We try our best to accurately present to you the Rav's words. Accuracy can sometimes get lost in the transition from spoken to written word. We would like to thank HaRav Nebenzahl for allowing us to send you this sicha without his first reviewing it. Although it does expedite matters in getting this sicha out to you, it does mean that if there is anything in the sicha that may not be understood, the fault is with us and not with HaRav Nebenzahl.

The Rav asks that his and other Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

Shabbat Shalom,
Nehemiah Klein

The Yeshiva would like to express its gratitude to Richard and Anita Grossman for their ongoing support for the Yeshiva in general and specifically our computer center. This enables us to communicate this sicha to you each week - "lehagdil Torah ulehaadira".

PARSHAT SHMOT 5769

STRIVING TO EMULATE HASHEM

THE NAME OF HASHEM - THREE VARIATIONS

Moshe Rabenu asks HaKadosh Baruch Hu: "Behold, when I come to the Children of Israel and say to them: 'the G-d of your forefathers has sent me to you, and they say to me: What is His Name? What shall I say to them' Hashem answers Moshe: 'I Shall Be what I Shall Be' and He said: 'so shall you say to the Children of Israel: 'I Shall Be has sent me to you' (Shmos 3:13-14).

Why this sudden change in the Name of Hashem? Hashem begins by answering Moshe that His Name is "I Shall Be what I Shall Be" and concludes by instructing Moshe to inform the people of Israel that His Name is "I Shall Be". Chazal explain: "The Holy One, Blessed is He, said to Moshe: 'Go and say to Israel, I was with them in this subjugation and I shall be with them at the subjugation of other kingdoms (as alluded to by 'I Shall Be what I Shall Be'). Moshe said before Hashem: 'Master of the Universe' It is enough for an affliction to be dealt with at the time it actually arrives' (note: 'one I Shall Be is enough for now')" (Berachos 9b). Why should I inflict pain upon the Jewish nation with tidings that further exiles await them in a few hundred years? "Thereupon the Holy One Blessed is He said to him: go and tell them ‘I Shall Be has sent me to you’" (Ibid).

In the very next pasuk we read:
"G-d said further to Moshe: 'so shall you say to the Children of Israel, Hashem the G-d of your forefathers, the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak, and the G-d of Yaakov has dispatched me to you: This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance from generation to generation".

Here Hashem tells Moshe to use the regular Name of Hashem (Shem HaVaya). How do we explain this additional change?

According to the Ibn Ezra this third instruction did not involve any change at all. He reasons that Shem HaVaya is in fact the same Name as E-hyeh - I Shall Be. The difference is that e-hyeh - I Shall Be - is in the first person form and therefore begins with an aleph as most first person verbs do (e. g. ochal - I shall eat, avo - I shall come, elech - I shall go, eshev - I will sit). The Shem HaVaya as we know it, on the other hand, is in the third person and therefore begins with a yud as most third person verbs do (e. g. yochal - he will eat, yavo - he will come, yelech - he will go, yeshev - he will sit). When Hashem spoke of Himself to Moshe He used the first person (e-hyeh - I Shall Be), while when Am Yisrael refers to Him they need to use the third person.

Let me preface this discussion of the Holy Names of the A-mighty by stressing that it is a mitzvah "to fear this honored and Awesome Name"(Devarim 28:58, see Rambam Hilchos Shevuos 12:11). We are obligated to speak of Hashem's Names with fear and trepidation. Even so, perhaps we can suggest an additional distinction between alef-hey-yud-hey and the Shem HaVaya:

**HASHEM EXISTS FOR ETERNITY AND IS NON-CHANGING**

The Shem HaVaya teaches us that Hashem is haya, hoveh, veyihye - "He was, He is, and He will be." Hashem exists for eternity (of course there are many other hidden meanings in the Shem Havaya, but this is the meaning of this Name in the revealed realm of Torah(See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 5)). The Name e-hyeh, on the other hand, denotes that Hashem is non-changing: "as I am now, so I shall always be." A human being, lehavdil, can be present now and can still be alive many years later, yet he is not the same person. He is born an infant, then he develops and matures, and then he enters old age. As an old person his body undergoes many changes - his hair turns white and his teeth fall out. Many changes occur in his intellect as well, he is born without any knowledge and slowly over the years he amasses vast amounts of information. As he gets older, he begins to forget some of what he has learned. Although the Gemera differentiates between "Torah scholars - the older they become, the more does wisdom increase with them ..." and "those who are bereft of Torah knowledge, the older they become the more does foolishness increase within them."(Shabbos 152a) Hashem, though, does not change in any way, the way He was is the way He is and the way He will continue to be. There can be no physical changes, for He has no body, and He does not gain or lose any knowledge - He and His mind are One(See Rambam Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 2:10 and Moreh Nebuchim chelek 1, perek 68).

Not only does Hashem not change physically or intellectually, His actions are also not subject to change. A human being may act physically in different ways - he can sit, then stand, and then run. He also may respond emotionally depending on the situation - at one moment he is angry, a moment later he can be overjoyed. Hashem, on the other hand remains consistent. Although the Torah does ascribe feelings and actions to the A-mighty - for example we read: "the anger of Hashem
burned"(Shmos 4:14), or "let Hashem rejoice in His works"(Tehillim 104:31), the Rambam explains that these are only allegories to help us understand (See Moreh Nebuchim chelek 1). Hashem does not undergo periods of sadness or joy and He does not sit or stand. When we read a pasuk: "Hashem descended"(Shmos 19:20) or "Elokim ascended"(Bereishis 17:22), it does not mean that Hashem literally climbed down or up. Rather "Hashem ascended" implies that the Divine Revelation departed (See Moreh Nebuchim chelek 1, perek 11).

**THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE WAY WE PERCEIVE HIM**

When Hashem is perceived by us in different forms at different times, this does not imply a change in Him, G-d forbid, but a change in the way we perceive Him. The Ibn Ezra explains: "we know that Hashem is One and the difference is in those who perceive Him, Hashem does not change His ways."(Commentary to Devarim 31:16) The Divine abundance is showered on everyone in the same way, only some people are more able to receive it than others. A prophet, for example, can absorb more than the man on the street, while a talmid chacham can absorb more G-dliness than one who is ignorant.

Changes of place and time can also account for differences in our abilities to receive G-dliness. In terms of location, Eretz Yisrael is more conducive than chutz la'Aretz, while the Kotel and the Old City are more conducive than other places. In terms of time - Shabbat and Yom Tov provide better reception than the other days of the week. Hashem remains constant in all places and at all times, it is our ability to absorb His Holiness that is altered based on changes in place and time.

My Rebbe HaRav Gedaliah Eisemen Shlit"a once told of a certain individual who achieved Torah greatness. He attributed his growth in Torah to his learning seder on the afternoon of Ereuv Shabbos. His reasoning was that the abundance raining down from Heaven remains constant, therefore when the batei midrash are full, this abundance must be shared among all the scholars, meaning each person merits only a small portion. However, at times when there are less people learning, each one has the opportunity to take a greater share for himself. Therefore those who learn on Friday afternoons merit an extra abundance of G-dliness. This is a classic case of using Hashem's constancy to one's advantage.

**TO RECEIVE ABUNDANCE FROM HASHEM WE NEED A RECEPTACLE FOR G-DLINESS**

It goes without saying that receiving this abundance of G-dly influence in optimal places and times depends on the person himself - how much he has fashioned his heart into a receptacle for G-dliness. Without properly preparing himself he can find himself in the holiest place and time and it will not help him. The wicked Titus, for example, entered the Holy of Holies and it had no effect on him at all (See Gittin 56b). Rav and Shmuel, lehavdil, lived their lives in Bavel and grew tremendously. The same applies to the Riff in Fez (North Africa) and Spain, the Gra in Vilna, the Rambam in Egypt, and Rashi in France. If we open our hearts we can also absorb a vast amount of Divine light even in chutz la'Aretz. If our hearts are sealed, however, even our physical presence in Eretz Yisrael will not help us. By the same token, one who wishes to absorb G-dliness can succeed in doing so even on weekdays while one with a sealed heart will not receive anything even on Shabbos.

This fundamental idea that Hashem is not subject to change is included in the verses that we recite daily:
Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad

"Hear O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the One and Only"(Devarim 6:4).

This does not only refer to the fact that He is the sole Creator and Leader of this world with none even second to Him, it also means that His essence is not subject to change and cannot be subdivided. The mathematical number one can in fact be divided - it may be represented as two halves or four quarters. A human being can be viewed as the sum of parts - the head, legs, etc. yet the One-ness of Hashem is absolute. It is a Unity that cannot be broken down into parts and cannot be altered.

"GO IN HIS WAYS" - EMULATING HASHEM

One of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah is to follow in the ways of Hashem: vehalacha bidrachav "go in His ways"(Devarim 28:9). If we analyze the pasuk in its context we will find that it is not written in the form of a Torah commandment. The Torah tells us that Hashem will bless us: "if you observe the commandments of Hashem, your G-d, and you go in His ways."(Ibid) If, however, the Torah means "Go in His ways" to be a condition to receiving Hashem's blessing, then following in His ways is clearly the Will of the A-mighty. It is for this reason that the Rambam listed it in his enumeration of the mitzvos(See Sefer HaMitzvos, Mitzvas Asei 8 and Hilchos Deos 1:6). The idea behind this mitzvah is to emulate: "the good deeds and honorable traits in which the awesome G-d is described"(Sefer HaMitzvos there).

At first glance, it would appear impossible for us to emulate this facet of Hashem - His remaining constant and never changing. By man's very nature he is subject to changes based on different circumstances. We cannot prevent ourselves from physical, emotional, or intellectual changes, as we cannot prevent ourselves from aging. We can, however, do our best not to be influenced inappropriately. For example, when analyzing a halacha, we must not allow ourselves to be swayed by our emotions. We must clarify to the core what the Gemara is saying and how it is interpreted by the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch down to the practical halacha derived from this analysis.

HASHEM IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Chazal, for instance, tell us that one who must daven without a minyan on Rosh Hashana should make sure not to daven Musaf during the first three hours of the day(See Avoda Zara 4b - the poskim have extended this ban to include the sounding of the shofar - see Mishna Brura 591:15). This obviously does not apply to one who does not have the option of davening later - for example a soldier in the army who will not be able to daven at a later time may and is in fact obligated to daven and blow shofar during the first three hours. If it is possible to do otherwise, however, one in such a situation should not blow the shofar or daven Musaf during the first three hours of the day. The Gemara explains that the first three hours are times of judgment, and who knows if he will have enough merit to stand in judgment on his own without the merit of the community behind him. The Gemara then asks: but does Hashem not sit and learn Torah during the first three hours of the day? Why then are the first three hours of the day considered hours of judgment? One answer provided in the Gemara is: "Torah, which Scripture designates as Truth as it is written: 'purchase truth, do not sell it'(Mishle 23:23).
While learning Torah which is Absolute Truth, the Holy One Blessed is He will not go beyond the parameters of justice. When sitting totally in judgment, that which is not described by Scripture as 'Truth', the Holy One Blessed is He may overstep the line of justice towards mercy"(Avoda Zara 4b). During hours of Truth, Hashem does not act lifnim mishuras hadin - beyond the boundaries of justice. Can anyone be sure that he will emerge with a positive verdict when judged so strictly?

THE TORAH IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH - WE CANNOT DEVIATE FROM IT

There is an important lesson to be learned from this Gemara. When we learn Torah there is no room for lifnim mishuras hadin. The Torah is Absolute Truth and we cannot deviate from it even if motivated by mercy or any other positive emotion.

There was a great dispute between the Avnei Nezer and his student the Chelkas Yoav regarding the liability for one who places food on the fire on Shabbos, in such a way that it will not become cooked until Motzaei Shabbos. On the one hand, the act was performed on Shabbos, on the other hand the results were only attained Motzaei Shabbos. The Achronim had debated this issue regarding the melachas of zore-a - planting - and other prohibited acts, and the Avnei Nezer and Chelkas Yoav extended this debate to acts of cooking and kindling a fire discussing whether one is liable for something which gets burned or cooked after Shabbos(See Chelkas Yoav Orach Chaim Siman 10 and Avnei Nezer Orach Chaim 119-122).

The Rav (HaGaon HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach) zt"l once told me the following anecdote: The Chelkas Yoav came to visit his Rebbe the Avnei Nezer prior to his death. The Avnei Nezer said to him: "perhaps before I die you will retract that which you have disputed me your entire life on this issue?" The Chelkas Yoav answered him: "indeed I retract." The Avnei Nezer then said: "are you deferring to me only because I am sick? In the Torah it is written: 'Truth'. To this the Chelkas Yoav responded: "in that case I reassert my original view!" This dispute remains for eternity, in the words of the Mishna: "A dispute for the sake of heaven will be everlasting"(Avos 5:20). The Torah is designated as 'Truth' and the fact that the Rebbe was sick should not influence the Truth at all. It is true that the Avnei Nezer was an amazing Torah giant, but the Chelkas Yoav had a sharp mind as well and he too was a great talmid chacham. If the Chelkas Yoav is convinced that the halachah does not follow the opinion of his Rebbe then he must state as much and may not defer to the Rav's view even if he is ill.

HALACHIC RULINGS CANNOT BE INFLUENCED BY EMOTIONS

There are times, however, when emotions do play a role in halachic rulings. When searching for ways to permit an aguna to remarry we must invoke our attribute of compassion. This does not mean that we may invent heterim that do not fit within the domain of halacha. What it does mean, however, is that if we are convinced that the husband is no longer alive we must delve into all the Gemaras and poskim in search of a valid heter. The ruling itself may not be motivated by mercy, but compassion for the woman must motivate us to search further. When no true heter exists, we may feel sorry for her but we may not permit her to remarry.

Regarding judgments in Beis Din as well, the Torah warns us "you shall not favor the poor"(Vayikra 19:15). The dayan may not favor an indigent person simply because he is penniless. If he feels sorry for him, he may give him tzedaka or set
up a collection for him in his local synagogue or town. The trial itself, however, must be based solely on the truth. If he feels that the Torah rules against him then his verdict must do likewise. (What we said before that Truth is not written regarding judgment and therefore leaves room for lifnim mishuras hadin, only applies to Heavenly rulings, when it comes to a human Beis Din the rule is "we are not merciful in deciding the law."(Kesubos 84a))

The Gemara teaches us that two talmidei chachamim with any sort of dispute between them may not sit together in judgment(See Sanhedrin 29a) - "for this causes the judgment to come out skewed, the hatred between them will cause each one to contradict the words of the other."(Rambam Hilchos Sanhedrin 23:7) When one of the judges offers one view, the other will search for ways to prove him wrong and the decision will not be based on truth. Of course the judges must research arguments to acquit as well as convict, but this is only if the ultimate goal is to arrive at the truth, not to invalidate the arguments of the other. By the same token a person who has in him a streak of cruelty may not serve as a judge in capital cases(See Sanhedrin 36b). His cruelty may prevent him from trying hard enough to find reason to acquit. Halachic rulings must be based only on truth and not be influenced by emotions or anything else.

Another way to apply this trait we are speaking of, to be unchanging, is in man's general demeanor. The Rambam writes that: "following in the ways of Hashem" requires us to remain in the middle of the road - not to veer to either extreme(See Hilchos Deos 1:3-6). The Rambam tells us: "the straight path is the middle one and this applies in all areas ... it must be equidistant from the extremities and to not approach the other extreme."(Ibid) Man must remain unchanging and should not allow anything to influence him that could pull him in either direction towards one extreme or the other.

FOR TWO TRAITS ONE MUST GO TO EXTREMES

It is regarding only two m Sidros that the Rambam tells us "it is forbidden for man to follow the middle path, he must move far from one extreme all the way to the other. These two traits are haughtiness ... and anger ..."(Hilchos Deos 2:4). Regarding haughtiness the Rambam cites Moshe Rabenu as the paradigm of one who went to the other extreme: "now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth."(Bamidbar 12:3). Moshe Rabenu did not remain in the middle of the road. Regarding anger the Rambam writes: "it is a terrible trait, and a person must distance himself until the extreme and teach himself not to become angry even when justified. Should he wish to instill fear into his family members ... as a means of setting them on the proper path, he must appear before them as angry in order to punish, but in truth not be angry."(Hilchos Deos 2:4) He should be as an actor in the theater who may give the impression of being angry at his fellow actors, but in fact in their personal lives they are the best of friends! When it comes to all other character traits, the Rambam writes that the wise follow the middle path, while the pious instructs us to move all the way to one extreme. Middas Chassidus, piety, after all is also one of the ways of Hashem(See Hilchos Deos 1:5).

CLEAVING TO HASHEM'S ATTRIBUTES

Another mitzvah we find in Rambam’s numeration of mitzvos is "to Him shall you cleave"(Devarim 10:20 - see Sefer Hamitzvos mitzvas asei 6). Chazal wonder: "is it possible to cling to the Divine Presence? But it is written 'for Hashem your G-d - He is a consuming fire!'(Devarim 4:24)"(Kesubos 111b). Several answers exist to
this question, on of them is to cleave to His attributes, as we have discussed, and in this manner we are cleaving to Hashem.

Another answer offered by the Gemara is "whoever marries his daughter to a Torah scholar or engages in business on behalf of Torah scholars, Scripture reckons his deed as if he were clinging to the Divine Presence." (Ibid) In other words, the way to cleave to Hashem is by cleaving to the Sages: "to try to marry the daughter of a talmid chacham, and to marry off his daughter to a talmid chacham, to eat and drink with talmidei chachamim, and to engage in business on behalf of a talmid chacham and to attach yourself to him in any way possible." (See Rambam Hilchos Deos 6:2) Although it is not always easy to marry the daughter of a talmid chacham, for there are not enough daughters of talmidei chachamim to go around, there is no reason why your wife cannot be the wife of a talmid chacham! Everyone can and must do this - it depends on his own efforts.

ACHIEVING HOLINESS

In addition to cleaving to Hashem and talmidei chachamim, I would like to offer another pshat in the commandment of "to Him you shall cleave" - to cleave to Hashem's thoughts as much as is humanly possible. He should be on our minds constantly and we must not allow our mind to wander from Him. In the words of David HaMelech: Shivisi Hashem lenegdi tamid - "I have set Hashem before me always" (Tehillim 16:8). The Messillas Yesharim has defined the level of kedusha, holiness, as "to cleave every hour and every moment to G-dliness ... even when involved in physical activities that the body requires, one's mind should not wander from cleaving to the Most High"(Messillas Yesharim chapter 26).

Granted we do not even approach this level, for holiness is the last of the eight levels the Ramchal lists in Messillas Yesharim (these are followed by Divine Inspiration and Resurrection of the Dead, but these are not required of man in his service of Hashem), and only applies to one who has already attained the previous levels. We must at least understand that that is what we should strive for - to attain the level of holiness. When man is on the road it is important to know where one is heading. When the IDF wishes to attack, it must know where the target is. If it is in Beirut then it would be appropriate to use the Navy, if the target is Damascus then the Navy would not be of much assistance. The same applies to our spiritual goals, it must be clear to us where we are headed in order to know what means to use to reach our goal.

This goal of holiness is very far from us, the Rambam writes that only four people ever attained that level - Moshe Rabenu and our three forefathers. With every move they made, with every action, they were always cleaving to Hashem(See Moreh Nebuchim 3:51). We must view holiness, however, as our ultimate goal. If the Ramma begins the Shulchan Aruch with "I have set Hashem before me always" (See Ramma Orach Chaim 1:1), then this implies that from the day a person reaches Bar Mitzvah he must attempt to reach a level of holiness to the best of his ability.

If we will begin with the beginning of the Shulchan Aruch, with "I have set Hashem before me always" then we will merit with Hashem's help, the conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch: tov lev bemishteh tamid "a good-hearted person feasts perpetually" (Mishle 15:15 - see Ramma Orach Chaim end of 696) that we will be in a constant state of happiness, cleaving to Hashem "amid gladness and goodness of heart" (Devarim 28:47) all of our days.