commentators take to mean Teverya, the major city of the Lower Galil. Eliyahu HaNavi will announce the arrival of Mashiach in the Teverya Sanhedrin. Why will Jewish leadership reemerge in Teverya?

As evidence of this future renaissance, the aforementioned gemara cites a verse well known to us from "*Lechah Dodi*": "Shake yourself from the dust; arise..." (Yeshayahu 52:2). The Sanhedrin will be told to shake off the dust of Teverya, arise, and return to Yerushalayim.

Alternatively, according to the Midrash, just as Hashem removed Iyov from his figurative trash heap, He will “dust off” the Beis HaMikdash and rebuild it. The Midrash concludes that, until now, man has built the Temple, and man has destroyed it; but Hashem will erect the next Beis HaMikdash, making it indestructible.

In another link to Iyov, R. Yochanan asserts that this Tanach figure actually returned from the Babylonian exile and built a *beis midrash* in Teverya (see *Bava Basra* 15a)! This city is the place for Iyov. His resurgence after catastrophe parallels the national revival — via the Sanhedrin and Mashiach — in Teverya.

For the Zohar, “Shake yourself from the dust; arise...” symbolizes the resurrection of the dead. Mortal man was fashioned from dust. In the future, though, Hashem will remake man without dust, so he will never die. Elsewhere, the Zohar emphasizes that, when Hashem resurrects the dead, there will be legions of newly revived people in the Galil, meaning (according to most commentators) Teverya.

We see that the verse in question refers to both the Beis HaMikdash and rebirth. For the Temple will not merely be rebuilt; it will be “reborn” as an eternal structure, just as the dead will gain immortality. But since the Gemara also applies the verse to Teverya and the Sanhedrin, that city must be suitable for the Sanhedrin and Mashiach even in exile, preparing them for their eventual emergence. We can now restate our original question: What makes Teverya a place of rebirth?

The Gemara relates “Teverya” (טבריה) to the word “*tabur*” (טבור) (navel), for the city is the “navel” of Eretz Yisrael (see *Megillah* 6a). The Midrash likens the Sanhedrin itself to a navel:

Just as a fetus receives its sustenance through its navel, the Jewish nation is sustained by the Sanhedrin. Various commentators therefore maintain that, when the Sanhedrin left the Beis HaMikdash, it retreated to the navel of Eretz Yisrael.

The Vilna Gaon offers another important concept. Exile resembles pregnancy, whose pain peaks before and during birth. After relatively brief “birth pangs,” Mashiach will be born, ending Jewish exile and beginning redemption.

Meanwhile, Mashiach is apparently an embryo, nourished by the “navel” of Eretz Yisrael, Teverya. Thus, he will first appear there. And Eliyahu HaNavi will announce his arrival in the Sanhedrin, which was exiled there. From Teverya, the Sanhedrin will return to Yerushalayim with Mashiach, and the Jewish people will be reborn, never to be reexiled.

This “navel” serves an even more profound function. The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 97a) states that the world will exist 6,000 years. Then it will be destroyed, remaining in ruins for 1,000 years, until Hashem creates *olam haba*. The Vilna Gaon explains that, in this seventh millennium, the righteous will begin receiving their reward for the mitzvos they performed in this world. Just as six work days prepare us for the seventh day, the holy Shabbos, there are six millennia in which to prepare for the seventh. During those thousand years, the wicked will suffer, but the righteous will be protected like a baby in the womb. Through the navel, they will savor their recompense, just as we revel in the pleasures of Shabbos. Consequently, the Gaon writes, the navel today represents this future delight.

The Gaon’s disciples take this idea further. Though our bliss will not begin in earnest until the seventh millennium, we will experience a touch of it at the end of the sixth, when Mashiach arrives.

If the seventh millennium corresponds to Shabbos, the end of the sixth should correspond to *erev Shabbos* (Friday afternoon), when we make our final preparations for this holy day by setting the table, bathing, etc. Regarding *erev Shabbos*, the people of Teverya excelled, starting Shabbos well before sunset (see *Shabbos* 118b). (The Chida speculates that, by virtue of this meticulous observance, the Sanhedrin will return to Teverya as redemption begins). For *erev Shabbos* approximates the Messianic age, when the first traces of *olam haba* will be felt. Teverya experiences this redemption even now and reflects it by beginning Shabbos early.

We can now understand why Teverya has hot springs. Another name for Teverya is "Chamas," as in "*cham*" (hot) (see *Megillah* 6a). As the Gemara explains, during the flood in Noach's time, hot water from the earth's interior poured forth in addition to rain. When the deluge subsided, Hashem left the resulting hot springs in three locations, including Teverya (see *Sanhedrin* 108a). In the Zohar, these springs represent the wellsprings of knowledge that will flow forth during the sixth century of the sixth millennium. At that time, Hashem will increase knowledge in the world in order to prepare it for the seventh millennium, just as a person prepares *erev Shabbos* for Shabbos. Scripture alludes to this phase by stating that, when Noach was six centuries old, all the wellsprings of the depths split open.

The Kabbalists add that Noach's era was ripe for receiving the Torah. However, that decadent generation turned the life-sustaining water of Torah into the destructive flood. Nevertheless, we will reaccept the Torah late in the sixth millennium, just as the "*erev Shabbos*" of Mashiach prepares us for the "Shab-

bos" of the seventh millennium. Meanwhile a trickle of this water has remained since the flood, foreshadowing when the world will be "flooded" with Torah knowledge. Teverya is the site of these springs, because it embodies this prelude to *olam haba*. Therefore, even now, a person can enjoy and heal via the hot springs of Teverya.

One famous recipient of these benefits was R. Shimon bar Yochai. To escape the Romans, he hid in a cave for thirteen years with his son, R. Elazar. There, R. Shimon studied what became the basis of the holy Zohar. The Midrash relates that he and his son subsequently bathed in the hot springs of Teverya, which symbolize the outpouring of Torah possible in this world. Through the Torah taught by R. Shimon bar Yochai, the end of the sixth millennium — the period in which we live — will usher in our final redemption. The wellsprings of Teverya have assisted this process. For the "navel" of Eretz Yisrael represents the extent of *olam haba* that can be experienced in this world.

NOTES:

עיי רמב"ם (הלי סנהדרין יד, יב).

עיי בזה"ק (ח"ב ז:) בההוא זמנא יתער מלכא משיחא לנפקא מגו גנתא דעדן מההוא אתר דאתקרי ק"ן צפ"ר ויתער בארעא דגליל, ע"כ, ועיי דברי ניצוצי אורות שכותב שזה ^{צפ"ר} טבריא ושם יתקיים הבשורה האמורה במלאכי הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אליהו הנביא יען שאמרו בעירובין כי אתי אליהו ויבשר בשורה לב"ד הגדול אתי וב"ד הגדול הוא בטבריא. ע"כ. ועיי גם ילקוט שמעוני (ויחי רמז קסא), א"ר יוחנן טבריה היא משלמת למשיח שנאמר (כו, ו) תרמסנה רגל רגלי עני פעמי דלים, מה כתיב אחריו והוכן בחדס כסא, ע"כ.

איתא בפס"ר (כו, ז) אמר לה ירמיה דומה מכתך למכת של איוב... לאיוב נערתני מן אשפה ועליך הוא אומר התנערי מעפר קומי שבי ירושלים, בשר ודם

בנה אותך בשר ודם החריבך, אבל לעתיד לבא אני בונה אותך שכן כתב בונה ירושלים ה' נדחי ישראל יכנס.

איתא בזוה"ק (ח"א קלד.) ת"ר לעתיד לבא הקב"ה מחיה את המתים וינער אותם מעפרם שלא יהיו בנין עפר כמות שהיו בתחלה שנבראו מעפר ממש דבר שאינו מתקיים, ע"כ. ואיתא עוד (ח"ב י.), קב"ה יתער מתייא דארעא קדישא וייקומון חיילין חיילין בארעא דגליל, ע"כ. עיי גם בזוה"ק (ח"ג ו:).

איתא במדרש תנחומא (כי תשא ב) שררך אגן הסהר אל יחסר המזג (שה"ש ז, ג). שררך זה סנהדרין...מה השרר הזה כל זמן שהתינוק נתון במעי אמו פיו סתום ומן השרר הוא אוכל כך ישראל אין אוכלין אלא מסנהדרין לפיכך נמשלו כשרר. ע"כ. ועיי גם במס' סנהדרין (לו.).

עיי גר"א (יהל אור על זוה"ק ח"ב קי"ט:), הובא בסידור אשי ישראל, עיי קלין [דצווחת אילת השחר על בנהא] הן עיי שנה הן נקראין חבלי משיח, שכל הגלות דומה להרה שמתקרבת הלידה כל יום והגאולה דומה ללידה כמ"ש (ישעיה סו, ח) היולד גוי כוי כי ילדה ציון כוי...צער הריון שהוא הגלות, וכשיושבת על המשבר זהו חבלי משיח. ע"כ. וכותב עוד (יהל אור על זוה"ק ח"ג סז:): האילה היא השכינה וצועקת בעת לידתה הן השבעים שנים הנ"ל וע"י נשיכת החויה לתלמידי חכמים בעניות היא יולדת משיח.

עיי גר"א (בפירושו על ספד"צ פ"א ד"ה שביעאה עליהו), וכלם חוזרים לבינה לבטן אמם והוא סוד חורבן העולם הזה שמתנהג ע"י בינה עלמא עלאה...וזהו סוד השבת אלא ששבת אינה חוזרת לשרשה אל בינה אלא בינה מאיר לה...אבל העה"ב דוגמת יום הכיפורים, ע"כ, ובספר אמת ליעקב איתא (מערכת רי"ש אות עד), דרבי עקיבא הגיע לני שיערי בינה אם כן משום הכי נקבר בטבריא, גם נלע"ד דזהו סוד גדול דיום הריגת רע"ק היה ביוה"כ כנודע והוא דכבר ידוע דיוה"כ הוא בבינה עיי ואת זו דרש רע"ק אשריכם ישראל לפני מ"י אתם מטהרים ומ"י מטהר אתכם דהיינו נ' שיערי בינה. ע"כ.

איתא ביהל אור (על זוה"ק ח"ב רנב:) זהו ענג ושעשוע כידוע והוא באדם טבור כמ"ש שררך אגן הסהר...שלכן בבטן אמו הטבור פתוח ואוכל ממה שאמו אוכלת והוא אמצעייתא דעלמא ומשם יוצא המזון לעולם, ושם הוא שכר טוב הצפון לצדיקים לע"ל שעליו אמר דוד תערוך לפני שלחן...וזהו הענין שכל ימות החול אסור להמשך אחר התענוגים ובשבת מצוה גדולה להתענג.

איתא בפתחי שערים (ח"ב עו:) ולכך אז צדיקים שבעוה"ז יתענגו על רוב שלום בטובת עוה"ז והוא הטבור מקום העונג והוא סוד גן עדן שבו עונג נשמות הצדקים... ולכן ארז"ל כל הנביאים לא נתנבאו אלא כו' שאז עדיין זמן הנהגת עוה"ז סוף אלף הששי דרגא דנביאים... אבל לעוה"ב עין לא ראתה שאז יעלו לאימא. (ועיי' דבריו עוד בענין טבור בח"א מה. וח"ב קיד ; ; ובבאר יצחק על מים אדירים עמ' שי.)

איתא בזוה"ק (ח"ב רג:) ת"ח ביומא שתיתאה כד מטא זמנא דערב דלוג לגו ההוא נהורא דאשא וסלקא לעילא לאעלא גו גווינן כדין מתתקנין ישראל לתתא ומסדרין סעודתין ומתקנין פתורין כל חד וחד פתוריה כדין חד שלהובא נפיק ובטש בההוא מדורא. כיון דבטש ביה מתגלגלן ההוא שלהובא וההוא מדורא ועאלין בנוקבא דתהומא רבא ואתתמרן ויתבת תמן.

עיי' דברי חיד"א בפתח עינים למגילה (ו.). ויש לציין כאן מה שכותב הרב חיים פלאגני בספרו ארצות חיים (עמ' יח), ימה של טבריא היא ארץ נפתלי (רש"י ישעיה ח) יראה דהיושבים בעיה"ק טבריא הם זריזים ביותר בכל עניניהם טפי משאר ארצות שא"י... כמו נפתלי אילה שלוחה.

איתא בזוה"ק (ח"א קיז.), ובשית מאה שנין לשתייתא יתפתחון תרעי דחכמתא לעילא ומבועי דחכמתא לתתא ויתתקן עלמא לאעלא בשביעאא כבר נש דמתתקן ביומא שתייתא מכי ערב שמשא לאעלא בשבתא אוף הכי נמי וסימנך בשנת שש מאות שנה לחיי נח וגוי' נבקעו כל מעיינות תהום רבה, ע"כ. ועיי' דברי הרמח"ל (אדיר במרום מהדורת הגר"ח פרידלנדר וצ"ל עמ' צד, וקצ-קצב). ועיי' בספר מאמר ציון (מאמר החמישי) עוד בענין אלך השביעי

כותב הרמח"ל (אדיר במרום עמ' לא), וסוף הכל היה בימי נח שהיה ממש כמו סוד משיח שבו היו נחים מן הגלגול ובו היה יכול לתקן העולם ברוב הקדושה, ובפרט בשש מאות שנה שהוא סוד מ"ש הזהור יתפתחון תרעי דחכמתא. כי באותו הזמן נגלה אור גדול מאד שהיה יכול לתקן כל העולם.

איתא בב"ר (עט, ו), נפק ואשכח מיליא משדכן ונתבטלה הגזירה אתון ואסחון בהדא בי בני דבית מוקד דטבריא א"ל בריה כל הדא טבתא עבדת לן טבריא ולית אנן מדכן יתה מן קטוליא אמר צריכים אנו לעשות טובה כדרך שהיו אבותינו עושים שהיו עושים איטלוסין ומוכרין בזול אמר צריכין אנו לדכיא טבריא.

יש להעיר שספר טבור הארץ מאת הרב משה קלורס עוסק כולו בקדושת

טבריא.

EVER HAYARDEN



EVER HAYARDEN: INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Torah, the Yarden River is the eastern border of Eretz Yisrael. The territories east of the Yarden, beyond the borders of the seven Canaanite nations, lie outside the land promised to the Jews leaving Egypt. Apparently, none of these areas would have fallen into Jewish hands without Sichon's foolhardy attack on the Jews who sought to cross his land en route to Eretz Yisrael. Moshe then conquered the Gilad and Bashan regions and divided them among Gad, Reuven, and half the tribe of Menashe.

Even after the conquest, Yehoshua called this land "*te-meiah*," spiritually unclean (Yehoshua 22:19). According to the

Midrash, the Shechinah cannot dwell there. And according to the *Mechilta*, unlike Eretz Yisrael, Ever HaYarden is not “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

The Gemara illustrates the area’s inferiority with the following incident: The Amora Ulla was traveling to Eretz Yisrael from Babylonia when one of his two burly escorts killed the other. When Ulla arrived in Eretz Yisrael and related what had happened, R. Yochanan wondered how such a thing could occur in the Holy Land. Ulla replied that it had happened before they’d crossed the Yarden (see *Nedarim* 22a). Obviously, the land east of the Yarden lacks the holiness of Eretz Yisrael proper.

However, there is another side to the story. First, Moshe conquered these lands, which should make them greater than those to the west, captured by his disciple Yehoshua. Gad is even praised for choosing the portion of land in which Moshe is buried (see Devarim 33:21 with Rashi). Furthermore, the Talmud divides Eretz Yisrael into three regions: Yehudah, the Galil, and Ever HaYarden. Surely Ever HaYarden shares the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael.

This dichotomy is easily explained. Midrashim state that Hashem promised Avraham ten nations (Bereishis 15:19-21), but three of them — east of the Yarden — belong to Ammon, Moav, and Esav until Mashiach comes. That is why the Jews had not planned on taking this territory; only when attacked did they capture part of it from Sichon and Og, who had conquered it from Moav and Ammon.

The Kabbalists understand that these three lands are potentially even more sacred than the other seven. For this world is built upon the number seven, as affirmed by the universal acceptance of a seven-day week, corresponding to the seven days

of Creation. The first six days of work lead to the holiness of Shabbos on the seventh. Yet complete sanctity requires the number ten, as tithing attests. Consequently, the three regions that complete our ten national lands represent the sublime holiness of the Messianic era and *olam haba*. At that time, Ever HaYarden will reach its full potential.

Meanwhile, these areas — though captured by Moshe — lack some of the sanctity found west of the Yarden. According to the Vilna Gaon, they correspond to evil forces that can be overpowered only with great difficulty. Thus, in its unfulfilled potential, Ever HaYarden belonged to Sichon and Og. The Midrash relates that each of these kings was as powerful as all those in Eretz Canaan combined. In fact, the latter paid homage to Sichon, because he had installed them. When the Jews asked to cross his land in order to enter Eretz Canaan, he declared himself duty-bound to block that entry.

The Kabbalists liken Sichon and Og to doorposts. Jewish homes have a mezuzah on every door, preventing evil from penetrating. Sichon and Og were the “mezuzos” of evil, barring the sanctity of Israel from the land of Canaan. Both kings had to be defeated before the Jews settled Eretz Yisrael. Only Moshe’s transcendent power could accomplish that feat.

Ever HaYarden therefore possesses a dual character. Today the region lacks the holiness of Eretz Yisrael proper. But in the future Ever HaYarden will be even holier, as it is already for those who transcend our era. The tribes who settled there connected with this spirituality even in this world.

NOTES:

איתא במדרש (במד"ר ז, ח) ארץ כנען מקודשת מעבר הירדן ארץ כנען
כשרה לבית שכינה ואין עבר הירדן כשר לבית שכינה.

עיי במכילתא בפי' בא (פייז), ודברינו בעדרי צאן (פי' בא) על זה.

איתא במדרש (ב"ר מד, כג), רבי חלבו בשם רבי אבא בשם רבי יוחנן כד עלה בדעתו של מקום להנחיל להם לישראל ארץ עשרה עממים את הקיני ואת הקניזי ואת הקדמוני, ולא נתן להם אלא ז'. אבל לימות המשיח יחזרו ויהיו לישראל כדי לקיים מאמרו של הקב"ה, אבל עכשיו ז' נתן להם.

בגמ' חולין איתא (ס:), אמר רב פפא עמון ומואב טיהרו בסיחון. ובמדרש איתא (במד"ר כ, ג), שבא סיחון ונטל ארץ מואב והוא נלחם במלך מואב הראשון ועוג נטל כל ארץ בנימין שנא' (דברים ג) כי רק עוג מלך הבשן וגוי' באו ישראל ונטלוהו משניהם שאין בו עולה.

בגודל קדושת עבר הירדן כותב החסד לאברהם (מעין שלישי, נהר ג), ודע כי ארץ סיחון ועוג הוא קצת גבול הג"ס העליונות הנז' [ועיי'כ] בחרוה להם בני גד לפי שעתיד להיות כנגד ג"ר העליונות ויהיה לעתיד המובחר שבארץ ישראל ואם היות שעדין לא נתקדש מ"מ יתקדש אח"כ אחר הגאולה, ואפשר שלכן נקבר משה שם כי הוא מסוד הדעת. עיי"כ. ועיי' גם בעשרה מאמרות (מאמר חיקור הדין ח"ג פיי"ח), זלפה שפחת לאה ניתנה ליעקב בחשאי לפיכך לא זכו ראובן וגד ליטול חלק בארץ אשר ה' אלקינו דורש אותה תמיד אלא מעבר הירדן... וכל דור דעה כמוהו לא נכנסו לארץ למעלתה כי לא היו נזקקים לה אלא לעבור משם לשערי גן עדן.

עיי' לקוטי הגר"א (דף מג. -מה:) איך הט' עיירות מוסבות שם הן ט' דרגין דנוגה שהיה בקליפה והוחזרו בקדושה.

איתא במדרש (במד"ר יט, כט), סיחון נטל שכרו מכל מלכי ארץ כנען והיו מעלין לו מסין שהיה ממליך אותו הוא ועוג שקולין כנגד כולן שנא' (תהלים קלו) לסיחון מלך האמורי ולעוג מלך הבשן ולכל ממלכות כנען.

אמרו ישראל נעבור בארצך לכבוש את המלכות. אמר להם איני יושב אלא לשמרם בפניכם. המגלה עמוקות כותב כיון שהיו [סיחון ועוג] כעין מזוזה ברע היה בהכרח מקודם לסלקם ואז תוכל הקדושה ליכנס בשער ודלת. עיי"כ. ועיי' דברינו בעדרי צאן פי' חקת.

CHAVOS YAIR: THE SPOILS OF OG

After the Jews defeated Sichon and Og, Moshe awarded their lands to Gad, Reuven, and half the tribe of Menashe. The descendants of Menashe's son Machir made further conquests in Gilad, whereupon Moshe gave them that territory. Yair, son of Menashe, proceeded to conquer Og's cities in Bashan and rename them Chavos Yair, after himself. In all, Og lost sixty cities (see BeMidbar 32, Devarim 3, and Divrei HaYamim I 2). Why did Moshe leave them for Menashe to capture?

Og was well known to the Jewish nation as a servant of our forefather Avraham. The Zohar states that Avraham circumcised Og along with himself. In fact, due to this merit, Moshe later feared he would not be able to defeat Og. (The Zohar also reports that no other king could vanquish him, because he held the stronghold of Bashan.) Hashem, though, assured Moshe that Og had subsequently rejected the covenant of circumcision and was

therefore vulnerable.

Yet Og thought his bris guaranteed him victory in any battle. He settled in Bashan, a contraction — according to the Gemara and the Zohar — of the Hebrew words “*bein shein*” (among the teeth). As the Zohar expounds the verse “Hashem said, ‘I will bring [you] back from Bashan; I will bring [you] back from the depths of a sea’ ” (Tehillim 68:23), Hashem will return all the Jews killed by the teeth of Bashan’s wildest animals.

This verse also figures in an incident that occurred during the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash: Four hundred young Jewish captives were being transported by boat. When they realized they would have to satisfy the adulterous appetites of their captors, the children remembered the verse and jumped overboard to save themselves (see *Gittin* 57b).

Bashan is apparently related to the Jewish bris. Thus, Og — himself circumcised — developed this land into a source of promiscuity to help him pervert Jewish chastity.

We can now understand the nature of Og’s sixty cities. By resisting adultery even in promiscuous Egypt, Yosef personifies Jewish chastity. And R. Tzadok HaKohen associates him with the sixth day of the week, the prelude to the sanctity of Shabbos. Thus, by virtue of his circumcision, Og built sixty cities (10 x 6), through which he schemed to destroy the Jewish bris. To enter the holiness of Eretz Yisrael, the Jews had to conquer this stronghold. When Moshe began the process by defeating Og, the prophet fittingly handed over the king’s territory to Menashe, son of Yosef. Only Yosef’s children could decontaminate it.

Recall that Yosef’s progeny also inherited Shechem, purifying it after the violation of Dinah there. In fact, the Kabbalists link Shechem with Og’s land. Rema MiPano adds that half of

Menashe's tribe lived in Ever HaYarden because his mother, Osnas, was born to Dinah and Shechem. The Shechem half of Menashe's genes, now rectified as part of the Jewish nation, was particularly suited to Og's section of Ever HaYarden.

With Og defeated, Yosef's descendant Yair could capture the sixty cities. He renamed them Chavos (villages of) Yair, because "yair" means "he will give light," and "Light is sown for the tzaddik..." (Tehillim 97:11), who upholds the covenant. Yair brought the light of Yosef the tzaddik to these cities that had perverted the bris of Avraham. Under Jewish control, they affirmed the Jewish covenant with Hashem, allowing for entry into Eretz Yisrael proper.

NOTES:

ע"י זוה"ק (ח"ג קפד.), עוג דאתדבק באברהם, ומאנשי ביתיה הוה, וכד אתגזר אברהם מה כתיב, וכל אנשי ביתו וגו', דא עוג דאתגזר עמיה וקביל האי את קדישא, כיון דחמא עוג דישראל מקרבין גביה אמר הא ודאי אנא אקדימנא זכותא דקאי לון.

ובקדושת עוג ע"י גם דברי הרב צדוק הכהן (רס"ל מג:), עוג דפלט מדור המבול שהיה נקי מחטא דור המבול...והיה לו קצת שייכות בהכרח לתורה. ע"כ.

ע"י זוה"ק (שם קפה.) ושכיח תמן תוקפא דיליה בגין דהוה מלך הבשן דכל מלכי עלמא לא יכלין לאגחא קרבא ביה בגין תוקפא דבשן, ואתא משה ואגח ביה קרבא.

ובענין בשן יש להוסיף שהגמרא (פסחים סח.) דורש שאלישע הנביא נקרא בשם בשן, ובגמרא אחרת איתא (ברכות י.) שאלישע לא ראה קרי מימיו.

בענין השייכות של ארץ עוג לבני יוסף ע"י קהלת יעקב (ערך אמורי), משה שהוא בחי' יעקב הכניע סיון ועוג שני מלכי האמורי וע"כ נתן אותו החלק

ליוסף שה"ס יסוד דקדושה וראוי לו לירש בחי' יסוד דקליפה. ומזה תבין שענין כבישת שכם היא כענין כבישת שני מלכי אמורי. ע"כ. ויש להוסיף עוד דאיתא בפרקי דר' אליעזר פט"ז) שעוג היה אליעזר עבד אברהם (עי' רד"ל שם), וידוע שאליעזר ויוסף הם שייכים להדדי ששניהם נערים וכו'. וא"כ מובן שיוסף יתנגד לקליפת עוג.

בענין שייכות יוסף ליום הששי ע"י כתבי הרב צדוק (קה"מ כז.), יוסף הוא ע"ש ודוד שבת (ולכן צחות לשון רז"ל בספור מעשה דפי' כל כתבי (שבת קיט.) יוסף מוקיר שבי אע"פ שמעשה כך היה ידוע כי כל דבר אינו במקר והזדמן) ע"כ.

ע"י דברי הרמ"ע מפענו במאמר חיקור הדין (ח"ג פ"ח), וחצי שבט מנשה מדה אחרת היתה בו בשביל אסנת אמו שהיתה בת דינה משכם החוי ונפגם חציו.

וי"ל עוד שהרמ"ד וואלי כותב ששם חוות מרמזו להנחש מלשון חויא. והיינו שיאיר נתן אור במקום שהיה תחת טומאת הנחש.

GILAD: LANDMARK OF INTEGRITY

Much of Ever HaYarden has been known as Gilad ever since our forefather Yaakov escaped his father-in-law, Lavan. When Lavan gave chase and was ready to attack, Hashem warned him not to harm Yaakov. Lavan then asked for a non-aggression treaty. Yaakov symbolically agreed by gathering a heap of stones. Lavan dubbed their location Yegar-Sahadusa, Aramaic for “heap of testimony,” while Yaakov called it a Hebrew equivalent, Gal’ed (Gilad) (see Bereishis 31:23-47). This monument demarcated a border that, according to the Midrash, each party could cross only for trade. Lavan’s motivation for this pact seems inexplicable. Why should he have feared a sudden attack by Yaakov? And why must the Torah tell us Lavan’s Aramaic name for this spot?

R. Tzadok HaKohen answers by reminding us of our genes. Although every Jew is proud to descend from our great Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Rachel and Leah’s father was the infamous

Lavan. Yaakov wanted to remove all taint of this ancestry by breaking with his father-in-law. But Lavan sought to mold the fledgling Jewish nation, so he chased Yaakov, claiming, “The daughters are my daughters, the sons are my sons, the sheep are my sheep, and all that you see is mine...” (ibid. 31:43).

Failing to intimidate Yaakov, Lavan thought a treaty would connect him to the Jewish people. Yaakov responded with a landmark separating the two.

Yet Lavan gave it an Aramaic name, again endeavoring to infiltrate the Jewish nation. For Hebrew is the Jews’ holy tongue; Aramaic was used to interact with other cultures. According to the Kabbalists, when we recite the weekly Torah portion once in Aramaic (using Onkelos’s translation) but twice in Hebrew, we overpower outside forces. So, too, Yaakov quickly countered with the Hebrew name Gal’ed.

Lavan partly succeeded, though. The Gemara states that murderers are commonplace in Gilad (see *Makkos* 9b). This criminal element, R. Tzadok says, is the legacy of Lavan’s attempt to harm Yaakov there. In Gilad, then, Jews isolate themselves from the insidious influence of Lavan, even when they must interact with him.

The Midrash informs us that, centuries afterward, Lavan reappeared as Bilam and sought to curse the Jews. Instead, before Bilam could carry out his evil scheme, his mule crushed its rider’s foot against a wall (see BeMidbar 22:25) — a wall made of none other than Yaakov’s stones. The landmark rebuked Lavan/Bilam for violating the treaty. Bilam then blessed the Jews as a people that dwells alone, separate from all other nations (ibid. 23:9).

Confrontation returned to Gilad later in history. Echoing the

Aramean Lavan, King Ben Haddad of Aram claimed to King Achav of Israel, "Your silver and gold is mine, and your wives and children...are mine" (Melachim I 20:3). Achav defeated Ben Haddad, and the resulting pact led to relative peace for a few years. Achav then decided to capture Ramos Gilad from Ben Haddad. After all, Yaakov had seized this area. Unfortunately, due to Achav's many sins, he fell in battle. Another Aramean thus used Gilad once again to penetrate the Jewish people.

However, we can invoke the power of Gilad to some extent even without that landmark. The Gemara associates the prophet Eliyahu with the name Gilad, since he inhabited that area (see *Pesachim* 68a). Eliyahu also celebrates every Jew's *bris*, which binds us to Hashem and separates us from other nations. As R. Tanchum responded when a caesar asked him to join the Romans, "We who are circumcised cannot become like you. You circumcise yourselves and become like us" (see *Sanhedrin* 39a). This power of Gilad maintains the Jewish nation's integrity.

NOTES:

איתא במדרש (בי"ר עד, טו), ויאמר לבן ליעקב, אי"ר יוחנן כזה שהוא מורה את החנית, עד הגל הזה וגוי לרעה אין אתה עובר אבל אתה עובר עלי בפרגמטיא.

וכותב הרב צדוק הכהן (קומץ המנחה לה:), גלעד הוא הגבול בין לבן ליעקב כמ"ש אם אני אעבור את הגל כו' שזה מעבר לגל מזה וזה מזה ולכ"א בנדרים (כב.). לב רגז כו' אכתי לא עברו ירדנא ובפי מטות נקרא כל עבר הירדן ארץ הגלעד שם לב רגז ולכך בגלעד שכיחי רוצחים והגל הוא המבדיל ביניהם ג"כ גלעד עצמו הוא ההבדל והוא ההתיחסות ביניהם ג"כ מצד שצריכים גדר וגם ששם הכריתות ברית שזהו ההתיחסות ומצד זה שכיחי ומצד שהוא המבדיל בו הוא ההבדל.

עיי במדרש תנחומא (פי ויצא יג), עד הגל הזה (ויצא לא, נב), זה שאמר הכתוב ותלחץ את רגל בלעם אל הקיר, הגל הוא הקיר לפי שעבר בלעם את השבועה שנשבע ליעקב...ובלעם זה לבן. ועייע דברינו בעדרי צאן (פי בלק).

עיי חומת אנך שם (מייא כב) שכתוב, כי לנו רמות גלעד, כי גלעד החזיק בו יעקב והרמות משוכים ומוחזקים אחרי העיר ולקחום האומות ושלנו הוא, עייכ. ועייע בדברי הרב צדוק הכהן (צה"צ [פ], ד"צ מ:) בענין מלחמת אחאב בגלעד.

ויש להוסיף דאיתא בגמרא (פסחים סח.) שאליהו נקרא בשם גלעד. וייל שזה כחו של בעל הברית ששומר הברית בין ישראל להקב"ה.

YABOK: UNITY, BLESSING, HOLINESS

Returning from Lavan's house to Eretz Yisrael, Yaakov crossed the Yabok River along with his family and belongings. He then retraced his steps to retrieve some forgotten jars on the other side. Alone at night, he defeated the metaphysical source of Esav's evil, the "minister of Esav" (see Bereishis 32:23-33 and *Chullin* 91a). Why did Yaakov go back for those insignificant jars? What does this event teach us?

The Zohar considers Yabok a contraction of *yichud* (the unity of Hashem), *berachah* (His blessing to the world), and *kedushah* (His holiness). Only through Hashem's unity do blessings sanctify the world. A similar process occurs during a Jewish wedding, where the bride and groom unite into a single family with *kiddushin* (consecration) and blessings under the *chuppah* (wedding canopy).

According to Ramchal, unity underlies our understanding of Hashem's connection to creation. Rather than employing inter-

mediaries, He alone directs every aspect of the world. Nothing occurs naturally or by chance, and no force can thwart His will.

The Vilna Gaon explains that blessing and holiness are relevant to angels. As we say in the *Kedushah* prayer, the angels declare, “Holy, holy, holy is Hashem of Hosts,” and “Blessed is Hashem’s glory from His place.” The unity of Hashem befits only humans, however, who proclaim, “Hear, O Israel; Hashem is our Lord, Hashem is One” (Devarim 6:4). *Kedushah* concludes, “Hashem will rule forever,” for when mankind recognizes Him as King of the world, “...Hashem will be One, and His name One” (Zechariah 14:9). Through our adherence to the Torah, Hashem’s sovereignty becomes known throughout creation. This way, we surpass the angels.

When Hashem gave man the Torah, the angels deemed us unworthy of it. Moshe countered that we live among idolatrous nations, so only we require a ban on paganism; we work, so only we can cease our labors on Shabbos; we experience jealousy and other evil urges, so only we can be rewarded for not sinning (see *Shabbos* 88b).

Angels are not humans with wings. They are merely messengers of Hashem, tools He uses to run the world. (The Hebrew word for “angel,” *malach*, literally means “messenger.”) Yet they apprehend the greatness of Hashem. Unbridled by physicality, they perceive Hashem’s holiness and blessing as no human can. But they have no free will, no evil inclination, so they cannot understand Hashem’s unity, due to which nothing restrains Him anywhere in the universe.

Only we appreciate the impotence of evil in the face of Hashem’s will. When we perform a mitzvah using our bodies, resisting the constant enticements of this physical world, we

affirm Hashem's Oneness. When our holy martyrs recited the Shema in Auschwitz — proclaiming, "Hashem is One," even in that inferno — they transcended the highest angels. Through this recognition of Hashem, true blessing and holiness permeate the world.

The river Yabok embodies the three concepts implicit in its name. Ramchal writes that Yaakov added the revelation of Hashem's unity to the blessing and holiness revealed by Avraham and Yitzchak, as evident in his crossing the Yabok. As he prepared to meet his archenemy, Yaakov realized Hashem's uncontested control of the world; nothing can stop Him, not even Esav's vast army.

Because Hashem runs the entire world, nothing within it is unimportant. Even our lowliest possessions are vehicles of Divine service and must be safeguarded. A throwaway society is anathema to a Jew. (Yet we mustn't pinch pennies. Whatever it costs to keep the peace is money well spent.) Hence the Jewish view of charity: Any money we have is not really ours; Hashem gave it to us to distribute to worthy causes. With this view in mind, Yaakov set out to retrieve his jars.

Our forefather was now ready for an even greater test: battling the metaphysical Esav. By defeating this sinister force and even extracting a blessing for himself, Yaakov brought Hashem's unity to the darkest place. Unfortunately, this victory was incomplete. The evil adversary left Yaakov limping. The ultimate revelation of Hashem's unity is yet to come. Meanwhile, through Torah and mitzvos, we recognize His unique mastery and display it to the world, until all will understand that "...Hashem is One, and His name One" (Zecharyah 14:9).

Notes:

איתא בזוה"ק (ח"ג רטז:), ר' פדת דהוה דחיקא ליה שעתא דלא הוה ליה אלא קב חרובין מע"ש לע"ש כמו לר' חנינא...איהו גרים קודם דחרב ק"ב מן יי דאיהו יב"ק. אוף הכי לא הו"ל אלא קב חרובין דאת יי איהו יחוד ומניה אתיא נביעו לאת ב' דאיהי ברכה ואיהי קדש ומניה אתקדש ק' דאיהי קדושה.

בענין יב"ק במעשה הקדושין עיי' זוה"ק (ח"ג רל:) ותקו"ז (ת"ז כא: ; ת"י כה: ; ות"י כז:).

ענין גלוי היחוד הוא יסוד של כמה ספרי הרמח"ל, ובפרט ספר דעת תבונות.

עיי' גר"א (לקוטים בסדור של נגלה ונסתר על קדושה), סוד יב"ק הם בגי' עולמות בריאה יצירה עשיה. קדושה שרפים אומרים, וברוך אופנים אומרים, ושמע ישראל בעשיה... וזה סוד שקבעוהו ימלוך בקדושה שהוא בסוד אחד כמ"ש והיה ה' למלך כו' ביום ההוא כו' ע"כ. ועיי' דברי הר"א חבר (באר יצחק על לקוטי הגר"א קעא.), והנה בזה ישראל גדולים ממלאכי השרת שבמלאכי השרת אין בהם רק קדוש וברוך לבד מה שאין כן בישראל יש להם יחוד גם כן בקריאת שמע בכל יום.

עיי' דברי הרמח"ל בתקט"ו תפלות (תפלה רז) ובאדיר במרום (דפוס החדש עמ' שמט), ועיי' בדברי תלמידו הרמד"ו על הפרשה. ועיי' גם דברי הבעל התניא בספר תורה אור (פי' וישלח). ובס"ד נאריך בענין זה בפ"י על רות (ד, ב).

בענין החסרון בניצוח יעקב עיי' דברי ר"א חבר (באר יצחק שם קלד.), כי ידוע שהיה סמא"ל שרו של עשו והוא עמלק שכ"ז שליטתו אז אין הכסא שלם ונסתלק א' מן הכסא והוא שם אהי"ה בינה שהיא עלמא דחירו והוא בגלותא בלילה שעדיין יעקב לא הגיע למעבר יב"ק עד לעתיד לבא אז כי עלה השחר ואז כי שרית כו'

GLOSSARY

AKEIDAH - the binding of Isaac

AKKO - Acre

ALEINU - prayer concluding the three daily prayer services

ARON - the holy ark, which housed the tablets

AVINU MALKEINU (lit., "our Father, our King") prayer recited on special days of supplication, such as fast days

BAAL TESHUVAH - penitent

BEIS HAMIKDASH the Temple, in Yerushalayim

BEIS LECHEM Bethlehem

BERACHAH - blessing

BRIS - covenant, often referring to circumcision

ERETZ YISRAEL - Land of Israel

GEMARA - Talmud, usually referring to the Babylonian Talmud

HAFTARAH the portion of NAVI read after the Torah portion on
SHABBOS and holidays

HAR HAZEISIM Mount of Olives

HASHEM - God

KABBALAH - mystical doctrine taught to Moshe at Sinai.

KOHEN (pl. KOHANIM) - priests who officiate in the Temple

KOHEN GADOL - high priest

LASHON HARA - derogatory gossip

LECHAH DODI - prayer welcoming SHABBOS

MASHIACH - the Messiah, who will rebuild the Temple and gather in
the Jews from exile

MIDRASH - compilation of Aggadic statements

MINCHAH - afternoon prayer

MISHKAN - Tabernacle built in the wilderness as a forerunner of the

BEIS HAMIKDASH

MUSSAR - ethical teachings of the Torah

NAVI 1) prophet; 2) books of the Prophets

NESHAMAH - soul

OLAM HABA - the world to come

PESACH - Passover

PIRKEI AVOS - *Ethics of the Fathers*

ROSH HASHANAH - holiday marking the Jewish new year

SHABBOS Sabbath

SHAVUOS festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai

SHECHINAH Divine Presence

SHEMA - prayer proclaiming God's Oneness

SHEMONEH ESREI - (lit., "eighteen") central prayer recited three times daily

SHOFAR - ram's horn blown on ROSH HASHANAH

SUKKAH booth in which Jews live during SUKKOS, recalling their desert sojourn after leaving Egypt

SUKKOS - (lit., "booths") holiday commemorating the Jews' dwelling in booths after leaving Egypt

TANACH acronym for Torah, Nevi'im (Prophets), and Kesuvim (Writings), the three sections of the Bible

TEVERYA Tiberias

TOSEFTA - collection of rulings dating from the Mishnaic period but excluded from the Mishnah

TZADDIK - righteous person

TZARAAS disease commonly translated as leprosy; see VaYikra 13-14

YAFFO - Jaffa

YERICHO - Jericho

YERUSHALAYIM - Jerusalem

YERUSHALMI - Talmud written in the Land of Israel, as opposed to the Bavli, the Babylonian Talmud

YETZER HARA - evil inclination

SOURCES

ARIZAL — R. Yitzchak Luria (sixteenth century), primary interpreter of the ZOHAR and transmitter of Kabbalah.

AVNEI NEZER — R. Avraham Borenstein of Sochatchov (nineteenth century), best known for *Avnei Nezer*, his responsum collection. His Torah commentary and philosophical writings are recorded in *Ne'os Deshe* and in SHEM MISHMUEL, written by his son.

R. AVRAHAM AZULAI — Seventeenth-century Sefardic Kabbalist.

BAAL SHEM TOV — R. Yisrael Shem Tov, eighteenth-century founder of Chassidism.

CHIDA — Acronym for R. Chaim Yosef David Azulai, eighteenth-century Sefardic leader.

R. ELIYAHU DESSLER — Twentieth-century Mussar figure and author of *MITHTAV ME'ELIYAHU*.

R. MOSHE YECHIEL EPSTEIN OF OZHAROV — Twentieth-century Chasidic leader and author of *Be'er Moshe* (on the Torah and Prophets) and the multivolume *Eish Das* (on Jewish philosophy).

GRA — Acronym for HaGaon R. Eliyahu, the VILNA GAON, an eighteenth-century commentator on all segments of Torah, written and oral.

R. YOSEF KARO — Author of *Shulchan Aruch* (sixteenth century).

MAHARAL — Acronym for R. Yehudah Loewe of Prague, a sixteenth-century thinker.

MEIRI — R. Menachem ben Shlomo, a thirteenth-century Talmudic commentator.

MITHTAV ME'ELIYAHU — See R. Eliyahu Dessler.

NEFESH HACHAIM — Philosophical work by R. Chaim of Volozhin (eighteenth-nineteenth centuries), a leading disciple of the GRA.

OZHAROVITZER REBBE — See R. Moshe Yechiel Epstein of Ozharov.

RAMBAM — Acronym for Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides, a twelfth-century Halachist, philosopher, and seminal figure in Jewish history.

RAMBAN — Acronym for Rabbeinu Moshe ben Nachman, also known as Nachmanides, a thirteenth-century Torah and Tal-

mudic commentator.

RASHASH — Acronym for R. Shmuel Strashun of Vilna, nineteenth-century Talmudic commentator.

RASHI — Acronym for Rabbeinu Shlomo Yitzchaki (eleventh century), whose seminal commentaries on the Bible and Talmud appear in most editions of the Bible and Talmud.

REMA MIPANO — Sixteenth-century Kabbalist and author of *Asarah Maamaros* and other works.

SEFAS EMES — Torah commentary by R. Yehudah Leib Alter (nineteenth century), the second Rebbe of Gur.

SHEM MISHMUEL — Torah and holiday commentary by R. Shmuel of Sochatchov (nineteenth-twentieth centuries), son of the Avnei Nezer.

SOCHATCHOVER REBBE — See *AVNEI NEZER*.

R. TZADOK HAKOHEN — Nineteenth-century Chassidic leader and author of many books, including *Pri Tzaddik* (on the Torah).

VILNA GAON — See *GRA*.

YERUSHALMI — Talmud written in the Land of Israel, as opposed to the Bavli, the Babylonian Talmud.

ZOHAR — The primary text of Kabbalah, compiled by R. Shimon bar Yochai and his disciples.

LANDSCAPES OF THE SPIRIT

BEIS LECHEM — a city that unites opposing elements...

GERAR — a danger zone that failed to take its place in Jewish destiny...

YAFFO — where Hashem calmed the waters and saved the world...

YERUSHALAYIM — holiest of cities, where Hashem relates most closely to mankind...

Take a remarkable journey through the spiritual dimensions of the cities of Eretz Yisrael. It is an odyssey you will never forget.

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