

# TORAH L'ISRAEL

# TORAH L'ISRAEL

STATE • SOCIETY • GEULAT ISRAEL

Selected teachings of Reb Chaim Zimmerman שליט"א

by

MORDECAI ALEXANDER

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## PREFACE

The first volume of *Torah L'Israel* is devoted to the teachings of Reb Chaim Zimmerman on the subjects of State, Society, and *Atchalta d'geula*—the redemption of Israel in our day. This portion of *Torah L'Israel* in English (adapted from the Hebrew text) was compiled to provide the English-speaking Torah world with a valuable text of lectures and conceptions on the most urgent topics of today: the genuine Torah viewpoint on the state of Israel, the modern Jewish nation, the modern ingathering of the exiles, and the preparation for the coming of the Moshiach.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to the editor and publisher of the *Jewish Press*; the profound scholar, author, and great *talmid chochem*, Rabbi Sholom Klass, who most graciously published my series of articles based on the lectures of Reb Chaim shlit"va over the past five years, which formed the basis of the English section of this work. I also wish to thank the *Jewish Press* associate editor, Rabbi Chaim U. Lipschitz, for his kind assistance which helped make possible the publication of my articles. And special thanks to the managing-director and editorial-writer of the *Israel Jewish Press* office, Yehuda Schwartz, and his wife Naomi, for their help and encouragement in this publication.

I wish to emphasize to the reader that this English portion of *Torah L'Israel* is adapted freely from the Hebrew text rather than exactly translated. By comparing parallel Hebrew and English chapters, the reader may find various ideas and concepts in the English text which either differ from or do not appear at all in the Hebrew text. Several portions and one complete chapter are entirely my original discourse and

erudition, according to my personal conceptions, and I omitted altogether certain paragraphs and chapters from the Hebrew text, because of enormous difficulties in adapting specific deep and profound concepts into the English language. In order to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion, the entire English text should be read as my own limited adaptation of Reb Chaim's lectures, and not as an exact translation. The purpose of this text is to provide the reader with an introduction to Reb Chaim's lectures, similar to the series of articles that appeared in the *Jewish Press*....

The first chapter, "The Three Divine Oaths," was originally published in the *Yiddish Morning Journal* (New York), on June 2, 1967, on the eve of the Six-Day War.

"The Last Divine Oath", "The Soldier of Israel", "Nations United against Israel," "The New Jerusalem," and "Mida K'neged Mida," were adapted from taped lectures of Reb Chaim, portions of which appear in the Hebrew text.

"Reason and Torah" is a partial synopsis of a manuscript now ready for publication, portions of which also appear in the Hebrew text.

"Man and Israel in Torah" is a synopsis of one chapter of *Medinat Israel*, another manuscript soon to be published, also found in the Hebrew text.

In conclusion, it is advisable to bear in mind that many of the concepts and teachings of Reb Chaim shlit" published in this book should be studied in much greater depth and breadth, in order to fully understand these most important problems of the nation of Israel and their solutions from the genuine Torah viewpoint and Halachic decisions.

## THE THREE DIVINE OATHS

The Ramban, in his critique of the Rambam's *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Mitzva 4, writes, "...that we are commanded to inherit (lareshet) the land that G-d gave to the children of Israel... and not abandon it to any other nations or to desolation, as the Torah says, 'And you shall inherit the Land, and dwell therein.'"

The word "yerusha," according to the Ramban, means conquest—we are commanded to conquer the land, and this is a compulsory war, which is binding even today, as it is in each generation. The word "yeshiva" means actually living in Eretz Israel. The Sages were meticulous to clarify the importance of this commandment, and specified didactically that the conquest and settlement of Eretz Israel is a positive commandment for all generations, even in the exile.

However, Rabbi Yitzchak de Leon, in his commentary *Megilat Esther*, raised a substantial question against the Ramban. According to the Gemara (*Ketuvot* 111a), G-d bound the Jewish nation to three oaths: first, that Israel should not rebel against the nations of the world; second, that they refrain from conquering Eretz Israel by force from foreign rule—thereby in effect forestalling any conquest of Israel until the coming of the Moshiach.\* As far as the Torah's command to settle in Eretz Israel, Rabbi Yitzchak de Leon consigns this mitzva to apply only when the Temple was standing; thus today there is no compulsory mitzva to settle in the Land of Israel.

\* The third oath is discussed in the following chapter.



Therefore, the modern State of Israel; its origin, birth, and development, appears to be in conflict with Halachic legitimacy, except according to the Ramban—whose opinion is apparently contradicted by the Gemara.

In order to understand the opinion of the Ramban, and reconcile it with the Gemara in Ketuvot, it is necessary to establish several introductory points:

A. The Torah was given and written in the language of man, i.e., a common, clearly understood choice of words which are synonymous with the speech and thought of the human being. Thus, before a mitzva was actually given, it was necessary for the Torah to write the mitzva's preliminary procedure, i.e., how to carry out the performance of the mitzva, and afterwards the command to do the mitzva was given. This preliminary procedure and preparation for a mitzva is called in the Talmud a "hechsher mitzva". For example: the writing of the parchments of the tefillin, the manufacture of their boxes and straps; their dimensions, color and assembly, all are called "hechsher mitzva" (see *Rashi* Shabbat 14a)—whereas only the actual act of putting on the tefillin is referred to as the fulfilling of the mitzva. Elementary logic dictates that before commanding us to put on the tefillin (the mitzva), the Torah must first tell us how to make the tefillin (hechsher mitzva).

What is the difference between a mitzva and hechsher mitzva? The mitzva is a constant, whose fulfillment cannot be circumvented; a hechsher mitzva is only mandatory when necessary to enable fulfillment of the mitzva proper. A man must put on tefillin every day (the mitzva), but he does not have to manufacture them (hechsher mitzva); in other words, if he already owns tefillin, he does not have an obligation to manufacture an additional set of tefillin. On the contrary, after a man has put on tefillin each day, he has fulfilled the complete commandment of tefillin; while a scribe, who

writes parchments of tefillin each day, does not fulfill the mitzva of tefillin in this way. The reason that the Torah wrote, "and you shall *write* them (tefillin) for a sign upon your arms and phylacteries between your eyes" was for a pedagogic intent—to instruct the Jew how to write and manufacture the tefillin before he puts them on. The mitzva of the Torah was only to wear tefillin; writing, the *hechsher* mitzva, is only the means to enable fulfillment of the mitzva, that of putting on the tefillin.

1. "You shall make tzitzit on the corners of your garments"; making the tzitzit is only a *hechsher* mitzva, for the mitzva proper is wearing the garment with tzitzit. Therefore, we do not recite a blessing when we make or tie the tzitzit, but only when we put on the fringed garment.

2. "The feast of Sukkot you shall make"; building a sukka is only a *hechsher* mitzva, for the mitzva proper is sitting in the sukka. Therefore, no blessing is recited over the building of the sukka, but only when we sit in it during Yom Tov.

3. "Som tasim alecha melech—You shall appoint a king over you." The mitzva is not to appoint or elect the king, but that there should be a king. The appointing is a *hechsher* mitzva and not a mitzva in itself.

4. "On the first day you shall destroy the leaven from your houses." It is not necessary to acquire chametz (leaven) and then destroy it, but rather the intention of the Torah is that there should be no chametz. Destroying the chametz is a *hechsher* mitzva, so that the mitzva proper, not possessing leaven, can be fulfilled.

This concept explains many subjects throughout the Torah, and answers many other difficult problems in the Talmud.

B. Many times the Torah uses the terms "yerusha" and "yeshiva"—the sages of the Talmud explained that yerusha is conquest and yeshiva means settling and living in Eretz Israel. However, yerusha is a *hechsher mitzva*, while the mitzva proper is settlement in the land. The style of the Torah is to write the *hechsher mitzva*, as well as the mitzva.

The Rashbam (chap. 1-3) elaborates, quoting the Ramban and the Tashbatz, that "aliyah" to Eretz Israel is a *hechsher mitzva*, whereas living in the land is the mitzva proper. Rabbi Avraham Sochochover, in the *Avnei Nezer* (Ch. 454, Par. 3), quotes the Tashbatz, and adds the following:

"The question is raised by the Megilat Esther, why emigrating from Babylon to Eretz Israel is prohibited by the Gemara (*Haoleh meBavel leEretz Israel over beaseh*), for the prophet cannot introduce any new laws. The answer is that aliyah is only a *hechsher mitzva*, while living in Eretz Israel is the mitzva proper. Thus an oath made by a man not to move to Israel is not considered "nishba levatel et hamitzvot," because aliyah is only the *hechsher mitzva*. The prophet was able to prohibit aliyah from Bavel to Eretz Israel because yerusha and yeshiva are not two parts of one mitzva.

C. The Sages usually refer to "aliyah" as travelling from the Diaspora to Eretz Israel, and "yerida" as travelling from Eretz Israel to the Diaspora.

One specific example is found in the first Mishna in the last chapter of Kiddushin, "Asara yuchasin alu meBavel." The Gemara asks, "Why does the Mishna say 'Alu meBavel' rather than 'went to Eretz Israel'?" The Gemara's answer: "to inform us incidentally that the Temple is the highest place in Eretz Israel, and that Eretz Israel is the highest place in the world." Through the Mishna the Gemara learns that going from the Diaspora to Israel is called "aliyah."

Now it is possible to answer the question of the Megilat Esther on the Ramban, regarding the three divine oaths. If

“aliyah” means from the Diaspora to Eretz Israel, then clearly the prohibition “shelo yaalu bechoma”—not to conquer Israel through “aliyah”—only applies if the Jews invade Israel from “chutz laaretz.” Gathering in the Diaspora and invasion of Eretz Israel is prohibited by the divine oath. However, the settlers already living in Eretz Israel are allowed to wage war from within Israel and conquer the land. The divine oath forbidding conquest of the land with force does not apply by definition to the settlers already living in Eretz Israel; they in turn *must* fulfill the commandment of “yeshiva,” and liberate Israel from foreign rule.

Therefore, the procedure for the liberation of Israel and its settlement must be reversed. First the individual settlers must come to Eretz Israel, with permission of the foreign rulers of Israel and the world. (The Ramban [Shir Hashirim 8:13] predicted that the Jews will reenter Eretz Israel with the permission of the rulers of the world and with their aid; his prediction was fulfilled when the United Nations voted in 1947 to give the Jews a homeland in Palestine). The settlers already in Israel, were never restricted by the oath and were always allowed to liberate the land in order to fulfill the mitzva of “yishuv Eretz Israel.”

The untold source of this explanation (that only inhabitants of the Diaspora are bound by the divine oath prohibiting conquest by force, and not the settlers in Eretz Israel) is found in the Zohar (Va’Arah 32:1): “the descendants of Ishmael (the Arabs) will eventually rule over the Holy Land, while it is void of inhabitants, for a long period of time. As long as it is without settlers, Ishmael will not relinquish control over the Land of Israel—until the children of Israel return to their land; only then will Ishmael lose his dominion over Eretz Israel.”

The “zechut” of Ishmael to rule Israel is only while the

land is empty of the Jewish people; even if the Jews gather in the Diaspora and invade Israel, they will not succeed. But when the land is first settled by Jews, then the liberation of the land will succeed, in fulfillment of the mitzva to settle Eretz Israel.

An additional proof is found in the Midrash (Shir Ha-Shirim 2:7): "Four divine oaths: G-d vowed that Israel should not rebel against the nations; nor hurry the redemption; nor reveal their mystery to the nations; nor conquer (yaalu) the land with force *from the Golah* (exile)."

The Midrash added the words "from the Golah," to the words of the Gemara, further indication that the "issur" not to conquer Eretz Israel with force applies only to the inhabitants of the Diaspora and not to those already in Eretz Israel.

As it has now been proven that the divine oath only applies to inhabitants of the Golah, the redemption of Israel and liberation of the land is possible without violating this oath. The normal process must be reversed; first the Jews must populate Israel, and then free it from foreign rule. Since conquest is only a *hechsher mitzva*, it can be performed after the mitzva (just as a *sukka* can be built during the holiday of Succot if the *sukka* fell down, or a pair of *tzitzit* can be made to replace frayed ones.) It is permissible, without violating the divine oath, to first settle Eretz Israel with permission from the nations of the world and the foreign rulers of Eretz Israel; afterwards, if necessary, the inhabitants may liberate the land by force.

This explains in full the Ramban's opinion that settlement of Eretz Israel applies even in this day. By reversing the order of the Torah, first *yeshiva* and then *yerusha*, the oath of G-d is not violated, as the history of the origin and birth of the State of Israel bear witness: because Israel was created exactly through this process; first *yeshiva* and afterwards

yerusha. In the Divine Plan for the rebirth of Israel, the order of "atchalta d'geula" clearly followed the rules of Torah and Halacha; first there was peaceful settlement with permission of the nations; only afterwards was the land conquered by war. The reverse order would have failed, as it would have violated the divine oath.

Throughout the Tanach the word "yerusha" is written before the word "yeshiva". One marvels, however, that King David wrote the following in Tehillim (chap. 69:36), "For G-d will save Zion, and rebuild the cities of Judah, and *they will live there (yeshiva) and inherit it (yerusha)!*" The Psalmist first writes yeshiva and then yerusha, which is found nowhere else in the Torah. This chapter of Tehillim describes the Exile, and concludes with the redemption from the Galut. King David foresaw prophetically that the order of "atchalta d'geula" would be reversed, so that the divine oath would not be violated. Elsewhere in the Torah the word yerusha is written prior to yeshiva; here, in the prophecy of the final redemption, the order is reversed.

The events surrounding the establishment of modern Israel happened precisely in the manner King David foresaw through prophecy. The arguments that the State of Israel cannot exist Halachically because of the divine oath are completely invalid; on the contrary, not only is the oath not violated, but the inhabitants already living in Eretz Israel are obliged to liberate the land as stated by the Ramban.

## THE LAST DIVINE OATH

The Gemara (Ketuvot 111a) states the following: "Three oaths G-d vowed with the Jewish people; (one) that Israel should not invade Eretz Israel with force; (two) that Israel should not rebel against the nations of the world; (three) that the nations of the world should not oppress Israel more than necessary... Rabbi Levi said, there are six divine oaths; these three; and (one) that they should not reveal the end (redemption); (two) that they should not postpone the redemption (through iniquities; *Rashi*); (three) that they should not reveal the *secret* to the nations." Rashi explains that the "secret" (*sod*) refers to either the secret of the calendar or the secret of the meaning of the mitzvot; Tosefot and the other Rishonim conclude that the "secret" means the secret of the calendar (*Sod Haibur*). In other words, the last oath forbids revealing to the nations the exact ways and means the Jewish calendar, leap years, and Rosh Chodesh are determined.

The Gaon, Rabbi Avraham Sochochover raises the question in his *Sefer Avnei Nezer*: what exactly is the meaning of a "divine oath"; especially, the last oath? What does it matter if we reveal to the nations the nature of the calendar and Rosh Chodesh (*Sod Haibur*)—if the *Sod Haibur* is indeed the calendar and the various calculations therein (as the Rambam explains), then what does it matter if the Goyim know about it; why is it necessary for G-d to enjoin its revelation with an oath?

"Remember for us the covenant, the mercy, and the oath which you vowed to Avraham Avinu on Mount Moriah"

(Rosh Hashana Prayers). In the creation of the world there are also these three attributes: "Olam chesed yibaneh"—"The world is built with *mercy*. "Without my covenant, day and night, the laws of heaven and earth would not exist"—the world is built with a *covenant*. What is an oath? It is necessary to explain what is this concept of a divine oath that is found throughout the Torah. Who is bound by such an oath, and how does an oath apply at all to G-d?



In the morning prayers, we say "Hamechadesh bechol yom tamid ma'seh berashit"—G-d renews every day, constantly, the act of creation. The question is asked, why does it not say "asher chidash"—G-d has renewed? The *Nefesh HaChaim*, the *Tanya*, and the *Maharal* give the following answer to this question.

The entire creation, should G-d take away his powers, would immediately revert to void and nothingness. In other words; the scientists believe that there are laws in the universe: mathematical laws; physics laws, chemical laws, and biological laws. For example, the law of gravity, which causes the stone to fall to the ground.

This is what the scientists say—but what does G-d say? G-d created the entire universe, the heaven, the earth, and all life therein. Just as all the physical creations that exist in the universe were created by G-d; by the same token, all the dynamic laws of the universe are creations of G-d. Even the laws of mathematics, axioms and rules of logic (a square is not a triangle; four is not three; two plus two equals four) are also creations of G-d. These rules were all created by G-d when he created the universe, and have not always existed. It is utterly false to assume that these rules always existed and will always exist, independent of the existence of the physical universe.

The ancient Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Plato, and



others, all believed that the fundamental laws of the universe are eternal, and cannot be changed. According to the Torah, there are no eternal rules or laws of the universe. These rules were created by G-d, and he could have created the world with different rules of logic, different systems of mathematics, and different laws of science.

Therefore, the scientists' theory—from the ancient Greeks to the modern materialists—that the rules and laws of nature are eternal and constant is untrue and false! G-d created everything, including the laws of nature and logic. This is the meaning of "Hamechadesh bechol yom tamid ma'seh berashit." Every second G-d gives his power to the universe; if G-d would remove his power from the universe, then it would become void. This is the explanation given by the *Nefesh HaChaim*, by Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin.

All of physics, modern mathematics, the laws of chance and probability prove this point explicitly. Modern mathematics has made obsolete all of the concepts that existed from ancient times until the past century. Until modern times, mathematicians believed that there were set laws and rules. Today scientists know that there are no rules at all—there is only probability; reasonable chance that certain phenomena will occur, but no established rules. There are statistical rules but there are no mechanical rules. The laws of statistics are not absolute laws—but they *are* operational. We accept the results and appearances according to computed statistics, but there is no rule or law established thereby. The laws of statistics are only a method of calculation, to enable man to practically utilize in a logical manner proportional calculations.

Therefore, through the development of modern science the words of the *Nefesh HaChaim* are fully understood: "G-d renews every day..." each day G-d uses his power to insure the continuation of the existence of the universe; and if he would remove this power, all would become void.

To us, these are laws of nature because we live by these laws. But this is only a convenient manner of speaking, for in reality, there are no such laws.

Now we can understand the meaning of a divine oath. When we say that G-d made an oath, it is a figure of speech—that which *we* call a law of nature, is a divine oath. When G-d creates a rule of nature, Chazal refer to it as an oath of G-d. For an oath is understood as a promise by the vower that will not change; thus when G-d makes an oath, he promises, so to speak, that he will not change the law he has created.

For example: The Gemara says that G-d vowed that the ocean should not cover the dry land. Why is this called an oath? It is a physical law that the ocean cannot cover the land of the continents; according to science, this is a fixed law. G-d created the law that the ocean will not flood the land, and renews it daily with the force of gravity and other laws of nature.

This is why we say that G-d vowed not to bring a flood upon the earth (Berashit 9:15); he will not destroy the world—this is a law he created so that the world will continue to exist.

To us, this is a law; to G-d, it is not a law, for he is not bound by any laws or rules. However, G-d did promise that he will not change this law. Without this promise, G-d could and does change the world—and this is the Divine guidance, over individuals and the community.

Therefore, although there are laws of Divine guidance, G-d allows the world to function according to its laws. He creates laws of nature and allows the world to run by these laws without interference. To man, these are laws—to G-d, they are oaths.

In understanding the Torah, there are insiders and outsiders. One who is an outsider cannot understand what is

inside. The minim, the apikorsim, the maskilim and the Chochmot Israel authors are all outsiders. When an outsider looks into a study hall, he can establish all kinds of statistics, publicize evidence, and make all kinds of guesses—but he can never know what is happening inside: what the students know, what they are learning. Everything that the maskilim write about the Torah; those who are not bnei Torah, speaking in a “scholarly, scholastic, or critical method,” even those who might observe the mitzvot of Torah and have important questions—are all outsiders, and do not know what is inside. Only the insiders, the true and genuine bnei Torah, can speak about what is inside.

For example, if a system is established that when you press a button, it produces an electric current, then even if you are not righteous and do not deserve it, the electricity is still produced. If a person is ill, and he takes the right medication, he will be cured, even if he is unworthy of being cured. This is part of the oath that G-d made, not to interfere with the order of the laws of nature. Without this oath, there is direct Divine guidance. This is the difference between a visible miracle and a hidden miracle. A divine oath—law of nature is a hidden miracle; when G-d directly intervenes in the world, it is a visible miracle (Ramban).

The Jewish nation does not follow the “derech hateva”—because the Divine guidance is not bound by any oath. If G-d had promised to let the world, including Israel, run according to laws of nature, then it would. But G-d judges Israel, so to speak, according to the merits of man, his mitzvot and transgressions, each generation according to its own merits.



We therefore establish that whenever Chazal refer to a divine oath, it refers to a law of nature. In addition to the

laws of nature and physics, which are experimental and can be tested by scientists in the laboratory, there are also historical laws, which cannot be directly tested. The Torah assures us that there are such historical laws, just as there are physical laws which we determine through experimenting in the laboratory. These laws of history, which the insiders, the bnei Torah, know exist, are as strong and established as the experimental laws, which we see empirically.

Among these laws are the three divine oaths: Israel should not rebel against the nations; the nations should not oppress Israel more than necessary. This, according to the Gemara, is a divine oath, and therefore a law of nature. Any nation that oppressed Israel unduly was eventually destroyed; such as Spain, the Crusades, Rome and Nazi Germany. An examination of history proves that every nation that persecuted the Jews was itself destroyed.

Anyone who believes that this was chance and by accident, is similar to someone who thinks that all the scientific theories of molecules and atoms, because they cannot be seen are not true. The true scientists understand atoms and molecules; an outsider to science, who is unfamiliar with scientific terminology and understanding, only believes that which he sees with his own eyes. That which he cannot see—even though the scientist can prove it mathematically—he does not believe exists.

The same is true in Torah—the outsiders do not see these historical laws, which work throughout history, but empirically cannot be proven in the laboratory through short experiments like others rules of science. Nonetheless, it is a proven historical law that any nation that persecuted Israel was destroyed. Therefore the Gemara calls it an oath; handed down to us by the Torah, although it cannot be

demonstrated in the laboratory. But it can be demonstrated by historical data—such as Spain, which in its days was the world's most powerful nation, like America today.

The reverse is also the same; G-d vowed that Israel should not rebel against the nations of the world—in other words, there is a law of Galut, the exile. If Israel should rebel in the exile, the revolt will fail. Whenever the Jews revolted against the nations in the Diaspora, they failed; the Warsaw ghetto uprising, although heroic and mighty, could not succeed. Shabbtai Tzvi, the false Messiah, tried to revolt, but the revolt failed. Every time Jews rebelled outside of the land of Israel (this law only applies in the Diaspora and not in Israel; for in Israel their revolt will succeed, as previously proven) the revolt had to fail, according to the oath of G-d. The Gemara calls this an oath—which is really a historical law. Just as there are physical and scientific laws, there are historical laws. Those outside of the Torah do not see or understand this; the Torah assures us, though, that there are such laws.

Now it remains to be explained what is the last divine oath, not to reveal the secret of the calendar. First, though, we must examine this question according to the Halacha l'Moshe misinai. The Rambam, in his commentary on the Mishna (Rosh Hashana), states that the secret of the calendar is the knowledge of when the New Moon appears; i.e., exactly when to calculate its appearance. Because such knowledge requires a complete understanding of modern science, astronomy, mathematics and physics, it is utterly impossible to attain this knowledge without some error of several minutes. Until Einstein and modern physics, the "molad" could not be calculated without some variance of several minutes; even now, the "molad" cannot be figured exactly to the second. Of course, science could, in the future, come up with more

exact methods and further calculate the "molad" even more exactly, and only then can we know the true "molad."

All of the pertinent scientific data required to calculate the appearance of the New Moon was shown to Moshe Rabenu by G-d on Mt. Sinai. This was the "sod haibur." The Rambam states that the "sod haibur" is the exact calculation of the appearance of the New Moon and is one of the most important parts of the structure of the Torah. The Shabbat, Yom Kippur, and all of the holidays depend on this knowledge and calculation. This important method of calculation was revealed to Moshe Rabenu on Mt. Sinai by G-d, as part of the oral Torah.

The development and understanding of science and technology—from the first man to the Greeks, from the Middle Ages to the science of twentieth century, was intertwined with the development of civilization and the advancement of human culture. Those whom we have referred to as the "outsiders" will surely say that the development of science and technology followed the development and advancement of culture and civilization. In other words, progress in science is merely one of the products of civilization. This is a common belief among the "outsiders."

As the Torah views history, everything is under Divine guidance. And herein lies a key point, which opens up a completely unique and different viewpoint. How does the Divine guidance function here? As man develops and becomes more civilized, proportionately, the Divine guidance allows him to acquire further scientific knowledge. The scientific knowledge is not discovered accidentally or automatically, but rather: "Wisdom is given to the wise." This wisdom comes from G-d, directly—whether it is the wisdom of the Torah, or the wisdom of science and technology. As man further develops

and becomes more civilized, G-d proportionately allows more scientific facts and phenomena to be discovered.

Imagine if in the times of Julius Caesar's rule of Rome, there had existed atomic bombs—the entire world would probably have been subject to a nuclear holocaust. Therefore, G-d did not allow man to discover atomic energy at that time in history, despite the fact that there were great geniuses and scientists involved in scientific and philosophical research. G-d impeded the development of science because civilization was at too low a level to permit them access to such destructive knowledge. Today, despite the existence of tremendous quantities of atomic weapons with the potential to destroy the entire world in a matter of hours, civilization has successfully built safeguards so that the world will continue to exist and mankind will survive. International politics is built with a system where the leaders of the world are working and worrying every minute to prevent any use of atomic weapons that could destroy civilization. Even though crime and lawlessness are increasing, and the individual (*yachid*) is degenerating, the society is advancing in a way that allows survival. Be it fears and rivalry of one nation for another (such as America and Russia), in the end, there is survival and continued existence. All of the laws and justice of democracy, international law and order, are not enforced because man has become more civilized, but because of nationalistic self-interests. Despite world-wide terrorism, street crime, and breakdown in morality, today's society is far more advanced than in earlier times—and the world continues to exist.

If we examine the history of atomic weapons, we see clearly how this knowledge was revealed precisely according to the advancement of civilization. For if Germany (who was working feverishly to develop the bomb before the Allies,

but failed) had been able to create the atom bomb, the world would have been destroyed. The same would apply to any earlier dictator—be it Julius Caesar, the Czar of Russia, or Napoleon—such knowledge would have resulted in the destruction of the world. Proportionately, as society advances and becomes more civilized, G-d allows the discovery of scientific facts and phenomena; it is not as the outsiders believe, that scientific advancement is a direct and automatic result of cultural and civilized advancement.

Now we can understand the divine oath related by the Gemara not to reveal the “sod haibur.” Because the Tannaim and great prophets knew the advanced scientific theories and laws (which were revealed to Moshe Rabenu and handed down from generation to generation), had they revealed this knowledge to the goyim, the world would have been destroyed. Therefore the Torah tells us there is a law—not a law that can be proven in a laboratory, but a historical law—that mankind will not discover this knowledge before the proper time. This is a law that as society advances culturally and improves, only then will it be able to advance scientifically; this is called a divine oath by the Gemara.



Now we must clarify a further important point.

In ancient times, there was slavery; afterwards, slavery was abolished; the concept of man being a slave to man became extinct. Afterwards, the animal served man. Instead of slaves, horses, donkeys, and oxen became man's servants. Today, animals no longer serve man. What has replaced animals?—the machine. Everything today is automatic, the era of automation prevails. Even meat and meat products are being replaced by synthetic foods—which indicates that modern man will no longer need animals.



In the beginning, man was important and distinguished, on a very high level—and it was fit and proper that other men should serve man. Great men such as Moshe Rabenu were elevated and important men; it was proper that other men should serve them. The same was true of the great men of the rest of the world—Socrates, Plato, Archimedes, Ptolomy—such men should be served by other men.

Later, man no longer was worthy to be served by other men. G-d therefore guided history to allow the emancipation of slaves through the birth of democracy, equality of man, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, and the Emancipation Proclamation; all which caused slavery to become extinct (there is still some slavery in Africa and other places today, but it is no longer an accepted concept in civilized society). That which was once a natural and worldwide concept, that man should serve man, has disappeared; mankind was no longer worthy of such servitude.

As slavery—man serving man—disappeared, it was replaced by animals serving man. This was on a lower level—but today man has so descended in worthiness that he does not even deserve that animals serve him. We see in our own day the permissiveness in the generation, and the entire mankind is at an animal level. Thus they no longer deserve to be served by animals. Everyone is totally involved in pursuit of pleasures and physical enjoyments, just like animals, so man is no longer higher than the animal. Therefore G-d guided history and opened up the rapid development of technology, so that man no longer needs animals to serve him. Now man is served by machines: because he no longer is worthy of servitude by another living thing.

However, this appears to be a paradox! At first we showed that civilization has advanced (as it has obtained advanced scientific knowledge), and now we state the opposite: man has degenerated to a lower level.

The answer is simple—the society (*tzibur*) has improved, for without the advancement and improvement of society, the world would not be able to exist. The *tzibur* as a whole, in areas which affect the entire society, has advanced throughout history. But the individual (*yachid*), outside of the ben Torah, is degenerating. As civilization advances, the individual man is becoming worse and worse; he has become today just like an animal.

Although in society there is democracy, culture, philosophy, and literature—if you closely examine each individual who is not a ben Torah, he is nothing but a brute. There is no “*ruchaniut*,” no idealism or decency at all. All the advancements of society are the results of egotism; their self-interest cannot be maintained without policing, without law and order, without democracy; so therefore society has improved. But there is no concern for the other person.

The Gemara states that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai asked his students, “What is the meaning of the verse ‘Zedakah teromam goy, v’chesed l’umim chatot?’ (Charity elevates the nation, and kindness of the nations is iniquities). Answered Rabbi Eliezer, ‘charity elevates the nation’ of Israel, as it is written, ‘And who is like you, O Israel, one nation of the world.’ And ‘kindness of the nations is iniquities’—every charity and kindness that the *goyim* perform is only for their own benefit and glory. Answered Rabbi Joshua, ‘Any charity and kindness the *goyim* do is iniquity, for they only perform it to continue their power and rulership...’ Answered Rabban Gamliel, ‘Any charity and kindness that the *goyim* do is iniquity, for their motive is conceit and pride... (Bava Batra 10b)’”.

How do we understand this Gemara; why were the Tannaim compelled to explain the verse in this manner?

The Rambam states in the Mishne Torah, “We must be exceedingly careful about fulfilling the mitzva of charity,

more than any other mitzva . . . because 'tzedaka' is a sign of the righteous descendants of Avraham, as it is written, 'For I know that he will command his sons after him to do kindness and justice . . .' He who is merciful, will be shown mercy . . . and whoever is unusually cruel, and has no mercy, should be suspect as to his ancestry; for cruelty is found by the idolaters, as it is written. 'They are cruel, and have no pity'."

The Rambam states explicitly that cruelty is the sign of the idolatrous *goy*. The Gemara gives three signs of the seed of Avraham; shame, pity, and kindness; the Rambam states this as a Torah law. In the laws of marriage in the Shulchan Aruch we learn that whoever is cruel should not be considered for marriage, because cruelty is evidence that he is not Jewish. Idolaters are cruel; Jews have mercy and pity. This is not meant allegorically or figuratively, but as a definite fact of Halacha.

There is another law: a ben Noah is guilty of stealing even if the object is worth less than a "prutah"—whereas a Jew in such a case is not guilty of stealing. Rashi gives the reason: a Jew renounces less than a "prutah," but a *goy* wou't renounce even less than a "prutah."

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai asked how could the Torah say that idolatrous *goyim* could do "chesed," since they are cruel and unmerciful? And why is their kindness called iniquity?

The answer of the Gemara is a revealing view of history. What do we see and observe? We see that modern society is devoted to *chesed*, helping their fellow man. Governments are devoted to the public welfare; leaders spend time and fortunes in *chesed*, helping man. But this is only on the public level. If a poor man approaches the manager of a public welfare institution as a private individual, he

will say, "I am busy, I have no time for *chesed*." Thus charity, kindness, and welfare are only public projects; the individual (*yachid*) is not interested in *chesed*.

King David wrote in the Psalms, "Chasid ani"—I am righteous, for all the kings of the east and west are busy with national problems, and I am engaged with . . . improving relations between a woman and her husband. When a woman who had given birth had a rabbinical question about ritual purification, she went to King David. This was the mercy of the King, for he could have refused to hear such minor problems; but King David was kindhearted and merciful. Although he was constantly involved with political problems, fighting wars and revolutions, he still found the time to help an individual with a problem—this is the power of the Torah. Whenever a Torah scholar came to him, the king would arise and embrace him. This was the *chesed* of King David.

This must be explained on a sociological level. Today there are many charity funds, social action movements, and civil rights groups in the democratic world. We live in a welfare society—poor, underprivileged people are supported by the state, relief funds and groups work all over the world to help suffering people and aid victims of earthquakes and hurricanes; medical help and supplies are rushed by society to every corner of the world. And at the same time, at the United Nations, all the civilized nations try to destroy Israel, and applaud the cruel terrorists—*out of pity and mercy for refugees*—and honor terrorists at the U.N. General Assembly.

And what would happen if all the welfare and charity were to suddenly stop? The minority groups would revolt immediately against the establishment; democratic society would be destroyed. Thus, the society does not give charity as an individual. Israel gives charity from mercy and pity, which is a sign of the seed of Avraham, as the Rambam

says. He who is not merciful and is cruel is suspect of not being a descendent of Avraham. The society gives charity on a public level, not as an individual. Their motive is not mercy, it is to preserve the society, and to preserve order.

Why is this so?—because the *chesed* of the *goyim* is the charity of society, and the society needs the charity for its own benefit. Thus, *chesed leumim* is the charity of the nations, but not the *chesed* of individuals. Society has law and order, penal codes and courts of justice. However, they are not motivated by any interest in right and wrong, but only by self-interest. Because modern society could not exist if there was unchecked crime and lawlessness, the society enforces law and order, in its own interest. Therefore the Gemara says “*chesed leumim chatot*”—the mercy of the nations is iniquity. When the mercy of the society comes from self-preservation and not from the actual mercy and pity, it is *iniquity*! The Gemara says, “Any kindness that the nations perform is only that their dominion should continue.” In other words, without all of the funds and public welfare that society promotes, there would be revolution.

There are other nations that promote public welfare, not to preserve their own rule, but to promote their own pride. They are proud that they are a democratic society. The United Nations has all kinds of funds and organizations to show that they are charitable. But this is still only done as a public function, and not on an individual level.

Therefore, the *Tannaim* who knew that idolaters are cruel, asked, what is *chesed leumim*—how can there be *chesed* among these *goyim*? The answer: The society needs and requires *chesed*—either for national pride, to show that they are a modern and civilized nation; or simply for self-preservation—they could not continue to exist without the welfare and public charities. This is iniquity—because the individual is still cruel and without pity.



The Talmud Yerushalmi states (*Taanit*): Rav Hanina bar Popa said, "We went through every verse of the Torah and couldn't find that Zion is called 'Am Yisrael', until I found the verse, 'for to Zion, he will say to them you are my people.'" Thus Zion is one of the names of Israel.

The question arises, on what did Rabbi Hanina bar Popa base the fact to Israel should be called Zion, to search the Torah for a supporting verse? If he had such an axiom that Zion is another name for Israel, from where did he derive this axiom? Why must Israel (the nation and people) be called Zion?

To answer this question, we must explain several concepts. One of the principles of the *goyim* is nationality—the homeland. The Communists, for example, say that everything exists for the state. The individual must be sacrificed for the state and the government. Even in the free world, they believe that the individual must sacrifice himself for the homeland (as the many wars throughout history bear out). Plato wrote that man must improve and develop to greatness, so that he can improve and develop the Greek nation. Man must develop for the sake of the homeland, this is the philosophy and thinking of the world to this very day.

In contradistinction, Eretz Israel, the land of Israel exists for the people of Israel, so that Torah and mitzvot and sanctity will exist in Israel. In the land of Israel, the people can observe all the mitzvot. But Am Israel?—this is a mistaken concept. The concept of the nation of Israel exists *only* for the individual. Because each individual is part of the nation, the improvements in the nation benefit the individual.

Therefore we say, the land of Israel is for the nation of Israel; the nation of Israel is the people (individuals) of

Israel; the righteous man. The Rambam explains that for the benefit of even *one* righteous man, the existence of the entire nation of Israel is justified.

All the people of other nations are named after their homeland: the French of France, the Arabs from Arabia, etc. Each individual is a citizen of his homeland. But Israel is just the opposite. The land of Israel is named after the people of Israel, and the people of Israel are named for the individual; for the most important thing is the individual!

Now we have another difficult question. Although Eretz Israel exists for the individual, Israel is called Zion. Zion is the holy site of the Temple Mount, the center of the world. Thus Zion is not only the name for the people of Israel, but is also the name for the land of Israel. Today because of this, we call ourselves Zionists, and believe in Zionism, i.e., we are people of the homeland.

Rabbi Hanina bar Popa answers that this is false! If Israel is called Zion, this means that Zion is the people of Israel—not the homeland. Because Zion is the people of Israel, the land is called Zion. Therefore Rabbi Hanina went through the entire Torah to find a verse in which the people were called Zion *not* because of the homeland, but that the land is called Zion because of the people. He found the verse, “and to Zion he will say you are my people.” When G-d called Israel Zion, only then was the homeland called Zion.

The Rambam writes (Hilchot Teshuva 3:1-2): “Every individual has merits and iniquities; he whose merits outnumber his sins, is a tzadik; he whose sins outnumber his merits, is a rasha; if they are evenly divided, he is a “beinoni.” The same is true of a country: if merits of all individuals outnumber their iniquities, they are righteous; if the sins outnumber the merits, they are wicked... Likewise the entire world; if all the sins outnumber the merits, they are con-

demned to destruction, as it is written, "And G-d saw that the evil of man was great . . .

"Therefore every man must look upon himself throughout the year as if he were half righteous and half evil: if he does one sin, he condemns himself and the entire world to destruction. If he performs one mitzva, he merits for himself and the entire world and causes salvation to the world, as it is written 'The righteous man is the foundation of the world'."

If so, then even a wicked man, who violates the commandments of the Torah, could act when the world is at a balance of half merits and half iniquities. At that moment, the entire world depends on him. Even this evil man, should he perform one mitzva, thereby would tip the scales of judgment for the world toward salvation; if he sins, then he tips the scales towards condemnation. Thus one act of righteousness, from this evil man, would save the entire world.

Thus, according to the Rambam, who is a tzadik? He who is half and half, and then performs one mitzva. Through this one act, he has saved the world, and the world continues to exist. He is the tzadik, the foundation of the world. Without him, there would be no world. This is the halacha of the *yachid*; the power of the individual, that he has within him the ability to save the entire world.

But what about the rest of the nations? The individual has no value to the *goyim*. In Bangladesh, in India, despite the world-wide funds and charity organizations, we see that small children, the orphans with no one to care for them, wander through the streets and the countryside, abandoned and uncared for. Even at this very moment, thousands of children are wandering the streets in war-torn countries throughout the world, starving to death or dying from disease. Society does everything; it sends wheat and food to starving countries, but no one watches or has pity on the individual.



What then is the criterion that distinguishes this cruel civilization from Israel; that distinguishes the charity of the nations from the *chesed* of the Torah?—*the individual* (yachid). Today the individual is low and barbaric; the society (tzibur) is advanced, and takes pride in its achievements. The Torah demands regard for the individual exclusively. This is the difference between the culture of the outsiders and the culture of the Torah.

And now we can see from the Tanach how this concept is clearly expressed by the prophet Hoshea:

“Return, O Israel, unto the L-rd your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity . . . Assyria shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses; neither will we proclaim the works of our hands as our gods . . .”

There will come a day when we shall not ride horses—we will ride in planes, trains, buses, even spaceships; but we will not say this is the work of G-d. In the civilized world the scientists believe that all the science and the technology is the work of their hands; there is no need for G-d, man has the power in his hands; this is what the world says.

The prophet says, in viewing the future: There will come a time; a modern, mechanical world of science and technology, when men will say that the works of G-d are their own works and accomplishments. For this, the prophet declares, they must repent. Why? Has not the society improved, developed and become enhanced; why only *then* will it be necessary to repent and to follow the ways of the Torah? The modern thinkers say there is democracy and culture, the prophet says NO! “For in you, the fatherless find mercy”—who is the loneliest individual in the world?—the orphan. Modern society ignores the orphan, and has no mercy to him. Only if they repent, then the individual becomes important. “For in you (G-d’s Torah) the fatherless find mercy.” But

if man depends on the modern world, the technological and mechanical world—"we will not ride horses"—then the orphan is abandoned and alone.

Everything the prophet says about the difference between the rule of Torah and the rule of the nations is the position of the "yachid," the individual. The Torah is concerned about the "yachid"; the other nations establish funds, movements and organizations; they develop and improve but they have no mercy on the "yachid." This is the difference between the culture of the nations and the culture of the Torah.

## REASON AND TORAH

The fundamentals of Torah faith are basic reason; no logical mind can question them, if he applies straight reasoning and does not become confused with contorted thinking. It is really a wonder that the non-believer can be blind to simple and plain concepts that intelligent people understand readily, and that cannot be refuted with logical argument.

The Rambam writes in the *Sefer Hamitzvot*: "The first mitzva of the Torah is understanding and belief in G-d." This requires an explanation: normally, a mitzva instructs a man to do or not to do a command with his own free will; thus, how can the Torah instruct a man to *believe* in something, if the man does not sincerely believe in his heart? How can the Torah punish the non-believer, who does not believe in G-d? Every punishment, even for idolatry, must first involve a warning to the offender by two witnesses, and then the Sanhedrin renders judgment—yet the "kofer" can be punished even without trial. Why is the non-believer to blame if he does not believe; how can he logically be commanded to believe, when he cannot in his mind accept the existence of G-d?

In addition, belief in G-d is one of the commandments that all Jews must begin to observe at bar mitzva, the age of maturity in Torah law. A boy of thirteen and a girl of twelve must fulfill this mitzva of *emunah*—yet there are great philosophers and thinkers who question the belief in G-d, and some great minds must labor years to understand

the existence of G-d—how can a young child expect to grasp that which is often beyond the understanding of great scientists and philosophers?

The *ben-Noach* — the non-Jew—is commanded in the seven mitzvot of bnei Noach; if he fails to observe them, he is liable to Divine punishment in the future. Now imagine a ben Noach who spent his entire life as a shepherd and a drunken peasant; completely ignorant and uneducated—when he is brought before the Beth Din of Heaven, and is condemned to eternal punishment, will he not protest that he never had the opportunity to learn about the seven mitzvot of bnei Noach! And indeed there is strong logic to his claim, for he was indeed an uneducated man his entire lifetime. Nevertheless, he will not be pardoned with such a defense. This also requires an explanation.

The answer to these questions is that “emunah”—the belief that G-d exists and created the universe—is an absolute certainty to any normal mind. Only a retarded or mentally incompetent person is incapable of this understanding. There is no necessity to introduce complicated philosophy to reach the understanding of “emunah”—as is explained in the “*Chovat Halevavot*”:

“There are those who say that the world came into existence by itself, without a creator—and I wonder, how this idea can arise? Would one say, upon observing canals and irrigation channels in a field, that these came into being by themselves, without the labor of skilled hands? Thus one who denies the existence of a creator of the universe is a fool and warped in his thinking... for it is obvious that things without a guide or a craftsman do not exhibit signs of wisdom; if a bottle of ink accidentally spills on a sheet of paper, it is impossible that letters and words would be formed—and if a piece of paper was found with orderly sentences written on it, and someone would say that these words

were formed by a bottle of ink that accidentally spilled on the paper, we would at once belittle such a notion . . .

“How can a logical mind say that the entire universe is an accident, coming into existence by itself, when we can see at every level signs of deep wisdom and intricate brilliance without end. The human body is constructed with ingenuity of infinite proportions, as doctors of anatomy and skilled surgeons will testify. How could such a complicated and marvelous machine such as the human body have come into existence without the brainwork and design of its inventor? Even if someone were to say that a clock came into existence by itself, everyone would question his sanity.”

This ancient example of the paper and the ink is a solid concept and cannot be refuted, even by the development of “modern” thinking—on the contrary, the modern thinkers have already accepted this concept, as the Gemara relates: “A certain freethinker came to Rabbi Akiva and asked, ‘Who created the world?’ Rabbi Akiva answered, ‘G-d created the world.’ The freethinker then asked, ‘Show me a proof.’ Rabbi Akiva pointed to his cloak and said, ‘Who weaved your cloak?’ The freethinker answered, ‘A tailor.’ Rabbi Akiva asked, ‘Show me a proof!’” And Rabbi Akiva used this example for his students: “Just as the cloak testifies to the tailor; as the door testified to the carpenter; as the house testifies to the builder, so the world testifies to G-d, who created it.”

If we can imagine a man born with perfect understanding, suddenly brought into the world and shown a universe with its galaxies and planets; the earth with all of its secrets and wonders—and we ask this man, did this universe, which he is viewing for the first time, come into existence by itself or was it planned by a master builder?—he will answer without any hesitation that the universe exhibits intricate wisdom and planning, as the Torah says “The heaven relates the glory of G-d . . . from my flesh I see the wonders of my

G-d." All the more so, modern man of today, who witnesses the modern development of empirical scientific data and technical mathematical theories of the entire universe; perfect order, beauty, and glory that gladden the heart and the mind—how can modern man not see this exalted brilliance with its infinite wonder which can be found throughout the universe?

This concept of the "master of the palace" is understandable both to the great or the common man in a general way—except that he whose wisdom is greater can reach a higher understanding of how the universe testifies to the existence of its Creator; thus it is hard to understand how the great philosophers were able to believe that the world came into existence by itself.

The answer is, according to the Torah: "ki hashochad y'aver eini chachamim—the bribe blinds the eyes of the wise" (Devarim 16:19). Even a wise man whom the Almighty himself considers a "chochem" is influenced by bribery and his eyes are blinded from seeing the truth. This is part of the nature of the human being—a desire ever so small can pervert even the greatest logic and wisdom.

The Talmud (Ketuvot 105a) explains in detail how a person is influenced even by the slightest benefit received from another person, and is no longer impartial in his judgment. The rabbis of the Talmud conclude, "Cursed be the one who takes a bribe for judgment." We can see that if Chazal felt they themselves were vulnerable to the influence of receiving benefit from another, certainly those who are on a more worldly level of desire and temptation for the pleasures of this world are blinded by the bribe. A person who is influenced by a bribe cannot see the truth if it is against his desires—he is, in this respect, as if he is intoxicated; even the greatest mind cannot overcome this lure. Therefore, it is no wonder that the great philosophers denied the creation of

the universe; for as their minds are great so is their passion great for the pleasures of this world, a lure that can force a man to deny even simple logic. Only a mind freed of this influence can see the truth; but if the truth is against the desires of man, there is no way the intelligence can overcome this influence and enlighten his eyes.

Now we can understand the Torah warning when it says "You shall not go after the desires of your heart—this is heresy." When man is warned to control and subjugate his desires, in order that his free mind should avoid being influenced by his desires, then he will see the truth that G-d created the universe; as Rabbi Akiva said, the universe testifies that there is a G-d. Denial of G-d has no place in the logic of man's mind; it is instead his desires and passions that influence him not to believe that which his mind should see.

Thus the iniquity is even greater, when he increases his desires that destroy his comprehension until he no longer recognizes the simple truth to believe—in other words, he has not conquered his passions, so that the belief can automatically reach his mind; he does not have to attempt to reach belief, but instead fight all the exterior causes that destroy this belief. Even the ben Noach, who has a primitive mind, is capable of understanding the concept that the world testifies that G-d created it. Every action of the intelligent being has some purpose—since the universe was created by a creator, then there must be a purpose. The drunk cannot rationalize that he thought the purpose of creation, the heavens and the earth, was to enable him to drink liquor and get drunk. It is a simple understanding that the purpose of all those created is to fulfill the will of the creator; to inquire and understand what is the will of G-d, for what should man be punished—as the Gemara says, "the ben Noach is punished because he should have learned on his own but did not." This also explains why idolatry is considered such a serious sin: if man

would depend solely on his reason, there is no way he could drift after idol worship. Belief in idols can only come about when man has strengthened his desires to pursue all abominations, as the ancient idolators practiced; in the words of Chazal: "Israel did not worship idols except to permit licentiousness in public" (*Kovetz He'arot*; Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman).

The words of Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman zt'l are found also in Rabbenu Tam in his *Sefer Hayashar* (also quoted in *Birchat Shmuel* on *Kiddushin*): "And it is possible that wisdom can be destructive from lack of belief, such as the wisdom of apikorsim and heretics; the philosophers who deny the Torah and its truth. As this destructive wisdom gathers in the mind, forming evil habits and a bad heart, belief is completely lost, not because of the bad heart but because the destructive wisdom has influenced the mind..."

In *Tehilim*, these words are expressed by David Hamelech: "The fool says in his heart, there is no G-d. They have dealt corruptly, they have dealt abominably, there is none that do good" (Chap. 14). The reason that G-d is denied is because man has become corrupt in his desires.

Now we can understand the Mishne in *Avot*: "Ten trials ... of Avraham Avinu, and he withstood them all." These ten trials contained all of the possible temptations and influences that can pervert the heart of man. There is no greater personal temptation than not entering a furnace, or being asked to sacrifice one's only son, and likewise the other trials. Nevertheless, Avraham overcame all of his personal temptations and remained firm in his mind that there is a creator of the universe.

According to Rabbi Elchanan zt'l we understand also why G-d created these influences, since nothing was created without a purpose—for if man would not be vulnerable to the lure of influence, then he would not possess free will, but



would be obliged almost forcibly to believe in G-d; without the influence of his desires, he would never be able to deny the fact that there is a creator of the universe.

The second idea that we must understand: if a man would travel in an automobile from city to city, and would say that the vehicle he rides in was not developed by man, but is the result of evolution over billions of years through the gathering of atoms and molecules over countless eras at random, eventually forming this "automobile"—no one would seriously consider this possibility. Even the greatest physicists and experts in biology, evolution, or higher mathematics would only ridicule such a statement as pure nonsense. (In ancient times, if people witnessed a phenomenon such as an automobile, they would have thought it was a demon or god created by the heavens.)

Thus if a man views the entire universe, he can not remain an apikorus who could deny the existence of G-d and the act of creation. If someone can view a complete world with all of its wonders, then to say that it came about by itself is merely a self-delusion. This is further proof that the disbeliever and heretic have contorted minds, and are incapable of straight and logical thinking. No one whose mind is clear and logic is untainted can deny the existence of G-d and the fact that he created the world.



No generation has witnessed the development of scientific exploration as our own; there has never been a time in history where technology and science have directly benefited man's physical existence as much as our present times. As bribery blinds the eyes of the wise, so has our modern generation become blind to anything except that which brings

physical pleasure, without regard or thought to the end effect, other than its effect on everyday problems of life.

This desire is a credit to man, as well as a liability. G-d created the world with this desire, as a balance to the logic and pursuit of wisdom. Man's character, whether good or bad, is exactly proportional to his wisdom, as the Torah says, "Shmar tam ureh yasher"—he who is innocent (in character) sees straight (in wisdom).

The Gaon of Vilna writes: "All worship of Hashem depends on 'tikkun hamidot' (perfection of character) and all sins are related to a person's character." *Pirke Avot*, the Talmudic book of ethics, why is it different from all other books of ethics? One of the great commentaries writes, the Tannaim who composed the Mishna were not merely expounders of Torah, law, and justice; of love, brotherhood, and friendship, as are the philosophers of the nations—but they practice what they expound. Each rabbi whose words are recorded in *Pirke Avot* observed strictly the words he taught, otherwise the law would not have been written in his name. In addition, each Tanna was noted for extreme self-sacrifice to fulfill the character which he taught. The Vilna Gaon adds that the author of the "*Mesilat Yesharim*," a major ethics work, was scrupulously careful in each and every "mida" mentioned in his book—this is why his work was worthy to become so widely accepted by Jews throughout history.

Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, in his book "*Kovetz He'arot*," says: "The first foundation of the Torah is belief in G-d, the second is belief in 'Torah min hashamayim'—the Divine revelation of the Torah. Since the purpose of creation is to do the will of the Creator, and as there is no way to otherwise ascertain the real will of G-d, thus remains the dilemma; how can man do the will of his creator when there is no way for his mind to comprehend the true will of G-d? The only way is, of course, that G-d must reveal to man what he

must do, and this is Divine revelation—Torah min hashamayim. Once it is confirmed that man must do the will of his creator, we see the world doing the opposite; mankind submerged in the pursuit of pleasure, 'no wise man seeking G-d' (Tehilim 14:2) and it becomes obvious that for such men the world need not come to be. Thus the coming of the Messiah, when the light of G-d's glory will shine, and G-d will be king of the world, must surely come."

From the words of Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, we can also see the principle of eternity of the soul and the world to come. All of the philosophy of existentialism struggles with the conquest of death and the victory of life, with death incorporated as an ideal of life, through mystical magic formulas inventions of the founders of the "principle of existence." In truth, no joy or fulfillment can ever be obtained without the supplementation of *Olam Haba* and the soul's eternity. One who has not accepted this concept never knows comfort in his life; without this belief man is defunct, as are the poets of death and the existentialists.

Thus arises the question, if these concepts are so compelling and true, how has man allowed himself to be deluded for thousands of years by the metaphysical soothsayers and sorcerers and the nonsense of existentialism, which repulses the pure reason of man, and bares the falsehood of "Eat and make merry, for tomorrow we die."

The answer comes from the words of Rabbi Wasserman: "There is a rule: 'Bribery blinds the eyes of the wise'" (Deut. 17:20). The influence of pleasures is the strongest "bribery" that exists, and this perverts man from his wisdom and the will of his Creator. We say that with the eating comes the desire; the more man partakes of the worldly pleasures, the more his passion grows.



The Talmud says, "Three attributes are found in the Jewish nation: Mercy, shame, and kindness" (Yevamot 79). The Gemara explains that each of these attributes are not merely descriptive praise, but are manifest signs which comprise the Jewish character, differentiating us from the nations of the world, as well as containing the major foundations of the Torah. The three commandments of the Torah that are "Yehareg v'al yaavor"—murder, adultery, and idolatry—are direct functions of the Jewish nationality based on the three characteristics unique to the nation (Rambam, Sefer Hamitzvot 9; Letters of Rabbi A. Y. Kook 1:20).

"He who is cruel, and shows no pity, his ancestry is suspect." (Rambam) The Shulchan Aruch comments that such a person should not be considered for marriage with a Jewish man or woman. "One who is shameless, cruel, or hates his fellow man and is not kind (gomel chesed), is suspected of not descending from Jews." In the Laws of Charity, the Rambam writes, "We are obligated to be careful with the mitzva of charity, even more than other commandments of the Torah; for charity is the sign of our righteous father Avraham, of whom it is written. 'For I have made known that he should command his descendants and household to be charitable.' The existence of Israel and the true belief stands only through the merit of charity, and the redemption of Israel will come only through charity, as it is written, 'Zion with justice shall be redeemed, and they will return to her through charity.' The giver of charity never suffers poverty and no evil ever befalls him through his charity. He who is merciful, G-d has mercy on him; and whoever is cruel and does not give charity, we must suspect his ancestry, for cruelty is found only by idolaters, as it is written 'And they are cruel, and have no pity.' All Jews are brothers, and if a brother has no pity for his brother,

then who will have on him pity!" (*Mishne Torah, Hilchot Tzedaka* 10:1).

According to the Halacha, a ben Noach is guilty of thievery even if the stolen object is worth less than a pruta—although a Jew is only guilty if it is worth at least a pruta. Rashi writes that to a Jew, less than a pruta is not stealing, and he is not particular less than a pruta; a ben Noach is cruel and does not renounce even less than a pruta. One of the signs of the righteous Avraham is that he is forgiving and merciful.

We live today in a modern, civilized world, which looks with disdain on the Torah's distinction between Jews and *goyim*. The liberal scholar and their adherents are amazed and amused that the Torah considers the Jews a "chosen nation." The philosopher George Santayana, in his critique of Bergson's philosophy, points out how many ideas of Bergson reach the absurd, and exclaims, "Perhaps he (Bergson) will say that the 'chosen people' is a truth in reality"—as if to say, it goes without saying that such an idea is absurd, perhaps the greatest absurdity of all!

Despite the words of this noted philosopher, the reader and follower of our modern literature sees how reality blatantly contradicts all the ideas of the liberal sociology of today and proclaims: Notice the difference between the sons of the Torah society and the sons of the nations of the world. Anyone who is still troubled need not recall the ancient history of the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, or the World War II Holocaust—let him read in the daily paper about Biafra, Bangladesh, the cold blooded murders in Kiryat Shmoneh, Maalot, and elsewhere. Only a mind completely bound to the liberalism snare can think that the cruelty of idolatry has completely disappeared.

None of these philosophers have thought along these lines; instead they create a logic based on terminology of their own

design and reach their conclusions contrary to the facts. They developed a history of contemporary civilization, they broke down old barriers and muddled the borders between Israel and the nations. The match between Israel and the modern culture is only artificial; he who tries to join them will succeed in bringing together two opposite poles.

The question remains: Can one, in all fairness, ignore the modern world and culture with all its progress and achievements?

The Talmud in *Megilla* 7b says, "If you are told, the goyim have *chochma* (wisdom) it is true. But if you hear, the goyim have Torah, do not believe it."

The *chochma* of the goyim is the development of civilization, science, technology, the critical philosophy and historical realism. "If you hear goyim have Torah, do not believe it"—all the laws that the wise men of the nations established have not succeeded in establishing any foundation for the spiritual guidance of man. Anyone who doubts this need only view the permissiveness of modern society.

Returning to the words of the Rambam: "Charity is the sign of the descendents of Avraham our father." Until Avraham, the world was dominated by cruelty and idolatry. When Avraham came, he proclaimed alone, against the world, the existence of G-d and against the cruel and barbaric world Avraham taught man to be charitable, merciful and kind; his descendents continued these ways down to the development of the nation of Israel. From the cruelty of the world came forth denial of G-d; and from the character of Avraham came forth the true belief and faith.



In this way, the Torah scholar is identified, and his measure of learning discerned. It is not enough to merely examine

his "pilpul" and scholarship in Torah. His character, his mid-dot, and his straightforwardness must match his scholarship.

The Rambam writes in Hilchot Daot, 6:1 : "The nature of man is to be influenced, in character and attributes, by his friends and companions who are righteous and pious and wise, so that he may be influenced for the good; and he should avoid bad companions and neighbors so that he will not receive bad influence. If in one's place the inhabitants are wicked, he should leave that place and live in a place where the people are good, or even live alone and isolated. If that does not work, he must live in caves and forests, to avoid becoming influenced by neighbors who are evil."

Our generation has rebelled against the established spiritual ideas of history and scholars. All the achievements, the discoveries, the wisdom and the inventions of the past and present mean nothing to them. There is no place for logic or rationalism in the values and judgment of the young generation, who reject any and all authority of logic and wisdom. They seek the pleasures and desires of life, and pursue self pride, complete permissiveness, and the psychological freedom from the establishment. The result has become a culture of drugs, the youth seeking their freedom from the establishment.



Not all members of the Torah world have escaped from the influence of the generation. Although there are safeguards for the Torah scholars, not all have absorbed the proper spirit of the Torah and its proper study. Many seek only the benefits and not the sacrifices, although "the Torah only remains with him who sacrifices himself for it." Instead of taking the "pilpul" of Torah and engulfing themselves in the pleasure of pure mental and spiritual joy of learning, they expend their energy in "chidushim" which bring suspicion on others who do not follow their ways.

Some learn ten pages of Gemara or less a year; they sit for weeks making "diyukim" and "chakirots," that would take a *cheder* boy a few minutes to understand—yet they proclaim in loud voices that their way of learning is the only way to learn, the right way to learn, the best way to learn.

Those who seek their own glory and honor often cloak themselves with the "garb of the rabbi"—normally worn only by the *talmid chochem* and scholar, who is genuinely pious and righteous. They see no limit to the importance of their own view-point, to their right to establish authority and opinions in the realm of Torah; even to judge and criticize prominent Torah authorities should these differ with their own views. These pseudo-scholars, who often show no honesty or compassion, display themselves as G-d fearing and pious, perfect in character, whose righteousness and fear of heaven burns in them like the flame of fire.

There is no limit to their brashness. Gedolai Torah who do not support them are insulted and impugned and called "minim"! "apikorsim"! and the like. Of course!—who is an apikorus—he who fails to heed the words of these boors! What is the value of a true *talmid chochem* when he ignores the youngster who learns a few "blat" of Gemara a year, and knows the language of "cheftza" and "gavra." Certainly in the great majority of *yeshivot* and talmudical academies, such characters are few indeed. But the few who do exist cast aspersions on the rest, and it is the duty of the *roshei yeshivot* to train their students, while they are still in their prime, to understand the true ways of Torah, which are the "middot" of Avraham—kindness, mercy and benevolence.

The Gedolai Torah, as a general rule, were considered great also in their compassion, dignity and supreme character. The Rambam writes: "One may only teach Torah to a student who is of good character and deeds. If a student follows



improper ways, we try to guide him back to the proper path, but until he has returned, we may not teach him Torah."

What is considered "the proper path"? The Gemara in Bava Metzia (83b) states: Rabba bar Hama employed two porters. While working they broke a barrel of wine. Rabba seized their clothing (as payment for the broken barrel). The two porters went to Rav and complained. Rav ordered Rabba to return their clothing. Rabba asked Rav, "Is this the fair law you decide (that I must return the clothing when they owe for the barrel)?" Rav answered, "Yes. As a scholar, you must go in the good and *proper way*." So Rabba returned their clothing. Then the porters complained, "We are poor men; we have worked all day and we have earned nothing (for Rabba didn't want to pay them because of the damage they caused). So Rav ordered Rabba to pay them their wages. Rabba thereupon asked Rav, "Is this the fair law?" Rav answered, "yes; the tzaddik must go beyond the letter of the law."

Thus we learn, the "wrong way" for the Torah student is to follow only the letter of the law; he must always go beyond the letter of the law and be more merciful and kind than required.



The Rambam writes in *Yesodai Hatorah* 5-11: "There are other dinim included in *chillul hashem*, such as a Torah scholar or righteous man whose deeds people complain about, even though he does not do anything against the law. For example, a *talmid chochem* who makes a purchase but fails to pay for it right away, when he has the ability to pay and he merely stalls his creditors; when he is boisterous and eats in public with common people; when he speaks with people gruffly and is unpleasant to those he meets; all of these

are *chillul hashem*, depending on how well known the scholar is. The *talmid chochem* must act '*lifnim meshurat hadin*', speak pleasantly with everyone, be the insulted and never the insulter, the embarrassed and never the shamer; he should avoid the company of the common people and only spend his time in study and prayer or helping his fellow man—then everyone will honor and respect him, and seek to emulate his ways. This is *kiddush hashem*, the sanctification of G-d's name." Thus, the greater a scholar is, the more he must take care to act beyond the letter of the law—*lifnim meshurat hadin*.

Jewish history is filled with stories of how its Torah scholars were always great men in character, who devoted their energies to the needs of their Jewish brothers. King David says to G-d, "Am I not a 'chasid', for all the kings of the world sit on their thrones in glory, while my hands are soiled... to make women ritually pure for their husbands" (Berachot 4a).

An example of our time was the great Gaon, Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, who personified the image of the *talmid chochem* who acted "*lifnim meshurat hadin*." He devoted his life to the needs of his Jewish brothers in Israel. Because of his devotion and great character, he was worthy to take his place among the great Torah scholars of contemporary times. The sainted gaon Rabbi Aaron Kotler said of the Chief Rabbi: "*Harav Herzog is a 'moiyomdiger' gaon*." He exchanged responsa with all of the rabbis of his time, published in his book, *Heichal Yitzchak*. Today Talmudic students of all schools of thought are awed at his great scholarship, and he is considered today one of the great Talmudic scholars of modern times.

In today's troubled times, when the modern world has cast off the standards and ways of the old generation, it becomes the task of the scholar of Torah to lead the way for

those who seek the truth. Only in adherence to the gentle and merciful ways of the Torah, is there hope for mankind. As the prophet Isaiah says, "The nations shall walk in your light," the light of Torah and its ways.

## MAN AND ISRAEL IN TORAH

Klal Yisrael, the nation of Israel, is viewed by Chazal as a unique individual—collective group; not as a number of single individuals, but as an entity called “*tzibur*”—the nation. The single man is not considered as a quantitative unit; his qualitative existence is relative to and dependent upon the true existence of the “*tzibur*.” In the theory of probability, the physicists illustrate this formula in the quantum theory. All of the atoms follow laws of probability and energy, but the individual particle (electron, proton, etc.), by itself, is entirely independent and is not bound by any of the mathematical formulas that govern the unit as a group within the laws of physics. Scientists have not been able, to date, to explain this mystery and contradiction between the laws governing the individual particle and those governing groups of atoms. From a philosophical point of view, the problem can be explained by differentiating between the individual electron, the light wave, or the radiation effect—which are qualitative differences. But scientifically and empirically, this is a dilemma that has not yet been solved.

In the Torah, there are numerous laws concerning *yachid* and *rabim*—the individual and the nation. The man as an individual is judged by himself; his success and failure is a direct result of his own free choice. Nonetheless, the individual, in relation to the nation, is dependent for his existence and merit on the “*tzibur*,” of which he is a part; although he may not deserve any benefits from his own merit.

As an illustration: The Gemara says, How do we know know that ten men are needed for *davar shebikedusha*

(forming a minyan, etc.)—and the Gemara learns it from the ten spies, who were called a group of ten. This is difficult to understand, for the ten spies were wicked, and tried to uproot the Torah and the teachings of Moshe! How can this be a proof that kedusha requires ten men? However, according to the concept just explained, there is no difficulty. Although all of those individuals contained in the group may be wicked as individuals, they still possess the holiness and merit of the group unit—Klal Yisrael, which is judged under the laws of “tzibur.”

The laws governing one man are different than those which govern the nation. At times, that which is a shortcoming for one man, is a positive factor for the nation; and vice versa. In Shir Hashirim, it says, “*Kulach yafa rayati, umum ain bach*” (All of you is beautiful, and you have no blemish). “All of you”—the entire nation of Klal Yisrael—is beautiful, without any shortcomings, when the entire nation is viewed as a whole. As the evil prophet Balaam emphasized—“Part of them you will see, but all of them you will not see”—only upon part of the nation can one find shortcomings, but on the entire nation nothing can be found that will enable their curse of Balaam to take effect. The nation, as a unit, is one. Not only one generation of Israel, but the entire history of Israel, from the generation of Moshe to today, is considered as one intact unit. Certain generations are complete in righteousness, such as the generation of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai; other generations are completely guilty, such as the generation of Achab. However, it is impossible to judge any one generation, since they are only one link in the eternal chain of Klal Yisrael. One cannot view from a timely position, it is necessary to reckon the ultimate and future totality of the nation. In other words, the one man is judged according to the present; whereas the nation is judged according to its total potential. Just as

in science there are laws of conservation of energy, so in "kedusha" there are laws of conservation of the "kedusha" of the nation of Israel. Therefore, we are unable to pass judgment upon the entire Klal Yisrael, since we cannot see the future and its consequences.

The Tana D'vei Eliyahu (Chapter 7; also quoted by the sainted Chofetz Chaim) states the following:

"The children of Israel are compared to a vineyard, as it is written, 'For the children of Israel are the *kerem* of G-d of hosts.' From this Rabbi Eliezer the Great said, 'The house of Israel, which is the vineyard of G-d: do not stare at it; if you stared at it, do not enter it; if you have entered it, do not enjoy from it; if you have enjoyed from it, do not eat of its fruits—but if you stared at it, and entered it, and enjoyed from it, and ate of its fruits, the end will be that you will be exterminated from the world.'"

The concept of the house of Israel as the vineyard of G-d, and no man is permitted to look at it critically, is explained by the Chofetz Chaim in his book "*Shmirat Halashon*." He explains at great length how careful one must be about not raising accusations against the nation of Israel, and the great *mitzva* of mentioning its merits. The following is a summary of his words:

"...now come and see Isaiah the prophet, when he saw the glory of G-d and he said, 'Alas to me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and among a people of unclean lips I dwell...' although he had no intention of demeaning the nation of Israel, for he said the same about himself beforehand (and he only meant that he was not worthy of the prophetic vision, both of his own merit and of his people's merit). Nevertheless, what is written afterwards: 'and one of the fiery angels flew above me... and touched my lips'—admonishing him for criticising Israel, my child! And because of this Isaiah the prophet suffered a cruel death

(Yevamot 49b): . . . he (Isaiah) hid in a cedar tree; his pursuer took a saw and cut the tree. When the saw reached his mouth, his soul departed . . . ' The Gemara emphasizes that this was in retaliation for calling Israel a nation of unclean lips!

Also Moshe Rabenu, who bitterly declared of Israel "a culture of evil men"—what happened? Shvuel ben Gershom, who served idols, descended from Moshe . . .

Also the prophet Eliyahu, who declared "I have been zealous . . . and your children have left the covenant"; this caused him to lose his spirit of prophecy, and he was ordered by G-d to anoint Elisha in his place (end of quote from Chofetz Chaim).

Here we have a most profound and enlightening concept. Three of the greatest men who ever lived: Moshe, Isaiah, and Eliyahu—were punished because they brought accusations upon Israel the nation! Although their intention was prophecy, and their words are recorded immortally in the Tanach—nevertheless, they were expected to refuse to utter words of accusation and incrimination against Israel. Thus we see how careful one must be not to ever pass judgment critically on the nation of Israel, no matter how great one may be.

Throughout the Talmudic and Rabbinical literature, we see clearly the importance of vindicating and defending the nation of Israel, and avoiding making accusations against it. In the Tanchuma, we read, "'And they shall judge the populace with righteous justice' . . . Says Rav Yehuda bar Shalom, 'that they (the judges) should always seek to vindicate and defend the people. From whom do we learn this?—From Gideon ben Yoash; when in his time the Israelites were in trouble, and the Almighty looked for one to defend them and he could not find anyone, for the generation was weak in mitzvot and good deeds. As soon as Gideon defended the people, the angel of G-d appeared to him, as it is written,

'And the angel of the L-rd appeared to him and said, go with your strength—the strength of the merit that you defended my people.' Thus they should judge the people '*mishpat zedek*'—that they should defend (melamed zechut) the people." From here we see the importance of defending the Jewish nation before G-d... (quoted from the "Sefer Chofetz Chaim").

Thus we have established that Israel is a group entity, the possession, so to speak, of G-d, beyond the limited visions of mortal man. Its root is infinite and eternal; therefore, it logically follows that no person has permission to pass judgment on the entire nation of Israel, even when it may appear justified and necessary—for the concept of Klal Yisrael is not within human understanding or judgment.

Rabbi Meir Simcha, the author of the *Meshech Chochma*, writes:

"And the waters were for them a wall, from their right and their left." When we examine the ways of the Torah, and its various laws, we discover certain active mitzvot and transgressions such as idolatry, bloodshed, and incest, with various punishments ranging from lashes to the death penalty. On the other hand, there are mitzvot of society and etiquette, such as *loshon hara*, slander, stealing, causing arguments, etc., which are not actively punished by the courts (either technically, because there is no active *maaseh*, or the restitution exempts the punishment). However, this is true only when the individual violates the mitzvot; when the *tzibur* violates these mitzvot, the opposite effects occur. The generation of King David, although it was completely righteous, but because there was internal strife and jealousy, the men fell in battle and were defeated. But the generation of Achab, although they worshipped idols, because there was no internal strife, they would enter battle and emerge victorious (Yerushalmi, Peah). When the nation is corrupted with idolatry



and adultery, "he dwells among them with their uncleanness..." But when the social laws are abused; when there is slander and strife, then G-d removes his presence from their midst. Therefore, even if the nation is violating Shabbat, there is hope, for they are still united as a nation. But when the social laws break down; when there is internal strife and no regard for the fellow man, then the protection of the *tzibur* disappears..."

These words of the Gaon Rabbi Meir Simcha, directly contradict and nullify the opinion of the Satmar Rebbi in his book *Vayoel Moshe*, wherein he states that miracles can be done through the "evil powers" (*koach hatuma*)—which he claims was the source of miracles of modern Israel—for if there is such power, then how did the Yerushalmi prove that in the days of Achab, they witnessed miracles because there was no internal strife? Perhaps the miracles were done through the "evil powers"? Thus we see clearly that the Yerushalmi did not subscribe to such ideas—and such proof is irrefutable.

The Rambam writes in *Moreh Nevuchim* (Vol. 1: Chap. 64):

"When Moshe Rabenu asked G-d to teach him the uniqueness of his attributes, "Tell me your ways"—and afterwards, G-d answers him: "In order that I should find favor in your eyes." In other words, he who knows G-d is he who is favored in G-d's eyes; not someone who merely fasts and prays, but rather he who knows him is favored by G-d. According to the amount of human wisdom and understanding man's closeness to G-d is measured. The first request was answered, when G-d showed him the attributes of mercy—*rachum*, *chanun*, etc. Thus the prime way to understanding G-d is understanding the attributes of mercy for sinners and forgiving transgressors..."

Thus the key factor in understanding G-d and being favored by G-d is in emulating his attributes of mercy and kindness—"just as he is forgiving, so you should be forgiving..." To understand the words of the Rambam, we must again turn to the *Meshech Chochma*: in regard to the "tzibur", the nation as a whole, the prime factor for their continued existence is on the social and moral level, not through the observance of prayers, fast days, and other ceremonies. Even if the entire nation observes all of the ceremonial mitzvot in full, but are corrupt in the laws of "adam l'chavero," only then they will be destroyed. On the contrary, even if they are lax in their observance of Sabbath and other mitzvot (as unfortunately is the case today), they still can hope for salvation, as long as internally there is peace and brotherly love. For the "tzibur" cannot be destroyed for idolatry, but only for moral decay. Thus the words of Rabbi Meir Simcha are actually explained in the *Moreh Nevuchim* of the Rambam.

In Isaiah 56:1, we read: "So says the L-rd: Keep justice and do righteousness; for my salvation is near to come, and my favor to be revealed. Happy is the man that does this, and the son of man that holds fast by it; that keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." The commentaries point out that the first part is in the plural, while the second part is expressed in the singular tense. That is, laws of justice and righteousness are in the plural, which are the laws of society and ethics; the redeeming factors of the entire nation. The ceremonial mitzvot are redeeming factors for the individual, thus the words of the prophet: "Happy is the *man* that does this, and the *son of man* that holds fast by it: keeps the Sabbath from desecration, and keeps his hand from doing any evil!" In other words, the mitzvot of the Torah, such as Sabbath and other practical mitzvot, are redeeming for the man—while the ethics and society laws redeem the nation.

We now must explain a second maxim while delving into the words of the Tana D'vei Eliyahu (that the nation is not judged by the same methods as the individual). For the individual, there are laws of corporeal punishment: lashes, excommunication, the death penalty, etc., whereas the nation (the *tzibur*) has none of these regulations. As long as the nation is consistent in its ethics and social relations, they have the merit to survive; individual sins and transgressions are punished only on an individual level. The Rambam writes, in the Laws of Gifts to the Poor (Chap. 10:1): "We are required to be exceedingly careful about fulfilling the mitzva of charity for the poor, more than any other positive mitzva. For charity is a sign of the righteous seed of Avraham Avinu, as it is written: 'For I know that he will command his descendants to be charitable'; the throne of Israel is not established and the true belief will not endure except through charity, as it says, 'Tzedaka tchonani'. Israel will not be redeemed except through charity... Whoever is merciful, G-d has mercy on him... and whoever is cruel and without pity, we must suspect his ancestry, for cruelty is found only by idolatrous goyim..."

Thus is also explained the words of Rabenu Daniel Habavli, who states that whenever we observe a national deliverance or miracle of the entire nation, it is incumbent to establish a memorial for the miracle (*Zecher V'nes*). According to what has been stated above, this is obviously a precept only binding upon the nation—the *tzibur*. The Gemara in *Horiot* (10b) states: "Alas to the wicked; for they merit in this world that which the righteous merit in the next world." Rashi explains, that this is considered bad for the wicked, because at times they are rewarded in this world in order to cause their complete destruction in the next world. Thus, if we observe an evil man who is successful, one should not conclude that all is well and good with him.

However, this is not true of the *tzibur*. Whenever we see the entire nation being delivered through a miracle, we can surely conclude that this is good for the nation, and reveals the eternal mercy of the Almighty. Therefore, a miracle affecting the entire nation requires that Hallel be recited and the memorial of the miracle be spread far and wide.



In Israel we find the combination of forces between the leaders of the nation and the Torah leaders; each vital parts of the entire nation of Israel, as previously indicated by the Chofetz Chaim. This combination of forces is described by the Gemara (*Menachot* 27a see text of the *Yalkut Shimoni*): "It was asked: the four species of the lulav, two of which produce fruits, two of which do not product fruits: the two that produce fruit require the others, and vice versa; and therefore a man cannot fulfill the mitzva until all of them are together in one group. Likewise, Israel will not be redeemed until they united as one group." Rashi comments that when Israel fasts, they are not answered unless all participate—the righteous and the sinners—similar to the lulav and its species, a combination of those that produce fruit and those that do not. When Israel is redeemed and return to their land, it will be as a combined group (*aguda achat*). Thus, according to Chazal, there will be a combination of forces between the leaders of the State of Israel and the Torah leaders.

A third maxim is found in the Rambam (*Hilchot Mamrim* 3:3-4): "Who is an apikorus?—this is a man who denies the Oral Torah in his mind and his thinking, and goes after the rebellion in his heart, like Zaddok and Beitus and all who followed them. However, the children and descendants of these misguided followers, who were corrupted by their

fathers; and those born among the Karites, and raised by them, all are considered as captive infants (*tinock shenishba*), are completely blameless from sin and considered as if they were forced into apostasy. Even if later they discover that they are Jewish and meet other Jews and their religion, they are considered blameless and not condemned. Therefore, we are required to bring them back to Torah, and help them repent and return to the ways of Torah." This statement of the Rambam is of vital importance for many of the problems and questions that arise today.

The Chazon Ish writes (*Yore Dea, Hilchot Shechita, 2*): "We wrote that according to the Gaonim, a *mumar* (deliberate sinner) is not required to fulfill '*yibum*', and this includes a *mumar* for one act of rebellion, or someone who denies the entire Torah... however, this does not include one who was forced to apostasy as stated in the Rambam; not only must we try to bring them back to the Torah, but we have to support them... Today, practically no one can be considered a *mumar*... Also, there is no longer the law of '*moridim v'lo ma'alim*'; for this only applied when the hand of G-d was revealed in the world, and miracles were seen in the open. One who denied the Torah despite all of these miracles was considered rebellious, and it became necessary to rid the world of such dangerous people. But today, when the miracles are no longer openly viewed, it would not be proper to condemn people in this way, therefore they can no longer be considered rebellious."

This opinion of the Chazon Ish, that today there is no application of the law "*moridim v'lo ma'alim*," is apparently contrary to the Rambam, who states that even today this rule applies. "And one should know, that we have a tradition in our hands from the Rabbis, that in the exile the Jewish courts do not enforce the death penalty—however, this is only in regard to a Jew who violates a capital crime; but

the *Minim* and *Zadukim*—if they persist in their evil ways, they are punished, in order that they should not harm the rest of the nation and destroy the faith.”

According to the Chazon Ish, if the destruction of the *Minim* is carried out, not only will repair to the situation not be rendered, but greater damage will result; thus he is actually in agreement with the Rambam, for they both concur that the end result must be a positive benefit to the faith. If persecution of the *Minim* will not contribute to the faith but instead destroy the faith, even the Rambam agrees that the law should not be applied.

The Chazon Ish confirms that today these people are falsely influenced by their elders; thus they have the law of a “captive child”, which the Rambam already ruled are considered forced transgressors. This law is further explained in the Beit Yosef on the Tur: “Regarding the Karites, in my opinion, because the Rambam has ruled that they are to be considered as captive children, it is therefore forbidden to loan money to them with interest . . .”

There are numerous other sources which prove fully that today, the average non-observant Jew is not considered an *apikorus*, but as a “captive child” and blameless from punishment for transgressions. Thus it can be stated without any reservations that in modern Israel today, *there are no secular Jews!* The Talmud says that the sinners of Israel are full of mitzvot like a pomegranate. If a man observes even one mitzva, he becomes sanctified—therefore, how can anyone ever accuse someone who has “kedushat Yisrael” and observes even one mitzva of being a secular Jew? According to the Halacha, there is no such thing today as a secular Jew, because the entire generation was raised by their elders without religion and knowledge of the Torah, influenced by the “liberalism” of the secular school; therefore most of them are considered “captive children.”

Today it is imperative to set up a dialogue between the observers of the Torah and the non-observers of the Torah. For rather than rejecting the non-observant, we are commanded by the Halacha to bring them back to the ways of the Torah. The task today is to approach the modern Jewish generation and attract them with words of peace, so that they should return to the ways of the Torah and the mitzvot.



The final maxim of the nation of Israel, is the concept of "*Geula*," the redemption of the Jewish people from exile and their return to the land of Israel. A renowned Rosh Yeshiva wrote the following:

"There is great doubt if today we are actually witnessing the stage of redemption in Israel, until the *Moshiach* actually comes. For we have not yet seen the time when swords will be pounded into plowshares, and the wicked will be cast aside like the waves of the sea, and the nations of the world are struggling for power, all of which the Gemara tells us are signs of the final redemption."

Despite the eminence of this great Rosh Yeshiva, the fact is that the redemption will not be an instantaneous process, but a gradual development, as the Talmud Yerushalmi states: "Rav Chiya, Rava and Rav Shimon ben Chalaphtha were walking in the valley... near dawn, and they saw the breaking of dawn in the east. Said Rav Chiya to Rava, Thus will be the final redemption of Israel, in the beginning, a little bit; just as the dawn, as it continues, it gets brighter and brighter, so the redemption will start slowly, and gradually grow greater and greater."

What can this be compared to? To a salesman who travels from door to door; when the man in the house tries

to close the door on him, he sticks his foot in the door, so that the door cannot be closed. The same is the redemption that has begun; the *Moshiach* stuck his foot in the door of redemption, and there is no retreat. The Almighty himself, so to speak, has agreed to the beginning of the redemption, and as the *geula* goes forward, it can only improve and increase.

We see clearly from the Torah and the commentaries that the state of Israel is Halachically the nation of Israel, which is the unique entity of *tzibur*. The nation is holy and sanctified whether or not the people are observant of the Torah. Thus, the opinions of the extremists, who deny the state of Israel and condemn it, is contrary to the Halacha and the Torah. The Torah demands that we defend the nation, right or wrong, and that the people of Torah concentrate their efforts into bringing back those Jews who have strayed from the traditions of the Jewish nation. This will be the correct and only way to the complete redemption of Israel, the *geulah shelama*, and the coming of the *Moshiach*.



## THE SOLDIER OF ISRAEL

The Rambam, in the *Sefer Hamitzvot* (Mitzva 9), writes the following: "We are commanded to sanctify G-d's name, as it is written: 'and I will be sanctified among the children of Israel' (Vayikra 22:32). This mitzva's principle is that we are commanded to proclaim this faith and true belief in the world, and not to fear any... enemy who attempts to subvert our faith by force. Such endeavors must be opposed, even to the point of death; this is the mitzva of *Kiddush Hashem*—sanctification of G-d's name. In other words, we must be prepared even to sacrifice our lives when forcible aggression acts against our faith, to show our love and devotion and belief in G-d and his oneness. We must follow the example of Chananya, Mishael, and Azzaria, who during the reign of the wicked Babylonian king Nebuchadnezer, refused to bow down to the idol of the king. All of the other Jews feared the king, and did bow down to the idol—and no one arose to sanctify the name of G-d; resulting in the shame of all Israel for generations as a result of the loss of this mitzva's observance. For the ultimate purpose of *kiddush hashem* is the public proclamation of the faith in G-d, as the prophet Isaiah stated—that the shame of Israel shall not be conciliated until a future generation shall arise; young men in the time of the future redemption, who during those difficult times will show no fear of death, and thereby proclaim the faith, sanctifying the name of G-d in public. This is the promise of the prophet: 'So says the L-rd to the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: Not now shall Jacob be shamed, and not now shall his face be embarrassed. When he will

see his children in his midst, the creations of my hands, sanctifying my name . . .' (Isaiah 29:22)."

According to the Rambam, *Kiddush Hashem* is not only a mitzva on the individual, but also a mitzva on the nation. When the entire nation failed to oppose the wicked king in Babylonia, the bravery of Chanaya, Mishael, and Azzaria was not sufficient to atone for the nation's failure in *Kiddush Hashem*. The great sages, the scholars and Torah leaders in Babylonia, did not withstand the critical tests of *Kiddush Hashem*, according to the Rambam. But what is the meaning of the promise of the prophet Isaiah? Why does the prophet describe the young redeemers and fighters as "the creations of my hands"? A parallel passage, quoted by the great sage Rabbi Meir N'sivim, sheds lights on this difficult question.

"When the Egyptians were drowning in the Red Sea, and the children of Israel were saved through the hand of G-d, the angels in heaven began a song of praise to G-d. G-d silenced them, saying 'the creations of my hands are drowning in the sea, and you wish to sing and rejoice?'" (Midrash B'shalach).

Rabbi Meir N'sivim asks the following: These Egyptians were cruel people, who oppressed the Jews for hundreds of years. They murdered Jewish infants by placing them in walls in place of missing bricks; they committed foul crimes and iniquities; they were on their way to destroy the Jewish nation fleeing Egypt—why did they deserve even the slightest mercy from G-d, that he expressed sadness at their demise? Why did G-d silence the angels from their song of praise at the destruction of the Egyptian army in the depths of the Red Sea?

Rabbi Meir N'sivim answers the following: In G-d's eyes, the worst murderer, the vilest criminal, even the cruelest savage, who has never performed one good deed during his en-

tire life, still has one merit: he is the creation of G-d's hands. On a human level, this is not necessarily a basis for compassion; but in G-d's eyes, this is in itself a merit of the human being. Thus, even the evil Egyptians—though not deserving of any mercy on a human level—are still recognized by G-d as the creation of his hands. Therefore G-d told the angels, "The creations of my hands are drowning—even the most evil human has this merit—therefore, you, the angels, should refrain from song."

From the words of Rabbi Meir N'sivim, we see that the description of a person without any merits of his own is "the creation of G-d's hands." A rosho, an apikoros; the non-believer and the atheist—despite all of their wickedness, are still called the creation of G-d.

Thus we can understand the meaning of the words of Isaiah. There will come a time, when the young men will show no fear and go forth to do battle for the sake of Israel. These young men will reject the faith of their forefathers; they will not believe in the Torah, or observe its mitzvot. They will lack all the merits of Jews, and will refuse to return to the belief in the Torah. Their one merit, however, no matter how wicked they may be, shall be that they are "creations of G-d's hands." These will be the young men who will sanctify the name of G-d in the future, by sacrificing their lives and fearlessly doing battle in the name of Israel. This is the message of the prophet; the fulfillment of *kiddush Hashem*, that was the shame of the pious generation in Babylonia. Because the great scholars and sages failed to sanctify G-d's name in the face of danger, the future redemption was taken from their hands and given to the young men who were not Torah sages, or even observant of the Torah.

The prophecy of Isaiah is the fact of our own generation. The soldiers of Israel, the young men who leave their families

and homes to fearlessly fight the enemy coming to destroy them, have sanctified the name of G-d and his people before the entire world. The brave freedom fighters who fought in 1948 without regard for their own lives; the victorious army of Israel in 1956 and 1967; the brave young soldiers who turned back the Egyptians and Syrians on Yom Kippur—these are the young men who have fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. Many of these soldiers are not observers of the mitzvot; some claim to be atheists or agnostics; they do not represent the Torah world or the Talmudic scholars—but, as the prophet foretold, this is the army of Israel.

## NATIONS UNITED AGAINST ISRAEL

When historians in the future look back to this generation, they will probably notice that the only issue the United Nations ever agreed upon was the extermination of Israel. No other topic or controversy has brought the "civilized" world together since its founding after World War II. Yet those same historians will be at a loss to explain what exactly is the reason for the isolation of Israel on the international scene, and what brought about the "united" hatred for a people so little deserving of such treatment.

In Israel, there is fear that this the beginning of the end of the Jewish state; what will the future hold in store, if the entire world is against such a small nation? Even rabbis and spiritual leaders are at a loss to explain these traumatic events; suddenly the era the *atchalta d'geula*—the beginning of the redemption—is apparently suffering a serious, if not fatal, reversal of fortune.

As always, the answer to this problem lies in the Torah, through the words of *Chazal*, the pillars of the *Masora*. The isolation and hatred of Israel today, rather than being a reversal of the *atchalta d'geula*, are instead a step forward, as predicted by *Chazal* in the Gemara. The sudden uniting of the nations against Israel is a part of the eventual redemption of the Jewish people.

The Mishna (Ediyot 2:9) States: "*Haav zocheh v'ben b'noi, ov'koach ov'osher, ov'chochma, ov'shanim, ov'mispar hadorot lifanav v'hu hakaitz shene'mar korai dorot marosh.*" A father merits for his son (through heredity) handsomeness, strength, wealth, wisdom, years and several previous genera-

tions, and this is the redemption (of Israel) as it is written, "He calls the generations from the beginning" (Isaiah 41:4). The Mishna then compares the final redemption of Israel to the redemption of Egypt; first there was a redemption from slavery; then there was the redemption of the land of Israel. The *Raavad* (Rabenu Avraham ben David) explains that in the future redemption there would first be the physical redemption of Israel, and afterwards the spiritual redemption; i.e., the repentance and return to the Torah.

The *Raavad* then writes the following, "And thus in the Messianic days, G-d will not redeem Jews and bring them to the land of Israel at once, but he will lead them through the desert of nations (*midbar amim*), as is prophesied in Ezekiel 20."

The prediction of the *Raavad*, that first there will be the physical *geula* of Israel, and then the spiritual, is clearly happening in our generation. What is difficult to understand is his prediction that Israel will be led through the desert of the nations before the final redemption. What does this mean, and how do we understand his statement?

Several recent events have shed light on the words of the *Raavad*. First, the United Nations—the civilized world declares that they want to work on peace, understanding, friendship, to end wars, strife, and hatred in the world, and what do they do?—The entire United Nations applauds the leader of the murderers and the terrorists. On the international level, the United Nations is the real symbol of all nations of the world, its culture and civilization. And what happens?—the United Nations chooses dictators, mad men, and mass murderers to condemn Israel as a racist state. At the peak of modern development, when mankind has utilized every form and system to achieve world harmony and peace, the United Nations declares that Israel must be isolated and destroyed. This is the *midbar*

*anim*—the desert of the nations. Israel is destined, according to the *Raavad*, not to wander in a desert, but to become isolated at a time when the entire world is a desert—a morally bankrupt, civilized desert. Thus, in the time of the Messianic redemption, the entire world will become a *midbar anim*—isolating Israel as the light of the world. All the events happening today in the United Nations are a fulfillment of the prophesy of Ezekiel, as explained by the *Raavad*.

In Israel, for many years, movements and philosophies developed by the Maskilim, Ahad Haam, and others urged that Israel must become a "*merkaz ruchani*." The Torah, the yeshivot, the precious study that was a way of life for thousands of years, was cast aside by the Maskilim. The "*merkaz ruchani*" for Israel lies in modern concepts, they said. So what happened? The early Maskilim and Zionists, rejecting the Torah, copied the ways of the world, seeking to make a cultural center in Israel. And where did they concentrate their efforts? In two areas, the universities, and the sports. Since Israel was founded, the universities and the sports have been the centers of culture for the secular Zionists.

What is the result of the new cultural centers of secular Zionists? In Rechovot, the home of the Weizmann Institute; during a soccer game—the pride of the sport culture in Israel, a Jew murders a fellow Jew in cold blood, without any provocation.\* The culture that rejected Rashi, the Rambam, the Vilna Gaon, the Chofetz Chaim, and created its own new cultural center, what did it produce? A deliberate murder, in the city of its culture, during the sport of its culture. If one peruses all of the Torah responsa and historical works for the past three thousand years, one will discover that there never was a case of deliberate cold blooded murder recorded.

\* This happened during the winter of 5736.

Thus, the Divine guidance is demonstrating that the cultural center created by the Maskilim and the secular Zionists is also a *midbar amim*—a part of the desert of the nations.

And the last point—why did the *Raavad* insert the explanation of the *geula* in the Mishna of “A father merits for the son”? What is the connection between father and son and the redemption?

In ancient history, the father was not only the head of the house, but the accepted ruler and household guide, whose word and guidance was absolute. As nations began to develop, the civilized world began to cast off the family ties, and in the modern world the family is practically non-existent. So what happens? The son goes to the university, which is supposed to be the cultural center for the world—and he is exposed to the worst immorality, drug culture, violence, and radicalism that the world has ever known. Today the father is afraid to send his son to university, the great cultural center of the world, and finds that the only solution to the corruption and chaos of the universities is family life with the father returning to the head of the household, as in ancient times. Thus, in the time of the Messianic era, “*Av zocheh l'bno . . .*” Only the father’s return to the original family structure will preserve the son from the perils of *midbar amim*, the desert of the nations.

All of this, which is predicted for the era of the *Moshiach*, we witness today—bearing proof to the eternity of the words of *Chazal*—and assuring us that events of the day are leading to the final redemption—not away from it.



THE NEW JERUSALEM — ירושלים בבנינה

Since 1967, when Jerusalem was liberated after the Six-Day War, the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people seemed to have come true. For two thousand years, after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Western Wall, the Temple Mount, and the Jewish Quarter were under foreign rule; since the independence of Israel in 1948, closed to all Jews. No one believed that "*Yerushalayim Bevinayana*," rebuilt Jerusalem, would occur in this generation. "*Beshuv Hashem et shivat Zion hayinu kecholmin*"; only in our dreams did we picture the return of Israel to Jerusalem.

Now that we were found worthy to witness the return to Jerusalem, and our dreams have become reality, rabbis and scholars are debating the necessity of continuing *zecher le-churban*, the mourning and fast days established by the Gemara for the destruction of Jerusalem. Are Tisha B'av, the ban on music, and all the various practices and customs to remind us of the destruction of Jerusalem still relevant today, now that Jerusalem has been liberated and is being rebuilt?

In Megilat Taanit, the pre-Mishnaic book of fast days, we learn that after the Second Temple was rebuilt, all the various fast days were made into days of feasting and joy, with mourning, fasting, and even eulogies prohibited. Once Jerusalem was rebuilt, days of sorrow become days of happiness. For the Torah is a universal system created by G-d. The destruction of Jerusalem, however tragic, is considered by the Torah as a punishment visited by G-d upon the Jewish people for their transgressions; once Jerusalem has been rebuilt, it is proof that Israel has been forgiven by

G-d, and sorrow must turn to joy. The Torah does not observe memorials or days of remembrance; former tragedies are no longer relevant in the Torah, once G-d has decided to rebuild the destroyed city. Yet the question remains; has the time come to begin revising the days of sadness to days of joy—from *galut* to *geula*, from exile to redemption.

Some circles of scholars claim that the mourning for Jerusalem should not be revised. Only the spiritual redemption of Jerusalem, the return of Israel to the Torah, can convert the mourning of Tisha B'av to redemption. The physical presence of Jews in Old Jerusalem, the return of Jewish sovereignty over its ancient capital, and the ingathering of the exiles from the Diaspora—all of these, however wonderful, are not the era of *geula* and *Moshiach*, they claim. Despite the esteem of some of these rabbis and scholars who hold this opinion, there are clear Halachic authorities contrary to this opinion. According to the Rambam, Raavad, and others, the physical redemption of Israel is a part of the *geula*, and of the era of *Moshiach*.

In addition the Raavad states that the physical redemption of Israel will *precede* the spiritual redemption, the *teshuva* of Israel to Torah. In the Gemara Megilla (13a), the rabbis teach us that not only can the physical redemption come before the spiritual redemption, but that it *will* come first. Although we mourn for the physical and spiritual destruction of Jerusalem, all our prayers on Tisha B'av concentrate on the physical, rather than the spiritual desolation of Jerusalem, as we read in the prayer "*Nachem*" in Shemoneh Esreh:

"O comfort, Hashem, the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem; the city in mourning, desolate, shamed, and destroyed. The city mourns for its children; its habitations are desolate; shamed from its glory; destroyed without its population."

Throughout the Kinot and prayers of Tisha B'av, Israel mourns the physical destruction of Jerusalem and Zion; the

exile of its inhabitants. Now that Jerusalem is once again under Jewish rule; as buildings rise in its skyline; as the Jews return to live in its gates—should the prayers and mourning customs be revised? Are we now witnessing “*Yerushalayim bivinyana*,” the new Jerusalem of Geulat Yisrael?

The Gemara says: “*Bizman sheमितznefet b'rosh Kohen Gadol atara havi b'rosh kol adam*—when the Kohen Gadol is wearing his priestly hat, a crown rests on the head of every man.” When we have the Holy Temple, Israel is in its glory. When there is no Temple, no *Kohen Gadol* serving in his holy raiment, when Jerusalem is in ruins and desolate, every Jew is in mourning. Thus the bridegroom on his wedding day must temper his joy and remember the destruction of Jerusalem, even on the most joyous day of his life. What is the connection, however, between the *Kohen Gadol* and the bridegroom, that the Gemara compares them symbolically?

Rabbi A. I. Kook zt”l, writes the following: “(In the prayer *Lecha Dodi*) *Hitnaari meafar kumi, livshi bigdei tifartaich ami; al yad ben Yishai Bait Halachmi, Karva el nafshi g'ala*” (Arise from the earth, regain your youth, attire yourself with your garments of splendor; my people—through the descendant of Yishai of Beth Lechem will come the redemption of my soul.) When the children of Israel return to Jerusalem, when its hills are filled with inhabitants, then Jerusalem is dressed in its garments of splendor. This is the redemption of Jerusalem.

As previously mentioned, the *Raavad* says there are to be two redemptions of Israel: first the physical redemption and afterwards the spiritual redemption. Just as when the Israelites left Egypt, they were first liberated from their physical galut, and afterwards they were redeemed spiritually, through *Matan Torah*; so in the era of *Moshiach* Israel will first undergo a physical redemption and then the spiritual redemption (*Raavad*; Ediyot 2:9).

Today Israel is undergoing its physical redemption, the *geulat haguf*, Jerusalem is in its raiment of splendor, its people are returning to live within its gates. And Rabbi Kook's prophetic words are actually the prophecy of Isaiah.

"Awake, awake! Attire yourself, O Zion, gird yourself with raiment of splendor, O Jerusalem, Holy City; for no longer will the uncircumcised and unclean ones enter you" (Isaiah 52:1). When the idolatrous *goyim*, the unclean and evil nations, no longer are found in Jerusalem, and only Israel lives within its gates, then is Jerusalem attired in garments of splendor. Until that day, Jerusalem still is in mourning, still lacking in its glory and splendor.

The spiritual redemption of Jerusalem cannot be achieved as long as the "uncircumcised and unclean" are within its gates. Our joy at today's rebuilding of Jerusalem, the glory of its reconstruction, are all part of the physical redemption of Jerusalem. The spiritual redemption of Jerusalem—Jerusalem in its raiment of splendor—must await fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, when idolatrous *goyim* are no longer found therein. This will complete the physical redemption of Jerusalem, and only then will come the spiritual redemption of Jerusalem. And in *Lecha dodi*, the poet concludes: "*Al yad ben Yishai Beit Halachmi, Karva el nafshi g'ala.*" Through the son of David, and the coming of *Moshiach*, will come the *geulat hanefesh*—after the physical raiment of splendor, the physical redemption of Jerusalem.

The physical raiment of Jerusalem will not be complete until the words of Isaiah are fulfilled. Thus, despite the return of Jews to Jerusalem, and its reconstruction, the mourning of *Tisha B'av* and *zecher v'churban* cannot yet be revised.

## THE NEW JERUSALEM — ירושלים בבנינה

by *Mordecai Alexander*

The Western world was shocked and angered when UNESCO voted to condemn Israel for the "destruction of the antiquities of old Jerusalem." Everyone was cognizant of the sinister Arab plot to mix politics and culture on a world-wide basis, and protests arose from all concerned. However, another plot against Israel is being planned as well, unknown as yet to the Western world. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, which was foretold by the prophets of Israel and is part of the Messianic era we are now living in, is currently being challenged by the modern world, and may result in the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophesy of world war against Jerusalem.

In order to understand this problem in its true perspective, it would be proper to see how the Western world looks at the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, since the liberation of 1967.

In *Newsweek* (July 30, 1973—before the Yom Kippur War) the following was reported:

"The walled Old City of Jerusalem sits in timeless repose amid the ancient terraced hills of Judea. Within are the cherished shrines of three faiths: the golden domed Mosque of Omar—the Dome of the Rock—where Mohammed is said to have sprung up to heaven; the Wailing Wall, symbol of the ancient agony of the Jews; and the tortuous Via Dolorosa . . . Home to 24,000 Moslems, Christians and Jews, Old Jerusalem is a welter of cramped, twining streets, Arab bazaars reeking with the fragrance of spices, barefoot urchins

tugging at tourists' sleeves, and white-bearded elders impassively playing dominoes. Now all this may be changed irretrievably by a surge of urban development, some of it the direct result of the ongoing conflict between Jew and Arab.

"During Israel's first nineteen years as a nation, the city was partitioned by barbed wire and bleak, barren stretches of no man's land. Then, after the Six-Day War of 1967, came the Israeli annexation of Arab East Jerusalem, and a wave of expansion and tourism. The boom has brought fresh problems, from incongruous high rises to dense traffic that leaves the streets cloaked in smoke."

It is interesting to find *Newsweek* so concerned about traffic and smog in Jerusalem, and only since the Jewish reentry into Old Jerusalem. Of course, before the Six-Day War, these problems didn't exist in Jerusalem. East Jerusalem was a decayed, crumbling city of filth, squalor, and poverty. The Jewish quarter in the Old City walls, the home of Jerusalemites for thousands of years, had been turned into stables and garbage dumps upon the orders of the Jordanian authorities, after the burning of the Hurva, Nissan Bek, and other synagogues therein. The huge Mt. of Olives Jewish cemetery, with its thousands of ancient tombstones, was ordered destroyed and the headstones were appropriated for important Jordanian building projects such as army bunkers and latrine seats.

But this is what made Jerusalem so dear to the world—its antiquities, its former glory, its barren hills and stones. The *New York Times* wrote in an editorial:

"There is no time to be lost if Jerusalem is to be saved from the high rise invasion. That the Israeli authorities protect the architectural integrity of Jerusalem and its surroundings is a matter of world concern."

What does the *New York Times* consider this "architectural integrity" of Jerusalem? In the same editorial:

"Since 1967 Jerusalem has become a boom town, with an exploding population and soaring land prices. The resulting proliferation of high rise hotels, apartments and office buildings threatens to overwhelm the magnificent architectural integrity of the ancient city and to destroy the stark beauty of the barren surrounding hills that has been an essential component of Jerusalem's unique spiritual mystery."

Notice the words "stark beauty of barren hills!" During the first and second Temple eras, did Jerusalem attract pilgrims because of its barren hills? On the contrary, since the destruction of the second Temple, a Jew viewing for the first time the barren hills of Judea and Jerusalem was required to tear his clothing in mourning and recite the following prayer:

'Your holy cities have become a desert; Zion has become barren, Jerusalem has been destroyed. The house of our Holy Temple and our glory wherein our forefathers praised you has been burned by fire; and all our yearnings have been destroyed' (Isaiah. 64:9-10).

In addition to the spiritual loss of Jerusalem, the Jews have mourned the physical decay and barrenness of Jerusalem. Now that the rebuilding of Jerusalem has been started, paving the way for the spiritual rebuilding as well, the world is up in arms against Israel. The idolaters rejoiced in the destruction of Jerusalem two thousand years ago, and have throughout the centuries rejoiced in seeing "*Yerushalayim bichurbana*"—Jerusalem in its destruction. And now that Jerusalem is being rebuilt, the world is upset while the Jews are rejoicing. For all of our prayers about Jerusalem say one thing: may we be worthy to see "*Yerushalayim beviyana*"; Jerusalem in its rebuilding.

Thus we understand why *Newsweek* and *The New York Times* are against the high rises, apartment buildings, and new hotels being built in Jerusalem. To them, beauty of Jeru-

salem is "Yerushalayim bechurbana." The destroyed homes, the crumbling synagogues, the decaying hills are all the signs of a beautiful Jerusalem to the enemies of Israel. No one protested the Jordanian desecrations of synagogues and cemeteries because all they were doing was adding to the *goyishe* beauty of Jerusalem. The more destruction, the more barrenness, and the more decay; the more "beauty" added to the holy city of Jerusalem.

In the Gemara and the Midrash, we find how accurately Chazal anticipated the idolater's concept of Jerusalem. Edom says "*Imalai Hacharava!*" My pleasure is in its (Jerusalem's) destruction. Esau, who is Edom, is the eternal enemy of Yaacov, the Jewish people. "If you hear that Rome and Jerusalem are destroyed; or that both are built, do not believe it—but if you hear Jerusalem is destroyed and Rome is built; or Rome is destroyed and Jerusalem is built, believe it" (Megilla 6a).

As Jews, we want to see *Yerushalayim Bivinyana*. The "architectural antiquities" and "unique spiritual mystery" that the Western world wants for Jerusalem is "*Yerushalayim bechurbana.*"

Thus today we see how Zechariah's prophesy, so unbelievable a few years ago, may well be imminent in our own days.

"And I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for war... half the city will be exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut away from the city. And the L-rd will go out and fight the nations on that day..." (Zechariah, 14).

Israel will be worthy to see *Yerushalayim Bivinyana*, and must not allow the world to pressure it into *Yerushalayim bechurbana*. The true beauty of Jerusalem, its genuine splendor, is when Jews are living in its fold, and building after building rises along its hills. "For Zion I will not be



silent; for Jerusalem I will not be still; until its justice shines like the light and its salvation like a torch afire. And the nations will see its justice, and the kings its glory; and it will be called a new name" (Isaiah 62; 1-3).

"Upon your walls O Jerusalem, I have placed watchmen, day and night they will not rest... and the land will no longer be barren, and your glory will shine throughout the world."

## MIDA K'NEGED MIDA—IN MODERN ISRAEL

*Mida k'neged mida* means literally, "a measure for a measure"—the axiom that punishment is meted out by G-d equal and proportionate to the offense. In other words, a sinner is punished by the exact same means that he performed the transgression. A thief, undetected by the authorities, will suffer a monetary loss equal to the amount stolen; a murderer will suffer the same fate as his victim, if he goes unpunished through the courts.

*Mida k'neged mida* also works in a positive sense—in regard to the observance of mitzvot. A man who gives a tenth of his income (*ma'aser*) to charity is rewarded by G-d by receiving an increase in money the next year, proportional to the amount given to charity—and likewise, a man who fails to give charity will lose, through some other outside cause, the amount he should have given to charity. "*Kol hamerachem, merach'mim olov*"—one who is kind and merciful to others, he himself receives mercy. "*Kol habore'ach min hakavod, hakavod borachat acharav*"—he who avoids honor, the honor pursues him; and he who pursues honor, the honor avoids him. These and many hundreds of other maxims are found throughout the Talmud and the Mishna, all giving the many variations of *mida k'neged mida*.

The first mention in the Torah of *mida k'neged mida* is found by Yitro (Shemot 18:11): "And Yitro rejoiced for all the goodness which the L-rd had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. . . Now I know that the L-rd is greater than all gods; for that which they conspired (against Israel, happened) to them."

Yitro was the first outsider to recognize that G-d acts *mida k'neged mida*. He saw that the Egyptians, who afflicted Israel by water (by drowning the infant boys), were punished by water—drowning in the Red Sea.

However, Yitro realized more from the concept of *mida k'neged mida*. He saw that proof of G-d's existence, of his power and absolute Divine guidance, were manifest in every display of *mida k'neged mida*. Thus, throughout history, the presence of G-d and *hashgacha p'ratit* is demonstrated empirically and irrefutably verified through *mida k'neged mida*—G-d's unique system of reward and punishment.

In the science of probability, laws are derived from empirically-proven statistical data, even where prior theories or laws do not indicate the existence of such phenomenon. Thus, a logician, trained by the laws of probability, accepts any constant found in the universe as fact, and relates to it as a law of nature that is consistent with empirical statistics and does not contradict any other related empirical laws. The reasons and philosophical explanations for the phenomenon are of no concern to the scientist; he will not reject a scientific theory proven empirically merely because he does not understand the philosophical aspects of the theory.

The laws of the Torah are in agreement with the scientific method. A genuine man of Torah will not reject any theory of science that is proven empirically, even if the philosophical aspects appear in conflict with the Torah. Rather, just like the scientist, the Torah scholar sees no need to retain any philosophical viewpoints relative to the Torah, for these are subject to change as the generations advance in understanding. Only the laws of the Torah, which are all empirical, and can be demonstrated in the laboratory or statistically proven, are eternal and unchangable. The *drush* and extraneous veracities that are not found anywhere in the Gemara, are all subject to obsolescence, without detracting

in any way from the eternal truth of the written and Oral Torah—just as the obsolescence of the philosophers such as Kant, Hume, or Russell has not affected the true sciences or mathematics.

Therefore, although *mida k'neged mida* is scoffed at by the atheists and modern liberals, or is distorted by the zealous religionists—the Torah tells us that it is an empirical law. When the Torah says that the rain in Israel will not fall at the proper time when the people sin, it will happen and is observable to the scientist. In fact, should a scientist be trained to computerize such data, he could program all the rainfall in Israel for four thousand years, and compare it to the behavior of the people, and he would have an exact statistical proof of one of the Torah's promises.

But it is not always necessary to computerize the data and manifestations of *mida k'neged mida*. Let us look at modern Israel, where according to the Gemara (*Rosh Hashana* 17b), the land of Israel is subject to constant Divine scrutiny and subsequent reward and punishment at once. Because G-d does mete out reward and punishment *mida k'neged mida*, it is possible to observe and prove through probability the laws of the Torah.

An example of *mida k'neged mida* in modern Israel is the unusually high number of auto accidents in Israel (in a country that has few drunk drivers, which accounts for the majority of accidents in the U.S.). According to the Torah, one of the unique punishments of sinners in the land of Israel is to be consumed by wild animals ("*chayot raot*"). Where do we see today wild animals?—we only see people killed by cars. So upon this the Rashba and other *Rishonim* comment that "wild animals" referred to by the Torah are symbols for any damager (*mazik*), just as "ox" and "donkey" in the Torah mean any possession of a man that can do damage. Thus we see that the punishment of "*chayot raot*" is an

immutable law, and only the *means* changes from generation to generation.

A second example of *mida k'neged mida* is found in the crisis of forced autopsies that created such a furor in Israel several years ago (and has still not been resolved, as autopsies continue without permission in most Israel hospitals). The Torah says (*Vayikra* 18:26-7): "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations . . . that the land shall not expel you also, when you defile it, as it expelled the nation that was before you." The land of Israel expels those who defile the land—how do we witness this today?

According to the Halacha, a Jew who is buried, and all his parts are not buried with him, it is considered as if he did not receive a real burial (*kevurat Yisrael*). Thus, when an autopsy is performed and all organs are not buried with the body, it is as if the person was not buried. So, *mida k'neged mida*, those sinners who deserve the punishment of being expelled by the land, created their own decree of forced autopsies, thereby causing that they are halachically not being buried and therefore are "expelled by the land"!

It is possible to list numerous similar cases in modern Israel, if one examines both the history and the current events and compares them to the laws of the Torah. By using the yardstick of *mida k'neged mida*, one will easily be able to verify and establish the eternal laws of Torah.