DEVARIM

Prepared by Ner Le’Elef
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Ner Le’Elef
P.O. Box 14503
Jewish Quarter, Old City, Jerusalem 91145
E-mail: nerlelef@netvision.net.il
Fax #: 972-02-653-6229
Tel #: 972-02-651-0825
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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The following points will tell you what this commentary does and does not do:

1. We tried to present the main themes of each parsha, and not to use the parsha as a springboard for other lessons.

2. The experienced reader will be able to understand the subject by reading the English on top fairly quickly, and will gain easy access to more information through the Meforshim quoted in the foot-notes.

3. A lot of extra information was quoted in full in the foot-notes. However, for a full understanding, the original Pirush needs to be consulted.

4. We gave the approach of the major Meforshim, wherever we were able to identify this. We used approximately 20 primary sources (Chazal and Meforshim) and we frequently quoted another 20. However, where we saw the need, we used other Meforshim as well. In some essays, the Meforshim we used were primarily not Meforshi HaChumash.

5. The essays are generally between eight to ten pages, with a one to two page summary at the beginning. They do not represent polished droshos for the following reasons:
   - They have too much information in them.
   - They were written for an experienced reader.
   - They lack midrashim, stories and other elements required to bring the subject alive.
   - They require application to contemporary circumstances.
Overview of Sefer Devarim

SUMMARY:

The most perplexing of the Five Books is דְּבַרְיָה. It repeats much of the previous books and therefore is called תורה משנה – the second Torah. On the other hand it contains over 70 new Mitzvos. The book is a preparation for the Jews to enter the land. In the land, many Mitzvos will become relevant and are therefore mentioned now or repeated for Chizuk.

The book also comes to provide a vision to the Jewish people, giving them chizuk and allowing them to focus on our ultimate purpose. The underlying message of Sefer Devarim is the Geula Asida.

The Gra divides Sefer Devarim into three parts: From the beginning of the Sefer until just before the 10 Commandments speaks of maaters pertaining to Mussar. From the beginning of the 10 Commandments until just before the blessings and the curses speaks of Mitzos. From there on Sefer Devarim deals with blessing and curses and other, related matters. These three aspects really cover all that the Torah deals with. The Torah really comprises three books – Shemos, Varyikra and Bamidbar. Bereishis is really an introduction to these books, the root of all the Torah. And Devarim comes to summarize each one of these books.

The Mitzvos that were repeated by Moshe Rabbeinu, were done so of his own initiative. The fact that there seems to be more human connection to Sefer Devarim, even though it is a part of the G-d given Torah, is a great clue to understanding its essence.

The giving of the Torah has two dimensions, that of the Giver (G-d) and that of the recipient (man), and the Torah perforce must reflect both. For the Torah is a covenant, and it is the very essence of a covenant that it be a connection between the two parties. So too with the two tablets, לוחות הברית. The first tablet has five commandments which relate more to G-d, the giver, while the second tablet has five commandments which relate more to man.

Hence, the first four books relate to G-d while Sefer Devarim relates to man. Each has a repetition of the 10 Commandments. This is why the people heard Devarim from Moshe in the first person, for Moshe is close to Bnei Yisrael, the recipients of the Torah.

This explains the many repetitions in Sefer Devarim, for we are not longer dealing with the pure intellect of the Torah; rather Devarim is coming to ensure that the recipients grasp what is being said.

Another difference is the Shabbos. In the first לוחות, we are asked to remember the Sabbath (זכור), whereas in the second we are told to keep it (שמר). Remembering the Shabbat is the primary focus of the Shabbat, keeping it is the framework, for abstinence alone cannot show that G-d is the creator. The reason for remembering is because G-d created the world, whereas the reason for not working is because we were once slaves.

The result of Sefer Devarim is that the Torah can now begin to connect to each and every Jew, who are all united by this common connection. Hence Devarim is said in a singular form to reflect this unity of the Jewish people. In a sense, Sefer Devarim is the transition between the Written Law and the Oral Law. The Written law is an objective reality, outside of ourselves, written in the third person. The Oral Law is the mechanism through which we bring the written law into ourselves, so that we and the
Torah become one. Sefer Devarim is still a part of the written law, but Moshe begins the process of bringing this Torah into us by talking to us in the second person. He also talks in the singular, to connect to each one of us.
Sefer Devarim is the preparation for the Jews to go into the land of Israel. Moshe Rabbeinu spoke to Bnei Yisroel to spiritually prepare them to go into Israel – to conquer it and to settle it. This is why it is a mesubim Torah, a repeat of the previous books1, - Klal Yisroel are to be reminded of everything that they were taught and clarify anything that was not yet clear in the Torah. For, without the merit of the Torah, they have no right to the land of Israel to begin with.

However, we need to then explain why there are over 70 new mitzvos contained in Sefer Devarim3. (Hence, the Maharal4 calss an an embarrassment.)

The Ramban5 suggests that many Mitzvos are mentioned for the first time in Sefer Devarim because only now, on the eve of the Jewish People's entry into Israel, would these mitzvos become relevant. Other Mitzvos are repeated here for chizuk and emphasis, since they would be more frequently applied in the land.6 No Mitzvos connected with the Cohanim are mentioned, as the Cohanim are not the inheritors of the land.7 Since it is only

the completion of the Torah. Bamidbar described the activities of the nation, and now Devarim comes to provide completion to those activities:

The Ramban explains why this is even so even many of the mitzvot which are not mentioned and many others which are not mentioned are mentioned.
through the merit of the Torah that Klal Yisroel would inherit the land, this strengthening of the Mitzvos is now vital.

Hence Moshe Rabbeinu rebukes and strengthens the people in general, focusing not only on the individual Mitzvot, and Shabbat as a core Mitzvah in our whole covenant with G-d, by as part of providing a vision for the Jewish people, giving them chizuk and allowing them to focus on our ultimate purpose. That ultimate purpose, writes Rabbeinu Bechaya, will begin to be expressed with the Geula Asida, the underlying message of Sefer Devarim.

In fact, the Gra shows in detail how all of Sefer Devarim is really a prophetic anticipation of the אמסת שישה, the 6th and last of the millennia in the world as we know it, before heralding the Moshiach. Just as Sefer Devarim prepared Klal Yisroel to enter the land from the desert, so it also prepares us to re-enter the land at the end of days.

The Gra divides Sefer Devarim into three parts: Part I begins at the start of the Sefer, continues until just before the Ten Commandments, and speaks of matters pertaining to Mussar. Part II speaks of Mitzvos, beginning with the Ten Commandments and ending with the blessings and the curses. From there on, Sefer Devarim deals with blessings, curses and related matters. These three aspects cover all that the Torah deals with. The Torah really comprises three books – Shemos, Vayikra and Bamidbar. Bereishis is an introduction to these books, the root of all the Torah, and Devarim comes to summarize each one of these books in turn.
In Sefer Devarim, Moshe Rabbeinu begins to talk about himself in the second person – “And I told you, etc.”. This is in stark contrasts to the other four books of the Chumash, where Moshe talks only in the third person. Moshe seems now to be more human, saying things in his own words and not merely being the mouth which G-d uses to speak to the Jewish people.

The Ramban says that the new Mitzvos in Sefer Devarim were given to us by Moshe as G-d commanded him, in exactly the same way as all the Mitzvos in the rest of the Torah were given. The Mitzvos that were repeated by Moshe Rabbeinu, however, were done of his own initiative. 

The fact that there seems to be more of a human connection to Sefer Devarim even though it is a part of the G-d-given Torah is a great clue to understanding its essence and to a more profound understanding of the repetitions contained within.

The Maharal explains that the giving of the Torah has two dimensions: there is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in the Giver, and there is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in the recipient. This results from the vast difference between the Giver (G-d) and the receiver (Man). The covenant of the Torah requires that both these sides be connected to the Torah, that the Torah reflect both the giver and the receiver, for it is the very essence of a covenant that it connect between the two parties.

And it is then natural that the two ends of the covenant relate to each one of the parties. The first expression of this, says the Maharal, is in the division of the first four books of Torah on the one hand and Devarim on the other, with each of these containing a repetition of the 10 Commandments. The first four books are the Torah reflected in the Giver; while the commandments on the second relate more to man.

A deeper expression of this is in the division of the first four books of Torah on the other hand and Devarim on the other, with each of these containing a repetition of the 10 Commandments. The first four books are the Torah reflected in the Giver, however, reflects the receiver. This is because it is the end of the Torah, which Moshe Rabbeinu starts to talk about himself in the second person, as he had never done before in the other four books.
the opposite end to the Giver, and is therefore closer to the Jewish people, the recipients of the Torah. This is why Sefer Devarim is given at then end of the 40 years in the desert, whereas the rest of the Torah was given at the beginning. And this is also why the Jewish people heard Sefer Devarim from Moshe Rabbeinu in the first person, as Moshe was close to the ones who received the Torah, the Bein Yisrael.

The recipient of the Torah requires great explanation to actually comprehend the Torah. Certainly Sefer Devarim is still Torah and Moshe said nothing of his own accord, but in the first Four Books Moshe is but the vehicle for the exact words of HaSh-m’s will; while in the Mishnah Torah, it is Torah connected to man’s side of the covenant. Moshe is no longer described in the third person here; there is a new human being speaking. Moshe is no longer just an instrument through which G-d chooses to talk; he receives a prophecy and passes it on.

This explains the many repetitions in Sefer Devarim, for we are no longer dealing with the pure intellect of the Torah. Rather, Sefer Devarim comes to ensure that the recipients grasp what is being said. Hence, some commentators understand the word מִשְׁמַֽה as coming from the word顺丰ה – to study or to make clear.

It is no accident that Rebbe comprised the work of the same name – the Oral Law document coming to clarify the Written Law.
This also explains several other differences between the Mishnah Torah and the rest of the Torah. For example, the Ten Commandments are repeated in the Mishnah Torah with some significant changes\(^1\) (see foot-note\(^2\) where we have underlined and italicized the differences):

In the first place, we are asked to remember the Shabbos (אֶחְיָאוּ), whereas in the second we are told to keep it (שֶׁמֶר בָּרוּךְ). And even though we are told שָׁמַר בְּרֹךְ, we still have to understand why זֶה כְּלָל אֲשֶׁר יֻכָּל מְשֹׁר in the first four books whereas שֶׁמֶר בָּרוּךְ appears in Sefer Devarim\(^3\). Remembering the Shabbos is the primary focus of the Shabbos, while keeping it is the framework, as abstinence alone cannot show that G-d is the Creator\(^4\). The reason for remembering Shabbos is because G-d...
created the world, whereas the reason for not working is because we were once slaves.

The result of Sefer Devarim is that the Torah can begin to connect to each and every Jew: all are united by this common connection of the Book which reflects the recipients connection with the convenant. Hence, Devarim is said in singular form to reflect this unity of the Jewish people. In a sense, Sefer Devarim is the transition between the Written Law and the Oral Law. The Written Law is an objective reality outside of us, written in the third person. The Oral Law is the mechanism through which we bring the Written Law into ourselves so that we and the Torah become one. Sefer Devarim is still a part of the Written Law, but Moshe begins the process of bringing the Torah into us by speaking to us in the second person. He also talks in the singular to connect to each one of us.

We began by saying that Sefer Devarim came to prepare the Jews for going into the land of Israel. The transition from being the generation of the desert to a nation living on the land was just what necessitated the transitional book of Sefer Davarim. This is, in fact just another aspect of the idea that Devarim comes to connect the Jewish people with the Torah and is hence the transition to the Oral Law. The Written Law is an objective reality of Sefer Devarim. This is, in fact just another aspect of the idea that Devarim comes to connect the Jewish people with the Torah and is hence the transition to the Oral Law. For, it is on the land that we would be required to apply the Torah in day-to-day life (i.e. the constant reapplication of a living Oral Law). In Sefer Devarim many Mitzvos begin to be clarified, which is just the role of the Oral Law, and the connection of the Jews to G-d through the Torah is greatly enhanced. This is why Devarim is said right at the end of the nation’s sojourn in the desert, rather than at the beginning.

In Parshas VeYelech we will point to one other aspect of this idea of Devarim law as the transition to the Oral Law and hence to the Land. This is the transition from Moshe Rabbeinu to Yehoshua as the leader of the Jewish people. Yehoshua, as the leader bringing the people into the land, is the one who completes the last eight verses of Sefer Devarim. Devarim ends with the transition complete. Although there would be more Kisvei Kodesh, no other work was to add a single drop of new Torah from Shamayim. Moshe, G-d’s emissary, ensured that he would bring all of this Torah down in his life-time and that he would set up all the necessary elements to guarantee its future.
1. Skepticism

SUMMARY:

In this week’s parsha, Moshe Rabeinu announces that he had enough: He can no longer carry the burden of the Jewish people alone. In the eyes of the Jewish people, Moshe seemingly could do nothing right. If he went out early, the people said, “How come Ben Amram went out early. Maybe he is not happy at home.” If, on the other hand, Moshe was late to leave the house the people would say that he was busy scheming against them. The people were overly critical and suspicious, taking nothing on faith, and this was burning Moshe Rabeinu out.

Every time that there was a challenge, the people responded by accusing Moshe of laying a trap to destroy them in the desert.

In fact, the people related to all other issues in the same way. This was not anti-Moshe Rabbeinu bias. Incredibly, they went so far as to accuse G-d of the same thing.

Suprisingly, the commentators see all this doubting and skepticism as a great asset, not a failure. As the Rashba puts it:

And Israel - inheritors of the true religion, sons of Yaakov, the man of truth, all are the progeny of truth – they would prefer to suffer the yoke of exile with all its consequences than to simply believe something prior to making a thorough and repeated investigation to remove all dross from the things that were said to them and even that which was shown to them with a sign and a wonder ... they even doubted the authenticity of Moshe that were ... for they were suffering under harsh labor when Moshe was sent to announce that they would be redeemed and despite this Moshe announced, “They will not believe me” and he required the backup of several signs. And this is the sign of truth that our nation is with G-d that it is not seduced into accepting anything until they are convinced of its truth subsequent to a massive and complete investigation.

Nothing was taken for granted by this clear-minded people, not even the possibility of prophecy itself. Right up to Maamad Har Sinai, this nation questioned whether in fact G-d was really revealing Himself to His prophets. Only when they heard G-d speaking to them directly, without any intermediary, even the visual senses, did they finally come around.

Doubting and demanding proof was their greatest guarantee that they would not be fooled into accepting a false claim to G-d’s revelation.

Jewish leaders modeled this rigorous honesty. No attempt is made to paint a rosy picture of the greatness of this nation. Factual accuracy is portrayed, even where it is highly uncomfortable. History is most often changed by the desire of the national scribes to present the best face of his country. Even in our own time, we have witnessed Communist, African, Arab, Nazi and other countries manipulate and distort history to place themselves in the best light. Not so the תורה.
In this week’s parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu announces that he has had enough; he can no longer carry the burden of the Jewish people alone:

בדיר את כי: איך אני יכול לערוך финансов מספריים

Rashi writes that Moshe’s exasperation stemmed from the fact that he seemingly could do nothing right. If he went out early, the people said, “How come Ben Amram went out early? Maybe he is not happy at home.” If, on the other hand, Moshe was late to leave his house, the people would say that he was busy scheming against them. The people were overly critical and suspicious, taking nothing on faith, and this was burning Moshe Rabbeinu out.

Every time there was a challenge, the people responded by accusing Moshe of seeming to do nothing right. If he went out early, the people said, “How come Ben Amram went out early? Maybe he is not happy at home.” If, on the other hand, Moshe was late to leave his house, the people would say that he was busy scheming against them. The people were overly critical and suspicious, taking nothing on faith, and this was burning Moshe Rabbeinu out.

In fact, the people related to all other issues in the same way. This was not anti-Moshe Rabbeinu bias. Incredibly, they went so far as to accuse G-d of the same thing.

The skepticism of the Jewish people was reinforced in a fierce independence, desire for freedom, and palain stiff-necked refusal to believe: “Remember,” Moshe reminds you went out of Egypt until now, you were rebellious towards G-d. Even when G-d
was clearly present in your midst you rebelled. In fact, even at Sinai, when you heard G-d say the words I am the Lord your G-d, you turned to the Golden Calf, some of you refusing to believe that G-d really wanted to do this all for your benefit and others resisting any imposition of His Hasgacha on your freedom of choice.

Suprisingly, the commentators see all this doubting and skepticism as a great asset and not as a failure. As the Rashba puts it:

And Israel - inheritors of the true religion, sons of Yaakov, the man of truth, all are the progeny of truth – they would prefer to suffer the yoke of exile with all its consequences than to simply believe something prior to making a thorough and complete investigation to remove all dross from the things that were said to them and even that which was shown to them with a sign and a wonder ... they even doubted the authenticity of Moshe that were ... for they were suffering under harsh labor when Moshe was sent to announce that they would be redeemed and despite this Moshe announced, “They will not believe me” and he required the backup of several signs. And this is the sign of truth that our nation is with G-d that it is not seduced into accepting anything until they are convinced of its truth subsequent to a massive and complete investigation.

Nothing was taken for granted, not even the possibility of prophecy itself. Right up to Maamad Har Sinai, the Jewish nation questioned whether G-d was in fact speaking directly, without any intermediary, even the visual senses, did they finally come around.
R. S. R. Hirsch supports the opinion of the Rashba that doubting and demanding proof was the greatest guarantee that the Jews would not be fooled into accepting a false claim to G-d’s revelation:

How could they, how dared they just quietly assume that G-d would help them in such an extraordinarily miraculous manner, for which there was absolutely no precedent, and which was so completely against natural expectation. These continuous doubts form an important proof for the truth of Moses' mission, as ר' יהודה הלוי remarks in the כוזרי. Moses had to deal with a clear-minded people whose minds were not befogged by fantastic ideas, and who were not easily taken in, or convinced by the first man who comes along.

It is not just the Jewish people who are skeptics; the Torah introduces us to this rigorously honest approach with Moshe, other leaders\(^1\), and the Jewish people in general. No attempt is made to paint a rosy picture of the greatness of this nation. Factual accuracy is portrayed, even where it is highly uncomfortable.

The accuracy of the text is confirmed by the honesty with which the תורה criticizes the Jewish nation whenever they engage in negative behavior.\(^2\) History is most often changed by the desire of the national scribes to present the best face of their country, even if this means massive re-writes in history. In our own time, too, we have witnessed Communist, African, Arab, Nazi and other countries manipulate and distort history to place themselves in the best light. Not so the תורה. The willingness of the תורה to show the Jewish people in a bad light, whenever this was truly so, is a further guarantee of its historical accuracy.

\(^1\) Ravno Aviel, Ravno, and Ravno’s children. There is no mention of their names or titles.\(^2\) Certainly, it is not good enough only to show that the Torah was G-d-given. We have to also show that what we have today is that same Torah, i.e. that our Mesorah is accurate. This we do under the Oral Law.
2. Judges & Their Judgements

SUMMARY

So central is the idea of justice in Judaism that, at the very outset of Devarim, Moshe deals with the appointment and conduct of judges.

“At that time” (וְזֶהָ הָעָתָה מֵעָתָם בְּעָתָם וּבְעָתָם לָכֶם לָכֶם בְּעָתָם הָיוָה (ט)), at the time which you were to go conquer the land from people well versed in war, I did not drill you in weapons, nor make you study plans of war and strategy, but rather dealt with your moral perfection in justice.

So too, we are expected to become impartial judges over ourselves, being honest and impartial about what we have to work on and improve. Hence, הָכִי נַעֲדוּ בְּךָ (וְזֶהָ הָעָתָה מֵעָתָם בְּעָתָם וּבְעָתָם לָכֶם לָכֶם בְּעָתָם הָיוָה (ט)), at the singular, i.e. each of you should place a judge – borders and parameters, בְּכָל שַׁעֲרֵי, – around his personality.

Moshe introduces this issue by using the word אִיכָּה - alas, woe - that terrible word used by Yirmiyahu to talk about the destruction. He warns that the beginning of destruction will lie in the small breakdowns in law and order, in the unpunished theft of pennies and the overlooked little acts of cheating.

The Torah demands an extraordinary set of qualifications to make it as a Jewish Judge, a Dayan. There is to be no privileged status here. The Dayan is chosen is purely on merit.

The Dayan is not just a honorable man of robes, but a leader of the nation, willing to take responsibility for a difficult nation. The must be righteous, modest (כָּעַס), G-d fearing, non-materialistic and unbribable.

They should love people and be liked by them in turn.

They have to be חכמים - but also בּוֹנִים, people who understand the underlying principles of the law so deeply that they can apply them to any new situation. They have to be able to identify the precise variables of each situation.

Moshe could not find people who fully filled this criterion and had to settle for less. Our parsha brings three criteria (וְיֶדֶם הַחכָּמִים וּרְאוּעִים), and Parshas Yisro brings another four (אֲשֶׁר יְכוֹלֵא בָּבֶן אָדָם יְרָאוֹ אַלְכָּשִים) for a total of seven.

The criteria are not all brought together, to teach us that we should take judges who may have even only one of these qualities.

Once appointed, a judge has to be fearless in rendering the right decision, although he may excuse himself from judging a case because he is frightened of one of the parties. However, once he has an idea of which way the judgment is going to go, he may no longer withdraw.

A judge may not play Robin Hood (זֶהֶם לָכֶם בְּעָתָם וּבְעָתָם לָכֶם בְּעָתָם הָיוָה): i.e. he may not award a judgment which is not strictly according to the law, but which seems fairer, given the circumstances of the two parties. He may not award a poor man a financial judgment in his favor against a wealthy man. He may not take a position in court to save someone’s honor, even if he know that he can sort things out of-court.

The moment a judge does any of these things he is playing G-d. Really, we humans shouldn’t be judging at all. A man steals from a second man. As far as the victim is concerned, he will get all that he deserves. If he is meant to have that extra amount of money, he will make it back on the stock exchange tomorrow, or the price
of his apartment will go up. If he is not meant to have that money, there are thousands
of other ways in which he might have lost it. As for the thief, G-d will take care of
him. What need then of human judges?

Human judges are a special dispensation by G-d to dispense with justice on
earth, avoiding more painful judgments in the afterworld. As such we are G-d’s
emissaries (Shlichim). But our mandate is limited to the precise instructions He has
given us. We must take care of our little part. The rest is up to Him.

It is for this reason that the judges are ordered to consider a case involving one
cent with the same care, and with the same priority as a multi-billion dollar suit,
hearing it first if it came first. Our job is to take care of whatever part of the truth
comes our way. To ensure truth emerges from that little prutah is just as important,
in terms of human spirituality as ensuring truth in a case that rocks the nation.

Don’t ever let up, the Torah warns. Even if you think you have come across
this case 1,000 times, go through it now point by point – perhaps you will find a tiny
difference, or perhaps you will see things in a new light.

Having said that, G-d’s mandate to man is quite broad. G-d makes man a
partner in this undertaking – יִשְׁפּוֹט אֵלֵיהֶם בְּכָרְךָ. As implementers of G-d’s will they
are actually given the same name as one of the names of G-d Himself.

G-d assures the judges that He will be there, with them in every judgement,
guiding them and putting into their heads the right judgment. יִשְׁפּוֹט אֵלֵיהֶם בְּכָרְךָ, that G-d will judge in the midst of
the gathering of Judges, i.e. it is He who is judging through them by bringing His
Shechina down to rest in their midst during the judgment.

In a world of absolute values, the justice of any situation is contained
intrinsically within that situation. G-d exists by very necessity, and since justice
appears to be demanded as an essential attribute of each situation - by necessity - it
seems to be something most associated with G-d, something emerging from G-d’s
Will. This is why G-d gives justice especially to the Jewish people. For, are they not a
most essential and necessary ingredient to this world, without which the world would
not fulfill its purpose and be destroyed. Being that they are essential to the world, the
Jews are naturally more in harmony with Justice.

And yet, on the other hand, this Heavenly help does not mean that the human
condition can be ignored. A judge is required to take time out to deliberate carefully
on the issues and weighing up each side before making a final decision. For no man of
flesh and blood can claim to be operating at a level of pure intellect, and therefore of
pure justice. It would only be an arrogant person who would judge hastily, and such a
person lacks all wisdom.

The Maharal develops this theme further. The great Sanhedrin was placed in
the Temple grounds next to the Alter. The Alter had a ramp leading up to it, so that
the Cohanim would not climb stairs in accessing the Alter, thereby revealing even
parts of their legs. This was akin to licentiousness, for erva is nothing other than an
expression of the more physical side of a person. This very same prohibition (אל מעלה
למזבחי על במעלות) is the source of prohibiting a judge from walking rough-shod on the
head of the people by arrogantly judging in haste. Such arrogance is tantamount to
abandoning his intellect and becoming a mere physical imitation of the great human a
judge is supposed to be. There is no difference between such a person and someone
engaged in licentiousness – both are expressing pure body. “There is no doubt,”
concludes the Maharal, “that it is forbidden to appoint an arrogant person as a judge.”
In the very opening verses of Moshe’s final lengthy address to the Jewish people (i.e. the whole of Sefer Devarim), he mentions the appointment of judges. He exhorts the judges to judge fairly and not be frightened by any of the plaintiffs into deviating from the truth at any stage. The positioning of issues of justice at the outset of the Mishnah Torah is testament to the centrality of this idea in Judaism.

In fact, the Prophet Michah tells us that justice is one of the three pillars of Judaism, through which we can reach all of the Torah:

1. The Lord our God
2. The Lord is righteous
3. Love of neighbor
4. Love of stranger
5. Love of the poor
6. Love of neighbor
7. Love of stranger
8. Love of the poor
9. Love of neighbor
10. Love of stranger
11. Love of the poor
12. Love of neighbor
13. Love of stranger

In conclusion, the centrality of justice in Judaism is evident, as it is not only a fundamental principle but also a practical guide for living a righteous life.
For what does G-d demand of you except that you engage in justice and loving-kindness and walking modestly with HaSh-m your G-d.

Moshe stresses this by saying: (יהו) ואמר ל芥 בכל העדה (ת") - "at that time", at the time when you were to go conquer the land from people well-versed in war, I did not drill you in weapons nor make you study plans of war and strategy, but rather dealt with your moral perfection in justice. (Rav Shimshon Rephal Hirsch)

Whenever the Torah speaks of judges and justice, there is always a personal level that it applies to as well. We are supposed to rule over ourselves, judge the conflicts within ourselves, master our bad traits and redirect them. In this we have to be honest and impartial to ourselves, acting with the same justice as in a court of law.

Because this command relates to each one personally, the words of the Torah are Präparé to our own lives; rather, the actual appointing of judges has the spiritual effect of facilitating that process within ourselves.

But back to the actual judges, the appointment of whom now became a prerequisite for entering the land. Moshe introduces this issue by using the word הdiens - alas, woe - the terrible word used by Yirmiyahu to speak of the destruction. He warns that the beginning of destruction will lie in the small breakdowns in law and order, in the unpunished theft of pennies and the overlooked little acts of cheating.

Notichon Shelom - איכה - alas, woe - the terrible word used by Yirmiyahu to speak of the destruction. He warns that the beginning of destruction will lie in the small breakdowns in law and order, in the unpunished theft of pennies and the overlooked little acts of cheating.

טבריאי הפוסים, שרייה שופטת על שמך ולאسنדה. היא מינה אנשים - איכה, אלasers - alas, woe - the terrible word used by Yirmiyahu to speak of the destruction. He warns that the beginning of destruction will lie in the small breakdowns in law and order, in the unpunished theft of pennies and the overlooked little acts of cheating.

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Rav Dovid Feinstein, Kol Dodi, pg. 216-217
The judges should not react to the cases brought to them; they should also be proactive - going out to the people, guiding, leading, rebuking and strengthening the spiritual level of the nation \(^1\) (אנשי). A judge is no ivory tower academic – he is to be a leader of the people.

The Torah demands an extraordinary set of qualifications for one to make it as a Jewish Judge, a Dayan\(^2\). He is not just an honorable man of robes, but a leader of the nation in many respects. Such people have to be not only masters of Torah wisdom, but people who observe what they know \(^3\), righteous in every sense \(^4\). They must first and foremost lead by example.

The judges must be well-liked,\(^5\) for a judge must have the trust and legitimacy of the people. But they must be liked, not because they are popularists, but rather because of their deep sense of truth and justice \(^6\), their love of the people, their authentic example and their good name in the broader society \(^7\). They must have a proactive - going out to the people, guiding, leading, rebuking and strengthening the spiritual level of the nation 1.

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To qualify as judges, they must not only be masters of Torah, halachos, and so on, but also 1, people who understand the underlying principles of the law so deeply that they can apply them to any new situation. Working from the other direction as well, the judges must be able to look at any case and understand what principle of law needs to be applied. They have to be able to identify the precise variables of each situation, knowing what is and is not a relevant difference and how it affects the law 2. The ability to compare and contrast with precision is vital to be qualified as a judge.

It seems that Moshe could not find people who fully filled this criterion 3. Yet, we see that Moshe appointed judges nevertheless. Our parsha brings three criteria (there are nine total) and Parshas Yisro brings another four (cats of the chumash yiratah, א){אש and Parshas Yisro brings another four (cats of the chumash yiratah, א}{אש and Parshas Yisro brings another four (cats of the chumash yiratah, א}{אש), for a total of seven. Chizkuni says that the criteria are not all brought together but rather broken up to teach us that should we not find judges with all the requisite criteria, we should take judges who may have even only one of these qualities 4.

Here lies a great testimony to the democratic nature of Judaism: people are chosen because they deserve to - not because of any privileged status. This idea is to be extended to any communal or public position. It is natural to expect that amongst those doing the appointing there will be all kinds of pressures to favor this one or that, but it is just as a warning against this that the Torah tells the appointers to be fearless 5.

Once appointed, it is the judges themselves who have to be fearless, courageously rendering decisions as they see the truth no matter what dangers they are under as a result - אל נטרר מכ[result.

A judge may excuse himself from judging a case if he is frightened of one of the parties or for other various reasons. He may even do this in the middle of the court proceedings 6. However, once he has an idea of which way the judgment is

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going to go, he may not withdraw even if he feels threatened by one of the parties. (Presumably if his life is at stake, however, he may do so.)

A judge may not play Robin Hood, i.e. he may not award a judgment which is not strictly according to the law but which seems fairer given the circumstances of the two parties. He may not award a poor man a financial judgment in his favor against a wealthy man. He may not take a position in court to save someone’s honor even if he knows that he can sort things out out-of-court afterwards.

The moment a judge does any of these things he is playing G-d. In truth, we humans shouldn’t be judging at all. If, for example, a man steals from a second man, as far as the victim is concerned, he will get all that he deserves. If he is meant to have that extra amount of money, he will make it back on the stock exchange tomorrow or the price of his apartment will go up. If he is not meant to have that money, there are thousands of other ways in which he might have lost it. As for the thief, G-d will take care of him.

What need, then, of human judges? If they judge according to the truth they are playing G-d’s role. And if they err, they force G-d to make good their mistakes. Why not leave the whole thing to G-d to begin with - (לאלכי ההמשפט קיים?)

Human judges are a special dispensation by G-d to dispense with justice on earth, avoiding more painful judgments in the afterworld. As such, we are G-d’s emissaries (Shlichim). Our mandate, however, is limited to the precise instructions G-d has given us. G-d is still handling the broader world. He will ensure that all the details work into the big picture. We must take care of our little part, and the rest is up to Him.

It is for this same reason that the judges are ordered to consider a case involving one cent with the same care and priority as a multi-billion dollar suit, hearing it first if it came first. Our job is to take care of whatever part of the truth comes our way. To ensure that truth emerges from one little prutah is just as important, in terms of human spirituality, as ensuring truth in a case that rocks the nation. Don’t ever let up, the Torah warns. Even if you think you have come across this case 1,000 times, go through it now point by point – perhaps you will find...
a tiny difference, or perhaps you will see things in a new light. Two brothers come to you fighting over two inherited ovens. The difference between the ovens is miniscule. What does it really matter who is going to get what? They will both have fine ovens.

No, says the Torah: your job is to come up with the truth, even if that means a distinction of a hairsbreadth (כ.Enum). Having said that, G-d’s mandate to man is quite broad. G-d makes man a partner in this undertaking. As implementers of G-d’s will, the judges are actually given the same name as one of the names of G-d Himself. A man who has lost a case should whistle out of court in happiness, the Sages say, for he has had G-d’s Will bestowed upon him. But how can mortal man ever be up to such a thing, to making judgments in G-d’s Name? G-d assures the judges that He will be there with them every time, guiding them and putting the right judgment into their heads.

The Ramban says that דעלת אלכיס ישפט means בכר אלכיס ישפט: G-d will judge in the midst of the gathering of Judges, i.e. it is He who is judging through them by bringing His Shechina down to rest in their midst during the judgment. Another verse makes this clear. When two people have a dispute, they come in front of G-d’s Name. The Sages urge that they are literally standing in front of G-d. The judges and G-d are then partners in this judgment. The Sages take it further, stating that a judge who renders a true judgment is a partner with G-d in the whole of creation! In all other respects, our attributes can never be compared to G-d.

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d’s. We may be kind in imitation of G-d’s kindness. But His kindness is so infinitely greater that the comparison quickly breaks down. A truthful judgment, however, is the same for man as it is for G-d. Here we can truly be compared to G-d’s attribute of Justice.

The Maharal approaches the issue of why justice was given to man from a different angle: It is obvious and basic to us that justice needs to be done, and that a perversion of justice is a perversion of truth and of everything which we might associate with G-d. But it is more than that. Justice is G-dly more than other things, he says, because justice is something which emerges as the required and necessary result of any situation. In a world of absolute values, the justice of any situation is contained intrinsically within that situation. G-d exists by very necessity, and since justice appears to be demanded as an essential attribute of each situation - by necessity - it seems to be something most associated with G-d, something emerging from G-d’s Will. This is why G-d gives justice especially to the Jewish people. For, are they not a most essential and necessary ingredient to this world, without which the world would not fulfill its purpose and be destroyed? Being that they are essential to the world, the Jews are naturally more in harmony with Justice.

When man, and in particular the Jews, engage in justice, they show thereby that they accept the King of Justice, and elevate His presence in the world.

Yet, on the other hand, this Heavenly help does not mean that the human condition can be ignored. The Sages in Ethics of Our Fathers tell us that a judge has to be temperate in judgment, which means that he must take time out to deliberate carefully on the issues and weigh each side before making a final decision. No man of flesh and blood can claim to be operating at a level of pure intellect and therefore of pure justice. It would only be an arrogant person who would judge hastily, and such a person lacks all wisdom. It is true that G-d stands with a person in judgment. When man, and in particular the Jews, engage in justice, they show thereby that they accept the King of Justice, and elevate His presence in the world. Here we can truly be compared to G-d’s attribute of Justice!

But, this only helps if he turns himself into a vessel to receive G-d’s guidance. A humble person is likely to avoid such a position wherever there is a comparison. A truthful judgment, however, is the same for man as it is for G-d. Here we can truly be compared to G-d’s attribute of Justice.

...
appears to be a better candidate for the job. On the other hand, once it is clear that
one is, in fact, the most qualified for the job, he will take responsibility and lead as he
should. The appointment is a huge responsibility, as a judge has to not only judge
correctly but also be willing to suffer with leading a difficult nation. Someone too eager for this responsibility is surely a foolish man. But the judges’
humility will also help him after his appointment, to judge without any personal
interest – just as the Ultimate Judge judges us.

The Maharal develops this theme further. The great Sanhedrin was placed in
the Temple grounds next to the altar. The altar had a ramp leading up to it so that the
Cohanim would not climb stairs in accessing the altar, thereby revealing even parts of
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concludes the Maharal, “that it is forbidden to appoint an arrogant person as a judge.”
3. Conquering Lands – Destroying Whole Peoples

SUMMARY:

G-d promises us our land. But, He assures us, we will get nothing of the land of three of our sworn enemies: Eisav, Amon and Moav. We may cross their land and to offer to pay for food and water as we go along, but that is all. All three were unresponsive to Klal Yisroel’s request to sell them food. As a result, male Moavim and Amonim, even after they convert to Judaism, are never allowed to marry a normal Jew.

This is surprising: Much worse was done to us by the Egyptians, who enslaved and killed many of us. Yet they are welcome to marry a fellow-Jew three generations after conversion. Similarly, the Edomim – despite the long history of Western anti-Semitism – are allowed to marry fellow-Jews after conversion.

It seems that the Moabites and Amonites developed certain, very serious spiritual defects which cannot be fully rectified.

The Egyptians and the Edomites were evil. They were passionate about their evil. They had spiritual, intellectual and emotional energy invested in their beliefs. This passion was, ironically, their saving. Take that energy and channel it in the right direction, and we will see a great positive force. The object of attachment (to evil) was wrong, but the underlying human qualities had great potential.

But the Amonites and Moabites were just apathetic - evil by default. They couldn’t have cared less whether a hungry and tired people, who had guaranteed their peaceful intentions, were passing by. They had no special energy that could be re-directed into Torah. They could convert, but that is as far as they could ever go.

There is another quality which prevents the channeling of negative to positive energies and that is leitzanus. The Leitz lacks any sense of importance or profundity. This is the case of Amalek. Amalek had the energy, but their leitzanus made them the anti-Torah, if not anti-life itself.

Another nation permanently excluded from the Jewish people is the Cannanite nation. Any Cannanite nation who chose to fight the Jews would be killed, men, women and children. Similarly, the Emori under Sichon and Og suffered total annihilation by the Jewish people.

But the Torah is most extreme with respect to the Amalekites. We are told to kill them whenever they are encountered and to wage an eternal war against them. We need to nurse our memories and fight the Amalekites until we have killed them all and wiped their memory off the face of the earth.

When the Jews had just left Egypt, the Amalekites attacked the Jews because of their pure hatred of what the Jews stood for – Monotheists in the deepest sense. To make clear that their intention was as a spiritual protest they cut off the circumcisions of the Jewish males and threw them into the air. Had they been victorious, their plan was to commit total genocide on the Jews.

The original עמלק received this hatred form his grandfather, עשו. Since then, their survival only led to further corruption and to further attempts at Jewish genocide, most famously by Haman.

עמלק is that force which, more than anything else, gives people reason to believe that G-d, as we know him, does not exist. עמלק’s existence, therefore, is in contradiction to the ultimate reality and purpose of this world. At a time when that
reality will be manifestly apparent, to the exclusion of anything else, that Amalek will have no place. As מִלְּכָּא אֶלֶף הַיּוֹם וּמִלְּכָּא עַד הַיּוֹם אֶלֶף, put it, יְשַׁעַר אֶלֶף עָלָיו וּמִלְּכָּא עַד הַיּוֹם אֶלֶף.

Amalek’s whole philosophy was to undermine any sense that anything in this world is of value. Other nations that had false ideologies could be challenged to transfer their beliefs and commitments to the right source; but Amalek had no sense of the importance of anything that could be channeled in the right direction.

As with Amalek, the case of the Canaanites is explained by the Torah itself. Again, the Torah itself gives us the reasons. If we do not kill them all, we will land to the next generation, they had re-assimilated. The Canaanites however, represent Jews and the Egyptians have this relationship and therefore the Egyptians are allowed, after three generations, to marry a normal Jews. The Canaanites however, represent potential, the Egyptians are allowed, after three generations, to marry a normal Jews.

The Maharal describes how the spiritual heirs of some nations were so committed to sensuality and materialism (סוף והחוף) that they became the forefathers of nations bearing these forces. Thus Avraham Avinu tells the two youths following him to the Akeidas Yitzchak -尚书 התורה, which the Sages interpret as 1尚书 התורה. One of those two youths was Eliezer, Avraham’s servant and a Canaanite. Such nations can yet attach themselves to spirituality by associating with those who radiate that spirituality, in a way that a material vessel holds the shape imposed on it by its form. This is the principle of opposites, that really make up one whole, just like black and white are really a part of, and complete the color spectrum.

For Jews to introduce the idea of Monotheism, our single greatest contribution to the civilization ever, we needed a total commitment to this idea. Given any clash between Jewish and Canaanite culture, there was every chance that Canaanite culture would have won out. We would have inherited a value system which would have included laws prohibiting kindness to the stranger and many other values which would have made the Nazis look tame.

The Maharal,םכפכפככ, quotes Moses saying, 1:尚书 התורה that the Sages interpret as 1尚书 התורה. Such nations can yet attach themselves to spirituality by associating with those who radiate that spirituality, in a way that a material vessel holds the shape imposed on it by its form. This is the principle of opposites, that really make up one whole, just like black and white are really a part of, and complete the color spectrum. Potentially, the Jews and the Egyptians have this relationship and therefore the Egyptians are allowed, after three generations, to marry a normal Jews. The Canaanites however, represent potential, the Egyptians are allowed, after three generations, to marry a normal Jews.

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their own form, imprinting this, in turn, on the world around them. This then becomes a destructive, competing form to the Jews and can only be used if subdued rather than sublimated. However, the Canaanites were then living independently in Israel – expressing their own culture.

We are required to go against our natural instincts and to destroy the Canaanites because they are considered rodfim. Their culture was so permeated with idolatry and the immorality that stemmed from this that, rather than the Jews attracting them to Monotheism, they would almost certainly infect the Jews with their decadent ideology.

Even if he is not to blame, such a Kenaani would unwittingly contribute to the corruption of the Jews and would be considered a rodef, just like an unborn baby threatening his mother's life would be killed. Of course the baby is not to blame for the situation – he is entirely innocent - but still he is a rodp.

Things did not have to be this way. But the collective commitment to evil by the entire nation over many generations ultimately led to this tragic state of affairs.

Jews have a proud record of sensitivity to the basic rights of all human beings. Jewish law requires that we allow גרי תושב to live in the land and we are required to guarantee their well-being. We are required to respect the territoriality of other nations. A non-defensive war against any nation was never permitted without the express permission of הוהי הקב. Therefore, the injunctions against these two groups are clearly very specific and for very specific reasons.

Certainly it is difficult for us to relate to such a commandment. Even the great King Saul was not able to bring himself to fulfill this commandment by killing all the Amelekites and their flocks. “How could it be,” he said to himself, “that that same Torah which commands that the whole procedure of Eglah Arufah be brought for a single unaccounted murder, how can a whole nation be destroyed? And if the people sinned, what did the animals do? And if the adults sinned, what did the minors do?”

Although there are opinions that the Nazis, and any nation which wished to kill the Jews, is considered Amalek, in practice, we do not know who the Amalakites, or any of the other nations are today. From the time that Sancheriv came and mixed up the nations, these laws do not apply today. They never could apply unless clearly mandated by G-d – man could never make such a decision on his own and, with the slightest doubt, we may not apply them at all.
A great deal of Parshas Devarim deals with Klal Yisrael’s military activities as they approach the Land of Israel, which continues from the last two Parshios of Sefer
במדבר. לפי הרמב"ן, ספר דברים הוא הספר ההבנדי לעם החיה בארץ ישראל בדור רבינו המשה והו יבאר לישראל צוותי התורה מצויות רוב בארצה הנכנס לדור הרבינו בصراع דרכם עד מארץ להם. אמר שמעון: צוותי התורה שבמשנהantages ענין של מצויות בתחום الداخل. בהרי כף מדריך עלי הקשו הרבה אבל נמולים הוא ויהיו כל שלג ארץ הוא פסוק שיקום הביאו שביירון את הוא היסוד משמעו ושבם היה שוה עץ וכולי spanish

ה札מח כאוכל: הפסח הזה... יבוא במלשך בני ישראל בשאר רמות התורה הפרימיטיביים של פרישות

השם שמעון

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In the end, none of these nations, Edom\(^2\), Moav\(^3\) and Ammon, were responsive to Klal Yisroel’s request to sell them food. All refused flatly to help them in any way.

In Parshas bemidbar, the Torah tells us that although Moavim and Ammonim may convert to Judaism, a male or female convert, although fully Jewish, cannot marry a normal Jew. You *shall not loathe an* convert, though fully Jewish, who converts, although fully Jewish, is never allowed to marry a normal Jew: \(^4\)

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Edomite; for he is your brother; you shall not loathe an Egyptian; because you were a stranger in his land. The children who are fathered by them shall enter into the congregation of the L-rd in their third generation.1

Even were we to somehow understand that the Moabites and Amonites sinned more grievously than the Egyptians, which seems a little far-fetched, the Edomites also declined to offer us food and water. Yet, they are included under the same law as the Egyptians!

Clearly, then, these laws do not have to do with any sort of revenge or similar such motive. Nor do the explanations given by the תורה (תנ"ע) about the עמוּנָי and מואָבִי restrictions (that they failed to be hospitable) reflect the proportionality of their crime. In Jewish law, even a Jew who fails to provide hospitality transgresses an עִשָּׂה at most. In terms of pure hatred, the אדומים - the Western world - are surely greater. The#adomim are in a relationship of intrinsic tension with the Jews (את שונא שעשו ההלכה עיינא). It is they who are the perpetrators of all the pogroms, holocausts, crusades, expulsions and blood libels throughout European history. Yet, they are given a more lenient halachic status than those who didn't greet us with hospitality! Nor is there any law to restrict any future nation that will commit any crime against us from converting. Therefore, the רה"ת is telling us that Amon and Moav developed certain very serious spiritual defects, defects that are a part of the spiritual, genetic endowments of the entire nation, and which, in some cases, cannot be rectified.

The situation gets much worse when it comes to the אمورים (Ammorites), reflected in its two kingdoms (Cheshbon under Sichon and Bashan under Og). Here, G-d announces to the Jewish people that they will fight and destroy the enemy, for their land is destined to be a part of the Jewish people. Still, the approach is the same. Sichon is told: Let us through, sell us food and water, and we will leave you alone.2 But, in a repeat of the Egyptian Exodus, G-d hardens their hearts and they refuse. What follows is a catastrophic destruction of men, women and children, the annihilation of an entire nation.3 The Jews do the same to Bashan, the other Emorite nation. Sensitive individuals have often wondered about the seeming cruelty of this act and about the seeming resoluteness that they may have no redeeming features that should act to save them.

In fact, the קנאים are permanently excluded from the Jewish nation. They cannot become תושב. They either have to leave, stay in a position of captivity, or something else.

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1 חכ. כג דבirsim, כה יב
2 כז ב: אכלי בכסף ולא焼תי, ובכפר ולאאכלתי
3 כט ב: יעבדו את השאר נאמנים שנשארים לא anzeigen
4 לדים, יב: עליה באית את האור, ואכלי בכסף, לא אכלתי בכסף
5 לדים, יא: ממאת את מפניך פזרתי היום מצוך אנכי, ואת מני שמר...
servitude or be killed\(^1\). Any Canaanites left in the land would be killed on the spot\(^2\). Many commentators learn that the prohibition of intermarrying was said specifically about the Canaanites\(^3\). (Rachav, who married Yehoshua, was not originally a Canaanite\(^4\).) But the laws concerning Amalekites are even more stringent. We are not only enjoined to remember forever what they did to us\(^5\), but we are told to kill them whenever they are encountered\(^6\) and to wage an eternal war against them\(^7\). We need to nurse our memories and fight the Amalekites until we have killed them all\(^8\) and wiped their memory off the face of the earth\(^9\). So central is this idea, that it was one of big three commandments given to Bnei Yisrael upon their entry to Israel\(^10\).

Yet surprisingly, in both the case of a Canaanite and that of an Amalekite whom we inadvertently allow to convert (e.g. in a situation where their identity was unknown to the (ב), they are fully Jewish and there are no marriage restrictions.

Rashi tells us that the reason for allowing the Mitzrim to completely become a part of us is because of our gratitude to them. Even though they threw our males into the river, they were nevertheless our host country\(^11\). The Ramban tells us that it is just part of us because of our gratitude to them. Even though they threw our males into the river, they were nevertheless our host country.

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But, in explaining further, the Ramban seems to bring the riddle back full circle. The Ramban is of the opinion that Moav (but not Ammon) agreed to sell the Jews food and water. They could not see the point of hasseling to do a kindness for someone else for decades, and in whose merit he was saved from Sedom. The Ammonites, though, were just ‘blah’ – apathetic about life. They were evil by default – they couldn’t have cared less whether a hungry and tired people, who had guaranteed their peaceful intentions, were passing by. Here was their chance to repay the kindness our ancestor, Avraham Avinu, had done for their people, who had guaranteed their peaceful intentions, were passing by. Here was their chance to repay the kindness our ancestor, Avraham Avinu, had done for their people, who had guaranteed their peaceful intentions, were passing by.

Today this or that nation may seek to destroy. Tomorrow he may smile towards you and show you kindness. Ammon and Moav, however, are totally lacking in something – surely that is worse?

Chaver Maamarim explains that this Ramban teaches us that Midos are worse than actions, but he does not tell us why.

Eliyahu Ki Tov explains the difference between the Egyptians and the Ammonites. Yes, the Egyptians were evil, but they were passionate about their evil. They had spiritual, intellectual and emotional energy invested in their beliefs. Take that energy and channel it in the right direction, and we will see a great positive force. The object of attachment was wrong, but the underlying human qualities had great potential. The Ammonites, however, were just ‘blah’ – apathetic about life. They were evil by default – they couldn’t have cared less whether a hungry and tired people, who had guaranteed their peaceful intentions, were passing by. Here was their chance to repay the kindness our ancestor, Avraham Avinu, had done for their people, who had guaranteed their peaceful intentions, were passing by.
They revealed ingratitude more debased than a murderer. A murderer is driven by a heart which rages in brutality. But a heart which is deeply stirred may sometimes also be stirred with mercy. Worse than the murderer is one totally lacking in heart. He will never turn toward loving-kindness. ... This people must be kept at a distance from the people whose life is built on the foundation of loving-kindness.

There is another quality which prevents the channeling of negative to positive energies, and that is leitzanus. Leitzanus is such that it cannot be cured, for it forms, as the Mesillas Yesharim explains, an oily shield off which any rebuke slips. The Leitz turns all importance into a joke. He lacks any sense of profundity and therefore cannot relate to the wisdom of Torah. This is the case of Amalek. Amalek’s anti-Torahism hardly seemed apathetic. They marched over a long desert to reach and attack the Jews. But their leitzanus made them the anti-Torah, if not anti-life itself.

Bilam prophesized that The beginning of all nations is Amalek, but his end is destruction. The end of days, the Messianic era, is a time when all nations, except for Amalek, will find their Tikun. And since that time is a time when nothing can exist that is not corrected, Amalek perforce will self-destruct. The reason for Amalek's self-destruction is because there is a time when all nations, except for Amalek, will find their Tikun. And since that time is a time when nothing can exist that is not corrected, Amalek perforce will self-destruct. The reason for Amalek's self-destruction is because there is a time when all nations, except for Amalek, will find their Tikun. And since that time is a time when nothing can exist that is not corrected, Amalek perforce will self-destruct.

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These need to be seen in the context of the laws to other non-Jews, which reflect a deep understanding of the basic rights of all human beings. The commandment to destroy the Canaanites could not have been simply an act of ethnic cleansing, because Jewish law requires that we allow a whole nation to be destroyed? And if the people sinned, what did the animals do? And if the adults sinned, what did the minors do?” A heavenly voice then went out and said: how could it be,” he said to himself, “that the same Torah which commands that the whole procedure of Eglah Arufah be brought for a single unaccounted murder can

We are required to go against our natural instincts and to destroy the Canaanites because they are considered to be a rod for the world, not to blame, was just that. An unborn baby threatening his mother’s life is also considered a rod for the world and is killed. The baby is surely not to blame for the situation, and the immorality that stemmed from this, that, rather than the Jews attracting them to Monotheism, they would almost certainly infect the Jews with their decadent ideology.

Of course, this does not mean that every Canaanite who grew up in this environment deliberately intended to corrupt the Jews. But the net result, even if he is not to blame, was just that. An unborn baby threatening his mother’s life is also considered a rod for the world and is killed. The baby is surely not to blame for the situation, and the immorality that stemmed from this, that, rather than the Jews attracting them to Monotheism, they would almost certainly infect the Jews with their decadent ideology.

It is highly unusual for the Torah itself to give reasons for its commandments. Yet, in the cases of the Canaanites and the Amalekites, the Torah does provide explanations. By telling us that we should remember what the Amalekites did to us when we were going out of Egypt. At that time, all the nations of the world had come to

Rabbi Uziel Milevsky
believe in G-d and recognized that the Jews were the chosen people. The Amalekites, however, attacked form the back, killing the weak and the stragglers. By daring to do what every other nation was too frightened to even contemplate, they were able to bring in the possibility that this G-d of the Jews may be defeatable after all. This can be compared to a cauldron of hot water which everyone is too frightened to jump into. However, after the first person jumps in, the waters cool off for everyone else to jump in afterwards.

The Amalekites attacked the Jews for no reason, as the Jews were not threatening their life or property in any way. It was pure hatred of what the Jews stood for, Monotheists in the deepest sense, which moved them to come against the Jewish nation. They went to great trouble to do so, coming from an enormous distance across the desert. When they reached the Jews, they made clear that their intention was as a spiritual protest against the miracles that the Jews had experienced. They therefore barbarically cut off the circumcisions of the Jewish males and threw them into the air. Had they been victorious, their plan was to commit total genocide on the Jews. To this end, they had assembled a coalition of other nations and enticed them to join them in battle.

This was not the first time that the Jews had heard from Amalek. The nation of Amalek had a history of total and vicious anti-Semitism stemming back to their founder, עמלק, who had received this hatred from אווש. Since that time, they had committed themselves to a value system which was totally antithetical to anything good. They had violated every ethical and spiritual principle for generations. History showed that their survival only led to further corruption and to further attempts at genocide on the Jews. The Amalekites were still trying to destroy the Jews at the time of Shaul Hamelech, four centuries later. Shaul spared their ruler, Agag, while destroying the rest of the nation. But Agag and his descendants did not give up. Four centuries later, Agag’s descendent come so close to destroying the Jews.

עמלק’s existence was ultimately the biggest חלול. עמלק is that force which, more than anything else, gives people reason to believe that G-d, as we know him, does not exist. Unluckily, therefore, is in contradiction to the ultimate reality and purpose of this world. At a time when that reality will be manifestly apparent to the exclusion of anything else, עמלק will perforce have no place. As בלאנס put it:

Unlike other challenges to Judaism which developed sophisticated ideologies and philosophies, Amalek’s whole philosophy was to undermine any sense that anything in this world is of value. Other nations with false ideologies could be challenged to transfer their beliefs and commitments to the right source; עמלק had no sense of the importance of anything that could be channeled in the right direction.

Because the Jews represented commitment to spiritual reality, G-d clearly showed them that it was their spiritual weakness which gave עמלק its strength. If you
have come to test me (says G-d), let (Amalek) the evil one come and test you. Immediately, “And Amalek came”.

A little harder to explain is the case of the Canaanites. Again, the Torah itself gives us the reasons: if we do not kill them all, we will land out intermarrying with them and assimilating into their powerful and perverse society. Despicably, we are likely to adopt their idolatrous practices⁴. After all, intermarried spouses are expected to take each other’s religious beliefs seriously. The problem with the Canaanites was that they were living in the land of Israel. Here, they would become citizens of the same state. Surely one has to make peace with one’s fellow country men, the logic goes, and we should all enter into the same civil pact. The Torah, however, calls this a מוקש, a fatal trap that will ultimately destroy us⁵. It is folly to think that we will be the dominant culture and change them. They were on the land of Israel for centuries, and their culture was very deep and well-established. The Canaanites were the bastion of idolatry; they were the founders of polytheistic practices and their primary ideological transmitters⁴. The Jews were too new to the Torah to stand up to this. Without perhaps even realizing it, we would be seduced into thinking that their despicable practices were really the in thing to do after all⁵.

In a world which has always been primarily non-Monotheistic (even today) and which at one stage had virtually entirely forgotten the notion of the one G-d, the Jews single-handedly reintroduced the concept. This was the single greatest contribution to civilization ever. In order to achieve this, however, the Jews had to have a total commitment to this idea. In the post-הראשון זמר era the concept of G-d got lost because of what were initially small compromises in Monotheistic belief.⁶ Therefore, the תורה gives a long list of prohibitions against any form of compromise in this area. For example, we see the following 26 negative prohibitions in the סמ”ג:

A. Kaplan translation:

1) When they practice their religion and sacrifice to their gods, they will invite you, and you will end up eating their sacrifice.

2) You will then allow their daughters to marry your sons, and when their daughters worship their gods, they will lead your sons to follow their religion.

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See זרה עבודה בישמהו רמבם

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6) See זרה עבודה בישמהו רמבם
• We are enjoined not only not to turn to idolatry but also not to follow the thoughts of our heart and the temptations of what we see, nor to imitate the practices of idolaters even not for the purposes of idolatry (יִד וּטֹ & נ).  
• Not to use G-d’s Name in vain. (טז)  
• Not to serve idols; not to kiss or bow to idols even not in an act of service; not to make idols for oneself or others; not to make any image of man (נ נ ו ה).  
• Not to lead Jews to idolatry; not to rebuild a city so accused; not to enjoy from such a city’s material possessions or benefit from any idolatry or its embellishments. (כ–מ).  
• Not to prophesize falsely or in the name of idolatry; neither to listen to such a person nor to fear killing him. (ל ל ד)  
• Not to seek the advice of or to engage in any acts called אוב,ידעוני & מולך. (Prohibitions ל–מ)  
• Not to make a מצבה or hewn stone to bow on or to plant a tree in the Temple. (מב–מד).

The commitment of the seven nations to polytheism and the corrupt values that went with this went so deep and was so passionate that given any clash between Jewish and Canaanite culture, there was every chance that Canaanite culture would have won out. (Therefore, according to the תורת, it was not enough for the תורה to demand their destruction; the תורה had to additionally command us not to allow them to settle on our land) The Canaanim would have bequeathed to the world idolatrous practices which included פַּעְר, where the service was to excrete in front of it! We would have inherited a value system that would have included laws prohibiting kindness to the stranger, disallowing peaceful co-existence with neighbors and many other values which would have made the Nazis look tame. This is not to say that attempts had not been made to reform the כנעים. The best attempt was made by אבינו אбраם. He had all the tools he needed for success - holiness, charisma, dedication, drive, wealth, prestige, and he spent the best years of his life walking up and down כנען preaching the doctrine of One G-d. In fact, his efforts were not without considerable success - as time went on he attracted an increasing entourage of followers. But in the end, the mighty culture of כנען eroded all his successes. By the very next generation, they had re-assimilated. אбраם's thousands, if not tens of thousands of converts, were nowhere to be seen. צחקי was to survey a totally barren, polytheistic scene once more. (The historian Yechezkel Kaufman has documented just how alien Monotheism was to the broader environment of the Jews.)

Yet, G-d still did not give up on the כנעים. אברם's efforts were headed, he promised him the land instead of the כנעים, but only if those despicable people would continue in their wickedness for a whole four more generations. Still they did not do תשובה.  

Given the huge cultural power of the Canaanim to transmit their evil ethics, they collectively became a רודף. The רודף applies even if the רודף is essentially innocent. Thus it applies even if the רודף is an unborn baby threatening the mother.¹

1 מ назад ת匣ור משועה ב
What needs to be stressed here is that no human being could ever be entitled to decide that any nation, no matter how evil, deserves to be killed. Only G-d could make that choice. The slightest doubt as to whether we are fulfilling G-d's will is enough to prohibit any action in this direction. Today, for example, these laws are completely in abeyance.

Although there are those who associated Amalek with the Nazis, and indeed with any nation that tries to wipe out the Jews in any generation, we cannot definitely indentify Amalek in practice. The lessons of these nations remain but sobering and frightening lessons for ourselves – to understand our own human condition and how deeply any human, including ourselves, is capable of sinking.
1. The Torah unchanging forever

**SUMMARY:**

If G-d has a plan for the world then he has to have a mechanism for revealing this plan. This mechanism has to lend itself to clear and convincing proof that this is His word. The mechanism turned out to be the Revelation of the Torah at Sinai. In our parsha, the Torah declares that the entire nation witnessed the events at Sinai at a level of face to face prophecy, unfiltered by any imaginative faculty and that this is the primary source of our trust that the Revelation did indeed take place. The Jews could not handle any more of such intense prophecy and therefore requested that Moshe continue the Revelation.

There are many secondary proofs to the authenticity of Torah. For one this Torah, as a system of living, works and has worked across time and place. Secondly, the Torah makes very specific predictions. Thirdly, there was a complete consensus amongst the nation in the first 1000 years after Sinai that it took place.

If the Torah were a fabrication, it would be impossible that, amongst a nation with a track record for skepticism, there would not have been a huge number who declared it a fraud. In addition, differing versions of what happened would have developed. Further, the miracles in Egypt and during the desert were given under conditions where they could be examined closely, by everyone (including non-Jews) and without the element of surprise. The מanna fell for 40 years and most of the plagues happened with clear warning, Moses announcing exactly what was going to happen.

Other proofs for the Torah include archaeology and the fact that both Christianity and Islam confirm the Sinai account.

But all of these things are secondary to the primary claim. This is the fact that there was a national revelation to the whole nation. Moses did not emerge from a cave - Mohammed-like - and proclaim he heard a prophecy. The ever weary Jews, the most skeptical nation on earth, would have had his head. Rather the entire nation stood at Sinai, spoke to G-d face to face and was able to authenticate all the rest of Moses’ prophecy.

One cannot fabricate a claim of national revelation. All religions would have loved to have made such a claim, but no-one has ever dared to claim such a thing. A claim of national revelation can never be made unless it is true. All claims to new religions are made by individual people who made private claims to personal revelation.

What would happen if they did make a claim of national revelation? Let us take an example provided by Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb. Have you ever noticed that UFO claims are always about a spacecraft landing in a deserted field? Imagine that your friend tells you one day that he has just seen a space-craft landing in Time Square, during morning rush hour. You phone a friend whose offices overlook Time Square and ask him whether he sees anything. Negative. You turn on the radio – no mention of such an event. You turn to all those around you and ask whether they heard of such a thing. No-one has. At which point you grab the person and walk them off to the nearest mental institution.
Now let us say that a person tells you that they did not see the event, but that all of our ancestors saw this event 250 years ago. Our first reaction is to go to our parents and say, “Mom, did your parents ever tell you about a spacecraft landing in Times Square?” I ask my friends and anyone I know to ask the same. No-one was ever told such a thing by their parents or by anyone of the previous generation. Only, apparently, has our claimant. Well this still isn’t going to get him out of the loony bin.

Judaism not only makes such a claim, but our Torah-keeping parents have all heard of this claim from their parents, and so on back for as 1000’s of years. As the Kuzari states, that claim, is watertight. You simply cannot make it up.

According to the Ramban, our verse now brings a prohibition against forgetting the Sinai experience. Should a false prophets come and claim that the Torah has changed, we will know that he is wrong. Had we received the Torah only from a prophet, even if his prophecy had been authenticated, there would always have been the risk that another prophet would come along and command us to do differently. He may back this up with all kinds of signs and, at the very least, cause us to doubt the authenticity or applicability of the original prophecy.

But, once we have heard the Torah directly from G-d, and we saw all the events at Sinai with our own eyes, without any intermediary, we are in a position to reject all who dispute this even should he bring signs and wonders as a back up. The Jewish People is able to give evidence on Sinai and all its events. They witnessed the authentication of Moses’ prophecy; they are our direct ancestors who have told us about this generation after generation.

All the miracles that led up to the Exodus, especially the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea, are a part of the package of proofs that support the Sinai experience.

To facilitate remembering the Exodus, the Torah introduces many מצוות which are מצוות מציאת מצרים or which include mention of that experience (e.g. Tefilin, Mezuzah, Kiddush). In addition, the Torah introduces Chagim which remind us of specific aspects of that entire period of history. Most dramatically, the שניות דברים in פרשת ואתחנן mentions מציאת מצרים as the reason for keeping the Shabbos.

Through this, it is the whole nation, and not just one group, who is charged with keeping this historical reality alive and accurate. Ultimately, it is parents who are charged with communicating this information to the people for whom they care the most, their children, further ensuring that distortions do not enter.
If G-d has a plan for the world, He must have a mechanism for revealing this plan, and the mechanism must lend itself to clear and convincing proof that this is G-d's word. The mechanism we speak of is the Revelation at Sinai. In our Parsha, the Torah declares that the entire nation witnessed the events at Sinai at a level of face-to-face prophecy, and that this is the primary source of our trust that the Revelation did indeed take place.

Having said this, we need to understand that there is no absolute proof for any knowledge. Science doesn't even pretend to work this way (although the layman often thinks that it does). For any particular set of phenomena there are usually several (sometimes hundreds of) competing scientific theories. A scientific theory is accepted as being true because it is the best, simplest, most aesthetic and inclusive explanation for a particular body of knowledge. In addition, it should make testable predictions.

We should not hold Judaism accountable to standards which are higher than scientific standards, for it is doubtful whether a higher standard actually exists. However, by scientific standards, Judaism can certainly be proven true. For example:

(a) Judaism works! It has worked across time, in different cultures (North African, European, etc.), under radically different circumstances (American affluence, the Holocaust). No other system comes close to Judaism's combination of wisdom and profundity in addition to its practical, livable nature. The Bechor Shor says that it is inconceivable that Judaism is the product of a human mind1. The nations of the world have envied the system of wise living which has sustained the Jewish People against all odds2.

(b) The Torah makes very specific predictions which have come true3.

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1Malbim also says that this is the meaning of the word ראה at the beginning of Parshas Reeh:

כבוד שור ד: ימי נגダー ראשוד לקוק ומשפטי זדיקי בכל תורה ההיא: יתא שווי כאלód לכל
לקוף כמותו, ישים חביבי שלא באברח במר די, כי אם אתה חביב

Malbim says that this shows that the blessings and curses are not simply promises for the future. One can actually see that people who observe the Torah have a sense of accomplishment, fulfillment and spiritual growth. The blessings are there for all to see.

2דברים ד (אות câ€™): ה: יראה לך חכומיך חכמה משפטי всем עמי תראה לכל התורה ההיא: יתא שווי כאריך
שאר אתמי באכפיך שמע שלשה: (א) שמעה הצדק עמי תראה: כל תורה ההיא אשר תראה לכל התורה ההיא: (ב) כי רבי נגדר ראשוד לך משפטי כל תורה ההיא: יתא שווי כאריך
ברח הך אלימלך בכל קטרן אלי: (ג) ירא לך נגדר ראשוד לך משפטי ברו כל התורה ההיא: יתא שווי כאריך.

3The best example of this is the תוכחות, where very specific conditions were laid down for the Jews being able to remain in Israel and very specific consequences were predicted for failure to do this. Another case is that of שומימת, and the year before and after.
(c) The complete consensus amongst the nation in the first 1000 years after Sinai mitigates against the Sinai experience being made up. It is impossible to create a fiction that will not have some skeptics (amongst a nation with a track record for skepticism) and that will not have differing versions of what happened.

(d) All the miracles in Egypt and during the desert were given under conditions where they could be examined closely, by everyone (including non-Jews), and without the element of surprise. The plagues fell for 40 years, and most of the plagues in Egypt were with clear warning as to exactly what was going to happen.

(e) The overall consensus is that archaeology confirms the authenticity of the Bible account wherever it could be checked.

(f) Both Christianity and Islam, the other two major Monotheistic religions, accept the Sinai account as being authentic.

All of these proofs are secondary to the primary claim, however. The most important fact was a national revelation to the whole nation. Moshe did not emerge from a cave, Mohammed-like, and proclaim that he had received a prophecy. The Kuzari tells us that such a claim will never be made for one cannot dare to claim such a thing. If such a claim were to be made before, there would have been such a claim, or anything near like it, been made before.

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Consider the verse

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2 In recent decades a new school of archaeology, the Copenhagen school, has challenged this assumption, given the evidence it is hard not to conclude that this school is driven more by ideology than scholarship.

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Not only did they witness these events, but they participated in them:

a thing. A claim of national revelation can never be made unless it is true. All claims to new religions are made by individual people who made private claims to personal revelations.

What would happen if founders of new religions would make claims of national revelations? Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb gives a fitting example: UFO claims are always about a spacecraft landing in a deserted field. Imagine that someone tells his friend that he has just seen a space-craft landing in Time Square during morning rush hour. The other phones a friend whose offices overlook Time Square and asks him whether he sees anything. Negative. He turns on the radio – no mention of such an event. He turns to all those around him and asks whether they heard of such a thing. No one has heard anything. He grabs the person and walks him off to the nearest mental institution.

Now let us say that a person mentions that he did not see the event but all his ancestors saw this event 250 years ago. Our first reaction is to go to our parents and say, “Mom, did your parents ever tell you about a spacecraft landing in Times Square?” He asks his friends and anyone he knows to ask the same. No one was ever told such a thing by their parents or by anyone of the previous generation; only, apparently, our claimant. Well, this still won’t get him out of the loony bin. Judaism not only makes such a claim, but our Torah-keeping parents have all forgotten the Sinai experience. We are commanded to remember the Shofar sounds, according to the Ramban, our verse now brings a prohibition against national revelations. Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb gives a fitting example: UFO claims are always about a spacecraft landing in a deserted field. Imagine that someone tells his friend that he has just seen a space-craft landing in Times Square during morning rush hour. The other phones a friend whose offices overlook Time Square and asks him whether he sees anything. Negative. He turns on the radio – no mention of such an event. He turns to all those around him and asks whether they heard of such a thing. No one has heard anything. He grabs the person and walks him off to the nearest mental institution.

Not only did they witness these events, but they participated in them:
the thunder and the lightening, but especially G-d’s unprecedented communication with each person who stood there

The Ramban explains that the reason for this Mitzvah is in order to be able to cope with future, false prophets who will claim that the Torah has changed, denying a fundamental of our faith. Had we received the Torah only from a prophet, even had his prophecy been authenticated, there would have always been the risk that another prophet would come along and command us to do differently. He may back this up with all kinds of signs, and, at the very least, cause us to doubt the authenticity or applicability of the original prophecy.

But, says the Ramban, once we have heard the Torah directly from G-d and we saw all the events at Sinai with our own eyes without any intermediary, we are in a position to reject all who dispute this event even if he backed up his claim with signs and wonders. The Jewish People is able to give evidence for Sinai and all its events. They witnessed the authentication of Moshe’s prophecy, and they are our direct ancestors who have told us about this generation after generation.

Later in Parshas VaEschanan, as an introduction to the repetition of the 10 Commandments, the Parsha deepens this understanding. Moshe exhorts the people to keep the Mitzvos because each one personally entered into a covenant with G-d:
G-d spoke with us face to face,
unfiltered by any imaginative faculty,
and it was only at the people's request that Moshe continued to tell over what G-d was saying:

All the miracles that led up to the Exodus, especially the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea, are a part of the package of proofs that support the Sinai experience. The Exodus is testimony, says the Aruch HaShulchan, to G-d’s Hashgacha in the world, and it is testimony to G-d’s ability to change nature. In addition, the crossing of the Red Sea, are a part of the package of proofs that support the Sinai experience (e.g. Tefilin, Mezuzah, Kiddush). In addition, the Ten Commandments and the package of proofs introduced in Tefilin, Mezuzah, Kiddush are part of the package of proofs that support the Sinai experience.

This nation, however, was chosen for responsibilities – not privileges. Those responsibilities became manifest at Maamad Har Sinai.

To facilitate remembering the Exodus, the Torah introduces many mitzvot that are unmentioned in the Torah or introduced in or after the period which include mention of the Egypt/Sinai experience (e.g. Tefilin, Mezuzah, Kiddush). In addition, the Torah introduces Chagim which remind us of specific aspects of that entire period of history. Most dramatically, the crossing of the Red Sea and the Ten Commandments introduced in Shabbos as the reason for keeping the Shabbos.

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As the Ramban explains:
Through this, it is the whole nation, and not just one group, who is charged with keeping this historical reality alive and accurate. Ultimately, it is parents who are charged with communicating this information to the people for whom they care the most, their children, further ensuring that distortions do not enter. (Parents typically want the best for their children. This includes ensuring that they know the truths their parents know).

As we showed briefly above, there are many other proofs showing that G-d gave the Torah on Mt. Sinai. Some of these are internal proofs, i.e. from the Torah itself, and some of these are external, i.e. from archeology, etc. However, it is clear what the Torah itself regards as the most powerful of all proofs: that the entire nation witnessed the events at Sinai at a level of face-to-face prophecy.

Rav Hirsch (ibid) points out that say this about teaching a grandson and not a son. For it is only when a son sees that what his father is teaching him is the same as he, the father, received from his father, that he can know that this is the same information that was received at Sinai.

... It remains somewhat striking that the Gemorrah should attach this consideration to teaching a grandson and not already teaching a son. ... If the grandson ... sees that his father has only taught him what he himself had received from his father, and so the conclusion lies to hand that altogether the fathers back to Moses have only handed down what they had received from their fathers, and the mouth of his father and grandfather becomes for him as the mouth of Moses.
2. Changes in the Ten Commandments

SUMMARY:

In this week’s Parsha, the 10 Commandments are repeated. In Luchos Rishonos we are asked to remember the Sabbath, (זכור), whereas in the second we are told to keep it (שומר). The Sages tell us that אחד בדבון זכור שמור. Yet we still have to understand why these two ideas are written in the order that they appear.

The reason is because of the difference between the Sefer Devarim and the other Five Books. The giving of the Torah has two dimensions. There is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in The Giver. And there is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in the recipient. This is because of the vast difference between the Giver (G-d) and the receiver (Man). The covenant of the Torah requires that both these sides be connected to the Torah, that the Torah reflects both the giver and the receiver. For it is the very essence of a covenant that it be a connection between the two parties. And it is then natural that the two ends of the Bris relate to each one of the parties. The first four books then, are the Torah reflected in the Giver. ספר דברים, however, reflects the receiver.

Shamor and Zachor are negative and positive Mitzvos respectively. The מצוות are the התיבות החזורים, the basic parameters of life in which we operate the vessel or material which will serve to hold the Kedusha. The הנשים, on the other hand, reflect, העלי קניון, the exalted levels of holiness which we are able to achieve, the content which fills up the vessel. Therefore, our starting point in Avoda is to enter into the framework, the negative commandments. Once within that framework, we are ready for to climb the levels of holiness through the positive commandments.

In a Torah which begins with G-d’s side of the covenant therefore begins with Zachor, whereas the Torah which begins with man’s part of the covenant begins with Shamor. In an ideal world, it would be enough for us to focus on זוכרים, the positive aspects of the Shabbos. We would be in natural harmony with the שומרים, with the framework or negative aspects of the Shabbos.

The Luchos Shniyos contain the word טוב - בוב בוב בוב בוב. The First Luchos do not have the word טוב mentioned at all.

The first Dibros (Luchos Rishonos), because they were said from the side of the giver (G-d), required the recipient to be at an unusually high level. In fact, at that time the Jewish people reached the level of the Angels and the whole event was at a spiritual level above that of this world. The word טוב was therefore not mentioned because such a word reflects completion of a process, as in each creation day. The very word implies that the particular reality at hand starts out incomplete. Hence the word טוב does not appear by the first Tablets since, being above this world, they start out complete to begin with.

The second Dibros (Luchos Shniyos), however, start from the perspective of mortal man, still unfulfilled in his future potential. It was to reflect this reality that the word טוב was said by these Dibros.

According to this, Zachor and Shamor are really just two faces, two different levels of the same thing. Of course they were said תבזוב, for each contains within it the other.

The Jews live a mortal life. They start by becoming Shabbos observant – שמור. But, having entered the framework of Shabbos, they are capable of soaring with
the holiness of the day. Here is a day — when the Jews can again be like the Angels as they were at Sinai. They never lost the Zachor, they were only given a new portal, וְשָׁמֵר — to achieve it.
The Ten Commandments are repeated in this week's Parsha. There are some significant changes between their first mention in Parshas Yisro and their repetition here.

The most significant change has to do with the Shabbos. In the first two chapters we are asked to remember the Shabbos (דוק), whereas in the second we are told to keep Shabbos (ప్రముఖ). The Sages tell us that the words “remember” and “keep” were said simultaneously. Yet, we still have to understand why they appear this way and in this specific order in the Written Torah.


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The Maharal says that the secret to all of this is the difference between Sefer Devarim and the other Five Books. The giving of the Torah, he says, has two dimensions: there is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in The Giver, and there is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in the recipient. This results from the vast difference between the Giver (G-d) and the receiver (Man). The covenant of the Torah requires that both these sides be connected to the Torah and that the Torah reflect both the giver and the receiver, for it is the very essence of a covenant that it be a connection between the two parties. And it is then natural that the two ends of the Bris relate to each one of the parties. The first four books, then, are the Torah connected to man’s side of the covenant. Moshe is no longer described in the third person, as he himself is now speaking.

Elsewhere, Maharal states that the recipient of the Torah requires greater explanation, for the Mishnah Torah is the Torah connected to the receiver. This is because:

1. This results from the vast dimensions: there is the dimension of the Torah as reflected in The Giver, and there is the Torah as reflected in The Giver.
2. The giving of the Torah has two ends, the giver and the receiver, for it is the very essence of a covenant that it be a connection between the two parties.

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This relates to two different types of Kedusha. The Torah commands us “Kedoshim Tiheyu”.1 Rashi teaches that “You shall be holy” means that we should remove ourselves from arayos, the sins of sexual immorality.2 HaSh-m specifically chose this commandment as the vehicle for attaining holiness because sexual immorality is incompatible with holiness. However, we achieve some of this holiness whenever we keep a negative commandment. This type of holiness is called Tahara, purity.

There is a second meaning of kedusha,3 which involves active engagement of the world for holiness.4 When we say Asher kidishanu bemizvosav, we do not mean separation kedusha. Rather, we mean active engagement.5 This relates to the positive commandments. The Shaarei Teshuva points out that all the great and enabling attributes are to be found through the positive Mitzvos – therein lie the commandments to love and fear G-d, to know Him and reflect on His ways, to be holy, to serve Him and to cleave to Him.6

Most of the Mitzvos involve using a physical object to create kedusha. Since everything was created by G-d, everything can be traced back to its source in kedusha.7 However, not all holiness is accessible.

There are sparks of holiness in that situation or object.8 However, not all holiness is accessible.

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1 kontroler68@comcast.net
2Asher kidishanu bemizvosav
3 kedusha.
4Asher kidishanu bemizvosav
5 kedusha.
6 kedusha.
7 kedusha.
8 kedusha.
9 kedusha.
10 kedusha.
11 kedusha.
12 kedusha.
13 kedusha.
14 kedusha.
to us. The Torah therefore prohibits certain things and permits others in order to guide us on a path of sanctifying that which we are able and avoid engaging things where the kedusha is so hidden that were we to engage these things we would only produce Tumah1.

In an ideal world, in G-d’s world, it would be enough for us to focus on the positive aspects of the Shabbos. We would be in natural harmony with the framework or negative aspects of the Shabbos. Therefore, in the Torah which begins with G-d’s side of the covenant, (the first four books,) we see the word Zachor used, whereas the Torah which begins with man’s part of the covenant, Sefer Devarim, includes the word Shamor.

But the Maharal goes even deeper, based on yet another difference in the wording of the two Luchos. The Sages point out that by the command of honoring one’s parents, the words זכר והעניה are added2. The First Luchos do not have the word זכר mentioned at all.

The First Dibros (Luchos Rishonos) required the recipient to be at an unusually high level, because they were said from the side of the giver (G-d). The Tablets themselves were made by G-d, with some of the letters hanging in the air for all the letters were carved into the luchos in one wholistic sweep3.

In fact, the Jewish people reached the level of the Angels at that time and the positive aspects of the Shabbos. We would be in natural harmony with the framework or negative aspects of the Shabbos. Therefore, in the Torah which forbids certain things, it is also created by G-d, and therefore, has kedusha to some level:

G-d has a purpose for that holiness which is not revealed to us. But that kedusha has nothing to do with us. Still, by not eating pork, we gain the word Shamor.

The halachik words זכר והעניה and אשת מואר are really kabbalistic words which mean unbound and bound respectively. If something is מואר, it means that its kedusha is unbound, accessible to us. If it is זכר, then its kedusha is bound up behind layers of external coverings or shells, which make it inaccessible to us. Pork, which is forbidden by the Torah, was also created by G-d, and therefore, has kedusha to some level:

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that it was feasible for Man to receive G-d’s Word. The word טוב was therefore not mentioned, because such a word reflects completion of a process, as in each creation day\(^1\). The very word טוב implies that the particular reality at hand starts out incomplete.

The Second Dibros (Luchos Shniyos) were given after the sin of the Golden Calf. At that point the Jews were once again incomplete, creatures of this world, as reflected by the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu now carves out the Luchos – they are not Maaseh HaSh-m\(^3\). Yet they were still capable of fulfilling their future potential. It was to reflect this reality that the word טוב was said by these Dibros\(^4\). In fact, the very high spirituality of the first Luchos was what caused their destruction in the end – something so G-dly was not sustainable in this world\(^5\). The Jews could hardly maintain their artificial spiritual level akin to the Angels, above the power of any human might, above even of the power of death\(^6\).

According to this, Zachor and Shamor are really just two faces, two different levels of the same thing. Of course they were said אחד בחיבור, for each contains within it the other. The Jews live a mortal life. They start by becoming Shabbos observant – שמור. But, having entered the framework of Shabbos, they are capable of soaring with the holiness of the day. Here is a day הבא עולם מעין, when the Jews can again be like the Angels as they were at Sinai. They never lost the Zachor, but were only given a new portal, שמור, to achieve it.
3. Torah Study

**SUMMARY:**

It order to keep the Torah, one must study it, until the day one dies. However, the study of Torah has independent value, beyond knowing what G-d wants of us. The Torah is the blueprint of the world. Therefore, everything in the world was created through the Torah. Someone who wants to be in harmony with the spiritual underpinnings of the world, to really understand what makes the world tick, has to take out the original plans and to study them. When we learn Torah, it is as if G-d, the designer of the world, has invited us, his close ministers, to share the inside story behind the world.

One who is connecting with the Torah though its study is therefore connecting with G-d on one of the most profound of levels. Torah can be contrasted with Tefila. Tefila is our talking to G-d as a servant would with a King. Torah is G-d talking to us, as a King would with a nobleman. The servant on the one hand, has easier access to the chambers of the King. He comes in to clean a dust and can have a quick word with the King. The nobleman, on the other hand, has access only by appointment – but his conversations are likely to be more profound.

The great Amora, אביי, sought to combine these two forces by only praying in the place where he studied, and our prayers all include Torah in their midst; the Shema, Shiras Hayam and others.

Each generation has a special relationship with the Torah and each place will develop its own unique understanding of the Torah. In fact each individual has his own unique לדוגמה in תורה. Hence we doven - בתורתך חלקינו ותן - that G-d should reveal to us our own unique understanding of the Torah. The word ישראל stands for ישו יש bistir in תורה - for each one of the 600 000 Jews who stood at Sinai.

For this reason, Torah study is the most democratic of Mitzvos. One needs no pedigree to become the greatest of Torah scholars. Unlike the crown of Kings and the crown of the Priests, the crown of the Torah, which is the greatest of them all, is open to all.

The Torah is divided between the Written and the Oral Laws. This allows everyone to study Torah. The Written Law can even be understood by a small child. The Oral Law is more difficult and is open ended.

The history of the Jews is full of stories of great sacrifice for the sake of the Torah:

*Our Rabbis taught: The poor, the rich, the sensual come before the [heavenly] court — They say to the poor: Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah? If he says: I was poor and worried about my sustenance, they would say to him: Were you poorer than Hillel? ... To the rich man they said: Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah? If he said: I was rich and occupied with my possessions, they would say to him: Were you perchance richer than R. Eliezar?....

There was a whole tribe, the Levites, whose task was to become masters of Torah. They were given no land, only cities, for they were not meant to work in the usual sense. However, any Jew can be like the Levites. Anyone who accepts the yoke of Torah study, the Sages declare, will find himself freed of the yoke of making a living. And indeed, it is one of the enduring mysteries that those who learn in Kollel to this day are able, month in and month out, to put food on the table, and pay their expenses on the sparsest of incomes.
Jews are the inheritors of the most fabulous tradition of thousands of years of wisdom. We are proud of our Torah scholars, and are privileged to support them.

Jewish scholarship is no just about poring over ancient documents. The texts are holy and uplifting. Secondly, our wisdom should never run ahead of our conviction to implement that wisdom. A non-observant scholar of the Torah is a contradiction in terms. It is forbidden to teach someone who has no commitment to keeping what he has learned just as it is forbidden to learn from a Rabbi who is not setting the right example.

The Torah does not belong to you or me; it is a מִסְרָה קַהֵּלָת יַעֲקֹב (דְּבָרֵי לֵלָד), an inheritance for the entire congregation of Jacob. Every fellow Jew has a right to all of the Torah, including the chiddushim, the new insights into any part of the Torah which any individual may have. We are therefore not simply being generous when we teach Torah, we are simply returning that which belongs to the people we are teaching.

Every morning, we ask HaSh-m to place in our hearts the understanding to be able, among other things, to teach Torah to others. One who ensures Torah continuity, connects that generation all the way back to Sinai and it is as if he has taught Torah to all future generations, to the end of days.

There is also a communal obligation to set up Torah institutions for the education of the next generation.

Many Torah-observant people feel that they simply do not have enough time to both do their own learning and to teach or tutor as well. However, the Sages make it clear that a teacher will in the end learn more Torah than he would have done simply by studying the Torah for himself.

While one could certainly fulfill the Mitzvah of teaching others by teaching anyone, even a relatively knowledgeable Jew, there is a special obligation toward teaching those who are most ignorant and therefore in greatest need of being taught. The Chofetz Chaim felt that in our ignorant generation, there was a special "לעשות עלת לְדָּה" to teach Torah to those most alienated from the Torah.
It order to keep the Torah, one must study it. The deeper one understands the Torah, the richer will be one’s observance. Hence, there is a life-long requirement to study Torah in order to know what to do, and this is the first thing one will be...
accountable for in Shamayim. However, the study of Torah has independent value beyond knowing what G-d wants of us. The Torah is the blueprint of the world. Therefore, everything in the world was created through the Torah. Someone who wants to be in harmony with the spiritual underpinnings of the world, to really understand what makes the world tick, has to take out the original plans and study them. When we learn Torah, it is as if G-d, the Designer of the world, has invited us, His close ministers, to share the inside story behind the world.

One who is connecting with the Torah through its study is therefore connecting with G-d on one of the most profound of levels.

If Torah study is like being a close advisor to the King and consulting with Him on His blueprint for creation, prayer is like being a servant to the King. On the one hand, the advisor is the one whom the King seems to take more seriously than a lowly servant. But the advisor’s access is limited – he can only meet with the King by appointment, making the setting more formal and limited. “Here the relationship is founded on respect. There can be close interaction, intense mutual understanding, but not intimacy. It would not be appropriate in this context to stop and say, “oh, by the way, I have a little family problem …”

The lowly servant, on the other hand, can easily have contact with the King. He can come in and clean in the King’s inner chambers without any prior arrangement, understanding what makes the world tick, has to take out the original plans and study them. When we learn Torah, it is as if G-d, the Designer of the world, has invited us, His close ministers, to share the inside story behind the world.

The Talmud reports: On another occasion it happened that Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa went to study Torah with Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai. The son of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai: If Ben Zakai had stuck his head between his knees for a day, no notice would have been taken of him. Said his wife to him: Is Chanina greater than you are? He replied to her: No; but he is like a servant before the king, and I am like a nobleman before a king.

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The great Amora, ⦿Avi Avi, sought to combine these two forces by only praying in the place where he studied. 1

Following this idea, Chazal also combined these two forces, the force of the new and that of the old, by placing Torah in the Tefilos in two ways: firstly, they took a lot of the prayers from Tanach 2. (The Yerushalmi tells us that this is also why we say Shema in the Maariv service even when we daven before dark.) 3 Secondly, they decreed that we should read from the Torah during the Tefilos 4. Torah and prayer represent two intimate relationships with G-d, and both are necessary, just as our deeper relationships with our fellow human beings are multi-faceted 5.

The Shema in the Maariv service even when we doven before dark. 3) Secondly, they removed for fear that people would think that it is only these which are G-d-given.

In fact, the Baruch was also, at one stage, intended to be a part of the davening, but was removed for fear that people would think that it is only these which are G-d-given:

Abayeh said: In the beginning I used to study Torah at home and daven in Shul. However, from the moment I heard what Rav Chiya bar Ami said in the name of Ulah, from the day of the destruction of the Temple, G-d only has (on earth) his four Amos of Halachah, I only pray where I study.

The Baruch Yigei — Beilus mapa the mishnayos mirmamophys sheli shema fulam hayeyim ai shorah amot

In fact, the Baruch Yigei were included in the service in the place where he studied. In the first siman of Ohr HaChaim, the Beis Yosef and the Rema follow the opinion of the Tur (as interpreted by the Beis Yosef) that the Sages only prohibited the public saying of the Aseres HaDibros (not only at the time of the Shema-Rashba), but that it is actually praiseworthy to say the Aseres HaDibros to oneself, in order to remind oneself of the great event of Sinai.

So the Tagesh thought to include as a part of a Gemara Metziah, but they felt it would have been too burdensome:
Unlike the laws of nature, the Torah, being infinite, always has new dimensions which can be brought down to earth. Therefore, teaching the Torah always lends itself to more understanding, even at the simplest of levels. Each generation has a special relationship with the Torah, and in fact, each place will develop its own unique understanding of the Torah.

This idea goes even further, extending to each Jew. The very first words of Torah that a mother teaches her child are the words of Moshe’s cavilat:—which is an inheritance of every Jew, each at his own level of study. Each individual has its own unique place in the Torah. Hence we pray that G-d should reveal to us our own unique understanding of the Torah. The word שישריא ליהו אתא אמתא ליהו means:

for each one of the 600,000 Jews who stood at Sinai. Each Jew’s special understanding of Torah is a revelation of profound significance. The Kabalistic
wisdom tells us that G-d, too, rejoices in this revelation, as it means that more of His ultimate purpose in creating the world has become revealed to man.

For this reason, Torah study is the most democratic of Mitzvos. One needs no pedigree to become the greatest of Torah scholars. The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos tells us that 3 crowns were given to the Jewish people. The first is the Crown of Priesthood. One cannot convert to the priesthood, but rather has to be born as a Cohen. The next crown is that of Kingship. Someone who is not a direct descendant of King David need not apply. But the crown of the Torah, which is the greatest of them all, is open to all. A wise mamzer is greater than an ignorant high priest.

The Torah is divided between the Written and Oral Laws. This allows everyone to study Torah. The Written Law can even be understood by a small child. The Oral Law is more difficult, and is open-ended. This is understandable, since ultimately, the source of the Torah is in that which preceded this world, and goes way beyond this world. The greatest of minds can therefore also understand the Torah with the full depth of their understanding.

There have always been people who have dedicated themselves to Torah study, sometimes in the face of exceptional difficulty and extreme poverty. There were great Sages who eked out a living as wood choppers and water drawers.

It was reported about Hillel the Elder that every day he used to work and earn one tropaik, half of which he would give to the guard at the House of Learning, the other half being spent for his food and for that of his family. One day he found...
nothing to earn and the guard at the House of Learning would not permit him to enter. He climbed up and sat upon the window, to hear the words of the living G-d from the mouth of Shemayah and Avtalion. They say that day was the eve of Shabbos in the winter, and snow fell down upon him from heaven. When the dawn rose, Shemayah said to Avtalion: Brother Avtalion, on every day this house is light and today it is dark, is it perhaps a cloudy day? They looked up and saw the figure of a man in the window. They went up and found him covered by three cubits of snow. They removed him, bathed and anointed him and placed him opposite the fire and they said: This man deserves that the Shabbos be profaned on his behalf.1

The Sages tell us that whatever circumstances we are in, we can point to someone who suffered similarly and was nevertheless able to achieve greatness in Torah:

Our Rabbis taught: The poor, the rich, the sensual come before the [heavenly] court — They say to the poor: Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah? If he says: I was poor and worried about my sustenance, they would say to him: Were you poorer than Hillel? … To the rich man they said: Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah? If he said: I was rich and occupied with my possessions, they would say to him: Were you perchance richer than R. Eleazar? It was reported about R. Eleazar ben Charssom that his father left him a thousand cities on the continent and over against that one thousand boats on the sea. Every day he would take a sack of flour on his shoulder and go from city to city and from province to province to study the Torah. One day his servants found him and seized him for public service. He said to them: I beg of you, let me go to study the Torah. They said: By the life of R. Eleazar ben Charssom, we shall not let you go. [He gave them much money so that they let him go]. He had never seen them, for he was sitting all day and night, occupying himself with the Torah. To the sensual person they would say: Why have you not occupied yourself with the Torah? If he said: I was beautiful and upset by sensual passion, they would say to him: Were you perchance more beautiful than Yoseph? It was told of Yoseph the virtuous that the wife of Potiphar every day endeavoured to entice him with words — The garments she put on for him in the morning, she did not wear in the evening, those she had put on in the evening, she did not wear in the morning. She said to him: Yield to me! He said: No. She said: I shall have you imprisoned. He said: The Lord raises the bowed-down. She said: I shall bend your proud stature. He replied: The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. She offered him a thousand talents of silver to make him yield to her, to lie with her, to be near her, but he would not listen to her; not to ‘lie with her’ in this world, not ‘to be with her’ in the world to come. — Thus the example of Hillel condemns the poor, the example of R. Eleazar ben Charsom condemns the rich, and Yoseph the virtuous condemns the sensual.2
There was a whole tribe, the Levites, whose task was to become masters of Torah. They were given no land, only cities, for they were not meant to work in the usual sense. Any Jew can be like the Levites, however. Anyone who accepts the yoke of Torah study, the Sages declare, will find himself freed of the yoke of making a living. And indeed, it is one of the enduring mysteries that those who learn in Kollel to this day are able, month in and month out, to put food on the table and pay their expenses.

Jews are the inheritors of the most fabulous tradition of thousands of years of wisdom. We are proud of our Torah scholars, and are privileged to support them.

The Jewish people are the people of the book, and they have tended to reflect higher levels of scholarship than those around them. But there is more than just wisdom. We are proud of our Torah scholars, and are privileged to support them.

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Teaching Torah
The Mitzvah of Talmud Torah involves both learning and teaching Torah. Every morning, we ask HaSh-m to place in our hearts the understanding to be able, among other things, to teach Torah to others.

Every Jew with any Torah knowledge has to understand that the knowledge of Torah, the new insights into any part of the Torah, which any individual may create him. "Every morning, we ask HaSh-m to place in our hearts the understanding to be able, among other things, to teach Torah to others."

Since this Torah is our life-line to spirituality, when we teach someone Torah, it is as if we created him.
Teaching the next generation is a great privilege and an awesome responsibility. It takes care and patience to ensure that the next generation really understands the Torah which the Jews have been studying for thousands of years. One who teaches Torah connects that generation all the way back to Sinai, and it is as if he has taught all future generations until the end of days to be able to receive this beautiful tradition as well.

In addition to the obligation that devolves upon each individual to teach Torah, there is also a communal obligation to set up Torah institutions for the education of the next generation.

Thus Rambam writes:

A father is obligated to teach his child (a minor) as it says: “And you will teach them to your sons to speak of them...” (2)

Just as a person is obligated to teach his son, so too he is obligated to teach his grandson, as it says, "and you should make it known to your sons and your son's sons" and not only his son and his son's son but it is a Mitzvah on every wise man in Israel to teach all the students even though they are not his sons, as it says, "and you will teach it to your sons". From the Oral tradition the Sages learned that 'your sons' are your students, for students are called sons as it
says "and the sons of the prophets (referring to the students of prophecy) went out". If so, why is one commanded on his son and his son's son? To [teach] the priority of a son over a son's son and a son's son over someone else's son."

Similarly, in Parshas BaMidbar, the verse states: And these are the generation of Aaron and Moshe. Yet, it continues to mention only the children of Aaron. Rashi explains that because Moshe taught Aaron’s children, they were considered his children as well.

Many Torah-observing people feel that they simply do not have enough time for both their own learning and teaching or tutoring as well. The truth is, however, that by imparting our Torah wisdom to others, we are not losing out on our own learning.

1. אֶזְמַה בְּכָבוֹם שָׁוְאָיָה (_fragment from the book of Genesis, Genesis 3:21:21) marks the beginning of the book, יִשְׂרָאֵל is mentioned as the first person to be born.
2. אֶזְמַה בְּכָבוֹם שָׁוְאָיָה (_fragment from the book of Genesis, Genesis 3:21:21) marks the beginning of the book, יִשְׂרָאֵל is mentioned as the first person to be born.
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The Sages make it clear that in the end, a teacher will learn more Torah than he would have learned otherwise. And, the Sages repeatedly point out the enormous positive implications of one who does teach others.

While one can certainly fulfill the Mitzvah of teaching others by teaching anyone, even a relatively knowledgeable Jew, there is a special obligation to teach those who are most ignorant and therefore in greatest need of being taught. Although the Halacha does restrict the teaching of the Torah to what it defines as “an appropriate student,” this restriction would not apply to those who have grown up non-observant.

Of those ignorant of the Jewish tradition the Chofetz Chaim said:

One should arouse his sensitivities towards these people and have mercy upon them as he would were he to see an impoverished man stark naked for lack of clothes. For with what will this [ignorant] person cover his soul in the World to Come given that he man stark naked for lack of clothes. For with what will this [ignorant] person cover his soul in the World to Come given that he

Therefore, the Chofetz Chaim felt that it is a special generation to teach those most alienated from the Torah:
Therefore it is incumbent on everyone who has absorbed even a bit of Torah knowledge, each one according to who he is, to make efforts to teach what he is able: If he knows Chumash, he should make a learning group and teach others; if he knows Mishneh, he should make a Mishneh group and study with them, etc.

Although some people may not consider themselves qualified to engage in other aspects of outreach, even a secular person can relate to the teaching of Torah in its pure form.
4. **The Shema**

**SUMMARY:**

The first mitzvah that a bar mitzvah boy is obligated in after he turns 13 is the Shema, the declaration of the unity of HaSh-m. The idea that the original source of everything and the ongoing sustenance of reality are one is a fundamental on which the whole Torah stands or falls.

The Shomenh Esreh is the completion of the שמע שלוש ממלכות שלום of Shema - שמע שלוש ממלכות שלום. I.e. when one stands and speaks to HaSh-m directly, there is not greater indication that one accepts that He rules everything. But there are plenty of people who pray to G-d but do not do His will. There are those who accept the yoke of Heaven on all of creation but themselves. Therefore, it is only when the שמע שלוש ממלכות of Shema follows the שמע שלום, that a true acceptance is achieved.

The Shema is an expression of love, whereas the Shmoneh Esreh is an expression of awe. We juxtapose the two, to join the love with awe. The first verse of the Shema is also said with awe. But the second verse begins אהבת – it already reflects the love that is built on the awe.

Yirah is a time which more naturally lends itself to inward directedness. Hence, a person when he says the first verse of the Shema should stand and not walk. But love leads to expansiveness – an expression outwards. Hence a person may walk if he needs to from אהבת onwards.

The 3 paragraphs of the Shema answer the three questions of the origin of Torah law, its demands and its purpose. The first paragraph, which is עולם קבלת שמים ממלכות, tells us of the origin of the law. The second paragraph, which עולם קבלת מאות, tells us what its demands are. And the third paragraph, which talks of personal sanctification – קדושים והיתם – tells of its purpose.

The first paragraph demands that we love G-d not only with all our heart and soul, but also with all our מאד, which means with all our wealth or with all our strength. The word literally means ‘very much’ i.e. a situation actualizing more and more of our human potential dedicated to this idea. מאד has the same letters as אדם. Adam is that being which be more and more, to be “very much”. We are asked to serve G-d with that potential.

The first paragraph is written in the singular – it is appealing to the highest aspirations of unusually great people. The second verse is the plural – referring to everyman. A normative level cannot demand that every morsel we eat, every object we use, be totally enthused with a love of G-d, however worthy an aspiration this is. Hence מאדך is missing in the second verse.

Another approach is to say that the first verse is talking about loving G-d (אלוהיך את אהבת) whereas the second verse is talking about serving Him (ולעבדו נשך) whereas the second verse is talking about serving Him (ולעבדו נשך). We are supposed to love G-d with all our אהבת, i.e. unambiguously, but we do not have to serve Him with all our נשך.

We also have to serve G-d נשך, with all of our souls - for each and every breath we take. We are never to take life for granted. Every breath is a new praise for G-d. If need be we should be prepared to give our lives for G-d. We should always prepare ourselves for this possibility, so that if it ever happens, we will have the inner strength to go through with this.
When R. Akiba was taken out for execution,... while they combed his flesh with iron combs, he was [saying the Shema]. ... He said to [his disciples]: All my days I have been troubled by this verse, 'with all thy soul', ... I said: When shall I have the opportunity of fulfilling this? Now that I have the opportunity shall I not fulfill it? He prolonged the word 'Echad' until he expired while saying it.

Every Jew, and not only exceptional Jews, are capable of giving their lives for G-d and His Torah (and hence פל imgUrl is in the second Parsha), even if we are not all capable of dedicating or giving up every last penny for His sake. The ability to die as an act of Kidush HaSh-m is in our spiritual genes – a gift and an inheritance from Avraham Avinu and in particular his son, Yitzchak, who reached perfection in this area.

A third approach understands that one is required to give up everything for G-d prior to finding his specific Avodah in life (the first verse). After that, one should only sacrifice all for that special area (the second verse). Hence Daniel was Moser Nefesh for Tefila and Mordechai would not bow to Haman. The first verse of Shema was given when Bnei Yisrael was still in the desert, and the specific Avodah of each one was yet to be understood. But the second verse clearly talks about Klal Yisrael in the land, when each was given not only his portion of land, but an insight into his specific Avodah. Hence, from then onwards, his sacrifices should only be as a part of his Avodah package.

The order of חומש:

The order of the parshios of the חומש as we say them is not in the same order as they appear in the Torah. Shema comes first because it is Kabalas Ol Malchus Shamayim. The second and third paragraphs is acceptance of the yoke of the Mitzvos, which perforce result in accepting the yoke of G-d. The second precedes the third however, because the third focuses on Tzitzis which is only obligatory during the day. In addition, each paragraph has more elements than the next. The first paragraph has the elements of studying, teaching and observing; the second only talks about teach and observing while the third only talks about observing.

שמות יראתי ... עד

The two last letters of the words שמות and שם are written larger to form the word עד witness. We are witness that G-d’s Oneness means that nothing else has any reality other than as desired by His Will. It is true that the real meaning of G-d’s Oneness is a deep Kabballistic idea – but we can all achieve a basic concept of this idea.

ברוך שמ רabı ממלכות עולם ועד:

These words do not appear in the Torah. They were said by Yaakov on his death bed. Jacob wished to reveal to his sons the 'end of the days', whereupon the Shechinah departed from him. Said he, ‘Perhaps, Heaven forfend! there is one unfit among my children, like Abraham, from whom there issued Ishmael, or like my father Isaac, from whom there issued Esau.’ [But] his sons answered him, ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One: ... Jacob [responded] .... ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.’ Said the Rabbis, How shall we act? Shall we recite it, — but our Teacher Moses did not say it. Shall we not say it — but Jacob said it! [Hence] they enacted that it should be recited quietly.
The Sages also tell us that when Moshe Rabbeinu went up to receive the Torah, he heard the angels saying בְּשַׁכֶל. Moshe subsequently told this to the Jewish people. Why do the Jewish people not say it aloud? It is like a person who stole some crown jewels. He gave them to his wife but warned her not to wear them in public, but only in the privacy of their home. However, on Yom Kippur, when we are as pure as the ministering Angels, the Jewish people say בְּשַׁכֶל aloud.

**Shema at Night and in the Day.**

The obligation to say Shema in the morning can only be fulfilled in the first three hours after daylight, whereas one has the whole night to fulfill the night-obligation. Day-time is a time of clarity, and therefore action (בָּשָׁנָה בַּבּוֹרָה תְּפִדֵה). Nights, which are dark, are for withdrawal, consolidation and faith (בָּשָׁנָה בַּבּוֹרָה תְּפִדֵה).
The first mitzvah that a bar mitzvah boy is obligated in after he turns 13 is the Shema. The Shema is a twice daily Mitzvah to believe in the unity of HaSh-m. We have to believe, says that Rambam, that the original source of everything and the
ongoing sustenance of reality are one\(^1\). This is not just a Mitzvah, but rather, it is a fundamental on which the whole Torah stands or falls\(^2\).

The morning prayers rise in spiritual level in 4 distinct phases. Birkas HaShchar relates to Olam HaMaaseh, Psukei Dezimra to Olam HaYetzira, Shema and its surrounding brochos to Olam HaBriah, and finally Shmoneh Esreh to Olam HaAtzilus.

The Shmoneh Esreh, as much as it is on a different level, is closely linked to the Shema. The Gemorrah says that reciting the Shemoneh Esreh is the completion of the Shema - \(^3\) the Shema. The Gemorrah says that reciting the Shemoneh Esreh is the completion of the Shema, kıbelum על מכלחח שמים is also said with awe, as it has its roots in יехוה rather than יהי אבות. The second verse (said aloud) begins with נמענו: Therefore, it is only when the מנה שומע that one completes the כל פי ישם שמים of Shema.

The Gra tells us that the overall tone of the Shema should be an expression of love, in contrast to the Shmoneh Esreh, which should be with awe\(^5\). We juxtapose the two in order to join the love with awe. Shem Mishmuel tells us that the first verse of the Shema, "ויהי יש Patreon", is also said with awe, as it has its roots in יראה rather than יראה - ראה. Shem Mishmuel compares this to Avraham Avinu who was able to maintain his commitments in the first phase of his life despite enormous challenges. Later, when he reached an even higher level of love, he was told - to move and develop new horizons\(^6\).
Rav Elie Munk\(^1\) states that the 3 paragraphs of the Shema answer the three questions of the origin of the law, its demands and its purpose. The first paragraph, שמח', tells us of the origin of the Torah laws – The Lord is Your G-d …. The second paragraph, מצווה', tells us what its demands are. And the third paragraph, משכן קדושיכם, tells of its purpose.

The second paragraph seems to repeat some of the first paragraph, but with important differences. The first paragraph demands that we love G-d not only with all our heart and soul, but also with all our עד, which means with all our wealth. It can also mean with all our strength\(^2\). Both meanings are compatible with the literal meaning of the word עד - “very much,” i.e. a situation actualizing more and more of our human potential dedicated to this idea. It is the essence of the human condition that we are always able to grow more. This is why the word עד has the same letters as אדם: Adam, Man, is that creature always capable of more and more, of “very much”. The word אדם comes from the word אדמה, which means that which has potential to bear fruit, i.e. to actualize a potential. In the Shema, we declare our readiness to serve G-d with that potential\(^3\).

But, as we stated, עד also means with all one's money - with all one's possessions. What is the connection between “all your money” and “all your potential”? The Gemorrah points out that there are people who are quite literally willing to give up their lives rather than give up their money\(^4\). Such a person has invested all of himself, all of his potential, in his worldly possessions. The Shema tells such a person to use all of that and direct it to G-d. And if serving G-d should demand that he give up all of his money, he should be ready to do this too.

Can we demand that every single person give every ounce of his potential, his last worldly cent if need be, to G-d? The first verse is written in the singular, as it is appealing to the highest aspirations of unusually great people. The second verse is in the plural, relating this to every man. A normative level cannot demand that every morsel we eat, every object we use, be totally enthused with a love of G-d. But it is certainly a worthy aspiration for us all.

The Nefesh HaChaim brings a different approach to this issue. The first verse, he says, is talking about our love of G-d, whereas as the second verse is talking about our serving Him. The Nefesh HaChaim\(^5\) points to another difference in wording between the first and the second Parshios. The first Parsha says:

\(^1\)World of Prayer, Vol. 1, pg. 113
\(^2\)הסנא' הרמב"ה לשון פירשו
\(^3\)שליט שפירא משלמה מהרב שמעתי
\(^4\)ברכות ב: תנא
\(^5\)משעת ב פי"א
A mitzvah of loving G-d. For love, we are prepared to give up all, hence,

כל לבכם בכל פמש ובכל מקודר

With all our heart – i.e. unambiguously
With all our souls – i.e. even our lives
And with all our Meod – i.e. with all our possessions

In the second Parsha, it says:

ילבשו כל לבכם וכל פמש:

Avoda is referring to Tefila. Here, כל מאصيد is not stated as it is above. From this we learn that although one is supposed to love G-d with all his_meod, he does not have to serve G-d with all his_meod.2

The words כל פמש appear in the second paragraph as well - כל פמש. We have to thank G-d for all of our souls, for each and every breath we take, as we are never to take life for granted. Every breath requires new praise for G-d. The Sages also tell us that these words mean that we should be prepared to give our lives for G-d under the circumstance that the Torah demands. R. Akiva says: With all thy soul: even if He takes away thy soul. Each time we say the Shema we have to picture ourselves giving our lives for G-d. We should use our imagination to put ourselves through scenarios of sanctifying our lives for G-d so that if we ever face such a scenario we will be fully prepared for it.

Our Rabbis taught: Once the wicked Government issued a decree forbidding the Jews to study and practice the Torah. Pappus ben Yehudah came and found R. Akiva publicly bringing gatherings together and occupying himself with the Torah. He said to him: Akiva, are you not afraid of the Government? He replied: I will explain to you with a parable. A fox was once walking alongside of a river, and he saw fishes going in swarms from one place to another. He said to them: From what are you fleeing? They replied: From the nets cast for us by men. He said to them: Would you like to come up on to the dry land so that you and I can live together in the way that my ancestors lived with your ancestors? They replied: Art thou the one that they call the cleverest of animals? Thou art not clever but foolish. If we are afraid in the element in which we live, how much more in the element in which we would die! So it

1 הבור שער ה Caleb לגב: שחתת כל המחשבות לכל יין אתנות. עליך להתייחס לכל פשרין לפני הלאים
2 שאמר באחד העולם על אדום את הומצאותorna כל מתמחה על המフトת נ登錄
3 how much more in the element in which we would die! So it

We do see that Tefila requires כל נפשך, something the Nefesh HaChaim goes to great lengths to explain:

1 מדרשו רב النبيอะפרהדר: (ו) אבותת את ה אדיקי כל מספר אחר ב Amelia יאיו על כל שמות ד��וה השמדת משמעה תכלה הקדיש את יוצרת כל מתמחה
2 הנ홈ה דבר לכל הנוממה תכלה ק

4 c:/documents and settings/chena rivka/desktop/ajop books/5. chumash detail devarim.doc
When R. Akiva was taken out for execution, it was the hour for the recital of the Shema, and while they combed his flesh with iron combs, he was accepting upon himself the Kingship (yoke) of Heaven. His disciples said to him: Our teacher, even to this point? He said to them: All my days I have been troubled by this verse, ‘with all thy soul’, [which I interpret] ‘even if He takes thy soul’. I said: When shall I have the opportunity of fulfilling this? Now that I have the opportunity shall I not fulfill it? He prolonged the word ‘Echad’ until he expired while saying it. A bas kol went forth and proclaimed: Happy art thou, Akiva, that thy soul has departed with the word Echad! The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Such Torah, and such a reward? [He should have been] from them that die by Thy hand, O L-rd. He replied to them: Their portion is in life. After that, one should only sacrifice giving up everything to G-d, even his portion in the World to Come. For that is thy life and the length of thy days, if we go and neglect it, how much worse off we shall be! It is related that soon afterwards R. Akiva was arrested and thrown into prison, and Pappus ben Yehudah was also arrested and imprisoned next to him. He said to him: Pappus, who brought you here? He replied: Happy are you, R. Akiva, that you have been seized for busying yourself with the Torah! Alas for Pappus who has been seized for busying himself with idle things!

According to the Nefesh HaChaim, this idea that the first verse is talking about our love of G-d, whereas as the second verse is talking about our serving Him, means that there are two approaches to giving our life for G-d: one as a result of love, and the second out of service to G-d. All Jews, and not only exceptional ones, are capable of dedicating or giving up everything for G-d and His Torah even if we are not all capable of fulfilling this. Now that I have the opportunity shall I not fulfill it? He prolonged the word ‘Echad’ until he expired while saying it. A bas kol went forth and proclaimed: Happy art thou, Akiva, that thy soul has departed with the word Echad! The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Such Torah, and such a reward? [He should have been] from them that die by Thy hand, O L-rd. He replied to them: Their portion is in life. A bas kol went forth and proclaimed, Happy art thou, R. Akiva, that thou art destined for the life of the World to Come.'
was given not only his portion of land, but an insight into his specific Avodah. Hence, from then onwards, his sacrifices should only be as a part of his Avodah package.

**The order of **

The order of the parshios of the ** as we say them is not the same as the way they appear in the Torah. In the Torah, the last parsha appears first, then the first and then the second. It we are not going to put them in order, then we ought to have put the second parsha first, since that is speaking about the whole tzibur (בשלוש ריבים), whereas the first parsha is speaking about the individual (בשלוש ראים). The Gemorrah brings two explanations for the order we have:

1. **Shema** comes first because it is Kabalas Ol Malchus Shamayim. The second and third paragraphs contain the acceptance of the yoke of the Mitzvos, which perform results in accepting the yoke of G-d. The second precedes the third, however, because the third focuses on Tzitzis which is only obligatory during the day.

2. However, the above explanation is difficult because the Gemorrah in Brachos tells us that there are at least five separate themes in the third paragraph: Tzitzis, the Exodus, Ol Mitzvos, not to have idolatrous thoughts, and not to have forbidden licentious thoughts. The Sages therefore bring an alternative explanation to the order by telling us that each paragraph has more elements than the next. The first paragraph has the elements of studying, teaching and observing; the second only talks about teach and observing, while the third only speaks of observing.
Listen and pay full attention1 oh Israel, HaSh-m who is the G-d of the Jews, He is also G-d over everything2.

Hear oh Israel, HaSh-m who existed before the world was created, He is still our G-d now in the present, He will be the One G-d of the future for evermore as well 3.

The two last letters of the words amen and amen are written larger to form the word amen, witness4. They forever remind Israel of her function, among the nations, to be the witness to the one G-d ... to live for the ideal of amen and, if need be, to die for it. He reaches, as it were, beyond the confines of his own being5. (Rav Elie Munk6) One does this as a realization that G-d’s Oneness means that there is nothing else – nothing else of significance, nothing else that has any reality other than as desired by His Will. It is true that the real meaning of G-d’s Oneness is a deep Kabbalistic idea,7 but we can all achieve a basic concept of this idea.

These words do not appear in the Torah. They were said by Yaakov on his deathbed and again by Moshe Rabbeinu when he went to receive the Torah.

The story of Yaakov Avinu is told by the Sages:

R. Shimon ben Lakish said: And Yaakov called unto his sons, and said: Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you [that which shall befall you in the end of days]. Yaakov wished to reveal to his sons the ‘end of the days’, whereupon the Shechinah departed from him. Said he, ‘Perhaps, Heaven forfend, there is one unfit among my children, like Avraham, from whom there issued Yishmael, or like my father Yitzchak, from whom there issued Esav.’ [But] his sons answered him, ‘Hear O Israel, the L-rd our G-d the L-rd is One: just as there is only One in thy heart, so is He in the heart of each and everyone of thy children.’

Yaakov Avinu said: And he blessed the sons of Yaakov, saying: Blessed be He who has said: One G-d, One L-rd is He.

In the fullness of time these words were added: ‘And the L-rd blessed the sons of Yaakov, saying: Blessed be He who has said: One G-d, One L-rd is He.’

The story of Yaakov Avinu is told by the Sages:1

World of Prayer, Vol. 1, pg. 114

Footnotes:
1. World of Prayer, Vol. 1, pg. 114
2. This word is used in the Yiddish language to mean “amen.”
3. This is a Kabbalistic concept that the Oneness of G-d extends beyond the confines of the individual and the world.
4. This is a small Kabbalistic symbol that is used to indicate witness.
5. This is a Kabbalistic concept that G-d’s Oneness means that there is nothing else – nothing else of significance, nothing else that has any reality other than as desired by His Will.
6. Rav Elie Munk (1884-1921) was a prominent Jewish scholar and author.
7. This is a deep Kabbalistic idea that G-d’s Oneness means that there is nothing else – nothing else of significance, nothing else that has any reality other than as desired by His Will.

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Shema at Night and in the Morning:

There is an interesting difference between the day-obligation of Shema and the night-obligation. The day obligation can be fulfilled only at the outset of the day, in the first three hours after daylight, whereas one has the whole night to fulfill the night-obligation. Rav Tzadok HaCohen explains that this is because daytime is a time of obligation.

The Sages also tell us that when Moshe Rabbeinu went up to receive the Torah, he heard the angels saying בєטספליט. Moshe subsequently told this over to the Jewish people. Why do the Jewish people not say it aloud? We can compare this to a person who stole some crown jewels. He gave them to his wife and warned her not to wear them in public but only in the privacy of their home. On Yom Kippur, however, when we are as pure as the ministering Angels, the Jewish people say בєטספליט aloud.2

There is an even higher level than Yom Kippur, that of the Messianic era, when it will be enough for us to say that G-d is One. Rashi in fact states that the first verse tells us that only in the Messianic will we know that G-d is one: Shema – “Hear, oh Israel, the L-rd who is now our G-d, will, in the Messianic era, be recognized as One by all.” There is nothing more to add to this when we really understand it.4 However, until that time, there is a need to spell out in this world of actions and objects what declaring G-d's Oneness means – hence “Baruch Shem, etc.”

1. it. Shall we not say it — but Yaakov said it! [Hence] they enacted that it should be recited quietly.

2. The Rabbis, How shall we act? Shall we recite it, — but our teacher Moshe did not say it. Shall we not say it — but Yaakov said it! [Hence] they enacted that it should be recited quietly.

3. There is an interesting difference between the day-obligation of Shema and the night-obligation. The day obligation can be fulfilled only at the outset of the day, in the first three hours after daylight, whereas one has the whole night to fulfill the night-obligation. Rav Tzadok HaCohen explains that this is because daytime is a time of obligation. The day obligation can be fulfilled only at the outset of the day, in the first three hours after daylight, whereas one has the whole night to fulfill the night-obligation.
clarity, and therefore action. Nights, which are dark, are for withdrawal into the home, consolidation\(^1\) and faith\(^2\). This is what Dovid HaMelech meant when he said לְהִגִּיד בלילֵי אֲמֹנְתֵךְ חָסְדֶךָ בָּבוֹכֶר. Similarly, Maariv at night is only a Reshus, for Tefila is an act of standing opposite HaSh-m, and it is harder to see G-d at night. One can therefore not demand of man that he reach such a level. However, being that we are closer to the Messianic era, we are closer to the final revelation of light, and we have therefore accepted Maariv on ourselves as an obligation. Still, we can daven Maariv the whole night, whereas Shema in the morning is limited to the first four hours, for even when we do reach this level of standing opposite G-d at night, it may take a whole night of preparation, whereas in the light of day we can reach this level much quicker\(^3\).

In truth, we rarely have glimpses of pure day and pure night. Nights have a bit of light from the moon and the stars; days are sometimes dimmed by clouds. Both of these can be blessings. The bit of light at night is like a candle searching for chometz – when we are under duress, a bit of clarity (light) shows us clearly what it is we have to work on\(^4\).
1. Arrogance, Faith and Fear

SUMMARY:

In this week’s Parsha G-d tells us to trust Him to deliver the Canaanite nations in battle to the Jews. The Jews should not fear these people – any fear of them should be submerged in their greater fear for G-d. “Trust me to save you,” G-d tells them, “as I saved you in Egypt. For it is I, not you, who will provide the victory.”

The entire desert experience, when they were completely helpless and yet totally taken care of was to teach them that in the end it all comes from G-d. And even this they did not deserve. They sinned and rebelled, this stiff-necked nation again and again. “From the day you left Egypt until you came here, you have been rebelling against G-d,” Moses tells them. “Even at Horeb you provoked G-d! And G-d was ready to display anger and destroy you.” “G-d then said to me, “I see that this is a very stubborn nation. Just leave Me alone and I will destroy them, obliterating their name from under the heavens.” “You have been rebelling against G-d since the day I knew you!”

So not only are they helpless, but they are also undeserving. Therefore, to earn merit, this trust in G-d must translates into observing his commandments and walking in His ways.

But it so easy to forget. Ironically it is easier to feel close to G-d when He is not so kind. For you will eat and be satisfied, you will build fine houses and become rich. And then you will become arrogant and think that you did all this yourself.

Our parsha identifies arrogance as the central trait which causes someone to forget his Creator - אהליך יהוה אתה ושכחת לבבך ורומ (Yid). Taming this arrogance is a great key to achieving spirituality.

This is the Golden Calf. Man worshiped the Calf not so much as a worship of other G-d’s but in order to worship themselves. For the arrogant, even G-d becomes an instrument for their own ideas. His gods are his own arrogance and materialism.

The temptation to take credit for one’s own achievements carries over even to someone who is ostensibly wise in the Torah. This will lead to his Torah understanding emerging distorted. His need for others to recognize his achievements leads him to rejoice when his friends are ignorant or stumble.

It is success which leads to this. The truly arrogant person is almost always arrogant about something which he is objectively good at. The weakling does not stand in front of the mirror priding himself in his muscles. However, when pride exists in a mans heart it rules over him from the top of his head to the bottom of his foot. Once one’s eyes become haughty, one’s ears stop listening. One’s speech changes and one dresses differently. In short, one begins to look ugly, permeated by arrogance.

So, although the arrogant person builds on something real, he ends with an illusion. Korach’s rebellion was rooted in his seeing the great people who would come from him. Korach had wanted to be the leader and found this reason to support his desire.
The irony in all of this is that, by taking his life into his own hands, the arrogant man loses his Siyata Dishmaya, and becomes a victim of his own weakness. To the outsider, the arrogant person looks so confident and self-contained. But the real story is different. Such a person is always looking over his shoulder, always fretting over someone else bettering him, always bitter and unfulfilled – a pathetic relic of the greatness of man.

How does one fight arrogance? True humility requires that one not only recognizes the gap between one’s own weakness and G-d’s greatness, but it requires that one first be totally filled up by a sense of worth just by following His Will. Any need for outside confirmation, for validation from one’s fellow humans, for ego-stroking in the slightest, will interfere with one’s humility.

The start of humility is a deep faith and understanding that G-d runs everything. Our primary choice in life is whether we will choose G-d or not:

הכל מי חוץ שמיים בידי

Everything is in the hands of G-d except the fear of Heaven.

From this awe, we will come to keep to serve Him, despite our egocentric cry that we should be serving ourselves instead. Only then will we be ready for real change:

י (?): (יחד) ומעולם לא עודו שניים ולאפרנס לא תקפדו עוד:

And you will remove the barriers from your heart (lit circumcise the foreskin of your heart) and (you will) not remain so stubborn anymore.

Now, momentum of spirituality is achieved. You fear of G-d leads to obeying Him which helps with your humility. Now, you can move even higher – So love G-d your Lord -
In this week’s Parsha, G-d tells the Jews to trust Him to deliver the Canaanite nations into their hands. The Jews should not fear these people:

Do not fear them ... You shall not be broken before them

It is only G-d that you should be fearing. Any fear you have for them should be submerged in your greater fear for G-d. The reason is all important. G-d tells the Jews to trust that He will save them as He saved them in Egypt; it is He, not them, who will provide the victory. As the end of those same verses state:

The entire desert experience was to put the Jews into a situation where they were completely helpless and yet totally taken care of. This was to teach them that in the end, all comes from G-d:

Moreover, this chesed was not earned – it was awarded because of G-d’s great desire to give man every opportunity to reach his potential rather than because they were deserving. In fact, this stiff-necked nation sinned and rebelled again and again. “From the day you left Egypt until you came here, you have been rebelling against G-d,” Moshe tells them. “Even at Horeb you provoked G-d! And G-d was ready to display anger and destroy you.” “G-d then said to me, “I see that this is a very stubborn nation. Just leave Me alone and I will destroy them, obliterating their name from under the heavens.” “You have been rebelling against G-d since the day I knew you!”

So here was a people, helpless and undeserving. The Jews had to learn how to turn the undeserved giving of Hakadosh Baruch Hu – the Chesed Vitur, into Chesed Vitur.
It is, however, so easy to forget. Ironically, it is easier to feel close to G-d when He is not so kind, for when one will eat and be satisfied, he will build fine houses, become rich, and turn arrogant, thinking that he achieved all this himself.

G-d’s response will be to show the Jews that in fact their pride is misplaced – that they are really as helpless as they were in the beginning. He achieves this by hiding His face from them until the Jews humble themselves again. “For a proud man falls into the hands of his evil inclination and he doesn’t receive help from G-d since he is the abomination of G-d.” (Mishlei) Unless we can learn to be humble in the face of plenty, this is potentially a repeating cycle.

Our Parsha identifies arrogance as the central trait which causes someone to forget his Creator - a Chesed earned by the nation. The path to this was for the Jews to learn to trust G-d and then to translate that into observing His commandments and walking in His ways.

Arrogance not only causes us to forget G-d, but to adopt more convenient ideologies in place of the Torah. This is the Golden Calf, repeated in detail by Moshe Rabbenu here. Man worshiped the Calf not because they believed in other gods but in order to worship themselves. For the arrogant, even G-d becomes an instrument for self-worship. For the arrogant, even G-d becomes an instrument for their own ideas. The message is that arrogance leads to forgetting G-d, and forgetting G-d leads to idolatry – the idolatry of self-worship. Even when he claims to believe in G-d, the arrogant person cannot but help to see Him as an instrument for his own ideas.

איה (והם) יאכלת חללה, והられます את בנותו ואת בניהם וגו':}

ועבדתם את אלוהים האחרים והשתתמו בהם:

\[\text{אין עבודה זרה, פסח}
\]

(משלי פרק א): "ויתנו לו כל נפשו".

\[\text{ bör כו,}"}

אורתSpi - השער הירושנ - שער הגאוה: השער הירושנ הוא שער המפריד את השער הירושנ מביתו, כרכו, אחר זה.

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"And I will give grass in your fields and you will eat and be satisfied". And then, you will think that this is as a result of your own efforts, and you will no longer fear Me and My commandments, rather "you will be seduced by your own hearts and you will go away from me and you will worship other gods and bow down to them". The gods of your own arrogance and materialism.

The temptation to take credit for one’s own achievements carries over even to someone who is ostensibly wise in the Torah. This will lead to his Torah understanding emerging distorted. His need for others to recognize his achievements leads him to rejoice when his friends are ignorant or stumble. He takes honor in his friend's dishonor.

Surely it was he who toiled and achieved this distinction of wisdom! But really without Siyata Dishmaya – G-d’s Heavanly help - he can achieve no understanding at all on his own. Without Him we can neither breathe nor open our lips, or even amazingly, find the strength to sin!

It is success which is the stumbling block to arrogance. The truly arrogant person is almost always arrogant about something which he is objectively good at. It is success which is the stumbling block to arrogance. The truly arrogant person is almost always arrogant about something which he is objectively good at.

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So, although the arrogant person builds on something real, he ends up with the greatest, nobody thought that he was making a claim about his IQ. But here, the world-famous boxer Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay) yelled, “I am the greatest,”
The irony in all of this is that by taking his life into his own hands, the arrogant man loses his Siyata Dishmaya and becomes a victim of his own weakness. To the outsider, the arrogant person looks so confident and self-contained, but the real story is different. Such a person is always looking over his shoulder, always fretting over someone else bettering him, always bitter and unfulfilled – a pathetic relic of the greatness of man.

An arrogant person imagines that he is his own benefactor, that he acquires this through the power of his own hand. He is filled up with a sense of self-worth through following G-d’s Will. Any need for outside confirmation, for validation from one’s fellow humans, for ego-stroking in the slightest, will interfere with one’s humility.

The starting point to fight our arrogance is really to be in awe of G-d. Our natural instincts are to think of humility as the opposite of arrogance. We look for an antidote, while the Mesilas Yesharim brings humility as the third last trait on the ladder.

Our natural instincts are to think of humility as the opposite of arrogance. However, the Mesilas Yesharim brings humility as the third last trait on the ladder, two before Ruach HaKodesh, for true humility requires that one not only recognize the gap between his own weakness and G-d’s greatness, but that one first be totally filled up with a sense of self-worth through following G-d’s Will. Any need for outside confirmation, for validation from one’s fellow humans, for ego-stroking in the slightest, will interfere with one’s humility.

The starting point to fight our arrogance is really to be in awe of G-d.
And now Israel, what does G-d want of you? Only that you remain in awe of G-d, your L-rd, so that you will follow all His paths and love Him, serving G-d your L-rd with all your heart and with all your soul.

Once we understand that G-d runs everything, it is easy to be humble. Our choice is about whether we will choose to fear G-d or not –

הכלה בידי שמים وخָתָם שְׁמוֹבָּטִים

Everything is in the hands of G-d except for the fear of Heaven.

But this tiny little area of choice is the key to tapping into the vast Heavenly help that G-d offers to extend to man. By realizing that he is nothing, that even his choice is a power granted to him by G-d, man gains everything.

The wording appears to make awe of G-d a cinch – He is only asking for this. But, on the contrary, awe of G-d is enormously challenging to achieve, even if Moshe made it look easy (and it was Moshe who spoke these words). But, it is also true that if we maintain an awareness of G-d, we can all model this behavior. We Jews, who have seen so much of the Hand of G-d, who have survived against all odds – we in particular are predisposed to understand such a thing. And hence – it is from you that He asks this.

From this awe we will come to keep the Mitzvos despite our egocentric cry: We Jews, who have seen so much of the Hand of G-d, who have survived against all odds – we in particular are predisposed to understand such a thing. And hence – it is from you that He asks this.

And (you will) remove the barriers from your heart (lit. circumcise the foreskin of your heart) and (you will) not remain so stubborn anymore.

Then, for the first time, we will be in a position to really recognize that G-d, your L-rd is the ultimate Supreme Being and the highest possible Authority. And from here, we can move even higher – So love G-d your L-rd -

1. רכ Modifier #1 of the preposition יְּלַעֲמָה (יב) מְרִיתוּ הנַעַר בָּאָרֶץ כָּלַא אֲלֵיהֶם בְּנֵי קֹדֶשׁ ֧וֹ דָּוִד מַעְרָא וְרָבִיתוֹ נַעֲרֵי הַבּוֹרָא

2. ברו בהרחפת (יב) ליראת כי צורך להTicks אתך שמיים כל הכנף

3. מַשֵּׁפֶת אַחֲרוֹן בְּסֵפֶר חָוֵית תְּלֹאָת מְרִיתוּ הנַעַר בָּאָרֶץ כָּלַא אֲלֵיהֶם בְּנֵי קֹדֶשׁ ֧וֹ דָּוִד מַעְרָא וְרָבִיתוֹ נַעֲרֵי הַבּוֹרָא

4. двух קונים מספרים תוספת י: (יב) חמה קסואל מה华东 אֲלִיאָה - אֲפָא דָּבָר קַפְרָה

5. מַתִּיוּ רְבָּתוֹ הַכֶּשֶׁת כָּלָה וְרָכִּי צוֹלְקַר מְשַׁמֵּךְ שֵׂמוֹ בְּטוּבָּתָו אֲלִיאָה

6. מַשֵּׁפֶת אַחֲרוֹן בְּסֵפֶר חָוֵית (ותwriteln): יְּהֵשִׁווה הַכָּלֶב כָּיָן כָּלְכֵלָה מְחָבָרָה יְּיָהוֹ שֶֽכָּנְיָא עָלְיוֹ הַכֶּשֶׁת כָּלֶב שֶׂמוֹ בְּטוּבָּתָו אֲלִיאָה

7. (י”י) כָּלִי אֲלָקִיזַר אֲבָלִי אֲלָקִיזַר אֲבָלִי אֲלָקִיזַר אֵלִי אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִızַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַר אֲלָקִיזַร

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ספר דברים פרק י (א) והבות את לי אליך
2. To Walk in His Ways

**SUMMARY:**

Like our relationship with other people, our relationship with HaSh-m can be expressed in many different ways. One way is to harmonize ourselves with His actions, i.e. to walk in His ways (בדרכיו והלכת): Just as He is merciful so should you be; Just as He clothes the naked, visits the sick and buries the dead so should you; Just as He is holy and righteous, so should you be.

These imitations basically divide into two major themes: We have to develop our character to be more G-d like; and we should become a giving person just like He is: He clothes the naked (the first Man and Woman), visits the sick (Abraham), consoles the mourners (Yitzchak over the loss of Avraham) and buries the dead (Moses). In short G-d’s actions in this world are acts of giving.

Imitating G-d reveals a great secret of the universe – that man can be a partner with G-d in running the world. We imitate Him not only in character traits and actions, but also in engaging in what is called עולם תקון – literally in fixing this world. We are His creation partners in completing the world.

We see that we harmonize ourselves with G-d’s actions not by meditating or by celibacy. We imitate Him by doing things which we might have thought have to do with being a nice guy – but have nothing to do with holiness. But we are dead wrong.

This was Avraham’s great discovery. Avraham’s culminating act of holiness, one which the Sages describe as greater than prophecy itself, was to run out to meet a bunch of heathen idolaters, wash their feet, serve them food and drink – hardly the stuff of high spiritual trips we might think. Prior to this, there had been great kabbalists, high and spiritual people – models which Avraham rejected. “G-d has enough Angels in Shamayim,” he reasoned. Can I possibly add to the world by being angel one million and one, leaving the rest of the world to despair and alienation? He did not create me as a human in order to be an Angel; but to be something greater than that.” And how right he was! It was Avraham, his hand dirtied by the dust of idolatry, who became the Forefather of the Jewish people, not the holy Shem or Chanoch or Ever.

When Avraham Avinu ran out to meet the 3 Angels whom he mistook as people, he was in the middle of a prophetic conversation with G-d. Faced with a choice between a prophetic revelation and an act of hospitality to 3 idolaters, Avraham chose the latter. Amazingly, G-d, told to hang on line while something more important gets done, patiently waits to continue His talk with Avraham Avinu. From this the Sages learn that: Greater is the act of hospitality than receiving the face of the Shechina (i.e. a conversation with G-d).

When we help to perfect and complete the world by giving, we perfect ourselves as well. This is why we see that second expression of “walking in His Ways” is to correct our character traits. Having good character so permeates a Jewish way of living, that it is implicit in every Mitzvah we do.

The average human being is such that it is difficult for us to each work on the whole range of human qualities we have. Each one of us tends to focus on our strengths and maybe on our biggest weaknesses. But we are likely to leave out the whole gamut of human character in-between. Probably most of us could say what our 5 greatest strengths are. If pressed we come up with our 5 greatest weaknesses. But
very few would be able to tell us what their ten traits in the middle are. How are we supposed to work on ourselves if we cannot even come up with a list of our qualities?

To this, the Torah has an answer. The Mitzvah of “Walking in his Ways” guides us to a balanced life, getting us to work on all aspects of ourselves. Judaism does not believe in being normal: normal is a term of comparison. It means being in the middle of the bell curve – a kind of average. In that sense, Jews are anything but normal. We are the mad nation of survival; the people who never feared breaking norms in order to set new standards. י”ש קבלת התורה. Judaism may not believe in the normal, but it does believe in being balanced, in the Golden Mean. Such balance is not an attempt at mediocrity – it is a result of a passionate pursuit of spirituality – ofimitating G-d himself.

When G-d explains to Avraham Avinu why he was choosing him and his descendents, he stated: For I have known him that he would command his children and his household after him that they would keep the Way of G-d … (Genesis 18)

If we will follow the whole Torah system, then some of the Mitzvos will direct us toward giving and some of them will direct us towards self-restraint, some toward the right and some towards the left, (with a slight emphasis towards chesed). We ought not to be angry people, but we have should not become totally unresponsive. We ought to live simply, but we need to know how to look after ourselves. The overall effect is to avoid the unhealthy extremes, and to become well-rounded and holy Torah personalities. The Rambam calls this the midah beinonis not in any way to be confused with mediocrity or compromise, and it is this which leads to completion of the person.

We are all different and we all have different personalities. It had to be that way – for there are different types of Tikunim which the world needs to be perfected. We therefore have different spiritual starting points, and we continue to develop differences as a result of social and environmental factors, as a result of natural maturation and the way we develop ourselves. The genius of the Torah system is to maintain and nurture our uniqueness without it becoming egocentric and without our losing a sense of balance.

The TARYAG Mitzvos overall demand that we focus on different things at different times. Rosh Hashana is a time for an overview evaluation of ourselves and our basic relationship with G-d, Yom Kippur is a time for Teshuva – for reconnection and reinvigoration, Sukkos is a time of trust and joy; (Chanukah causes us to focus on wisdom), Pesach allows us to reflect on what real freedom means and Shavuos reconnects us with the Torah itself. So too some mitzvos focus us on the environment, others on our fellow man, others on G-d and still others on ourselves.

Weaving all these pieces together is the Mitzvah of הולך ונלחם. This Mitzvah is a principle underlying the total scope of the Torah. It is an implicit thread made explicit by directing us to fulfill the Golden Mean – and you should walk in His ways.
Like our relationship with other people, our relationship with HaSh-m can be expressed in many different ways. We pray to Him, study His Torah, obey His Will and generally try to get close to Him. Of course, being that G-d is infinitely away, no matter how close we get He is still infinitely away. The movement through spirituality, though, connects us with Him, the Ultimate Source of spirituality.

There is also another way to connect with HaSh-m. Instead of moving towards Him, we can harmonize ourselves with His actions: "walking in HaSh-m's ways".

Certainly, we cannot imitate HaSh-m's essence. In fact, we cannot even know about His Essence. We can but say a few general principles of His essence. HaSh-m's ways are expressed in many different ways. We pray to Him, study His Torah, obey His Will and generally try to get close to Him. Of course, being that G-d is infinitely away, no matter how close we get He is still infinitely away. The movement through spirituality, though, connects us with Him, the Ultimate Source of spirituality.

Certainly, we cannot imitate HaSh-m's essence. In fact, we cannot even know about His Essence. We can but say a few general principles of His essence. HaSh-m's manifestation in the world, however, is a different matter:

Just as He is merciful so should you be.

The Daas Tevunos points out that using a negative statement also does not work. Saying that G-d is not at all cruel, that He has no body, or that He does not need anything from any outside source, still tells us very little about what the opposite of that is. (The one exception to this is that there is nothing other than Him. The whole Daas Tevunos is dedicated to explaining this theme.) Some of the terms we use about G-d, that He is perfectly good, a perfect unity, perfectly whole, etc. are terms which are true but far removed from any real understanding. The meforshim have also shown that the names of G-d do not describe His essence; rather, they are manifestations outside of His essence. (See the Kuzari.)

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Just as He clothes the naked, visits the sick and buries the dead, so should you.

Just as He is holy and righteous, so should you be.

These imitations basically divide into two major themes:

You should develop your character to be more G-d-like.

You should become a giving person as He is, in every way. (This is in addition to the command of "לעָלָךְ לְעָלָךְ".)

Imitating G-d clearly has the goal of helping us become more G-d-like, and being more G-d-like reveals a great secret of the universe: that man can be a partner...
with G-d in running the world. We imitate Him not only in character traits and actions, but also in engaging in what is called הרקע עלפי – in literally fixing this world. We are His creation partners in completing the world.

When the Sages look closely at what G-d’s actions are in this world, they come up with a surprising list: He clothes the naked (the first Man and Woman), visits the sick (Avraham), consoles the mourners (Yitzchak over the loss of Avraham) and buries the dead (Moshe). Two things emerge from this list: firstly, that G-d’s actions in this world are acts of giving, and secondly, we harmonize ourselves with G-d’s actions in this world not by meditating or by celibacy, nor even by praying to Him or studying His Torah (though the latter two have a significant place in Judaism). We imitate Him by doing things which we might have thought have to do with being a nice guy but have nothing to do with holiness. However, we are dead wrong, and it is the Mitzvah of התיותם ברוך which comes to disabuse us of that idea.

It was Avraham who was first to discover and then teach the יד רכז. Avraham’s culminating act of holiness, one which the Sages describe as greater than prophecy itself, was to run out and meet a bunch of heathen idolaters, wash their feet, serve them food and drink – hardly the stuff of high spiritual trips we might think. In fact, there were models for Avraham Avinu of great kabbalists, high and spiritual people – models which Avraham rejected. “G-d has enough Angels in Shamayim,”
he reasoned. Can I possibly add to the world by being angel one million and one, leaving the rest of the world to despair and alienation? He did not create me as a human in order to be an Angel, but to be something greater than that.” And how right he was! It was Avraham, his hands dirtied with the dust of idolatry, who became the forefather of the Jewish people; not the holy Shem, Chanoch or Ever.

Avraham Avinu’s culminating act of giving, his running out to meet the three Angels whom he mistook as people, shows this principle very well. Avraham Avinu was in the middle of a prophetic conversation with G-d when the guests showed up. Faced with a choice between a prophetic revelation and an act of hospitality to idolaters, Avraham chose the latter. Amazingly, G-d, told to hang on line while something more important was being done, patiently waited to continue His talk with Avraham Avinu. From this the Sages learn that:

An action of chesed, of imitating and harmonizing ourselves with G-d, is greater and holier than a conversation with G-d, for what could be greater than actually becoming a partner in the creation process itself?

The Torah adds another dimension to this amazing insight: when we help to perfect and complete the world by giving, we perfect ourselves as we well. This is why we see that the second expression of “walking in His Ways” is to correct our character traits. Rav Chaim Vital, the great student of the Ari, understood that having good character so permeates a Jewish way of living that it is implicit in every Mitzvah we do.

The human being is such that it is difficult for us to work on the whole range of human qualities we have. Each one of us tends to focus on our strengths and maybe on our biggest weaknesses, but we are likely to leave out the whole gamut of

1. Can I possibly add to the world by being angel one million and one, leaving the rest of the world to despair and alienation?
2. He did not create me as a holy Shem, Chanoch or Ever.
3. Amazingly, G-d, told to hang on line while something more important was being done, patiently waited to continue His talk with Avraham Avinu.
4. Rav Chaim Vital, the great student of the Ari, understood that having good character so permeates a Jewish way of living that it is implicit in every Mitzvah we do.
5. Each one of us tends to focus on our strengths and maybe on our biggest weaknesses, but we are likely to leave out the whole gamut of human qualities we have.
human character in-between. Probably most of us could say what our 5 greatest strengths are. If pressed, we could come up with our 5 greatest weaknesses. But very few would be able to say what the ten traits in the middle are. How are we supposed to work on ourselves if we cannot even come up with a list of our qualities?

The Torah has an answer for this: the mitzvah of קדושת הדרכים beinoniyot. The Rambam writes extensively about how this mitzvah guides us in living a balanced life1, getting us to work on all aspects of ourselves. Following this Way of G-d is not just a Mitzvah, but is a great source of goodness and blessing to the person.2

Judaism does not believe in being normal: normal is a term of comparison. Normal means being in the middle of the bell curve, a kind of average. In that sense, Jews are anything but normal. We are the mad nation of survival, the people who never feared breaking norms in order to set new standards.

If we will follow the whole Torah system, some of the Mitzvos will direct us toward giving and some of them will direct us towards self-restraint, some toward the right and some towards the left (with a slight emphasis towards chesed)5. We ought to live simply, but we need to know how to look after ourselves7. The overall effect is to avoid the unhealthy extremes8 and to become well-rounded and holy Torah personalities. The Rambam calls this the midah beinoniyot. This should not in any way

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1.']= ד"כ הלuchos ד' ת"כ: התorias ז"כ לכלךברך האלוהים ז"כ הדרכי ИсDieser נs
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7.]= י"כ הלchos ד' ת"כ: ז"כ לכלךברך האלוהים ז"כ הדרכי ИсDieser נs
8.]= י"כ הלchos ד' ת"כ: ז"כ בכלךברך האלוהים ז"כ הדרכי ИсDieser נs

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We are all different, and we all have different personalities. We were created in this way because there are different Tikunim that need to be perfected in the world. Therefore, we are all born different, even with different spiritual starting points, and we continue to develop differences as a result of social and environmental factors, natural maturation processes and the way we develop ourselves. The genius of the Torah system is to maintain and nurture our uniqueness without it becoming egocentric and without our losing a sense of balance.

Overall, the Taryag Mitzvos demand that we focus on different things at different times. Rosh Hashana is a time for an overview evaluation of ourselves and our basic relationship with G-d, Yom Kippur is a time for Teshuva – for reconnection with the Torah itself. Similarly, some Mitzvos focus us on the environment, others on our fellow man, others on G-d and still others on ourselves.

Weaving all these peaces together is the Mitzvah of הלותב ודרכיך. This Mitzvah is a principle underlying the total scope of the Torah. It is an implicit thread made explicit by directing us to fulfill the Golden Mean – and you should walk in His ways.
3. Geirus

SUMMARY:

A non-Jew becomes Jewish by conversion. In a male this involves three elements, Circumcision, Kabalas Mitzvos and Tevilah in front of a kosher Beis Din of 3 people. A woman converts by accepting the Mitzvos and Tevila. This process has to take place in front of a Kosher Beis Din of 3 people. After conversion, the Ger is regarded as 100% Jewish. Therefore, he is included in the מצוות of כמוך, לרעך, ואהבת, and of תונו, לא. Nevertheless, the Torah repeated these prohibitions with specific reference to a Ger, for: since he entered our Torah, G-d added (His) love to (the) love (of the Ger), and allocated him additional Mitzvot.

So concerned is the תורה to ensure that we relate to the רא as an equal, that, while his legal status may be 100% Jewish, there may yet be attitudinal biases on our part. For a Ger to suffer such biases would be particularly painful, for he has given up all his previous social and national connections – his entire past – to join the Jewish nation and to be closer to G-d. Therefore, the Torah stresses that “in the Jewish nation .. pure character … gives him that which, in other circles, riches and origins acquire for him.” We Jews, after all know what it is to be a stranger in someone else’s land – כי ג飲みים באירץ וbjergים. And having come from such lowly beginnings ourselves there is certainly no room for condescension on our parts. The Ger is simultaneously lowly and great: He is lowly because he is exposed and because he has to fight the natural attraction to reconnect with his own non-Jewish roots, but his very act of conversion is an act of greatness. After all, we Jews converted at Sinai with the aid of the thunder and the lightning and the convulsions of nature. The Convert does so unaided.

The Neshama of the Ger has inherited a spark of spiritual greatness. In the case of the Ruth the Moabitess, this had come all the way down from Lot. Through his long years with Avraham Avinu, Lot had imbibed some pure sparks of Chesed which lay dormant through the generations. Ruth finally accessed that greatness in the recesses of her soul and gave everything up to bring that holiness home. Other souls may be from Jews whose ancestors long ago assimilated – Jews all along. We can only imagine what spiritual heritage the conversion of Onkelus, or those great Tenaim, Shmaya and Avtalyon brought with them.

The convert should become כאזריך – like one of you, which can also be translated “just like you were”, coming after the verse כי ג飲みים באירץ וbjergים. If you want to understand how these Neshamos got lost amongst the nations, just look how the entire Jewish people got absorbed into the 49th level of impurity of Egypt.

The Yafes Toar is also such a soul. The words Yafes Toar refers to their souls, not their bodies.

All converts show greatness in their act of conversion. Many become great leaders in the Jewish people. The sincere convert as a reluctant concession which the Torah makes: It is a way of providing an opportunity to the enormous spiritual power of the convert to find expression.

It is true that we do not encourage converts. But this is only as a test of sincerity, rather than reflecting any position on whether we want them or not. Nor does the court does not first try to persuade potential converts to be Noachides rather than Jews. The Yerushalmi (Brachos) states: At the time when the Jewish people, He
surveys the whole world in search of a Righteous Gentile, and brings him to attach him to the Jewish people (i.e. to convert). The Sma, in admonishing us not to deal fraudulently with non-Jews says, that if we do not behave in an exemplary fashion, who would join the Jewish nation as converts, implying that this is what we want them to do.

Negative statements made by the Sages about converts refer to insincere converts. Yehoshua accepted Rachav, the harlot, as a convert and Naomi accepted Ruth the Moabite. Hillel converted a non-Jew who made a condition that he will only convert if he could become the High Priest (an impossibility) and another convert demanded that he be taught all of the Torah on one foot. But, Hillel saw that both these converts would be completely sincere by the time of their conversions.

The only time we see a limitation on converts is at the time of Moshiach. For, at that time it will be so in to be Jewish that it will no longer be possible to test for sincerity. A similar situation existed during the time of Shlomo HaMelech.

The acceptance of the stranger, his physical and spiritual presence requires adjustments on our part – but that is all part of the kindness which G-d is asking of us.

We are supposed to develop this special sensitivity to the Ger and then generalize to all who find themselves strangers, such as those who move to a new city. Although certainly the obligation is only to actual גרים, the Mitzvos come to develop our character so that new applications of the idea will be expressed naturally by us.
The spirituality of the Torah is so powerful, that it covers the spiritual reality of all mankind. Herein lies the possibility of conversion.

A non-Jew becomes Jewish by conversion. For a male, this involves three elements: Circumcision, Kabalas Mitzvos, and Tevilah. A woman converts by accepting the Mitzvos and Tevilah. This process has to take place in front of a Kosher Beis Din of 3 people. The Gemorrah in Krisus teaches us that we learn these three
requirements from what Klal Yisroel did at Sinai when entering into the Bris with HaSh-m\textsuperscript{1}. The verse says:

"וכככ כלככ (במזמר טו טו)"}

comparing the process of Klal Yisroel at Sinai with that of Geirus\textsuperscript{3}. Klal Yisroel at Sinai also brought a Korban, something a Ger will have to do when the Temple is rebuilt, בוי\textsuperscript{4}.

After conversion, a Ger is considered to be 100% Jewish\textsuperscript{5}. Therefore, he is included in the Jewish nation, "from out of the heathen world, who, giving up all his previous social and national connection, without any past, without any present, only with the impulse towards pure human worth which has awakened within him, solely with the impulse towards pure human worth which has awakened within him,

Since he entered our Torah, G-d added (His) love to (the) love (of the Ger), and allocated him additional Mitzvos.\textsuperscript{7}

The Torah is so concerned to ensure that we relate to the Ger as an equal, and recognizes that while a Ger's legal status is 100% Jewish, there may yet be attitudinal biases on our part\textsuperscript{8}. For a Ger to suffer such biases would be particularly painful, for he has come to the Jewish nation, "from out of the heathen world, who, giving up all his previous social and national connection, without any past, without any present, only with the impulse towards pure human worth which has awakened within him,

לפי המוסר של pedagog. (י"א מדריך: פ"א קסalaria) הביאו כולנו לבר تحتاج לבר necesita לה布朗יך (ברוחו של רבי עם השכפנאות) לקיים את התורה בברון מתוקה, וברון מצילים בברון של חינוך. זה יכול להביא לבר損害 לכל ברונות חינוך באותה בברון. שברון הואrodu יד יד ט"ס

If a Ger may not hold positions of authority, however.

We may not hold positions of authority, however.

ביי מֵימֶר צָדִיק מֶמְלָכִית כֵּלֶל וְלָכֵּל שֶׁלֶמֶשׁ לְמָכְרֵי הָדוּרְוֵי עֹלֶּה בְּלֵבָן. מי שֶׁמָּא שֶׁמָּא (י"א מדריך: פ"א קסalaria) הביאו全过程 לברحتاج לבר необходимости בברון מצילים בברון של חינוך. זה יכול להביא לבר損害 לברונות חינוך, והברון הואrodu יד יד ט"ס

Arahide the deficiencies of the rabbis of that generation. The Moser and the rabbis of that generation do not fulfill the Moser and the rabbis of that generation fulfill the Moser. Therefore, the Moser must be fulfilled by the Moser of the Moser (which is the Moser). The Moser of the Moser must be fulfilled by the Moser of the Moser.

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A Ger who converts is considered is considered to have been born from the day of his conversion. (Midoaraa'isa, he could marry his siblings if they too were to convert, though the Sages prohibited this.) His conversion is considered a Teshuva of sorts, of his soul returning to where it really belongs. But it is only a Teshuvah of the future onwards. The non-Jew does not have

\[1\] Rabbi Hirsch – דברי יד

why should the Ger not think of returning to his roots, where he is loved and wanted, if he is asked to?...

and because he has to fight the natural attraction to reconnect with his own non-Jewish roots, but his very act of conversion is an act of greatness. After all, we Jews converted at Sinai with the aid of thunder, lightning and convulsions of nature. The Convert, in contrast, does so unaided.

And, having come from such lowly beginnings ourselves, there is certainly no room for condescension on our part. The Ger is simultaneously lowly and great: He is lowly because he is exposed and because he has to fight the natural attraction to reconnect with his own non-Jewish roots, but his very act of conversion is an act of greatness. After all, we Jews converted at Sinai with the aid of thunder, lightning and convulsions of nature. The Convert, in contrast, does so unaided.

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\[2\] Hirsch ibid – יס

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\[3\] Meshech Chochma - משלחי 준ה ק"מ 101

Why should the Ger not think of returning to his roots, where he is loved and wanted, if he is rejected by the people he gave up so much to a part of?

Why should the Ger not think of returning to his roots, where he is loved and wanted, if he is rejected by the people he gave up so much to a part of?

Why should the Ger not think of returning to his roots, where he is loved and wanted, if he is rejected by the people he gave up so much to a part of?
the power to correct his past, and hence he is called a Ger. It is for this reason that G-d asked Avraham Avinu, the first ‘convert’ to leave everything behind – כל כן – and begin anew. So, here lies the full extent of the courage of the Ger. He has not only left his past in the sense that an Italian would become French or even a Christian a Moslem – he has literally no spiritual continuity from his past. We are truly responsible providing the totality of his new context. The non Jew now begins to say, “the G-d of my Fathers”, for even his history is now acquired.

Anyone who knows Geirim knows that it is not the weak who come and join the Jewish people but rather the very opposite. From where did a non-Jew’s desire to join the hated Jews with their burdonesome Torah come from? The Nesha’imos of the Ger surely inherited a spark of spiritual greatness which longs for a connection with the Jewish people and the Torah. In the case of the Ruth the Moabitess, this had come all the way down from Lot. Through his long years with Avraham Avinu, Lot had imbibed some pure sparks of Chesed which lay dormant through the generations. Ruth finally accessed that greatness in the recesses of her soul and gave everything up to bring that holiness home. Other souls may be from Jews whose ancestors long ago assimilated – Jews all along.

To explain this to us, the Torah tells us that the convert should be like one of you. Ohr HaChaim translates these words to mean “just like you were”, and joins it to the end of the verse, כי גרים יהיה באור מפרות. If we want to understand how these Nesha’imos were lost amongst the nations, we just need to look at how the entire Jewish people were absorbed into the 49th level of impurity of Egypt. Just as our sparks of holiness were ultimately redeemed from what looked like a total envelopment of impurity, so too we can only imagine what spiritual heritage the conversion of Unkelus or the great Tanaim Shmaya and Avtalyon brought with them.

In Parshas Ki Seitzei, the Ohr HaChaim points out that the concept of the Eishes Yefas Toar also refers to such Nesha’imos. The words Yefas Toar cannot be referring to physical beauty, for the law is applicable to all captive women, not just the beautiful ones (referring to physical beauty, for the law is applicable to all captive women, not just the beautiful ones - ייחושIEnumerable). Yefas Toar refers to their souls rather than their bodies. War is a time when the Shechina is with us. If, at this time, one of us sees himself attracted to this woman, he can presume that it is her intrinsic goodness that he is being attracted to. Such a holy soul belongs with the Jewish people. It then becomes a mitzvah to marry this woman, and to return her soul to where it belongs.

Conversion is truly an act of greatness. Our laws filter out anyone who may have the slightest ulterior motive to convert – for the sake of money, a relationship or other. Many converts build on this first act to ultimately become standard bearers of...
greatness in the Jewish people? Anyone who sees the sincere convert as a reluctant concession which the Torah makes is simply out of harmony with the letter and the spirit of the law.

Judaism does not seem to encourage converts, which has led some people to believe that Jews do not, in fact, want them. According to this perspective, the requirement to be especially kind to Geirim is a requirement which occurs only after a conversion process that we would really prefer did not happen. While there is certainly no Torah Mitzvah to convert Gentiles, there is nevertheless a considerable body of evidence indicating that we do, in fact, want converts. How else do we explain that when a potential convert first approaches the court of law, the court does not first try to persuade him to rather become a Noachide, fulfilling the Seven Noachide Laws? Even clearer is the Yerushalmi which states: At the time when the Jewish people do His will, He surveys the whole world in search of a Righteous Gentile, and brings him to attach him to the Jewish people (i.e. to convert).

To ensure that converts would always have the underlying strength to convert, G-d told Avraham Avinu to wait until he was 99 years old to be circumcised (and

In fact there were some near conversions that would have dramatically changed the face of the earth. Unkelus was a Ger, and Rebbe Akiva was the descendant of Gerim. On the eve of Rosh Hashana, 1280 in the secular calendar, the famed kabbalist Avraham Abulafia set out to Rome to convert Pope Nicholas III to Judaism. When the Pope heard of his plan, he ordered Abulafia burned at the stake.

However, in Horeb, Rav S.R. Hirsch writes (Chap. 77, no. 504): We must present to him [the potential convert] that if in his present condition he has fulfilled only the seven general duties of the Noachides he stands quite blameless before G-d, so why should he go out of his way to subject himself to such obligations?

However, in the Yerushalmi which states: At the time when the Jewish people do His will, He surveys the whole world in search of a Righteous Gentile, and brings him to attach him to the Jewish people (i.e. to convert). The Smag, in admonishing us not to deal fraudulently with non-Jews, says that if we do not behave in an exemplary fashion, who, amongst the non-Jews would be inspired to join us as converts, implying that this is what we want them to do.
undergo his own personal conversion of sorts, coming as he did from a non-Jewish house of idolatry). Avraham Avinu’s ability to overcome the entrenchment of an entire life-time enabled non-Jews of every age to do the same. If he had converted at 20 or 30, for example, this would only have enabled people up at that age to convert\(^1\). In addition, Avraham receives the blessing: “and all the nations of the world should be blessed through you.” This blessing is a source for non-Jews to receive from the spiritual blessing – the spiritual to acquire a Jewish soul\(^2\).

There are some very negative statements made by Chazal about Geirim. *Evil after evil comes from those who receive Converts*\(^3\). Tosafos explain that all these statements refer to insincere converts, and that, on the contrary, the failure by the Avos to accept Timna led to her giving birth to Amalek, who became an archenemy of the Jews\(^5\). Yehoshua also accepted Rachv the harlot, and Naomi accepted Ruth the Moabitite. Hillel converted a non-Jew who made a condition that he would only convert if he could become the High Priest (an impossibility), and another convert demanded that he be taught all of the Torah on one foot. But, Hillel saw that both of these converts would be completely sincere by the time of their conversions, as is what indeed happened\(^6\).

After Mashiach comes, geirim will no longer be accepted\(^7\). This is because at that stage it will be so “in” to be Jewish that it will no longer be possible to test for sincerity. A similar situation existed during the time of Dovid and Shlomo HaMelech.

Surely it is hard to adjust to the presence of the stranger, as his physical and spiritual presence requires adjustments on our part, but that is all part of the kindness which G-d is asking of us.

We are supposed to develop this special sensitivity to the Ger and then apply it to all who find themselves strangers, such as those who move to a new city\(^8\).

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\(^1\) כקט

\(^2\) כקט

\(^3\) כקט

\(^4\) הקט

\(^5\) הקט

\(^6\) הקט

\(^7\) הקט

\(^8\) הקט
Although the actual obligation is only regarding actual גרים¹, the Mitzvos come to develop our character so that new applications of the idea will be expressed naturally by us².
4. Prayer

SUMMARY:

Prayer completes our relationship with G-d. In so doing it not only nourishes us, but all the universes which G-d created. It seems strange, then, that the core of our prayers are requests (the middle 13 blessings of the Shmonesh Esreh), a seeming indulgence of our own needs.

Asking our needs from G-d reminds us that we are dependent solely on Him. This is the starting point of a relationship with G-d. Prayer is about trust. It’s about knowing that there is a higher power that is watching, waiting, listening, caring, helping, loving, and guiding. It’s about knowing that I can do nothing by myself, with the reassurance that I am not alone.

The world is mysteriously constructed so that the greater the created being, the more dependent it appears to be. The stone is completely independent. Plant life has certain needs, but not as great as the needs of an animal, which has a less readily available supply of food and often must search for it; it requires shelter; and in the higher order of the species if may even manifest a limited psychological dependence. The human being experiences the greatest needs.

So we don’t pray because we need things; rather, the order is the reverse. In order to increase our awareness of G-d’s involvement with our lives, we pray for our needs, for that heightens our awareness. If we do not turn to G-d, at least when we are in trouble, we are denying His Providence in this world. Our involvement in this world lures us into thinking that we run the whole show. Prayer is the antidote to balancing active engagement with a clear understanding that ultimately we control nothing.

G-d set things up in such a way that we will always have needs causing us to turn to Him. Often, the whole purpose of the need is to get us to daven. From the outset He wanted to give the Imahos children, but kept this back from them to get them to daven for children first.

The world was set up in such a way that the arousal of every blessing arouses with it its opposite. The curse and the blessing are mirror images, and it is our dovening which guides that force to the side of blessing. We can have an anxiety-provoking premonition that something bad is going to happen, and our prayers turn it into something positive.

Once our prayers remind us that G-d is looking after us, we use this as a springboard to recognize His Providence throughout the world. This is what we achieve whenever we say a blessing over some food or aspect of the creation. This in turn enhances our pleasure of the world by recognizing that HaShem created this thing with exquisite detail and perfection for our benefit. By tying the pleasure back to Hashem, we create kedusha out of the object of the pleasure, of the pleasure itself, and of ourselves. We leave the world a better place.

We cannot and do not bless G-d, in the sense of bestowing upon Him something. G-d is perfect; we cannot add anything to Him. Therefore, when we say “Baruch”, we do not mean “May He be blessed.” Rather we mean, “He is intrinsically blessed.” Baruch is a statement of fact – He who is Blessed. Since He is totally blessed, His blessing overflows to us like a fountain (ברכה מלשון ברכה)– thereforeברך is an expression of additional Hashpaah.
Therefore, the real test of whether a person is having a true relationship with G-d during his davening is what happens afterwards. The very_task we are supposed to do in the world to get close to הוהי predisposes us to alienation from Him, by making us think that it us who controls the process. Prayer is the antidote to this and is therefore just the beginning of a comprehensive relationship with הוהי. Prayer is but one of a multiple of relationships with HaSh-m and cannot be seen in isolation. The type of relationship prayer is, is not merely to relate but to transform ourselves.

God wants us to pray, He asks us to pray, but He doesn’t need us to pray. He doesn’t need His ego stroked. Nor do we daven to remind Him—we pray to remind ourselves. Prayer is for our benefit, to remind us that there is a Creator, who cares about us and is listening when we speak to Him. Every prayer removes a barrier between ourselves and the Almighty, giving me clarity and understanding so that I can draw closer to Him.

A person who sees prayer as an opportunity for a relationship with G-d will not be disappointed if the things he requests from Him do not get answered. For by asking he will have achieved the main object of prayer, the relationship itself. In the culminating act of prayer, we stand facing Him directly, and speak to Him in the second person. Thus the awareness that we are לפני השכינה לפני עומד is of the very essence of what defines prayer.

In some sense, prayer is an art, and like all great arts, requires practice. Davening is not an intellectual process; it’s about feeling the pleasure of a relationship with G-d. The sages call prayer עבודה: service, or work, of the heart, because it is an experiential process, and it is literally work, something difficult which requires effort. All relationships require work and a relationship with God is no different: it requires time, energy, and commitment.

All relationships require that we get more in touch with ourselves, understand what in ourselves is preventing a deepening of the relationship, as well as what is connecting. Prayer is no different. The word פלל means to judge, a focusing of one’s thoughts and gaining clarity; to judge oneself and, because one wants honesty in the relationship, asking G-d to judge us too. The ultimate clarity is to understand that everything leads back to the ultimate Unity which is HaShem. Just as we can grow in a relationship, and just as relationships have their ups and downs, so it is in our prayer-relationship with G-d. The important thing is to see prayer as an ongoing growth process. Rav Hirsch explains that the words לשבת בלבכם בלאברדו as always meaning to work on something. Therefore לשבת בלבכם means to work on our hearts, i.e. on ourselves, to see through our prayers, new meaning and a new relevance to our lives.

The Kuzari says prayer is to the soul as food is to the body. After a while, we begin to get hungrier and hungrier for the next time we will be able to nourish our souls with another prayer.

Prayer is a lost art—it has been neglected because society has not been educated how to pray. However, prayer can be activated on many levels—on the physical level: my words; the emotional level: my heart, and the mental level, my awareness of what I’m saying. I go to shul and just sit—that’s a prayer! As I walk to shul—that’s a prayer too.

God is not like a human being—He does not turn us away because we come only in times of need. In fact he waits to hear from us.
Prayer is a great fundamental of Judaism, especially in a post-Temple, post-prophetic era where we have a more limited range of options to connect with G-d. In completing our relationship with G-d, prayer comes to complete us as well. In fact, a great prayer can raise us almost as spiritually high as prophecy itself! But, as the Nefesh HaChaim tells us, prayer does more than just nourish us; it nourishes all the universes which G-d created, and therefore has an impact on us by changing all the channels through which G-d delivers goodness and punishment. Since this world is called 

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G-d’s Prayer: We see from these quotes that prayer is a real force which has an objective reality in very high worlds. This explains the Gemorrah which states that G-d prays and asks what is His prayer:

מט ברכות כל בכובס: ברכה בכוכב כל בכובס: נברך את כל בכוכב כל בכוכב כל בכוכב כל בכוכב...

(The Gemorrah also states that HaSh-m wears Tefillin and asks what is written on them.)

The Maharal (בכם מגלה) says that since prayer means, and since HaSh-m wears Tefillin, the Nefesh HaChaim says:

עונו התפילה שלום אשת מזיקה לאחר בין כל בכוכב כל בכוכב כל בכוכב כל בכוכב כל בכוכב...

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an exact parallel of higher worlds, our physical requests impact on the higher parallel universes.\textsuperscript{1}

\textit{It seems strange, then, that the core of our תפילה are ביך:} The middle 13 שמות שרהו of the middle 13 ברכות, which is the center of our davening, comprises requests for necessities which a person feels are beyond his reach\textsuperscript{2}, as if prayer is nothing more than the indulgence of our own needs.

Certainly, we ought not to simply see prayer as a verbalized wish list. The needs it is appropriate to ask for must be essential ones which cannot be achieved by human effort, and which are intended only in order to serve G-d\textsuperscript{3}. We ought also to be praying for the needs of our fellow man\textsuperscript{4}. In addition, such requests must minimally be accompanied by a general praise (כ ראשות) and recognition of all the good that HaSh-m does for us (ג ארוןמה)\textsuperscript{5}.

In fact, the ideal would be to see the needs of the Jewish people as paramount above individual needs\textsuperscript{6}. A great person sees the needs of the Tzibur as the primary need that he himself has. But even for ordinary Jews, relating to the בכר in some way is the only means for prayer to be effective\textsuperscript{7}. For that reason, the prayers are in the plural\textsuperscript{8}.

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\textsuperscript{6} i.e. we have to begin our Тфилот with שמענה, which is the center of our davening, comprises requests for necessities which a person feels are beyond his reach, as if prayer is nothing more than the indulgence of our own needs.

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Yet, although it is greater to daven for others and in particular to daven for the whole of Klal Yisroel, nevertheless, this is not meant to be to the exclusion of the more personal aspect of the yearning soul.

What happens when we request such real needs from G-d is that we remember that we are dependent solely on Him. When we pray, we look into ourselves, our human condition, in order to begin a relationship with HaSh-m. The world is mysteriously constructed so that the greater the created being, the more dependent it appears to be:

“...the proper starting point for praying to G-d is not the ultimate meaning of his dependence and to seek out the One upon Whom he is dependent.”

Therefore, prayer is a uniquely human recognition of G-d's Hashgacha.

What emerges, then, is that the proper starting point for praying to G-d is not the psychological dependence. The human being, of course, experiences the greatest dependence and to seek out the One upon Whom he is dependent.

But not only are his needs infinitely greater; he is the soul being endowed with the capacity to perceive the ultimate meaning of his dependence and to seek out the One upon Whom he is dependent.

Therefore, prayer is a uniquely human recognition of G-d's Hashgacha.

In fact, if we do not turn to G-d, at least when we are in trouble, we are denying His Providence in this world.

What happens when we request such real needs from G-d is that we remember that we are dependent solely on Him.

Therefore, prayer is a uniquely human recognition of G-d's Hashgacha.

In order to do this, we pray for our needs, fulfill those needs. Rather, the order is in the reverse: we start out by wanting to satisfy a need, and is therefore the most dependent of all. But not only are his needs infinitely greater; he is the soul being endowed with the capacity to perceive the ultimate meaning of his dependence and to seek out the One upon Whom he is dependent.

Therefore, prayer is a uniquely human recognition of G-d's Hashgacha.

The point is not to wait until we are lacking something in order to appreciate that everything comes from HaSh-m.

If we lacked for nothing, we would be completely self-contained.

The Yarning Soul, Rabbi Moshe Einstadter pg. 28.

Had HaSh-m set up the world in such a way that nature would have automatically provided for all our needs, it would have theoretically been possible to recognize HaSh-m's Hashgacha.
HaSh-m’s wants to have a relationship with us and therefore sets things up in such a way that we will have needs which will remind us to turn to Him. Often, the whole purpose of the need is to get us to daven\(^1\). From the outset, G-d wanted to give the Imahos children, but kept this back from them in order to get them to daven for children first\(^2\). Rav Tzadok\(^3\) explains that often it is not that we are lacking something so much as that the world was set up in such a way that the arousal of every blessing arouses with it its opposite. The curse and the blessing are mirror images, and it is our davening which guides that force to the side of blessing\(^4\).

The fact that when we daven we hide His Hashgacha is also the explanation given to why we are considering stealing when we do not say a Brocha before eating. (See Brochos)

Once we use our needs as a springboard to recognize Hashem’s wants to have a relationship with us and therefore sets things up in such a way that we will have needs which will remind us to turn to Him. Often, the whole purpose of the need is to get us to daven to Hashem. In the end, that same thing which would have been bad turns into something positive\(^7\). Prayer, says Rav Dessler, is the tool that allows us to be aware of that thought of Hashem all over\(^8\).

Reader’s Digest, Points to Ponder:
Max Lucado: I’ve seen you stalking the malls, walking the aisles, searching for that extra-special gift. Stashing away a few dollars a month to buy him some lizard skin boots; staring at a thousand rings to find her the best diamond; staying up all night ... assembling the new bicycle.
This, in fact, is what a Brocha is all about. If one focuses on every word of a bracha, one will realize much about the nature of the giver of the bracha, and His kadosh v’b’rachah, and will learn and reinforce many great principles of Judaism.

According to the Kuzari, a bracha is a way of enhancing our pleasure of the world by preparing for that pleasure, recognizing its source, HaSh-m, and recognizing that HaSh-m created this thing with exquisite detail and perfection for our benefit. By tying the pleasure back to Hash-m we create kedusha out of the object of the pleasure, of the pleasure itself, and of ourselves. We leave the world a better place.

We cannot and do not bless HaSh-m. To bless implies to add something (to add the blessing). Since HaSh-m is perfect and complete, we cannot add anything to Him.

Why do you do it? So the eyes will pop, the jaw will drop. To hear those words of disbelief:

“You did this for me?”

And that is why God did it. Next time a sunrise steals your breath or a meadow of flowers leaves you speechless, remain that way. Say nothing, and listen as heaven whispers, “Do you like it? I did it just for you.”


1.nposkim shineen b’peh: “כַּל בֵּית בַּר יֶבֶר נַפְלָת הָתְפִלָּה" (ב: יִבְרָךְ, מַכְסַת, וַהֲוָא הָהָּאוֹר וְהָהַקָּנָה הָלְבִישׁוּתָם): "I bless, (He) cloaks them, and He lightens their path." He will understand where all this comes from and will be hugely grateful:

2.אוצר התפילה, חקוקה, ס. (דף בה אמות זכר... יዝ המקור)... וב: ביהם ביבא תפילת התפילהupal קדישָא" (לפי אזור): "The prayer is a way of enhancing our pleasure of the world by preparing for that pleasure, recognizing its source, HaSh-m, and recognizing that HaSh-m created this thing with exquisite detail and perfection for our benefit. By tying the pleasure back to Hash-m we create kedusha out of the object of the pleasure, of the pleasure itself, and of ourselves. We leave the world a better place.

For example, a person who says בַּרְכָּה on the bracha will become very alert and appreciative of many things around him. He will appreciate the fact that he has clothes (down to his shoe-laces), that he can walk, that he is a free man, that he can see, etc. He will understand where all this comes from and will be hugely grateful:

3.ב: יברך, מכת, וחה (’ח תפילת התפילהupal קדישא’): "I bless, He cloaks them, and He lightens their path." He will understand where all this comes from and will be hugely grateful:

4.כַּל בֵּית בַּר יֶבֶר נַפְלָת הָתְפִלָּה" (ב: יִבְרָךְ): "I bless, (He) cloaks them, and He lightens their path." He will understand where all this comes from and will be hugely grateful:

5.ב: יברך, מכת, וחה (’ח תפילת התפילהupal קדישא’): "I bless, He cloaks them, and He lightens their path." He will understand where all this comes from and will be hugely grateful:

6.כַּל בֵּית בַּר יֶבֶר נַפְלָת הָתְפִלָּה" (ב: יִבְרָךְ): "I bless, (He) cloaks them, and He lightens their path." He will understand where all this comes from and will be hugely grateful:
Therefore, the first word of every brachah, brachai, cannot mean “May He be blessed.” Rather, it means, “He is intrinsically blessed.” But it is not just recognition of HaSh-m’s Hashgacha that we are looking to develop. We are looking to have an intimate relationship with our G-d. Therefore, asking for our own needs is only meant to be the beginning of a comprehensive relationship with Hashem. As the Derech HaSh-m explains how our Avodah requirements predispose us to alienation from Him. The Derech HaSh-m explains how our Avodah requirements predispose us to alienation from Him. The Derech HaSh-m explains how our Avodah requirements predispose us to alienation from Him. The Derech HaSh-m explains how our Avodah requirements predispose us to alienation from Him. Therefore, the first word of every brachah, brachai, cannot mean “May He be blessed.” Rather, it means, “He is intrinsically blessed.” Therefore, the first word of every brachah, brachai, cannot mean “May He be blessed.” Rather, it means, “He is intrinsically blessed.”
one of a multiple of relationships with HaSh-m, and cannot be seen in isolation. The type of relationship prayer is is not merely to relate, but to transform ourselves. A connection with G-d means that we are better receptacles for שלימות. This, says the Maharal, allows us to receive from G-d.1

G-d wants us to pray, He asks us to pray, but He doesn’t need us to pray. He doesn’t need His ego stroked. Prayer is for our benefit, to remind us that G-d is the source of all goodness and love. It reminds us that there is a Creator who cares about us and is listening when we speak to Him. Each prayer removes a barrier between us and the Almighty, giving us clarity and understanding so that we draw closer to Him.

G-d knows what we need. We do not daven to remind Him—we pray to remind ourselves. The essence of prayer is choice, the process of deciding, refining, and reaffirming what it is that we want out of life. Like a good parent, the Almighty desires our growth as human beings and does not spoil us by giving us everything on a silver platter. By nature, man only values that which he works for, and so we are given the opportunity to work on our relationship and earn our blessings. “Understanding isn’t given, it is earned.” Unless we earn it, it is not meaningful.2

“Imagine for a moment that a man has a family heirloom worth thousands of dollars and he wishes to give it to his son. The son happens to be very clumsy and careless, and it is obvious that if he gets the heirloom, it will be shattered within moments. Nevertheless, it would be very painful for the father to be deprived of the opportunity to give the gift to his son. Thus, the father wants to train his son to be able to receive the heirloom.”3

A person who sees prayer as an opportunity for a relationship with G-d will not be disappointed if the things he requests from Him are not answered, for by asking, he will have achieved the main object of prayer, the relationship itself.4

In the culminating act of prayer, we stand facing G-d directly and speak to Him in the second person. Thus the awareness that we are שמות לפני השכינה is of the very essence of what defines prayer.5

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1 Fiori, Dena, Moreshet 2000


3 Y. Kirzner and Lisa Aikin, The Art of Jewish Prayer

4 פִּכְרָים (הָהִלָּהָה מִי): שֶׁהֵבִיל בֵּין הַמַּעֲבָדֲלוּת דֵּי הַכְּלִיטִי אוֹרָה. שרְמִכְכָּשׁוּ הַכְּלִיטִי אוֹרָה לא יִשְׁמַע עַל יַיִי

5 יָדּוֹר וּרְבִּין חֵיָה חֵלִיר. היי תִּפְלֵיָה
This relationship has the potential to be so intense that it can be compared to prophecy. The difference is that in prophecy, the experience is initiated by G-d, whereas in prayer, the experience is initiated by man.

What is hard about prayer is “getting the experience.” Davening is not an intellectual process; it’s about feeling the pleasure of a relationship with G-d. The Sages call prayer שבלב: service, or work, of the heart, because it is an experiential process and is literally work, something difficult which requires effort. All relationships require work, and a relationship with G-d is no different: it requires time, energy, and commitment.

How can we do this? The most important ingredient is something called כוונה means direction, and the direction of our prayers is what gives them real depth of meaning and awareness. Because it requires focus and concentration, this is often difficult to achieve, especially when we are tired or discouraged. Remember that it is an art, and like all great arts, requires practice. It is a challenge—we need to rise to the occasion and strive for great heights. Although we say the same prayers each day, we are supposed to constantly grow from the experience so that every day we stand before G-d a bigger and better person. If this is so, we would relate to the prayers on a different level each day, seeing in them new meaning and new relevance to our lives. It is an awesome moment when we finally feel that we are communicating with the Divine! It’s a direct connection to the Almighty. The power of obligatory prayer coupled with כוונה is so great that nothing stands between our prayers and the Almighty’s ears.

The desire to pray is in and of itself the relationship; the prayer is the actualization of the desire. As the Sages put it, G-d wants our hearts.

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1 In The Yearning Soul, Rabbi Moshe Einstadter point this out, showing that the "שו"compares the one in terms of the other:

2 Based on Dena Heller, Moreshet 2000.

3 הרמב"ם: "הכוונה היא какדש: מינה את כולם המתחבטים וראשינו נעשים כולם ויהיו מתבדרים שהשכלי קוח ולהתגברות הגשמיות, הנבואת להמעלת קרוב מגיעים שהוי עד בתפילתם ומ_MUTumbnailsCloseup.png" = שעון אחר.


5 קuerdo סנהדרין: הכההלא "בלבא והה"ד כיב מ"ה"ה -" תמי` לצייר…שהحكה אשה שפחתת נמנים הגון קב –ותוו איש גרה כ"י.


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If we are to show that when we are actively engaged in the relationship we have our heart in it, we will then show that we have רצון, for we desire the relationship and miss it when we do not have it. The Kuzari says that prayer is to the soul as food is to the body. After a while, we begin to get hungrier and hungrier for the next time we will be able to nourish our souls with another prayer.

Those who have perfected the art of prayer, who understand what a deeper relationship with G-d is all about, will achieve not only closeness but a real attachment to the Almighty.

All relationships require that we get more in touch with ourselves, understand what in ourselves is preventing a deepening of the relationship, as well as what is connecting. Prayer is no different. In fact, one of the names of Tefila is נפש, as Chana stated:

אמשאך אתushima אתולין יידכתיב זכריך מפשי אתה, דבריך מפשי אתד

Through exploring our relationship with G-d we become spiritually focused, gain clarity about our lives, and give ourselves an opportunity to sort out all the mixed thoughts, ideas and feelings, some of them good and some of them bad.

Yaakov Avinu said of Yosef: [intercalation]

It is proper that you know our intention in prayer is nothing other than 1. The yearning of the soul for G-d 2. Its humility before Him 3. Together with its elevation before its Creator 4. And its praise and thanks to His name 5. And the casting of all burdens upon Him. (Chovos Yaakov, Cheshbon 10)
This literally means, "I never thought (or I never had the courage to pray) to see your face again". The word פֶלֶל means to judge, as if Yaakov was judging between one thing and another. Yaakov never accepted the news of Yosef's death, yet he sometimes thought that Yosef was dead. At other times, Yaakov felt that Yosef was still alive. Yaakov was never able to conclude (judge or evaluate) decisively between these thoughts of whether he would ever see Yosef again.

As such, the very word "to pray" means a focusing of one’s thoughts and gaining clarity; to judge oneself and, because one wants honesty in the relationship,

2The word פֶלֶל is used in the Chumash to mean Judges.

A different interpretation of פֶלֶל in this context is given by Akiva Tatz, Learning Inspired (pg. 100 – 102): פֶלֶל has two opposite meanings: פֶלֶל has the connotation of the hope of completely unpredictable, illogical consequences occurring, great kindness being expressed despite circumstances suggesting otherwise, as it says “Re’o panecha lo pillalti”. Yet the same root means strict, deserved justice – פֶלֶל.

4The references to prayer are from Horeb (618 – 620), which is derived, originally meant to deliver an opinion about oneself, to judge oneself. The procedure of arousing such self-judgement is called... (620): Such prayers... are called... tehillah when referring to the general contemplation of G-d in the world, humanity and Israel; (620): Such prayers... are called... tehillah when referring more to yourself.) In English we call the prayer ‘prayer,’ but this word only incompletely expresses the concept, for ‘to pray,’ i.e. to ask for something, is only a minor section of the tehillah.

Rav Hirsch, related to דָּרָךְ כַּכָּל פֶלֶל, פֶלֶל כַּכָּל פֶלֶל, to bring some extraneous matter into a material, and so integrate it therein that the whole becomes one single mass (differentiated from in order to mix when the whole mass remains still a mixture I.L.). That which is completely פֶלֶל is mentally, to bring a spiritual element, a thought, a fact, a principle etc. in a sphere of heterogeneous thoughts or conditions, and by being penetrated by this element to make it unified and homogeneous. Hence פֶלֶל the business of a judge. He has to bring the principle of right and justice and make it penetrate all conditions laid before him and thereby form the conflicting conditions into one harmonious unity. Hence judges are also called,... from within, these, a conception which always presupposes the subsuming a plurality under the idea of unity. פֶלֶל, to penetrate oneself with godly thoughts. Jewish praying is not from within outwards, but from without inwards. Were there only one form of praying, from within outwards, i.e. pouring out thoughts or prayers which are already present within oneself, then fixed “prescribed” prayers, and added thereto, at a fixed time to be prayed by an unlimited number of persons, would be pure folly. For it would assume that, at the word of command, at some fixed moment, any number of people would have the same thoughts and feelings.
to ask G-d to judge us too\textsuperscript{1}. The ultimate clarity is to understand that everything leads back to the ultimate Unity which is HaSh-m\textsuperscript{2}.

Just as we can grow in a relationship, and just as relationships have their ups and downs, so it is in our prayer-relationship with G-d. Through prayer we can either reach great heights or feel very apathetic. The important thing is to see prayer as an ongoing growth process\textsuperscript{3}. Rav Hirsch\textsuperscript{4} explains that the words \textit{לבעבדו} always means \textit{to work on something}. Therefore, \textit{לבבכם} בעבדו means to work on our hearts, i.e. on ourselves. But, there is a special gift of growth through prayer: by giving us a direct connection to \textit{השם}, we short-circuit some of the normal roots of growth. Usually, a person can only envision the growth that is within his \textit{מדרגה} - world\textsuperscript{5}.

and have the urge to put them into words. Not so. \textit{לבעבדו} means to penetrate oneself ever afresh again, with eternal, essential lasting truths and facts, because otherwise they become weaker and weaker, fade away from one’s consciousness, yea, may even have already disappeared. Here \textit{פללתי} לא פניך means "the thought of seeing you once again seemed to me so far from any possibility of its being realized, that I could not give it any entry into my mind."

We look at what we are requesting and judge for ourselves: do we need it, do we deserve it? It is a reflexive word, something we do to ourselves, self-evaluation, self-judgement. And then we ask for matnas chinam. (Siac Chaim, Tefila)

Moshe davened asking for matnas chinam in V'Eschanan. Rashi, quoting Sifri 23: Tzadikim could request based on their deeds, but choose to ask for free gifts, for Hash-m's mercy. (Deuteronomy 3:1, Rashi) He does this based on G-d's words in Exodus 33:19, which uses the root word for free gift in place of the regular word for prayer (Rashi).

Prayer is a tool for general growth in several ways:

\begin{itemize}
\item[i-] It increases our overall closeness to HaSh-m, personalizing our relationship with Him.
\item[ii-] This gives us a more intense awareness of His \textit{פרטית} השגחה over our lives.
\item[iii-] Once a person understands clearly that everything comes from the Source of all Righteousness, Mercy and Kindness, his character will improve. He will no longer feel jealousy or anger towards others, and he will no longer feel despair or indignation at anything that happens to himself.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{1} הגדור שחקה צד שכנגד

\textsuperscript{2} Pray for G-d to judge us too.

\textsuperscript{3} Rav Hirsch

\textsuperscript{4} The words always means \textit{to work on something}. Therefore, \textit{לבבכם} means to work on our hearts.

\textsuperscript{5} But, there is a special gift of growth through prayer: by giving us a direct connection to \textit{השם}, we short-circuit some of the normal roots of growth.

\textsuperscript{6} Usually, a person can only envision the growth that is within his \textit{מדרגה} - world.

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\textsuperscript{11} We look at what we are requesting and judge for ourselves: do we need it, do we deserve it? It is a reflexive word, something we do to ourselves, self-evaluation, self-judgement. And then we ask for matnas chinam. (Siac Chaim, Tefila)

\textsuperscript{12} Moshe davened asking for matnas chinam in V'Eschanan. Rashi, quoting Sifri 23: Tzadikim could request based on their deeds, but choose to ask for free gifts, for Hash-m's mercy. (Deuteronomy 3:1, Rashi) He does this based on G-d's words in Exodus 33:19, which uses the root word for free gift in place of the regular word for prayer (Rashi).

\textsuperscript{13} We look at what we are requesting and judge for ourselves: do we need it, do we deserve it? It is a reflexive word, something we do to ourselves, self-evaluation, self-judgement. And then we ask for matnas chinam. (Siac Chaim, Tefila)
Prayer, however, can lead a person to Dveikus even above his level, for G-d also contributes to this relationship and makes it happen from His side.

Prayer is a lost art—it has been neglected because society has not been educated how to pray. However, prayer can be activated on many levels—on the physical level: my words; the emotional level, my heart; and the mental level, my awareness of what I’m saying. I go to shul and just sit—that’s a prayer! And as I walk to shul—that’s a prayer too.

G-d is not like a human being: He does not turn us away because we come only in times of need. In fact, He waits to hear from us.

A good way to begin talking to G-d is with thanks and with gratitude. Anyone who opens his eyes and looks around at all the goodness, love and warmth in his life will surely come up with things to be grateful for. We need to develop what someone called a “gratitude attitude,” and we will find our life greatly enriched thereby.

“Whether you are good or evil you are always called G-d’s children. Cry to Him like a child to a father.” Talk to G-d as you would to a loving father, a benevolent king, and remember that G-d has been waiting to hear from you. Ask Him for help, for guidance, for support, and you will feel that He is there. Find a siddur prayer book and look for one prayer that speaks to you, and say that once a day. Maybe learn one or two lines in Hebrew.

Everything from important business meetings to finding one's car keys can be an opportunity for prayer, because everything, from the insignificant to the earth-shattering, is controlled and dictated by the Almighty Himself. We will find that when we really believe G-d is listening, we will feel loved and cared for by the Almighty Himself. We will never be alone again!

1 The Talmud teaches that prayer is activated on many levels—on the physical level (words), the emotional level, and the mental level.

2 Kaplan, Rabbi Aryeh, A Call to the Infinite. Moznaim Publishing Co., NY 1986, quoting Rabbi Nachman of Breslov; pg. 203
5. The Disputed Land of the Jews

**SUMMARY:**

The Torah begins with a message that G-d created the world, owns it all, and would give the land of Israel to whoever would accept his Torah and dedicate themselves to spirituality. In the meantime, the land was placed in the custodianship of the Canaanites. Since the Canaanites were cursed to be slaves, their trusteeship could be revoked when the Jews would be ready to enter.

G-d first promised Avraham Avinu that the land of Israel would belong to the Jewish people. In a series of promises, G-d unfolded the specifics of that plan – the exact borders, the nations that would be conquered, and the covenant that it would remain ours even if, through our sins, we would be exiled from the land. Avraham walked the length and breadth of the land to ease the claim of his descendents.

from that time onwards, jews through the ages have always had an extraordinary love for the land of Israel, yearning to return, for it is here that we achieved our greatest spiritual heights.

But it is not only the Jews who have wanted this land – it has been coveted and fought for by the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Moslems, the Turks, the Crusaders and many more. Clearly, these nations have not been fighting for something of exceptional material value – here was a land whose water supply was uncertain, and whose borders were exposed; rather, they have sensed its underlying spiritual value.

Despite all these coveters, G-d promises us that if we do His will - לא והרב יושב ארצכם - no sword will pass through your land. You can leave your cities unprotected three times a year, ascend to Jerusalem, and no-one will dare attack you, knowing that here G-d protects his people. It is here that G-d's ownership of everything is more clearly expressed by His direct Hashgacha. It is therefore here that the Mitzvah of Shemittah, which reflects this idea, be applied.

Repeatedly, the sojourn by the Jews on the land would be linked with their Torah observance. The Jewish people were vomited out of Israel when their behavior was incompatible with the demands of the land. The Spies saw that the land of Israel was an יושביה אוכלת ארץ - its spiritual demands could wreak havoc on those who fell short (and they, as a result, hoped to avoid the entire challenge altogether). Others looked at this awesome place and had just the opposite reaction: they decided that they would give up everything: comfort, money, and sometimes their own lives and those of their children, to merit living the rest of their lives on Holy soil. It is only in Israel that Torah, soul and place can all truly come together in one symphony of praise to the Almighty

For thousands of years millions of Jews prayed (and still pray) three times a day for the restoration of Jerusalem. The level of Israel-consciousness amongst the Jewish nation is astonishing. We re-ignite our longing at weddings, mourning houses, on our walls and in our prayers. We long for the land because we long to transform ourselves and, subsequently, all of mankind. We dwell but temporarily in other lands, until the day that we can return.

All Monotheistic faiths have recognized the holiness of this land but also have understood that it was uniquely the Jews. despite the holiness of this land in the eyes of other religions, none of them ever expressed any national aspirations to have Israel
as their homeland. Their attempts to make the land productive were totally unsuccessful, for the land will only yield it blessing to Torah-keeping Jews.

Part of their desire to control it is rooted in hatred of the Jews. Since the Jewish people and the land are one the dispute for the land and anti-Semitism have always been combined.

That disagreement stretches back to the beginning of history. It was over this land that Yitzchak and Yishmael had their disagreement, a conflict that continues to this very day. The holier the place in Israel, the greater the desire of the Moslems to possess it. Jerusalem is the most disputed of all; the Temple Mount, even in the modern and powerful State of Israel, is out of Jewish hands. The Moslems are not short of other land, that they need this tiny patch as well.

Rather, the dispute over the land is bound up with the inherent tension which exists between the Jewish People and its status as a nation in spiritual exile, whose very presence challenges the Edomite forces, the ruling civilization. Yishmael has joined with Edom in fighting the Jewish people and their right to the land. Therefore, this conflict will only be resolved in the Messianic era.

In the mean time, we continue live a miraculous existence in the land. Our enemies, who vastly outnumber us, attack us, have sent tens of thousands of missiles towards us, have even been willing to self-destruct if, in the process they can rid the land of the Jews. But G-d’s watchful Providence ensures that we not only survive, but flourish.
It was vital to the purpose of creation that there be at least one nation who would keep G-d’s Torah, and it was vital to the achievement of their mission that this people live on the Holy Land. The earlier generations were acutely aware of this. Therefore Kayin and Hevel fought over this land, each one knowing that whoever would be granted the land of Israel would gain the keys to the central spiritual role for generations to come. In fact, the word “morasha” is used in reference to both Torah and Eretz Yisrael, to show their interlinkage and inseparableness. All other lands would be sustained from this land.
When Avraham Avinu committed himself to core spirituality, G-d promised the land of Israel to the Jews, and they, from the time of Avraham Avinu, have tried to live there ever since. In the expectation that this promise would be disputed, G-d begins His Torah by declaring that He created the whole world, owns it all, and therefore has the right to give this land to the Jews.

Although initially all of Avraham’s descendants were eligible to be inheritors of the land, G-d later excluded Yishmael. Similarly, G-d later excluded Eisav from the inheritors of Yitzchak. On the one hand, this is cause for joy, for it means that all Monotheistic faiths have recognized the holiness of this land.

Yitzchak and Yishmael fought over the land and later, the Moslems, descended from Yismael, turned the land into a holy place for their religion. This pattern repeated itself again and again, for even the lowest of spiritual peoples can be elevated by this land.

In a series of promises, G-d unfolded the specifics of that plan—the exact borders, the nations that would be conquered, and the promise, rather covenant.
that it would remain ours even if, through our sins, we would be exiled from the land. If we would fail to merit the land through our own actions, we could still rely in the enormous achievements of our ancestors.

From that time onwards, Jews through the ages have always had an extraordinary love for the land of Israel, for it is here that we achieved our greatest spiritual heights. Even when the Jews were exiled by Babyloniens and the Romans, there were always some Jews left in the land - the continuity was never broken. Despite the Roman efforts to rid the land of all Jews, later conquerors found them still there. Many of those in exile would make perilous journeys to return to a land where they would survive under the most torrid of circumstances. In the 16th century, Safed became a great center of Jewish law and Kabalah. In the town of Pekiin in Galilee, a flawless line of descent can be traced from the days of the ancient Israelites till the present day. In our day, Israel has now become the country with the greatest Jewish population, exceeding, in the first decade of the 20C, the Jews of the USA.

But it is not only the Jews who have wanted this land – it has been coveted and fought for by the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Moslems, the Turks, the Crusaders and many more. The holier the place in Israel, the greater the desire of the Moslems to possess it. Jerusalem is the most disputed of all; the temple mount, even in the modern and powerful state of Israel, is out of Jewish hands. It is not that the Moslems are short of other land, that they need this tiny patch as well, for it is not the need for more farming acres which is behind their motives. Clearly, these nations have never been fighting for something of exceptional material value; rather, they have sensed its underlying spiritual value.

As Rav Hirsch puts it: Neither material abundance nor political independence was inherent in the land itself. In both it stood in the most complete contrast to Egypt. Just as its fertility was entirely dependent on rain, it had to look to the heavens for its sustenance, in a manner different to that of Egypt. The holier the place in Israel, the greater the desire of the Moslems to possess it. Jerusalem is the most disputed of all; the temple mount, even in the modern and powerful state of Israel, is out of Jewish hands. It is not that the Moslems are short of other land, that they need this tiny patch as well, for it is not the need for more farming acres which is behind their motives. Clearly, these nations have never been fighting for something of exceptional material value; rather, they have sensed its underlying spiritual value.

1 The verse (Devarim 4:7) declares: ‘And the Lord your God has enlarged your border, from the Red Sea in the east even to the Big Dipper in the west, and from the desert in the north even to the coastlands of the sea in the south.’

2 As Rav Hirsch puts it: ‘Neither material abundance nor political independence was inherent in the land itself. In both it stood in the most complete contrast to Egypt. Just as its fertility was entirely dependent on rain, it had to look to the heavens for its sustenance, in a manner different to that of Egypt. The holier the place in Israel, the greater the desire of the Moslems to possess it. Jerusalem is the most disputed of all; the temple mount, even in the modern and powerful state of Israel, is out of Jewish hands. It is not that the Moslems are short of other land, that they need this tiny patch as well, for it is not the need for more farming acres which is behind their motives. Clearly, these nations have never been fighting for something of exceptional material value; rather, they have sensed its underlying spiritual value.'
Knowing that the land would be in dispute, Avraham walked the length and breadth of the land to ease the claim of his descendents. Certain places in Israel, considered particularly holy, would be particularly coveted by the nations: the Temple Mount, the Cave of the Patriarchs, and Har Grizim and Har Eival and possibly Shechem. To anticipate these claims, the Jews purchased each place to strengthen G-d’s promise to the Jews. Avraham Avinu bought the cave of the Patriarchs in Chevron, Dovid HaMelech bought the Temple Mount from Arnova HaYevusi, and Har Grizim and Har Eival were acquired by the Jews as the place where they made a covenant with G-d.

But the desire of the nations for the Land is not rooted in love of the Land alone. It is also a function of the hatred of the Jews. It is only if we really understand the spiritual reasons behind the desire of the nations that we can understand conflicts like the current Arab-Israeli conflict, a continuation of the conflict of Yitzchak and Yismael. Since the Jewish people and the land are one the dispute for the land and anti-Semitism have always been combined.

The Ungvarer rebbe points out that the Moslem claim to the temple is based on the improbably story of Mohammed flying on his horse to the far mosque (Jerusalem). The fact that the whole world has taken this story at face value to support moslem claims makes no sense whatsoever. (this includes the atheistic soviet state, in its time.) Clearly, we are being told that the coveting by the nations of our holy land is something rooted in spirituality and not the laws of nature at all.

Rather, the dispute over the land is bound up with the inherent tension which exists between the Jewish People and its status as a nation in spiritual exile, whose very presence challenges the Edomite forces, the ruling civilization. Yishmael has joined with Edom in fighting the Jewish people and their right to the land. Therefore, this conflict will only be resolved in the Messianic era.

This understanding also explains why, despite the holiness of this land in the eyes of other religions, none of them ever expressed any national aspirations to have Israel as their homeland. Only as a response to Jewish national aspirations did the Palestinians...
develop similar feelings. Until then, they also recognized that the Jews had a prior claim on the land. Only after the Jews started arriving en masse did hatred for the Jews lead to the creation of a whole new nation, the Palestinians, willing to fight and die for the Jewish homeland. For the 2000 years until then, it was only the Jews who mourned for the land.

Israel has been coveted because everyone has recognized that it has something of exceptional spiritual value to offer. In fact, it was just because it has no natural resources that it was chosen. For it would come to show, without a shadow of a doubt that, if we were to do His will, the land will yield its blessing:

If, in spite of this, in this land a national life would blossom against which no national conqueror would dare attack, even if three times each year its borders were left open and all military defense withdrawn - if all the מלכיות together and make war on each other, but no sword would dare enter this blooming and yet defenseless land - then the eternal fact would have been brought to the eyes of the nations "here G-d lives"!

The land of Israel belongs to G-d. This is why the Shemittah idea, that everything ultimately belongs to G-d, which really applies to the whole world, only applies only in the land of Israel, for it is here that G-d's ownership of everything is more clearly expressed by His direct Hashgacha.

The Jews were told clearly, time and again, that their sojourn on the land would be linked with their Torah observance. The Jewish people were vomited out of Israel when their behavior was incompatible with the demands of the land, just as the Romans declare a yearly fast for Jerusalem after it was destroyed two thousand years ago? Did the descendants of Titus or Godfrey, Mohammed or Saladin? Do they fast on the ninth of Av, the day of the destruction of both Temples without missing a year as the Jews did and continue to do? Would any other nation ever cry for the destruction of its capital after even two hundred years?

Even if we agreed with those who believe that the Palestinian people founded their homeland in Palestine, did they ever fast for its well-being or for Jerusalem's destruction year in and year out? They did not do so, not even for one year! And did, or do, their Arab brothers around the world sit on the floor and weep like we Jews do, year in year out, in every corner of the globe when we think of the destruction of this holy city? ...

The great Arab contributions to literature and religion came from Mecca, Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad -- not from Jerusalem. To the Arab nations, the land of Israel is two percent of a vast territory they inhabit.

1 The Pasha of Jerusalem wrote in 1864: "We all know and the Arabs are also aware, that G-d said to Abraham: Unto thy seed I will give this land, and repeated the promise several times to him and to Isaac and to Jacob. So fully the Mohammedans believe this. (Ermette Pierotti, Customs and Traditions of Palestine, Cambridge, 1864, pp 75 ff)

2 Emir Feisal, one of the great leaders of the Arab peoples at the Peace Conference following World War I, who wrote on March 3, 1919: "We Arabs.... Look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. (Benjamin Neanyahu, A place among the nations, Bantam Books, NY, 1993, pp 406 ff)

3 Rabbi Natan Lopes Cardozo, article on www.thecardozoschool.org: Who mourned for Jerusalem for two thousand years?

4 Rav S. R. Hirsch: (בראהשית ז:ו)

5 ב התורה שָׁם: האנני בר או פרט אתה אֶזוי התפורט למימי ניגה:
Torah predicted\(^1\). Several Mitzvos that seem to have no connection to the land are nevertheless stricter in the land than outside of it. The Spies saw that the land of Israel was an ארקא אלכטת יבשות - its spiritual demands could wreak havoc on those who fell short (and they, as a result, hoped to avoid the entire challenge altogether\(^2\)). Others looked at this awesome place and had just the opposite reaction: they decided that they would give up everything: comfort, money, and sometimes their own lives and those of their children, to merit living the rest of their lives on Holy soil\(^3\). It is only in Israel that Torah, soul and place can all truly come together in one symphony of praise to the Almighty\(^4\).

Even after we fell short in our devotion to G-d and therefore lost our sovereignty over the land, we never abandoned our longing to return to the land. Jews lived for centuries on other lands, but their hearts still lived in Jerusalem. Two thousand years later, we still pray three times a day for the full spiritual glory of Jerusalem to be restored.

"[When] … Israeli author Shai Agnon … received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966, the King of Sweden, Gustav VI, asked where he was born. … "I was born in Buczacks, [he said,] but that was only in a dream, in reality I was born in Jerusalem and exiled by Titus!" Indeed, this most powerful answer captures all of Jewish history. All Jews were born in Jerusalem and exiled by Titus! It is due to a historical "aberration" that any Jew was ever born outside the land."

The level of Israel-consciousness amongst the Jewish nation is astonishing. We re-ignite our longing at weddings, mourning houses, on our walls and in our prayers.

But it is not just a selfish desire for spiritual fulfillment that causes us to cling to the land. "When G-d appeared to our forefathers, He made it clear that we were not just to dwell there but to employ the land to transform ourselves and, subsequently, all of mankind."

"... We believe that we do not just have a right to live in this country, but that it is our religious and moral duty, something we owe the world. Our claim to this land is based on a covenant, which is a 'treaty' to inspire mankind with the word of G-d. ... We Jews live by covenants, and we cannot betray our pledge or discard our promise. ...

It is this very holiness that causes the land to be so physically unproductive to other nations whose essential spirituality is not in harmony with the land. Despite

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\(^1\)Rabbi Natan Lopes Cardozo, article on [www.thecardozoschool.org](http://www.thecardozoschool.org);

\(^2\)עבאד במשיב ויס תם וכול, אשה על החכמה. ח"ב 141

\(^3\)מצה במשיב ויס תם וכול, אשה על החכמה. ח"ב 27

\(^4\)מצב במשיב ויס תם וכול, אשה על החכמה. ח"ב 141

\(^5\)"ףטרא" קמע קмеча ק"ה ק qualidade אומרים ק"ה קplaints, קומכ לעבר קאורים ק инвестици קqualities קלול קניבים על קcmath קקLiver. קקזיל קעיב קאמר קודר קבבל, קﻛרapsible הלקר קופן ויקניב يعد קקמאר קקקמאר קקניבים קקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקקк

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their recognition of the holiness of the land, Christian and Islam nations were unsuccessful in settling it. It is this very same holiness which allowed the Jews to grow to such fantastic spiritual heights specifically in this place. It is no surprise, then, that prophecy was also specifically tied to the Land of Israel, where only G-d is the ultimate owner of the land.

No other nation showed such a commitment and dedication to their land as the Jews showed to theirs. Thousands of Jews lost their lives trying to make it to the land. Others were grateful to spend their last years here, while still others felt privileged to be buried here. Remarkably, many non-Jewish leaders were able to transcend the pervasive anti-Semitism and supported the Jewish return to the land.

For now, we continue live a miraculous existence in the land. Our enemies, who vastly outnumber us, attack us, have sent tens of thousands of missiles towards us, have even been willing to self-destruct if, in the process they can rid the land of the Jews. But G-d’s watchful Providence ensures that we not only survive, but flourish.

The meaning of the State of Israel has been confusing, given its secular underpinnings. But its significance as a historical event of huge proportions, good or bad, has been indisputable. Although we can only be ambiguous at best about a Jewish State which is not run on Torah principles, it surely points to a future time, not too distant, when G-d’s Kingdom will be reflected in the entire world, emanating from and through this land.

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1. ינוריו שומש: יכ במעון זהה שלושי כי שמלה הנהנש והפורחת. 
2. רביתי איכה: יד בכוזרי מובא (שנתנבי מי עבבורה או הזאת בארץ אם כי נתנבי לא מובא) בכוזרי ש: כרמכお勧め להותר לכות את הנחלות, אמר ברקטא (ז桱) כי אם הוא: כי כל הנחלות לכות חלואים, כי אם הוא: כי כל האלונים: כי לי האלונים (ז桱)
3. רבי נטנול טופז רוקזו, אנטייב on www.thecardozoschool.org;
* Napoleon Bonaparte sent a proclamation to all Jews, in the name of France, to return to the land with “this nation’s warranty and support and to maintain it against all comers.”
* The seventh Earl of Shafstbury called for the return of the Jews to their homeland “since everything seems ripe for their return.” In the times of August 26, 1840, he wrote that “it would be a crowning point in the glory of England to bring about such an event.”
* The famous poet, Lord Byron, wrote his “Hebrew Melodies” stating that “the white dove hath her nest, the fox his cave, mankind their country, Israel but the grave.”
SUMMARY:

Judaism requires that everyone give to charity. Even the poor, provided that they are not totally dependent on charity themselves, are required to give something to charity on an annual basis. This is because the act of giving is a core Jewish trait. One cannot meet the needs of the person in front of him if he does not feel his pain. And he cannot apply his own standards to define this. A millionaire without his check book is in pain. A person used to living in a mansion, and now living in the same-size cramped apartment that you do is in pain. You cannot think, “Let this person find a job.” Unless you are willing to actively help the person find a job, or empower him to invest in what he is lacking to become qualified for one, you may not hold back your charity for this reason.

A true Jewish giver understands that no-one will ever become poor from giving to charity. He feels that he gains more from the giving than the poor person. After all, G-d could, if He wanted, take care of the poor person Himself. Was not the giver privileged to receive his money from G-d and not from the hands of someone else and with enough to give to the poor person as well? Was he not privileged to do a holy Mitzvah? Did he not imitate G-d himself? Is he not now a better receptacle to receive the good which G-d wishes to give to him? A person with this perspective will not wait for the poor to embarrass themselves by asking. He will find ways of giving, even to those who could not bring themselves to ask.

Money is a powerful force put by G-d into the world. It is one of the basic passions of man. Money is not just wealth – it is a source of power and of honor. We never seem to be able to quench our thirst for it. Why it is such a force is mysterious. On Mt Sinai, Moshe Rabbeinu could not understand the nature of the half Shekel. In response, G-d showed him a coin of fire – fire to show that money is one of the primary passions of this world.

Money is such an overarching Taavah because people see it as the means to obtaining all their other Taavos. In the Shema, money is referred to as תֹּכֹּל, literally “all of our very much”. The word תֹּכֹּל has the same letters as the word אדם, but the letters are in the wrong order. (אדם is in ascending order, תוכז is in no order.) Money, like man himself, lends itself to more and more, without end. But whereas man’s infinite potential is rooted in spirituality, money pulls him into increasing materialism. In fact, the Sages tell us, there are people who love their money more than their lives!

Having said that, money is a part of the world that G-d gave man with which to serve Him. Man must take ‘all of his very much’ and use it to get closer to G-d.

The most obvious expression of this is charity. Tzedaka comes from the word Tzedek – rightness or righteousness. We were given not only the money we need for ourselves and our family, but the money which belongs to the poor as well. We are but custodians of that money. Failing to give to charity is not just an act of miserliness; it is a type of theft, and can actually be redressed in a court of law. In any case, what is not ours we will not be able to keep.
G-d could have just as easily taken care of the poor person Himself, giving his money directly to him instead of through us. G-d didn’t do it that way, to give us the benefits of giving. Ultimately, it is to us that He is giving, and we are given this incredible opportunity to be His partner in looking after the world.

Charity is an art, and giving in a way that avoids embarrassment, and which gives the recipient his dignity is all part of that art. Giving a loan though seemingly safer for the giver, also lends greater dignity to the recipient and is therefore a more noble act than charity. Investing in a business with a poor person is best of all, for an investment avoids embarrassment altogether.

In a sense the charity receiver has already resigned himself to his lot, reducing his embarrassment a little. But someone who has not yet reached that stage, who is trying desperately to maintain his dignity, would surely suffer more. There is the worry of where the money is coming from, there is the pressure of having to pay the bills and put food on the table, there is the embarrassment of seeing your kids being different and ashamed. Poverty is a great source of marital strife, of health problems due to inadequate care and of many other problems beside.

In addition, the Torah considers it an added Mitzvah to make a timely loan to someone, preventing bankruptcy or other circumstances which would turn the person into a charity case.

But loans create debt and loans are often repaid by borrowing other loans, often on worse terms. Two remarkable Torah laws come to correct this: The first is a prohibition on interest; the second is a moratorium on debts at the end of the Shmittah year. Not only is the lender required to forgive the debt, but he transgresses a Torah prohibition if he fails to give the previous year, in anticipation of not being able to reclaim his loan.

Some understand G-d in His Torah as saying “And don’t say to yourself, ‘Next year is a Shmittah year, and the fellow can get all he needs anyway. So why should I help him now?’ The poor man needs your money today, not next year: You have no right to make ‘good business’ calculations when someone is pain or distress. You will always have good reasons not to give, not least of all by saying the poor man is a lazy no good for nothing and deserves his fate. Your job is to overcome this and to help the person in need, and when he needs it. I, in turn, will look after you.”

The punishment for the person who does not give when he could is contained within his own personality. A selfish person will always be unhappy. The material can never fully satisfy the person – leading to an insatiable need to be ever more self-centered and taking. A giver, by contrast, finds that the more he gives the more filled up he feels and elevated he becomes.

Loans, charity and all kinds of giving are the way, of imitating G-d’s ways on earth. They reflect as much a relationship with our Maker as they do with our fellow man. This is why the past, present and future physical and spiritual well being of the Jewish nation seems to be dependent on our giving to charity. G-d made His bris with Avraham Avinu based on his doing chesed. From then until the Mashiach this will remain a sign of our essential Jewishness until we will finally be redeemed through the merit of doing charity.

The paragon of giving is אברם – the Father of Elevation. He was elevated because he showed by his giving that he is spiritually full and therefore not in need of material fixes to fill him up.

Perhaps a built in seventh year debt cancellation make no sense on purely human terms – compassionate, economic or other. But a world left just to human logic is not a pretty place. We have seen what the Godless attempts to run the world in the
last century led to. This is a mitzvah which clearly requires trust in G-d, just as he trusted us with His money to begin with.
Charity:

_loans and interest:

5. הצדקה בצדקה היא לברך וברך: דברי מ' (ר'א): וממה שלושה תשבּ והimize ת(xpath).

Loans & Interest:

2. הלוח יא，默认 תושבּ וברך: דברי מ' (ר'א): וממה שלושה תשבּ והimize ת(xpath).
5. הלוח יא，默认 תושבּ וברך: דברי מ' (ר'א): וממה שלושה תשבּ והimize ת(xpath).
15. הלוח יא，默认 תושבּ וברך: דברי מ' (ר'א): וממה שלושה תשבּ והimize ת(xpath).
17. הלוח יא，默认 תושבּ וברך: דברי מ' (ר'א): וממה שלושה תשבּ והimize ת(xpath).
Charity to a freed slave:

Shmittas Kesafim:
This involves G-d’s help in identifying the right recipient.

Every act of Charity also fulfills one or more of the following Mitzvos of Kindness:

Money, together with food and sex, is one of man’s three most powerful drives, a mysterious force which G-d put into the world. People who are otherwise kind and gentle may act in the most unusually negative ways when it comes to money-related issues which affect them.

We long for more money, although we know that the rich are no happier for it. We see money not only as a means to buying more things, but as a kind of barometer of how successful our lives are. Money is not just wealth, but it is also a source of power and honor. And it has incredible hold over many of us – some of the nicest people turn into monsters when it comes to money. We fight over money matters even with our best friends, and we never seem to be able to quench our thirst for it.

For example, we say, “Do you know how much that person is worth?” when all we really mean is how much money he possesses. The person himself has an infinite soul and is worth an infinite amount. In The Sane Society, Erich Fromm brings an example of a tragedy happening, like a bridge collapsing, with people dying. The headlines will focus not on the lost lives of inestimable value, but will say something like: “A 3 billion dollar tragedy.”

Money wields power in many ways. For example, there is no question that wealthy people have easier access to politicians and heads of state than poor people.

If a billionaire and a pauper were to walk into a room, our natural instincts would be to pay more attention to the billionaire. However, maybe the billionaire has a foul character deserving of our scorn and the pauper is a truly righteous person deserving of our honor and praise.

For this reason Halacha requires that even when two friends who trust each other borrow money from one another, they should write a Shtar (IOU note), signed or witnessed.

For we are trying to use money to fill ourselves up. This can never work. Something material can never fill up the spiritual thirst of man.
wealthy never seem to be satisfied with being a millionaire or even a billionaire – we are driven to earn more and more by some force which controls us. Man is faced with a vicious cycle – it is not possible to be just a "little" selfish without the need to be ever more so kicking in. It is no wonder that Rav Dessler divides the world into givers and takers.

It is in this context that the Tur, in his introduction to Hilchos Tzedakah, says:

The Tur only uses the words in a few places, several of them having to do with money affairs. The Prisha explains that this is because we have an exceptional Yetzer Hara when it comes to money matters.

On Mt. Sinai, Moshe Rabbeinu could not understand the nature of the half-Shekel that the Jewish people were supposed to give for the upkeep of the sacrifices in the Temple. Why should a simple coin should be mysterious to Moshe Rabbeinu? Yet, the very fact that the Torah itself introduced currency as a part of our very Mitzvah-package, the way we serve G-d, would seem to tell us that money is something which has its roots (in some form) in the original Torah in Heaven, at the highest of spiritual levels. It was this idea, that a heavenly force could somehow translate into mere currency, that Moshe struggled with.

The coin G-d showed Moshe was made of fire to show that money is one of the primary passions of this world. Money is such an overarching Taavah because people see it as the means to obtaining all their other Taavos. The general Taavah of money translates into the specific Taavah of each individual. In the Shema, money is referred to as all of our very much. The word has the same letters as the word , but the letters are in the wrong order ( is in ascending order, is in no order.) Money, like man himself, lends itself to more and more without end. But, whereas man's infinite potential is rooted in spirituality, money pulls him into increasing materialism. The Sages ask: if in the Shema it already says – one even has to give his life for G-d, the words are redundant, for

Instead of realizing that we are barking up the wrong tree, we conclude that the reason we were not satisfied by the money we have must be because it was not enough. If only we could double the amount, then we would be happy!
surely if one has to give his life for G-d he has to give his money too. But, astonishingly, there are people who love their money more than their lives!1

If man can reach a level of serving G-d with all his money2 he can subsequently reach a total love of G-d. This is because money is a part of the world that G-d gave man with which to serve Him3. Man must take ‘all of his very much’ and use it to get closer to G-d4.

On the surface, this seems very depraved. Yet, when we look deeper, we see that the money of the righteous is more beloved to them than their body5. This portrays that the value of money and the material possessions it purchases lies as a means rather than an end. The correct use of money is an opportunity, a challenge to make the right choices and emerge more holy6.

The most obvious expression of this is Tzedaka, charity. Tzedaka, says the Maharal, comes from the word Tzedek – rightness or righteousness. A poor person is supposed to receive his money: this is not an act of magnanimous largesse on the part of the giver. It is, rather, an act of sharing the Jewish nation’s resources amongst brothers and sisters, or, put more accurately, amongst G-d’s beloved children7. In fact, the 4 letters of the word Tzedaka are comprised of two groups of two letters each that show the caring, brotherly relationship all Jews are meant to have for one another8.
The money we have is a trust, and it is not automatically ours for the keeping. We were not only given the money we need for ourselves and our family, but also the money which belongs to the poor as well. Failing to give to charity is not just an act of miserliness (a type of theft); it is a type of theft, and can actually be redressed in a court of law. And, since G-d is the One who bestowed us with that trust, it is tantamount to idolatry. If we show that we cannot be responsible to give charity to its rightful owners, we will be better off as the Shulchan Aruch rather than as the Shem Reish: a situation which we will face in the next six generations. In any case, we will not be able to keep what is not ours. If we do not give the money to its rightful owners, G-d will ensure that they get their money another way. We, in turn, will lose this money in taxes, business losses, or some other expense.

In truth, G-d could have easily taken care of the poor person Himself, giving the poor man's money directly to him instead of through us. G-d didn’t do this, however, as he wanted to give us the benefits of giving. Ultimately, it is to us that G-d

But more than that, the Torah then tells us that we will get back the money, which was never ours, if we give it to its rightful owners:

Although we are not normally allowed to test G-d, we are allowed to do so on this issue:

If we do not give the money to its rightful owners, G-d will ensure that they get their money another way. We, in turn, will lose this money in taxes, business losses, or some other expense.

Cliché phrase: "To whom it may concern:"

"Dear Reader,"

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In truth, G-d could have easily taken care of the poor person Himself, giving the poor man's money directly to him instead of through us. G-d didn’t do this, however, as he wanted to give us the benefits of giving. Ultimately, it is to us that G-d
is giving, and we are given this incredible opportunity to be His partner in looking after the world.

Once upon a time there was a pious, wealthy man who became very poor -- so poor, that in order to earn a living he would hire himself out by the day to plow fields. One day while he was working in the fields Elijah the prophet appeared to him in the guise of a simple Arab and said, "You have six good years coming to you. When would you like them -- now or at the end of your life?"

The poor man barely looked up from his work. "Excuse me please," he said, "but I am very busy and I'm being paid for my work. Please leave me alone."

Elijah came back a second time and again the poor man paid no attention. When he returned yet a third time, the poor man agreed to consider his proposal. "If you're so determined," he told him, "wait here. I never do anything without first consulting my wife. I'll go home and ask her, and we'll see what she says."

He went home and told his wife what had happened: "He won't leave me alone! What should I tell him?"

His wife thought for a minute and then said: "Tell him to give us the good years now."

The farmer went back to Elijah with the answer: "My wife said you should give the good years now."

Elijah then began arguing with him: "Right now you're able to work. When you get old, you might not have the strength; perhaps you should leave the good years for later."

"I never asked you for anything," the farmer replied. "It was your suggestion to begin with! My wife says 'now'. If you want to give the six years, give them now. Otherwise, good-bye."

"Fine," Elijah agreed. "Return home and you will find a treasure."

When the poor farmer returned home, his children came running excitedly to meet him. They told him they'd been playing in the yard and had suddenly discovered a great treasure. In an instant, the family became extremely wealthy.

"This money is sacred," the woman told her family. "We shall continue living exactly as we do now. We will not be as hungry as we have been, but that will be the only change."

She called over one of her children and told him, "Your responsibility will be to write down whatever I tell you to." She began giving money to the poor and needy, and told her son to record each charitable donation in a special notebook.

Their lives continued in this way for the next six years. They did not move to a bigger and better home, nor did they buy new furniture--they didn't even whitewash the walls. In fact, the farmer even continued working in the fields.

One day, Elijah reappeared. "Do you remember me?" he asked the farmer. "I have come to reclaim the treasure I gave you."

"And do you remember that I didn't take it without consulting my wife?" the farmer replied. "I never do anything without conferring with my wife. Please wait here -- I'll go home and ask her."
He went home and told his wife that the stranger had returned to take back the treasure.

"Here," she said calmly. "Give him our account books. Tell him to look them over and see what we did with the money. Then ask him if he has better caretakers for his treasure. If he does, he can take it away. But if we've taken good care of his money, let him leave it with us."

When G-d saw all the charity and good deeds they did with the money, not only did the treasure remain with them, but it increased many times over.1

Since giving is such a core idea, Judaism requires that everyone give money to charity. Those who are not poor give a tenth of their earnings to charity, but, except for the wealthy, they do not give more than a fifth2. Even those who are poor are required to give something to charity on an annual basis, provided they are not totally dependent on charity themselves3. This is because the act of giving is essential to developing the refinement of character that is a core Jewish trait.

Charity is an art, and giving in a way that avoids embarrassment and gives the recipient his dignity is all part of that art4. Someone of limited resources who gives anonymously or who gives in ways that are not perceived by the recipient as charity may well be equal or greater to the large giver who exacts a price in kavod and who may be condescending in his act of giving5. Anonymous giving, says the Maharal, allows one to connect with the pure spirituality of the act, getting rid of the external things which prevent a person from becoming pure and holy6. A small giver may also be contributing a greater proportion of his wealth, showing that he really relates to his needs. A millionaire without his check book is in pain. A person used to living in a dependent on charity themselves3. This is because the act of giving is essential to developing the refinement of character that is a core Jewish trait.

Most important of all is that the giver should try to meet the needs of the recipient his dignity is all part of that art.5 Someone of limited resources who gives anonymously or who gives in ways that are not perceived by the recipient as charity may well be equal or greater to the large giver who exacts a price in kavod and who may be condescending in his act of giving. anonymous giving, says the Maharal, allows one to connect with the pure spirituality of the act, getting rid of the external things which prevent a person from becoming pure and holy. A small giver may also be contributing a greater proportion of his wealth, showing that he really relates to his money as a trust and that giving is a golden and holy duty.

Most important of all is that the giver should try to meet the needs of the person in front of him. He cannot do this if he does not feel the other's pain, however. He cannot apply his own standards to define what it is that the other person needs. A millionaire without his check book is in pain. A person used to living in a dependent on charity themselves. This is because the act of giving is essential to developing the refinement of character that is a core Jewish trait.


1 This story appeared in Women to Women in an article called Charity by Rebbetzin Esther Greenberg (Compiled and edited by Aviva Rappaport, Published by Mesorah Publications Ltd., New York, 1996)
mansion and now living in the same-size cramped apartment that you are in pain. The verse says: יד productService premium שלא יمعنى לו – fulfill the deficiencies that are lacking to him – i.e. that he perceives that he is lacking.

It is so tempting to think, "why is this person not working (or not working more)?"; "It is his own fault for acting recklessly"; "I already gave him money and he just comes around again and again"; "look at that house he is living in! He can’t be poor." Such logic should never be used as an excuse not to give. If one feels this person is poor because of certain problems he has and he wants to reform him, he should take him into his house, adopt him as a son, and spend the next four to ten years with him, loving him and helping him grow. He must give this person again and again, whether he is a Jew or non-Jew. Will he be taken for a ride by people who really have money? Perhaps. But the law states that as long as one does not know this person's circumstances, he should give something, however little, without question. Our Sages have stated and history has testified that no one becomes poor from giving to charity.

But that is not all. A true Jewish giver goes further, feeling that he really gains more from giving than the poor person gains. After all, G-d could, if He wanted, take care of the poor person Himself. Was not the giver privileged to receive his money from G-d and not from the hands of someone else, with enough to give out to the poor person as well? Was he not privileged to do a holy Mitzvah? Did he not imitate G-d Himself? Is he not now a better receptacle of receiving the good which G-d wishes to
give him³? A person with this perspective will not wait for poor people to embarrass themselves by asking; he will find ways of giving even to those who cannot bring themselves to ask².

There are ways to help others in this matter that are even greater than charity itself. Giving a loan to a poor person, though seemingly safer for the giver, lends greater dignity to the recipient, and is therefore a most noble act. Investing in a business with a poor person is best of all³, as an investment avoids embarrassment altogether⁴.

Although giving charity is a great deed, the act itself underscores the lack or deficiency of the recipient (that he needed a handout). Therefore, say Chazal, he who lends is greater than he who gives, for the recipient of the loan is shown thereby to be more complete⁵, and the giver of the loan has prevented the other's deterioration to the point where he needs straight Tzedaka⁶.

In a sense, a person receiving charity has already resigned himself to his lot, reducing his embarrassment a bit. But someone who has not yet reached that stage and who is desperately trying to maintain his dignity would surely suffer more³. There is the worry of where the money is coming from, the pressure of having to pay the bills and put food on the table, the embarrassment of seeing one's kids being different and ashamed. Poverty is a great source of marital strife, health problems due to inadequate care, and many other issues as well. Judaism is acutely sensitive to people in such situations⁸.

It is demeaning to have to ask for a handout, and it is much more respectable to ask for a loan. The Torah therefore considers it a greater Mitzvah to give a loan...

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³ Chinuch. Maharsha learns that an investment is best because the amount of money given is much greater, allowing the ani a proper start to begin a new business, live respectfully and repay any capital outlays. Maharash in his states that since each level requires that the recipient receive less, it is a greater act.

⁵ Shotem. A person with this perspective will not wait for poor people to embarrass themselves by asking; he will find ways of giving even to those who cannot bring themselves to ask.

⁶ Maharash states that since each level requires that the recipient receive less, it is a greater act.

⁷ It is demeaning to have to ask for a handout, and it is much more respectable to ask for a loan. The Torah therefore considers it a greater Mitzvah to give a loan...
than to give charity\(^1\). In addition, the Torah considers it an added Mitzvah to make a timely loan to someone, preventing bankruptcy or other circumstances which would turn the person into a charity case\(^2\). It is also a Mitzvah to loan money to a wealthy person if he finds that he doesn't have his checkbook or that his credit card expired, etc\(^3\). An extension of this idea is to loan any object which one's neighbor may need\(^4\), i.e. loaning one's car (if public transport is not available) or other things one may be frightened to lend as they may become damaged (provided that the need is real)\(^5\).

Although the Torah leaves it up to each individual to decide how much he is going to loan and for what period of time, this does not mean that lending money is just a good idea to be pursued by those inclined. The Torah makes it clear that this is an obligation on every Jew. G-d will know how honest we have been with ourselves and others when deciding whether we could afford to make a particular loan or not\(^6\). True, one may find his vacuum cleaner not working when returned (and the poor person is then definitely obligated to pay\(^7\)), and he may once or twice find himself facing a bad loan, but the Torah wants to train us to feel that it is worth the risk and the hassle to help someone in need. Does this mean that Judaism is encouraging us to turn the person into a charity case\(^2\)? It is also a Mitzvah to loan money to a wealthy person if he finds that he doesn't have his checkbook or that his credit card expired, etc\(^3\). An extension of this idea is to loan any object which one's neighbor may need\(^4\), i.e. loaning one's car (if public transport is not available) or other things one may be frightened to lend as they may become damaged (provided that the need is real)\(^5\).

Loans, then, are full of benefits for the lender. However, they have their downside for the borrower, for loans create debt. One of the greatest curses of poverty is debt, as debt breeds debt. Further, where loans have interest payments, this often downside for the borrower, for loans create debt. One of the greatest curses of poverty.

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\(^1\) שֵׁם הַחַזֶּקָה

\(^2\) אָבֶדֶת הַשֵּׁם

\(^3\) אוֹתָם בֵּינֵיהֶם

\(^4\) אוֹתָם בֵּין הַחֳזָאָה

\(^5\) אוֹתָם בֵּין הַחֳזָאָה

\(^6\) אוֹתָם בֵּין הַחֳזָאָה

\(^7\) אוֹתָם בֵּין הַחֳזָאָה

\(^8\) And, in fact, one should always make loans, even to friends, with a signed IOU, with witnesses or with a deposit of some sort.
In this context come two remarkable Torah laws: the first is a prohibition on interest, and the second is a moratorium on debts at the end of the Shmittah year.

But the Torah goes further. Not only is the lender required to forgive the debt, but he transgresses a Torah prohibition if, anticipating the moratorium, he fails to give to a poor person in order to avoid the loss of not being able to claim his loan back. Some commentators understand G-d in His Torah as saying, “And don’t say to yourself, ‘Next year is a Shmittah year, and the fellow can get all he needs anyway. So why should I help him now?’ The poor man needs your money today, not next year: You have no right to make good business calculations when someone is pain or distress. You will always have good reasons not to give, not least of all by saying that the poor man is lazy and deserves his fate. Your job is to overcome this and to help the person in need when he needs it. I, in turn, will look after you.”

Loans, charity and all types of giving are the venue in which we can imitate G-d’s ways on earth. As such, these are the most G-dly things we can do, and they

1. Certainly, the borrower is not supposed to deliberately take advantage of this, and should offer to pay back the loans nevertheless.

2. "Next year is a Shmittah year, and the fellow can get all he needs anyway. So why should I help him now?" The poor man needs your money today, not next year: You have no right to make good business calculations when someone is pain or distress. You will always have good reasons not to give, not least of all by saying that the poor man is lazy and deserves his fate. Your job is to overcome this and to help the person in need when he needs it. I, in turn, will look after you.”

3. In this context come two remarkable Torah laws: the first is a prohibition on interest, and the second is a moratorium on debts at the end of the Shmittah year.

4. As such, these are the most G-dly things we can do, and they

5. See the Mitzvah of giving in Parshas Eikev.
reflect as much a relationship with our Maker as with our fellow man\(^1\), going to the very core of our Jewish identity\(^2\). Only with this understanding can we explain why the past, present and future physical and spiritual well-being of the Jewish nation seems to be dependent on our giving to charity. G-d made His bris with Avraham Avinu based on doing Chesed\(^3\). From then until the Moshiach this will remain a sign of our essential Jewishness, and we will finally be redeemed through the merit of giving charity\(^4\).

A selfish person is essentially physical, for it is the physical world which cannot be easily divided. This causes competition for resources, leading one to perceive the need to look after his own interests. By very nature of his involvement with the physical, a materialistic person is a taker and not a giver\(^5\).

Materialism can never fully satisfy a person,\(^6\) as it leads to an insatiable need to be ever more self-centered and taking. On the other hand, a person who is filled up with the shchad of the Gemilut Chasadim he has done is spiritually full and therefore not in need of material fixes to fill him up. Those who hold onto their money show that they require outside material input on a continuous basis. Ironically, they are therefore not in need of material fixes to fill him up. Those who hold onto their money show that they require outside material input on a continuous basis. Ironically, this cuts them off from the source of real Bracha, and they will ultimately have less money than if they had been more willing to part with it to begin with\(^7\). A giver, in

\[\text{תניא מלבש תכשיט דרכו דוד. לכ יעצר מלבש תכשיט לה分会 על מנשה כהן קדוש אחיו סימן רוחני כהן קדוש легушка философия.}\]

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contrast, is more than full; he is overflowing, giving to others. This puts him in essential harmony with G-d, whose whole purpose in creating the world was to be able to give.

Charity and loans make good common sense, but there is no society other than Judaism that mandates them as part of law. A built-in seventh year debt cancellation, too, makes no sense on purely human terms – compassionate, economic or other. However, a world left to human logic alone is not a pretty place, as we know and have seen what the G-dless attempts to run the world in the last century led to. The mitzvah of charity is a mitzvah which clearly requires trust in G-d, a trust that we Jews have not always historically achieved. But it is not hard to see that man is hardly likely to figure these things out by himself. As we explained above under Tzedakah, one's money is a trust, and part of that trust is that he will give to the poor man the money that was always his.

\(1\) For further insight into the dynamics of giving, see the hillel betroch in the halachah.

\(2\) Indeed, Jews have always excelled in charity, but not with enough trust in G-d and His promise to freely make loans in the 6th year. And thus it was that Hillel was forced to make his Pruzbul, a mechanism whereby we can by-pass the debt cancellation and still claim our loan.
2. The Corruptor

SUMMARY:

In this week’s Parsha, the Torah brings three kinds of people who corrupt others. The first is the false prophet, claiming to speak in the name of G-d and bringing all the necessary signs and proofs, telling us that something in the Torah has changed or that we should serve idols (maybe in addition to serving G-d); the second is the Meisis, someone who actively entices us to serve idols through argument and persuasion; and the third is the Ir Hanidachas, where an entire city turns to idolatry. In all cases, the consequences are severe – the person or people concerned get put to death. The Ir Hanidachas gets reduced to ashes, never to be built again.

Because of the severity of these punishments, the Torah introduces here procedures of evidence for all judicial procedures which bear the death penalty, and prohibits the taking of the law into ones’ own hands.

G-d introduces these laws by commanding us not add or subtract to the Torah. The Torah is the perfect means to our fulfillment – any idea by man that he can somehow improve on this will lead down a slippery slope: We will begin to judge each commandment deciding whether it is good, still relevant or can be improved upon. By the time we are finished, it will no longer be Judaism that we are practicing – it will be some human religion of our own making. It is this which leads to the moral and spiritual cesspool of the false prophet, the Meisis and the Ir Hanidachas.

The Torah leaves plenty of room for freedom of expression and human creativity; but not here. For this would undermine the very foundations of the Torah, creating a world devoid of its moral and spiritual purpose. After the Revelation, what was to stop another prophet from coming and saying that the Torah had changed, or added to? Or what was to stop someone from re-interpreting the Torah in a radically new way? What happens if he predicts miracles which come about to back up his plan? What if he is known to us as a genuine prophet? Or what was to stop someone saying that the whole Torah was true, and G-d given, but that there were also other gods worthy of service? In other words, how does one maintain the integrity of the Torah and of Judaism, and prevent all kinds of splinters and new-age variants?

To this the Torah answers that the entire Torah was given at Sinai and that it will now never change. It was given with the utmost clarity, neither about G-d as the source of this revelation, nor its content. All the principles we need to apply to any new situation are already contained within the Torah, and any new situation can be understood by those principles. These principles were not given based on any miracles, but rather a clear and undisputable national revelation, and therefore miracles cannot be the basis of any future claim to change the Torah. From now on, no prophet can ever innovate anything new in the Torah. A prophet can temporarily suspend the laws of the Torah, as Eliyahu did on Mt. Carmel, but any prophet, even a genuine one, or even one who draws on signs and predictions, who will call for a permanent change in the Torah, is ipso facto wrong. It is one of the 13 Principles of Our Faith that the Torah will never change, and anyone challenging this principle, is challenging the very foundations on which the Torah is based.

Idolatry undermines the Torah just as thoroughly as a false prophecy, and this is what the Meisis and the people of the Ir HaNidachas are guilty of.
The punishment for all of this is the death penalty. The challenge is that we, in imposing this penalty, are in danger of becoming monsters, imposing a Taliban-like regime and terrorizing the people. The Torah however makes a remarkable promise: our act of seeming cruelty will have the opposite effect of making us more merciful. We are to act not because we are filled with the fiery passion of fundamentalism, but because we constrained by the Torah to follow its dictates.

But why would the Torah act with such severity to acts of idolatry? Surely, the Monotheistic idea is powerful enough to stand on its own two feet and capture the minds of thinking people? To this, the Chinuch has an interesting response. The Sinai experience provided us with a clear and factual empirical base to our belief in G-d and His Torah. An entire nation reached the highest levels of prophecy, speaking to G-d face to face. Now it is time to move on, and build on what we have achieved. Civilization cannot move forward if every generation has to spend their lives questioning the basics. Perhaps a brilliant mind, an Abraham, may discover the truth on his own. But even he would spend most of his life just figuring out what it is that he ought to be doing. And when he finally does, his efforts will be for naught, for his children will demand the right to start all over again and discover the truth for themselves.

The false prophet and the Meisis come to corrupt others, and destroy the Sinai idea. The Ir Hanidachas is an entire city whose inhabitants have mutually corrupted each other, and which now stands as an example of defiance to the entire Jewish community. All Jews now know that they can go and visit this “sin city” and check it out for themselves.

The Torah takes a harsh view of these cases both because they deny the entire purpose of creation and because they actively pursue the entrapment of others. Hence, in an unusual detailing of its reasoning, the Torah makes it clear that the deterrent value to others is part of the logic of the punishment.

Those implementing the punishment do so knowing that, by saving others from being led away to from the Torah, they are saving their lives. This is greater than saving his life physically.

Our Torah is a Torah of peace – לְדָרוּת דָּרוּת שֶׁל דָּרוּת. The stress is on gentleness, kindness and harmony. Our Parsha also deals with laws of charity and loans, showing an unprecedented level of sensitivity required of a Jew towards his fellow man. It is totally out of character for the Torah to then provide such a chapter of harshness. Clearly, root of this is the fact that everything is at stake here. The lesson is that to be merciful to the evil will lead to being cruel to the righteous – to denying them for one thing, the one tool they have, the Torah, for attaining the World to Come.
In this week’s Parsha, the Torah brings three kinds of people who corrupt others. The first is the false prophet who claims to speak in the name of G-d and brings all the necessary signs and proofs1 (even stopping the sun)2, telling us that something in the Torah has changed or that we should serve idols3 (maybe in addition to serving G-d). It is certainly forbidden to believe such a prophet4 and it may even be forbidden to enter into a dialogue with him requesting that he back up his claim5.

The reason for ignoring the false prophet’s miracles, signs or predictions for the future are explained by the Rambam. Miracles and signs are always open to some interpretation, as they always leave some doubt in our heart. When Moshe Rabbeinu first went to the Jewish people with signs from G-d, these were only temporary. Indeed, the people did not fully accept Moshe Rabbeinu until they, too, received a direct prophecy from G-d and were able to confirm Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecy as a result. Every prophet that comes after Moshe Rabbeinu does have to bring signs or predictions to establish his credentials. However, we can never be sure that he is...
telling the truth, as the signs could have their source in kishuf. The Torah tells us that we can rely on such a prophet and listen to what he says. (This is like the law of two witnesses. We can give the death penalty based on two witnesses even though they may both be lying. The Torah allows us to act, presuming they are telling the truth.)

The final mandate for listening to such a prophet is therefore from the Torah itself. If a prophet will claim to prophesize something which contradicts the Torah, he is then underlining the very mandate which tells us to believe him. Ipso facto, he is a false prophet.\footnote{Ir Hanidachas, the fact that the all the inhabitants of a particular place turned to idolatry leads to the entire city being reduced to ashes, never to be built again.}

Perhaps it is because of the very severity of these laws that prompts the Torah to introduce laws of judicial due process just here, laws of evidence for all judicial hearings. The second case in this Parsha is that of the Meisis, someone who actively entices us to serve idols through argument and persuasion. The third is the Ir Hanidachas, where an entire city turns to idolatry. In all cases, the consequences are severe – the person or people concerned are put to death.\footnote{Ir Hanidachas, the fact that the all the inhabitants of a particular place turned to idolatry leads to the entire city being reduced to ashes, never to be built again.}

The third case is that of the Meisis, someone who actively entices us to serve idols through argument and persuasion. The third is the Ir Hanidachas, where an entire city turns to idolatry. In all cases, the consequences are severe – the person or people concerned are put to death. It is perhaps for the severity of these laws that prompts the Torah to introduce laws of judicial due process just here, laws of evidence for all judicial hearings.

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procedures which bear the death penalty¹, and making sure we understand that no one takes the law into his own hands². In fact, just after these laws, the Torah talks about the unity of the Jewish people revolving around a centralized authority on the Temple Mount. For if every Torah scholar can be the final arbiter of Torah law, we will splinter into a thousand pieces³. Simultaneously, the Torah bans Bamos and only allows for one central Mizbech by stating that each man may not do what he deems to be fitting.

At the beginning of these laws⁴ Moshe tells us of one other law: the law of not adding to or subtracting from the Torah⁵. The Torah is the perfect means to our fulfillment, and as such, any idea by man that he can somehow improve on this will lead down a slippery slope: we will begin to judge each commandment, deciding whether it is good, still relevant or can be improved upon. By the time we are finished, it will no longer be Judaism that we are practicing but rather some human religion of our own making. It is this which leads to the moral and spiritual cesspool of the false prophet, the Meisis and the Ir Hanidachas.

The severity of the punishment for these crimes is difficult to comprehend. The motivation of the Meisis lies, after all, in the desire to be creative, to distinguish himself by presenting a new system⁶. Why should people not be allowed the freedom of expression to communicate their alternative ideas to Judaism, just the kind of marketplace of ideas, protects the right for many competing concepts to be expressed in the marketplace of ideas.

The Torah is quite clear that a world without moral and spiritual purpose is not a world worth sustaining. G-d had a purpose for this world, and He revealed that purpose through prophecy at Sinai. After the Revelation, the question then arose as to what was to stop another prophet from coming and saying that the Torah had changed

¹[Meisis]: "Ir Hanidachas.
²[Meisis]: "Ir Hanidachas.
³[Meisis]: "Ir Hanidachas.
⁴[Meisis]: "Ir Hanidachas.
⁵[Meisis]: "Ir Hanidachas.
⁶[Meisis]: "Ir Hanidachas.

This text is a translation of a Hebrew text. The original text is in Hebrew and the translation is in English.
or that laws were added to it. What was to stop someone from coming and re-interpreting the Torah in a radically new way? What happened if he was known to us as a genuine prophet and predicted miracles that came about to back up his plan? What was to stop someone from saying that the whole Torah was true and G-d given but that there were also other gods worthy of service? In other words, how would one maintain the integrity of the Torah and Judaism, and prevent all kinds of splinters and new-age variants?

To this the Torah answers that the entire Torah was given at Sinai and it would never change. It was given with the utmost clarity so that no one would become confused; neither about G-d as the source of this revelation, nor the content of the revelation. All the principles we need to apply to any new situation are already contained within the Torah, and any new situation can be understood by these principles. These principles were not given based on any miracles, but rather in a clear and undisputable national revelation. Therefore, miracles cannot be the basis of any future claim to change the Torah. From Sinai on, no prophet can ever innovate anything new in the Torah. A prophet can temporarily suspend the laws of the Torah as Eliyahu did on Mt. Carmel, but any prophet who will call for a permanent change in the Torah, even a genuine prophet or one who draws on signs and predictions, is ipso facto wrong. It is one of the 13 Principles of Our Faith that the Torah will never change, and anyone challenging this principle is challenging the very foundations on which the Torah is based.

It goes without saying that all of this is a function of the Torah being G-d-given. Any idolatry undermines the Torah just as thoroughly as a false prophecy. Any attempt to get others to believe in idolatry is a crime of the utmost gravity, for this is tantamount to denying the entire purpose for which the world was created, i.e. the mandate for man to get close to G-d through His Torah.

The punishment for all of this is the death penalty. The Torah is cognizant of the fact that if we engage in this sort of cruelty even in the act of implementing our judicial duties we are in danger of becoming monsters, imposing a Taliban-like....
regime and terrorizing the people. But here, the Torah makes a remarkable promise. In the case of Ir HaNidachas, we are told that our act of seeming cruelty will have the opposite effect of making us more merciful. We are to act, it seems, not because we are filled with the fiery passion of fundamentalism, but because we are constrained by the Torah to follow its dictates.

But why would the Torah act with such severity to acts of idolatry? Surely, the Monotheistic idea is powerful enough to stand on its own two feet and capture the minds of thinking people? To this, the Chinuch has an interesting response. The Sinai experience provided us with a clear and factual empirical basis to our belief in G-d face to face. Now it is time to move on and build on what we have achieved; not to spend our days going through the whole issue of the authenticity of Sinai all over again. Civilization cannot move forward if every generation has to spend their lives doubting that may take years to work through. Perhaps a brilliant mind, an Avraham, would be for naught, for his children would demand the right to start all over again and discover the truth for themselves.

The Torah takes a harsh view of these cases both because they deny the entire purpose of creation and because they actively pursue the entrapment of others. Hence, in an unusual detailing of its reasoning, the Torah makes it clear that the deterrent value to others is part of the logic of the punishment.

Those implementing the punishment do so knowing that by saving others from being led away from the Torah they are saving their lives.

In general, the Torah gives greater value to something spiritual than to something physical. For example, if one had two lost objects to return, one belonging to his rabbi and one belonging to his father, he is required to return the lost object to his rabbi first, because his father facilitated his entry into this world but his rabbi to his rabbi and one belonging to his father, he is required to return the lost object to
worse than someone who physically murders, for a murderer murders in this world, but one who causes sin is depriving (murdering) the person from the World to Come.¹

Therefore, just as there is a Torah obligation to save a person’s physical life, there is a similar obligation to save his life spiritually². This is considered one of the greatest things we can do:

בכלמדילmuşאתהמתעשרםסקיריכיצאתועדתרומאאלאעמותהיהוזהעיסוייםいずיאו

For example, there are instances where one would be required³ to break the Shabbos to save a fellow-Jew’s Yiddishkeit⁴, such as one who is already Mitzvah-

¹ הקשהמהמשיימהותいろונב(מסדריךיצאתועד)העמדאותאלאעמותהיהוזהעיסוייםいずיאו.
² כו.’ועשהדםדןדיששלשלישיםולאהראשוניםבעי.
³ והייאמה:אלאתתעמדעדםרוכ.
⁴ שםםרוכב’שחיילכלונכםב.’ושה.’ませרשניך.”⁵

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observant, even a minor\(^1\), and has been forcibly removed to an environment which endangers his/her Mitzvah observance.\(^2\)

In a sense, our laws of the false prophet, the *Meisis* and the *Ir Hanidachas* are just extensions of this idea. The first two are clearly coming to corrupt others. The latter is an entire city whose inhabitants have mutually corrupted each other and which now stands as an example of defiance to the entire Jewish community. All Jews know that they can go and visit this “sin city” and check it out for themselves.

Our Torah is a Torah of peace – דרכי דרכי שלום. The stress is on gentleness, kindness and harmony. Our very Parsha deals with laws of charity and loans, showing an unprecedented level of sensitivity required of a Jew towards his fellow man. It is totally out of character for the Torah to then provide such a chapter of harshness, where, in the case of the *Meisis*, we are told to have no mercy and not to look for extenuating circumstances\(^3\). Clearly, the root of this is, as we explained, the fact that everything is at stake here. The lesson is that being merciful to the evil one will lead to being cruel to the righteous – to denying them the one tool they have, the Torah, for attaining the World to Come.

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\(^1\) שורים והרר אויריה שור

\(^2\) סעיף סויחא מם ספיגי ד

\(^3\) ספר הхранך - מצהות: שלא כל המוסד כותב על המיסות: שפנטום המיסות שלא כלשון בכר של כותב על

�名ס מכיל ידיעו כל כותב או ילמד או ילמדו בביתו, על המיסים (דא"א, פי"א, פי"א) לא הלמד עלי כותב:

אמרו וברך זכרון אמרו [ספיגי כה] לא תלמד עלי כותב:

ספיגי ד实践活动 - מצהות: שלא стоוק המוסד מלקדם חובה על המיסים:

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1. Requirement to Listen to Chachamim

SUMMARY:

It is a positive command to listen to the Sages' interpretation of the oral law, as the verse states, according to that which they will teach you, you should do. There is also a negative command not to dispute the Sages' final determination of halacha as the verse states, do not go away from that which they will tell you left or right.

The Sanhedrin was the original arbiter of the Halacha. But the broader implications of this verse are to follow Torah authorities in each and every generation. The verse means that even the Sages of a particular generation are not as great as a previous generation, they still have as much binding authority on their generation.

Underlying the need for this command is the fact that the Torah was given in such a way that it required the Sages to interpret it. Most of the laws of the Torah cannot be understood from the words of the Torah alone. Thus the interpretation of the Sages of any generation becomes the Torah which G-d commanded us to keep at Sinai. Even if, by the highest standards of our own human logic the Sages appear to be as wrong as confusing left with right, G-d testifies through this Mitzvah that this is not so. For if we were all left to make our own interpretations of the Torah, a thousand individual religions would bloom, and none would be Judaism.

A Sage who refused to accept the final decision of the Sanhedrin, and continued to pasken for people according to his original position is called a Zaken Mamreh. By doing this, the Zaken Mamreh threatened G-d’s entire plan for the world. Such a person got the death penalty, not as a deterrence, for most people were not knowledgeable enough to become a Zaken Mamreh. Rather, the purpose was to show people the immense importance of the tradition of Torah she'Ba'al Peh.

The Sages were also instructed to make Rabbinic decrees, as the verse states:יוו ויקרא:משמרתי ואתו שומרתם,למשמרתי המשמרת ועשו. Since G-d tells us to listen to the Sages, it is as if every Rabbinic decree is commanded by G-d Himself. The Sages, in a sense, are but fleshing out the details of the Torah command. G-d Himself would have commanded us to keep these Rabbinic commands, but He preferred to delegate to mankind this dimension of spiritual creativity. These dimensions of the Torah are not pure sechel like those written in the Torah itself. Just as there are laws not written in the Torah, but delegated to the realm of nature, so there are laws delegated to man to reveal and promulgate.

There are many different levels of דרבנן. In addition, there are certain Deoraisas which were given to the Sages to define. All מצוות דרבנן are an integral part of the תורה, part of the intended scope of the Torah to begin with. Therefore, disobeying Rabbinic decrees tends to undermine the whole chain of continuity and viability of the תורה on earth.

The Sages were critically aware of the fact that they were making legislation for times and circumstances in the future when things might be different. They were profoundly careful not to make any legislation which might become dated or which might not apply to any set of circumstances. They therefore looked very deeply at universals in human psychology and makeup and drew on deep principles that would
be applicable for all time. In this, they were operating at a level called קדושה天堂, a phenomenally high spiritual level, which allows access to a much higher plane of understanding than normal seichel.

Part of this understanding comes from the unusual mastery of the הHighlights which the Sages had. This mastery gave them an understanding of the deep structure of the world. It is this same understanding which allows contemporary Halakhic authorities to draw on הHighlights principles to answer questions about genetics, or the stock exchange or the internet.

Despite all their qualifications, the Sages were very wary of making any decree. Many hundreds and often thousands of Sages would discuss each and every point, before a decree would be made. Sometimes, such discussion would continue for decades, sometimes over many generations.

There were several qualifications to be a member of the Sanhedrin, many of them applicable to a great sage of any generation: The Sages had to be masters of Torah knowledge. They had to be able to use their Torah mastery to understand all new and relevant applications of the Torah, identifying all the relevant variables that would allow the underlying principles of Torah law to apply to this new situation.

Their whole thinking had to be in harmony with that of the Torah’s so that every insight they had and every advice they gave on any issue would be pure Torah. הHighlights is an extension of this to other, non-Halachic areas of life normally defined as דעות דבירי. These may involve personal issues relating to self, marriage or children; medical and legal issues; political and financial issues. הHighlights is as its name implies – the extension of that דעות which emanates from pure הHighlights, into areas which are not clearly labeled as הHighlights.

To be a member of the Sanhedrin, the Sages had to speak a majority of the languages of the world. The reason for this was that they had to hear testimony directly and not rely on translators. In addition, since halacha both impacts on worldly wisdom and takes into consideration current scientific and medical opinion, the Sages had to have a basic knowledge of astrology, and medicine. They had to be familiar with the multiple idolatrous practices of the time, to assess them and decide their status.

Members of the Sanhedrin had to be lovers of people, well liked and in good standing in the community. They had to be outraged by oppression and all manner of untruth and moral perversion, feel themselves accountable to G-d rather than man, and use their wisdom to wend their way through the complications that, as servants of G-d, they would then face.

In order to command maximum respect, these Sages even had to be physically attractive, trustworthy, wealthy enough not to be dependent on favors, yet not materialistic and money hungry.

We do not listen to a Sage who is not righteous, no matter how much he knows. This is because there is a relationship between truth and good character. For example, someone who gets angry will want to impose his opinion only because he is angry.

This is why the halacha is like Beis Hillel and not Beis Shammai in almost every case. Beis Hillel were concerned to hear what Beis Shamai had to say. They thereby showed patience, humility and an appreciation of others and their opinions, and therefore ultimately more sensitive to the truth. Similarly, the Bnei Beseira, seeing that Hillel was a superior Talmid Chacham to themselves, immediately stepped down as heads of the Sanhedrin and appointed Hillel in their stead.
A Sage with all these qualities could expect to be blessed with Ruach HaKodesh, which insured that his decisions would be true. Human logic is such that it lends itself to seeing different possibilities. But the final choice of the Sages was not only logical, but Divinely assisted.
It is a positive commandment to listen to the Sages’ interpretation of the Oral Law, as the verse states, according to that which they will teach you, you should do¹. There is also a negative command not to dispute the Sages’ final determination of halacha determined through the Medin and through the Kabalal which they have received, as it states in the Torah, do not go away from that which they will tell you left or right.²

Strictly speaking, these verses are referring to the Sanhedrin, who represent

¹דיברתם א"ש (משנה): על פי התורה אסר רור

²דיברתם א"ש (משנה): אסרו בהן מברר אמרו שלAccessory תואר כל מברר
the extension of Moshe Rabbeinu. According to the Sefer HaChinuch, however, this Mitzvah applies not only to listening to the Sanhedrin but also to the great Sages of each generation. The Gemorrah learns this from the verse אֲלֵי הַשֵּׁם וּרְאוּ הַאֱלֹהִים, which is interpreted to mean that even if the Sages of a particular generation are not as great as those of a previous generation, they still have as much binding authority on their generation.

The Ramban stresses that there is no difference between these laws and those that were received by Moshe on Har Sinai, for the Torah was given in such a way that it required the Sages to interpret it. In fact, most of the laws of the Torah cannot be understood from the words of the Torah alone. Without this mandate, the Midrash says, the Torah would be a mysterious document for us.

Thus, the interpretation of the
Sages of any generation becomes the which G-d commanded us to keep at all costs.

Even if, by the highest standards of our own human logic, they appear to be wrong, as wrong as confusing left with right, G-d testifies through this Mitzvah that this is not the case. For if we were all left to make our own interpretations of the Torah, a thousand individual religions would bloom, and none would be Judaism. This is why the case of a single Sage is such a serious thing. To be a Zaken Mamreh, one had to be an outstanding Talmid Chacham who refused to accept the final decision of the Sanhedrin and continued to pasken for people according to his original position. 

(Even the greatest elder of Beis Din can become a Zaken Mamreh if he argues with the Sanhedrin.) Such a person is arrested, taken to Jerusalem, and publicly executed on the next festival. Anyone who knows even a smattering of how Torah death sentences were implemented will realize what an astonishing approach this is. Only if one recognized that G-d’s entire plan for the world was being threatened by this Sage...
could one make some sense of the penalty. The Ran\(^1\) explains that the purpose could not have been deterrence, for most people were not knowledgeable enough to become a Zaken Mamre. Rather, the purpose was to show people the tremendous importance of the tradition of Torah SheBaal Peh\(^2\).

According the Rambam and others\(^3\), included in the Mitzvah of קנתנו לברכה are the Rabbinic decrees\(^4\). The Rabbinic decrees are also learned out from the following verse:

{הカラー} יא: השמרא את המשמרות

The Sages had a tradition\(^5\) that this meant:

{הカラー} יא: לעשות את המשמרות

Since G-d tells us to listen to the Sages, it is as if every Rabbinic decree is commanded by G-d Himself\(^6\). The Sages, in a sense, are but fleshing out these details of the Torah command\(^7\). G-d Himself would have commanded us to keep these Rabbinic


\(^{2}\)The Ran explains that this is why the Torah uses the words, “and they shall not continue to act sinfully” (17:13) when it gives the reason for the public proclamation of the death of the Zaken Mamre. It does not say, “and they shall not continue to do this evil thing,” as it says with regard to Edim Zomemim (19:20). Since the announcement of Zaken Mamre is made as a warning to all people not to argue with the Oral Tradition of the Torah, it is phrased as a general statement. In contrast, the proclamation in the case of Edim Zomemim is a warning specifically not to emulate the sin of the sinners.
commands, but He preferred to delegate this dimension of spiritual creativity to mankind\(^1\). According to the Maharal, this is because these dimensions of the Torah are not pure sechel like those written in the Torah itself. Just as there are laws not written in the Torah but delegated to the realm of nature, so there are laws delegated to man to reveal and promulgate\(^2\).

\(^1\)Ramban, there is an exception to this rule. A person who transgresses a Deoraita transgresses a positive and a negative command. It was the Sages in turn who rendered these Rabbinic Mitzvos to be more lenient\(^3\).

There are many different levels of Deoraita. In addition, there are certain Deoraita that were given to the Sages to define,\(^5\) although the Sages were not

\(^2\)Therefore, his comments are, in the broadest sense, applicable to the wider range of DeRabanans.

\(^3\)According to the Ramban, one who transgresses a Deoraita transgresses a positive and a negative command. It was the Sages in turn who rendered these Rabbinic Mitzvos to be more lenient.

\(^4\)See the Mabit in his Kiryat Sefer, מביי.

\(^5\)For example, Shitas Rashi is that the Melachos of Chol Hamoed are DeOraisa. However, the specifics of which Melachos are prohibited and which are permitted were left in the hands of the Sages.
permitted to prohibit something which was clearly permitted by the Torah. Nonetheless, within the scope of their mandate, the Sages could make a Rabbinic Decree even more powerful than a Torah decree. All decrees are an integral part of the Torah - part of the intended scope of the Torah to begin with.

Since the decrees of the Sages are an extension of the Torah and since the Sages are the guardians of the Torah, disobeying Rabbinic decrees tends to undermine the whole chain of continuity and viability of the Torah on earth. Therefore, the punishment for disobeying Rabbinic decrees is severe.

ורחיב על收费

This was an indication to them that HaSh-m wanted these decrees all along:

_batches_, in the name of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the Sages decreed the following:

"The Sages decreed that in the Torah (Vayikrah 19:35) it is written, "And if you glean, you shall not glean all the gleanings..."

 человеков скрепит эту малость, ибо - (см. об этом в трактате "Талмид Чагга")

This is the right of each of the Sages: when there is a halachah in their name, they are allowed to make a decision, in their name, to prohibit or permit something which was clearly permitted by the Torah. For the sake of the Torah, the Sages have the right to pass judgment. When they pass judgment, it is as if a Torah decree, even one more powerful than a Torah decree. All the laws which the Sages pass in their name are an extension of the Torah.

In summation, the Sages are the guardians of the Torah and are permitted to prohibit something which was clearly permitted by the Torah.

In summation, the Sages are the guardians of the Torah and are permitted to prohibit something which was clearly permitted by the Torah.

If the Sages decide to do something, it is as if they have done it themselves.

The Ritva understands that the Chachamim saw a hint in the Torah of all that they decreed. This was an indication to them that HaSh-m wanted these decrees all along:

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The Sages themselves were critically aware of the fact that they were making legislation for times and circumstances in the future when things may be different. They were profoundly careful not to make any legislation that might become dated or which might not apply to any set of circumstances. They therefore looked very deeply at universals in human psychology and makeup, and drew on deep principles that would be applicable for all time. In this, they were operating at a level called רוח הקדש, a phenomenally elevated spiritual level, which allows access to a much higher plane of understanding.

Part of this understanding comes from the unusual mastery of the תורה which the Sages had. This mastery gave them an understanding of the deep structure of the world. It is this same understanding which allows contemporary Halachik authorities to draw on תורה principles to answer questions about genetics, the stock exchange or the internet.

Despite their qualifications, the Sages were very wary of making any decree. Many hundreds and often thousands of Sages would discuss each and every point before a decree would be made. At times, such discussions would continue for decades, and sometimes over many generations.

Qualifications to be a Torah Sage

There were several qualifications to be a member of the Sanhedrin, many of them applicable to a great sage of any generation.

The Sages had to be masters of Torah knowledge 1. They had to be able to use their Torah knowledge to understand all new and relevant applications of the Torah 2. In truth, the Sages had to be what the Rambam calls מותרת דעת בעלי – which possibly means that their whole thinking had to be in harmony with that of the Torah’s so that בעוה עון 'ז ע אות גשער בשעריו ב聃: אבל התורה כמשפטי יענש היצר יתקפו אשר מצד תורה דברי על העובר ישראל כי העובר ولך הבזיון מצד אבל ותקיפתו היצר מתולדות תора דברישומר היהות אחר חכמים דברי למות. יראת שפורק בעצמו טורה דבריהם על העובר היראה למדרגת יסוד חכמים שדברי אחר שמים.  

Rashi might be referring to those shealos which the Gemorrah and the poskim do not directly talk about (for example, cloning or in vitro fertilization). The mashal Rashi brings is not one of someone who comes to ask a shailah, but rather one of showing what the Torah is even when no sheilah is asked. This may be a reference to Daas Torah issues, issues which require a Torah attitude to be formulated even where they cannot be reduced to a halachik question.
every insight they had and whatever advice they gave on any issue would be pure Torah.

All rabbis who have become expected to use their in the situations that come before them. This requires taking the various halachic opinions into account, comparing the case in front of them with the case about which they are judging, and deciding about the relevance of the unique variables.

is an extension of this to other non-Halachic areas of life normally defined as . These may involve personal issues relating to self, marriage or children, medical and legal issues, or political and financial issues.

To become members of the Sanhedrin, the Sages had to speak a majority of the languages of the world. The reason for this was because they had to hear testimony directly and not rely on translators. In addition, since halacha impacts on worldly wisdom and takes into consideration current scientific and medical opinion, the Sages had to have a basic knowledge of astrology and medicine. They had to be familiar with the multiple idolatrous practices of the time in order to assess them and the Sages had to have a basic knowledge of astrology and medicine. They had to be with the multiple idolatrous practices of the time in order to assess them and the Sages had to have a basic knowledge of astrology and medicine. They had to be familiar with the multiple idolatrous practices of the time in order to assess them and decide their status.

To be eligible for the a had to have broad range of character traits and integrity. He had to have wisdom, humility, and fear of heaven. He had to be non-materialistic, a lover of people, well-liked and in good standing in the community. Even a Beis Din of 3 had to have these qualities, even though they did not have to have the other qualities. As leaders, members of the Sanhedrin had to energetically and passionately be willing to accept responsibility, stand up to people

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1 Pachad Yitzchak (שבוטות) states that while was the domain of the Sanhedrin, it was the King who was in charge of , including , and . But the King, in turn, had to be appointed by the Sanhedrin.
(despite the requirement to be well-liked), be outraged by oppression\(^1\) and all manner of untruth and moral perversion\(^2\), feel themselves accountable to G-d rather than man, and use their wisdom to wend their way through the complications that, as servants of G-d, they would face\(^3\).

In order to command maximum respect, these Sages even had to be physically attractive\(^4\), trustworthy\(^5\), wealthy and non-materialistic enough not to be dependent on favors\(^6\), yet not materialistic and money hungry\(^7\).

Every Sage is required to practice what he knows at the highest levels\(^8\). The Tanchuma states that a Sage should be simultaneously modest yet well-known for his righteous deeds\(^9\). If he is not, we do not listen to him, no matter how much he knows\(^10\). This is because there is a relationship between truth and good character. For example, someone who gets angry, says the Maharal, will want to impose his opinion only because he is angry. This is a sure formula for missing the truth\(^11\). In the disputes

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\(^{1}\) וְיִרְאוּ כָּל הַצְּוָרָתָן אֲשֶׁר יַשְׁיִיאוּ בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{2}\) רָצִינוּ לְהַמְּצָרִים אֲשֶׁר יַשְּקִיעָם בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{3}\) אֲנָבוּ וְאָדָמות יְהוָה אֵינוֹן בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{4}\) בְּפֶרֶשֶׂה מִרְדֵׁרֵי הַיָּמִים: "לוֹא יִהְיוּ נַבּוֹנִים בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{5}\) לְהַמְּצָרִים אֲשֶׁר יַשְּקִיעָם בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{6}\) אֲנָבוּ וְאָדָמות יְהוָה אֵינוֹן בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{7}\) בְּפֶרֶשֶׂה מִרְדֵׁרֵי הַיָּמִים: "לוֹא יִהְיוּ נַבּוֹנִים בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{8}\) לְהַמְּצָרִים אֲשֶׁר יַשְּקִיעָם בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{9}\) אֲנָבוּ וְאָדָמות יְהוָה אֵינוֹן בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{10}\) בְּפֶרֶשֶׂה מִרְדֵׁרֵי הַיָּמִים: "לוֹא יִהְיוּ נַבּוֹנִים בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.

\(^{11}\) לְהַמְּצָרִים אֲשֶׁר יַשְּקִיעָם בְּנֵי חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמוֹ, כְּגוֹ Neighborhoods should be well-known.
between Beis Hillel and Beis Shamai, the halacha is like Beis Hillel in almost every case just because Beis Hillel was so concerned to hear what Beis Shamai had to say. In doing so, Beis Hillel showed great patience, humility and an appreciation of others and their opinions. This teaches us that one cannot reach the truth without good character traits.

Another fascinating example is the case of the Bnei Beseira. The question arose whether the Korban Pesach could be brought when Erev Pesach fell on Shabbos (when Shechita and Bishul are prohibited). The Bnei Beseira, who were the heads of the Sanhedrin, did not know the answer. They referred the matter to Hillel, who had emigrated from Bavel to Israel, and Hillel resolved the dispute. Seeing that Hillel was a superior Talmid Chacham, the Bnei Beseira immediately stepped down as heads of the Sanhedrin and appointed Hillel in their stead.

Humility (and, where appropriate, shame) is a handmaiden of truth and therefore of wisdom. Lies may be clever, devious or sophistcated, but they can never be wise. In the Mishneh in Eduyos, Hillel and Shamai have a dispute. In the end, two common weavers from the Dung Gate testify that the halacha is like Beis Hillel in almost every character trait. The Bnei Beseira, who were the heads of the Sanhedrin, immediately stepped down as heads of the Sanhedrin to appoint Hillel.

The reason the Mishneh is recorded, the Sages say, is to teach us that in the face of truth, no one should stick to his guns. The lesson of Hillel and Shamai, the greatest Sages of their time, was that they were able to accept the opinion of the simplest people they saw that theirs was the truth.

A remarkable example of this is brought in the Gemorrah Bava Kama:

1. מבגילה, значитحا את כתוב רבי חניך, צריך forgiven, עשרת הדברים, because רבי חניך is so concerned to hear what רבי חניך had to say.
2. דearnestly, here כדתידי, because רבי חניך was so concerned to hear what רבי חניך had to say.
3. דכמתה אתון מעבירה את קצין, את כתוב, את מתפלל, את מ츠튼, את חתומית, את ימין, את מהות, את פעמים של ההלכה, שאמנוلاحכמים, שלא כל חכמים ש mudança הלכה SCM, ningún. The reason the Mishneh is recorded, the Sages say, is to teach us that in the face of truth, no one should stick to his guns. The lesson of Hillel and Shamai, the greatest Sages of their time, was that they were able to accept the opinion of the simplest people they saw that theirs was the truth.

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וכא קממים מצוין, сет 목, because רבי חניך was so concerned to hear what רבי חניך had to say.
4. התוודה ההוותFOREMOST, the Sages say, is to teach us that in the face of truth, no one should stick to his guns. The lesson of Hillel and Shamai, the greatest Sages of their time, was that they were able to accept the opinion of the simplest people they saw that theirs was the truth.

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וכא קממים מצוין, сет 목, because רבי חניך was so concerned to hear what רבי חניך had to say.
The humility of a Sage has one more advantage: it ensures that the huge responsibility to which the Rabbinic leadership be held accountable\(^1\) be balanced by a sense that the nation deserves honor and even a certain sense of awe\(^2\).

If a Sage had all of these qualities, he would also be blessed with one more ingredient, a result of having these qualities and understanding that it required of him to take responsibility for the Jewish people. This quality was Ruach HaKodesh, and it ensured that the decisions the Sages rendered would be Torah-true\(^3\). Human logic is such that it lends itself to seeing different possibilities, but the final choice of the Sages was not only logical but also Divinely assisted\(^4\). The Gemorrah expresses this by saying that from the time of the Temple's destruction prophecy was removed from the prophets and given to the Sages\(^5\). This prophecy of the Sages, says the Ramban, is Ruach HaKodesh\(^6\). In fact, says Rav Wolbe\(^7\), we have an unbroken chain of such Ruach HaKodesh in all the Sages of each generation to this very day. Although it is hard for us to know who has or does not have this quality, it is apparent that some people who mastered Torah were nevertheless not integrated enough to receive Ruach HaKodesh, and therefore were not accepted by the nation as a Sage\(^8\).

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\(^1\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.

\(^2\) The sense of awe is generated by the fear of God, which is why the Sages declared that the nation deserves honor.

\(^3\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.

\(^4\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.

\(^5\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.

\(^6\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.

\(^7\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.

\(^8\) See the tractate of Talmid Chachamim, where the heads of the schools are described.
All of these qualities combined portray a depth of insight and wisdom so beautifully described by Rabbi Dessler\(^1\) of the gedolim in his generation:

*I can faithfully say that to see people like the Chofetz Chaim and Rav Chaim of Brisk who I witnessed at meetings dealing with issues of the broader community, that their insight was incredible, even in the eyes of small people like us\(^2\). Their deep understanding would go to the very bowels (תהום) of the earth and there was no possibility of a normal person plumbing the ends of their clear understanding of things\(^3\).

Someone who witnessed their meetings had a tangible sense that when they conducted their deliberations ... their faces reflected the great and deep responsibility which they felt. One who has never seen this has never seen the feeling of responsibility expressed in his life time\(^4\)! And whoever merited to stand in their presence on these occasions would be clear that he had seen the Shechinah rest on their activities, for Ruach HoKeshesh rested on this group (בחבורתם)\(^5\).

The Sages commanded us to listen to the words of the great rabbis even if they would tell us that our left is really our right. Not that we could ever say that they have Chas Ve'Shalom erred, for I, a tiny person, have seen with my own eyes their error. Rather, my own senses are as nought like the dust of the earth relative to the clarity of their minds and their Siyata Dishmaya .... And this is what is meant by Daas Torah as it applies to Emunas Chachamim\(^6\).

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\(^1\) מכתב מאליהו, שם: קודס כל דבר אומר埃尔יהו, כי אוחיט נגוניו מבטיח ל民主党 מלהואות רבポート בכרnic

\(^2\) מכתב מאליהו, שם: קודס כל דבר אומר埃尔יהו, כי אוחיט נגוניו מבטיח ל民主党 מלהואות רבפורט בכרnic

\(^3\) מכתב מאליור, שם: נווטק שוכל היה יד ודוקב דע ההווה משם, יד הוויה שומ אפשר ו çeşמה שמה עמודית

\(^4\) מכתב מאליהו, שם: לא תדע את אהלך. יגא את עInputLabelיה, תודע ומדכם, כי במעשכם המחובטיים...

\(^5\) מכתב מאליהו, שם: נלך רוח ליוו את הנעום ומנibbon אגרת התורהणת בורה על פניה, באם שמי שלח אוח את ואת

\(^6\) מכתב מאליור, שם: נלך רוח ליוו את הנעום ומנibbon אגרת התורהणת בורה על פניה, באם שמי שלח אוח את ואת

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2. Prophecy:

SUMMARY:

It is a positive mitzvah and one of the 13 Principles of Faith to believe in prophecy. G-d would not want us to obey His Will without providing a way of revealing that Will. This mechanism is prophecy. Without it mankind would lack the means to achieving spiritual completion. The ultimate expression to be able to achieve this was the giving of the Torah, through prophecy, at Sinai.

All other mechanisms to understand G-d’s will proved to be unreliable. Even Avraham Avinu, though he was able to understand on his own that some Higher Being had to have created this world, could not grasp what G-d was all about until HaSh-m appeared to him in a prophecy. From that time on, Jews knew of and believed in prophecy. At the time of the Exodus, their doubts were only whether Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecy was authentic. Thus it was necessary for Moshe to do Nisim in order to authenticate his prophecy.

At Sinai, all the Jews had prophecy together with Moses. There were myriads of prophets after that, though only 48 prophets and seven prophetesses are recorded with a lasting message to the Jewish nation.

After the revelation of the Torah, no subsequent prophet could ever contradict or even add to the contents of the original prophecy (i.e. the Torah). However, prophecy still continued. Sometimes, this was a purely personal experience. Since prophecy is the highest and purest form of knowledge imaginable, this provided the prophet with a great sense of spiritual self-satisfaction. Public prophets came to clarify the Torah and strengthen its observance through Tochacha to the Jewish nation. Sometimes, such rebuke involved prophesizing the future as a way of warning the Jewish people what would happen if they did not do Teshuva. It was also necessary as a way of verifying the authenticity of a prophecy to begin with. Finally, a prophet could implement a Horaas Shaah, a temporary suspension of a Mitzvah, as Eliyahu HaNavi did on Mt. Carmel when he built Bamos as a one time exception to the prohibition.

Prophecy as a special type of knowledge which emerges as a result of the prophet’s Dveykus to HaSh-m. As a result of understanding and appreciating what he is cleaving to, he is bestowed with a higher level of understanding. This higher understanding allows the prophet to get closer to the origin of the various mechanisms through which HaSh-m delivers His Hasgacha. By understanding these higher realms, the prophet can perceive some of the underlying principles which govern this world, allowing him to accurately see what human actions will lead to what kind of consequences. Sometimes the Navi is able to see something which has already happened in a higher realm, but which has not yet come down into our realm.

Prophecy is, in fact, the highest form of intellectual clarity which is possible. The prophet cannot understand this pure knowledge until he has processed it through his power of imagination and from there to his normal intellectual and conceptual tools.

The act of prophecy is a totally absorbing process. It requires that the person’s physical control be completely released so that he can enter the realm of the pure intellect. The result is for the prophet’s body to shake for all but the highest prophets. Prophecy usually takes place at night, in a dream or a vision though Moshe Rabbeinu had his prophecies during the day.
Prophecies must first take place in the land of Israel, because the link to G-d is so much stronger there.

A prophet will always know for certain whether he is having a prophetic experience or not. So too, the meaning of the prophecy will always be clear.

A prophet must either be vouched for by an established prophet or provide certain signs which provide us with the basis of accepting him. These are not miracles or changes in nature. Rather he has to make a detailed prediction of certain things that will happen in the future. If the slightest detail of the positive aspects of his prediction does not come true, we reject him. A prophet has to do this many times, though not an unreasonable amount.

We can never be sure that we are not being fooled though. However, Torah teaches that such proof is sufficient. A similar case is that of two witnesses, sufficient to give someone the death penalty. The two witnesses may be lying. But the Torah tells us that we can proceed as if what they are telling us is true.

In addition, a prophet must have certain personal qualities. He had to be righteous, humble and completely focused on spiritual issues. He must be totally healthy of mind and body, for otherwise his mind will not be able to achieve the necessary clarity; he must be exceptionally wise and intelligent, for G-d does not turn the simpleton of yesterday into the wise and inspired genius, the man of G-d of today, wise enough to grasp the meaning of the word of G-d, and hand it on.

He had to be socially and financially self-contained, because only one who seeks nothing for himself can look on and understand things in complete objectivity.

There were many different levels of prophecy. Lower levels might see G-d in the image of a sage or a warrior and have prophecy in allegories. However, the solution to the allegory or image was a part of the prophetic experience. The highest level of prophecy would be purely auditory, without any visual images.

When the First Temple was destroyed, prophecy stopped. We remained with “the prophecy of the Sages”, i.e. the clarity of insight which the Sages achieve with the help of Ruach HaKodesh. Prophecy is advantageous over wisdom in that it is a clear message from heaven. Wisdom on the other hand, lends itself to error, for it is Torah that comes from man and works its way up. However, its advantage over prophecy is that it can go much higher and further than prophecy.

In the generations of prophecy, there was a tremendous Yetzer Hara for idolatry. The latter was the mistaken application of bringing earthwards forces from above, and therefore paralleled the prophetic process. But the Sages prayed that this Yezer Hara should be annulled, in part because of the plague of false prophecy, and when it was, prophecy also stopped. This provided an opportunity to now develop the Oral law to its full glory. Concomitantly, the Yetzer Hara was now similar, Greek wisdom flourished, and the era of Hellenism descended upon the Jews.

Both Moshe and Bilam prophesized that, in the Messianic era, prophecy will return to the Jewish people. The Mashiach will be a great prophet, second only to Moses, and he will have certain prophecies that even Moshe Rabbeinu did not have.
Four of them appear in Parshas Shofitm:

There are seven Mitzvos that directly deal with prophecy, and all of them are in Sefer Devarim.

G-d would not want us to obey His Will without providing a way of revealing that Will. This mechanism is prophecy. It is therefore one of the 13 fundamental principles of our faith to believe in prophecy, for without it, mankind would lack the means to achieving spiritual completion. The ultimate way to achieve this was by giving the Torah through prophecy at Sinai.
All other mechanisms to understand G-d’s Will in the past had proved to be unreliable. Even Moshe Rabbeinu was able to understand that some Higher Being had to have created this world, but he could not grasp what G-d was all about until HaSh-m appeared to him in a prophecy. From this time on, Jews knew of and believed in prophecy. Ramban states that at the time of Moshe Rabbeinu the nations of the world doubted the idea of prophecy. However, the Jews all knew of and accepted prophecy. Their doubts were only whether Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecy was authentic. Thus, it was necessary for Moshe to do Nisim in order to authenticate his prophecy.

We have stated that the original reason for prophecy was to reveal G-d’s Will in the form of the Torah. However, even after the original prophecy by Moshe and the Jewish people, G-d desired that there would still be a long period of prophecy and that we should listen to these prophets. The revelation of the Torah was forever, and no subsequent prophet could ever contradict or even add to the contents of the original prophecy (i.e. the Torah). There are, however, a number of secondary purposes for prophecy:

1. משפחא של כל ד”ר (בראשית) ד”ר כל אויל יせる כל מזון…� בתר אפשר היא כי הקדשה בו פנים שעון פנים לשאלה: Whether Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecy was authentic. Thus, it was necessary for Moshe to do Nisim in order to authenticate his prophecy.

2. ...משתמשי לא כל ד”ר (בראשית) ד”ר אויל י成功率 כל מזון...� בתר אפשר היא כי הקדשה בו פניםعلל: Even we should listen to these prophets. The revelation of the Torah was forever, and no subsequent prophet could ever contradict or even add to the contents of the original prophecy.

3. ...משתמשי לא כל ד”ר (בראשית) ד”ר אויל י成功率 כל מזון...� בתר אפשר היא כי הקדשה בו פניםעלל: All other mechanisms to understand G-d’s Will in the past had proved to be unreliable. Even Moshe Rabbeinu was able to understand that some Higher Being had to have created this world, but he could not grasp what G-d was all about until HaSh-m appeared to him in a prophecy.

4. ...משתמשי לא כל ד”ר (בראשית) ד”ר אויל י成功率 כל מזון...� בתר אפשר היא כי הקדשה בו פניםעלל: Ramban states that at the time of Moshe Rabbeinu the nations of the world doubted the idea of prophecy. However, the Jews all knew of and accepted prophecy. Their doubts were only whether Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecy was authentic. Thus, it was necessary for Moshe to do Nisim in order to authenticate his prophecy.
Self-fulfillment: Prophecy may be a purely personal experience, coming to “broaden his heart and add to his knowledge.” It is the highest and purest form of knowledge imaginable.

To Clarify the Torah and Strengthen its Observance: After Sinai, prophecy serves to clarify the Torah and to strengthen its observance through Tochacha to the Jewish nation.

Propheze the future: Although this was not a central purpose of prophecy, it was necessary as a way of verifying the authenticity of a prophecy as well as a result of rebuking the nation by predicting what would happen if they did not do Teshuva (however, prophecy was not the only way to know the future).

Moreover, we believe that G-d can change the future according to our prayers or behavior, should He so wish, and therefore, it is possible that the future could never be accurate.

Self-fulfillment is not mentioned in the (פרק ה, המאמר 3rd ספר ה诩됨) In the (פרק ה, המאמר 3rd ספר ה诩됨), self-fulfillment is divided into two, one as the next level after transceding his five senses, and one as a new level of understanding.

See alsochap 19 for yet another type of prophecy.

(see chap 19 for yet another type of prophecy)
all of the time\(^1\). However, even an established prophet who prophesizes a good result which does not come about is immediately rendered a false prophet\(^2\).

\[iv-\] Horaas Shaah: As we will see below, all Neviim were also Talmidei Chachamim. When it came to interpreting the Torah, a Navi had no more status than another \(\text{לֹא}^3\). However, a Navi could implement a Horaas Shaah, a temporary suspension of a Mitzvah\(^4\). An example of this is Eliyahu HaNavi, who built Bamos on Har HaCarmel as a one-time exception to the prohibition,\(^5\) and Avraham Avinu, who told Yitzchak to allow himself to be sacrificed even though human sacrifice is forbidden\(^6\). Idolatry, however, can never be exempted\(^7\).

At Sinai, all the Jews had prophecy together with Moshe. There were myriads, perhaps millions, of prophets after that. The Tanach records 48 male prophets\(^8\) and

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\(^1\) The author may be referencing a specific verse from the Chumash, Devarim, to support their argument.

\(^2\) Additional context or a reference to a specific verse or commentary is needed.

\(^3\) The text suggests that a Navi had no more status than another Navi at the time of Torah interpretation.

\(^4\) The concept of Horaas Shaah is explained, providing an example of its implementation.

\(^5\) Eliyahu HaNavi is cited for an exception to certain prohibitions.

\(^6\) The prohibition on human sacrifice is noted, emphasizing that it cannot be exempted.

\(^7\) Idolatry cannot be exempted, according to the text.

\(^8\) A list of 48 male prophets is mentioned, indicating the extensive prophetical tradition in the Tanach.

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According to the \(\text{לי אֵיךָ}^9\), these do not include the Avos, Moshe or Aaron. The 48 are:

1-3 Three sons of Korach, Assir, Elkanah and Aviasaph (authors of Tehilim 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88)
4. \text{Yehoshua ben Nun} (Moreh Nevuchim 2:45 says he reached the 10\(^{\text{th}}\) level of prophecy, the highest next to Moshe Rabbeinu)
5. Pinchas (He received the Mesorah from Yehoshua. Those who consider Pinchus and Eliyahu as one, substitute his father, Elazar)
6. \text{Elkanah} (The husband of Channah, a descendant of Korach’s sons)
7. \text{Nasnan} (Nathan. He lived during the time of David and Shlomo HaMelech and finished with Gad Sefer Shmuel.)
8. \text{Gad} (A contemporary of David HaMelech. He helped Nasan complete Sefer Shmuel. He was killed by a Malach)
9. \text{Asaph} (He wrote Tehilim 50, 73-83)
10. \text{Herman ben Yoel} (A grandson of Shmuel)
11. \text{Yedusun} (Yeduthun) (Possible author of Tehilim 39, 62, 71)
12. Eitan ben Kishi (Possible author of Tehilim 89. Some say he is Etan ben Zerach, grandson of Yehuda. According to the Targum, all five sons of Yehudah’s son Zerach were prophets.)
13. David HaMelech (There is an opinion, however, that no-one was ever a prophet and a king at the same time: Zohar 2:154a, Moreh Nevuchim 2:45)
14. Achiyah HaShiloni (the Shilonite)
15. Shmuel (Samuel)
16. Shemaya (he lived in the time of Rechavam)
17. Ido (The son of the Sunnamit woman visited by Elisha or possibly her husband, making Chabbakuk her son. Ido was the grandfather of Zechariah)
18. Azariah ben Oded (Lived during the time of King Asa)
19. Chanani HaChozeh (the Seer – He too lived during the time of King Asa)
20. Yehu (Chanani’s son) (It is apparent from Divrei Hayamim 20:34 that he wrote a book that was apparently included in Kings)
21. Eliyahu (Elijah. Some identify him with Pinchus)
22. Michaiah ben Yimlah (He lived during the time of Kings Ahab and Yehoshaphat and was a contemporary of Yehu (20))
23. Ovadiah (Obadiah) (He was the overseer of King Ahab’s house and was a contemporary and student of Elijah)
24. Elisha (He was appointed for prophecy by Eliyahu)
25. Eliezer ben Dadavahu
26. Yonah (Jonah) (He lived at the time of King Yehu)
27. Zechariah (He, like his father, Yehoayada, was head of the Sanhedrin. After rendering his prophecy, he was stoned by the people at the instigation of the King)
28. Amotz (The father of Yeshayahu)
29. Havakuk (The son of the Shunami women who was resurrected by Elisha. However, see Ido, 17, above)
30. Zephaniah
31. Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) (Author of the book of Kings and Lamentations, i.e. Eicha)
32. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) (He prophesized during the reign of 4 kings and, according to the Rambam, he reached the 7th level of prophecy. He was a student of Amos and the leader of the Sanhedrin at the time.)
33. Yechezkiel ben Buzi (Ezekiel) (He lived during Galus Bavel. Some say that Buzi was Yirmiyahu, and hence Ezekiel was Yirmiyahu’s son)
34. Daniel
35. Baruch ben Neriah (He was a descendant of Yehoshua. Ezra was a talmid of his.)
36. Uriah ben Shemaiah
37. Seriah ben Neriah
38. Mordechai
39. Chaziel ben Zechariah
40. Oded
41. Hoshea (Hosea. Author of Sefer Hoshea. A talmid of Zechariah)
42. Amos (Author of Sefer Amos. A talmid of Hoshea – 41 above)
43. Micha (Micah. Author of Sefer Micha. Head of the Sanhedrin and a talmid of Yeshayahu – 32 above)
44. Yoel ben Petuel (Joel. Author of Sefer Yoel. Head of the Sanhedrin and a talmid of Micha – 43 above)
45. Nachum (Author of Sefer Nachum. Head of the Sanhedrin and a talmid of Yoel – 44 above.)
46. Chagai (Haggai. Author of Sefer Chagai. Prophesized during the Persian exile.)
47. Zechariah (Author of Sefer Zechariah. Possibly the grandson of Iddo – 17 above)
48. Malachi (Wrote Sefer Malachi. There is a machlokes whether he is the same person as Ezra or not.)

For detailed notes on each prophet see Rav Aryeh Kaplan, The Handbook of Jewish Thought, pg. 113 – 120 (Table 6:1), whose notes we used in compiling these details. In his note 1 there he points out that Rashi, Rabbeinu Chananel and Hilchos Gedolos list Moshe and Aharon among the 48. However they are omitted by Seder Olam because, as the Talmud states, the 48 are all those who did not add to the Torah in any way. Rashi also
seven prophetesses\textsuperscript{1}. These were the prophets with a lasting message to the Jewish nation. Each of the 48 prophets took one of the 48 drops of Gan Eden which were combined in Adam HaRishon before the sin\textsuperscript{2}.

The Ramchal defines prophecy as a special type of knowledge that emanates from HaSh-m’s Kavod\textsuperscript{3}. This knowledge emerges from the prophet’s Dveykus to HaSh-m. As a result of understanding and appreciating what he is cleaving to, the prophet is bestowed with a higher level of understanding\textsuperscript{4}. This higher understanding allows the prophet to get closer to the origin of the various mechanisms through which HaSh-m delivers His Hashgacha. By understanding these higher realms, the prophet can perceive some of the underlying principles which govern this world\textsuperscript{5}, allowing him to accurately see which human actions will lead to what kind of consequences\textsuperscript{6}. Sometimes the Navi is able to see something that has already happened in a higher realm but which has not yet come down into our realm\textsuperscript{7}. Thus, he is not seeing in the future as much as he is describing what he has already seen.

Prophecy is, in fact, the highest form of intellectual clarity which is possible\textsuperscript{8}. The prophet cannot understand this pure knowledge until he has processed it through his Dveykus (his power of imagination), and from there to his normal intellectual and

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\textsuperscript{1} Sarah, Miriam, Devorah, Channa, Avigail, Chulda, Esther

\textsuperscript{2} ד"ה בה' הר"ה (תבניות, ס"כ: ר"ה)

\textsuperscript{3} הח"ה י"ה

\textsuperscript{4} הצהרה על ההשגה של הנביאים הקב镂ים

\textsuperscript{5} מצות

\textsuperscript{6} התבניות

\textsuperscript{7} ד"ה

\textsuperscript{8} ד"ה

\textsuperscript{9} The Ramchal defines prophecy as a special type of knowledge that emanates from HaSh-m’s Kavod. This knowledge emerges from the prophet’s Dveykus to HaSh-m. As a result of understanding and appreciating what he is cleaving to, the prophet is bestowed with a higher level of understanding. This higher understanding allows the prophet to get closer to the origin of the various mechanisms through which HaSh-m delivers His Hashgacha. By understanding these higher realms, the prophet can perceive some of the underlying principles which govern this world, allowing him to accurately see which human actions will lead to what kind of consequences. Sometimes the Navi is able to see something that has already happened in a higher realm but which has not yet come down into our realm. Thus, he is not seeing in the future as much as he is describing what he has already seen.

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How did we verify whether someone was a true prophet or not?

A Navi will always know for certain whether he is having a prophetic experience or not. Even though the prophet has to filter his prophecy through the lenses of his Koach HaDimyon (meaning that he usually has to understand his prophecy as some kind of parable), the meaning of the prophecy will nevertheless always be clear.

1. The Navi will always know for certain whether he is having a prophetic experience or not. Even though the prophet has to filter his prophecy through the lenses of his Koach HaDimyon (meaning that he usually has to understand his prophecy as some kind of parable), the meaning of the prophecy will nevertheless always be clear.

2. The experience or not.

3. Even though the prophet has to filter his prophecy through the power of imagination.

4. A Navi will always know for certain whether he is having a prophetic experience or not.

5. Not filtered through the power of imagination.

6. Prophecies must first take place in the physical environment.

7. This is why Yonah, who did not want to go to Ninveh, originally fled Israel, thinking that he would then be deprived of his capacity to prophesize.

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It is one of the 13 Principles of Faith to believe that all prophecies of the prophets are true, provided they don’t contradict anything written in the Torah. Clearly, then, there has to be a mechanism for determining what is and what is not true prophecy. The fact that the Torah commands us not to listen to a false prophet is testimony to the reality that we may be faced with just the challenge.

The fact that we believe in prophecy at all goes back to the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu, as Toras Moshe states that anyone else. It is not the prophet’s sign or proof alone which provides us with the basis of accepting him. Rather, it is because Moshe Rabbeinu tells us in his Torah that if what they are telling us is true.

Moshe Rabbeinu told us how to authenticate future claims to prophecy by anyone else. It is not the prophet’s sign or proof alone which provides us with the basis of accepting him. Rather, it is because Moshe Rabbeinu tells us in his Torah that if what they are telling us is true.

The sign which a prophet has to bring is not a miracle or change in nature. The two witnesses may be lying, but the Torah tells us that we can proceed as if what they are telling us is true. Rather, he has to make a detailed prediction of certain things that will happen in the future. If the slightest detail of the positive aspects of his prediction does not come true prophecy. The fact that the Torah commands us not to listen to a false prophet is testimony to the reality that we may be faced with just the challenge.

Note that the prophets are required or at least are an acceptable alternative to verification. The fact that the Torah commands us not to listen to a false prophet is testimony to the reality that we may be faced with just the challenge. Moreover, the miracles must be predicted by the prophet. In, he writes that the claims of the prophets must be credible in that they are consistent with what we know either through our senses or through our experience.
true, we reject him. A prophet has to do this many times, though not an unreasonable amount. After a Navi has been accepted, he no longer needs to bring signs to support his prophecy. An alternative route for establishing that a prophet is true is for an established prophet to testify that this person is a prophet.

The tricky part is once a prophet is established and no longer has to back his claims with signs. How do we identify the false prophecy of such a person? This can be checked in two ways: if there is more than one prophet alive at the time, all the prophets will often get the same prophetic message in some form or another. On the other hand, if he simply repeats the prophecy that his co-prophet is saying, this too will be a counter-indication.

Personal qualities

A prophet has to be at a certain level of spirituality in order to merit receiving prophecy. However, being at the right level does not guarantee that he will have the prophecy. In the case of prophecies for the sake of Israel specifically, a person can be at the level of prophecy and not receive it if the situation does not warrant it. In fact, the requirements for prophecy are so stringent that the number of prophets is very limited. In the case of prophecies for the sake of Israel specifically, a person can be at the level of prophecy and not receive it if the situation does not warrant it.
In order to receive prophecy, a person had to be a גבור, totally healthy of mind and body, for “only in a healthy, unweakened body does the mind attain that clarity that can draw from the well of the תורה.”

The prophet had to be an exceptionally wise and intelligent person (חכם), because “only a mind which has developed to its full human capacity can have the understanding to grasp the meaning of the word of G-d, and hand it on.”

G-d only uses as an instrument for Divine wisdom one who already has... developed... the ordinary human gift of wisdom. Judaic Truth knows nothing of that miracle of G-d, which suddenly makes the simpleton of yesterday into the wise and inspired genius, the man of G-d of today.

Further, he had to be a righteous person, totally in control of his desires. He was required to be humble and completely focused on spiritual issues.

Any claims by someone who had less than these qualities were simply ignored.

Rav S.R. Hirsch (בשמות: יא-יב). He states there: Visions, hallucinations,... clairvoyance... only occur in conditions of sickness, debility and morbidity.


Rav S.R. Hirsch, ibid.

See intro. to Liber torah, chap. 7 - נביאים do not have to have perfect mad imageData:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAADIAAAAfCAMAAAADfLSXAAAABlBMVEX///8AAABVwtJ3gAAAFXRFWHRDQ135RXhhP.GP0AAABJRU5ErkJggg==

R.S.R. Hirsch: Just that in which you see your complete unsuitability for the work makes you most suitable for it.... Your insufficiency is the guarantee that you are sent by G-d. Without it, that salvation in Egypt would fall into the category of world-historical events, which glorify human greatness. ...
Accuracy

Not all prophets had the same levels of prophetic understanding. The level of prophecy would determine the level and type of allegory (or filters) through which the prophet would have his vision. Therefore, G-d might be seen in the image of a sage, a warrior or some other form. Therefore, the exact same prophecy would be seen by different prophets in the form of different images. The highest level of prophecy was purely auditory, without any visual images. According to their level, prophets may see more or less of a particular matter. They would also repeat the prophecy in their own words. All of this could be confusing for the novice prophet. Yet, the prophet was never confused as to whether a prophecy had actually taken place or what the
essential message of the prophecy was, for the solution to the allegory or image was a part of the prophetic experience.

Why Prophecy Stopped

At the end of the First Temple, prophecy ceased. Prophets who were still alive then continued to prophesize. Throughout the 70 years of the Babylonian exile and even into the Second Temple era, there were some prophets, amongst them Mordechai, Esther, Chananya, Azarya and Michaela, who had received prophecy earlier and continued to prophesize. But no new prophets arose during this period, however, and prophecy died out.

Why indeed did prophecy stop? In the generations of prophecy, there was a tremendous Yetzer Hara for prophecy. The latter was the mistaken application of bringing forces from above down to earth, and therefore paralleled the prophetic process. The Sages prayed that this Yezer Hara should be annulled, in part because of the plague of false prophecy, and when it was, prophecy also stopped. (Prophecy had already become more difficult to attain because of the hiding of the Aron HaKodesh.) The Sages knew and anticipated this result, and in fact saw this as an opportunity to develop the Oral Law in its full glory. This now meant that the Yetzer Hara would parallel this point, and Greek wisdom flourished, bringing the era of Hellenism to descend upon the Jews.

The Sages tell us that from the day the First Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the Sages. What this means, says the Sages, is that prophecy was not, as we think, given to the Sages, but rather taken from the prophets and given to the Sages. The Sages knew and anticipated this result, and in fact saw this as an opportunity to develop the Oral Law in its full glory. This now meant that the Yetzer Hara would parallel this point, and Greek wisdom flourished, bringing the era of Hellenism to descend upon the Jews.

For somebody to begin to have prophecy, the only way it could have been to be in its place, the majority of the Jewish people had to be on land, and the prophecy had to take place in Israel. After the Babylonian exile, the presence of prophecy was never again in its place. Hence, prophecy stopped.

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1 Talmud, Shabbat 142a
2 Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Torah Nation
3 For somebody to begin to have prophecy, the only way it could have been to be in its place, the majority of the Jewish people had to be on land, and the prophecy had to take place in Israel. After the Babylonian exile, the presence of prophecy was never again in its place. Hence, prophecy stopped.

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Ramban, is that what we normally associate as prophecy (the prophecy of the prophets) ceased. But, there is another type of prophecy that remained, which is the prophecy of the Sages, i.e. the clarity of insight which the Sages achieve with the help of Ruach HaKodesh. Amazingly, Ameimar tells us that this latter type of insight is better than actual prophecy. Prophecy has the advantage of being a clear message from heaven, a Torah-message coming from the Heavens above and filtering downwards. Wisdom, on the other hand, lends itself to error, for it is Torah that comes from man and works its way up. Torah's advantage, then, is that it can go much higher and further than prophecy.

משיח and Prophecy

Both Moshe and Bilam prophesized that prophecy will return to the Jewish people in the Messianic era. The Mashiach will be a great prophet, second only to Moshe, and he will receive certain prophecies that even Moshe Rabbeinu did not receive.
3. Kings

SUMMARY:

According to most commentators, it is a positive commandment for the Jewish people to request and appoint a king (מלך שום עליך תשים), and in fact was the first of three things which Bnei Yisrael were required to do upon entering the Holy Land.

Like a judge, a king was appointed by the Sanhedrin and had power to judge the nation. However, their missions were radically different. The king was not primarily there to judge the nation, but rather to run the affairs of state and ensure that society was set on a correct path. As kings they would declare war and create emergency decrees, and they had a clear responsibility for the physical and not only the spiritual welfare of the nation.

If we contrast kings to ordinary judges, the differences become starker still. The primary role of a judge is to render Halchakially pure decisions while the role of the king was to determine alternative regimens of sanctions. What would happen if, for example, a murderer roamed the streets at night, killing people without two witnesses to the crime. Judges would be powerless to try him, while the king would be able to take care of the problem.

The kings of Israel, like the judges before them, came as Heads of State, to unite all your national forces for the well-being of your State.

From Shmuel’s criticism of the people’s request for a king we see that the motives for wanting a king have to be correct. Through Shaul, the people wanted to normalize their existence - Give us a king, like all the other nations – and this was their error. They were looking for primarily someone who was more general than sage, more fighter than a moral and spiritual figure. They said מלך לנו תנה rather than מלך עלינו תנה as a sign that they were hoping to get out of Shmuel incessant rebuking of the nation and take upon themselves a milder form of authority. The Sages even encouraged us to see non-Jewish kings in order to better contrast pure temporal power with the Jewish idea of a king.

Does this mean that Judaism believes in a monarchy as the ideal way of ruling? Firstly, we see that the stress is on the King acting as a conduit for Torah law. He is not an independent authority. To stress this he is expected to carry around a Sefer Torah wherever he goes. He is expected to painstakingly write this Sefer Torah himself, and to copy it specifically from the Sefer Torah of the Sanhedrin themselves. We require a special verse to tell us that he is exempt from taking it into the shower and the bathroom with him! The logic is that he should see every moment of his life through Torah eyes. All of this is a reminder that the king rules, but first he is ruled – by G-d through His Torah.

Secondly, his powers are significantly counter-balanced by the Sages of the Sanhedrin, who constitute the parliament and the senate all in one. It is the Sanhedrin and the leading prophet who to appoint him to begin with. The King in turn, is expected to follow laws of the highest moral standards. Should the King act inappropriately he is hauled in front of the court of law like any other citizen.

In some respects, the King is all powerful, for he is there to redress temporary moral imbalances which may occur in society and to break the back of mafias or any other emerging evil. Although he had no power in monetary cases, he could order the death sentence based on looser standards of evidence than an ordinary court could. He
could appropriate lands for the state, especially during war, decree taxes and issue military call ups wherever needed. He could exact free labor for public works projects.

Disrespect to the King incurred a death sentence. Yet, despite this, a person could safely defy the orders of the King if he was busy doing a Mitzvah instead. The concentration of these powers in the hands of one individual, given the checks and balances described above, was a great unifying element in the society. This was dependent in turn on his loving all Jews, and this was a condition of him being appointed in the first place. David Hamelech is chosen in part because he showed such care and mercy to his sheep, revealing his deep concern for all of G-d’s creatures.

There is no one who seems to have more power in the Jewish People, yet there is no other whose choice is more limited. A king’s heart is guided by G-d Himself.

But there was another check on his power. A candidate for King who was not clearly G-d-fearing, got nixed by the Rabbis. And once he was King, there were many rules to help him maintain his Yiras Shamayim and his humility. He was not allowed to have any horses beyond fully justifiable military needs. Nor was he allowed to accumulate any wealth beyond what was needed for the public need and the maintenance of the military. Personal wealth could cause him to laude it over others and away from feeling close and dependent on G-d, just as the expansion of his fleet of horses will lead to him feeling all powerful and less trusting in HaSh-m. The King is the best candidate for arrogance, and the Torah warns him against feeling superior to his fellow Jew — hardly an attribute that is looked for in the modern day leader and sometimes even seen as a weakness. In fact, although the public honor of the king has to be maintained, in private he is encouraged to stand before the High Priest and to honor Talmidei Chachamim. Yehoshofat, King of Judah, would get up for Talmidei Chachamim, kiss them and call them, “My rabbi, my teacher”.

G-d assures any King who is tempted to take personal advantage of his rule that his rule if not his life will be short. Shaul failed to listen to the prophetic instruction to kill Agag and all the cattle, and he is immediately told by Shmuel that his rule is going to be ended. It is a privilege to be a king as much as it is a privilege for the nation to receive one. Both sides have to earn, and keep on earning, the privilege.

A person who would see a Jewish King would pronounce the blessing — blessed is He who wo shared of His Glory with those who fear Him. The king was but a way for us to understand and appreciate G-d better. The Messianic Era will again bring back this noble idea to the Jewish people. The Messianic Era will again bring back this noble idea to the Jewish people. Mashiach himself will be the king of Israel, and at that time we will all know that the real King is G-d Himself.
In this week’s Parsha, we are told to appoint a king. Most commentators learn that this is a positive commandment, and in fact was the first of three things that Bnei Yisrael were required to do upon entering the Holy Land (the

Mitzvos obligating the Nation:

- דָּבְרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁמָה (Shemos 12:41): שמת את בנים (מצות שמות 12:41)
- דָּבְרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁמָה (Shemos 12:41): שמת את בנים (מצות שמות 12:41)
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- דָּבְרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁמָה (Shemos 12:41): שמת את בנים (מצות שמות 12:41)
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In this week’s Parsha, we are told to appoint a king. Most commentators learn that this is a positive commandment, and in fact was the first of three things that Bnei Yisrael were required to do upon entering the Holy Land (the
other two including destroying Amalek and building the Temple). According to some, the mitzvah is for the Jewish people to request the appointment or for the Sanhedrin to appoint a king, but only after the nation would so request. So, coming from the people... the institution of the king is not a dictatorial institution. A minority of commentators go so far as to say that the whole appointment is a voluntary act by the nation, and not a mitzvah at all!

Perhaps the Mitzvah is to be in awe of the king after he is appointed and that is what is meant by the words.

In some sense, a king was like a judge. Both were appointed by the Sanhedrin to appoint a king, but only after the nation would so request. Perhaps the Mitzvah is to be in awe of the king after he is appointed and that is voluntary act by the nation, and not a mitzvah at all!

1. According to R. Hirsch Pg. 333. 
Challenging the authority of either king or judge was a most severe offense¹. Both had long periods of uninterrupted rule². But there the similarities ended. A king was distinguished from a judge at the very outset by being anointed upon his appointment³. His mandate was radically different. The king was not primarily there to judge the nation, but rather to run the affairs of state and ensure that society was set on a correct path⁴. As kings they would declare war and create emergency decrees, and they had a clear responsibility for the physical and not only the spiritual welfare of the nation⁵. (It is true that, in the period of the judges, the lack of kings required the judges to fill some of these roles. But they did so as fill-in kings and not as judges per se⁶.)

In addition, Kings were subject to a unique set of obligations limiting their wealth, forbidding inebriation and requiring them to be accompanied by a Sefer Torah at all times; all this to prevent Royalty turning some grand tool to express the kings selfish, sensuous and materialistic sides⁷. In contrast to this, the king was accorded at all times; all this to prevent Royalty turning some grand tool to express the kings.

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¹ אברבנעל: משנת הרביעי ההיות שלכל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה התורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
² אברבנעל: ההבדל בין היותן של כל התורה 무엇ות שלא בין השתיות של כל התורה, וכדי להפריד את החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
³ אברבנעל: ההבדל בין היותן של כל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
⁴ השפרך: התשובהقربת היות ראשון בין כל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
⁵ השפרך: התשובהقربת היות ראשון בין כל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
⁶ אברבנעל: משנת הרביעי ההיות שלכל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
⁷ השפרך: התשובהقربת היות ראשון בין כל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככר אחר חזור על יד משיח
⁸ אברבנעל: משנת הרביעי ההיות שלכל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככרあと חזור על יד משיח
⁹ השפרך: התשובהقربת היות ראשון בין כל התורה什么东西ות שלמות את פרת השם, המרсход את פנים היהודים בהם, המשכית את עונג האל אחר מושתת, אחריו הוא הלך, על פי החכמה וה תורה והסברה בפרספקטיב ההתייחסות הםthetic והتحديית בככרあと חזור על יד משיח
If we contrast kings to ordinary judges, the differences become starker still. The primary role of a judge is to render Halachically pure decisions while the role of the king was to determine alternative regimens of sanctions. What would happen if, for example, a murderer roamed the streets at night, killing people without two witnesses to the crime. Judges would be powerless to try him, while the king would be able to take care of the problem with his extra-legal powers.

The kings of Israel, like the judges before them, came as Heads of State, to unite all your national forces for the well-being of your State.

And yet, in the book of Shmuel, the people are criticized for wanting a king:

Shmuel Chap 8: (4) Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel to Ramah. (5) And said to him, Behold, you are old, and your sons walk not in your ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. (6) But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel said to them, Who shall reign over you? (7) And they said to Samuel, Give us a king to reign over us. Then said Samuel to the men of Israel, ...
G-d clearly disapproved of the Jewish people's request and told Shmuel to try and scare them off by telling them of the vast powers of the king. The people, however, remained adamant, and Shaul was appointed as king. Some commentators say that the problem was their desire to normalize their existence: *Give us a king, like all the other nations.* They wanted primarily a military figure, someone who was more general than sage, more fighter than a moral and spiritual figure. Rather than see the king as a way of getting closer to G-d and serving Him better, they saw the Kind as an opportunity to dilute the incessant rebuke of Shmuel with a milder authority. Hence, it says  - give the king over to us, as if to say controlled by our agenda rather than - place the king over us. Other suggestions are also made.

All these lessons are valuable for understanding what a true king is supposed to be, i.e. an aid to demanding more of ourselves as individuals and as the nation, not a way of making life easier. The Sages even encouraged us to see non-Jewish kings in a way of making life easier. The Sages even encouraged us to see non-Jewish kings in

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2. Smoälau 2: (1) Amram Shmuel authored the entire book of Deuteronomy, and only the last paragraph is attributed to Shmuel's son, Yaakov. It refers to Shmuel's son's death and the appointment of Shaul as king.
3. Smoälau 2: (2) Shmuel's son, Yaakov, authored the entire book of Deuteronomy. This is the view that many Rabbis hold.
4. Smoälau 2: (3) Shmuel authored the entire book of Deuteronomy. This is the view that some Rabbis hold.
5. Smoälau 2: (4) Shmuel authored the entire book of Deuteronomy. This is the view that some Rabbis hold.

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"The king is a means to an end. He is a means to an end of our existence, not an end in itself. He is a means to an end of our existence, not an end in itself. He is a means to an end of our existence, not an end in itself. He is a means to an end of our existence, not an end in itself. He is a means to an end of our existence, not an end in itself."
order to better contrast pure temporal power with the Jewish idea of a king.  

Firstly, we see that the stress is on a king acting as a conduit for Torah law, and not as an independent authority. To stress this, he is expected to carry around a Sefer Torah wherever he goes. The king must painstakingly write this Sefer Torah himself, and copy it from the Sanhedrin. We require a special verse to tell us that he is exempt from taking the Sefer Torah into the shower and the bathroom with him! The logic is that the king should see every moment of his life through Torah eyes. All of this is a reminder that although the king rules, he is first and foremost ruled by G-d through His Torah. Tosafos points out how starkly the king was reminded of this when he was asked, as happened once to King Yanai, to stand in front of the Sagely judges when giving evidence.

Secondly, a king's powers are significantly counter-balanced by the Sages of the Sanhedrin, who, in the words of Rabbi Herzog, constitute the Parliament and the Senate all in one. In fact, a king is dependent on both the Sanhedrin and the leading prophet to appoint him to begin with. Thus, Shaul was appointed by Shmuel and his court.

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1. (But, does not our Parsha say that the Jews should appoint a king - why is it added here?)
2. Ramban says that our pasuk is just making a prediction of the inappropriate request that the Jewish people were destined to make.
3. Reminded of this when he was asked, as happened once to King Yanai, to stand in front of the Sagely judges when giving evidence.
4. Secondly, a king's powers are significantly counter-balanced by the Sages of the Sanhedrin.
5. We require a special verse to tell us that he is exempt from taking the Sefer Torah into the shower and the bathroom with him.
6. All of this is a reminder that although the king rules, he is first and foremost ruled by G-d through His Torah.
7. Thus, Shaul was appointed by Shmuel and his court.
8. In fact, a king is dependent on both the Sanhedrin and the leading prophet to appoint him to begin with.
9. Thus, Shaul was appointed by Shmuel and his court.
A king is all-powerful, for he is there to redress temporary moral imbalances which may occur in society and to break the back of mafias or any other emerging evil. Although he has no power in monetary cases, he could order the death sentence based on looser standards of evidence than an ordinary court could. He could appropriate lands for the state, especially during war, decree taxes and issue military call ups wherever needed. He could exact free labor for public works projects.

Disrespect to the king incurred a death sentence. Yet, despite this, a person could safely defy the orders of the king if he was busy doing a Mitzvah instead. The Chinuch points out that the concentration of these powers in the hands of one

Beis Din. (Rabbi Herzog adds that today, lacking the Sanhedrin and prophets, we should only appoint a position of President, and then only for a limited period of time.) A king, in turn, is expected to follow laws of the highest moral standards. Should a king act inappropriately, he is hauled in front of the court of law like any other citizen (though for a time the corruption of the Kings of Yehudah limited the application of this law).

In some respects a king is all-powerful, for he is there to redress temporary moral imbalances which may occur in society and to break the back of mafias or any other emerging evil. Although he has no power in monetary cases, he could order the death sentence based on looser standards of evidence than an ordinary court could. He could appropriate lands for the state, especially during war, decree taxes and issue military call ups wherever needed. He could exact free labor for public works projects.

Disrespect to the king incurred a death sentence. Yet, despite this, a person could safely defy the orders of the king if he was busy doing a Mitzvah instead. The Chinuch points out that the concentration of these powers in the hands of one
individual, given the checks and balances described above, was a great unifying element in society. This was dependent on the king's loving all Jews, and was a condition of his appointment in the first place. In fact, Dovid HaMelech was chosen in part because he showed such care and mercy to his sheep, revealing his deep concern for all of G-d’s creatures.

There is no one who seems to have more power in the Jewish People, yet there is no other whose choice is more limited. A king’s heart is guided by G-d Himself.

There was an additional check on a king's power. A candidate for king who did not clearly fear G-d was nixed by the Rabbis. And, once a King was appointed, there were many rules that helped him maintain his Yiras Shamayim and humility. For example, a king was not allowed to have any horses beyond fully justifiable military needs. Nor was he allowed to accumulate any wealth beyond what was needed for the public need and the maintenance of the military. Any personal wealth was likely to lead the king to a lauding it over others and away from feeling close to G-d Himself.

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sometimes even seen as a weakness. In fact, although the public honor of the king has
to be maintained, in private he is encouraged to stand before the High Priest, to honor
Talmidei Chachamim, and place them in honored positions next to him. Yehoshafat,
King of Yehudah, would get up for Talmidei Chachamim, kiss them and call them,“My rabbi, my teacher”.

G-d assures any King who is tempted to take personal advantage of his rule
that his rule, if not his life, will be short. Shaul failed to listen to the prophetic
instruction to kill Agag and all the cattle, and he was immediately told by Shmuel that
his rule would end.

A person who would see a Jewish King would pronounce the blessing -
ברוך ליראיו מכבודו שלו – blessed is He who wo shared of His Glory with those who fear
Him. The king was but a way for us to understand and appreciate G-d better. The
Messianic Era will again bring back this noble idea to the Jewish people. Mashiach
himself will be the king of Israel, and at that time we will all know that the real King
is G-d Himself.
4. War

SUMMARY:

The natural state of humankind is a state of dispute. This is a world of separate identities, where truth and the commitment to truth are not strong enough to overcome the unique perspectives and inclinations which each of us brings to different situations. Were it not for G-d Himself the world would lack any semblance of unity.

War is extreme machlokes, group machlokes, organized on tribal, national or religious lines. Wars are sometimes a necessary evil, but more often they are pure evil. Just because of this we cannot initiate a war unless it is Divinely Sanctioned through the Urim VeTumim. The Urim VeTumim, representing justice, was used to drive home the point that during war we are being judged. We are in moral danger just as we are in physical danger. In fact, the two are intertwined.

Judaism distinguishes between different types of wars – and the distinctions are crucial. In the broadest terms, there is Milchemes Mitzvah and Milchemes Reshus. The difference influences both the nature of the call up and the exemptions as well as how the enemy is to be treated.

The Rambam defines three types of Milchemes Mitzvah: The war against the Seven Canaanite Nations, the war against Amalek and a defensive war. But the scope and glory of Judaism is that it defines every scenario – pre-emptive strikes, war of territorial aggrandizement, etc. War is a great leveler of distinctions. “War is war” they say. To this Judaism responds with a resounding “no”. The details, and the distinctions are crucial.

The subject and laws of war are so intricate, because they really reflect a kind of microcosm of all of human endeavor, under much more intense conditions. The lessons from these laws apply to all the other “wars” – the disputes and interpersonal conflicts - we wage. Ultimately,战争 is the “battle” our evil inclinations – a very private form of war with oneself and one’s baser instincts.

The Torah is a book of peace, not war. It is the same Judaism which tells us that Shaul HaMelech’s mercy was misplaced when he saved Agag which instructs us to end every Shemoneh Esreh with a brocha about peace, every Kadish with the words Oseh Shalom, every benching to include the same blessings of peace. It was in reward for his pursuit of peace that Aharon was awarded the כהונה for all generations. The Torah is called peace as it states “It’s ways are pleasant ways and all its paths are peace.” And Shalom is one of G-d’s names.

Peace between us and Shamayim is of transcendent value to peace between us and our fellow man and this sometimes requires that we fight for truth.

Pinchas was a classic example of this. At first the people were convinced that this barbaric person must have been a bastard of some sort, and even the Beis Din had decided to excommunicate him. G-d Himself had to intervene and tell us just how badly mistaken we all were. Pinchas, it turns out, had saved the whole nation. He had brought peace between the Almighty and His people.

Defining and achieving peace can be awfully complex. Shaul HaMelech’s saving of Agag shows us that a false peace will lead simply to more suffering and destruction later on. Pinchas’s act of “murder” demonstrates that sometimes the road to peace is through war.
And so the Jews go to every war calling for peace. Peace, flee or war. “Peace” is the ultimatum demanding that the opposing nation abide the Seven Noachide Mitzvos and agree to a role of public service and tributary taxation and public works as commanded by the king. The Jews are warned against any trickery – once a deal has been reached it would be a Chillul HaShem to breach it.

We make this deal even with people whose moral perversity has permeated their entire society, people whose degradation has totally dehumanized them. We do this not because they deserve peace, but rather because we need to reinforce our own moral sensitivity to such a precise degree. At a time like this, despite the need to focus on preparing for a fearless fight, perhaps even death, we challenge and expand our mercy and reach out. And we benefit, are the better for it, even more than the enemy.

Military exemptions from the Jewish army begin first and foremost with those lacking faith and who are therefore frightened, and those who have not been scrupulously observant of all the מצוות effectively turning the Jewish army into a volunteer citizens' army. The exemptions continue with those who are in their first year of marriage, for we need to remind ourselves that it is just for those family units, and the privilege of building future generations that we have turned ourselves into unmerciful fighters in the first place. Those who had just bought a house or planted a vineyard – those who are building up the infrastructure of the nation – are similarly exempted. All these exemptions require faith on our part that although each and every fighting soldier counts, our trust in G-d, expressed by doing the right thing, counts far more.

After all this, victory is not assured. We have to do our bit – G-d will do His. Victory is His business, not ours.

Overseeing these exemptions, and providing the send-off speech, is no general or politician – the vice chief-Cohen himself was entrusted with this job. Moreover, he was to speak in Hebrew, in the very words provided by the Torah – for only the precision, down to the very words of the Torah can protect us at a time like this.

We are told at the outset - - not to act overly hastily, despite the need to be decisive and innovative.

And so, having sent anyone fearsome or tainted by sin or newly married (etc.) home, and making it known that the Cohanim and the Leviim will not be able to touch so much as a cent’s worth of the spoils of war, this army of the righteous was ready to go out on its way. Finally, they can get down to maneuver drills and war plans. But no! There is yet another prerequisite command: רע דבר ירך אל do not weaken your resolve - - רע דבר ירך and do the wrong thing once the enemy falls into your hands. And so, the Jewish army exits with the Aron in their midst, a constant reminder to maintain their standards.

Should the enemy choose to fight, the next phase of the laws of war kick in.

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Regarding the treatment of the enemy we are also told: If your enemy is hungry give him bread to eat and if he is thirsty give him water to drink (משלי: כה: כא). Many of these laws or every more pertinent in our times. We have seen the horrors of a century of war – and we are grateful for G-d’s Divine code.
DETAIL:

The subject and laws of war are so intricate because they reflect a kind of microcosm of all of human endeavor under much more intense conditions. So too, many of the lessons from these laws and directives apply not only directly to the conditions of and during the state of war, but also serve as a guide in our other relationships and circumstances – the other “wars” we wage.

As much as we work to avoid it, war is a fact of life. Since World War II, when we supposedly set up mechanisms to avoid war, there were an average of 15 conflicts at any one time, each causing 2000 deaths or more per year. As a nation, we Jews are much more familiar with war than we would like. We have, in recent and distant history, fought many wars as well as suffered the myriad effects of wars fought by our galus host nations.

“War” in the Jewish perspective is much more than just an issue of conflicting nations engaging in battle. We Jews “battle” our evil inclinations, a very private form of war within oneself and one’s baser instincts. War can also refer to “machlokes,” some of which is productive and legitimate, as when in the realm of differing opinions in Halacha, Hashkafah and Torah thought, and some of which is negative and destructive. There is also Kana’us, the selfless and decisive, even harsh and uncompromising, defense of G-d’s Glory and His Torah.

Any discussion of the Torah approach to war must start with the mention of Peace. Only when one understands how fundamental and central the ethic of peace is to Judaism can one begin to comprehend and integrate the Torah concept of war. Olam HaZeh is comprised of much evil that sometimes demands doing battle – unforgiving, decisive, even merciless battle. The same Judaism which tells us that Shaul HaMelech’s mercy was misplaced when he saved Agag instructs us to end every Shemoneh Esreih with a brocha about peace, every Kaddish with the words Oseh Shalom, and every benching with the same blessings of peace.

- Let us take a look:
  1) Initiating and bringing peace and harmony between man and his fellow man is one of the few mitzvos with clearly promised benefits in this world and in Olam Haba.
  2) As a reward for his תורנות and actively pursuing and ensuring peace, Aharon HaCohen was awarded the כהונה for all generations. This was the loftiest and holiest position in כלל ישראל, and included the honor of ‘direct communication’ in the Kodesh KaDashim on behalf of the entire nation.
  3) One may even lie (in certain circumstances) to preserve the peace.
  4) Peace is priceless, for HaSh-m’s Name is Shalom.
  5) Hash-m chose peace as the ultimate blessing for כלל ישראל.
  6) The Holy Torah was given to mankind in order to establish peace. The Torah is called peace as it states, “Its ways are pleasant ways and all its paths are peace.”

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1 פסah: א:8
2 הבמות: ב:1
3 בדנבר רבר א:17
4 שופטים: ג:4, ויקרא פי:ט. תורת חכמיםسفרא בוקרי
5 תורםו א: תمام צ:7
6 לארון: ג:8. תורת חכמיםسفרא בוקרי
7) All that is recorded in the Torah is written for the sake of peace, and although warfare is recorded in the Torah, even warfare is recorded for the sake of peace.2

Peace itself has no easy definition. The Parsha of Pinchas is a clear example where the immediate human perception of the best way to attain peace is not necessarily effective or correct. Even though Pinchas killed the leader of a Tribe, he is considered to have brought Shalom into the world3. This, says Rav Yaakov Etlinger4, is the Shalom between man and his Creator5. There are many situations where Torah principles require a stand against anti-Torah positions. But, says Rav Etlinger, this is because ultimately, peace between us and Shamayim is of transcendent value to peace between us and our fellow man.

Pinchas’s actions were not immediately welcomed as heroic, and indeed, it had to be that way. There was a strong move to lynch him afterwards6. The people were convinced that this barbaric person must have been a bastard of some sort7, and even the Beis Din had decided to excommunicate him8. G-d Himself had to intervene and tell us just how badly mistaken we all were9. Pinchas, it turns out, had saved the whole nation. He had brought peace between the Almighty and His people10.

From Pinchas’s exceptional example of achieving the ultimate Shalom between HaSh-m and the Jewish nation we can internalize that Shalom must be the ultimate vision we aspire to. Each Jew is urged to emulate and acquire his/her own personal level of the exalted title of the ברית שלום. However, we also learn just how complex defining and achieving peace is. Shaul HaMelech’s saving of Agag showed us that a false peace will simply lead to more suffering and destruction later on. Pinchas’s act of “murder” demonstrated that sometimes the road to peace is through war.

The first stage of war is to call for peace.
At this stage, peace does not mean a mutual treaty. As with Iraq, ‘peace’ really meant an ultimatum set by the more powerful of the two sides, which, if met, avoided the need for military confrontation. What is astonishing is that the Jews set an ultimatum offering peace for set conditions despite being the weaker nation, per HaSh-m’s directive. Peace, flee or war. “Peace” is the ultimatum demanding that the opposing nation abide by the Seven Noachide Mitzvos and accept a role of servitude, tributary taxation and public works as commanded by the king². (Servitude does not mean slavery –but it does deny the accepting nation any office or position of authority over the Jews.) The Jews are warned against any trickery, as once a deal has been reached it would be a Chillul HaSh-m to breach it³.

We are commanded to extend a peaceful alternative to our enemies. Look at what kind of people and nations we may be making this deal with, urges the Chinuch: idol worshipers – the scum of the earth, or people whose moral perversity has permeated their entire society, people whose degradation has totally dehumanized them. We do this, says the Chinuch, not because they deserve peace, but rather because we need to reinforce our own moral sensitivity to such a precise degree. At a time like this, despite the need to focus on preparing for a fearless fight, perhaps even death, we challenge and expand our mercy and reach out. And we benefit, are the better for it, even more than the enemy. “I can forgive the Arabs for killing my people,” Golda Meir famously said. “But I cannot forgive the Arabs for turning my children into killers.”

War – The Most Normal Abnormal Condition of Man

At the beginning of Parshas Korach, the Sefas Emes says that the natural state of humankind is a state of Machlokes. Left to their own natural devices, two people are more likely to disagree with each other than to agree. This is a world of separate identities, where truth and the commitment to truth are not strong enough to overcome the unique perspectives and inclinations which each of us brings to different situations. Were it not for G-d Himself, says the Malbim, the world would lack any semblance of unity⁴.

War is extreme machlokes, group machlokes, organized on tribal, national or religious lines. Wars are sometimes a necessary evil, but more often they are pure evil. Over 100 million people were killed in wars in the 20th Century alone. How many of these victims died for a just cause?

War is something so devastating that we cannot initiate a war (Milchemes Reshus) unless it is Divinely Sanctioned through the Urim VeTumim⁵. (Besides the

1 יונתן מגדת תפכד
2 דניאל, חק מוכלין פיר עליה א
3 דניאל שם פיב
4 ירמיש פונטס פסקים ב
5 סנהדרין, פ מיב

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Urim VeTumim, war required consensus from the regular legal, legislative framework, the Sanhedrin, and the special legislative framework, the King.

The Cohen Gadol had to put on all eight garments and ask G-d (through the Urim VeTumim) whether war was permitted. This was one of only four things for which the Urim VeTumim was consulted. All four related to the Holy Land (Milchemes Reshus was to expand the borders of Israel), and all four related to the nation as a whole. All, together with Milchemes Reshus, involved a breaking of barriers of some sort and the need to establish new ones. When man breaks his barriers, he is in danger and in need of Divine guidance.

Indeed, the Urim VeTumim, representing justice, were used to drive home the point that during war we are being judged. We are in moral danger just as we are in physical danger. In fact, the two are intertwined. The pasuk states:

On which the Yerushalmi comments:

It is in this context that the Torah, Talmud and codifiers bring down a phenomenal and brilliant set of laws, laws that anticipate and prevent much of the horrors of war.

**Different Types of Wars**

Judaism distinguishes between different types of wars, and the distinctions are crucial. In the broadest terms, there is Milchemes Mitzvah and Milchemes Reshus. The difference influences both the nature of the call-up and the exemptions, as well as how the enemy is to be treated. In both cases, we must call to our enemies in peace. However, should they turn down the offer, the Torah demands that we be more ruthless with those enemies who fall under the category of Milchemes Mitzvah.

Milchemes Mitzvah, potentially further divided between Mitzvah and Chovah, seems to have no exemptions, not even females:

Milchemes Chova is already commanded by the Torah.

The other three were: 1 - The division of the land for the Tribes, 2 - Adding onto Jerusalem and 3 - Adding onto the Azaros.
Most meforshim understand this literally, although the Radvaz does not. According to the Radvaz’s understanding, this means ‘as the bath will be called up, the κλέφει will no longer have her Chupah’. Furthermore, he states, females are not called up to war but perhaps they serve the kind of backup roles involving food supply and the like.

The Rambam defines three types of Milchomes Mitzvah: the war against the Seven Canaanite Nations, the war against Amalek and a defensive war. The scope and glory of Judaism is that it defines every scenario – pre-emptive strikes, war of territorial aggrandizement, etc. War is a great leveler of distinctions. “War is war,” they say. To this, Judaism responds with a resounding “no”. The details and the distinctions are crucial.

Exemptions

Military exemptions from the Jewish army begin first and foremost with those who lack faith and are therefore frightened of going to war, effectively turning the Jewish army into a volunteer citizens’ army. The exemptions continue with those who are in their first year of marriage, for we need to remind ourselves that it is just for those family units and the privilege of building future generations that we have turned ourselves into unmerciful fighters in the first place. Those who had just bought a house or planted a vineyard – those who are building up the infrastructure of the nation, are similarly exempted. Incredibly, one opinion in the Gemorah regards the purpose of these

1. The verb נדדה (nadda) has a feminine form, suggesting a verb meaning "to turn herself around".
2. The expression כשל工程机械 (keshel erchomekham) means "to be afraid of mechanical equipment".
3. The term שער מיור (shir meyir) refers to the gates of the city.
4. The verse הפסוק (haposuke) is referring to the time of the War of Amalek.
5. The word גלילי (galilei) is used here to denote a surname.
6. The expression לעימורılır (laimurilir) means "to be publicly made known".
7. The phrase יוסי הוא בניך (yosi ein binc) is a biblical expression signifying a son.
8. The term יסוד (isod) is used to denote the foundation of a house.
9. The expression הפסוד (haposed) refers to the act of setting aside or making something invalid.
10. The word סופר (supar) signifies a commissioner or appointed person.
other exemptions to provide cover to those who have sinned and need to get home without embarrassment. Either way, all these exemptions require faith on our part that although each and every fighting soldier counts, our trust in G-d, expressed by doing the right thing, counts far more. And when, says the Abarbanel, one would see the faith of the Jewish leadership to send all these potential soldiers home and still march confidently into battle, this would further inspire all the remaining soldiers to recognize that G-d really would be with His people. (In addition, these exempt soldiers presented the secondary benefit of providing a home guard to protect the cities.)

Following these directives may seem to promise the guarantee of victory. However, as in every aspect of our relationship with HaSh-m, the Results Department is not in our control. In fact, the Meforshim discuss the Bitachon quotient when things look hopeless. We have to do our bit, and G-d will do His. Victory is His business, not ours. We represent Him, and our lack of fear shows not human bravado but rather deep faith. Therein lies a great Kiddush HaShem.

Overseeing these exemptions and providing the send-off speech is no general or politician, but rather the vice chief-Cohen himself was entrusted with this job. Moreover, he was to speak in Hebrew, in the very words provided by the Torah, for only precision, down to the very words of the Torah, can protect us at a time like this.

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1 Rav Shimshon Rephael Hirsch
The Ethics of Fighting War

We are told at the outset,:

which the HaEmek Davar understands as an injunction not to act overly hastily despite the need to be decisive and innovative.

And so, having sent home anyone fearsome, tainted by sin, newly married, etc., and making it known that the Cohanim and the Leviim will not be able to touch so much as a cent’s worth of the spoils of war, this army of the righteous was ready to go out on its way. Finally, they can get down to maneuvering drills and war plans. But no! There is yet another prerequisite command:

In fact, HaEmek Davar understands the words:

to be an exhortation not to do the wrong thing once the enemy falls into the hands of the Jews. The final speech of the Cohen, says the HaEmek Davar, is to warn and encourage the soldiers that they are going out with the Aron in their midst and they must maintain their standards.

Should the enemy choose to fight, the next phase of the laws of war kicks in. The Jewish army marches into battle warned against any unnecessary damage to the environment. Not a single fruit tree is to be unnecessarily uprooted, and certainly no scorched earth policy is to be tolerated. Furthermore, one of the most striking ‘humanitarian’ laws we are commanded in is the prohibition of besieging the enemy cities on all four sides. We are told, amazingly, to leave one side of the city open. According to some authorities, this is the equivalent of forbidding

1 יתנוו´ מצוה´ תקח´树立 dictum: милוי: לאו´ יתנוו´ מלחמי´ כלים: בביתו´ סופרים(:</p>

2 בכר´ שפיכון´ דומיו´ וויתון´ הקיבורית`</p>

3 רמבי´ (השוואות´ הלוי´ א´) לאו´ מלחמי´ החרמון`</p>

4 יתנוו´ מצוה´ תקח´树立 dictum: מביר´ א´ סופרים(:</p>

5 מפריז´ על´ ט nhị´ און´ הרמחון´ שמח´ יבר´ היך´ ימוי´ וויתון´ ביתו´ סופרים(:</p>

6 רמבי´, חל` החרמון פיז´:</p>
attacks on civilians. However, anyone who does not flee the attacked city can be considered a combatant.

Regarding the treatment of the enemy we are also told: *If your enemy is hungry give him bread to eat and if he is thirsty give him water to drink.*

## The Jewish Soldier at War Today

Once Sancheriv mixed up the nations, Milchemes Mitzvah no longer applies, as it relates to attacking specific nations. However, wars of self-defense do apply, and, according to the Rabham, fall into this category. Additionally, the principle of "HaBah LeHargecha Hashkem LeHorgo" – If someone seeks to kill you, kill him first, applies as a national as well as an individual imperative, applicable to Jews and non-Jews alike. The laws of saving a life, "Rodef", apply as well, though in the case of national danger, war requires endangering and giving one's life, which saving a life, Haba LeHorgecha, and Rodef do not necessarily demand.

Jewish participation in a war between non-Jewish nations is a complex issue. Many authorities forbid Jewish voluntary enlistment. On the other hand, R. Meir Eisenstadt surprisingly permits voluntary enlistment despite the dangers involved, and the Mishnah Berurah states that Jews must allow themselves to be conscripted in

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1. משלי: כחא
2. Sanhedrin 72A
3. גויים
4. ר"ע ר"ז ויקרא: טז – רעך דם על תעמוד לא על עובר
5. While it is clear that one may not sacrifice his life to save the life of another, there is some debate if there is an obligation to save lives when it will endanger the bystander. The Hagahot Maimoni (Rotzeach 1:14) is of the opinion that it is obligatory for the bystander to place himself in uncertain danger in order to save the victim from certain danger. Others argue that it is forbidden to do so, and that the principle of "your life comes first" applies to uncertain danger as well (Radvaz in Pitchei Teshuva YD 157:15). Based on this opinion, some authorities forbid a donor from giving a kidney to a dying patient if it will place the donor in some danger (Tzitz Eliezer 13:101; Minchat Yitzchak 6:103). Rabbi Moshe Feinstein takes a middle point of view. It is not obligatory to place oneself in a situation of questionable danger to save another person's life; However, one may choose to take this risk in order to save a life. Therefore, he rules that it is permitted to donate kidneys even if there is some danger to the donor. (YD 2:174)

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6. ע"ז תוספות ע"א, וחלק סופר חתך ע"א
7. אש אמרי תשובות, ע"א, ו"א אמה יורה דעה ס"נ
8. סכמט: יט

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accordance with the “law of the land.” The reason given is that failure to do so will enrage the citizenry and may result in the loss of Jewish life. Although the Mishnah Brurah does not discuss the legitimacy of war on the part of non-Jews, he permits Jews to participate simply as a matter of pikuach nefesh.
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