

Chayus

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל

Hakhel

An Eternal Commandment

All commandments are eternal, in every place and in every time. However, not necessarily is the *essential character* of the commandment eternal.

For example, the commandment of Shemittah, the essential nature of the commandment is to refrain from sowing and planting the land, etc., and that one should relinquish ownership from anything that does grow in the year of Shemittah, etc. Then there is a detail of this commandment, the purpose of the commandment. Through resting the land for an entire year, and not producing one's sustenance, one enhances his recognition that everything is in the hands of G-d, master over everything. The eternal character of this Mitzvah is not in the resting of the earth which is only one year and only in the Land of Israel, but the message of the commandments is always applicable, to always remember that G-d is in charge.

Hakhel is different, where the *essential character* of the commandment is eternal.

The essential component in fulfilling the commandment of Hakhel is to "encourage them [=the Jews] to perform mitzvot and strengthen them in the true faith" (Mishneh Torah Chagigah 3:1), and "to concentrate their attention and direct their hearing, listening with reverence and awe" (ibid., 6). This in itself is of eternal relevance.

Thus, the eternal element and aspect of a commandment is most revealed in the commandment of Hakhel, since it is not a mere detail of the commandment that has an eternal message, but the essential character of the commandment, as well, has an eternal relevance.

Likkutei Sichos vol. 34, p. 215

סיפור חסידי

Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber

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When Less Is More

"I know my son, I know. Also he shall become a nation, also he shall be great; but his younger brother shall be greater than he..." (Vayechi 48:19)

The wholesome simplicity of a simple Jew touches upon the utterly simple essence of G-d. (*Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov*)

The two men were among the privileged few to be granted an audience with the king. At the appointed hour the first man arrived at the palace; but as soon as he entered the anteroom he froze, awestruck. A wealthy man himself, he was in a position to truly appreciate the grandeur which lay before him. For

hours he stood, reveling in the finery and opulence which intoxicated his rich-man's soul. For hours he stood, and the king... he never did quite see the king.

The second man also arrived at the same entrance hall, but he was a man unaccustomed to such riches. His impoverished taste failed to appreciate what so enthralled his more sophisticated fellow. Much to the wealthy man's dismay, the pauper made straight for the king's door.

Says the Lubavitcher Rebbe: A great man once said: "I pray with the mind of a child." A child's perception of G-d, he felt, is, in a way, truer and purer than the accomplished kabbalist's deepest comprehension of the Divine attributes and manifestations.

The spiritual connoisseur who approaches G-d with an eye for the 'experience' of this or that nuance of divinity, can lose sight of what the point of it all is. Only by acknowledging our basic spiritual illiteracy can we truly relate to the all-transcendent essence of G-d.

אור תורה
Ohr Torah

Translated by: **Yechiel Krisch**
Adapted from the teachings of the **Mezritcher Maggid**

Two shades of red: Refining character via joy

According to the teaching of Kabbalah, the color red has two mystical connotations: stringency and joy. The latter, which is associated with red wine, is capable of tempering and sweetening the former, which is associated with blood. The power of joy and its ability to counterbalance stringency can be illustrated by the fact that a king, when he is in a state of joy, allows even unworthy subjects to enter his presence. Similarly, even one who is spiritually unfit can arrive at a state of purity through joy.

This is one explanation of the verse: "He is red-eyed from wine and white-toothed from milk" (Vayechi 49:12). With the power of joy ("red-eyed from wine") even one as rigid and unyielding as a "tooth" will attain a purity that is whiter than milk.

Further, now when a scribe writes the aforementioned verse in a Torah scroll, the Hebrew letter Ches from the word chachlili (חכלילי) is written larger than the other letters. For just as watchtowers extend far above the walls of a city, enabling the tower guards to see far away, so too the letter Ches, which mystically connotes contemplation, can help guard the spiritual "city" of one's own mind. Thus, when one's love and fear of G-d suddenly depart in the midst of prayer, those emotions can be renewed through focused contemplation upon the greatness of G-d.

The Hebrew word for "thought" and focused contemplation (מחשבה) can be rearranged to spell the phrase "with joy" (בשמחה), which is achieved through drinking wine, which is the focus of this verse.

Par. 61

גאולה
Geulah

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by **Yaakov Paley**

Weather the storm

While in exile, the Jewish people are compared to a rock due to the storms they must weather and also due to their spiritual insensitivity. With the future redemption, by contrast, G-d promises to remove our heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh. In his blessings, Yaakov states, "From there he sustained the rock of Israel" (Vayechi 49:29). This refers to Moshiach, who will emerge and sustain the Jews at the end of their exile, while they are spiritually compromised and likened to a rock. He will lead them from this state to the Redemption.

Ralbag al HaTorah

Binyamin's Blessing: A wolf Who will Prey

The Verse:

Binyamin is a wolf, he will prey; in the morning he will devour plunder, and in the evening he will divide the spoil" (*Bereishis* 49:27).

The Translation/Commentaries:

Targum Onkelos renders the verse as, "in his land, G-d's presence will dwell, in his inheritance the Mikdash will be built." The Rogatchover (Rabbi Yosef Rosen 1858-1936) explains that "Mikdash" here refers to **the Altar** which is sanctified through the application of blood (thus the allusion of Binyamin as a wolf ensnaring prey).

Targum Yonasan ben Oziel renders the verse slightly different, "in his land, G-d's presence will dwell, in his inheritance the **Beis Hamikdash** will be built."

What is the significance of the dispute? Why does Onkelos say the verse refers only to the Altar while Targum Yonasan says that it refers to the entire Temple?

The Explanation:

The conclusion of Tractate Kiddushin states: "*Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: I never saw a deer work as one who dries figs, nor a lion work as a porter, nor a fox work as a storekeeper. And yet they earn their livelihood without anguish. But all these were created only to serve me, and I, a human being, was created to serve the One Who formed me. If these, who were created only to serve me, earn their livelihood without anguish, then is it not right that I, who was created to serve the One Who formed me, should earn my livelihood without anguish? But I have acted wrongfully and have lost my livelihood... (Kiddushin 82b).*"

This passage appears in the Jerusalem Talmud, but with a slight alteration in the order of the animals and their trades: "*I never saw a lion work as a porter, nor a deer as one who dries figs, nor a fox as a storekeeper, nor a wolf as a pot salesman.*"

What is the significance of this slight difference?

Spiritual Professions:

Everything was created in order to facilitate a Jew's Divine service. The animals and occupations listed by Rabbi Shimon symbolically represent the core steps in a person's spiritual work.

"Drying figs" is the process of removing figs from the trees, placing them in sunlight, and waiting for them to mature and ripen to the point where they are ready for the market. This alludes to the process of preparing physical items (drying the figs) for the purpose of performing a mitzvah (fit for consumption).

The porter transports items to their intended place, to the market where they can be sold, or to the home of the person who has purchased it. Sometimes, we cannot use an item for a mitzvah while it languishes in an impure place, and we must transport ourselves to a different environment where that mitzvah can be performed.

The shopkeeper sells items, transferring them from one person's possession to another's. Sometimes an item needs to be removed from one person's possession in order for it to be usable for a mitzvah, such as an item that belonged to an idolater.

Present vs. Future:

The Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds have differing perspectives when there is a clash between 'a future consideration' and 'a present consideration.' The Babylonian Talmud privileges the present over the future—thus, if there is an opportunity to perform a mitzvah in the present, we do not defer the opportunity to the future, even if the mitzvah will be performed more beautifully then. The Jerusalem Talmud privileges the future perfection over the present, satisfactory fulfillment of the mitzvah.

This is reflected in the sequence of occupations listed by the two sources. Figs do not mature at the same time, some are ripened before others. Thus, either a person can choose to pick each fig as it ripens or one can wait until there is a significant volume of figs ready to be transported to the market.

The Babylonian Talmud lists the cutting and drying of figs before the porter. This is because what is most important is to act immediately, to prepare a mitzvah at the earliest possible opportunity, even though a greater quality or quantity of “figs” can be amassed later. The Jerusalem Talmud lists the porter before the fig cutter, because, in its perspective, it is better to wait until there is a significant “load to transport” before beginning to act and prepare the mitzvah.

This is also why the Jerusalem Talmud adds the would-be occupation of the wolf as a pot salesman. Cooking in a pot takes time, but it enhances the quality of the food. This aligns with the philosophy of the Jerusalem Talmud which privileges the quality of a thing over the timeliness of it.

The Translations Explained:

Targum Yonasan was based in the Land of Israel. Therefore, he privileges the perfection of the future over the present. Even though one can technically offer sacrifices on an altar even when there is no Beis Hamikdash (Mishneh Torah, Laws of the

Temple 6:15), it is preferable and more enhanced when sacrifices are offered within the Beis Hamikdash. Therefore, he interprets Yaakov’s blessing to Binyamin as referring to “prey,” i.e. sacrifices, that were offered within the entire Beis Hamikdash.

Onkelus was a resident of the diaspora and therefore adopted the perspective of the Babylonian Talmud that privileges the present over future perfection. Therefore, he renders the blessing as referring to the Altar itself, being that the essential thing is that the sacrifice should be offered on the altar, notwithstanding the enhancement that is added when there is a Beis Hamikdash.

Based on the above it is possible to suggest that this dispute extends to the proper time to build an altar. According to the Babylonian Talmud, we may be obligated to build an altar at the earliest opportunity, even if we cannot yet build the Beis Hamikdash. According to the Jerusalem Talmud, however, we would not be obligated to build an altar until the Beis Hamikdash itself is built to house the altar.

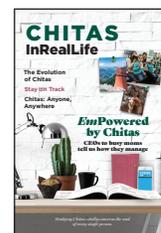
Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 447ff.

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Vayechi, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 72 – 76
Tanya*	Likutei Amarim Chapter 12. עמ' 32- ותענוגיו. עד עמ' 32
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #100
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Mishpatim – Hilchos To'en V'Nit'an, Chapter 3
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Taharah – Hilchos Keilim Chapters 15 – 17

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