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Parshat Achrei Mot-Kedoshim

Printer Friendly

3rd Yahrzeit of HaRav Lipman Asher Podolsky zt"l:



This coming Tuesday 13 Iyar will be the yahrzeit of one of the most beloved members of our staff. Daniel Mendelson (5767-68) recalls him. If you would like to be informed when tehillim will be recited by the kever please contact [Dina](#).

Spotlight:

Thursday April 15- Shana Alef went to Har Herzl

Sunday April 18- Esther Wachsmann, whose son was kidnapped and killed by terrorists, spoke in Yeshiva [Watch it here](#)

Monday April 19- Trip to Sderot to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut together with Yeshivat Sderot. [Read about it](#)

Tuesday April 20, Yom Ha'atzmaut- Sports Day/Color War and BBQ at Neve Yaacov Sports Center



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A Uniting Factor by Gabe Felder, Shana Alef, RAMAZ

A Uniting Factor

This year was the first I had commemorated and celebrated Yom Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut respectively. I say this not because I ignored these holidays in America but rather that till I experienced these days in Israel, I lacked the understanding of just how powerful they were. Being in Netiv Aryeh allowed me, as well as the other shanah alef members, to see and feel the effect of this day in a way I never imagined possible. I'll try to illustrate key moments in each day leading up to Yom Ha'Atzmaut, which for me, stood out and strengthened a feeling and ideology that presents itself over these days.



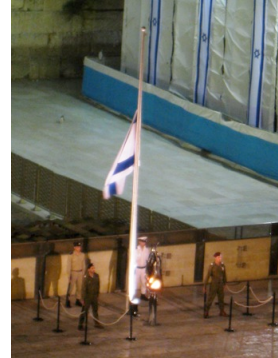
The Thursday before Yom Ha'Zikaron, Shanah Alef visited Har Herzl, the military cemetery of Jerusalem, housing such figures as Yitzchak Rabin and Golda Meir. The Mediterranean spring sun had shown itself along the graves illuminating the rocks marking each grave and bringing to bloom the flora separating each grave. I am always humbled by such visits because the soldiers buried in this cemetery and others like it, all buried as equals, died so I could sit on this computer no less than five hundred feet from the holiest site on earth and type the way I am now, and eventually go up to the beis midrash and learn as much Torah as I would like. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l used to say Tehillim outside of Har Herzl once a month en route to his yeshiva in Bayit vaGan. In doing so he related how he could not understand the need to go to kivrei tzadikim up north and in Europe, when kivrei tzadikim such as these were a stone's throw away.

These soldiers died so every Jew, religious or not, could go to their home, a right stripped of our people for two thousand years. It is through their deaths that we are united as a people unlike any time in history. Rav Shlomo Zalman's description is well deserved, as these tzadikim truly define what it means to be Moser nefesh.

Jump now to Sunday, Erev Yom Ha'Zikaron. The Yeshiva arranged for us a special guest speaker, Mrs. Esther Wachsman, whose son was kidnapped and eventually killed during his rescue attempt by Arab Palestinian terrorists in 1994. Mrs. Wachsman spoke of the plight of a mother, born in America to parents that survived the holocaust, who must experience the emotional trauma of every mother in Israel whose sons and daughters fight for their country. What Nachshon brought about through his captivity, as Mrs. Wachsman said, was something incredible. In the days preceding his death, the Jewish

population united. At her families request, Jews who had never before put on a Kippah, donned the ornament and began praying for their brother in captivity. At Mrs. Wachsmann's request, that Erev Shabbos women who were totally unobservant, lit Shabbos candles for the first time. Present at the funeral were hundreds of people from all sides of the Jewish spectrum, however their stance on observance did not matter, what mattered was a member of the Jewish people had been killed.

That night at the Kotel a memorial flame was lit for the fallen soldiers. A siren sounded and all were silent. Standing in rows of tens and hundreds, people cried. Once again, previous differences were lost, as I saw a woman with a sheital and a chiloni woman hold each other, comforting each other in their mutual loss. The next morning a similar siren sounded and while I could not see the outside world, the beis midrash came to a screeching halt. It did not matter what was going on, all Talmudic arguments ceased. The silence, both serene and transcendent, united us all. At that moment I was comforted for I knew that all over Israel, people were frozen as we were, memorializing as we were.



That evening, as the country transitioned from loss to celebration, the Yeshiva took us to Sderot, a city less than half a mile away from the Gaza strip that was plagued by qassam rockets in recent years. We were invited to the Hesder Yeshiva for dinner and celebration. The emotional rise was something no short of unimaginable. The power and spirit of a city continuously plagued by terror only shows the ineffective abilities of those that wish to harm us. The city's buildings shined, reflecting the decorative lights off the alabaster stone. Israeli flags waved triumphantly, as the two yeshivas converged with the rest of the city in the city's square. We danced and sang, our voices shaking the ground. The pride of millions of Jews boomed much to the dismay of those that wished otherwise. Celebrating Yom Ha'Atzmaut is more than just singing and dancing, it is the proof of the Jewish people's immortality, our power and presence rising from ashes to our greatest reward. Hashem has given us the opportunity to return to a land denied to generations of Jews before. Then, against all odds, we rose, independently forming a great nation, ever present in the civilized world, and once again becoming the physical center of the Jewish people. To clarify, we were not simply celebrating our independence, but rather the grabbing an opportunity granted to us at our lowest point and recreating a much needed homeland.



There is a story told by Doctor Seuss known as The Zax. In it, two creatures known as "Zax" meet, though neither will move out of the way of the other to allow passage, stubbornly standing till eternity. This is often how I view the clash of Israeli secular and religious society, the two walking the same path in opposing directions and when they meet, neither is willing to budge. While Israeli society is at constant seesaw, moments of unity show what unites us all. It is unfortunate that this only occurs annually on these two days, or takes a story like Nachshon Wachsmann, however it proves the potential is there. While crude we must all look at ourselves as Hitler once did, no matter what place we may see ourselves in the world, we are all Jews. Let it be soon that the unity of Yom

Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut exist as constant, Jewish brethren side by side, bringing to fruition what has already begun, proving to the world what we already know, that we are Hashem's chosen people, eternal and mighty.

Recollections Of My Rebbi by Daniel Mendelsohn (5767-68)

Harav Lipman Asher Podolsky zt"l was a man who literally influenced thousands of lives. To all who knew him, the Rav was a fatherly figure, a role model, someone who clung to every word you spoke as if you were the most important person around.



Very few can obtain the attention of youngsters to the extent of being able to hear a pin drop in a room packed with 200 students. Such were the highly anticipated Thursday night shiurim given by the Rav. The room shook when Rav Podolsky spoke in Yeshiva Erev Rosh Hashana, he had the ability to wake anybody up from their spiritual slumber.

My journey with the Rav began almost immediately after arriving in Shana Aleph. I knew him for only a short period, but this was to be the period that changed my life the most and my experience was very different than that of one of the Rav's other students. Let me explain:

My first week in Shana Aleph an announcement was made asking for a volunteer to take breakfast every morning to an unwell Rabbi living in the Old City. No mention was made of who this Rabbi was or his connection to the yeshiva. I stepped forward and so began my mornings with Rav Podolsky. The Rav was the strongest unwell man I have ever met. He would struggle out of bed every morning, no matter how hard it was for him, just to greet me and give me a sense of accomplishment in my mitzvah. We would sit together for hours in his home and discuss everything possible. mussar, machshava, midrash etc. anything we could fit in before I had to rush back to Yeshiva. One morning the Rav pulled out a slightly different sefer than usual, "The Little Prince" by Antoine De Saint-Exupery. Together we would read this children's book everyday and then discuss the endless morals and lessons behind the story.

Everyone up until now had known Rav Podolsky as the powerful, inspiring Rav in Yeshiva, their morning seder Rebbe, Mussar on Thursday nights Rebbe etc. I however never knew him in those days. The much frailer man in the cushioned armchair was a friend. I never knew he was a big Rav. He was a friend I could always run and talk to in breaks, share stories and talk to about life.

In January his health deteriorated and his parents flew in to take care of him. I was no longer needed to take him meals. I continued however to find whatever time I could to visit the Rav and continue our discussions. Our meetings took place less often though due to his more frequent and more prolonged hospital visits. The Rav would never talk about himself. Never answered negatively about how he was feeling. I could see he was in pain but he always told me things were great and wanted to know how i was instead. It became the norm for him to be hospitalized for a few days at a time which is why I didnt see the end coming.

A Rav called me up and told me that Rav Podolsky was entering his last days. I begged Rav Bina to allow me to go to the hospital and was sent with a few others to visit.

Rav Podolsky was known for his fondness of the British boys, he always called them his 'Britische naches' he would love to sing and harmonize with the Brits and anyone else for that matter. He even made his own music CD.

We were told upon arriving at the hospital that the previous day, at seuda shlishit surrounded by his loved ones singing to him, he uttered his last words. Don't stop.

It is said that the hearing is one of the last things to go before a person passes from this world, When we arrived the Rav was already non-responsive. As a gift of thanks to the Rav lying before us we stood and sang to him on behalf of all students whom he has had such influence on. It was one of the most emotional experiences of my life. very few of us could contain our tears. Whilst we were singing the Rav's fingers raised as if to tell us to keep going despite his unconsciousness. As each one of us said our last goodbyes and left the room with Rav Amos, I waited and asked the Rav's mother for one last lesson. We hadn't yet finished our book and I was not going to let this opportunity pass. I opened the last chapter and read to him.

" My star will be just one of the stars for you..... in one of them I shall be laughing...and when your sorrow is comforted (time soothes all sorrow) you will be content that you have known me. You will always be my friend. You will laugh with me."

I guess these words summed it all up. I never knew the story would become our story. It ended how we ended. The Rav passed on from this world the next morning.

The Rav never stopped helping me. A year later, well into my army service, I was experiencing a particular rough time. It was just after Operation Cast Lead I went to visit the Rav's kever at Har Hamenuchoth. I had forgotten the words inscribed on the matseva, the words from Pirke Avot I so badly needed to hear at that point. "Lefum tzaara agra" Through pain comes reward.

I have never met someone who solely lives for the purpose of others, Rav Podolsky zt"l used to get very frustrated at no longer being able to come to Yeshiva. He would tell me that he would stay alive and keep going as long as he had people to teach. I guess I kept him teaching as long as I could. He will never stop teaching though. His Divrei Torah, music cd's and books are available to all. The pain of losing someone close was tough for all of the thousands who came to his funeral, everyone was his closest friend, but as the Rav said, you will always be my friend, lefum tzaara agra.

To end with the Rav's closing words of every shiur. May you all be zoche to live life as it should be lived.

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Achrei Mot-Kedoshim

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon





"Kabbalat HaTorah - Only for a United Nation"

"Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons, when they approached before Hashem and they died" (Vayikra 16:1). There are several opinions in Chazal regarding the precise nature of the sin of the sons of Aharon (Rav Dessler zt"l in Michtav M'Eliyahu, volume II page 244, brings a compilation of fifteen opinions). Whatever their sin may have been, we must emphasize the words of the pasuk, that it occurred "when they approached before Hashem". In other words, the deaths of Nadav and Avihu did not result from any terribly grave sin, G-d forbid, that would serve to distance them from Hashem, but the opposite, their sin was so minor that it was only due to their extreme closeness to Hashem that the A-lmighty in His infinite wisdom saw fit to put them to death. This was a fulfillment of Hashem's words to Moshe previously "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest me" (Vayikra 10:3). It is because "Hashem, deals strictly with those round about Him even to a hair's breadth" (Yevamot 121b), that any minor infraction was sufficient cause for them to die.

Why does the A-lmighty deal in such a strict manner with the righteous? When discussing the value of a pile of scrap metal, it is of little concern to us whether we find scratches, faults, or even a few grams missing from the supposed weight. Scrap metal is sold by the kilogram or ton and minor discrepancies have no effect on its worth. When dealing with pearls, however, we are as exacting as a hair's breadth - should a pearl have even the slightest defect, its value would plummet. It is because the pearl is so valuable and precious that any minor blemish can have a great effect on its value. Hashem does not deal strictly with the wicked because they are like scrap metal, the tzaddikim, on the other hand, are His precious pearls. It is because of this that any sin of theirs, even the most minor one, is subject to the full force of judgment. Should one of the chairs in the Yeshiva not stand completely upright, it would be of little concern to us. What would be if a spaceship left its launching pad at the wrong angle at Cape Kennedy? What begins with the slightest deviation could result in it missing its destination altogether, and perhaps begin destined to remain circling in space for eternity! The tzaddikim are a "ladder set earthward and its top reached heavenward" (Bereishit 28:12), the slightest blemish at the bottom can have great ramifications at the top. For others, whose actions are not perfect this is of little or no significance.

As we mentioned, Rav Dessler zt"l summarized the various opinions in Chazal regarding the sin of Nadav and Avihu. Rav Dessler explains that all of these opinions are based on the same idea: relative to their status they were lacking the trait of humility, this was a result of their great stature (see Michtav M'Eliyahu volume II, page 246). One of the sins mentioned in Chazal is quoted in the Gemara "It once happened that Moshe and Aharon were walking along the way and Nadav and Avihu were walking behind them and all Israel, in turn, were walking behind them. Nadav said to Avihu: 'when will these two old men die and you and I will lead the generation'" (Sanhedrin 52a). It was not that Nadav and Avihu prayed for the deaths of their father and uncle, G-d forbid, rather that they viewed themselves as being worthy of being the future leaders of the nation. It is possible that all of the claims against Nadav and Avihu are in fact based on their being the sons of Aharon. It was because Aharon was on such a high level that more is

demanded from his children, than from the children of an ordinary person.

We find a similar idea regarding the sons of the prophet Shmuel. We are told "but his sons did not follow his ways, they were swayed by profit; they took bribes and they perverted justice" (Shmuel I 8:3). One view in Chazal is "it was in his lofty ways that they did not go; however, they also did not sin. But how, then, do I establish the continuation of the verse: 'they turned aside after monetary gain'? It means that they did not act in accordance with the deeds of their father, for Shmuel the Righteous used to travel throughout all the Jewish areas and judge the people in their cities, as it is stated 'He went every year and made a circuit of Beit Kel, Gilgal, and Mitzpah and judged Israel'(Shmuel I 7:16). However, his sons did not do likewise, rather, they sat in their cities and judged in order to increase the income of their attendants and scribes" (Shabbat 56a). Shmuel used to travel from city to city in order to spread Torah. His sons, however preferred to remain in their home cities, causing those seeking counsel to go to the trouble of traveling to them. Chazal, in fact, tell us that in this area Shmuel was greater even than Moshe Rabenu: "Moshe would sit and whoever needed a ruling in any matter would come to him to be judged, as it says 'Moshe sat to judge the people' (Shmot 18:13), while Shmuel would travel from place to place and render judgments in order not to trouble the people to come to him, as it says 'he went every year' (Shmuel I 7:16). Said Hashem, Moshe who sat in one place to judge the Jewish people, will come to me to the Tent of Meeting to hear My words, while Shmuel who went out towards the Jewish people in their cities and judged them, I will go and speak to him" (Shmot Rabba 16:3).

The fact that Moshe Rabenu did not go out and judge the people the way Shmuel did is not so difficult to understand. During the time of Moshe's leadership, the Jewish people were all encamped in one central area and it did not pose any difficulty for a person seeking counsel to come to Moshe. During Shmuel's time, however, the dwelling places of the Jewish nation was spread out from Dan until Be-er Sheva (see Shmuel I 3:20). In spite of this, Chazal felt that in this area Shmuel was greater than Moshe Rabenu - Shmuel went to the people to judge and counsel them, while Moshe remained in one place and had the people come to him. It derives therefore that Shmuel's sons were "only" on the level of Moshe Rabenu. Was this so terrible? Obviously not! Yet the Meiri explains that because their father went from city to city spreading the words of Torah, we expect no less from his children. Had it been anyone else, or the children of anyone else, we would not require such high standards of behavior.

R' Chaim M'Volozhin comments on the following pasuk: "one who walks in his innocence is a righteous man, fortunate are his sons after him" (Mishle 20:7). He explains: "The traits that the tzaddik toiled and labored to attain, become part of the nature of his children after him, and with a slight amount of effort on their part, they too can reach this level. We see for ourselves how many people sacrificed their lives for Kiddush Hashem. This is something ingrained in our nature passed down to us from Avraham Avinu who was willing to give up his life in the furnace in Ur Kasdim for his belief. The same may be said for the remainder of the ten trials of Avraham, they paved the way for us to be able to withstand similar trials" (Ruach Chayim on Massechet Avot 5:3). If a Jew makes the self-sacrifice to settle in the Land of Israel, it is due to the power instilled in him from Avraham Avinu. A Jew who is willing to sacrifice himself or his children al

Kiddush Hashem, has inherited that ability to do so from Avraham Avinu who gave himself up to be burned in the furnace in Ur Kasdim and was willing to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah. (The question has been raised as to what was so significant about Avraham's willingness to offer his son upon the altar, after all in subsequent generations there have been many individuals who died sanctifying the Name of Hashem or who sent their children to do so.

There are many explanations for this, yet based on these words of R' Chaim M'Volozhin we can understand that the people of subsequent generations inherited their ability to do so from Avraham Avinu. It was Avraham Avinu's passing this test, that paved the way for his descendants to stand up to such terrible trials and tribulations). In this way we expect Shmuel's sons too to follow in the footsteps of their father, to live up to standards we would not expect of others.

The charges against Aharon's sons were due to the righteousness of their father. Had they descended from anyone else we would not hold them up to such standards of righteousness. Perhaps this is the reason the Parsha begins with the words: "Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons", it does not say "after the deaths of Nadav and Avihu" - the charge against them was due to their being the sons of Aharon. Had they just been Nadav and Avihu, their actions would not have been judged so harshly.

We find ourselves during that period of time in which we mourn the death of twenty four thousand students of R' Akiva. The Mishna (see Ediyot Perek 10, Mishna 2) seems to imply that the attribute of judgment is much stronger during the period between Pesach and Shavuot then during other parts of the year. This can explain why they were judged so harshly specifically during this time. According to the description in the Gemara: "they all died an ugly death, what death was it? Rav Nachman said: 'asakra'" (Yevamot 62b). This is elaborated on in Massechet Brachot: "nine hundred and three forms of death were created in the world, as it is stated 'many avenues (totzaot) toward death' (Tehillim 68:21), and the numerical value of the word 'totzaot' (avenues) is equal to nine hundred and three. The harshest of them all is asakra (Brachot 8a).

It is possible that here too, we must add that the reason the attribute of judgment dealt so harshly with them, was because they were students of R' Akiva. This placed them on such a high level that Divine Providence was as exacting with them as a hair's breadth. After all, what was their sin? Chazal tell us "they did not act with mutual respect" (Yevamot 62b). Does it say that they physically harmed each other or cursed each other, G-d forbid? No! They did not accord each other sufficient respect. For this they were punished so severely. Perhaps while they were arguing over a halachic issue, one offered his own

"chiddush", while another countered with "what you are suggesting totally contradicts an explicit halacha, R' Akiva would not agree with you, R' Yehoshua has the totally opposite view". Their disputes were not carried out in a respectful manner.

R' Yisrael M'Salant zt"l once entered a Beit Midrash to find two students in the midst of a very heated argument. One shouted "you fool, what you are saying shows that you are a total ignoramus!". R' Yisrael approached them saying "we are all obligated to learn Torah but this is not the way, a bit of derech erez is called for". The following day R' Yisrael

returned to the same Beit Midrash to find them speaking to each other in a much more respectful manner: "it would appear that his honor is correct, I concede to his opinion". R' Yisrael said to them: "When I said that derech erez is required it does not mean you are not obligated to learn. We all know that 'derech erez kadma laTorah' 'derech erez precedes the Torah' (Vayikra Rabba 9:3), but the derech erez must be FOLLOWED by Torah learning. You have no right to agree to a 'psbat' you find incorrect simply out of derech erez. If you disagree then you must voice your opinion, just be careful not to insult him in any manner".

The Gemara relates an incident involving R' Yehuda ben Nehemiah, one of the students of R' Akiva (perhaps this incident serves as an example of R' Akiva's other students behavior as well). R' Yehuda ben Nehemiah had a dispute with R' Tarfon involving a halachic issue. R' Yehuda ben Nehemiah disproved R' Tarfon's view and "The face of Yehuda ben Nehemiah brightened with joy" (Menachot 68b). He was filled with so much joy that his face radiated. To only feel joy in his heart perhaps he would not have been so clearly punished (it is not clear whether the charge against him was that his joy was seen on his face, or that he felt any joy at all in his heart), the fact is that his feeling of joy was visible to all. R' Akiva, upon witnessing this event, remarked: "Yehuda your face has brightened with joy because you have refuted the sage; I wonder whether you will live long" (ibid.). Immediately thereafter, the Gemara tells us: "R' Yehuda b'Rebbi Ilai said: 'This happened a fortnight before the Passover and when I came up for the Shavuot festival I inquired after Yehuda ben Nehemiah and was told that he had passed away'". He died between Pesach and Shavuot - perhaps this serves as one example of one of R' Akiva's students who died in the days between Pesach and Shavuot for not treating each other with mutual respect.

The above exchange appears difficult. What after all, was the grave sin that R' Yehuda ben Nehemiah was guilty of? R' Tarfon asked a question and he answered him. Did he say any bad word about R' Tarfon, did he even say "see! I won!", or anything of the sort? The answer is that we expect more from the students of R' Akiva. Because they were on such a high level, Hashem dealt strictly with them "like a hair's breadth". It was that joy of victory that was visible to all that lead to the death of R' Yehuda ben Nehemiah.

Prior to the giving of the Torah, it is written "and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain" (Shmot 19:2). The use of the singular implies "like one person with one heart." (Rashi there). Whenever it relates the nation's journeys, the Torah speaks in the plural "and they journeyed" "and they camped". The use of the singular "vayichan Yisrael" "and Israel encamped" implies a feeling of unity. The Torah can only be given to a people united, without that feeling of Jewish unity, Hashem would not have given the Torah to His people. When a people is united and feels as one body, one does not feel joy at emerging victorious over another person, for defeating another would be the same as defeating himself - you win and lose simultaneously. Joy at victory over one's fellow man is a sign of a fragmented people. It is because the Torah can only be given to a people living in harmony that this unity is especially required before Shavuot - the day of the giving of the Torah. The Torah was not given to six hundred thousand individuals but to a united nation.

"Kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeh" "All Jewish people are responsible for one another" (Shvuot 39a). Why should I be responsible for the actions of the other? On a simple level, it is based on Chazal's derivation "'and a man will stumble over his brother' (Vayikra 26:37) - man will stumble because of his brother's iniquity" (Shvuot 39a). Similarly, we are commanded: "You shall reprove your fellow" (Vayikra 19:17). Perhaps we can add that the first source for a Jew being responsible for the actions of his fellow Jew appears immediately prior to Matan Torah. Moshe Rabenu informed the nation that Hashem wished to give them the Torah: "So shall you say to the house of Jacob, and relate to the Children of Israel"(Shmot 19:3). The people's response was

"Everything that Hashem has spoken WE shall do!" (ibid. 8). This was not a chorus of "I shall do", but each and every person shouted in the plural - every member of the Jewish nation accepted responsibility for the Torah observance of his fellow Jew - "all Jewish people are responsible for one another". It was only in this merit that Hashem was willing to give the Torah to the nation. When my fellow Jew does not observe the dictates of the Torah as he should, there is something lacking in my own observance. It is only when we take responsibility for one another and are united that we are able to receive the Torah. The day of Matan Torah is referred to several times as "the day of the congregation" (Devarim 9:10, 10:4, 18:16) for it was on that day that we became a "congregation" - "this day you have become a people" (Devarim 27:9), not a collection of individuals, not even twelve separate tribes - but one nation, one unit.

Rashi tells us that during the days of our forefathers, construction of a "matzeva" - an altar made of a single pillar, was permitted (see Rashi's commentary to Devarim 16:22). The Torah explicitly describes Yaakov Avinu building such a pillar (see Bereishit 28:18, 35:14) and this act was pleasing to Hashem. It was only during the days of Moshe Rabenu that we were commanded "And you shall not erect for yourselves a pillar, which Hashem, your G-d, hates" [26] (Devarim 16:22). Rashi explains in the name of the Sifri why the "matzeva" so beloved to Hashem during the days of the forefathers, was despised from the days of Moshe Rabenu onward. Perhaps we can add our own explanation: a "matzeva" is a single solitary stone (although the Rambam in Hilchot Avoda Zara 6:6 presents a dissenting view, certainly in the view of Rashi's commentary on this pasuk it was a lone stone). An altar, on the other hand, is constructed from many different stones. During the days that preceded the giving of the Torah each Jew was on his own, while from the time the Torah was given it would be incomprehensible to offer a sacrifice on a lone stone. There could only be an altar - made up of many stones. This in fact was symbolized by Moshe's act at the receiving of the Torah: "He built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel" (Shmot 24:4 - see Rashi there who comments that the construction of this altar was part of the necessary preparations for receiving the Torah). The Jewish people up until that point were twelve disjointed tribes. From this point on they were "klal Yisrael", the united Jewish nation - there can no longer be a "matzeva" comprised of a single stone, only a "mizbe-ach built from many.

We find something similar when Eliyahu came to Har HaCarmel to create a foundation for reuniting the Jewish nation following that terrible rift caused by the prophets of the Baal - "Eliyahu took twelve stones, corresponding to the number of the tribes of the children of Yaakov, he built the stones into an altar for the Name of Hashem" (Melachim

I 18:31-32). He built a "mizbe-ach", not twelve separate "matzevot". Eliyahu wished to teach the nation that all the tribes had to be united - the Torah cannot be given to many individuals but only to an entire nation. What occurred during Matan Torah, applies to future generations as well - joining the Jewish nation hinges on accepting the Torah (the Israeli Supreme Court may think otherwise but we know the truth). The opposite is true as well, one cannot be a part of the Torah without being a part of the nation, for a Jew does not accept the Torah for himself as an individual.

The authorities cite several thoughts a person must have in mind before praying: that I am fulfilling my obligation to pray, that I am praying to Hashem, that I am standing before the King of kings: "I have set Hashem before me always" (Tehillim 16:8), my eyes must be cast downward and my heart upward. We are also told to bear in mind the Mitzvah of "Love your fellow as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18). This applies even to one who davens alone and not as part of a congregation, for he does not use the singular language of the pasuk "heal me Hashem and I will be healed" (Yirmiyahu 17:14), but rather in the plural, he says "heal us Hashem - then we will be healed". A person must daven as a member of the Jewish community, for our tefillot correspond to the communal offerings that were brought in the Beit Hamikdash. Although one is permitted to offer his own private supplication, the primary tefillot - Shacharit, Musaf, and Mincha correspond to the communal offerings.

Chazal tell us: "From where do we know that the words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself over it? The Torah states 'this is the teaching regarding a man who would die in a tent' (Bamidbar 19:14)" (Brachot 63b). In the past we have offered many interpretations to this adage of Chazal, perhaps we can now offer an additional explanation: The Torah is only retained by one who "kills" his independent self over it - he must be a part of the community, it is not I the individual who learns Torah, but I the Jew. I, as a member of the Jewish nation, am learning Torah which is "the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov" (Devarim 33:4). The Torah is the property of the entire nation and is not limited to one living on a desert island. This is the way we must approach learning Torah.

How can we arrive at a true understanding of the Torah? By searching for the absolute truth - not the "truth" that fits my needs. Our forefathers were straight in their approach and it is for this reason that the book of Bereishit, the book of the fathers, is referred to as "Sefer HaYashar" (see Yehoshua 10:13, Shmuel II 1:18, Avoda Zara 25a). Our forefathers were able to acquire the Torah on their own, it did not have to be given to them. Avraham Avinu was able to direct his thoughts to the Torah in its entirety (see Bereishit Rabba 95:3). Why are we not able to do the same? Why did we need Moshe Rabenu and the word of Hashem in order to learn Torah? Because our thoughts are not as straight and pure as those of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. When we learn we do not search for absolute truth, we are not interested in what is good for the world, but a truth that suits my specific needs - "G-d has made man simple, but they sought many intrigues" (Kohelet 7:29). When a merchant who is asked what two times two is responds with "that depends, if I am buying then it is three, if I am selling then five" we know immediately how he does his calculations, and that he will never be able to arrive at the true answer. Few admit to such calculations, but one who is not straight is often guilty of it. The forefathers were not searching for anything but the straight and honest

truth, they were able to acquire the Torah without it being given to them. For us, if only we should be able to acquire the Torah after it being given to us!

"If there is no fear of G-d there is no wisdom" (Pirkei Avot 3:17). How does one fear Hashem? By negating himself before Hashem, by searching not for what I need but for what Hashem wants. Not only must one negate himself before Hashem, but before the prophets and the sages of Israel as well. Not to think that I am the wise one, to understand that the prophets and Chazal are the great ones and it is from them that I must learn. If I have difficulty understanding a passage from the Gemara, it is my understanding that is lacking. The same may be said regarding the commentaries of Rashi, Rabenu Tam, and the Rambam. I do not understand because I did not learn properly - Rashi learned the Gemara very well. If I cannot understand why Rabenu Tam does not accept Rashi's view, it is not Rabenu Tam who is lacking in understanding, it is me. Only when we negate ourselves before Hashem can we arrive at the absolute truth - we cannot expect to view the Torah from our own perspective, on our level.

Given "The situation" today we must contemplate "what is this that Hashem has done to us?" (Bereishit 42:28). We do not know nor can we begin to understand Hashem's ways. What we do know is that everything Hashem does is for the good - how it is good, we cannot know and we cannot comprehend, what is certain is that the time has come to awaken ourselves from our slumber and repent. Each of us must work on that which needs correcting. Regarding positive traits we must think of the community as a whole, but when it comes to imperfections we must look to ourselves - what can I improve on, not in what way does my neighbor need improvement. Although the "viduy" we recite is written in the plural (Ashamnu, bagadnu, etc.), when one wishes to confess for a personal sin that he is guilty of he does so in the singular. If he was guilty of desecrating the Shabbat, G-d forbid, he does not say "we desecrated the Shabbat", but rather "I desecrated the Shabbat". He does not say "we spoke loshon hara", but rather "I spoke loshon hara", if that is the sin he wishes to confess. Each individual must search within himself for what he can improve on.

The situation we are in is terrible. On the one hand, we see Hashem's salvation, without which we would not be able to survive at all. On the other hand, we are living in very difficult times - all seventy wolves are gathering together to publicly denounce this lone defenseless sheep. Who knows what the future will bring, we are in great need of help from above. The way to merit Hashem's help is to strengthen our Torah, love of Hashem, fear of Hashem, prayer, and chesed. Hashem deals with His people in a way that is "measure for measure" (Shabbat 105b). When we strengthen our acts of chesed, Hashem will act with us using His attribute of chesed. If we try our best to judge others favorably, Hashem will do the same for us. When we bless other Jews, Hashem blesses us. The blessing that is then bestowed upon us is not only a result of His acting "measure for measure", but is the promise Hashem gave Avraham Avinu

"I will bless those who bless you" (Bereishit 12:3) - Hashem will bless whoever blesses the Jewish people. We should therefore do our best to bless our fellow Jews, if not that then we should at least try not to become angry with them. Together with all this we must believe with all our faith that "whatever the Merciful One does, He does for the best" (Brachot 60b). We may not see or understand this, but believe we must.

We must also believe that "Totally false is the horse for salvation" (Tehillim 33:17). To believe that the horse will save us is not a half truth it is a total falsehood. If one were to tell you that England defeated Germany in WWII, he would be partially right, for they played a role in this victory alongside America and Russia. The pasuk is telling us that it is not even partially true, salvation comes only from the A-Imighty. This does not absolve man from putting in his own effort, for that requirement was decreed to Adam HaRishon "by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread" (Bereishit 3:19). We must put in our own efforts yet not think for a moment that "the sweat of our brow" has any effect. The Ramban tells us "diligence is a lie" (see his commentary to Bereishit 36:15) - only Tefilla, Torah, chesed, and other positive acts have any truth to them. The horse is only an illusion. These illusions are necessary for the running of the world, but we must realize that they have no effect at all, not even from the perspective of "zeh vezeh gorev" "this and this cause" (Pesachim 26a) - it is only the word of Hashem that has any effect.

What confession does the prophet Hoshea instruct us to say? "Say to Him 'May You forgive all iniquity and accept good intentions and let our lips substitute for bulls'" (Hoshea 14:4), "Assyria will not save us" (it does not matter whether we refer to Assyria as America, it too will not save us!), "we will not ride the horse" (it does not matter whether we call it a horse, a missile, or a tank - this is not where our salvation comes from) "nor will we ever again call our handiwork 'our gods'" (we will not attribute success to our efforts), "for it is with You that an orphan finds mercy" (only Hashem can save us, nothing else).

A complete understanding and recognition of these facts can lead to salvation for the Jewish nation. It is told of HaGaon HaRav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik zt"l that when he fled Warsaw (following its takeover by the Germans at the outset of WWII), the roads were filled with German murderers. The entire journey he spent thinking to himself "ein od milvado" "there is none beside Him" (Devarim 4:35). It was through this, Baruch Hashem, thank G-d, he was saved with the aid of great miracles, and was able to arrive safely in Vilna which at the time was outside the German jurisdiction. (For further details of this story, see Yalkut Lekach Tov volume V page 62). To strengthen our recognition of "there is none beside Him" in this world is "of great significance and is a wonderful aid to ridding oneself of all that others wish to do to you ... that they will have no success in carrying out their wishes" (Nefesh HaChayim Shaar III, chapter 12). When we understand that "ein od milvado", then there truly is no one beside Him and there is no force in the world that can overpower us. The only power a suicide bomber or any other force in this world has over us is a result of our granting them significance. When we view them as insignificant, they can have no effect on us.

The Torah tells us that "Rachel had taken the teraphim, put them into the camel's packsaddle and sat on them" (Bereishit 31:34), why did Rachel place them on the saddle of the camel? On a simple level we can say that it was in order to hide them from her father who used them for his Avoda Zara (see Rashi Bereishit 31:19). Chazal, however, offer an additional explanation. Why was it specifically on the saddle that Rachel placed them? Chazal tell us (see Zohar volume I 164:2) that the teraphim had powers of sorcery and impurity that could reveal to Lavan their whereabouts. When do they have such power? When they are honored. When they are degraded, on the other

hand, their power is null and void. By sitting on the teraphim, Rachel not only hid them from her father, but degraded them and thereby caused them to lose any power they may have had.

They would now be unable to reveal their location to Lavan. In fact, the halacha states that a simple nullification can cause an Avoda Zara to lose its status.

Yirmiyahu the prophet tells the Jewish people "What will you say when He punishes you? you yourself have trained them as rulers over you" (Yirmiyahu 13:21). Yirmiyahu is asking, what complaints can you have against Hashem when He brings to king of Bavel to rule over you and exile you? Was it not you who were guilty of giving them the importance of rulers? Chizkiyahu gave great honor to the Babylonian emissaries sent to him by the king of Bavel. We are told that his wife herself waited on them (see Sanhedrin 104a), and he displayed all his treasures to them. Had we not shown such significance to Bavel they would not have the power of dominion over us. Similarly, it was the Jewish people who were guilty of elevating the status of the Romans which lead to their eventual rule over us during the period of the second Beit Hamikdash (see Rashi on Shir

HaShirim 6:12 and the Ramban on Bereishit 32:4). The first time we attached too much honor to the Romans was when Yaakov sends a message to Esav, father of Edom (Rome), by saying "Thus shall you say, to MY MASTER, to Esav, so said your servant Yaakov" (Bereishit 32:5). These superfluous words of submission, that Esav was referred to as the master, lead to the Jewish people being enslaved by the Romans. Had the Romans been treated as insignificant they would not have succeeded in lording over us!

Chazal relate (see Tanchuma to Vayeshev siman 3) that R' Chiya and R' Shimon son of Rabbi were once traveling on the road and passed by a group of strong and healthy Roman soldiers. R' Shimon pointed out to R' Chiya that these soldiers of Esav were very healthy and strong. R' Chiya proceeded to take him to the market place whereby he showed him a basket of grapes and figs, surrounded by flies. R' Chiya then remarked "these flies are equal to that Roman legion, neither has more power than the other. When R' Shimon related this incident to his father, his father remarked "why did R' Chiya accord such significance to that legion? They are not equal to flies, they are nothing while the flies are at least fulfilling the will of Hashem, as it states: " responded "Why did R' Chiya accord so much importance to this legion that he equated them with flies? This legion is nothing, while the flies follow the will of Hashem, as it says "It shall be on that day that Hashem will whistle to the fly that is at the far end of Egypt's rivers" (Yeshayahu 7:18). The flies, as the legion, have no independent power, but at least they do not rebel against Hashem. The Roman soldiers on the other hand worship Avoda Zara, kill Jews and are guilty of many despicable acts.

A person on Rabbi's level understands very clearly that the Romans are less than flies. The same may be said of all Arabs and the suicide bombers - they are less than flies for "there is none beside Him". When we understand this, we will merit a true revelation of "there is none beside Him", the kingdom of Heaven will be revealed all over the universe, "for the earth will be as filled with knowledge of Hashem as water covering the sea bed" (Yeshayahu 11:9), speedily in our day, Amen.

Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Benish Ginsburg

Hoche-ach Tochiach et Amitecha

One of the many mitzvos found in Parshas Kedoshim is the mitzvah of tochacha which we generally translate as rebuke. I would like to share with you the beautiful understanding of HaGaon HaRav Yaakov Kaminetzky zt"l regarding this mitzvah (see Emes L'Yaakov Vayikra 19:17). Rav Yaakov points out that many people assume that this mitzvah is Bein Adam LaMakom, between man and Hashem - Hashem wants every Jew to properly observe the Torah, therefore every person is obligated to ensure that his fellow Jew keeps the Torah to help fulfill Hashem's plan for this world.



Rav Yaakov, however, points out that the mitzvah of "hocheiach tochiach et amitecha" is sandwiched in between other mitzvot which come under the category of bein adam lachavero: preceded by "lo telech rachil be-amecha" and "lo tisna et achicha bilvavecha" and followed by "lo tikom velo titor" and "ve-ahavta lere-acha kamocho"

The fact that this mitzvah appears at this juncture is a strong indication that it is in the realm of bein adam lachavero. The mitzvah to be mochiach a fellow Jew is for his own sake - to place him on the correct path in order that he properly observe the Torah.

Rav Yaakov proceeds to quote from the Rambam (Hilchos De'ot, Perek 6 Halacha 7) who rules that when a person rebukes another whether it be regarding a mitzvah in the realm of bein adam laMakom or in the realm of bein adam lachavero it should be in a soft tone, he should inform him that he is only doing it for his own benefit. How interesting, part of rebuking is to inform the person that it is for his benefit. Rav Yaakov explains that this is not just some detail of the mitzvah but it is an absolute prerequisite for fulfillment of the mitzvah of tochachah. We see that tochachah is clearly a mitzvah bein adam lachavero - an attempt to help the person grow in his avodat Hashem. Rebuking is therefore not a simple task, it requires finding just the right language in which it is clear that the person is genuinely trying to help the other person.

We read in Parshas Vayetze (29:4) of Yaakov Avinu coming to the well and noticing that the shepherds were slacking off in their work. Yaakov approaches them and addresses them as achai, my brothers, me-ayin atem, where are you from? How can he address them as "my brothers" if they were total strangers? Rav Yaakov explains based on this idea which he has developed: Yaakov Avinu was aware that he was about to give them tochachah for slacking off in their job. In order to give proper tochachah Yaakov needed to convince the shepherds that what he was saying was for their benefit. In order to do that Yaakov needed to create a relationship: "my brothers" - I feel close to you, I want to help you. Only then is he able to rebuke.

A good test of whether our tochachah follows Rav Yaakov's approach of convincing the listener that we are speaking for his benefit, is whether or not he thanks the rebuker afterwards. Perhaps rather than rebuke, a more appropriate translation of tochachah would be to give advice.

Good Shabbos,
Beinish Ginsburg

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Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

Rav [Yoel](#) and Ruth Yehoshua on the engagement of their son Uriel to Tehilla Feldheim.
Rabbi [Shlomo](#) (5760-61) and Miriam Karp on the birth of a baby boy, Yosef Aaron.

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

Printer Friendly Tehillim List

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia | ● Avraham David ben Miriam Goldeh |
| ● Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel | ● Ephraim Yitzchak ben Golda |
| ● Chaya bat Grunia | ● Margalit bat Rachel |
| ● Yitzchok ben Shayna Ita | ● Yaacov ben Baila |
| ● Moshe Zanvel ben Brindel | ● Leah bat Eidel |
| ● Gershon Yitzchok ben Mottel Tzerel | ● Ester Bas Lea |
| ● Rueven ben Tova Chaya | ● Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah |
| ● Rivka Margalit bat Etta | ● Chaya Esther bat Golda Rachel |
| ● Chaya Meira Mindel bas Chava Golda | ● Shayna bas Chava |
| ● Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka | ● Eliezer ben Sorah |
| ● Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna | ● Fruma bat Rochel |
| ● Elazar ben Nuber | ● Yonatan Moshe ben Devorah Tova |

- Na'ava Bat Ami bat Sara Leah
- Gilad ben Aviva
- Binyamin ben Nazira
- Naomi Sara bas Henna Miriam
- Fruma bas Ita



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

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Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel?- [let us know](#)! We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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