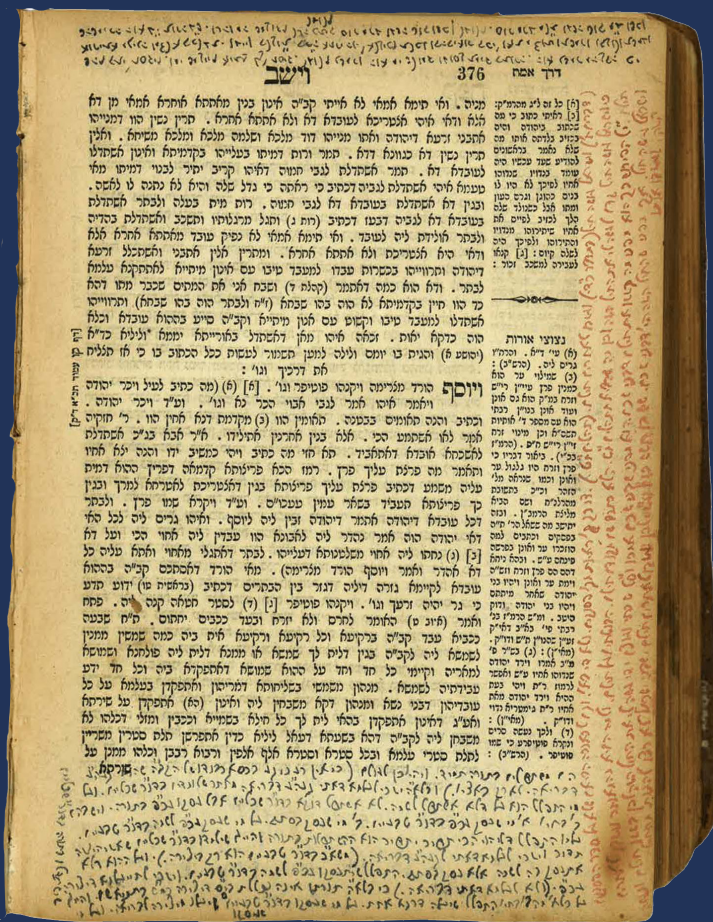


# GEMS FROM LIKKUTEI LEVI YITZCHOK -IN ENGLISH-



The Glosses of  
R' Levi Yitzchok Schneerson זצ"ל

IN HONOR OF CHOF AV, 5783  
- THE 79TH HILULA -

GEMS FROM  
LIKKUTEI  
LEVI YITZCHOK

–IN ENGLISH–

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R' Levi Yitzchok Schneerson זצ"ל*

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Harav HaGaon HaChasid HaMekubal, R' Levi Yitzchak Schneerson זצ"ל  
18 Nissan, 5638 (1878) - 20 Menachem Av, 5704 (1944)

**Cover photo: A page of Zohar with commentary from  
R' Levi Yitzchok, which he had with him in exile.**

Note the various colors of the ink, due to the variety of  
flowers used by Rebbetzin Chana to make ink.

*Courtesy: Chabad Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad,  
770 Eastern Parkway and Kehot Publication Society.*

Boruch Hashem

*20 Av, 5783*

“With gratitude to Hashem, I have merited a great and wondrous Zechus, in that some of my father’s writings and Seforim have reached me”, wrote the Rebbe, in the introduction to Likutei Levi Yitzchok, the published writings of his father, of righteous memory.

This rare expression gives us a glimpse of insight into how precious and dear these teachings are to our Rebbe.

We echo the sentiment of what a “great and wonderful Zechus” we have to publish a sampling of R’ Levi Yitzchok Schneerson’s teachings, in English, making them accessible to an audience for whom they have thus far been a closed book. This is the 3rd year we are producing this unique booklet, establishing a Chazaka.

These teachings are taken from the Chayenu publication where we feature a freshly-translated teaching each week.

We have included 20 teachings, corresponding to the 20th of Av, the 79th Hilula-Yahrzeit.

With Hashem’s help we will produce the remainder in the right time.

May we merit that the Zechus of the Ba’al Hahilula, R’ Levi Yitzchok Schneerson ל"ג, shines upon us and that studying his teachings brings him and his son, our Rebbe, great nachas.

**CHAYENU**

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# FOREWORD

## **Gratitude**

At the outset, we ought to thank all those who made this publication possible.

First and foremost, we owe a debt of gratitude to Rebbetzin Chana, who with tremendous sacrifice toiled to provide the “ink” for her husband to be able to jot down his novel Torah insights. The Rebbe always credited her with the fact that we have his teachings today.

As you can read in her journal (pg. 139), it was also a lifelong wish of hers that these ultimately get published. Unfortunately, she didn’t merit to see them printed in her lifetime, but she too has Nachas that this booklet is in your hands.

## **Yalkut Levi Yitzchak al HaTorah**

While there are a number of books out there deciphering the deeply coded in-depth Kabbalistic teachings of R’ Levy Yitzchok ך״ו (see pg. 143 for Resources), without doubt the most extensive and elaborate treatment on his teachings is the series known as “Yalkut Levi Yitzchak al HaTorah” which is authored by **Rabbi Dovid Dubov** of Chabad in Princeton, New Jersey. In these vol-



umes he unpacks the deeply subtle and elusive, nuanced language of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok & Toras Levi Yitzchok, while also bringing an abundance of footnotes with sources in Chasidus and Nigleh to aid the reader in understanding the profundity in R' Levi Yitzchok's words. Rabbi Dubov has worked closely with our team at Chayenu each week as we endeavored to make sure we were adapting the concept into English correctly.

He also records a weekly video on the very same teaching, which can be found online (see pg. 148).

**Rabbi Alexander Heppenheimer** has authored the translation – and commentary – of the Likkutei Levy Yitzchak section in Chayenu over the past year. With his vast knowledge of both Nigleh and Nistar he has added tremendous breadth and depth to the weekly teachings, as evident in the footnotes.

**Rabbi Itzick Yarmush**, Editor in Chief of Chayenu, reviews the text weekly, often adding critical oversight.

Thanks to our new Chayenu Editor, **Rabbi Menachem Cohen**, for his invaluable review and insightful comments.

**Rabbi Itzick Yarmush**, Editor in Chief of Chayenu, reviews the text weekly, often adding critical oversight.

**Rabbi Mendy Angyalfi**, Chayenu's in-house typesetter and graphic artist puts his aesthetic touch on the final product, delivering a polished, neat end product.

**Rabbi Yossi Pels**, Executive Director of Chayenu and the driving force behind all its offerings and projects, ensures that the operation runs smoothly, each week.

We are grateful to **Sholom & Esther Laine** for their sponsorship of the weekly column in Chayenu and helping to facilitate this unique content. May Hashem bless them and their family

abundantly for this partnership and investment.

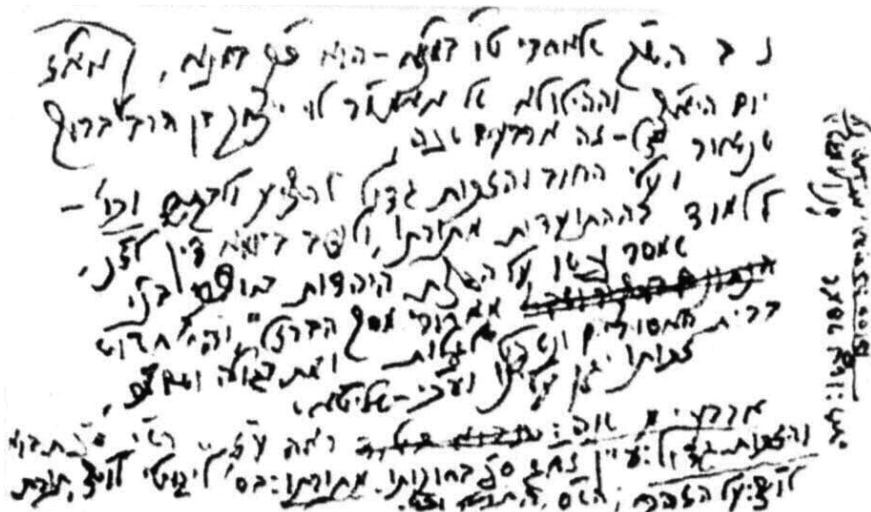
We very much thank **Yaakov & Leah Feldman** for their ongoing generous support for the pioneering work of Yalkut Levi Yitzchok al HaTorah.

Special thanks to **Rabbi Friedman of Kehot Publication Society** for granting us permission to include the original text of Likkutei / Toras Levi Yitzchok each week, and in this publication, and for permission to reprint the photo of the Rebbe's father, R' Levi Yitzchok Schneerson זצ"ל. Thank you too, to **Rabbi Chaim Shaul Bruk of Lahak Publications** for his efforts in obtaining and remastering the original photo.

Finally, our gratitude to **Mr. Ezzy Rappaport** of Surfside, Florida for partnering with us in making this publication possible. May he and his beautiful family be blessed abundantly in the merit of bringing the Rebbe's father's teachings to the English-speaking world, in honor of the 79th Hilula-Yahrtzeit.

## Studying the Teachings of R' Levi Yitzchok

The following note was penned by the Rebbe on Motzei Tisha B'av 5744 to his secretariat for it to be included in answers that would come from the Rebbe during those few days.



נ.ב. הש"ק שלאחרי ט"ו מנ"א - הוא כ"ף מנ"א, יום היא"צ וההילולא של אאמו"ר לוי יצחק בן הרב אא"ז ברוך שניאור ז"ל - זה ארבעים שנה,

ועלי החוב והזכות גדול להציע ולבקש וכו' - ללמוד בהתוועדות מתורתו, ולנדב ביומא דין לז"נ, שמסר נפשו על הפצת היהדות בתוככי בני"מ מאחורי מסך הברזל, ועי"ז הי' חבוש בבית האסורים ונשפט לגלות ומת בגולה ושם מ"כ, זכותו יגן עלינו ועכ"י שליט"א.

(Translation)

P.S. The Shabbos following 15 Av, Chof Av, is the fortieth Yahrtzeit of my father Horav Levi Yitzchok son of my grandfather Horav Boruch Shneur, of blessed memory.

It is my great obligation and merit to suggest and request etc. — a communal study of his Torah, as well as donating to tzedakah on this day in his memory. [My father] devoted his life to the spreading of Yiddishkeit amongst the Jews “behind the iron curtain,” which resulted in his arrest and his being sentenced to exile, where he passed away and was laid to rest.

May his merit shield us and all Jews, may they live and be well.

בראשית  
BEREISHIS



בראשית

## BEREISHIS

*Measure for Measure*

לָמָּה אֵין כְּתִיב בְּשֵׁנֵי כִי טוֹב, רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן תַּנִּי לָהּ בְּשֵׁם  
רַבִּי יוֹסִי בֶן רַבִּי חַלְפָּתָא, שָׁבוּ נִבְרָאת גֵּיהֵנוֹם

WHY DOES IT NOT SAY “[G-D SAW] THAT IT WAS GOOD” ON THE SECOND DAY [MONDAY]? RABBI YOCHANAN TAUGHT IN THE NAME OF RABBI YOSEI SON OF RABBI CHALAF TA: BECAUSE GEHINNOM<sup>1</sup> WAS CREATED ON IT. (*Bereishis Rabbah* 4:6)

**Driving question:**

- Why is Gehinnom associated specifically with the second day?

---

1. Commonly translated as “hell” or “purgatory,” Gehinnom is the spiritual realm in which the soul, after its bearer’s physical death, undergoes a cleansing process of punishment.

In the Zohar,<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Chizkiyah states that the maximum length of a soul's stay in Gehinnom is twelve months.<sup>3</sup> Of this, he says, "half is in heat and half in snow."

Gehinnom, as a whole, is an outgrowth of G-d's attribute of Gevurah (severity/stringency). He gave us the Torah and its mitzvos as an expression of Chessed (benevolence); when a person contravenes G-d's Will as communicated in the Torah, then that evokes an unholy type of Gevurah, which then feeds into the Gevurah of Gehinnom.

Now, the Chessed of Torah breaks down into two subcategories, expressed respectively by the performative mitzvos ("do X, through which you will bring G-dly energy down into the world"—an expression of Chessed within Chessed) and the prohibitory mitzvos ("don't do X, so that you don't bring negative energy into the world"—Gevurah within Chessed). Disobedience to G-d can thus take one of two forms: failing to fulfill the performative mitzvos, or violating the prohibitory ones. The former bespeaks a laziness born from a "coldness" and lack of passion; the latter, an energetic, "hot," passionate attitude.

Each of these, R. Chizkiyah is telling us, is treated with a corresponding remedy. A person was "cold" and apathetic to the performative mitzvos? Then the appropriate treatment for his soul is a spell in a cold, snowy Gehinnom, which is in fact an expression of Chessed within Gevurah.<sup>4</sup> The same

---

2. I:238b.

3. In very rare cases it can be longer. See Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 17a, and Likkutei Dibburim (English translation), vol. IV, p. 120.

4. See Tanya, Part 1 (Sefer Shel Beinonim), ch. 8.

person was “hot” to transgress the prohibitory mitzvos? For this, a hot, fiery Gehinnom, deriving from Gevurah within Gevurah, is the appropriate therapy.<sup>5</sup>

This bifurcated nature of Gehinnom, R’ Levi Yitzchak notes, is symbolized in its very name, for the numerical value of the Hebrew word גיהנום is 108, exactly half of that of גבורה, 216.

108	= (40 = מ + 50 = נ + 5 = ה + 10 = י + 3 = ג) גיהנום
216	= (5 = ה + 200 = ר + 6 = ו + 2 = ב + 3 = ג) גבורה

On each of the six days of Creation, the Tanya<sup>6</sup> tells us, a different one of G-d’s attributes was dominant, and the creations of that day reflect that theme. So on the first day the first Divine attribute, that of Chesed, predominated; on the second day it was the second attribute, Gevurah. It now becomes clear why Gehinnom, an entity of Gevurah, was created specifically on the second day.

It is also noteworthy, says R’ Levi Yitzchak, that the sage who taught about this dual nature of Gehinnom is Rabbi Chizkiyah. For his name literally means “the power of G-d,” power being another facet of Gevurah.

**Conclusion:** Gehinnom has a twofold nature, corresponding to the two drives in human nature—heat and passion, versus coldness and indifference. Each of these can be

5. Mishnas Chassidim, Maseches Heichalos Hakelipos 6:5.

6. Shaar Hayichud Vahaemunah, ch. 11.

utilized in an appropriate way in serving G-d, and one must be careful not to interchange them.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*<sup>7</sup>  
*He'oros L'Zohar - Bereishis, p. 237*

*In the Words of R' Levi Yitzchak:*

...ר' חזקוני אמר שדינא דחייבי דגיהנם הוא י"ב חדשים חצי מהם בחמה וחצי מהם בשלג, חמה הוא בחינת גבורות דקליפה, ושלג הוא בחינת חסדים דקליפה, והוא כי קיום מצות עשה הוא בשני דברים, א' סור מרע, שלא לעבור על מצות לא תעשה, ב' ועשה טוב קיום מצות עשה, הנה כשעובר על מצות לא תעשה שפגם בגבורות דקדושה, והוא מפני שנתגבר בו חמימות התאוה, (כי מה שאינו עובר על מצות לא תעשה, צריך לזה בחינת עצלות, שיהי' עצל שלא יעשה, והוא קרירות, ומה שעובר חס ושלום על מצות לא תעשה הוא מצד חמימות אש). ענשו הוא מדה כנגד מדה, בגיהנם דחמה אש, וכשלא קיים מצות עשה שלא המשיך חסדים דקדושה, והוא מפני עצלות וקרירות שמצד זה אינו עושה, ענשו הוא מדה כנגד מדה בגיהנם של שלג, וכמו שכתוב במשנת חסידים מסכת היכלות הקלפות פרק ו משנה ה, עיין שם. ועיין בתנא פרק ח' עונש הכללי לכל ביטול מצות עשה מחמת עצלות בגיהנם של שלג, עיין שם...



7. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al HaTorah, Vol. 1 (Bereishis), sec. 13.



לך לך

## LECH LECHA

*Parallel Opposites*

וְאַבְרָם בֶּן חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן

AVRAM WAS SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN  
HE LEFT CHARAN. (BEREISHIS 12:4)

הָדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב וַיְהִי אִמֵּן אֶת הַדָּסָה הִיא אֶסְתֵּר... רַבָּנָן  
אָמְרֵי בֵּת שִׁבְעִים וְחֲמִשָּׁה. רַבִּי בְּרַכְיָה בְּשֵׁם רַבָּנָן דְּתַמְנָן  
אָמַר, אָמַר הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְאַבְרָהָם: אֵתָהּ יֵצֵאת מִבֵּית  
אָבִיךָ בֶּן שִׁבְעִים וְחֲמִשָּׁה שָׁנִים, חֵייד אַף גּוֹאֵל שְׂאֵנִי מֵעַמִּיד  
מִמּוֹד יִהְיֶה בֶּן שִׁבְעִים וְחֲמִשָּׁה שָׁנִים כְּמִגְנֵן הַדָּסָה

THIS [RELATES TO] THE VERSE (ESTHER 2:7) “HE RAISED  
HADASSAH (הַדָּסָה), WHO IS ESTHER”... THE RABBIS SAY THAT  
SHE WAS SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD. RABBI BERECHIAH SAID  
IN THE NAME OF THE RABBIS OF “THERE” [BABYLONIA]  
THAT G-D SAID TO AVRAHAM: “YOU LEFT YOUR FATHER’S

HOUSE AT THE AGE OF SEVENTY-FIVE; [I SWEAR BY] YOUR LIFE THAT ALSO THE REDEEMER WHOM I RAISE UP FROM AMONG YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE AGED SEVENTY-FIVE, THE NUMERICAL VALUE OF **הַדְּסָה**.”<sup>1</sup> (BEREISHIS RABBAH 39:13)

### Driving question:

- What is the significance of the equality of Avraham’s and Esther’s ages when they first stride into Jewish history?

A key figure in the story of Esther is, of course, the villainous Haman, whose plot she thwarted by her timely intervention. Looking at Haman’s biography,<sup>2</sup> R’ Levi Yitzchak finds several startling similarities with the life of Avraham, progenitor of the nation that Haman sought to destroy. These, he explains, demonstrate that Avraham and Haman are literally polar opposites, and that looking at the details recorded about one of them brings the other into sharper relief. Furthermore, since it is often necessary to

1.  $74 = (5) ה + (60) ס + (4) ד + (5) ה$ .

In Gematria, the word as a whole is sometimes counted as one extra unit (called **עם הכולל**), yielding 75. (Moreover, Esther 2:12 records that each of the women brought to Achashverosh’s harem had to undergo a one-year-long beauty regimen, so that according to this opinion Hadassah/Esther was first brought there at age 74, and crowned queen at 75.)

2. And even at his name: it shares its first two letters, **המ**, with the last two of Avraham’s, **הם**. (The difference between Haman’s open **מ** and Avraham’s closed **ם**, says R’ Levi Yitzchak, is the difference between leaving an opening for the forces of evil to live parasitically off the Divine energy that suffuses all of existence, vs. closing off that avenue to them.)

use like to defeat like,<sup>3</sup> it follows that Esther, who overcame Haman, must have inherited from Avraham the qualities that she needed for this purpose.

These parallels begin even before Avraham's and Haman's births. The Gemara<sup>4</sup> tells us that Avraham's mother's name was Amaslai, and that Haman's mother's name was... also Amaslai!

Next: the structure most associated with Haman is the gallows (עץ, lit. "tree") that he erected and planned to use to hang Mordechai, the nurturer of Jewish faith in his time,<sup>5</sup> and thereby to eradicate that faith. Avraham, too, had his tree—"he planted an *eishel* in Beer Sheva"<sup>6</sup>—which by contrast he used to spread knowledge of and faith in G-d: "and he called there in the name of Hashem, Eternal L-rd."<sup>7</sup>

The correlation carries over to their offspring as well. In recounting the genesis of the Jewish people, Yehoshua

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**3.** In the spirit of the adage "From the forest comes the very axe(-handle) that fells it" (Sanhedrin 39b), and the halachic principle that "the medium by which (a vessel) absorbs (non-kosher residue) is how it is to (be koshered and made to) exude it" (Avodah Zarah 76b; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 121:6).

**4.** Bava Basra 91a.

**5.** The Midrash (Esther Rabbah 6:2) dubs Mordechai "the equal in his generation of Moshe" and adduces several correspondences between them. In turn, in another Midrash (Eichah Rabbah, Pesichta, sec. 24), Moshe is addressed as רעיא מדימנא, "faithful shepherd," or more literally "shepherd of faith," since he draws down that quality into his flock, the Jewish people (see Tanya, part 1 (Sefer Shel Beinonim), ch. 42). Thus Mordechai can be seen as the exemplar of Jewish faith in his era.

**6.** Bereishis 21:33. One version of Targum Onkelos ad loc, as well as several of the classic commentators (Ibn Ezra, Ralbag, et al), translate *eishel* as "a tree." Rashi cites an opinion that it was "an orchard" comprising many trees.

**7.** Ibid.

announces in G-d's name that "I took your father Avraham from beyond the [Euphrates] River... and I increased (ארבה) his progeny,"<sup>8</sup> ארבה adding up to 208, the equivalent of the name of Avraham's true heir Yitzchak (יצחק). Correspondingly, Haman had 208 children,<sup>9</sup> the numerical value of the word ורב, "and the multitude (of children)," that he used when boasting about his good fortune.<sup>10</sup>

208	= (5) ה + (2) ב + (200) ר + (1) א
208	= (100) ק + (8) ח + (90) צ + (10) י
208	= (2) ב + (200) ר + (6) ו

The upshot of the saga of Esther is that not only was Haman himself defeated and hanged on the very "tree" that he had constructed, but that the other Jew-haters throughout Achashverosh's empire whom he had inspired were wiped out too. Their number? Another instance of seventy-five<sup>11</sup>—75,000, to be exact.<sup>12</sup>

**Conclusion:** Avraham demonstrated great self-sacrifice in leaving the comforts of home and family, at an advanced

8. Yehoshua 24:3.

9. Megillah 15b (Rami bar Abba).

10. Esther 5:11. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak (Megillah loc. cit.) notes that the word ורב is spelled "defectively" (the expected spelling would be ורוב), and R' Levi Yitzchak points out that this reflects the fact that they lacked the quality of truth symbolized by the letter ו (Zohar, Vayikra 2a), which Yitzchak achieved (Torah Ohr, Toldos 17c).

11. The significance of this particular number in this connection is addressed by R' Levi Yitzchak in the original. It is beyond the scope of this essay, but it has previously been explored in Chayenu, Parshas Vayeilech 5782 (Likkutei Levi Yitzchok section), and that essay was also featured in Chayus for that week (Chayenu.org/Chayus-Vayeilech-5782).

12. Esther 9:16.

age, to set out for an unknown destination to which G-d would direct him. He was richly rewarded when his descendant Esther, at the same advanced age, was enabled to defeat Haman, Avraham's dualistic nemesis, and to ensure the continuation of Avraham's legacy for all time.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>13</sup>  
*Igros Kodesh*, p. 302

*In the words of R' Levi Yitzchak:*

...כִּי הָמָן וּבָנָיו הֵם הַלְעוּמַת דְּאַבְרָהָם וַיִּצְחַק, שֶׁזֶהוּ הַמֶּאֱמָר רז"ל שְׂאִימָא  
 דְּאַבְרָהָם וְאִימִי דְהָמָן שְׂמוֹתֵיהֶן שְׁוֹת, לְהוֹרוֹת שְׁהָמָן הוּא הַלְעוּמַת דְּאַבְרָהָם  
 (אַבְרָהָם נִטַּע אֱמוּנָה, וַיִּטַּע אִשָּׁל בְּבֵאֵר שְׁבַע כו' בְּשֵׁם ה' אֵל עוֹלָם, וְהָמָן רָצָה  
 לְעִקּוֹר אֱמוּנָה, וְעָשָׂה עֵץ גְּבוּהָ ג' אַמָּה הַלְעוּמַת דְּאִשָּׁל דְּאַבְרָהָם. אַבְרָהָם  
 מְסַתֵּיִם בְּאוֹתֵיזוֹת ה"ס וְהָמָן מִתְחִיל בְּאוֹתֵיזוֹת ה"ס (אֲךָ הִמ' דְּאַבְרָהָם הוּא מ'  
 סְתוּמָה, בְּסוּד הַחֹתֶם שְׂאִין יִנְקָה לְלְעוּמַת זֶה, וּבְהָמָן הוּא מ' פְּתוּחָה שְׂאִין יִשׁ  
 יִנְקָה לְלְעוּמַת זֶה, וְהֵינּוּ מֵה שְׂאֵחַר כֶּךָ הוּא ג' הָעֵץ דג' אַמָּה, וְדִי לִמְבִין).  
 וְהֵע"ה אֶלְף שְׁהָרְגוּ בְּנֵים דְּפּוֹרִים הוּא בְּזִכּוֹת הֵע"ה שְׁנָה דְּאַבְרָהָם כְּשִׁי צֵא מִחָן...  
 גַּם אֶסְתֵר הֵיטָה בַת ע"ד שְׁנָה כְּמִנְיֵן הַדְּסָה כְּשִׁנְלֻקְחָה אֶל בֵּית הַמְּלָכוֹת, שֶׁהוּא  
 לְגַד הֵע"ה שְׁנָה דְּאַבְרָהָם כְּמוֹ שְׁפָתוֹב בְּמִדְרַש רַבָּה פ' לך עֵיין שָׁם...



13. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al HaTorah, vol. 1 (Bereishis-Toldos), secs. 81 and 83.

וישב

## VAYEISHEV

*No Canaanites Allowed!*

וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מְגֹרֵי אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

YAAKOV SETTLED IN THE LAND OF HIS FATHER'S  
SOJOURNINGS, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN (37:1).

**Driving Question:**

- Why the repetition of “land” in the verse?<sup>1</sup>

Looking at the lives of our Patriarchs, we find certain commonalities between Avraham and Yaakov that are not shared by Yitzchak, who was between them.

One of these concerns their marriages. Sarah, barren for many years, urged her husband Avraham to take her

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1. A question posed already by the Alshich in his commentary ad loc.

maidservant Hagar as a secondary wife, and he did so.<sup>2</sup> Yaakov did the same with Rachel's handmaid Bilhah and Leah's Zilpah.<sup>3</sup> Yitzchak and his wife Rivkah also endured a long period of infertility, but in contrast to Avraham and Yaakov he, as "a perfect burnt-offering,"<sup>4</sup> refrained from this course of action and remained wedded to Rivkah exclusively.

Another is the terminology used for the Promised Land in connection with each of them. A common name for it throughout Tanach is "the Land of Canaan," and this phrase is used when speaking of Avraham's<sup>5</sup> and of Yaakov's experiences. With Yitzchak, on the other hand, it is always simply called "land,"<sup>6</sup> without "of Canaan" ever being appended. The verse cited above highlights this dissimilarity, as its middle clause speaks of "the land of [Yitzchak's] sojournings," while the end of the verse, referring to Yaakov's settlement there, calls it "the Land of Canaan."

These two points, writes R' Levi Yitzchak, are interrelated.

In Torah literature "woman" and "land" are metonyms,<sup>7</sup>

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2. Bereishis 16:1-3. Later, after Sarah's passing, he married Keturah (ibid. 25:1), whom our Sages identify with Hagar (Rashi ad loc., from Bereishis Rabbah 61:4).

3. Bereishis 30:3-4, 9.

4. Since G-d had instructed Avraham to offer Yitzchak as such (ibid. 22:2), and he retained that status for the rest of his life (Rashi, ibid. 25:26 and 26:2).

5. As in Yehoshua 24:3, "I took your father Avraham... and conducted him throughout the entire *Land of Canaan*."

6. As in Bereishis 26:2-3, where Hashem instructs Yitzchak, "Dwell in *the Land*... Sojourn in *this Land*."

7. Rain, which stimulates the earth to produce vegetation, is dubbed in the Talmud her "husband" (Taanis 6b); indeed, a common term for rain in classical Jewish sources is *reviah*, lit. "intercourse" (see commentary of Rambam, Peah 8:1). Conversely, in a discussion about why Esther was not obligated to give up her life

so that “the Land of Canaan” stands in for “a Canaanite maidservant,”<sup>8</sup> the halachic term for a gentile bondswoman regardless of her actual ethnic origin.<sup>9</sup> Yitzchak, then, is dissociated from any aspect of Canaan, whether geographical or marital.

The deeper reason for this, continues R’ Levi Yitzchak, is the superior status of Yitzchak’s mode of Divine endeavor.

Avraham is identified with and personifies Chessed (“kindness”),<sup>10</sup> which begets a yearning love for Hashem which expresses itself in the desire to be close to Him. This emotion is termed נכסף, silver,<sup>11</sup> since the same Hebrew root also means “to yearn.”<sup>12</sup>

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rather than consort with the gentile King Achashverosh, the Talmud (Sanhedrin 74b) states that she was “like natural ground,” i.e., a passive participant, and this in turn is used as a halachic precedent for analogous situations (e.g., Shach, Yoreh De’ah 157:9). More generally, both earth and woman are seen as expressions of the Divine modality of Malchus (lit. “kingship”), the source of all further growth and development (cf. “Everything comes from the dust” (Koheles 3:20) and “Everything comes from the woman” (Bereishis Rabbah 17:7). See also Torah Ohr, Vayechi 54b; Pelach Harimon, Tazria, p. 133; et al).

**8.** The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 36:5) in fact explicitly compares the Land to a maidservant who rears the king’s sons (representing the three Patriarchs).

**9.** The term is taken from the episode in Bereishis 9:22–25 where Canaan, for his role in the mistreatment of his grandfather Noach (see Rashi ad loc.), is cursed to be “a slave of slaves to his brethren.”

**10.** In turn, Yaakov’s dominant trait, Tiferes (“beauty”), and particularly its outgrowth of Rachamim (“mercy”), “redeems” Avraham’s Chessed (cf. Yeshayah 29:22) and brings it to fruition (see Tanya, part 1, end of ch. 45; Torah Ohr, Vayechi 51b; et al). Thus, what is explained in the text about the superiority of Yitzchak’s mode of Gevurah over Avraham’s Chessed applies equally well to its advantage over Yaakov’s Tiferes.

**11.** See Tanya, part 1 (Sefer Shel Beinonim), ch. 50.

**12.** As in נכסף נכסף, “you yearned greatly” (Bereishis 31:30).



Yitzchak, by contrast, embodies Gevurah (“stringency” or “severity”), and particularly its highest level, sourced in the supernal attribute of Binah (“understanding”), which surpasses the emotive attributes headed by Chesed. This form of Gevurah engenders a love of G-d akin to a blazing fire,<sup>13</sup> where the soul wishes to tear free of the body and become completely subsumed into the Divine (only to then pull back and realize that Hashem wants body and soul to remain together and serve Him in tandem<sup>14</sup>). Such passionate striving towards G-dliness is compared to gold,<sup>15</sup> which outshines silver not only quantitatively (in being more valuable per unit) but qualitatively (in that gold possesses a captivating luster that silver lacks).<sup>16</sup>

In our present era Chesed seems to be higher than Gevurah, so that the loftier quality of Yitzchak’s path of Divine service is hidden from our ken. However, our Sages tell us<sup>17</sup> that in the future we will acclaim Yitzchak exclusively with the words “You are our father,”<sup>18</sup> recognizing the transcendent greatness of his Gevurah over Avraham’s Chesed and Yaakov’s Tiferes.

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13. Tanya, loc. cit.

14. This dialectic is termed “running (to G-dliness) and returning (to physical life),” a term borrowed from Yechezkel 1:14. See Tanya, loc. cit.

15. Tanya, loc. cit.; Torah Ohr, Vayeishev 26d; et al. See also Likkutei Sichos 6:159.

16. See Zohar 2:148a. Indeed, our Sages say that “the world was not worthy of using gold; it was created for the sake of the Holy Temple” (Bereishis Rabbah 16:2). The Tzemach Tzedek (Ohr Hatorah, Tetzaveh, p. 1613) relates this to the point in the text, that the spiritual source of gold is Binah, which transcends the created realms entirely.

17. Talmud, Shabbos 89b.

18. Yeshayah 63:16.

*In the Words of R' Levi Yitzchok*

... וכמו כן מציינו באברהם שהי' עבד ה', והוא עבד עברי, כי פתיב עליו ואקח את אביכם את אברהם מעבר הנהר... ונשא שפחה, דהיינו הגר. גם פתיב אחר כך ואולך אותו בכל ארץ כנען. ארץ הוא נוקבא, וארץ כנען הוא כמו שפחה כנענית, ועיין במדרש רבה פרשת בחקתי בפסוק וזכרתי כו' והארץ אזכר, משל לשפחה המגדלת כו' עיין שם. הרי שהארץ נמשלה לשפחה. וכן יעקב שהוא כמו בחינת ישראל נשא שפחות, וכתוב בה וישב יעקב כו' בארץ כנען, מה שאין כן יצחק שהוא מבחינת גבורות עליונות דבינה עלאה, מעלת הזהב על הכסף... לא נשא שפחה כלל. וביצחק לא נזכר שישב בארץ כנען, רק גור בארץ. שכן בארץ, וכתוב ארץ מגורי אביו וכדומה ולא נזכר בו הלשון ארץ כנען)...

*Toras Levi Yitzchak*<sup>19</sup>*Chiddushim U'Beurim B'Shas, p. 126*


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19. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al Hatorah, Vayeishev, sec. 1.

שמות  
SHEMOS



בא

BOI

*Tefillin & Shofar*

וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכָה וְלְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ

[THE TEFILLIN] SHALL BE FOR A SIGN ON YOUR ARM, AND  
FOR *TOTAFOS* IN THE CENTER OF YOUR HEAD<sup>1</sup> (13:16)

The word *totafos* is comprised of two words, *tot* and *fos*. **T**ט *tot* in the Caspi [language]<sup>2</sup> means “two”; פת *fos* in the Afriki [language]<sup>3</sup> means “two.”<sup>4</sup> [Thus, the word *totafos* hints at the four Torah passages placed inside the tefillin

1. Lit., “between your eyes,” but explained in the Oral Torah as an idiom for the area just above the hairline (Talmud, Menachos 37a–b; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 25:9).

2. Possibly the language of some region near the Caspian Sea.

3. Possibly the language of some region of North Africa, or of Phrygia, an area of present-day Turkey.

4. It has been suggested (see Aruch Hashalem, s.v. ט) that *fos* is cognate with English *both*. *Tot* may be cognate with English *two* (R. Aryeh Kaplan, The Living Torah, Shemos ad loc.).

boxes.]<sup>5</sup> (Rashi ad loc., citing Talmud, Menachos 34b)

### Driving question:

- Why does the Torah choose these specific words to each denote “two,” and why in that order?

There is a deep-rooted connection, between the mitzvah of the head-tefillin<sup>6</sup> and that of blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah.

One of the purposes of the shofar is as an alarm to wake people out of their (spiritual) slumber.<sup>7</sup> Kabbalistically, it is associated with the process in which G-d’s desire to maintain the world’s existence enters a state of “sleepy” suspension, only to be re-aroused and re-energized by our blowing the shofar and coronating Him,<sup>8</sup> a process reflected in the way in which G-d put Adam to sleep in order to “carve out” Chava from him and reunite them as man and wife.<sup>9</sup> Sleep, in turn, is a state in which one’s greater mental facilities are in abeyance, and only those necessary for basic survival

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5. Shaloh (Klal Peh Kadosh) explains that when our Sages identify words in the Torah with words in foreign languages (as in this case), they are in fact original Hebrew words which then became part of those languages.

6. Which is the one signified by the word *totafos*.

7. See Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Shofar 3:4: “While the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is a Scriptural decree [and hence its ultimate rationale is because G-d said so], there is an allusion in it, as if to say: Sleepers, wake up from your sleep! Slumberers, wake up from your slumber! Remember G-d...”

8. See Pri Etz Chaim, beginning of Shaar Hashofar.

9. Bereishis 2:21–22.

are functioning.<sup>10</sup> In short, then, the blowing of the shofar draws down intellectual faculties, on both the individual and the cosmic level.

The tefillin, too, and specifically the head-tefillin, are associated with the intellect. Its very location is above the brain, and indeed one of its purposes is to subjugate the intellect to G-d.<sup>11</sup> For this reason a child, whose mental facilities are as yet undeveloped,<sup>12</sup> does not wear tefillin;<sup>13</sup> and since, as above, sleep is the antithesis of intellect, one may not sleep while wearing tefillin.<sup>14</sup>

Yet another connection between the head-tefillin and shofar is that the former are called פאר, “glory,”<sup>15</sup> and the root of the word שופר shofar means “beautiful.”<sup>16</sup>

Now the word טוט *tot*<sup>17</sup> is used in the Talmud to represent

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**10.** See Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 1 (He'oros L'Zohar—Bereishis), p. 112, for an exploration of this concept.

**11.** Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 25:5, and in greater detail in Tanya, part 1 (Sefer Shel Beinonim), ch. 41.

**12.** Specifically, he lacks *daas*, the quality of empathy (R. Shalom Dovber of Lubavitch, Kuntres Hatefillah, ch. 5).

**13.** Maamar Issa B'Midrash Tehillim 5653 (customarily recited by Lubavitcher Chassidim at a bar mitzvah), sec. 3.

**14.** Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 44:1.

**15.** Talmud, Moed Katan 15a, citing Yechezkel 24:17.

**16.** As in “...who gives forth words of שפר beauty” (Bereishis 49:21).

**17.** In the Talmud's exegesis of *totafos*, this component is spelled ט, without the medial *vav*. In the three places in the Torah where the word is used, it is spelled טוטפת in two of them (Shemos 13:16 and Devarim 11:18) and טטפת in the third (ibid. 6:8). R' Levi Yitzchak's explanation of this distinction is beyond the scope of this essay.

the sound of the shofar:<sup>18</sup> “the טוט binds [a person who is excommunicated] and the טוט frees him [of that status].”<sup>19</sup> The word פת *pas*<sup>20</sup> means “bread.” Rosh Hashanah is the day of Divine judgment, when one’s sustenance for the entire year is determined by G-d,<sup>21</sup> and our shofar-blowing influences that judgment, as reflected in the verses “Blow the shofar on the [New] Moon... for it is a *chok* for Israel, a judgment by the G-d of Yaakov,”<sup>22</sup> where the word *chok* [lit., “law”] also signifies “allotted portion of food.”<sup>23</sup>

Thus, says R’ Levi Yitzchak, the tefillin, טטפת, encapsulates the events of Rosh Hashanah: טט—the blowing of the shofar, and פת—the bread that Hashem grants us for the year. It now becomes clear why these two terms are in that order: first the cause, then the effect.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>24</sup> vol. 3  
(*Igros Kodesh*), pp. 286–287



18. And is cognate with English *toot*, most likely onomatopoeic.

19. Talmud, Moed Katan 16a. Significantly, Tosafos (Menachos 34b, s.v. טט) cites the possibility that there too טט means “[a panel of] two [judges],” but concludes that it represents the blast of the shofar.

20. As the text of the Torah is written without vowels, the letters פת can be vocalized in various ways, among them *fos* and *pas*.

21. Talmud, Beitzah 16a.

22. Tehillim 81:4–5.

23. Talmud, loc. cit., citing Mishlei 30:8, “Grant me the bread of my *chok*.”

24. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak, vol. 4 (Shemos–Bo), sec. 108.

יִתְרוֹ

## YISRO

*Two Thirds*

בְּרִידֵי רַחֲמָנָא דִּיהֵב אֹרְיָאן תְּלִיתָאֵי לְעַם תְּלִיתָאֵי  
עַל יְדֵי תְּלִיתָאֵי בְּיוֹם תְּלִיתָאֵי בִּירְחָא תְּלִיתָאֵי

BLESSED IS HASHEM, WHO GAVE THE TRIPARTITE  
TORAH<sup>1</sup> TO THE TRIPARTITE PEOPLE,<sup>2</sup> THROUGH  
THE THIRD-BORN,<sup>3</sup> ON THE THIRD DAY,<sup>4</sup> IN THE  
THIRD MONTH<sup>5</sup> [SIVAN<sup>6</sup>]. (TALMUD, SHABBOS 88A)

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1. The Written Torah is made up of the Torah proper (the Five Books of Moses), Neviim (Prophets) and Kesuvim (Writings). (The glosses in notes 1–4 are from Rashi ad loc.)

2. Comprising Kohanim (Priests), Levites and Yisraelim (lay Jews).

3. Moshe, who was the third child in his family, preceded by Miriam and Aharon.

4. Since the beginning of the period of abstention (from marital relations) that Hashem had commanded in preparation for the Giving of the Torah (Shemos 19:11).

The Talmud (Shabbos 86b–88a) presents a dispute about the sequence of events, with the Rabbis maintaining that there were only two full days of abstention (4–5 Sivan) and that the Torah was given on the third day (the 6th of the month), while R. Yosei avers that Moshe “added one extra day on his own initiative” and that the Giving of the Torah was thus delayed by one day, to the 7th of Sivan. The dictum cited in the text, states the Talmud, must necessarily represent the opinion of the Rabbis.

5. Shemos 19:1.

6. Which is the third month counting from Nissan, as per Shemos 12:1, “This



### Driving statement:

- There are two “third months” that are significant in connection with the revelation of the Torah.

**T**he Jewish year has two poles, with Nissan and Tishrei both vying for position as the head of the year. The Mi-drash<sup>7</sup> relates that when Hashem “chose His world,” having created it<sup>8</sup> in Tishrei,<sup>9</sup> He designated that month as the start of the year; but then, when He liberated the Jewish people from their Egyptian slavery in Nissan, He selected that to be the first month.

R. Yitzchak Arama, in his classic work *Akeidas Yitzchak*,<sup>10</sup> associates these two months with the twin ways in which Hashem runs His world: via the natural order (represented by the month of its creation) and with miracles (such as the ones accompanying the Exodus). In turn, Chassidic philosophy, with its focus on how Divine energy is radiated down to our world in a mode called *ohr yashar* (“direct light”)

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month shall be for you the head of the months.”

7. *Shemos Rabbah* 15:2.

8. Or, to be more precise, Adam (and Chava), whose recognition of Hashem was the first step in fulfilling His ultimate purpose in creation, “to make for Himself a dwelling place in the lower realms” (*Tanchuma*, Nasso 16; *Tanya*, part 1, ch. 36; et al).

9. In keeping with the opinion of R. Eliezer (*Talmud*, Rosh Hashanah 10b–11a), which is accepted in practice, as reflected in the wording in the Rosh Hashanah Musaf prayer, “This day is the beginning of Your works.” See also *Tosafos* *ibid.* 27a, s.v. כמאן, who reconcile this with the opposing view of R. Yehoshua that places the culmination of the world’s creation (i.e., the formation of Adam, as in the preceding note) in Nissan.

10. Sec. 38 (*Parshas Bo*).

only for us to beam it back up to G-d as *ohr chozer* (“reflected light”) through our study of Torah and observance of mitzvos, relates these to the above themes, with Nissan, the month of Divinely initiated miracles, symbolizing *ohr yashar*, and Tishrei, the time when Adam recognized his Creator and when we re-enact that coronation of G-d every year, representing *ohr chozer*.<sup>11 12</sup>

Sivan, then, as the third month from Nissan, was the month of the Giving of the Torah. However, R. Levi Yitzchak goes on to say, it is the Tishrei pole of the year—including its third month, Kislev—that buttresses Nissan and makes its effects permanent. We see this in the fact that the First Tablets, given in Sivan, were shattered soon after,<sup>13</sup> while their replacement, bestowed in Tishrei,<sup>14</sup> remained intact forever.

In turn, this difference between the First and the Second Tablets (and the respective states of the Jewish people at the granting of each), and between *ohr yashar* and *ohr chozer*, precisely recapitulates the difference between the perfect *tzaddik*, who has always been faithful to G-d, and the

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11. Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, p. 233, and vol. 2, p. 393, et al.

12. This dichotomy is also noticeable in the difference between the seasons (in the Northern Hemisphere) that begin with these respective months: during the half-year beginning with Nissan we receive more sunlight (a metaphor for Divine energy—see Tehillim 84:12 and Tanya, part 2, ch. 4), while the opposite is true during the other half of the year, beginning with Tishrei (Likkutei Sichos, vol. 19, p. 160).

13. Shemos 32:19. The date was the 17th of Tammuz, forty days after the Giving of the Torah (Talmud, Taanis 26a–b and 28b).

14. On the 10th of Tishrei, later designated as Yom Kippur (ibid. 30b and Rashi ad loc.).

*baal teshuvah*, whose former distance from Him he uses as a powerful springboard to catapult himself to still greater heights.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, along with the Second Tablets there came “manifold sagacity,”<sup>16</sup> new dimensions of Torah that had heretofore been unrevealed.<sup>17 18</sup>

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15. See Tanya, part 1, ch. 7; Sefer Hamaamarim 5636, vol. 2, p. 360; et al.

16. Iyov 11:9.

17. Shemos Rabbah 46:1.

18. The exposition in the text is from a letter that R' Levi Yitzchak wrote to his son the future Rebbe shortly before his wedding, which took place in Kislev 5689 (1928). During the wedding festivities, the Previous Rebbe, father of the bride, commented that he had a different view of the Sivan-Kislev duality: they are the months in which Hashem granted us, respectively, the revealed plane of the Torah and its esoteric facets—the 19th of Kislev being the “Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus” (Sefer Hasichos 5689, p. 64). See also Toras Menachem, vol. 10, p. 270, where the Rebbe further develops this idea and connects it to the point in the text about the *tzaddik* vs. the *baal teshuvah*.

R' Levi Yitzchak appears to have taken note of this point and incorporated it into his approach, as in a later letter (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3 (Igros Kodesh), p. 217) he discusses the significance of the fact that Kislev is the month of the miracle of Chanukah (made possible by the Jews' self-sacrifice in preserving the Torah in the face of Hellenic encroachment), as well as no less than three Chabad holidays that commemorate the struggle of our Rebbeim to disseminate Chassidus more widely and their consequent arrests and liberations.

*In the words of R' Levi Yitzchok:*

...בְּסֵלוֹ הוּא גַם בֵּן חוֹדֵשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְתַחֲלִילַת הַשָּׁנָה מִתְּשָׁרֵי. וַיֵּשׁ בּוֹ מַעֲלָה לְגַבִּי  
חוֹדֵשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי דְּסִיּוֹן בְּשִׁמְתַּחֲלִיין מְנִסָּן, בִּי הִתְחַלְּתָה מְנִסָּן הוּא בְּדֶרֶךְ אֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
וְסִיּוֹן שֶׁהוּא חוֹדֵשׁ הַג' שָׂאזְ הִי הִתְחַנְּנָה דְּמִתְּנָן תּוֹרָה לֹא הִי קִיּוּם, בִּי הַלּוּחֹת  
רֵאשׁוֹנוֹת לֹא נִתְקַיְמוּ, מִה שְׂאִין בֵּן תְּשָׁרֵי שֶׁהוּא אֹר חוֹזֵר, תְּשׁוּבָה שְׁלֹמֵעָלָה  
מַעֲבֹדַת הַצְּדִיקִים, וְהַלּוּחֹת שְׁנִיּוֹת הֵם בְּפִלְיִים לְתוֹשָׁבֵי כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב בַּמִּדְרָשׁ  
רַבָּה תִּשְׂא עֵינֵי שָׁם.

וְלִדְבַר זֶה יֵשׁ קִיּוּם לְעוֹלָם, בְּנֵן עֲדֵי עַד, בִּי לּוּחֹת שְׁנִיּוֹת שֶׁנִּתְקַיְמוּ הוּא מִפְּנֵי  
שְׁנִתְּנוּ בְּחִשָּׁאֵי, בְּהַתְּכַסּוֹת בְּלִבּוֹשִׁים...

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>19</sup> vol. 3 (Igros Kodesh), p. 205



<sup>19</sup> Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Michtevei Hachasunah, pp. 154–155.

# כי תשא KI SISA

## *T(h)orn Between Two Extremes*



כי לא תשתחוה לאל אחר

FOR YOU SHALL NOT BOW TO ANY OTHER GOD (SHEMOS 34:14)

ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד

HASHEM OUR G-D, HASHEM IS ONE (DEVARIM 6:4)

### Driving question:

- What is the significance of the near-similarity of the words אחר and אחד?<sup>1</sup>

1. Baal Haturim to Devarim ad loc. comments that the letters in which they differ, א and ח respectively, are written larger than normal in the Torah scroll in order to highlight the dissimilarity and prevent potential misunderstandings; see also Vayikra Rabbah 19:2. (Curiously, Minchas Shai to Shemos ad loc. cites an ancient manuscript that maintains that, on the contrary, the ח should be written *smaller* than normal.)

**T**hirty-seven hundred years ago twin sons were born to Yitzchak and Rivkah. Even before their birth, when they “struggled in her womb,”<sup>2</sup> their mother was told by a Divine communique that the two boys would be polar opposites, with “one nation overpowering the other.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Yaakov and Eisav came to embody cosmic good and evil, such that centuries later G-d can say to His prophet, “Is not (אלה in Hebrew) Eisav the brother (אח) of Yaakov?... Yet I loved Yaakov, and Eisav I hated.”<sup>4</sup>

The twins’ uncle Lavan, in far-off Charan, fathered two girls, Leah and Rachel. As time passed, it was generally assumed that Leah, the older daughter, would be married off to Eisav, her firstborn cousin,<sup>5</sup> while Yaakov would wed Rachel.<sup>6</sup> Leah tearfully prayed for her fate to be averted,<sup>7</sup> and indeed both she and Rachel became Yaakov’s wives.

This was not simply a family melodrama, and the stakes were far higher than just matrimony. Leah and Rachel embody the Divine energies evoked by the knots of the tefillin.

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2. Bereishis 25:22.

3. Ibid. v. 23. See also Rashi ad loc.: “Never will they achieve greatness at the same time; when one rises, the other will fall.”

4. Malachi 1:1–2.

5. The sources cited in the following note say nothing about Eisav making any plans based on these speculations. However, R’ Levi Yitzchak is clearly assuming that he did. Cf. Rashi, Bereishis 30:22 (citing a liturgical poem by R. Elazar HaKallir), that he later set his sights on Rachel, figuring that Yaakov would divorce her for her barrenness.

6. Rashi, Bereishis 29:17, from Talmud, Bava Basra 123a, and Bereishis Rabbah 70:16.

7. Thus the Torah describes her as having “weak eyes” from excessive crying (see sources cited in the preceding note).

Specifically, Leah, the “big” sister, is associated with the larger of those knots, the ד (Daled)-shaped knot<sup>8</sup> of the head tefillin.<sup>9</sup> Yaakov, bearer of G-d’s Oneness in the world, אחד in Hebrew, would be able to actualize his life’s mission by bonding with Leah—the א (brother) combining with the ד. Indeed, in the verse cited above about His Unity, the word אחד is written in the Torah with Leah’s oversized Daled.<sup>10</sup>

Eisav had designs on Leah and on enlisting her potentials for his ends; thus, in the verse from Malachi quoted above, Eisav’s א relationship is prefaced with the word הלא, an anagram of לאה Leah. However, unlike Yaakov, his agenda is אחר, the promotion of powers “other” than G-d.<sup>11</sup> To accomplish that, he would need to alter her ד into a ר.<sup>12</sup>

“Whoever [inappropriately] adds, subtracts,” our Sages comment.<sup>13</sup> In keeping with that maxim, the difference between ד into ר can be expressed in terms of equal “addition” and “subtraction.” The addition is an arithmetical one, as

8. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 32:52.

9. Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar HaKerias Shema 2 and Shaar HaTefillin 2.

10. Ibid., and Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’i, Devarim, vol. 1, p. 283.

11. Interestingly, when her father Lavan expressed his willingness to have Yaakov marry Rachel (while plotting to instead substitute Leah), he states, “Better that I give her to you than to another (אחר) man” (Bereishis 29:19). Eisav being associated with אחר, as in the text, R’ Dubov suggests that Lavan may thereby have been hinting that he had no intention of going along with Eisav’s plans.

12. These two letters are similar not only in their shapes but in the meanings of their names: דלית Daled is related to the word דל, “poor,” and to the Aramaic דלית, “which there is not”; ריש Reish means “poverty,” as in Mishlei 10:15 and (spelled slightly differently) 30:8. See Maamar Basi Legani 5710, sec. 6, and the Rebbe’s exposition of it in Maamar Basi Legani 5716, secs. 4ff.

13. Talmud, Sanhedrin 29a.

the numerical values of these letters are, respectively, 4 and 200, so that to go from  $\daleth$  to  $\daleth$  requires adding 196. The subtraction is graphical, in that the  $\daleth$  has a protruding point, called in Hebrew a קוץ (lit., “thorn”), which, when removed, turns it into a  $\daleth$ ; the word קוץ equals the same 196:

$$90 = \daleth, 6 = \daleth, 100 = \daleth$$

Thus, Eisav intended to manipulate Leah by “adding to” and “subtracting from” her  $\daleth$  in equal measures. He was further encouraged in his quest by the fact that the name לֵאָה, with the names of its letters spelled out in full,<sup>14</sup> equals 200, the value of  $\daleth$ !

74	= (4) $\daleth$ + (04) מ + (03) ל :ל
111	= (08) ה + (03) ל + (1) א :א
15	= (01) י + (5) ה :ה
Total: 200	

Fortunately, however, G-d heard her heartfelt prayers and allowed her  $\daleth$  to remain intact, so that she joined Yaakov as a forebear of the nation that makes His Oneness a reality in our world.

*Toras Levi Yitzchak*<sup>15</sup> (*Chiddushim U'Beurim B'Shas*), p. 205



14. Called מילוי in Kabbalistic terminology.

15. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak, vol. 2 (Vayeitzei-Vayishlach), sec. 20.



וִיקְרָא  
VAYIKRA



ויקרא

## VAYIKRA

*Of Fingers and Letters*

וּנְפֹשׁ כִּי תִקְרִיב קָרְבָּן מִנְחָה לָּהּ... וְקִמֵּץ מִשָּׁם מְלֵא  
קִמְצוֹ... וְהִקְטִיר הִכִּיז אֶת אֲזִכָּרְתָּהּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

IF A PERSON OFFERS A *MINCHAH* (MEAL-OFFERING) TO  
HASHEM... [THE KOHEN] SHALL TAKE A FULL *KOMETZ*  
(FISTFUL) FROM THERE... AND THE KOHEN SHALL OFFER  
ITS “REMEMBRANCE”<sup>1</sup> ON THE ALTAR (2:1-2)



הִיכִי עֹבֵיד? ... חוֹפֵה שְׁלֹשׁ אֶצְבָּעוֹתָיו עַד שְׁמֹגִיעַ  
עַל פֶּם יָדוֹ וְקוֹמֵץ... בְּמַחְבַּת וּבְמַרְחֶשֶׁת מוֹחֵק  
בְּגוֹדְלוֹ מְלִמְעָלָה וּבְאֶצְבָּעוֹ קִטְנָה מְלִמְטָה

HOW DOES HE DO IT?... HE BENDS HIS [MIDDLE] THREE  
FINGER[TIP]S DOWN UNTIL THEY REACH THE PALM OF

1. The *kometz* is thus nicknamed because it causes the owner of the offering to be “remembered” by G-d for good (Rashi ad loc.)

HIS HAND,<sup>2</sup> AND TAKES THE *KOMETZ*... IF IT IS A PAN-FRIED OR DEEP-FRIED [*MINCHAH*], HE WIPES AWAY [THE EXCESS] WITH HIS THUMB FROM ABOVE AND WITH HIS LITTLE FINGER FROM BELOW (TALMUD, MENACHOS 11A).<sup>3</sup>

### Driving question:

- What is the significance of using only three out of five fingers for this task?<sup>4</sup>

**A**mong the Names of Hashem, Elokim (א-להים) represents Gevurah (strictness/severity).<sup>5</sup> While as with all of G-d's attributes it is, at its core, an expression of His benevolence,<sup>6</sup> its effects on the recipients can be perceived

2. Rashi ad loc. explains that the Kohen would first place his hand, palm up, onto the flour, then dig the side of his hand into the flour until it covered his palm, and then bend his fingers downward to enclose the flour that will make up the *kometz*.

3. These offerings, unlike a crumbly unbaked *minchah*, are kneaded into a solid mass which, after frying, is broken up into chunks before the *kometz* is taken (Talmud, Menachos 75b). When the Kohen palms such a *minchah*, then, parts of those chunks might protrude out of the sides of his fist, and those protruding parts are not to be offered on the Altar (Rashi, *ibid.* 11a and Yoma 47b).

4. Rambam, in his formulation of this law (Hil. Maaseh Hakorbanos 13:13), omits any mention of three fingers, or of using the thumb and little finger to smooth out the edges. Kesef Mishneh and Lechem Mishneh ad loc. understand that according to Rambam the above-cited Talmudic passage does not represent the final halachic conclusion (and hence that the present essay may not be consistent with his view). However, Maaseh Rokeach ad loc. explains Rambam as agreeing that the *kometz* is taken as described in the text.

5. And in fact is used of human judges as well, as in Shemos 21:6 and 22:7-8, and of Moshe's role in "judging and punishing Pharaoh with plagues and afflictions" (Rashi, Shemos 7:1).

6. "There is no 'left' (negativity) in Atik (G-d's Primordial Will)" (Zohar 3:129a, explained in greater detail in *Toras Chaim* by the Mittler Rebbe, Bereishis, vol. 1, pp. 114a ff); "No evil descends from Above" (Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh 11); et al. Indeed,

as harsh. Kabbalistic literature therefore often speaks of “sweetening” and mellowing Gevurah.

A primary way of doing this is by reaching back closer to the source of Gevurah,<sup>7</sup> to a point before it devolves down into our world. Symbolically, this is expressed by swapping each of the letters of the Name א-להים with the letter that precedes it in the Hebrew alphabet.<sup>8</sup> Of the five letters of this Name, the first, א, is also the first letter of the alphabet and has no predecessor, so it remains as is. The next three letters, י, ה, ל, are transformed into the respective letters, כ, ט, ג. The last letter, ם, becomes ן, but these are actually two forms of the same letter—according to the rules of Hebrew orthography, ם is used word-finally and ן anywhere else<sup>9</sup>—such that here, as the last letter of the (transformed) Name, it goes back to being ם.<sup>10</sup> The resulting Name, representing a mitigated type of Gevurah, is thus אכטגן.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, its last four letters<sup>12</sup> form the initials of the phrase כי טובים דודיק

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Gevurah is the means G-d uses to allow the world and its creatures to exist without being subsumed into Divinity (ibid., Shaar Hayichud Vebaemunah, ch. 4).

7. Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Hashofar 1; Toras Chaim, ibid. 108b; et al.

8. In general, transpositions and transformations of the Hebrew letters of a word represent a diminution of the G-dly energy that powers its referent (see Tanya, Shaar Hayichud Vebaemunah chs. 1, 7 and 12). Specifically, the letters closer to the beginning of the alphabet are “higher” and thus nearer to their Source (Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Chag Hamatzos 1).

9. Talmud, Shabbos 104a and Megillah 3a.

10. Similarly, the letter before ל is actually ך (the word-final form of the letter Chof), but for the same reason it instead becomes ל, the medial form.

11. Pri Etz Chaim loc. cit.

12. Together with the initial א, denoting Hashem Himself (this letter being the initial of the Name Elokim), to Whom this phrase is addressed. (Likkutei Torah by the Arizal, Shir Hashirim ad loc.)

מִיִּין, “For Your love is better than wine”<sup>13</sup>—an expression of the Divine affection for His people that lies at the heart of Gevurah.

It thus comes out that the process of “sweetening” the Gevurah of א-להים actually involves the transposition of only the middle three of its five letters. This, is the underlying reason that taking the *kometz* of the *minchah*, which symbolically moderates the offering and makes it acceptable to Hashem,<sup>14</sup> involves only the Kohen’s middle three fingers.

*In R’ Levi Yitzchak’s words:*

וְהִנֵּה הַהִמְתָּקָה דְּשֵׁם אֱלֹקִים הוּא ע”י הַתְּחַלְפוֹתוֹ בְּאוֹתוֹת הַקּוֹדֵמִין לוֹ  
אֲכַדְט”ם כְּמוֹ שְׂכָתוֹב בְּפָרִי עֵץ חַיִּים שְׂעָר חַג הַמִּצּוֹת. וְהַחֲלוּף הוּא בִּגְ אוֹתוֹת  
לֵה”י... וְאוֹתוֹת א”ם נִשְׂאָרוּ דִּין כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיוּ כְּמוֹ שְׂכָתוֹב שָׁם. וְעַיִן מִזֶּה בְּרִשְׁמִיָּה  
עַל מֵאֵמֶר רו”ל אֲמַרִי דְּבִי ר’ יֵנְאִי מֵאֵי דְכָתִיב כִּי מִיץ חֶלֶב יוֹצֵא הַמָּאֵה וְגו’  
וּבְרִשְׁמִיָּה עַל הַמְשָׁנָה מִבֵּיא אֲדָם ס’ עֲשׂוֹן בְּכָלִי א’ בְּעֵנָן מֵה שְׂקִמִּיצַת הַמִּנְחָה  
הִיָּתָה בִּגְ אֶצְבָּעוֹת, אֶצְבָּע, אִמָּה, קִמִּיצָה, עַיִן שָׁם.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 1 (He’oros L’Zohar—Bereishis), p. 204*

13. Shir Hashirim 1:2.

14. R’ Levi Yitzchak refers to his expositions of statements from the Talmud, Berachos 63b and Menachos 104a, in which he elaborates on this point. Unfortunately, those essays are not extant. In other places in his writings (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, p. 6 (Yalkut Levi Yitzchak, vol. 1, sec. 172) and Toras Levi Yitzchak, p. 27 (Yalkut Levi Yitzchak, ibid., sec. 192)) he notes several connections between the *minchah* offering and Gevurah (for one, the word *minchah* also denotes the afternoon prayer, instituted by Yitzchak, the Patriarch who personified Gevurah), so we may suggest that removing part of the *minchah* indicates a diminution of that modality. Another possible point is that the slaughtering of an animal is seen as an expression of the weakening of Gevurah (see Likkutei Torah by the Arizal, Shemini and Re’eh), and the taking of the *kometz* from a *minchah* halachically parallels the slaughtering of an animal offering (see Talmud, Menachos 102a and Meilah 3b) and thus may be said to have the same effect on its Gevurah.

שמיני

## SHEMINI

*Contrasting Matzah  
and Kitniyos*

נִהְגוּ בְּמִדֵּינֹת אֵלוֹ שֶׁלֹּא לֶאֱכֹל בְּפֶסַח תְּבָשִׂיל שֶׁל אֶרֶז  
וְדַחַן וּפּוֹלִין וְעֵדָשִׁים וְשׁוּמְשָׁמִין וְשָׂאֵר מִיְּנֵי קִטְנִיּוֹת

IT HAS BECOME CUSTOMARY IN THESE COUNTRIES<sup>1</sup> NOT TO EAT ON PESACH COOKED FOOD<sup>2</sup> [MADE] FROM RICE, MILLET,<sup>3</sup> PEAS, LENTILS, POPPY SEEDS,<sup>4</sup> AND OTHER SPECIES OF *KITNIYOS*.<sup>5</sup> (ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ARUCH 453:3)

**1.** Central and Eastern Europe, at the time home to Ashkenazic Jewry, and the communities later established by their descendants worldwide. (Some Sephardim have also accepted this custom in whole or in part.)

**2.** In practice, those who follow this tradition do not eat these species on Pesach in any form, raw or cooked. There are variant customs regarding the use of their extracts, such as oils.

**3.** Some say that the first two definitions should be transposed (Rashi, Berachos 37a, cited in the Alter Rebbe's Seder Birkas Hanehenin 1:11).

**4.** Alternatively, "sesame seeds." Both are in fact included in the purview of this custom.

**5.** Lit., "legumes," but actually including many species outside of that class (as well as other ones not listed here).

The technical reason for this restriction, as the Alter Rebbe goes on to explain, is the

## Driving question:

- What is the deeper reason behind this practice?<sup>6</sup>

The various Names of G-d reflect the ways in which He relates to His creations. Among them, the Name הו"י Havayah,<sup>7</sup> which represents a more open revelation of G-dliness in our world, and whose corresponding Divine attribute is Chessed (benevolence; giving), and the name א-להים Elokim,<sup>8</sup> the mode in which G-dliness is concealed within the workings of nature, an expression of Gevurah (constriction; withholding).<sup>9</sup> An analogy can be drawn to the workings of the human intellect, where a greater mind can more easily assimilate a “high-voltage” concept, while

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concern that unlettered people might not recognize the difference between *kitniyos* and grain (which they resemble in appearance and in methods of preparation), and might thus prepare dishes of cooked grain, which would be Biblically forbidden chametz. See [chabad.org/871998](http://chabad.org/871998) for more on the subject.

6. Interestingly, R. Yosef Goldberg (1914–1985, dean of the Lubavitcher Yeshivah of Brunoy, France) records in his memoirs that R. Levi Yitzchak once told him that “without getting into the halachic angle [summarized in the preceding note], *kitniyos* and Pesach are incompatible in terms of their [spiritual] roots”—as expounded in this essay.

7. Actually spelled ה-ו-י, and not to be pronounced (outside of the Holy Temple) as written. In Chassidic literature it is styled הו"י, as above, which also preserves its basic meaning of “[the Source of all] existence.”

8. Outside of the recitation of sacred texts, pronounced (as above) with a *kuf* substituting for the *hei*.

9. A common trope in Kabbalistic and Chassidic literature (Pardes 12:2; Tanya, Shaar Hayichud Vebaemunah, ch. 6; et al.) is that א-להים has the same numerical value, 86, as הטבע, “the nature.” In Tanya loc. cit., the Alter Rebbe analogizes the effects of these two Names to “the sun” and “its sheath” (Tehillim 84:12), where the latter screens the intense light and heat of the sun so that we can bear it; in the same way the Name Elokim cloaks the energy of Havayah, to make possible a world of finite creations.

a lesser mind will require a “transformer” to reduce the current to a lower level. In Chassidic thought these two modes are called, respectively, *mochin degadlus* (“mature intellect”) and *mochin dekatnus* (“juvenile intellect”), and the respective experiences of Divinity signified by Havayah and Elokim can be mapped onto those.

In the human diet, grain and *kitniyos* serve similar purposes. But there is a key difference:

Grain is made into bread, לחם in Hebrew, and that foodstuff is more closely associated with הויה (being numerically equal to three times that Divine name<sup>10</sup>) and its concomitant *mochin degadlus*.<sup>11</sup>

26	= (5) ה + (6) ו + (5) ה + (10) י
x 3 =	
78	= (40) ם + (8) ן + (30) ל

By contrast, *kitniyos* can be seen to pertain to Gevurah and to *mochin dekatnus* in multiple ways.<sup>12</sup> Their very name is of the same root as *katnus*; among the class of *kitniyos*, lentils are red, a symbol of Gevurah;<sup>13</sup> and they are a food tra-

**10.** Accordingly, Kabbalistic sources (Siddur Arizal, et al.) state that the bread over which the Hamotzi blessing is recited should be dipped in salt (מלה in Hebrew, an anagram of לחם) three times. See also Siddur Im Dach (5779 edition) 156b–157a.

**11.** As expressed in the Talmudic adage that “a child does not know how to call ‘Father’ or ‘Mother’ until he tastes grain” (Berachos 40a and Sanhedrin 70b), and the associated opinion of R. Yehudah (ibid.) that the “Tree of Knowledge” (Bereishis, ch. 3) was wheat. See further Ohr Hatorah, Mishpatim, p. 1302.

**12.** Elsewhere (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, p. 369) R. Levi Yitzchak notes several other characteristics of *kitniyos* that are germane to this point.

**13.** See Likkutei Torah, Vayikra, Hosafos 51d; the Tzemach Tzedek’s Beurei



ditionally served to mourners,<sup>14</sup> who have just experienced a heavy dose of Gevurah.

In taking us out of Egypt, G-d manifested His ultimate Chesed to extract us from the constricting Gevurah of Egypt. The Hebrew name for Egypt, מצרים, is related to מיצר, “constriction,” and in the human frame it is embodied in the narrow neck, גרון in Hebrew, that connects head and body.<sup>15</sup> Significantly, the neck contains three vital organs (esophagus, trachea and blood vessels), and its numerical value is equal to three times א-להים (plus one<sup>16</sup>).

86	= (40) ם + (10) י + (5) ה + (30) ל + (1) א
x 3	
+ 1 =	
259	= (50) ן + (6) ו + (200) ר + (3) ג

On Pesach, then, our nation exited the *mochin dekatnus* of Egypt and entered into a new stage of *mochin degadlus*.

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Hazohar, pp. 590ff; et al.

**14.** Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 378:9. The Talmud (Bava Basra 16b) relates that the lentil stew that Yaakov made (Bereishis 25:29,34) was for his father Yitzchak on the occasion of the passing of the latter's father Avraham; in the original R. Levi Yitzchak discusses the significance of Eisav's demand to eat it.

**15.** See Torah Ohr, Va'eira 58b ff.

**16.** The rules of Gematria (finding meaning in the numerical values of letters and words) allow for one, representing the word as a whole, to be added to the total. Chida (Devash Lefi, Gimmel, no. 14), citing earlier Kabbalistic sources, notes an allusion to this in the Written Torah (Bereishis 48:5). The Rebbe comments (Toras Menachem—Hisvaaduyos 5727, vol. 2, pp. 191-192) that it also finds halachic expression in the fact that the “forty lashes” prescribed for certain transgressions (Devarim 25:2) are actually thirty-nine (Talmud, Makkos 22a).

Thus the food of Pesach is matzah made of grain, rather than *kitniyos*.<sup>17</sup>

*In the words of R. Levi Yitzchak:*

לֶחֶם גִּימְטָרִיא ג' פְּעָמִים הוּא'... וְקִטְנִית שְׁהוּא גַם בֵּן מֵאֲכָל אֵךְ נִקְרָא קִטְנִית  
מִלְשׁוֹן קִטְנִית, הוּא מִבְּחִינַת מוֹחִין דְּקִטְנִית. (...וְאִם הָאֲכִילָה הוּא לֶחֶם ג' פְּעָמִים  
הוּא' הוּא בְּחִינַת מוֹחִין דְּגִדְלוֹת, וְאִם הָאֲכִילָה הוּא קִטְנִית הוּא בְּחִינַת מוֹחִין  
דְּקִטְנִית שְׁבָרִיאָה). וְקִטְנִית הוּא מִן עֲדָשִׁים שְׁהוּא מֵאֲכָל הַבְּרָאָה דְּאָבֵל כְּמוֹ  
שְׁפָתוֹב בְּשִׁלְחֹן עֲרוֹךְ יוֹרָה דְּעַה הַלְכוֹת אֲבֵלוֹת... וּמִפְּנֵי שְׁקִטְנִיּוֹת הֵם בְּחִינַת  
דִּינִים וּגְבוּרוֹת מוֹחִין דְּקִטְנִית, לְכֵן אֵין אוֹכְלִין אוֹתָם בְּפֶסַח, שְׂאֵז הוּא זְמַן  
הַחֲסָדִים, הִיצִיאָה מִמִּצְרַיִם. דְּהֵינּוּ הִיצִיאָה מִמוֹחִין דְּקִטְנִית שְׁבָרִיאָה ג' פְּעָמִים  
אֵילָקִים בְּיָדוֹע... עֲדָשִׁים שְׁהוּא קִטְנִית, הַמוֹחִין דְּקִטְנִית שְׁהֵם אֲדָמִים בְּחִינַת  
גְבוּרוֹת וְדִינִים...

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>18</sup> vol. 3, pp. 182–184



17. To be sure, this exposition does not account for the practice of many Sephardic Jews to eat at least some kinds of *kitniyos* on Pesach. It may be suggested that for them it finds expression in the universally established halachah that matzah cannot be made from *kitniyos*, only from grain (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 453:1).

18. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al Hatorah, vol. 4 (Shemos-Bo), sec. 73.

# אמור EMOR

## *Don't Blow It!*



אמר רבי לוי בר לחמא אמר רבי חמא בר חנינא: כתוב אחד  
אומר "שבתון זכרון תרועה", וכתוב אחד אומר "יום תרועה  
יהיה לכם"; לא קשיא: כן טוב שחל להיות בשבת, כן  
ביום טוב שחל להיות בחול... אלא אמר רבא: מדאורייתא  
מישראל שרי, ורבנן הוא דגזור ביה, כדרבה... שפא יטלנו בידו  
וילך אצל הבקי ללמוד, ויעבירונו ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים

SAID R' LEVI BAR LACHMA IN THE NAME OF R' CHAMA  
BAR CHANINA: ONE VERSE SAYS [REGARDING ROSH  
HASHANAH,] "A DAY OF CEASING [WORK], A REMEMBRANCE  
OF SHOFAR BLOWING"<sup>1</sup> [SEEMINGLY IMPLYING ONLY A VERBAL  
"REMEMBRANCE" OF THE MITZVAH,<sup>2</sup> BUT NOT PERFORMING

1. Vayikra 23:24.

2. By reciting verses that speak of the shofar [in the Rosh Hashanah Musaf prayer]

IT], WHILE ANOTHER VERSE SAYS “IT SHALL BE A DAY OF SHOFAR BLOWING FOR YOU.”<sup>3</sup> THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION: THE FIRST VERSE REFERS TO WHEN THE HOLIDAY COINCIDES WITH SHABBOS [AND THEN THE SHOFAR IS NOT SOUNDED]; THE SECOND, WHEN THE HOLIDAY OCCURS ON A WEEKDAY... RATHER, [AFTER HAVING REFUTED THIS EXEGESIS,] RAVA SAID: BIBLICALLY IT WOULD BE PERMITTED [TO BLOW SHOFAR EVEN ON SHABBOS], BUT THE RABBIS ENACTED A [PRECAUTIONARY] DECREE, AS RABBAH [PUT IT]:... LEST [A PERSON UNVERSED IN HOW TO BLOW THE SHOFAR] TAKE IT IN HIS HAND AND GO TO AN EXPERT TO LEARN [HOW TO BLOW], AND [INADVERTENTLY] CARRY IT FOUR CUBITS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN<sup>4</sup> (TALMUD, ROSH HASHANAH 29B).

### Driving questions:

- How can the Sages override the Biblical requirement to hear the sound of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah?<sup>5</sup>

(Rashi ad loc.).

3. Bamidbar 29:1.

4. Which is prohibited on Shabbos by an oral law transmitted to Moshe at Sinai (Talmud, Shabbos 96b). Note that carrying from one's house into the public domain (as our would-be student would presumably do on his way to the expert's house) is also forbidden on Shabbos (ibid. 2a passim); see Rashi (Sukkah 43a, s.v. ויעבירו) and Tosafos (ibid. s.v. ויעבירו, and to Rosh Hashanah ad loc. s.v. ששא) for a discussion of why Rabbah does not mention this point.

5. Technically the Sages are empowered to do so because they are calling for the passive non-fulfillment of a mitzvah, rather than an active violation (Talmud, Yevamos 90a). Still, the question is that Rabbah's concern seems somewhat farfetched, and ostensibly does not justify a blanket ban on shofar blowing for even the learned Jews.

In the original essay, after giving the answer that has been adapted into the present article, R' Levi Yitzchak goes on to provide an answer based on Kabbalistic themes. The question—and the point that the sounding of the shofar elicits the beaming

- How does Rava's explanation account for the differing expressions in the verses cited by R' Levi bar Lachma?<sup>6</sup>

G-d, as the creator of humanity and the author of the Torah, is of course well aware of human frailty, including the tendency to forget. The “remembrance” in the verse from Vayikra can thus be understood in a different vein than R' Levi bar Lachma does: not as a reference to the verses regarding the shofar,<sup>7</sup> but as enjoining us to remember Shabbos itself and its multifarious laws. Taken in this way, then, the three words שבתון זכרון תרועה can be understood as follows: שבתון, when Rosh Hashanah occurs on the **Shabbos** day, on which all work ceases,<sup>8</sup> זכרון, be sure to **remember** that it is Shabbos, and then תרועה, you

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down of rarefied Divine energies into our world—is also a common trope in Chabad Chassidic literature (Likkutei Torah, Rosh Hashanah 56a ff; Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah 5659 and 5666; et al.), and serves as a starting point for wide-ranging explorations of the spiritual dynamics of the cosmos, the relationship between the Creator and His creations, and numerous other building blocks of the Chassidic ethos.

6. The verse from Vayikra is quoted in Sifra ad loc. as hinting at the Rabbinical enactment to recite the verses of Zichronos (on the theme of G-d's remembrance of His creations) and Shofaros (on the theme of the shofar) in the Rosh Hashanah prayers. Indeed, Ritva to Rosh Hashanah 16a asserts (in a point related to R' Levi Yitzchak's explanation further on in the text) that this type of hint—called an *asmachta* in Talmudic literature—is not simply a mnemonic device, but is actually G-d's way of intimating that a particular practice is desirable but that He is leaving it to the Sages to decide whether to enact it. Nonetheless, this leaves the dichotomy of the two verses unexplained.

7. See above, notes 2 and 6.

8. By contrast with festivals that occur on weekdays, on which certain categories of labor are permitted for the purpose of food preparation and other ancillary holiday needs.

will be able to **blow the shofar** without fear of violating the holy day. And the opposite is also implied: if you are apt to forget Shabbos or its laws, do not blow the shofar. Thus the Torah's phraseology already suggests the concern expressed by Rabbah, which eventually the Sages found prevalent enough to issue a sweeping prohibition against blowing the shofar on Shabbos.

Alternatively, the “remembrance” may be taken to refer to the rules and techniques of shofar blowing, yielding a somewhat different understanding: when Rosh Hashanah occurs on **Shabbos**, if you **remember** how to blow and are not in need of instruction by an expert, then you may **blow**, but otherwise you may not. On this reading the verse is drawing a distinction between the expert and the non-expert, banning the latter from sounding the shofar on Shabbos, out of fear that in his eagerness to do the mitzvah he will inadvertently desecrate Shabbos by carrying; the Sages, then, simply extended this ban and made it more universal, thereby safeguarding the sanctity of Shabbos.

*In the words of R' Levi Yitzchak:*

בִּי הִנֵּה לְכַאוֹרָה צְרִיךְ לְהִבִּין לְפִי מִסְקֶנֶת הַגְּמָרָא בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה שֶׁם שְׂמֵדְחָה דְּעֵת ר' לְוִי בַר לְחֵמָא שְׂסַבִּירָא לֵיהּ שְׂמֵדְאוּרֵייתָא אִין תּוֹקְעִין בְּשַׁבָּת רַק זְכוּרֵן תְּרוּעָה דְּהֵינּוּ אֲמִירַת הַמְּקֵרָאוֹת דְּתְרוּעָה, אֲלֵא שְׂמֵדְאוּרֵייתָא מְשֵׂרָא שְׂרִי בְּשַׁבָּת, אִם בֵּן יִשְׂאֵר קִשְׁיַת ר' לְוִי בַר לְחֵמָא לָמָּה בְּפָסוּק א' כְּתוּב זְכוּרֵן תְּרוּעָה וּבְפָסוּק א' כְּתִיב יוֹם תְּרוּעָה וְלֹא נִמְצָא שֶׁם בְּגֵמְרָא שׁוּם תְּרוּץ עַל זֶה. (וְעַל פִּי נִגְלָה יֵשׁ לוֹמֵר שְׂיִתְרָצוּ בְךָ, הֵינּוּ שְׁהִים יִפְרְשׁוּ גַם בֵּן שְׁהִפְסוּק דְּשַׁבָּתוֹן זְכוּרֵן תְּרוּעָה מִיַּדִּי בְּשַׁבָּת כְּמוֹ שְׂכֵתוּב שַׁבָּתוֹן, הֵינּוּ כְּשֵׂרָאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה חָל בְּשַׁבָּת. אַךְ הַפְּרוּשׁ דְּזְכוּרֵן תְּרוּעָה אֵינוֹ בְּמוֹ שְׂפֵרֵשׁ ר' לְוִי בַר לְחֵמָא שְׂרַק זְכוּרֵן אֶת הַתְּרוּעָה, דְּהֵינּוּ אֲמִירַת הַמְּקֵרָאוֹת שֶׁל הַתְּרוּעָה אֲלֵא הַפְּרוּשׁ דְּזְכוּרֵן הוּא שְׂצִיךְ לְהִיּוֹת זְכוּרֵן שְׂזִיכּוּר

שְׁשִׁבֶת הַיּוֹם וְלֹא יַעֲבִירוּנוּ ד' אַמּוֹת בְּרִשּׁוֹת הָרַבִּים וְאִזּוּ מִתֵּר תְּרוּעָה דְּהֵיִינוּ  
 לְתַקְעַ, וְהַתּוֹרָה אֵינָה גּוֹזֶרֶת שְׂמָא לֹא יִזְכֹּר וַיִּשְׁכַּח. אוּ יִתְפָּרֵשׁ זְכוּרֵן תְּרוּעָה הֵיִינוּ  
 שְׂזִיכֹר וַיִּדַע אֶת הַתְּרוּעָה דְּהֵיִינוּ שְׂזִיחָא בְּקִי בַּהּ וְאִזּוּ מִתֵּר תְּרוּעָה דְּהֵיִינוּ לְתַקְעַ כִּי  
 אִם לֹא בֵן הָרִי צְרִיךְ לְהֵיזֵית שְׂיִלְךְ אֶצְל הַבְּקִי וַיַּעֲבִירוּנוּ ד' אַמּוֹת בְּרִשּׁוֹת הָרַבִּים,  
 וְהַתּוֹרָה אֵינָה גּוֹזֶרֶת אֶת הַבְּקִי מִשּׁוּם שְׂאִינוּ בְּקִי, וְרַבְּנֵן גּוֹזְרִים שְׂמָא לֹא יִזְכֹּר,  
 וְגּוֹזְרִים הַבְּקִי מִשּׁוּם שְׂאִינוּ בְּקִי. וּבִזְזָה אֶתִּי שְׂפִיר מִנֵּן לָהֶם לְרַבְּנֵן לְגֹזֵר גּוֹרָה זֹאת  
 לְבַטֵּל בְּשִׁבְלָה מִצּוֹת תְּקִיעַת שׁוֹפָר בְּשַׁחַל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה בְּשִׁבֶת. וְעַל פִּי הָאֵמּוֹר  
 אֶתִּי שְׂפִיר, כִּי מִן הַתּוֹרָה יֵצֵא לָהֶם זֹאת, כִּי מֵאַחַר שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה אָמְרָה זְכוּרֵן שְׂצָרִיךְ  
 לְזִכֹּר שְׁשִׁבֶת הַיּוֹם וְלֹא יַעֲבִירוּנוּ כו' וְאָמְרָה שְׂצָרִיךְ לְזִכֹּר דְּהֵיִינוּ שְׂזִיכֹר וַיִּדַע מֵהוּ  
 תְּרוּעָה שְׂלֵא יִצְטָרֵךְ לִילְךְ אֶצְל הַבְּקִי, הִנֵּה מִמֶּה שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה מְזַהֶרֶת עַל זֶה, מִזֶּה  
 גּוֹפֵא מוֹכַח שְׂיֵשׁ חֲשֵׁשׁ שְׂמָא לֹא יִזְכֹּר וַיִּשְׁכַּח שְׁשִׁבֶת הַיּוֹם, וְשְׂמָא לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּקִי  
 בְּתְרוּעָה. אֲךָ הַתּוֹרָה אֵינָה גּוֹזֶרֶת הַזְּכוּר מִשּׁוּם הָאִינוּ זְכוּר, וְהַבְּקִי מִשּׁוּם הָאִינוּ  
 בְּקִי, וְרַבְּנֵן גּוֹזְרִים מֵאַחַר שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה מְזַהֶרֶת עַל זֶה...

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, p. 289*



במדבר  
BAMIDBAR





במדבר  
BAMIDBAR

*Prayer and Torah*



לְיְהוּדָה נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן עֲמִינדָב. לְיִשָּׁשָׁכָר נְתַנְאֵל בֶּן צוּעָר.

FOR YEHUDAH, [THE TRIBAL PRINCE WAS] NACHSHON SON OF  
AMMINADAV.

FOR YISSACHAR, [THE TRIBAL PRINCE WAS]  
NESANEL SON OF TZUAR. (1:4-5)

**Driving statement:**

- The names and patronymics of these leaders encapsulate their respective tribes' primary paths in serving G-d.

**A**t the Giving of the Torah, “G-d descended upon Mount Sinai,”<sup>1</sup> marking the return of the Divine Presence to

1. Shemos 19:20.

earth for the first time since Adam and Chavah sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards the Mishkan was constructed to serve as a more permanent seat of G-d's Presence,<sup>3</sup> and the first two of the tribal princes to offer gifts at its dedication were the leaders of the tribes of Yehudah and Yissachar,<sup>4</sup> both of who had the status of "kings."<sup>5</sup>

At the end of an extensive essay on the Mishkan and its inaugural festivities,<sup>6</sup> the Rebbe points out that the tribe of Yehudah is associated with prayer,<sup>7</sup> and Yissachar with Torah,<sup>8</sup> and thus that it was appropriate that the Mishkan, center of these activities, was inaugurated with their gifts.

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2. Shir Hashirim Rabbah 5:1. See Basi Legani 5710, sec. 1.

3. See sources cited in the preceding note. See also Ramban's commentary to Shemos 25:1.

4. Bamidbar 7:12–23.

5. Symbolized by the fact that in the passage describing their gifts, only they have their names given before those of their tribes, since "the king always precedes his people" (Bamidbar Rabbah 13:17).

6. Published in Reshimos, nos. 104–109.

7. His very name, יהודה in Hebrew, comes from his mother Leah's declaration, "Now I will thank (אודה) G-d" (Bereishis 29:35; see also Torah Ohr, Vayechi 45a). It is also noteworthy that Nechemiah 11:17 mentions an official in the Beis Hamikdash who "was the first to thank (יהודה), spelled identically to the name of the tribe though vocalized differently) in prayer."

8. Divrei Hayamim 1:12:33 speaks of this tribe as "knowing understanding of the times to know what Israel should do... and all their brethren followed them," which our Sages (Bamidbar Rabbah 13:15; Talmud, Yoma 26a; et al.) see as a reference to their prowess in studying Torah and disseminating it to the rest of the Jewish nation. Yaakov's and Moshe's blessings to Yissachar also celebrate this quality (see Rashi, Bereishis 49:14–15 and Devarim 33:18).

The name נחשון Nachshon is related to נחשול *nachshol*, “wave,” representing the self-sacrifice that Nachshon exemplified, having been the first to leap into the Reed Sea<sup>9</sup> at G-d’s command to “travel forward,”<sup>10</sup> and also to נחש *nachash*, “snake,” which is symbolic of total devotion to communion with G-d, to the point where “even if a snake is wound around one’s heel, he should not interrupt [his prayers].”<sup>11</sup> Another source that demonstrates a connection between the snake and prayer: “When straightening up [for the recitation of G-d’s Name after bowing during the Shemoneh Esrei prayer], Rav Sheishes would rise up like a snake.”<sup>12</sup>

But Nachshon is the son of—i.e., is preceded by—עמינדב Amminadav. His name, which translates to “my people is generous,” hints at something that must precede prayer—the generous giving of tzedakah (charity).<sup>13</sup>

Turning now to Yissachar’s leader, his name נתנאל Nesanel

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9. Bamidbar Rabbah 13:7 (which indeed states that he was called Nachshon in token of that action); Talmud, Sotah 37a.

10. Shemos 14:15.

11. Talmud, Berachos 30b.

12. “Gradually, first [raising] his head and then [the rest of] his body, so that his bowing should not appear to be burdensome to him” (Talmud, Berachos 12b and Rashi ad loc.). This practice is codified as halachah in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 113:6.

13. “R. Elazar would give a coin to a poor person and then pray, as it is written (Tehillim 17:15), “I will behold Your Presence with *tzedek* [related to *tzedakah*, “charity”]” (Talmud, Bava Basra 10a). In keeping with this, Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 92:10 and Yoreh De’ah 249:13) states that “it is good” to give charity before praying. See also Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh, secs. 8 and 12.

breaks down to נתן א-ל *nasan E-l*, “G-d gave [the Torah],”<sup>14</sup> symbolizing not only the area in which this tribe excelled, but the proper attitude one must have towards the Torah—to always bear in mind that it is a Divine gift.<sup>15</sup> The study and teaching of Torah, too, has a prerequisite (something of which it is “a son”)—a sense of humility,<sup>16</sup> denoted by the name צוער Tzuar, from a Hebrew root for “small.”<sup>17</sup> Here too, there are yet more layers of meaning: Mount Sinai, where the Torah was given, is poetically referred to as “Mount Mitz’ar,”<sup>18</sup> sharing the same root as Tzuar and referring to its status as the lowliest of mountains.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the same root צער also means “hardship,” as in our Sages’ advice that one must be prepared to live “a life of hardship” in order to travel “the road to Torah”<sup>20</sup> and become a consummate scholar and teacher.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, p. 394*

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14. Midrash Aggadah, Bamidbar 1:8; see also Vayikra Rabbah 1:3.

15. See Talmud, Nedarim 81a and Bava Metzia 85b; Bach, Orach Chaim 47; et al.

16. Thus we say, at the end of the Shemoneh Esrei prayer, “Let my soul be like dust to all; open my heart to Your Torah.” See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 15a.

17. As in “it is small (מצער)” (Bereishis 19:20); “the insignificant (והצעיר) [will become] a great nation” (Yeshayah 60:22); et al.

18. Tehillim 42:7 and Rashi ad loc.

19. Talmud, Sotah 5a.

20. Avos 6:4.

*In R. Levi Yitzchak's words:*

יְהוּדָה תִּפְלָה... וְשֵׁם נְשִׂאוֹ נַחֲשׁוֹן וְקוֹף בְּחוּיָא בְּשִׁמוּנָה עֲשֶׂרָה בְּשֵׁם, וְשֵׁם אָבִיו  
 עֲמִינָדָב כְּאֲשֶׁר כְּתוּבָת נְתִינָת הַצְּדָקָה קִדְּם הַתִּפְלָה, וְטוֹב וַיְפָה הִיא... יִשְׁשֹׁכֶר  
 תּוֹרָה חֲכָמָה, מִבְּחִינַת בּוֹנֵן, וְשֵׁם נְשִׂאוֹ נְתַנְאֵל הוּא מֵה שְׁהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
 א-ל נָתַן אֶת הַתּוֹרָה... וְהוּא בֶן צוּעֵר, כִּי בֶן הִיא דְרָכָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה כּו' וְחַיֵּי צַעַר  
 תַּחֲוִיה. גַּם תּוֹרָה נִתְּנָה עַל הַר מְצַעַר שֶׁהוּא הַר סִינִי.



# בהעלותך

# BEHA'ALOISCHA

## *The Rite on the Right*



וְכֹלֵא בְשַׁעֲתָא דְכִהֲנָא פְּלַח פּוֹלְחָנָא,  
וְאַקְרִיב קִרְבָּנָא, וְאַקְטַר קְטֹרֶת

AND ALL OF THIS<sup>1</sup> OCCURS WHEN THE KOHEN  
PERFORMS THE SERVICE, AND OFFERS THE SACRIFICE,  
AND BURNS THE INCENSE... (ZOHAR 3:35A)

### Driving question:

- The sacrifices and the incense are both services that the Kohanim perform. To which other rite does the phrase “performs the service” refer?

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1. The preceding lines in the Zohar speak of the “union of the King” and Malchus, the culmination of the Sefiros (see further in the text), which also stands for the collective Jewish people.

**T**he innermost chamber in the Beis Hamikdash was the Kodesh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies), where G-d's Presence rested atop the Ark and the Keruvim surmounting it.<sup>2</sup> Looking outward from there, the Menorah is to the right, on the southern side of the Sanctuary,<sup>3</sup> and the gold-plated altar, on which incense was offered, is straight ahead, on the midline.<sup>4</sup> Further out,<sup>5</sup> in the courtyard, stands the copper-plated (and, later, stone<sup>6</sup>) altar,<sup>7</sup> and an area to its north (i.e., left, when looking outward from the Sanctuary) where the “most holy” animal sacrifices are slaughtered.<sup>8</sup>

The three vectors of right, left and center symbolize the first three of the Sefiros, the Divine modalities that form the interface between G-d and His creations, and their human emotional analogues. These are, respectively, Chesed (“benevolence,” the drive to give), Gevurah (“severity,” the drive to withhold) and Tiferes (“beauty,” the perfect blend of Chesed and Gevurah). As the phrases “offers the sacrifice”

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2. Indeed, G-d is referred to as “the One who is enthroned on the Keruvim” (Shmuel 1:4:4 and 2:6:2, Tehillim 80:2, et al).

3. Shemos 26:35 and 40:24.

4. Ibid. 30:6 and Rashi ad loc.

5. The Sanctuary also contained, on its northern side opposite the Menorah, another item of furniture—the table on which the Lechem Hapanim (showbread) was placed (Shemos 26:35 and 40:22). It does not figure in this Zoharic passage or in R. Levi Yitzchak's exposition, possibly because the services involving it were not performed daily, but only on Shabbos (Vayikra 24:8; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Temidin Umussafin 5:1–5). Nonetheless, the association of the left with Gevurah (as in the text) does carry over to the table and its load of bread too (see *Toras Chaim* by the Mittler Rebbe, Terumah 307c ff; *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*, vol. 2, p. 438; et al).

6. Shemos 20:22 and Rashi ad loc.; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Beis Habechirah 1:13.

7. Shemos 40:6, 29.

8. Mishnah, Zevachim 5:1–4; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Maaseh Hakorbanos 5:2–3.

and “burns the incense” encompass activities performed to the left and in the center (pointing to Gevurah and Tiferes respectively), then by elimination “performs the service” must refer to something done on the right side and associated with Chessed, namely, the daily lighting of the Menorah. Light is a facet of Chessed,<sup>9</sup> and the upward-reaching flames of the Menorah’s lamps symbolize *ahavah rabbah*, the “great love” of the soul to G-d, straining upward to reunite with her Source;<sup>10</sup> Chessed is the defining characteristic of the Kohen,<sup>11</sup> and *ahavah rabbah* is what Aharon, progenitor of the Kohanic line, and his descendants evoke within the Jew.<sup>12</sup> Thus the kindling of the Menorah can be called “the service” *par excellence*, in the spirit of the adage “There is no service like the service of love.”<sup>13</sup>

Taking it a step further, there is a sense in which all three of these rites in the Beis Hamikdash can instead be seen as evocations of Gevurah. For one, they all have an association with Yitzchak, who among our Patriarchs is the exemplar of Gevurah;<sup>14</sup> for another, the fire that consumes the wick and

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9. Zohar 1:256b, et al; Tanya, Shaar Hayichud Vehaemunah, ch. 11.

10. Tanya, Sefer Shel Beinonim, ch. 43.

11. Zohar 1:256b, 258a.

12. Likkutei Torah, Naso 21a and Behaaloscha 29c ff; Maamar Zos Toras Habayis 5689, sec. 2; et al.

13. Zohar 3:267a.

14. “Yitzchak ordained the Menorah” (Zohar 3:133a–b); he was nearly offered as a sacrifice at the Akeidah, and for the rest of his life was called a “perfect burnt-offering” (Rashi, Bereishis 25:26 and 26:2); and he is described as smelling the fragrance of Yaakov’s clothes and commenting on it (Bereishis 27:27)—indeed, the Midrash (Tanchuma Buber, Toldos 22) states that Hashem infused his clothes with aroma of the incense (and it is also noteworthy that this is the first instance in Tanach where a person is described as smelling something).



oil of the Menorah, the incense, and the limbs offered on the altar is also a facet of that attribute.<sup>15</sup>

In the Hebrew alphabet, there are five letters that have separate forms at the end of a word. These final forms are known as מנצפ"ך,<sup>16</sup> and in Kabbalistic literature they too are seen as representations of Gevurah, in that they “withhold” the continuation of a word.<sup>17</sup> Their combined numerical value is 280. Significantly, the initials of the three services mentioned in the Zohar, פּוֹלְחֵהֶנָּא, קִרְבָּנָא, קִטְרֵת, likewise equal 280, once again underscoring their connection with Gevurah. Yet the Kohen, archetype of Chessed, is able to “sweeten” and moderate that harshness, because he embodies not just plain Chessed but Rav Chessed, “abundant Chessed,”<sup>18</sup> which surmounts Gevurah altogether. This is indicated by the fact that the phrase וְרַב חֶסֶד<sup>19</sup> likewise equals 280.

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15. Zohar 3:255a, et al.; Tanya, Sefer Shel Beinonim, ch. 50, and Iggeres Hakodesh, epistle 10.

16. Talmud, Shabbos 104a and Megillah 2b. This differs from their alphabetical order; Ramban to Shabbos ad loc., and Ritva to Megillah ad loc., explain that מנצפ"ך suggests the phrase מן צופיך, “from your seers,” alluding to a point in the Talmud ibid. that the correct usage of these letterforms had been forgotten for a period of Jewish history, and was re-established by the “seers” (prophets).

17. Meorei Ohr, s.v. מנצפ"ך; Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 2, p. 340; et al.

18. Derech Mitzvosecha 112b; Hemshech 5672, vol. 2, p. 981; et al. In general Rav Chessed is seen as an attribute of the Kohen Gadol (with the ordinary Kohen representing ordinary Chessed), but here R. Levi Yitzchak understands it to pertain to the ordinary Kohen too, possibly because he inherits this quality from Aharon the original Kohen Gadol.

19. As it appears (with the prefixed vav) in the list of Hashem’s Attributes of Mercy in Shemos 34:6.

280	= מ (40) + נ (50) + צ (90) + פ (80) + ך (20)
280	= פ (80) + ק (100) + ק (100)
280	= ו (6) + ר (200) + ב (2) + ח (8) + ס (60) + ד (4)

Thus, in the hands of the Kohen, “the service,” “the sacrifice” and “the incense” all evoke G-d’s attribute of Chessed and bond Him and His nation together.

*In R. Levi Yitzchak’s words:*

...היינו אימתני מתחברין נה"י בחדא ונמשכים למלכות. הוא בשעתא דכהנא פלח פלחנא כו'. על איזה פלחנא פונתו אם על קרבנות וקטרת הרי אמר אחר זה בהדיא. קרבנא. קטרת. ועל כרחך שפונתו על עבודה אחרת שנקראת פלחנא סתם. ויש לומו פלחנא הוא הדלקת המנורה שמנור[ה] הוא בחינת אור והיתה בימין הוא בחינת אהבה רבה דאהרן בחינת חסד. ונקראת פלחנא סתם כי לית פלחנא כפלחנא דרחימוותא. ואקרב קרבנא קרבן הוא עבודה קו השמאל גבורה. (והיינו מה שקדשי קדשים היו נשחטים בצפון. צפון הוא צד השמאל גבורה. ועקר עבודת הקרבן והפפרה היה זריקת הדם, דם הוא גבורה. ואקטר קטרת. קטרת שבמזבח הפנימי שהיה עומד באמצע הוא תפארת... (והראשי תבות פלחנא קרבנא קטרת הוא פק"ק מספר מנצפ"ך גבורות. הוא כי כל אלו הג' שניכים ליצחק גבורות. כי הרי יצחק תקן מנורה בזהר תרומה דף קל"ג. ויצחק הוא היה קרבן עולה על גבי המזבח וכן ריח הקטרת שיך ליצחק, שכתוב בו וירח את ריח בגדיו, וכתוב ראה ריח בני... וכל אלו הג' דברים היו באש. הדלקת המנורה באש. והקרבנות באש. והקטרת באש. איש הוא בחינת גבורות. אך העושה אותם היה כהן דוקא בחינת חסדים שהוא יכול להמתיק את הגבורות. והכהן הוא בחינת ור"ב חס"ד שמספרו גם כן פק"ק, הוא יכול להמתיק את הגבורות...)

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, 20 vol. 2, p. 257*



20. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak al Hatorah, vol. 6, ch. 46.

מטות

## MATOS

*Him, Her and (K)not*

וּנְבַח הָלַךְ וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת קֵנַת וְאֶת בְּנֵי תֵיהָ וַיִּקְרָא לָהּ נְבַח בְּשֵׁמוֹ

AND NOVACH WENT AND CONQUERED KENAS<sup>1</sup> AND  
HER DEPENDENT VILLAGES, AND GAVE TO HER  
THE NAME NOVACH, AFTER HIMSELF<sup>2</sup> (32:42)

וַיָּבֵא לוֹ יַיִן וַיִּשְׁתֵּהוּ

AND [YAAKOV] BROUGHT WINE TO HIM  
[YITZCHAK], AND HE DRANK (BEREISHIS 27:25)

1. Generally identified with present-day Qanawat, in southern Syria.

2. Although this name did not stick. This is alluded to by the fact that the ה of הַ is missing the *mappik* (an internal dot signifying that it is to be pronounced consonantly) that would be the usual marker of the feminine possessive, so that it instead resembles the word לא, “not” (Rashi and Ramban ad loc., quoting R. Moshe Hadarshan). In a different essay (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 2, p. 277) R. Levi Yitzchak elaborates on the underlying Kabbalistic reason for the failure of the name to take hold.

וַיִּקְחוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אִישׁ מִחַתָּתוֹ...  
וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לְפָנָי ה' אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֶתֶם

THE TWO SONS OF AHARON, NADAV AND AVIHU, EACH TOOK THEIR FIRE-PAN... AND THEY OFFERED BEFORE G-D A STRANGE FIRE WHICH HE HAD NOT COMMANDED THEM (VAYIKRA 10:1)

### Driving statement:

- In each of the above verses there is a word that bears the rare *trop* (cantillation mark) *mercha kefulah*. The words themselves are very similar: לָהּ (“to her”), לוֹ (“to him”) and לֹא (“not”).<sup>3</sup> There is a deep-rooted connection between these disparate verses.

The Hebrew word for “she” is generally<sup>4</sup> written in the Torah with the identical spelling as the word for “he,” with the difference being only in the vowel points—הָוּא (pronounced “hee”) and הוּא (pronounced “hoo”) respectively. The Zohar<sup>5</sup> remarks that this symbolizes the fusion of male and female, as the ה *hei* represents the feminine,<sup>6</sup> the ו *vov* the masculine,<sup>7</sup> and the א *alef*, numerically equaling 1, is what unites them.

3. It appears in two other verses in the Torah, Shemos 5:15 and Bamidbar 14:3 (as well as in nine other places in the books of Neviim and Kesuvim), but those are not analyzed in R. Levi Yitzchak’s essay.

4. With eleven exceptions where it is written הִיא (see *Minchas Shai*, Bereishis 14:2).

5. 3:184a.

6. Indeed, in Hebrew grammar, word-final *hei* generally marks nouns and past-tense verbs of the feminine gender or possessive.

7. For example, word-finally it marks a masculine possessive.

The interface between G-d and His world, and in human society between a giver and a receiver, includes all of these components too. The Kabbalists speak of ten Sefiros (modalities); the exact enumeration varies somewhat depending on context, but basically they are grouped into three intellectual faculties and seven emotional ones.<sup>8</sup> The latter in turn break down into a bracket of six emotions called ז"א Za,<sup>9</sup> and a seventh, called Malchus, the act of giving or transmitting to the other. As the potentials of Za are actualized in Malchus, they parallel the relationship between husband and wife, and thus Za is seen as the masculine<sup>10</sup> and Malchus as the feminine—corresponding respectively to *vov* and *hei*, as in the Zohar cited above. Higher than the emotions and preceding them are the intellectual faculties, notably Binah (“understanding”), in which the seminal spark of an idea is developed. The name of the letter *alef* means “to learn,” and is associated with Binah, as in the Talmud’s exegetical interpretation of the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, *alef* and *beis*: *alef binah*—“learn the understanding [of Torah].”<sup>11</sup>

It is also possible to subdivide Za itself into two groups of three each—the higher and lower emotions respectively. In this grouping, the intellectual faculties come under the umbrella of Arich Anpin (the Divine and corresponding human will to create), the first three emotional faculties are

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8. Tanya, part 1, ch. 3, et al.

9. An acronym for זעיר אַנפּין Ze’eir Anpin, lit. “small face,” to distinguish them from אַרְיֵךְ אַנפּין Arich Anpin (“large face”), a nickname for the far higher soul-power and Divine modality of the inchoate desire to create (see further in the text).

10. Note that *vov*, the symbol of the masculine as in the Zohar cited above, numerically equals six, corresponding to the six faculties of Za.

11. Talmud, Shabbos 104a and Rashi ad loc.

the masculine, and the next three the feminine.<sup>12</sup> As each of the ten Sefiros incorporates aspects of all the other ones,<sup>13</sup> each of these triads can be seen to comprise thirty components—the numerical value of the letter ל *lamed* shared by all three of the words לֹא, לוֹ, לָהּ.

Each of these *lameds* then joins with one of the letters of הוּא to represent the spiritual accomplishments of the respective protagonists. Nadav and Avihu embodied aspects of Binah,<sup>14</sup> and their misdeed included inappropriately drinking wine before entering the Sanctuary,<sup>15</sup> wine being an evocation of Binah too;<sup>16</sup> thus their word contains the *alef* of Binah. Yaa-kov's primary attribute is Tiferes (“beauty”), the centerpiece of Za, and the wine that he served his father was properly mixed with water,<sup>17</sup> symbolizing the moderating of Binah that makes it possible for it to engender the downward flow of G-dly energy into our world,<sup>18</sup> and so his word is made up of his triad's *lamed* plus the *vov* of Za. Finally, Novach's very name symbolizes Malchus, in that it numerically equals 60,<sup>19</sup> evoking the “sixty mighty men” guarding the royal bed of

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12. See Etz Chaim 13:2.

13. As is always the case with “the side of holiness,” all of whose aspects work in harmony, and by contrast with “the other side” (the forces of evil), which ultimately are sourced in the World of Tohu in which the Sefiros were uncooperative and thus shattered (Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Ahavas Yisroel, et al.).

14. Shaar Hapesukim (Arizal), Vayikra ad loc.

15. Rashi, Vayikra ad loc., from Vayikra Rabbah 12:5.

16. Zohar 3:127a, et al.

17. Zohar 3:189a.

18. See Torah Ohr, Vayishlach 25b.

19.  $(8) \aleph + (2) \beth + (50) \daleth = 60$ .

Shlomo,<sup>20</sup> who in turn are an evocation of Malchus,<sup>21</sup> and in that it derives from the Hebrew root נבח, referring to the barking of a dog, a debased form of the power of human speech associated with Malchus.<sup>22</sup> Appropriately, then, Novach's word incorporates the *hei* of Malchus.

The *mercha kefulah* borne by all these three words in turn hints at the even higher Sefiros known as Abba and Imma, “father and mother.” This cantillation mark therefore resembles two small *vovs*, again signifying the downward flow of G-dly energy into our world—but they are unwritten in the Torah scroll since they represent Sefiros beyond human ken, “the secrets that are known to G-d”<sup>23</sup> alone.

*In the words of R. Levi Yitzchak:*

(וַיִּשׁ דְּעָה שְׁשִׁיתַיִי יִין נִכְנָסוּ. יִין הוּא תִקְוָה הַגְּבוּרֹת דְּבִינָה, וּמוֹבֵן שְׁהִיָּה יִין חִי (שְׁלֹכֵן נִצְטוּהָ אַחֵר כִּךְ יִין וְשִׁכְרֵי אֵל תִּשְׁתֵּה. יִין דֶּרֶךְ שְׁכֻרוֹתוֹ דּוֹקָא. וְאִם נִתַּן בּוֹ מַעֲט מַיִם אֵינּוּ חַיִּב מִיָּתֵה). וְהוּא לֹא כְּמוֹ יִין שֶׁהֵבִיא יַעֲקֹב לְיִצְחָק, שְׁשָׁם אֲרָמִי מִיָּא לְגוֹ חֲמָרָא. כְּמוֹ שְׁכֻתוֹב בְּפִרְשֵׁת בְּלֶק דִּף קפ"ט ע"א. שְׁלֹכֵן כְּתִיב לֹא בְּתָרִי טַעֲמִי. מְרַכָּא כְּפֹלָה. וְכֵאֵן שְׁתוּ יִין חִי. וְהוּ שְׁשָׁם כְּתוֹב לֹא בּוֹ בְּמִרְכָּא כְּפֹלָה. וְכֵאֵן כְּתוֹב לֹא צוּה. בֵּא' גַּם בֵּן בְּמִרְכָּא כְּפֹלָה, וְנִלְמַד הֵכָא מֵהֵתָם. שְׁכְּמוֹ הֵתָם יִין כְּמוֹ בֵּן הֵכָא יִין. וַיִּשׁ עוֹד מְרַכָּא כְּפֹלָה, בְּתוֹרָה בְּתַבַּת ל"ה. וַיִּקְרָא לָהּ נִבְח בְּשִׁמּוֹ. וְהוּא פְּלֵא. בְּאֵלּוֹ הֵג' ל"א ל"ו ל"ה. בְּכֻלָּם הֵטַעַם הוּא מְרַכָּא כְּפֹלָה. לָהּ בְּה' הוּא בְּמַלְכוּת נִקְבָּא. לֹא בּוֹ הוּא בּוֹ"א דְּכוּרָא. לֹא בְּא' הוּא בְּבִינָה אֶלְף בִּינָה. עֵינִי לְקַמֵּן בְּפ' חִקַּת דִּף קפ"ג ע"ב בְּעֵנֵן הו"א. לֹא בּוֹ כְּתִיב בְּיַעֲקֹב שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת וָ"א דְּכוּרָא. לֹא בְּא' כְּתִיב בְּנֹדֵב וְאֲבִיהוּא שֶׁהֵם מְנַצֵּחַ וְהוּד דְּבִינָה. לָהּ בְּה' כְּתִיב בְּנִבְח - הוּא בְּבְחִינַת מַלְכוּת. וְהֵינּוּ לָהּ בְּה' בְּדַעַת דְּמַלְכוּת... וְהוּא

20. Shir Hashirim 3:7.

21. See Etz Chaim 22:3.

22. See Zohar 2:45a.

23. Cf. Devarim 29:28.

הם גבורים הסובבים מטתו של שלמה בעץ חיים שער מוחין דקטנות פרק ג'  
 עין שם. נבח הוא מספר ס'. גם נבח הוא כמו קלב נובח. והוא בחינת מלכות.  
 עין בזהר חלק ב' דף מ"ה ע"א עין שם... ואמנם מהו השלשה למדיין שבהם.  
 הנה יש לומר כי הט' ספירות המקוריות, שהיא בחינת אריך אנפין. הנה כח"ב  
 הוא באריך אנפין וחג"ת בזעיר אנפין. ונה"י בנקבא כמו שפתוב בעץ חיים  
 שער אריך אנפין פרק ב' עין שם. זהו השלשה למדיין. ל"א הל' הוא כח"ב... לו  
 הוא חג"ת... לה הוא נה"י. והמרקא כפולה שבכל אחד. שהם כמו תריין וואויין.  
 קטנים. ואינם נכתבין בתורה. רומז על אבא ואמא. התלויין בהמלות נצור חסד  
 ונקה. ואינם נכתבין. כי הם נסתרות...

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 2, p. 268*





דברים  
DEVARIM



# שופטים SHOFTIM

## *Parental Proclamations*



וּבֹאֵת אֶל הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם... וְעָשִׂיתָ עָלַי פִּי הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר  
יִגִּידוּ לְךָ מִן הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא... וְהָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה בְּדוֹן...  
וּמֵת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא... וְכָל הָעָם יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ

[WHEN THERE IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT A MATTER OF  
HALACHAH,<sup>1</sup>] YOU SHALL COME TO THE KOHANIM, THE  
LEVITES<sup>2</sup>... AND YOU MUST ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
STATEMENT THAT THEY DECLARE TO YOU FROM THAT PLACE<sup>3</sup>...

1. And the lower courts have been unable to resolve it (Talmud, Sanhedrin 86b and 88b; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Mamrim 3:8).

2. The Kohanim and Levites referred to are members of the Great Sanhedrin of 71 justices, the highest Jewish court, and indeed the verse goes on to refer to “the judges.” That Kohanim and Levites should be part of that tribunal is ideal but not required (Mishneh Torah, Hil. Sanhedrin 2:2, from Sifri to Devarim ad loc.), though R. Levi Yitzchak’s exposition appears to assume that they will be present.

3. The Lishkas Hagazis (Chamber of Hewn Stone) in the Beis Hamikdash, seat

BUT THE MAN WHO ACTS WILLFULLY [AGAINST THEIR DECISION]... THAT MAN [KNOWN IN HALACHIC TERMINOLOGY AS *ZAKEIN MAMREI*, A DEFIANT ELDER<sup>4</sup>] SHALL DIE... AND ALL THE PEOPLE SHALL HEAR [OF IT] AND BE FEARFUL. (17:9-13)

...וְהָיָה עַד שֶׁקָר הָעֵד ... וְעָשִׂיתֶם לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר זָמַם  
לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאַחֵיו... וְהַנְּשֹׂאֲרִים יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ

...AND BEHOLD, THE WITNESSES HAVE TESTIFIED FALSELY [IN A WAY THAT BRANDS THEM AS *EIDIM ZOMEMIN*, SCHEMING WITNESSES<sup>5</sup>]... THEN YOU SHALL DO TO THEM AS THEY SCHEMED TO DO TO THEIR BROTHER... AND THOSE WHO REMAIN SHALL HEAR [OF IT] AND BE FEARFUL. (19:18-20)

תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: אַרְבַּעַה צְרִיכִין הַכְרֹזָה, הַמִּסִּית, וּבֵן סוֹרֵר  
וּמוֹרָה, וְזֶקֶן מַמְרָא, וְעֵדִים זוֹמְמִין. בְּכֻלָּהוּ כְּתִיב בְּהוּ וְכָל  
הָעָם וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל; בְּעֵדִים זוֹמְמִין כְּתִיב וְהַנְּשֹׂאֲרִים

OUR RABBIS HAVE TAUGHT: FOUR [CASES OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT] REQUIRE A PROCLAMATION [OF THE CONDEMNED'S MISDEED]: A *MEISIS*,<sup>6</sup> A *BEN SORER*

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of the Sanhedrin (Talmud, *ibid.* 14b and 87a; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Mamrim 3:7). Indeed, if they sit anywhere else, even in plenary session, then insubordination to them does not carry the consequences described here (*ibid.*).

4. He must be a sage of the caliber of the Sanhedrin judges themselves, who defies their verdict and continues to act according to his opinion, or instructs others to do so (Talmud, *ibid.* 86b ff; Mishneh Torah, *ibid.* 3:3-4, 8).

5. Their testimony, that event A happened in location B at time C, was confuted by other witnesses who testify that they were with them in a different location at the time, such that they could not possibly have observed the event (Talmud, Makkos 5a; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Eidim 18:2).

6. One who attempts to entice another Jew to worship a false deity. See Devarim

UMOREH,<sup>7</sup> A ZAKEIN MAMREI AND EIDIM ZOMEMIN.

[WE DERIVE THIS AS FOLLOWS:] IN CONNECTION WITH MOST OF THEM IT SAYS “AND ALL THE PEOPLE...” OR “AND ALL OF ISRAEL...” [...“SHALL HEAR,” IMPLYING THAT IT MUST BE ANNOUNCED]; BY EIDIM ZOMEMIN IT SAYS “AND THOSE WHO REMAIN.”<sup>8</sup> (TALMUD, SANHEDRIN 89A)

### Driving question:

- Why indeed does the Torah mandate a proclamation specifically in these cases?

**R.** Meir Poppers (1588–1662), in his work *Me'orei Ohr*, defines כְּרוֹז, “herald,” as “deriving from Abba v’Imma (‘father and mother’), who proclaim [that one should] repent.”<sup>9</sup> [Abba v’Imma are Kabbalistic sobriquets

13:7–12.

7. Lit., “wayward and defiant son.” See Devarim 21:18–21.

8. “Because not all people are suitable to give testimony [as certain classes of sinners are disqualified]” (Talmud and Rashi, *ibid.*).

These four cases are listed out of the order in which they appear in the Torah. R. Levi Yitzchak comments that the *meisis* and the *ben sorer umoreh* come first because the wording “and all Israel” is used regarding both of them, and because both are subjected to the same type of capital punishment, stoning; next comes the *zakein mamrei*, who is executed by strangulation, a less severe method; and finally the *eidim zomemin*, whose punishment depends on the offense of which they accused their victim (which might carry the death penalty, but might instead be something lesser—lashes or a monetary payment).

9. Yair Nasiv *ad loc.* references Zohar 3:127b (Idra Rabbah), where R. Shimon bar Yochai speaks of “a herald (כְּרוֹז) who calls out every day [urging people to realize that time is short to accomplish G-d’s purposes].” See also Avos 6:2: “Each and every day a Heavenly Voice goes forth from Mount Chorev [Sinai], proclaiming (וּמְקַרְזֵת, from the same Hebrew root) and saying, ‘Woe to the people because of

for the dual intellectual faculties of Chochmah (“wisdom,” the seed of an idea) and Binah (“understanding,” where that seed matures into a full-fledged concept).] The commentary Yair Nasiv ad loc. cites an unpublished explanation by R. Poppers that this is indicated by the *gematria* (numerical value) of כְּרוֹז, which equals 72 + 161, the values of the spelled-out forms (*millui*)<sup>10</sup> of the two Divine names ה-ו-ה-י and ה-י-ה-א, which respectively relate to Chochmah and Binah.<sup>11</sup>

		(4) ט + (6) ו + (10) י + (6) ו + (10) י + (10) י +		(10) י (5) ה (6) ו (5) ה
72 =	46	+	26	
		(80) ח + (30) ל + (10) י + (4) ט + (6) ו + (10) י +		(1) א (5) ה (10) י (5) ה
161 =	140	+	21	
	186	= 140+ 46	47	= 21+ 26
233 =		= (7) ז + (6) ו + (200) ר + (20) כ		

[their] affront to Torah [in that they fail to study it].” Such exhortations are in turn associated with “your father” and “your mother” in Mishlei 1:8 and 6:20.

10. Specifically, the *millui* that uses the letter *yud* to represent the vowels—as contrasted with other *milluim* that use the letters *alef* or *hei* for this purpose (and which are likewise extensively referenced in Kabbalistic and Chassidic literature; see further in text for an example). Note, too, that the term *millui* can sometimes refer to only the added letters (for example, just the ט of יי, represented in the third and fourth columns of the table)—see further in text.

11. Eitz Chaim 15:6 and 25:1. Significantly, a verse that uses these two Names in succession (Yirmiyahu 30:25) is expounded in the Talmud (Kiddushin 70b) as speaking of “the families of good lineage,” which are built up by fathers and mothers who follow G-d’s prescriptions for marital life (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, p. 118).

The penalties prescribed in the Torah for various offenses are not arbitrary, but are each tailored to the spiritual harm that had been perpetrated. Accordingly, it should follow that the requirement for a *קרוז*, announcer, in connection with the four types of wrongdoers mentioned above indicates that each of them have, in their own way, attacked Abba/Chochmah and Imma/Binah, and that therefore a *קרוז* is needed to undo those deleterious effects:

The *meisis* wished to convince his fellow Jew to abandon G-d and adore false deities. In doing so he has infringed on the first two of the Ten Commandments, “I am the L-rd your G-d” and “You shall not have any alien gods before Me.” These we heard from G-d Himself,<sup>12</sup> as one Divine statement;<sup>13</sup> they are, like Abba v’Imma, “two inseparable companions.”<sup>14</sup>

The *ben sorer umoreh* “does not listen to the voice of his father (Abba) and the voice of his mother (Imma).”<sup>15</sup> His parents state before the court that “he does not listen to *קלנו*, our voice,”<sup>16</sup> equal to the *gematria* of the *milluim* of *ה-ו-ה-י* and *ה-י-ה-א* when considering only the added letters,<sup>17</sup> and “our voice” implies that their voices are identical,<sup>18</sup> again un-

12. Talmud, Makkos 24a.

13. “In that [one] voice they heard ‘I am...’ and ‘You shall not have...,’ as it is written (Tehillim 62:12), ‘One [statement] did G-d speak; I heard two’” (Mechilta d’Rashbi, Shemos 19:25).

14. See Zohar 3:4a.

15. Devarim 21:18.

16. Ibid. v. 20.

17. See above, note 10, and the table in the accompanying text.

18. R. Yehudah indeed considers this (as well as other similarities between the

derscoring their status as the “two inseparable companions.” Furthermore, their son’s offenses include being זולל, a glutton, and סבא, a drunkard:<sup>19</sup> זולל is numerically equivalent to חכמה Chochmah, and סבא to 63, the value of a different *millui* of the Divine Name ה-ו-ה, one associated with a more outward-focused aspect of Binah,<sup>20</sup> indicating that his behavior runs counter to those faculties.

73	= (30) ל + (30) ל + (6) ו + (7) ז
73	= (5) ה + (40) נ + (20) כ + (8) ח
63	= (1) א + (2) ב + (60) ס
63	20 = (4) ד + (6) ו + (10) י 15 = (10) י + (5) ה 13 = (6) ו + (1) א + (6) ו 15 = (10) י + (5) ה

The *zakein mamrei* thinks that he knows better than the Kohanim and Levites, who embody Chochmah and Binah respectively.<sup>21</sup> He too possesses those qualities, as symbolized by the very appellation זקן ממרא: the word זקן is seen by our Sages as standing for the phrase זֶה שֶׁקִּנְהַ חֲכָמָה, “this is one who has acquired Chochmah,”<sup>22</sup> and ממרא forms the initials of מְקַלּוֹת מִים רַבִּים אֲדִירִים, “more than the sounds of many mighty

parents) to be indispensable for the boy to be branded a *ben sorer umoreh* (Talmud, Sanhedrin 71a), although the halachah does not follow his view.

19. Ibid. 21:20.

20. Etz Chaim, Shaar Hakelalim, ch. 8; ibid. 4:3, 5:1-2, et al.

21. See Me’orei Ohr, s.v. כון, and Ohr Hatorah, Bamidbar 2:730ff.

22. Sifri to Vayikra 19:32; Talmud, Kiddushin 32b (Rashi’s reading).

waters,”<sup>23</sup> where “many waters” is an evocation of Binah.<sup>24</sup> Yet since their verdict was given from מקום “(that) place,”<sup>25</sup> where the first two letters מק equal 140 and the last two ום 46, the respective additional-letter *milluim* of ה-ו-ה-י and ה-י-ה-א, he is expected to treat that verdict as sacrosanct and to set aside his own Chochmah and Binah in its favor, and is held guilty for not doing so.

The *eidim zomemin*’s crime is that they testified falsely. The word “testimony,” עדות in Hebrew, evokes “the Mishkan, the Mishkan of testimony,”<sup>26</sup> where the dual expression symbolizes the union of Chochmah and Binah, as well as of their analogues within the Name ה-ו-ה-י itself—the ו representing Chochmah, the ה Binah.<sup>27</sup> These two letters (themselves constituting a Divine Name), affixed to the names of the families of the Jewish people, were G-d’s testimony to the fidelity of all Jewish fathers and mothers throughout their searing Egyptian exile.<sup>28</sup> The *eidim zomemin*, by contrast, schemed (סָ in Hebrew, equal to 47, the sum of the Names ה-ו-ה-י and ה-י-ה-א) to subvert the very concept of testimony, with its associations with Abba v’Imma, by claiming to have witnessed something for which they were not even present.

On top of all this, the word כָּרוֹז itself can be analyzed using the method of *gematria* known as *achorayim* (“hinderpart”), in which we work back to the beginning of the word,

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23. Tehillim 93:4.

24. Zohar 3:54b and Mikdash Melech ad loc.

25. See above, note 3.

26. Shemos 38:21.

27. Likkutei Torah, Pekudei 4a ff.

28. Rashi, Bamidbar 26:5.



letter by letter, and count each successive letter again towards the total. This yields 699, which is three times that of פָּרוּז itself; adding this to 233, the *gematria* of פָּרוּז itself, sums to four times that value, thus symbolizing the point that there are four specific cases that require a פָּרוּז.

20	$(20) = כ$
220	$(20) + 7(200) = כ + ר$
226	$(20) + 7(200) + 1(6) = כ + ר + ו$
233	$(20) + 7(200) + 1(6) + 2(7) = כ + ר + ו + ז$
$= 699$	
$+ 233$	$(20) + 7(200) + 1(6) + 2(7) = כ + ר + ו + ז$
$= 932$	$((20) + 7(200) + 1(6) + 2(7))^a 4 =$

*Toras Levi Yitzchak, pp. 188–190*

*In R. Levi Yitzchak's words:*

דף פ"ט... (בְּמִסִּית וּבֵן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה כְּתִיב וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וּבִזְקֵן מִמָּרָא כְּתִיב וְכָל הָעָם. וְאֵתִי שִׁפִּיר מָה שֶׁהִבְרִייתָא הַקְּדִימָה בֵּין סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה לְזִקֵן מִמָּרָא וְעֵדִים זֹמְמִין. אִם כִּי בִּתְוֹרָה הוּא כְּתוּב בְּאַחֲרוֹנָה בְּפִרְשֵׁי תִצָּא. אַחַר פִּרְשׁוֹת זִקֵן מִמָּרָא וְעֵדִים זֹמְמִים הַכְּתוּבִים בְּפִרְשֵׁי שׁוֹפְטִים. הוּא כְּדִי לְהַסְמִיכוֹ לְמִסִּית, שְׁבִשְׁנֵיהֶם כְּתוּב וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל גַּם בְּמִסִּית וּבֵן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה בְּשְׁנֵיהֶם הוּא מִיתַת סְקִילָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב וּסְקִילָתוֹ, וְרִגְמוּהוּ, מָה שֶׁאֵין בֵּן זִקֵן מִמָּרָא הוּא בְּחֻנֵּק, וּבְעֵדִים זֹמְמִים אֵין מִיתַת מִיְחָדָת, כִּי מִיתַתֵּן הוּא כְּפִי מִיתַת אֲשֶׁר זֹמְמוֹ עַל מִי שֶׁהִעִידוֹ עָלָיו. וְלִפְעָמִים הוּא רַק מְלָקוֹת אוֹ עֲנֵשׁ מְמוֹן, אִם עִדוֹתֵן הֵיטָה עַל חֵיב מְלָקוֹת אוֹ מְמוֹן... הֵינָה פָּרוּז הוּא מִצַּד אָבָא וְאֵמָא כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב בְּמֵאוּרֵי אוֹר מְעַרְכַת פָּרוּז, וּבִיאִיר נְתִיב שֵׁם פָּרוּז גִּימְטְרִיא ע"ב קס"א סוּד אָבָא וְאֵמָא עֵין שֵׁם. וְהֵינָה פָּרוּז בְּאַחֲרוּסִים כ' כ"ר כרו"ז מספּרו ג' פּעמִים כרו"ז, אִם בֵּן פָּרוּז וְאַחֲרוּסִים דְּכרוּז, הוּא ד' פּעמִים פָּרוּז, זֶהוּ מָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ ד' פָּרוּזִים. בְּמִסִּית, בְּבֵן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה, בְּזִקֵן מִמָּרָא, בְּעֵדִים זֹמְמִין. וְהוּא כִּי כָּל אֵלוֹ הֵד' פּוֹגְמִין בְּאָבָא וְאֵמָא. מִסִּית לְעֵבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה הוּא

שְׁמִסִּיתוּ לְעֵבֶר עַל הַדְּבָרוֹת אֲנֹכִי וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ שְׁמִפִּי הַגְּבוּרָה שְׁמַעְנִים, אַחַת דְּבַר  
 אֱלֹקִים שְׁתִּים זוֹ שְׁמַעְתִּי, שֶׁהֵם לִנְגַד חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, אֲנֹכִי חֲכָמָה לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ בִּינָה,  
 זֶהוּ שְׁשִׁמְעִנִים שְׁתִּים, וְהֵם אַחַת, כִּי אָבָא וְאִמָּא הֵם תְּרִין רַעִין דְּלֵא מִתְּפָרְשִׁין...  
 וְכֵן בֶּן סוּרָר וּמוֹרָה פּוֹגֵם בְּאָבָא וְאִמָּא שֶׁהֵם אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב אֵינְנו שְׁמַע  
 בְּקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל אִמּוֹ, אֵינְנו שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלֵנוּ... וְהֵם אוֹמְרִים זֹלִל וְסָבֵא... זֶהוּ זוּלִּיל  
 מִסְפָּר חֲכָמָה, שְׁפוֹגֵם בְּאָב דְּחֲכָמָה... סִבֵּא גִימְטְרִיא ס"ג דְּבִינָה שְׁפוֹגֵם בְּאִם  
 דְּבִינָה... וְאָבָא וְאִמָּא זְוֹגֵם תְּדִיר שְׁעַל זֶה נֹאמֵר וְלֹא מִתְּפָרְשִׁין כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב שָׁם,  
 וְהוּא עֲנִין שְׁשׁוּיִן בְּקוֹל... וְזֶהוּ בְּקוֹלֵנוּ, קוֹלֵנוּ הוּא מִסְפָּר מ"ו דְּמִלּוּי ע"ב דְּחֲכָמָה  
 וְק"מ דְּמִלּוּי קס"א דְּבִינָה... וְכֵן זְקוֹן מִמְרָא שְׁחוֹלֵק עַל סְנֵהדְרִי גְדוּלָה שְׁבַמְקוֹם  
 הֵהוּא דְּוִקָא, שְׁעֲלִיהֶם כְּתִיב וּבֵאתְ אֶל הַכְּהֵנִים הַלְוִיִּם, פּוֹגֵם בְּחֲכָמָה וּבִינָה,  
 שְׁמַחְזִיק אֶת עֲצָמוֹ לְחֶכֶם וְנִבּוֹן יוֹתֵר מֵהֶם. וְהֵינּוּ זְקוֹן זֶה שְׁקָנָה חֲכָמָה. מִמְרָא  
 רֵאשִׁי תְבוֹת מְקוֹלוֹת מִים רַבִּים אֲדִירִים, מִים רַבִּים הוּא בִּינָה, וְחוֹלֵק עַל הַכְּהֵנִים  
 הַלְוִיִּם דְּסְנֵהדְרִי גְדוּלָה, הַכְּהֵנִים חֲכָמָה הַלְוִיִּם בִּינָה. וּמִן הַמְּקוֹם הֵהוּא דְּוִקָא.  
 מְקוֹם הוּא מ"ק מִלּוּי קס"א דְּאִמָּא, ו"ם מִלּוּי ע"ב דְּחֲכָמָה. וְכֵן עֵדִים זְוִמְמִין  
 שֶׁהֵם עֵדֵי שְׁקָר כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב עַד שְׁקָר כּו' שְׁקָר עֲנָה כּו', פּוֹגֵמִין בְּחֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, כִּי  
 עֵדוֹת מְגִיעַ בְּחֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב מִשְׁבֵּן הָעֵדוֹת, שְׁקָאֵי עַל חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה,  
 וְכֵן שְׁבִטֵי י"ה עֵדוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁשִׁים י"ה מַעֲיֵד עֲלֵיהֶם, הָרֵא וּבִנֵּי הַשְּׁמַעוּנִי, הוּא  
 חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה וְכְמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב בְּלִקוּטֵי תוֹרָה בְּדְבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי וּבְהִבְאֹר  
 עֵין שָׁם... וְזִמְם שֶׁהוּא רַק מַחְשַׁבֶת הַדְּבַר, הוּא בְּחֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, ו"ם גִּימְטְרִיא הוּי  
 אָהִי שְׁזֵהוּ בְּחֲכָמָה וּבִינָה.



# כי תבא KI SAVOI

## *G-d's People*



הַסִּבֵּת וְשִׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִהְיִיתָ לְעַם לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ

BE ATTENTIVE AND LISTEN, YISRAEL: THIS VERY DAY YOU  
HAVE BECOME A NATION TO HASHEM YOUR G-D (27:9)

### Driving questions:

- What day is being referred to?
- Why the double expression “be attentive and listen”?<sup>1</sup>

In the following Torah portion of Nitzavim, which is the continuation of Moshe’s valedictory address to the assembled Jewish people, he repeatedly uses the phrase הַיּוֹם, “today”: “You are all standing before G-d *today*... for [Him]

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1. Both of these questions are in fact posed by Alshich ad loc. (questions 5 and 6); see there for his explanations.

to establish you *today* as His nation...”<sup>2</sup> These are seen as hinting at Rosh Hashanah.<sup>3</sup> The word הַיּוֹם, “this,” likewise evokes Rosh Hashanah, as in the phrase הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה תְּחִלַּת מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, “This day is the beginning of Your works,”<sup>4</sup> recited in that day’s prayers.<sup>5</sup>

On Rosh Hashanah we reaccept G-d as our King, and the rite with which we do this is *tekias shofar*, the sounding of the shofar,<sup>6</sup> which among other things resembles the trumpeting that accompanies a monarch’s coronation.<sup>7</sup> The mitzvah is defined—as indeed is expressed in the blessing recited before its performance—as “to *listen* to the sound of the shofar,”<sup>8</sup> matching the phrase “listen, Yisrael” above.

2. Devarim 30:9, 12.

3. See Paaneach Raza, end of Parshas Nitzavim; Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 44a ff; et al. The same word הַיּוֹם in other contexts is also understood to refer to Rosh Hashanah; see Rashi to Iyov 1:6, and Zohar 2:32b, commenting on that verse.

4. In fact G-d began to create the universe on the 25th of Elul (Vayikra Rabbah 29:1; Tosafos, Rosh Hashanah 8a, s.v. לתקופות; et al); Rosh Hashanah, on which mankind was created, was the sixth day. It is called “the beginning” because all of G-d’s work was culminated and completed on that day (Maharsha, Rosh Hashanah ad loc.), and because the purpose of Creation is achieved only by man’s service of G-d (see Ran, Rosh Hashanah 16a; Maamar Zeh Hayom 5742 and sources cited there (Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat, vol. 1, pp. 41ff)).

See also Likkutei Sichos 24:191ff, where the Rebbe further analyzes why R. Levi Yitzchak needs to resort to explaining how הַיּוֹם symbolizes Rosh Hashanah, if הַיּוֹם itself refers to that day, and explains that הַיּוֹם means something to which one can actually point with his finger (see Rashi, Shemos 15:2), and thus that it refers particularly to the G-dliness that is revealed in the terrestrial world in man’s soul.

5. Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 27a; Musaf of Rosh Hashanah, Zichronos blessing.

6. Note that *tekiah* can refer to the blowing of the shofar in general, or to one of the specific types of sounds produced during the fulfillment of the mitzvah, as below in the text.

7. R. Saadiah Gaon, cited in Avudraham, Rosh Hashanah.

8. Tur, Orach Chaim 585.

Now, the sounding of the shofar in the synagogue<sup>9</sup> on Rosh Hashanah is divided into two parts. First comes a bracket of 30 sounds before the Musaf prayer; these are called in halachic parlance *tekios (di)meyushav*, “the seated blasts,” as the congregation (though not the blower<sup>10</sup>) may sit while hearing them.<sup>11</sup> The rest of the sounds, during and after Musaf, are called *tekios (di)me’umad*, “the standing blasts,” for which the listeners too must stand.<sup>12</sup> The double expression “be attentive and listen,” then, symbolizes this twofold division of the *tekios*.

Finally, there is a widespread custom that the total number of shofar blasts on Rosh Hashanah—*tekios dimeyushav* and *tekios dime’umad*—is 100.<sup>13</sup> These are made up of ten units of *tekiah-shevarim-teruah-tekiah*, *tekiah-shevarim-tekiah* and *tekiah-teruah-tekiah*: the *tekiah* is defined as a long sound, the *shevarim* as a group of shorter ones, resembling groans, and the *teruah* as a group of still shorter ones, resembling sobs.<sup>14</sup> In halachic literature the length of each of these is given in units called *trumitin*,<sup>15</sup> brief bursts; the 100 blasts are equal to 900 *trumitin*.<sup>16</sup> It is also cus-

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9. As opposed to when it is done privately (i.e., where there is no *minyan* of ten adult male Jews present), in which case only the 30 blasts are sounded (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 592:2).

10. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 585:1.

11. Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch 585:2. Nonetheless, the common practice is that the congregation stands for these too (Mishnah Berurah 585:2).

12. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 592:1.

13. Aruch, s.v. ערב 1; Shaloh, Maseches Rosh Hashanah 214a and 220b; et al.

14. Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 33b–34a.

15. The term appears to be taken from Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashanah 4:1, which refers to טרימטה *trimota*. It may be related to English *trumpet*.

16. Etz Chaim 26:3, 5. This requires further elucidation, as it does not seem to

tomary to make the last *tekiah* among the *meyushav* group longer than normal (dubbed *tekiah gedolah*, a great *tekiah*), which thus may be said to add one more, for a total of 901—precisely the numerical value of the double expression *הַסִּבַּת וְשִׁמְעַע*.

901 = (70) ע + (40) מ + (300) ש + (6) ו + (400) ת + (20) כ + (60) ס + (5) ה

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 2, p. 388*

*In R. Levi Yitzchak's words:*

(וְדַע שֶׁהַפְּסוּק הַזֶּה יֵשׁ לְפָרֵשׁ שְׁקָאֵי עַל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה. זֶהוּ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה קָאֵי עַל הַיּוֹם דְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה. (שְׁנַקְרָא זֶה כְּמוֹ שְׂאוּמְרִים זֶה הַיּוֹם תַּחֲלִית מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְהוּא לְמַעַלְהָ מִן בְּכִ"ה בְּאֵלּוּל נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם... ) וְאִזְ נִהְיִיתָה לְעַם, כְּמוֹ שְׂכַתּוֹב לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶתְךָ הַיּוֹם {לְהַיּוֹת לּוֹ} לְעַם שְׁקָאֵי עַל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וְעֵינָן בְּלִקּוּטֵי תוֹרָה בְּדַבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל אֶתֶם נִצְבִּים הַיּוֹם עֵינָן שָׁם. וְהוּא עַל יְדֵי תְקִיעַת שׁוֹפָר שְׂבִרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה שְׁהַמְצוּהָ הוּא לְשִׁמְעַע כְּמוֹ שְׁמִבְּרִכִּים לְשִׁמְעַע קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, זֶהוּ רִישָׁא דְקִרְא הַסִּבַּת וְשִׁמְעַע, וְהַפְּלַל הַסִּבַּת וְשִׁמְעַע, יֵשׁ לוֹמַר תְּקִיעוֹת דְּמִיִּשְׁבּ וְתְקִיעוֹת דְּמַעֲמוּד, שְׂבִינְחָד יֵשׁ בְּכָל הַק' קוֹלוֹת תַּת"ק טְרוּמִיטִין. אַךְ הַתְּקִיעָה הָאֲחֻרֹנָה דְּתְקִיעוֹת דְּמִיִּשְׁבּ הִיא גְדוֹלָה וְאִם בֵּין צְרִיךְ לְחַשֵּׁב עוֹד טְרוּמִיט אֶחָד. וְיִהְיֶה בְּסֶךְ הַכָּל תַּת"ק א'. זֶהוּ הַסִּבַּת וְשִׁמְעַע מִסְפַּר תַּת"ק א' בְּמִכּוּן.)



precisely match up with either of the opinions cited in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 590:3 (and from there in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch 590:4–7). According to the first opinion (that of Rashi), a *teruah* equals three *trumitin*, a *shevarim* must be less than nine (and cf. Tzemach Tzedek, Chiddushim Al Hashas, Rosh Hashanah 4:9, that it should be six), and the *tekios* (which must be at least equal in length to the blasts between them) would accordingly vary in length; this would yield a figure considerably lower than 900 *trumitin*. The second opinion (that of Tosafos) makes a *teruah* equal to nine *trumitin*, a *shevarim* the same, and among the *tekios*, some 9 and others 12 (or, per Magen Avraham ad loc., 18), thus totaling either 960 or 1080 *trumitin*.

וילך

## VAYEILECH

*Love, Fear, Action!*

פְּרִשֶׁת הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּיּוֹם? מוֹצָאֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָרֵאשׁוֹן שֶׁל  
 חַג, בְּשִׁמְיֵנוּ בְּמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית, עוֹשִׂין לוֹ בַּיּוֹם שֶׁל עֵץ  
 בְּעִזָּרָה... וְקוֹרְא... "עֵשֶׂר תְּעֵשֶׂר", "כִּי תִכְלֶה לְעֵשֶׂר"...

HOW WAS THE KING'S TORAH READING [AT THE HAKHEL  
 CEREMONY<sup>1</sup>] PERFORMED? FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE  
 FIRST DAY OF SUKKOS,<sup>2</sup> IN THE EIGHTH YEAR

1. Enjoined in this week's Parshah (Devarim 31:10-13). Significantly, this year (5783) is a year of Hakhel.

2. This might mean the second night of the holiday, or the second day; Encyclopedia Talmudis, s.v. הקהל, footnote 62, cites authoritative sources for both possibilities.

In the course of his exposition (part of which has been adapted into the present article), R. Levi Yitzchak observes that "it is not stated that the reading must be done by day—indeed, the Attribute of Malchus [see further in text] is the attribute of the night—yet the obligation is not specifically at night either," and explains the Kabbalistic basis for this dichotomy. To which his son the (future) Rebbe responds (in a letter later published in Reshimos, no. 168) with a citation from Sheyarei

—THE YEAR FOLLOWING SHEMITTAH—THEY WOULD BUILD A WOODEN PLATFORM FOR HIM IN THE COURTYARD [OF THE BEIS HAMIKDASH]<sup>3</sup>... AND HE WOULD READ... “YOU SHALL SURELY TITHE,”<sup>4</sup> “WHEN YOU COMPLETE TITHING...”<sup>5</sup> (MISHNAH, SOTAH 7:8)

### Driving question:

- Why are these portions among those read by the king at Hakhel?<sup>6</sup>

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Korban on Talmud Yerushalmi, Sotah ad loc., which interprets a passage in the Talmud Yerushalmi to be saying that it was at night. R. Levi Yitzchak in turn replies (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, p. 260) “Indeed, this supports my statement [about Malchus, as above], though I have not yet found a corroborating opinion,” and goes on to question Sheyarei Korban’s understanding of the Yerushalmi. In a later talk (Toras Menachem 5713 1:62), the Rebbe comments that while the answer is ultimately uncertain, there are strong halachic reasons to believe that it was at night.

**3.** In the Women’s Courtyard (Talmud Bavli, Sotah 41b), although the Talmud Yerushalmi (Sotah 7:7) suggests that it might have been in the Courtyard of the Israelite [Men].

**4.** Devarim 14:22–29.

**5.** Ibid. 26:11–15.

**6.** It is true that Sukkos occurs during the time when the crops are being gathered in before the rainy season (it is thus dubbed in the Torah “the Festival of Ingathering”), and hence is when harvest gifts for the poor and tithes from the crops are being distributed (Rashi, Sotah ad loc.; see Tosefos Yom Tov ad loc., who objects that since agricultural work ceases during Shemittah, then at the beginning of the following year there is no harvest to be subject to these laws, and Lechem Shamayim ad loc. for a resolution). Furthermore, as during the Shemittah year these mitzvos were in abeyance, it is necessary to remind people that they are once again coming into force (Talmud Yerushalmi ad loc.). Nonetheless, since the rest of the sections that the king reads speak of the fundamentals of Judaism (“to reinforce the true religion”—Mishneh Torah, Hil. Chagigah 3:6), a discussion of tithes seems somewhat out of place.



The agricultural calendar in the Land of Israel runs on a septennial cycle, within which are two triennial subcycles. In the first two years, after portions of the crop are designated as *terumah* (“uplifting”) for the Kohen and *maaser rishon* (“first tithe”) for the Levi, the next tithe is *maaser sheni* (“second tithe”), which the owner is to bring to Jerusalem and eat there, or exchange it for money which he will bring to Jerusalem and used to purchase food that will be eaten there; in the third year it is replaced by *maaser ani* (“poor man’s tithe”), which, as its name indicates, is given to the poor.<sup>7</sup> This sequence repeats in years four through six; then comes the Shemittah year, when agricultural work ceases, and all produce is free for the taking.

Following years three and six, in which *maaser ani* is given, comes *biur maaseros* (“removal of tithes”),<sup>8</sup> where the landowner must ensure that all of the above portions and tithes for the past few years have been distributed correctly,<sup>9</sup> and *vidui maaser* (“the declaration of tithes”),<sup>10</sup> in which he attests before G-d that he has been careful to keep all of these agricultural laws and then some. These are to take place on a holiday in the respective following years (fourth and seventh), a point exegetically derived from the similarity of the word מְקַצֵּה, “at the end,” in the passage about *maaser ani*, and מְקַץ, a variant form of the same word, in the

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7. The first passage mentioned above, “You shall certainly tithe...,” deals with *maaser sheni* and *maaser ani*.

8. Described in vv. 28–29 of the first passage mentioned above.

9. Since he might conceivably have, after separating them from the main body of the produce, kept them in his storehouses until the recipients come to claim them.

10. Described in the second passage above, “When you complete tithing...”

one about Hakhel.<sup>11</sup> This too underscores the connection between Hakhel and *maaser ani*—i.e., between mitzvos associated with the third and seventh years of the agricultural cycle.

This seven-year cycle puts us in mind of, and indeed is spiritually derived from, the seven-part “emotional” interface between G-d and His creations, known as the Seven Middos (“attributes”) or Sefiros (“luminosities”). They too consist of a triad of three—Chessed (“benevolence,” which engenders a connection to G-d based on love), Gevurah (“severity,” associated with fear of G-d) and Tiferes (“beauty,” a perfect blend of Chessed and Gevurah); then a second triad—Netzach (“victory”), Hod (“splendor”) and Yesod (“foundation”)—that recapitulates the first one but on a lower level, just as years four through six of the agricultural cycle repeat the previous three years; and finally comes Malchus (“kingship,” where the sentiments of the previous Middos find expression in practical action). The first six of these are also known as Za.<sup>12</sup>

These attributes are also embodied by seminal figures of Jewish history. Specifically, our Patriarch Yaakov personified

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11. Sifri on the above passages. It goes on to explain that the Torah cannot be referring to the holiday of Sukkos, for at that time not all the crops have necessarily been tithed yet (some of them are harvested only later in the year), and therefore that these dual mitzvos must be performed on the next holiday, Pesach. Thus *biur maaseros* takes place on the eve of Pesach (Mishnah, Maaser Sheni 5:6) or on its sixth day (Mishneh Torah, Hil. Maaser Sheni 11:7—see Kesef Mishneh ad loc., who finds support for the Rambam’s reading), and *vidui maaser*, on the seventh day (Mishnah, ibid. 5:10; Mishneh Torah, ibid. 11:3).

12. An acronym for *Z’eir Anpin*, “small face” (to distinguish these six Sefiros from the far higher faculty of G-d’s will, called *Arich Anpin*, “large face.”)

Tiferes,<sup>13</sup> and King David, Malchus.<sup>14</sup> There are numerous points of contact between them, such as that our Sages state of both of them that they are immortal,<sup>15</sup> so that the seventh (David) can be seen as the outgrowth and culmination of the third (Yaakov).<sup>16</sup> In terms of one's service of G-d, this connection indicates that practical action (Malchus) must not be allowed to remain dry and mechanical, but must be imbued with the love and fear of G-d that make up Tiferes; this, then, is symbolized by the Jewish king (the bearer of Malchus) capping the seventh year (also Malchus) by reading passages about *maaser ani* and *biur/vidui maaser* (associated with the third year, Tiferes) and thereby spurring his nation towards a renewed commitment to G-d and His Torah.

Finally, the king's reading takes place on a platform, *בִּמְה* in Hebrew. This word breaks down into *בִּי מ"ה*, "in me there is מ"ה," the latter being the numerical value of an expansion of G-d's Name<sup>17</sup> that is the spiritual source of *Za*,<sup>18</sup> and thus symbolizing the point that the king's majesty and executive power must stand on and be suffused with the ideals of the

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13. Zohar 1:157b, et al.

14. Pardes Rimonim 23, s.v. *דוד*, et al.

15. "Yaakov our forefather did not die" (Talmud, Taanis 5b); "David, King of Israel, lives and endures" (ibid., Rosh Hashanah 25a, and in the Kiddush Levanah liturgy).

16. See also Likkutei Torah, Chukas 61c, which explains in this vein why the purification rituals for one made impure by contact with human remains are performed specifically on the third and the seventh day (Bamidbar 19:12,19).

17. Arrived at by taking the names of the letters of the Tetragrammaton, *י-ה-ו-ה*, and spelling each one out as it is pronounced: *יוד-הא-ויאו-הא*, the numerical value of which adds up to 45.

18. See Likkutei Torah, Vayikra 3c ff, et al.

preceding Middos (all of which are encapsulated in their centerpiece, Tiferes). That Name is also numerically equal to אָדָם, “man,” specifically the highest level of mankind,<sup>19</sup> associated with Tiferes<sup>20</sup> and thus representing how this attribute must be “within” the king and actuating what he does for his nation.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 3, pp. 239ff*

**In R. Levi Yitzchak’s words:**

כִּי הִנֵּה מְצִינוּ בְּמִצּוֹת וּדְוֵי מַעֲשֵׂר שֶׁהוּא דְּוָקָא אַחַר כְּלוֹת שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים, בְּפֶסַח דְּשָׁנָה הַרְבִּיעִית, וְכֵן בְּפֶסַח דְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית אַחַר הַג' שָׁנִים ד' ה' ו'... וְהוּדוּי הוּא בְּפֶסַח דְּוָקָא, וְנִלְמַד זֶה בְּגִזְרָה שׁוּה מִמִּצּוֹת הַקֹּהֵל הַתְּלוּי בְּשָׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה שֶׁהוּא בַּחַג הַסְּכוּת... וּבַהֲקֵהֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלִבְד קוֹרָא בְּמִשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה... עַל בִּימָה גְּדוּלָה שֶׁל עֵץ בְּמוֹצָאֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָרָאוּן שֶׁל חַג הַסְּכוּת, וּבַהֲקִרְיָא בְּהַקֵּהֵל הִיָּה פְּרָשִׁת מַעֲשֵׂרוֹת בִּיחוד גַּם כֵּן דִּהֵינּוּ פְּרָשִׁת עֵשֶׂר תַּעֲשֵׂר וּפְרָשִׁת כִּי תִכְלֶה לַעֲשֹׂר כְּדֵאִיתָא בְּפֶרֶק אֱלוֹ נְאֻמְרִין עֵין שָׁם. הֵרִי מוּבֵן מִכָּל זֶה שְׁמִצּוֹת וּדְוֵי מַעֲשֵׂר שֶׁהִיא תְּלוּיָה בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁלִישִׁית וּמִצּוֹת קְרִיאָה בְּהַקֵּהֵל שֶׁהִיא תְּלוּיָה בְּשָׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה הַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית, שִׁיכִים זֶה לָזֶה, שְׁנִלְמַד וּדְוֵי מַעֲשֵׂר מִן קְרִיאַת הַקֹּהֵל שְׁצָרִיךְ לְהִיֹּת בַּחַג דְּוָקָא, וּבַקְרִיאַת הַקֹּהֵל קוֹרִין פְּרָשִׁת מַעֲשֵׂרוֹת. (שְׁמִיה שְׁקוֹרִין בְּהַקֵּהֵל שְׁאֵרֵי הַפְּרָשִׁיֹת שְׁבַמִּשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה שְׁקָחְשִׁיב בְּאֱלוֹ נְאֻמְרִין שָׁם, מוּבֵן מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵם מְבִיאִים לְזֵרוּז בְּמִצּוֹת וּלְחֻזֵק יְדֵיהֶם בְּדַת הָאֱמֶת, וְהוּא כָּל הַפְּרָשִׁיֹת וּפְרָשִׁת קְרִיאַת שְׁמֵע וּבְרֻכּוֹת וּקְלָלוֹת שְׁבַמִּשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה שְׁכָּל זֶה מְבִיא לִידֵי חֻזֵק הַדָּת... אֲבָל לְמָה קוֹרִין פְּרָשִׁוֹת מַעֲשֵׂרוֹת בִּיחוד גַּם כֵּן, הֵרִי עַל בְּרוּחַךְ לומר שְׁמִצּוֹת הַקֹּהֵל דְּשָׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה שִׁיךְ לַעֲנִין מַעֲשֵׂרוֹת וּדְוֵי מַעֲשֵׂר... שְׂרִישֵׁי הַדְּבָרִים בְּכָל זֶה יֵשׁ לומר, כִּי הִנֵּה מְצִינוּ שְׁאֱלוֹ הַב' זְמַנִּים דְּשְׁלִישֵׁי וּשְׁבִיעֵי יֵשׁ לָהֶם מַעֲלָה בִּיחוד עַל שְׁאֵרֵי הַזְּמַנִּים... וְהוּא לְנֶגֶד יַעֲקֹב וְדוֹד, וְ"א וּמַלְכוּת בְּכָלֵל... שְׁעֵקֵב תַּפְּאֵרֶת,

19. Hayom Yom, 4 Elul.

20. As in the phrase בְּתַפְאֵרֶת אָדָם, “like the beauty (Tiferes) of man (Adam)” (Yeshayah 44:13).

לא מת, וכן דוד מלך ישראל הוא חי וקיים, ועין בלקויטי תורה בדבור המתחיל  
והזה הטהור עין שם. וזהו שמצות ודוי מעשר ומצות קריאת הקהל שהם תלויים  
בשנה הג' ובשנה הז' שיכים זה לזה ותלויים זה בזה, הוא כי ז"א תפארת בכלל,  
ומלכות הם תלויים זה בזה... ומפני שבהקהל אז המלכות היא גדולה מאד, לכן  
הקריאה היא על מקום גבוה, בימה... ובימה הוא בי מ"ה לרמו שהיא מקפלת  
מהחסדים על ידי ז"א שם מ"ה, ודי למבין.



מועדים  
YOMIM-TOVIM



ראש השנה

## ROSH HASHANA

*The Shofar's Size and Sides*

וְכַמָּה שְׂעוּר תְּקִיעָה? פִּירֵשׁ רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל:  
כַּדִּי שְׂיִאחֲזֶנּוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְיִרְאֶה לְכָאן וּלְכָאן

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM LENGTH OF [A SHOFAR FOR] BLOWING? RABBI SHIMON BEN GAMLIEL EXPLAINED: [WHEN IT IS LONG ENOUGH] THAT ONE CAN HOLD IT IN HIS HAND AND [SOME OF ITS LENGTH] WILL BE VISIBLE IN EACH DIRECTION.<sup>1</sup> (TALMUD, ROSH HASHANAH 27B)

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1. Elsewhere (Talmud, Niddah 26a) this size is defined as a *tefach* (handbreadth, approx. 3–4 inches), and this is codified as halachah in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 586:9. On a practical level, this ensures that onlookers will not be misled into thinking that the sounds are being produced by blowing into the hand (Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch 586:13, citing the halachic digest of Rabbeinu Asher (Rosh), Rosh Hashanah 3:6).

## Driving question

- Why is this law stated in such a roundabout way, speaking of “blowing” rather than simply “a shofar,” and “that one can hold it in his hand... will be visible...” rather than “a *tefach*”?

The shofar, preferably the horn of a ram,<sup>2</sup> evokes the memory of the ram<sup>3</sup> that Avraham offered up at the Akeidah (“Binding of Isaac”), the tenth and climactic “test”<sup>4</sup> that Avraham underwent to demonstrate to all future generations the depth of his allegiance to Hashem.<sup>5</sup> That ram took the place of Avraham’s beloved son Yitzchak, whom he had been ready to sacrifice at Hashem’s command.<sup>6</sup> Like Yitzchak himself, then, the shofar embodies Gevurah (also known as Din), the Divine (and the corresponding human) modality of restraint and strict judgment.

In the hierarchy of the Ten Sefiros, Gevurah is flanked by Chesed (“kindness” or “benevolence,” the mode of giving without regard to the recipient’s worthiness) and Tiferes (“beauty”), also known as Rachamim (“mercy,” which, like Chesed, gives forth, but in a way tailored to the recipient). Thereby the harshness of unalloyed Gevurah is tempered and moderated. In the same way, Yitzchak, whose driving approach was Gevurah, was the middle of our Patriarchs; he

2. Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 16a; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 586:1.

3. Talmud, loc. cit.; commentaries of Turei Zahav (Taz) and Magen Avraham to Shulchan Aruch loc. cit.

4. Avos 5:3 and commentaries ad loc.

5. Bereishis 22:12 and Rashi ad loc.

6. Ibid. 22:13.



was preceded by Avraham, the personification of Chessed, and followed by Yaakov, representing Tiferes.

While the shofar itself stands for Gevurah, the blowing thereof motivates G-d (so to speak) to relate to us via the modalities of Chessed and Tiferes. The Midrash<sup>7</sup> sees this point reflected in the verse<sup>8</sup> (customarily recited before shofar-blowing) עָלָה אֱלֹקִים בְּתִרוּעָה ה' בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר, “*Elokim* rises up with the *teruah*,<sup>9</sup> *Havayah* with the sound of the shofar,” where the Divine names *Elokim* and *Havayah* are associated with, respectively, Gevurah/Din and Tiferes/Rachamim, and explains that first “G-d rises up to sit on the Throne of Judgment... and when the Jewish people take their shofaros and blow them before G-d, He rises up from the Throne of Judgment and sits on the Throne of Mercy.”

This, says R' Levi Yitzchak, is why R' Shimon ben Gamliel speaks of “blowing” rather than directly of the shofar: he thereby is focusing on the Divine mercy evoked by the shofar-blowing, rather than on the severity represented by the object itself.

R' Shimon then goes on to say that it “will be visible in each direction,” or more literally, “will be visible to this side and to that side.” “This side” of Gevurah is Chessed; “that side” is Tiferes. Here too, then, continues R' Levi Yitzchak, the Talmudic wording is carefully chosen to allude to the Gevurah

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7. Vayikra Rabbah 29:3.

8. Tehillim 47:6.

9. One of the sounds produced when performing the mitzvah of shofar-blowing, a staccato or warbling sound.

aspect of the shofar being “hidden” (within the hand<sup>10</sup>) and receding into the background, with only its Chessed and Tiferes qualities highlighted. Significantly, the numerical value of the words ויראה לכאן ולכאן (“and it will be visible in each direction”) precisely equals that of אברהם יעקב, Avraham (and) Yaakov.

Furthermore, the phrase suggests a double יראה (visibility), which echoes Avraham’s declaration at the climax of the Akeidah, ה' יראה... בקר ה' יראה (“Hashem will see... on the mountain Hashem will be seen”),<sup>11</sup> thus again reflecting how Avraham’s modality tempers that of Yitzchak.

430	= (107) ולכאן + (101) לכאן + (222) ויראה
430	= (182) יעקב + (248) אברהם

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>12</sup>  
vol. 3 (*Igros Kodesh*), p. 355

**10.** When blowing the shofar, it is customarily held in the right hand (Shaloh, Maseches Rosh Hashanah, Torah Ohr 217b). R' Levi Yitzchak associates this too with Avraham, whose quintessential attribute of Chessed is on the right vector of the Ten Sefiros. Further on, as well as in another essay (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 1, p. 180), he also notes that the Hebrew word for hand, יד, has the same numerical value as דוד, David ( $\text{ד} + (10) \cdot (4) = 14$ , and  $\text{ד} + (6) \cdot (4) = 14$ ), thus associating the shofar, with which we herald Hashem’s Kingship (Malchus), with David, King of Israel and embodiment of the Sefirah of Malchus.

**11.** Bereishis 22:14.

**12.** Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al HaTorah, Vol 1, ch. 142-143.

*In the words of R' Levi Yitzchak:*

...כִּי הַמְכוּוֹן בְּתַקִּיעַת שׁוֹפָר לְהַמְשִׁיךְ גְּבוּרוֹת מְמוֹתָקוֹת, שֶׁהֵם מְמוֹתָקוֹת בְּרַחֲמִים וְחֲסָדִים, כִּי אִם שֶׁהַשׁוֹפָר עֲצָמוֹ הוּא מְאִילוֹ שֶׁל יִצְחָק בְּחִינַת גְּבוּרוֹת, וְהוּא מְטִיל תְּרֻדָה בְּחִינַת גְּבוּרוֹת, אֲךָ זֶהוּ מִבְּחִינַת יִצְחָק כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא אַחַר הָעֵקֶדָה שֶׁנִּמְתָּק בְּחֲסָדִים דְּאַבְרָהָם.

(וְשׁוֹפָר שִׁיעוּרוֹ טַפַּח כְּדֵי שְׁיֵאָחֲזוּנוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְיִרְאֶה לְכָאן וּלְכָאן, הוּא שְׁיֵאָחֲזוּנוּ בְּיָד יָמִין דְּחֲסָדִים דְּאַבְרָהָם וְיִרְאֶה לְכָאן וּלְכָאן הוּא כְּמוֹ שֶׁקָּרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא ה' יִרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר יֵאמֹר הַיּוֹם בְּהַר ה' יִרְאֶה. הֲרִי יֵשׁ כָּאן ב' פְּעָמִים יִרְאֶה, וְהֵינּוּ יִרְאֶה לְכָאן וּלְכָאן שְׁיֵשׁ רֵאִי מִשְׁנֵי הַצְּדָדִים...

וְהֵינּוּ דְקָדוּק הַלְשׁוֹן בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה דָּף כ"ז עֲמוּד ב' אִם נִשְׁתַּיֵּיר בּוֹ שִׁיעוּר תְּקִיעָה, וְכַמָּה שִׁיעוּר תְּקִיעָה כּו' מֵהוּ הַלְשׁוֹן תְּקִיעָה, הַכִּי זֶהוּ הַשִּׁיעוּר דְּתְקִיעָה, הִנֵּה עַל פִּי הַמְּבוֹאֵר אֲתִי שְׁפִיר,

וְיֵשׁ לִזְמַר הַשׁוֹפָר עֲצָמוֹ הוּא בְּחִינַת יִצְחָק, כִּי הוּא מְאִילוֹ שֶׁל יִצְחָק, וְשִׁיעוּרוֹ כְּדֵי שְׁיֵאָחֲזוּנוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְיִרְאֶה לְכָאן וּלְכָאן הוּא שִׁירְאֶה לְכָאן לְאַבְרָהָם שֶׁהוּא קֹדֶם יִצְחָק וּלְכָאן לְיַעֲקֹב שֶׁהוּא אַחַר יִצְחָק, וְהוּא שְׁחֲסָדִים דְּאַבְרָהָם וְרַחֲמִים דְּיַעֲקֹב יִמְתַּקוּהוּ מִב' צְדָדִיו, וְהֵינּוּ מֵה שֶׁהַתִּיבוֹת וְיִרְאֶה לְכָאן וּלְכָאן גִּימְטְרִיא אַבְרָהָם יַעֲקֹב בְּמְכוּוֹן...



# יום כיפור

# YOM KIPPUR

## *White Magic*



הִבְיִאוּהוּ לְבֵית הַפָּרֻחַ... וְטָבַל... הִבְיִאוּ לוֹ בְגָדֵי לָבָן...  
בִּשְׁחַר הָיָה לוֹבֵשׁ פְּלוּסִין... וּבֵין הָעֶרְבִים הַנְּדוּוּיִן...

[ON YOM KIPPUR] THEY BROUGHT [THE KOHEN  
GADOL] TO THE PARVAH CHAMBER... HE IMMERSED  
HIMSELF<sup>1</sup>... THEY BROUGHT HIM THE WHITE  
VESTMENTS<sup>2</sup>... IN THE MORNING HE WOULD WEAR  
[VESTMENTS MADE OF LINEN] FROM PELUSIUM<sup>3</sup>... AND  
IN THE AFTERNOON, FROM CUSH<sup>4</sup>... (MISHNAH, YOMA 3:6-7)

- 
1. In a mikvah located on the roof of that chamber (Yoma 3:3).
  2. Made entirely of linen (Vayikra 16:4), and so called to distinguish them from the “golden vestments,” which the Kohen Gadol wore during the rest of the year and for some parts of the Yom Kippur sacrificial services.
  3. A district in eastern Egypt, famed in ancient times for its high-quality linen. It is identified with Rameses, the original location of the Jewish settlement in Egypt (Bereishis 47:11) and the departure point for their exodus from there (Shemos 12:37, Bamidbar 33:3) (Bartenura ad loc., citing Targum Yerushalmi to the above verses).
  4. So Rashi (Yoma 34b), citing Targum Yonasan (Yirmiyah 13:23). Cush is generally understood to mean an area to the south of Egypt (present-day Sudan/Ethiopia),

פְּרוּהָ אֶמְגוּשָׁא – PARVAH<sup>5</sup> WAS AN *AMGUSHA*  
 (BLASPHEMER OR SORCERER).<sup>6</sup> (TALMUD, YOMA 35A)

### Driving questions:

- Why was the Kohen Gadol's mikvah located, of all places, on a site named for such a character?
- What is the significance of the places of origin of the linen for his vestments?

although it may refer to the Hindu Kush, a mountain range bordering the Indian subcontinent (compare Bartenura ad loc., who identifies הַנְּדוּן as a product of India).

**5.** There are several explanations of Parvah's connection to this chamber. Rashi ad loc. states that he constructed it, and Bartenura (Middos 5:3) adds that he used witchcraft to do so (leading Tosafos Yom Tov, Middos ad loc., to wonder how such a building could have been allowed to remain in the Beis Hamikdash). By contrast, Meiri (Yoma ad loc.) asserts that Parvah built it after he had repented of his evil ways, and Tiferes Yisroel (Middos ad loc.) suggests that he was not a sorcerer at all, but an engineering wizard whose design of the plumbing system for the mikvah atop that chamber was so ingenious that people thought that it worked by magic.

An alternative association is given by Aruch, s.v. פְּרוּהָ (quoted in Tosafos to Yoma ad loc. and Rambam's commentary to Middos ad loc.): Parvah wanted to snoop on the Kohen Gadol's Yom Kippur service in the Sanctuary (during which "no [other] person may be present," as per Vayikra 16:17), and dug a tunnel under the Beis Hamikdash for this purpose, but was caught (and, Rambam adds, executed) on the spot where this chamber was afterwards built.

Incidentally, it has been suggested that the Yiddish term *pareve* ("neutral," referring to foods that are neither dairy nor meat) is derived from the name of this chamber, although the precise relationship is obscure.

**6.** These are the respective definitions given by Rav and Shmuel (Talmud, Shabbos 75a; Rashi ad loc. explains that the "blasphemer" is a fanatical idolater who reviles G-d and tries to win converts to his religion). The term is an Aramaization of *magus*, a Persian priest, the root of English *magic*.

Interestingly, the future Rebbe, in a letter to his father (published in Reshimos, no. 107) to which the present essay is the latter's response, also brings up a reference to an *amgusha* from Sanhedrin 39a, where even such a scoundrel concedes that "the upper half" of the human body belongs to G-d.

**A**fter the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf, and Moshe had spent months praying for Hashem to forgive them, He did so on Yom Kippur, giving Moshe the Second Tablets and revealing to him the “Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy.”<sup>7</sup> Ever since then, Yom Kippur is a day designated for G-d’s pardoning His people, and our prayers on that day and the weeks before it are replete with references to those attributes.

One of them, the sixth,<sup>8</sup> is Rav Chesed, “abundant in kindness.” Chesed itself is the Divine (and corresponding human) drive to give of oneself, but it requires that the recipient at least be fit to receive it, and its opposite number is Gevurah, which seeks to withhold Chesed’s benevolence and deny it to the unworthy. Rav Chesed, by contrast, knows no such limitations, and surmounts even the strictures of Gevurah. It is therefore the attribute most closely identified with Yom Kippur, on which one can repent and win Divine forgiveness even for serious sins.<sup>9</sup>

The Kohen Gadol is the embodiment of Rav Chesed,<sup>10</sup> and so on Yom Kippur particularly, his dress and deportment

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7. Shemos 34:6-7.

8. There are various opinions as to the numbering of the attributes in the above verses (see commentaries ad loc.; Tosafos, Rosh Hashanah 17b; et al.). The identification of Rav Chesed as the sixth is in accordance with the division given in Pri Etz Chaim (Shaar Haselichos 4), following Arizal; several earlier authorities (Rav Hai Gaon, Rav Nissim Gaon, et al.) concur, although counting some of the attributes differently.

9. Yoma 85b ff.

10. “The Kohen is the man of Chesed” (Zohar 1:256b), and the Kohen Gadol (lit., “big Kohen”) represents a higher level within that. See Torah Ohr, Tetzaveh 82b; Ohr Hatorah, Tetzaveh, pp. 1598ff passim; et al.

mirror that attribute. Thus he is robed in garments made of linen, associated with Gevurah,<sup>11</sup> but which are subsumed within Chesed and therefore are white, the characteristic color of Chesed.<sup>12</sup> Significantly, too, linen is often referred to in the Torah as *sheish*, “six,”<sup>13</sup> and indeed the Talmud deduces from this term that the linen for the Kohanic vestments was to be woven of six-ply threads,<sup>14</sup> in keeping with Rav Chesed’s position as the sixth Attribute of Mercy.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the material for those vestments comes specifically from the spiritually tainted lands of Egypt and Cush,<sup>16</sup> again representing how G-d, via His attribute of Rav Chesed, absorbs even the most unworthy into His realm of holiness.<sup>17</sup>

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**11.** In an earlier part of the original essay R’ Levi Yitzchak expands on this point, noting that flax was offered by Kayin, an exemplar of Gevurah, and that the hangings that separated between the Mishkan and its surroundings (separation, again, denoting the withholding that is the heart of Gevurah) were made of linen. Indeed, a mystical reason behind the prohibition of wearing *shaatnez* (a mixture of wool and linen) is because it is an inappropriate combination of Chesed and Gevurah, yet that prohibition is waived for the outfits of the Kohanim (see Likkutei Sichos 29:122ff and sources cited in note 13 there).

**12.** Pardes 10:3; Imrei Binah, Shaar Hatzitzis 2; et al.

**13.** Throughout the Torah portions of Terumah, Tetzaveh, Vayakhel and Pekudei, which describe the construction of the Mishkan and the design of the vestments of the Kohanim.

**14.** Yoma 71b.

**15.** Earlier in the original essay R’ Levi Yitzchak notes that Gevurah itself can be seen as associated with the number six too, as it is the sixth of the Sefiros according to various possible enumerations.

**16.** Both are descended from Noah’s unworthy son Cham (Bereishis 10:6), and together they were stripped of their clothing and their dignity (Yeshayah 20:4) in retribution for their ancestor’s gross dishonor of his father (Rashi, *ibid.* 9:23).

**17.** See Tehillim 68:32, which describes how in the wake of the ultimate defeat of Eisav and the evil that he embodied, “Noblemen will come from Egypt [to honor G-d]; Cush will run [to bring a gift with] his hands to G-d.” See also Talmud, Pesachim 118b, for an exposition of why specifically these two nations will do so.

Appropriately, too, the Kohen Gadol's immersions preparatory to the central parts of the Yom Kippur service are performed in a location named after the wicked Parvah, signifying the transformative power of Rav Chesed and of the Yom Kippur service that elicits it.<sup>18</sup>

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>19</sup> p. 389

*In the words of R' Levi Yitzchak:*

וְאֵל תִּקְשִׁי עַל כָּל זֶה יַמְהַד' בְּגָדֵי פְּשָׁתָן לְבָן דְּכֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים, שְׂמוּבָן שֵׁהֶם רוּמָזִים עַל רַחֲמִים וְחֶסֶדִים שְׂמֵרָאָה הַלְבָן רוּמָזוֹ עַל חֶסֶדִים, וְהַכֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל הוּא בְּחִינַת רַב חֶסֶד, כִּי שָׁם וְאִזְ הַכּוֹנֵה הוּא שְׁהַגְבוּרוֹת הַיּוֹתֵר תִּקְיָפוֹת שֶׁהוּא פְּשָׁתָן גַּם בֵּין מִתְמַתְקִים, שֶׁזֶהוּ כָּל עֲנָן יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים שְׂזוֹדוֹת נַעֲשׂוּ בְּזִכּוּיָתוֹ, וְלִבָּן הַבְּגָדִים הִיָּה פְּלוֹסִין וְהַנְדוּן מִסְטָרָא דְלַעֲמַת זֶה דְּוָקָא מִמְצָרִים וְכוּשׁ (עַל דְּרַךְ יֶאֱתִיו חֲשֵׁמֵנִים מִמְצָרִים\* בּוֹשׁ תְּרִיץ יָדָיו לְאֵלֶקִים) שְׁגַם הַגְבוּרוֹת הַיּוֹתֵר קִשּׁוֹת מִתְעַלִּים וְכִמוֹ שֶׁהַטְּבִילָה בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ אִזְ הִיָּתֵה בְּלִשְׁבֶּת בֵּית הַפְּרוּה, אֲמַגּוּשָׁא דְּוָקָא. וְהַכֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל דְּוָקָא שְׂבַחֲיָנְתוֹ הוּא וְרַב חֶסֶד (הַתְקוּן הַשְּׂשִׁי, הַיִּינוּ שֵׁשׁ) הוּא יָכוֹל לְלוּבְשָׁם...

\*בכתוב: "מני מצרים"



18. Note also Meiri's explanation (above, note 5), that the chamber could be named after Parvah only after (and because) he repented.

19. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al Hatorah, vol. 6 (!), sec. 6 (!!).



שמיני עצרת  
SHEMINI  
ATZERES

*Family Reunion*



בְּהַתְּוֹדֵעַ יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו—בְּזִמְנָא דְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא הָוָה  
מִתְחַבֵּר בְּהוּ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּגִין דְּאִינוּן נְטָלִי בְּלַחֲוֹדֵייהוּ, וְלֹא חֲבוּרָא  
דְּעַמִּין<sup>1</sup> בְּהַדְרֵיהוּ. בְּגִין כֶּךָ בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ תְהִיָּה לָכֶם,  
דְּהָא בְּזִמְנָא דָּא אִיהוּ קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא בְּלַחֲוֹדוֹי בְּחֲבוּרָא  
חָדָא עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל, דְּכַתִּיב בְּהוּ אָחִי וְרַעִי כְּמָה דְּאוּקְמוּהָ.

“[NO OTHER MAN STOOD WITH HIM] WHEN YOSEF  
DISCLOSED [HIS IDENTITY] TO HIS BROTHERS”<sup>2</sup>—[ON

1. The standard printed editions of the Zohar add here the phrase עֲבֹדֵת כּוֹכָבִים וּמַנְלוֹת, “idolatrour worshippers of stars and planets,” a censor’s insertion absent in manuscripts and accurate editions.

2. Bereishis 45:1.

THE MYSTICAL PLANE, THIS SYMBOLIZES] THE TIME WHEN THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE, BONDS WITH THE JEWS, FOR THEN THEY ALONE TRAVEL [WITH HIM], WITHOUT ANY OTHER NATION JOINING WITH THEM.<sup>3 4</sup> THUS [THE VERSE STATES,] “ON THE EIGHTH DAY THERE SHALL BE A WITHHOLDING<sup>5</sup> FOR YOU”<sup>6</sup>—FOR AT THAT TIME HE, THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE, ALONE IS IN UNITY WITH THE JEWS, WHOM THE VERSE CALLS “MY BROTHERS AND MY FRIENDS,”<sup>7</sup> AS EXPLAINED ELSEWHERE<sup>8</sup> (ZOHAR 1:208B).

### Driving statement:

- There are multiple ways in which the festival of Shemini Atzeres can be seen as relating to Yosef.

The relationship between Yosef and his brothers was a fraught one, with them suspecting him of attempting

3. Paraphrasing Devarim 32:12: “G-d led [the Jewish people] alone, and there was no foreign power with Him.”

4. By contrast with the seven days of Sukkos, during which sacrifices were offered in the Beis Hamikdash on behalf of the seventy nations (Talmud, Sukkah 55b, cited in Rashi, Bamidbar 29:18), and which will be observed by those nations following the eschatological War of Gog and Magog (Zechariah 14:16–19; cf. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 3a).

5. The holiday of Shemini Atzeres, a time when G-d asks for us to remain with Him for one last day (Rashi, Bamidbar 29:35–36).

6. Bamidbar 29:35.

7. Tehillim 122:8.

8. Zohar 2:55b and 122a, 3:7b and 22a.

to dominate them<sup>9</sup> or even to displace them from their status as progenitors of the Jewish people.<sup>10</sup> The underlying reason for this misunderstanding was that Yosef was on a higher spiritual plane beyond their ken.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Yosef alone of all his brothers is considered a quasi-patriarch of the Jewish nation,<sup>12</sup> and a “bridge” between them and their forebears Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.<sup>13</sup>

The three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuos and Sukkos correspond to the three Patriarchs respectively.<sup>14</sup> Appropriately, then, Shemini Atzeres, tacked on to Yaakov’s festival of Sukkos<sup>15</sup> and surmounting it,<sup>16</sup> is associated with

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**9.** Bereishis 37:8.

**10.** As Yishmael and Eisav, in the previous generations of the genesis of the Jewish people, had been rejected from the legacies of Avraham and Yitzchak (Malbim, Bereishis 37:4).

**11.** As indicated by the fact that whereas they (and indeed also their forefathers the Patriarchs) worked as shepherds (Bereishis 46:34 and 47:3), insulated to a certain degree from the surrounding debased cultures of Canaan, Aram and Egypt, Yosef was able to serve as viceroy of the Egyptian superpower while fully retaining his connection with Hashem (Sefer Hamaamarim 5565, 1:192ff; Ohr Hatorah, Miketz 6:1102ff; Likkutei Sichos 3:831ff; et al.). Indeed the Torah relates that when the brothers first appeared before Yosef in Egypt, “they did not recognize him” (Bereishis 42:8), since they could not even conceive of such a type of Divine service (Torah Ohr, Hosafos 103b; Likkutei Sichos ibid.).

**12.** “Only three are called patriarchs [of the Jewish people]” (Talmud, Berachos 16b), yet the Jewish people are sometimes collectively called “children of Yosef,” as in Tehillim 77:16 (see Talmud, Sanhedrin 19b).

**13.** See the Mittler Rebbe’s Beurei Hazohar, Vayechi 29d ff; Ohr Hatorah, Vayechi 991a ff.

**14.** Zohar 3:257b; Tur, Orach Chaim 417.

**15.** “Yaakov traveled to Sukkos... and for his livestock he built *sukkos* (huts)”—Bereishis 33:17.

**16.** The number seven symbolizes the natural order, which Hashem created in seven days and using the seven “emotional” Sefiros (Divine attributes). Eight represents a

## Yaakov's doppelganger<sup>17</sup> and continuator<sup>18</sup> Yosef.

Moreover, Shemini Atzeres is on the 22nd of Tishrei, which occurs on the same day of the week as Rosh Hashanah and which is in some ways an echo thereof.<sup>19</sup> These too relate to the trajectory of Yosef's career, where it took 22 years for his dreams (in which he foresaw his brothers bowing to him) to come to fruition,<sup>20</sup> and where his meteoric rise to power began with his release from prison on Rosh Hashanah.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Shemini Atzeres' very name indicates its status as an eighth day following seven preceding ones, and that in turn brings us to Yosef's nemesis, his uncle Eisav<sup>22</sup> and the eight kings who ruled his descendant nation of Edom.<sup>23</sup> The first seven of them are described in spare terms, each one ruling and dying,<sup>24</sup> but then comes the eighth, named

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transcendence beyond that, as in the eight-day holiday of Chanukah, circumcision on the eighth day, etc. (see Teshuvos Rashba 9; Likkutei Torah, Devarim 87d; Sefer Hamaamarim 5704, pp. 191ff.)

**17.** The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 84:6) adduces numerous parallels between Yaakov's and Yosef's life experiences, and also notes (ibid. 84:8) that their faces bore a resemblance too.

**18.** See Likkutei Sichos 3:832.

**19.** Sefer Hamaamarim Kuntreisim 2:339a, cited in Hayom Yom, 22 Tishrei.

**20.** Talmud, Berachos 55b and Megillah 17a.

**21.** Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 10b-11a.

**22.** "The descendants of Eisav can be defeated only by the descendants of Yosef" (Talmud, Bava Basra 123b; cf. Bereishis Rabbah 84:5).

**23.** Bereishis 36:31-39.

**24.** And thus correspond to the "World of Tohu (chaos)," which underwent a cataclysmic "breaking of the vessels" that dispersed pinpoints of G-dliness throughout the cosmos, with the subsequent "World of Tikun (repair)" being the arena in which the Jewish people rediscover those sparks and elevate them to a higher spiritual plane.

Hadar,<sup>25</sup> whose name means “beauty,” echoing the description of Yosef as “handsome of form and handsome of appearance,”<sup>26</sup> and Moshe’s blessing to Yosef’s descendants, “his firstborn ox has glory (*hadar*).”<sup>27</sup> Hadar’s capital city was Pa’u, again relating to יוסף Yosef, as they share the same numerical value.<sup>28</sup> And alone of all of those kings Hadar had a wife named in the Torah, reflecting the dynamic of the union<sup>29</sup> between G-d and His beloved people Israel that is the heart of what Shemini Atzeres is all about.

*In R. Levi Yitzchak’s words:*

(הַשְּׁלֵשָׁה רְגָלִים פָּסַח שְׁבוּעוֹת סְכוּת הָאֲבוֹת חֲגֵ"ת וְיוֹסֵף הוּא שְׁמִינֵי עֲצַרַת רְגַל בְּפִנֵי עֲצָמוֹ, וְעַיִן בּוֹהֵר פְּרִשְׁת וַיִּגַּשׁ דָּף ר"ח עֲמוּד ב' בְּהַתְּנַדֵּעַ יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו כּו' בְּגִין כֵּךְ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינֵי עֲצַרַת תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם עֵינֵי שָׁם, הֲרִי שֵׁיִּיִסֵּף הוּא בְּחִינַת שְׁמִינֵי עֲצַרַת...), וְשְׁמִינֵי עֲצַרַת הוּא יוֹם הַכ"ב מֵרֵאשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה, וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה בְּיוֹסֵף גּוֹפֵא חֲלוּמוֹתָיו נִתְקַיְּמוּ לְסוֹף כ"ב שָׁנָה בְּמֵאֵמֶר רַז"ל...

...וְהוּא בְּחִינַת שְׁמִינֵי עֲצַרַת יוֹמָא בְּתַרְאָה דְּחַג. שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת יוֹסֵף יְסוּד. שְׂאֵז הוּא הַיְחוּד דִּיִּסוּד בְּמַלְכוּת. כְּמוֹ שְׂכַתּוּב וְלֹא עֲמַד אִישׁ אֶתוֹ בְּהַתְּנַדֵּעַ יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו בְּזַמְנָא דְּקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא הוּהוּ מִתְחַבֵּר בְּהוּ בִּישְׂרָאֵל כּו' בְּגִין כַּאֲן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינֵי עֲצַרַת תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם כְּמוֹ שְׂכַתּוּב בּוֹהֵר חֲלֵק א' דָּף ר"ח עֲמוּד ב' עֵינֵי שָׁם... כִּי יוֹסֵף שְׁהִיָּה יָפָה תֹאֵר וַיִּפֶּה מֵרֵאשִׁי הוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ מַלְךְ הַשְּׁמִינֵי הַדֵּר וְהֵינּוּ שְׁמִינֵי

25. Who presages the transition from Tohu to Tikkun, symbolized among other things by the fact that in the Torah his death is not mentioned (although it is in the parallel passage in Divrei Hayamim 1:1:51).

26. Bereishis 39:6.

27. Devarim 33:17.

28.  $(6) \text{ ו} + (70) \text{ ע} + (80) \text{ פ} = 176$ , and  $(80) \text{ ו} + (60) \text{ ס} + (6) \text{ י} + (10) \text{ י} = 176$ .

29. A theme particularly associated with Yosef, who embodied the Sefirah of Yesod (“foundation”), the drive to bond with another, represented in the human frame by the organs of generation (Tikkunei Zohar 17a) through which the bond between husband and wife is actualized.

עֲצַרְתַּ שְׁמִינֵי דְּוָקָא עַל דְּרַךְ מַלְכֵי הַחַי הַדָּר. (מֵה שְׂאִין בֶּן בֹּו' יָמֵי סְבוּת מִקְרִיבִין  
 ע' פְּרִים לְנֶגֶד ע' אָמוֹת שְׁשָׁרְשָׁם מִז' מְלָכִים הַקּוֹדְמִים דְּתַהוּ... וְלֵהֲדַר שְׁבַשְׁמִינֵי  
 עֲצַרְתַּ יֵשׁ אִשָּׁה מְהִיטְבָּאֵל. הוּא הַיְחִיד שְׁבַשְׁמִינֵי עֲצַרְתַּ.)

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>30</sup> vol. 2, pp. 135 and 426




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**30.** Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al Hatorah, vol. 2, sec. 95. See also Likkutei Sichos 3:831ff, where the Rebbe further explores several themes from this essay.

פסח

## PESACH

*The Mishkan, Chanuka  
and The Number 8*

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי...

IT HAPPENED ON THE EIGHTH DAY... (9:1)

**Driving statement:**

- There are two interrelated dates, each associated with the number eight, that are significant in the history of the Mishkan (desert Sanctuary).

**O**n Yom Kippur<sup>1</sup> of the year 2449 since Creation,<sup>2</sup> Moshe descended from Mount Sinai with the second

1. Rashi, Shemos 31:18 and 33:11, from Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Sisa 31.

2. The Exodus and the Giving of the Torah having been in the previous year, 2448. See Rashi, Avodah Zarah 9a, s.v. ועוד.

set of Luchos (Tablets), replacing the ones that he had broken upon seeing the people worshipping the Golden Calf,<sup>3</sup> and with G-d's promise of forgiveness for His errant nation.

The next day Moshe convened the people<sup>4</sup> and relayed to them G-d's instructions for the building of the Mishkan. The people contributed so eagerly<sup>5</sup> that virtually all of the materials were available within two days,<sup>6</sup> and the construction work also proceeded apace, with all of the components of the Mishkan completed in under two and a half months, by the 25th of Kislev.<sup>7</sup>

However, the erection and the dedication of the Mishkan was postponed for another few months, to the month of Nissan.<sup>8</sup> The Midrash<sup>6</sup> tells us that G-d planned this so that it would take place in the month in which our Patriarch Yitzchak was born, and goes on to relate that G-d promised that Kislev would be given a holiday to make up for this missed opportunity. This eventually came true over a

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3. Shemos 32:19.

4. Shemos 35:1 and Rashi, *ibid.* v. 2.

5. Shemos 36:4.

6. Midrash Tanchuma, Terumah 4, et al.

7. Pesikta Rabbasi 6.

8. During the first seven days of the dedication ceremonies the Mishkan was erected and disassembled every day; on the eighth day it was erected on a longer-term basis. The majority opinion is that the first seven days were the 23rd through 29th of Adar, making the eighth day the 1st of Nissan (Sifri, Vayikra 191); however, Ibn Ezra to Shemos 40:2 maintains that the ceremonies began on the 1st of Nissan, and notes that R. Akiva (Sifra, Bamidbar 68, and Talmud, Sukkah 25b) apparently follows this view as well.



millennium later, when the Chashmonaim (Hasmoneans) recaptured the Holy Temple from the Syrian Greeks and began the process of purifying and rededicating it on the very same date of the 25th of Kislev,<sup>9</sup> celebrated since then as the first day of the holiday of Chanukah.

There are a number of other points of contact between Chanukah and the dedication ceremonies of the Mishkan:

- Both last(ed) for eight days.
- The eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan also marked the first of twelve successive days on which the princes of the twelve tribes of Israel, each in their turn, brought gifts for the Mishkan.<sup>10</sup> The narrative of those gifts constitutes the Torah readings for each of the days of Chanukah.<sup>11</sup>
- Our Parshah, named Shemini (“eighth”), and which recounts what occurred on that eventful day, tells of how Aharon’s two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, offered a “strange fire” to G-d and were consumed by a Heavenly fire. Now the word חנוכה can be broken down into ח-נו-כה, where the first letter, ח, has the numerical value of 8, representing the day on which this occurred; the next two letters נו numerically equal נדב, Nadav; and the last letters כה have the value of 25, precisely the same as אביהוּא Avihu. Thus the very name of the holiday of Chanukah contains within it

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9. Talmud, Shabbos 21b, from Megillas Taanis, ch. 9.

10. Bamidbar, ch. 7.

11. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 684.

an allusion to the events of the “eighth day” that became its substitute.

56	= (6) ו + (50) נ
56	= (2) ב + (4) ד + (50) נ
25	= (5) ה + (20) כ
25	= (1) א + (6) ו + (5) ה + (10) י + (2) ב + (1) א

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, vol. 2*  
(*He'oros L'Zohar—Shemos-Devarim*), p. 264

*In R. Levi Yitzchak's words:*

...שָׂאוּ נִסְתַּלְקוּ נָדָב וְאֲבִיהוּא... וְהָיָה זֶה בְּיוֹם חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּשְׁכָּן. (וְהַמִּשְׁכָּן נִגְמְרָה מְלֹאכְתוֹ בְּכ"ה בְּכֶסֶל. בְּחֻנְכָּה. וְהִקְמַתוֹ הָיָה בְּא' בְּנִסָּן, וְלָכֵן קוֹרִין בְּחֻנְכָּה בְּפִרְשַׁת הַנְּשִׂאִים, פִּרְשַׁת חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּשְׁכָּן). הֵינָה בְּתַבַּת חֲנוּכָּה נִרְמָז כָּל זֶה... וְהָיָה זֶה בְּיוֹם ח' הַיְיָנוּ שֶׁתַּבַּת חֲנוּכָּה מֵתְחִיל בְּשִׁמוֹנָה. וְנִרְמָז בָּזֶה גַם כֵּן מִמִּיתַת נָדָב וְאֲבִיהוּא. הַיְיָנוּ ח' דְּחֻנְכָּה הוּא יוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי. נ"ו הוּא מִסְפָּר נָדָב. כ"ה מִסְפָּר אֲבִיהוּא, לְרִמּוֹ שְׁבִיּוֹם ח' שָׁבוּ הָיָה חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּשְׁכָּן נִסְתַּלְקוּ נד"ב אֲבִיהוּא"א...



שבועות

SHAVUOS

*Shavuos and Yitzchak*

שְׁהַמוּעֵדִים נִתְקְנוּ כְּנֶגֶד אָבוֹת... שְׁבֻעוֹת כְּנֶגֶד יִצְחָק

THE FESTIVALS WERE ORDAINED TO CORRESPOND  
TO THE PATRIARCHS... SHAVUOS CORRESPONDS  
TO YITZCHAK<sup>1</sup> (TUR, ORACH CHAIM 417).

**Driving statement:**

- There are numerous ways in which Shavuos and Yitzchak are connected.

**E**ach of the three Patriarchs embodies one of the primary attributes (Sefiros) via which G-d interfaces with His creations. Specifically, Yitzchak is the archetype of

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**1.** The shofar blown at the Giving of the Torah came from the ram sacrificed in place of Yitzchak (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 31:13). In this essay R. Levi Yitzchak finds several more direct connections.

Gevurah,<sup>2</sup> which can be variously translated as “strength,” “might,” “severity,” and other qualities that indicate a contraction or withholding of energy.

One aspect of Gevurah is self-control, the ability to obey commands without question. The Psalmist speaks of the angels who are “the mighty ones of strength” who “do [G-d’s] word” and “hear (לשמוע) His word,”<sup>3</sup> implying that they first “do” what they are told, and only afterwards “hear” and understand<sup>4</sup> the rationale for it.<sup>5</sup> The Jewish people, too, enthusiastically declared “We will do and we will hear” what G-d says,<sup>6</sup> indicating that, unlike the other nations who first demanded to know what the Torah entails before consenting to it,<sup>7</sup> they were prepared to accept it sight unseen. Thus their reception of the Torah was an evocation of Gevurah. And it is Yitzchak himself,<sup>8</sup> who alone of the Patriarchs rises up before G-d in defense of his errant descendants, and who, in keeping with his affinity for Gevurah, uses the Jews’ whole-hearted “We will do and we will hear” as his first argument on their behalf.

Gevurah is also the faculty of breaking down an outpouring of beneficence into smaller and more limited units, so that the recipient can assimilate them. Thus the Giving of

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2. Pardes 22:4, et al.

3. Tehillim 103:20.

4. The Hebrew root שמע can also mean “comprehend” or “understand,” as in Bereishis 41:15.

5. Talmud, Shabbos 88a.

6. Shemos 24:7.

7. Sifri, Devarim 33:2.

8. Talmud, Shabbos 89b.

the Torah itself is an expression of Gevurah, in that the infinite Will and Wisdom of G-d is “stepped down” into terms comprehensible by the human mind and invested in the physical objects with which mitzvos are fulfilled. Thus our Sages describe the first two of the Ten Commandments, which the Jewish people heard directly from G-d, as having been given “from the Mouth of the Gevurah.”<sup>9</sup>

The attribute of Gevurah also has a negative side to it, in that the constriction of G-dly energy can be so intense as to conceal it entirely and leave room for forces that oppose G-d, believing themselves to be independent of Him. And in turn, that mentality is symbolized by puffed-up leavened bread (*chametz*),<sup>10</sup> in contradistinction to *matzah*, which signifies *bittul*, the sense of self-nullification in the presence of one’s Creator. It is thus significant, that a central rite of Shavuos is the offering of two loaves of *chametz* bread in the Beis Hamikdash,<sup>11</sup> again evoking Yitzchak’s attribute of Gevurah.

Finally, turning to the name of the holiday, the word שבועות Shavuos, besides its surface meaning of “weeks” (since it follows the seven weeks of the Omer count), also denotes “oaths,” in token of the mutual oaths between the Jewish people and G-d that He will never abandon us and that we will never abandon Him.<sup>12</sup> Significantly, the first time we find G-d swearing an oath to any of the Patriarchs is after

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9. Talmud, Makkos 23b; see Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh 10.

10. Likkutei Torah, Tzav 13c.

11. Vayikra 23:17.

12. See Sefer Hamaamarim 5698, p. 234, and Toras Menachem—Hisvaaduyos 5716, p. 323.

the Binding of Yitzchak,<sup>13</sup> and the content of that oath was about the future of Yitzchak and his progeny, so that the very concept of a G-dly oath, after which the holiday of Shavuos is named, relates particularly to Yitzchak.

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*,<sup>14</sup> vol. 3, pp. 378–379

*In R. Levi Yitzchak's words:*

...לְוַגֵּל דְּשַׁבְּעוֹת בְּיַחֲוֹד, שֶׁהוּא מְכוּן לְנִגְדַּי יִצְחָק. (כִּי ג' מוֹעֲדֵי הַשָּׁנָה הֵם לְנִגְדַּי הַג' אָבוֹת בְּיָדוּעַ). שְׂבַמְתָּן תּוֹרָה דְּשַׁבְּעוֹת הַקְּדִימוֹ נַעֲשֶׂה לְנִשְׁמַע שְׂגִבּוֹרֵי פֶחַ דְּוָקָא יְכוּלִים לְהַקְדִּים כְּמֵאֲמַר רַ"ל, וְהוּא בְּחִינַת יִצְחָק שְׂמֵדְתוּ מִדַּת הַגְּבוּרָה. וְהֵינּוּ מֵה שֵׁי יִצְחָק דְּוָקָא הַזֵּבִיר וְכוּתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵה שֶׁהַקְדִּימוֹ נַעֲשֶׂה לְנִשְׁמַע בְּשַׁבָּת בְּפָרֶק אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא עֵינֵן שָׁם, כִּי מֵה שֶׁהַקְדִּימוֹ נַעֲשֶׂה לְנִשְׁמַע זֶהוּ מִבְּחִינָתוֹ... וְשַׁבְּעוֹת שֶׁהוּא מְלִשׁוֹן שַׁבְּעָה גַם כֵּן שֵׁיךְ לְיִצְחָק כִּי אִם שֶׁהַקְדוּשָׁה בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם אֵךְ הָיָה זֶה עַל יְדֵי עֲקֵדַת יִצְחָק דְּוָקָא. וְגוֹף הַשַּׁבְּעָה הוּא שֶׁהַרְבֵּה אַרְבֵּה אֶת זֶרְעֶךָ כו' וִירֵשׁ זֶרְעֶךָ כו' וְהַתְּבָרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כו' שֶׁקָּאֵי עַל יִצְחָק, וְלְיִצְחָק נֵאֱמַר וְהַקְמַתִּי אֶת הַשַּׁבְּעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי כו'. הָרִי שֶׁשַּׁבְּעָה שֵׁיךְ לְיִצְחָק... וְהֵינּוּ מֵה שֶׁשַּׁבְּעוֹת הוּא שְׂתֵי הַלֶּחֶם... וְעוֹד זֹאת הָרִי שְׂתֵי הַלֶּחֶם הֵם חֲמִץ דְּוָקָא, שֶׁחֲמִץ רֹמֵז עַל גְּבוּרֹת בְּיָדוּעַ, יַעֲן כִּי בַעֲצֵם יִצְחָק הוּא בְּחִינַת גְּבוּרֹת. וּמִתָּן תּוֹרָה אֲנֹכִי וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ מִפִּי הַגְּבוּרָה שְׂמַעְנוּ, גְּבוּרָה דְּוָקָא.



13. Bereishis 22:17.

14. Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al Hatorah, vol. 5, sec. 120.

# הוספות

# APPENDIX



הרבנית חנה שניאורסון  
FROM THE “MEMOIRS  
OF REBBETZIN CHANA”



...I RECALL MY HUSBAND DESCRIBING HOW HE FELT UPON ARRIVING IN Alma Ata in 1940, after eleven months of constant surveillance in prison. He was told he was free to go on his own wherever he wanted, except beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Despite the latter limitation, he felt such a sense of freedom. It was difficult for him to imagine no one was following or watching him. He felt a strong desire to share his joy with someone, and doubtless it would have been an opportunity to expound on this. But there wasn't even a single fellow-Jew with whom to converse, and he had no choice but to continue stifling this desire, although it was now for a different reason than before.<sup>1</sup>

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**1** I.e. it wasn't by compulsion, as it had been previously, but because he had no one



He told me this two months later [after I joined him there], yet, while relating it, he deeply relived that experience.

His life was tragic and after his passing the situation remains tragic. Throughout his life he wrote down so many of his Torah insights. Thousands of pages of his writings were left in his study at our home [in Yekaterinoslav], which was later destroyed by Hitler. As for his other writings on Chasidism and Kabbalah during the course of his six years of wandering—until two weeks before his passing—I left them in Moscow. Friends took them from me and concealed them in various hiding places.<sup>2</sup> Who knows where they are now?...

## **Publishing Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's works**

Several weeks have passed, but I feel no better, and perhaps even weaker. It could be this is just a temporary feeling which will improve.

I would like to make a wish that I will see publication of the letters of my husband, of blessed memory, which are extant.<sup>3</sup> Something ought to be published from such a personality, such a flowing "wellspring" of incessant Torah thought, never ceasing even a moment, who, when he had no one to address, would write down his thoughts on paper in installments.

Certainly I am entitled to hope for this, after all that I have witnessed in my life. In any event, it is something that ought to come about. I can do nothing to help it happen, but my desire for

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available with whom to share his feelings.

- 2 See the Rebbe's letters of 6 Kislev, 5718; Tevet, 5720 (Igrot Kodesh, vol. 16, p. 128; vol. 19, p. 117ff.).
- 3 The Rebbetzin is referring here to her husband's letters and accompanying writings sent to his son, the Rebbe, from 1927 to 1939. At that time, the volumes of Zohar with Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's handwritten comments around the margins had not yet been brought out of the Soviet Union. See the following footnote.

it is strong and I hope it will happen.<sup>4</sup>

Date: After 15 Shevat, 5713 (1953)

*(Memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana, Part 35<sup>5</sup>)*

The life of my husband, of blessed memory, was tragic, and the same is true after he left this world. It would be desirable that there be some memorial to him. It appears to me that some of his writings could be published. But perhaps not? There are probably good reasons [why they are not being published yet].

Thursday, Kislev, 5715

*(Memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana - Part 38<sup>6</sup>)*

## TO READ THE FULL MEMOIRS OF REBBETZIN CHANA

(IN THE ORIGINAL YIDDISH/HEBREW OR TRANSLATED  
INTO ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH, RUSSIAN)

visit: [Lahak.org/2977537](http://Lahak.org/2977537)

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- 4 On 20 Menachem Av, 5729 (1969, the 25th anniversary of his father's passing), after the Minchah service, the Rebbe gave the following instructions: his father's comments written on the margins of the volumes of Zohar and Tanya (that had been brought to him in his place of exile by his mother) should be typeset for publication.

*The following is a listing of the publication dates of the extant works by R. Levi Yitzchak:*

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak on Tanya: Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, 5730 (1970)*

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak on Zohar, Bereishit: Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, 5730 (1970)*

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak on Zohar, Shemot-Devarim: Purim, (1971)*

*Torat Levi Yitzchak on the Talmud (Mishnah and Gemara): 20 Menachem Av, 5731 (1971)*

*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak on assorted Scriptural verses and Rabbinic passages, together with his letters to his son, the Rebbe: Erev Shabbat Mevarchim Menachem Av, 5732 (1972)*

- 5 For the full Memoir, in English, visit: [Lahak.org/2980304](http://Lahak.org/2980304)
- 6 For the full Memoir visit [Lahak.org/2980306](http://Lahak.org/2980306)

# RESOURCES

FOR TEACHINGS OF  
R' LEVI YITZCHOK SCHNEERSON, זי"ע

## HEBREW

### **Likkutei Levi Yitzchok / Toras Levi Yitzchok**

*New updated edition, reviewed and compared to original manuscript.*

The original writings of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. They are distinguished by their unique combination of the Revealed and Hidden Torah, and their profound scrutiny of the text of the Zohar and the writings of Kabbalah and Chassidus.



[www.Kehot.com](http://www.Kehot.com)

## Toras Menachem - Tiferes Levi Yitzchak

The Rebbe's commentary on his father's teachings On the weekly Parsha.

**Author:** The Rebbe

**Publisher:** Vaad Hanochos  
B'Lahak

**Format:** hardcover, 5 volumes

**Language:** Hebrew



## Yalkut Levi Yitzchak al HaTorah

The teachings of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak deciphered and decoded, with commentary from Chasidus and many sources, making it understandable.

**Author:** Rabbi Dovid Dubov

**Publisher:** Kehot Publication Society

**Format:** Hardcover

**Language:** Hebrew

**5 Volumes Available, at [Kehot.com](http://Kehot.com)**

Compiled and annotated by Rabbi Dovid Dubov,  
Chabad representative in Princeton, New Jersey.



## Pninei Levi Yitzchak

A collection of novel insights selected from the works of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson on Prayer, Jewish Holidays, Torah Personalities and miscellanea.

Skillfully distilled and shortened by the editor, they provide the scholar and layman a window into the Kabbalistic world of the author.

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

**Kehot.com**



## Letters of the Wedding – “Michtevei HaChasuna”

A collection of six letters written by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, to his son, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, on the occasion of his wedding to Rebbetzin Chaya Moussia, the daughter of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Also reproduced is a facsimile of the Rebbe's tenaim written before the ceremony.

Released in celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the wedding.

Available at **Kehot.com**



## ENGLISH

### **An Inner Perspective**

Comprising sixteen essays, this work was adapted by Rabbi Eli Block from R. Levi Yitzchak's original works as well as from the Rebbe's elucidations.

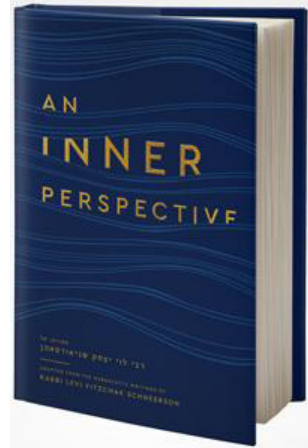
**Publisher:** Kehot Publication Society

**Author:** Rabbi Eli Block

**Format:** Hardcover, 206 pages

**Language:** English

**Kehot.com**



### **Rabbi, Mystic, Leader**

**The Life and Times of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson**

**Publisher:** Kehot Publication Society

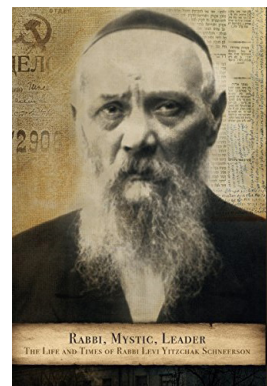
**Compiled by:** Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb

**Translated by:** Rabbi Elchonon Lesches

**Format:** Hardcover 271 pages

Biography of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's extraordinary life of self sacrifice and leadership.

**Kehot.com**



# WEEKLY TEACHINGS

FROM LIKKUTEI / TORAS LEVI YITZCHOK  
ON THE PARSHA

## ENGLISH

Each week, a column of R' Levi Yitzchok's teachings, as they appeared in this booklet, are printed in the Chayenu weekly publication.

These are based on the Parsha of the week or Yomim Tovim.

At the end of each English section, there is a quote from the original text of R' Levi Yitzchok, thus allowing you to learn it and understand it in his own words.

To receive this weekly dose of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, subscribe to Chayenu at [Chayenu.org/subscribe](http://Chayenu.org/subscribe) or pick it up (in Crown Heights) at the Judaica or grocery stores.

Study: R' Levi Yitzchok's Teachings

### לקוטי לוי יצחק

R' LEVI YITZCHOK'S TEACHINGS

The teachings of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson—father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe—were discovered on the margins of his Seferim which he had while in exile in Kazakhstan. They reveal incredible depth and breadth of Kabbalistic knowledge and interconnect the revealed and esoteric realms of Torah. They were published as Likkutei / Toras Levi Yitzchok. For more on this, visit: [chayenu.org/LLY](http://chayenu.org/LLY)

Hebrew text, with permission of **Kehot Publication Society**  
Adapted by **Rabbi David Dubov** in **Yalkut Levi Yitzchok: Al HaTorah**  
— by **Yakov ben Zina & Leah bas Shloma** —  
Translated by **Rabbi Yaakov Chaiton**  
Edited by **Chayenu**

DEDICATED BY  
SHOLOM & ESTHER LAINE ז"ל  
IN MEMORY OF THEIR CHILDREN  
MENACHEM MENDEL & MYRIAM CHAYA SAMUELS, FRAYDA MALKA, MENACHEM MENDEL,  
MENDUCHA ROCHEL, CHANA LIBBA, MUSHEKA, MOSHE CHAIM, SHAYNA & BRACHA ז"ל

PAGE 38

### Tefillin

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וְקָשְׁתָּם אֵתָם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטֹעֲמֹת בֵּין עֵינַיִם  
*You should bind them [the boxes of Tefillin] as a sign upon your hand  
and they shall be for ornaments between your eyes. (11:18)*

The Talmud instructs the order in which the Tefillin are supposed to be donned:  
*When one dons the Tefillin, he first dons the Tefillin of the arm and afterward dons the Tefillin of the head.* (Talmud, Menachos, 36a)

From another teaching of the Talmud regarding the definition of a rebellious Jew one can appreciate the importance of donning Tefillin:

*Who are considered 'rebellious Jews who have sinned with their bodies'?*  
*Rav said: This is referring to the skull that did not [ever] don Tefillin* (תקופת הקיסטא וְרָאָה טוֹקֵי) (Talmud, Rosh Hashanah, 17a)

◀ 175 | Chayenu: Eikev, 5782

**A YouTube video — on the same teachings — taught by Rabbi Dovid Dubov - author of Yalkut Levi Yitzchok al HaTorah**

This is available on the following channel: Irgun Torah  
**[tinyurl.com/LeviYitzchok](https://tinyurl.com/LeviYitzchok)**

Audio of above-mentioned weekly thought:

Spotify - **[tinyurl.com/LLY-audio](https://tinyurl.com/LLY-audio)**

## HEBREW

**Each week a PDF is produced by Rabbi Eli Wolf (Israel), and is distributed by WhatsApp.**

There is also a weekly video he produces on the same teaching.

Available here:

**[tinyurl.com/LLY-Hebrew](https://tinyurl.com/LLY-Hebrew)**

## FURTHER RESOURCES

A website with many resources, including links to Fabrengens, Derher Articles and much more:

**[IggudHashluchim.com/4457310](https://IggudHashluchim.com/4457310)**



## SUPPORT

To donate to Keren Levi Yitzchak, a fund the Rebbe established in his father's memory

**[magbis.org/keren-levi-yitzchak/donate](http://magbis.org/keren-levi-yitzchak/donate)**

To support the work of Chabad in Almaty, Kazakhstan, which preserves the burial site & tomb of R' Levi Yitzchok, visit **[20av.net](http://20av.net)**

## PARTNER WITH US

*To support the work of translating R' Levi Yitzchok's teaching into English each week, as they appear in this booklet, Please visit:*

**[CHAYENU.ORG/CHOFAY](http://CHAYENU.ORG/CHOFAY)**



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אשר נאסר והגלה על עבודתו  
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ונפטר בגלות ביום כ"ף לחודש מנחם אב  
שנת ה'תש"ד

וזוגתו הצדקנית הרבנית  
מרת חנה ע"ה  
בת הצדקנית הרבנית מרת רחל ע"ה  
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ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'



נדפס על ידי ולזכות  
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