

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns surrounds the central text. The border is composed of multiple layers: an outermost layer of large floral motifs, a middle layer of smaller repeating floral designs, and an innermost layer of a simple repeating scroll pattern.

KOVETZ
HEOROS
HATMIMIM
V'ANASH

~ Melbourne ~

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10 SHEVAT, 5772



PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS OF THE RABBINICAL COLLEGE
OF
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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A project of
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מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

יה"ר שיראה הרבה נחת מבניו – התמימים בפרט
משלוחיו, חסידיו, וכלל ישראל בכלל
ויגאלנו ויוליכנו קוממיות לארצינו
וישמיענו תורה חדשה מפיו
בגאולה האמיתית והשלימה
תיכף ומיד ממש

מוקדש ע"י

התלמידים השלוחים

הת' ישראל שיחי' אוחנה
הת' שניאור זלמן שיחי' אוסוביצקי
הת' משה אהרן שיחי' באקמאן
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי' בעגון
הת' צבי הירש שיחי' גורארי'
הת' ישראל שמעון הכהן שיחי' דובינסקי
הת' לוי יצחק שיחי' ליבעראוו
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי' ליבערמאן
הת' שמואל שיחי' ליפסקער
הת' שמואל שיחי' סלונים
הת' אברהם צבי הכהן שיחי' ענגעל
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי' פאלטער

לזכות הבחור התמים
יוסף יצחק שיחי' גופין
לרגל יום הולדתו ביום הבהיר יו"ד שבט
להצלחה רבה ומופלגה בכל עניניו
ברוחניות ובגשמיות

ולזכות אחיו דוד שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו
ביום כ"ח שבט הבעל"ט

ולזכות אחיו איסר אהרן שיחי'
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ולזכות אחיותיו גנעשא שצערא
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ביום הבהיר יו"ד שבט
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מוקדש ע"י
הוריו הרה"ת ר' ישראל
ומרת רבקה שי'

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D'VAR MALCHUS

G-d's Sovereignty Over All

This week's parshah describes several miracles of a general nature which occurred to the Jewish people after they left Egypt including the splitting of the sea and the slaughter of the Egyptians, the sweetening of the waters of Marah, the manna, the slav [the fowl with which G-d provided the Jews], the well of water which accompanied the Jews through the desert, and the defeat of Amalek in battle.

The fact that the Torah groups all of these miracles in a single Torah portion appears to indicate that they share a connection. Nevertheless, that connection is difficult to understand. On the surface, they appear to be separate and different matters. Also, the word Torah means "instruction." Thus, every story the Torah relates is told to provide us with an "instruction" in our service of G-d. What instruction can we derive from the narrative of these miracles?

The resolution to these questions depends on the understanding that the three miracles, the splitting of the Red Sea, the manna, and the war with Amalek, were of a general nature, whose significance continues for all time.

In regard to the splitting of the Red Sea: It is explained that the splitting of the Red Sea was one of the preparations necessary for the giving of the Torah, and thus continues to have ongoing relevance. For this reason, we recall the splitting of the sea in our prayers each day. The continuous relevance of the manna is obvious from G-d's command to set aside one measure as "a keepsake for your [future] generations," so that we will constantly be aware that G-d is providing our livelihood. For this reason, the Shulchan Aruch recommends reciting the passage concerning the manna each day. Similarly, the war with Amalek is described as continuing, "from generation to generation." Many authorities consider the mitzvah of remembering Amalek as obligatory upon us at all time and for this reason, it is customary to recall Amalek each day in the Six Remembrances.

The connection between these three miracles can be explained within the context of the song sang after the crossing of the Red Sea which expresses our praise of G-d and our thanks for His saving us from the Egyptians. Nevertheless, the song also mentions the retribution visited upon the Egyptians and the death they suffered. On the surface, the question arises: Why is it necessary to mention the gentiles at all? Why doesn't the song focus on the Jews alone?

The mention of the gentiles is necessary, however, because the purpose of this song is not to praise the greatness of G-d in the spiritual realms or His love for the souls of Jewish people. Rather, the intent is to praise His power and greatness within this material world and to acknowledge his bond with the Jews as they exist, one nation among many gentile foes. Although they are "a lamb among seventy wolves," G-d protects them from harm and works miracles for them.

This is the setting for the revelation of how, as the song concludes, "G-d will reign forever and ever," how His sovereignty will be expressed throughout the world. Commenting on the above verse, the Midrash relates: "Although you have existed for all time, your throne was not established, nor were you made known in your world until your children uttered the song." At the splitting of the Red Sea, the Divine power invested and en clothed within the world was openly revealed, and the potential was granted to see G-dliness in every entity in the world. Through the Jews' recitation of the song, they brought about the recognition of G-d's sovereignty in the world.

In order to bring about the revelation of "And G-d will reign forever and ever" in the world at large, a person must first internalize the awareness of G-d's sovereignty within his own consciousness. He must realize that G-d's Kingship encompasses the totality of his existence, even his mundane physical realities.

This is the message of the manna, that one's livelihood comes directly from G-d, and from G-d alone. Even when a Jew must work to earn his livelihood and other intermediaries are involved, he is being sustained by G-d. Thus, the Rebbe Maharash would say that earning a livelihood today, in the time of exile, is "manna from heaven."

A Jew is essentially above the natural limitations of the world. Even when he descends and is involved with those realities and the gentiles in his environment, he remains essentially above nature and is sustained by "manna

from heaven." [This lesson is further reinforced by the miracles of the slav and the well of water which accompanied the Jews in the desert. They are also examples of how G-d provided for the Jews material needs in a supernatural manner.]

The realization that G-d controls his material existence makes it possible for a Jew to internalize his awareness of G-d's sovereignty. Since "He placed the world within their hearts," this awareness makes it possible for G-d's sovereignty to be expressed in the world at large. There are, however, impediments to the revelation of His sovereignty which must be nullified in order for that revelation to be complete. This is the purpose of the war against Amalek.

Our Sages comment, "G-d swore that neither His name, nor His throne will be complete until the name of Amalek is wiped out entirely." Thus, Amalek represents the antithesis of G-d's sovereignty. Since the expression of G-d's sovereignty is an eternally relevant concept, the negation of Amalek, who prevent that expression, is also of constant relevance.

On a personal level, the quality of Amalek refers to coldness in the service of G-d. On the verse, "Remember what Amalek did to you...as you came forth from Egypt, how he met you on the way...", the Midrash explains that the Hebrew *korcha* translated as "he met you," could also be interpreted as "he cooled you off." Similarly, the Rabbis have noted the numerical equivalence between Amalek and the word *safek* meaning "doubt."

Amalek represents the potential which raises doubts in our minds and cools off our excitement after witnessing the miracles that accompany our personal exodus from Egypt. It deadens a Jew's sensitivity to the providence with which G-d controls our lives. Therefore, for G-d's sovereignty to be revealed, Amalek must be nullified.

There is a connection between the above concepts and Yud Shvat, the *yahrzeit* of the Previous Rebbe, which was commemorated this week. The Previous Rebbe's service was expressed in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus throughout the world, preparing the world for the revelation of G-d's sovereignty.

[There is also a connection between the miracles mentioned above and the teachings of Chassidus. Torah is described as "bread" and within Torah itself, the teachings of P'nimiyus HaTorah as "bread from Heaven," *mana*.

Similarly, oil is used as a metaphor for Chassidus and the *Slav* were distinguished as a uniquely succulent fowl.]

The relation of the teachings of Chassidus to the revelation of G-d's sovereignty within the world was reflected in the Previous Rebbe's efforts to translate the teachings of Chassidus into secular languages and his efforts to spread justice and righteousness (as expressed through the seven universal laws commanded to Noach and his descendants) among the gentiles.

The nature of the Previous Rebbe's service is reflected in his name, Yosef Yitzchok. Yosef is associated with the concept of "increase" and Yitzchok with "laughter" and "joy." More particularly, Yosef refers to the service of "May G-d add on to me another son," i.e., transforming one who is "another," estranged from his Jewish roots, to a "son." Yitzchok is associated with the service of "Whoever hears will laugh with me," spreading happiness and joy in a manner that "whoever hears," i.e., even someone who does not consciously intend to hear, "will laugh with me."

An added dimension of the Previous Rebbe's *yahrzeit* is reflected by the fact that this year, it is commemorated on a Friday. Friday is set aside for the preparations for Shabbos. Similarly, this points to the fact that ours, the sixth millennia (and more particularly, the latter portion of the sixth millennia, more than three quarters of it having passed), is a preparatory stage for the seventh millennia, "the day which is all Shabbos and rest for eternity." Indeed, it is already "Friday afternoon" and we are waiting with anticipation for "Shabbos." This must be associated with an increase in the study of P'nimiyus HaTorah as a foretaste and preparation for the revelation of P'nimiyus HaTorah in the Era of Redemption.

(Adapted from a Sicho of Shabbos Parshas Beshallah 11 Shvat, 5751)



CHASSIDUS

תורה אור ד"ה ויגש אליו יהודה Insight in

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The מאמר begins with stating the difference between the משכן and the בית המקדש, the difference being expressed in the primary material used for the structure. In the בית המקדש the prime element used was stone [the inanimate object] and ארזים, cedar wood, was merely used as beams for support. However in the משכן the main components of the building, the walls, were made of ארזים, cedar wood and only the floor was made of earth [inanimate object]. Following this the מאמר continues with saying that the walls of the משכן were made from עצי שטים, acacia wood¹. It would seem, by the differentiation of the names that these are two different types of wood which come from different trees!? Once again in the subsequent paragraph we see that the walls of the משכן were indeed cedar and not acacia, as clearly stated, “נעשו הקרשים מארזים”.

It can be further seen in תש"י² לגני באתי that acacia wood is a representation of foolishness as שיטה means leaning or bending, and the natural growth of the עצי שטים is in an outward manner. This is

¹ As it says (שמות כו, טו) עצי שטים עומדים

² אות ג'

contrasted by cedar which on the contrary grows in an opposite way than that of the acacia, in that cedar trees grow straight up and tall, and is the highest level of the **צומח** kingdom. That **מאמר** from the previous **רבי** goes on to explain that the reason why acacia was chosen to be used for the **משכן** is because of the way it grows as well as it comes from the same word in Hebrew as **שטות** representing the concept of foolishness. Foolishness can be considered an act of bending and veering from the path dictated by logic. Foolishness can be holy or unholy. Unholy foolishness is the illogical thinking that leads us to go against the will of G-d. Holy foolishness is the willingness to go above and beyond the requirements of the **תורה** to fulfill our divine mission and refine ourselves. This type of wood specifically was used as planks for the walls of the **משכן**, in an act of placing the “bending” acacia trees in a vertical position, to symbolize the use of foolishness for holy purposes.

This entire concept reflected in the above mentioned **מאמר** only strengthens the difficulty in **תורה אור**. The entire resemblance between acacia wood and foolishness which is supposed to be apparent is contradicted by cedar.

Additionally, in **פרשת תרומה (כה, ה) רש"י ד"ה ועצי שטים** where an explanation³ is given for a problem raised, where did the Jews get wood for the **משכן** in the desert?, **רש"י** explains that **יעקב** saw by divine inspiration that later on the Jews would build the **משכן** and wood would be needed, he therefore brought **ארזים**, cedar, that his children would be able to use in the future when they leave **מצרים**. Once again this discrepancy is seen, the **פסוק** says **שטים** and **רש"י** says **ארזים**?

³ From **מדרש תנחומא**

An insight in this issue can be found in תורת חיים-פרשת ויגש⁴. There the אדמו"ר העמצאי expounds on this concept as follows, informing us that the beams of the בית המקדש שלמה were cedar implies that this is a praise for the בית המקדש and is an advantage that the משכן of משה and שילו didn't have. He continues with saying that the walls of the משכן in the desert were in fact acacia, which is from "the best of cedars," and the בית המקדש שלמה had **only beams** of cedar. In the end, the בית המקדש was not greater in this regard as only the beams were cedar, unlike the משכן whose walls were composed fully of acacia. We may conclude from the words of the אדמו"ר העמצאי that he is of the opinion that acacia is from the cedar family, "the best of cedars," even though it not entirely a cedar tree.

Further explanation can be given from גמרא ראש השנה דף כג ע"א where it is brought that in fact there are ten types of ארזים, cedar, one of them being acacia⁵. This is not to be taken as literal cedar rather ארזים is a generic name used for various species of trees. Furthermore the opinion of the אדמו"ר האמצעי can perhaps be understood as not that it is "the best of the cedar" rather that of the list of trees included in the category ארזים mentioned in the גמרא it is the greatest.



⁴ פט Page

⁵ Even though there is an opinion that argues that only four species of tree are called cedar and acacia is not one of them, nevertheless the תוס' there explains that really everyone agrees that there are ten types of cedar, the argument is only in the terms used in business.

P'SHUTO SHEL MIKRA

When did **שרה אברהם** marry **שרה**?

Moshe Aharon Backman
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In (מ, יב) פרשת בא it states “And the time the Jewish people dwelled in Egypt was 430 years”. On this רש”י commentates “from the time יצחק was born until now were 400 years...and 30 years from the decree בין הבתרים until the birth of יצחק”. We find in the תורה explicitly that אברהם was 100 years old when יצחק was born, that means (as most commentaries¹ point out) that אברהם was 70 at the time of the בין הבתרים.

When we look back to (טו, ג ואילך) פרשת לך לך right before the ברית בין הבתרים we find ה' promising great reward to אברהם. Upon hearing this אברהם asks, “what good are rewards when I have no inheritors, אליעזר will end up inheriting them?” to which ה' replies “Your children will inherit you. [And he (אברהם) went outside] Look up to the heavens and count the stars, can you count them? That will be [the number of] your children. אברהם trusted in ה' and it was considered as a merit for him.”

One of the explanations רש”י gives on this episode is that שרי and אברם, as they were called until now, were not able to have children but when

¹Including רמב”ן, אבן עזרא, ספורנו

their names are changed to אברהם and שרה they would be able to². On the last פסוק of the story רש"י explains³ that the merit of אברהם were the קרבנות which ה' commanded him to bring in the following פסוקים.

Based on these פסוקים it is implied that אברהם and שרה were already married by the ברית בין הבתרים, and based on the interpretation of רש"י (as well as other commentators) in פרשת בא that אברהם was 70 by the ברית בין הבתרים it is understood that אברהם and שרה must have married before 70 אברהם.

Later on in the פרשה (לך לך טז, ג) after 10 years of not having children, as רש"י explains, אברהם is told by his wife to take her maid servant הגר as a wife to have children. We find in the following רש"י that הגר was impregnated by the first cohabitation with אברהם. The last פסוק of the פרק informs us that אברהם was 86 when הגר gave birth to ישמעאל. From this we see that אברהם was 75 when he married שרה [86 at the birth of ישמעאל, 85 at his conception, minus 10 years of not having children with שרה equals 75 at his marriage].

Thus we are left with a contradiction between the two interpretations of רש"י, פרשת בא and (טו) לך לך from where we deduce that אברהם married שרה before 70 and (טז) לך לך which clearly infers that their marriage took place when אברהם was 75. This requires to be looked into further.



² Even though this explanation is according to the מדרש nevertheless even according to the simple interpretation of the פסוק it would seem that אברהם and שרה were already married.

³ This is only the second interpretation, but seemingly it would be safe to assume that the ברית בין הבתרים followed this episode chronologically according to the first interpretation as well.

Twin sisters born with the שבטים¹

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In a number of places throughout תורה it is inferred by רש"י that each time a baby was born to יעקב twins were born with the child. In בראשית (לה, יז), when בנימין was born, it states "Also this one will be a son". רש"י addresses the question, why does the פסוק include the word "also"? Based on this רש"י interprets "from here we learn that together with every tribe there was a twin and with בנימין there was an extra twin born (2 twin sisters). From here we see there were 12 tribes 13 twins plus Dinah and thus יעקב had 26 offspring. In addition to this we can conclude that רחל wasn't the same as the maids, she had 5 children a twin and triplet while maids had only 4, two twins.

An additional source for this idea that a twin sister was born with each of the tribes can be found (לז, לה). בראשית (לז, לה). After יוסף understood יוסף was dead the פסוק reads "and he ripped his garments...and all of his sons and all of his daughters arose to comfort him" This verse begs the question since when did יעקב have daughters? In response to this question רש"י gives 2 explanations, firstly, ר' יהודה says there were twin sisters born with each tribe and they married their twin. Secondly, ר' נחמ"י says the שבטים married "כנענים" meaning merchants (it couldn't mean literally כנענים because אברהם and יצחק were particular for their children not to marry כנענים and certainly יעקב would not approve to his own children marrying them²), and the פסוק should be read "the daughters [in law]

¹ See לקוטי שיחות חלק ב' שיחה ב'

² See רש"י בראשית לח,ב

arose comfort him (יעקב)". A person does not refrain from calling his sons in law sons and his daughters in law daughter.

According to ר' יהודה you must say he meant each tribe married their twin besides for those which it says explicitly in the Torah who they married. For example יהודה married שוע and after she died he married תמר, שמעון married דינה³ and יוסף married the daughter of פוטיפר. Those שבטים not recorded clearly to have married different wives did not marry their direct sister (same father and mother) rather married half sisters, for example the sons of Leah married there sisters from a different mother and those from the other mothers married there half sisters, the daughters of Leah because it is forbidden to marry full sister. The only exception was דינה and שמעון. Since when דינה was captured by שכם she gave up hope of coming back, when she did return she was then considered a non Jew who converted and a convert has no family consequently it was not problematic for שמעון to marry his biological sister because from the standpoint of הלכה they were not related at all.

One more place which speaks of the שבטים having twins is in רש"י פסוק יעקב the פסוק state the total number of people coming to מצרים with יעקב. The פסוק ends with "his offspring excluding the wives of the sons of יעקב was 66 souls. Regarding which רש"י commentates, "according to the opinion that twins were born with the tribes (ר' יהודה) we must say they died (because if there were twins born with the שבטים and are alive why aren't they counted as part of the count of those who went to מצרים). True, it does evidently mention פסוק "except the wives of the sons of יעקב" but this still

³ See רש"י בראשית מו, י

does not explain why they would not be counted if literally “offspring of יעקב” implies biological daughters of יעקב as well despite the exclusion of in-laws.

It is for this reason the second opinion says that the wives of the שבטים were not offspring of יעקב. Such an approach answers this problem but at the same time another difficulty arises, why does the תורה need to exclude the wives of the sons of יעקב if not offspring anyway?

ר' נחמי' quoted the opinion of רש"י בראשית (לז, לה) who says a person does not refrain from calling his son in law as his son and his daughter in law as his daughter. We may have thought just as one would call his daughters in law as daughters one also may go as far as counting them as part of the biological family therefore the פסוק had to come to teach us otherwise, as it says “besides the wives of the sons of יעקב”.

In (מו, כו) רש"י בראשית (מו, כו) says also cites the opinion that יוכבד was born between the walls when going into מצרים (there are many מפרשים who inquire as to who was number 70 going into מצרים and bring interpretations dissimilar to that of רש"י. The רמב"ן is of the opinion that יעקב himself was number 70. Others hold ה' was the seventieth who went down with יעקב to מצרים and he always goes to גלות with us to assist us and finally redeem us (similarly and especially in the current bitter times of this exile when it is so bitter we don't even realize we are in גלות he should carry out the purpose of why he came with us into this exile for, and bring redemption).

If יוכבד was born between the walls and her father was לוי⁴, her mother had to be a twin and she must have died before the Hebrews went down

⁴ See (א, ב) רש"י שמות

to מצרים so how is it possible that she could have been born between the walls? One cannot answer Levi's wife was like רחל having בנימין (with 2 twin sisters) and dying right afterwards, that the wife of לוי had יוכבד between the walls then she died because it says 66 came up to מצרים and when they arrived there were 70. Who were the 4 already in מצרים? According to this opinion we are forced to say יוסף, אפרים, מנשה and יוכבד teaching us יוכבד is counted as born in מצרים and רש"י says twins died before even went up to מצרים. Seemingly we must conclude that לוי married a twin and she died then לוי married a second time and the second wife gave birth to יוכבד between the walls.



MISCELLANEOUS

TRUTH AND ITS ALLIES

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SINCERITY AND SHREWDNESS

Rabbi Moshe Sofer (the Chasam Sofer) would often say “Every Jacob meets a Lavan; but few Lavans meet a Jacob!”¹ At first he appears to be stating the obvious: unrighteous people greatly outnumber the righteous and therefore it is more likely that a righteous person will meet an unrighteous one, but not vice-versa. Actually, the Chasam Sofer meant that every sincere person will at some stage face a Lavan-like swindler; but seldom will they respond effectively like Jacob did, by balancing sincerity with shrewdness, and protecting themselves from mistreatment. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi explains how this important psychological balance is hinted to in the qualities of a knife suitable for *Shechita* (the ritual slaughter of animals). The knife must be perfectly *smooth* but also extremely *sharp*. In human personality, *smooth* suggests simplicity and sincerity; uncomplicated and transparent. *Sharp*, on the other hand, implies maintaining mental acuity in order to appreciate their

¹ Responsa Chasam Sofer , Volume 6, Likutim 59

environment and not be deceived.² Shrewdness without sincerity results in manipulation and cunning; sincerity without shrewdness equates with gullibility. Only the combination of both qualities enables one to be productive while maintaining one's integrity.

IMAGINATION AND REASON

Another important psychological balance is between the intellectual (left hemisphere) and imaginative (right hemisphere) faculties of the brain. Everyone possesses both faculties, although some have a dominant hemisphere which means they are principally intellectual or creative. The nature of the activity occupying the brain also determines which hemisphere will prevail. In decision-making, planning, and mathematics, the analytical mind dominates; while painting or singing employ predominantly the creative side. In all cases, however, rationale must supervise and guide imagination; otherwise one can lose touch with reality and enter a fabricated personal world.

This may be what led to the fall of Adam and Eve. G-d commanded Eve abstain from eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,³ but she listened instead to the *nachash* (serpent) who encouraged her to eat the fruit. The *nachash* claimed the fruit would open her eyes to a higher truth and a Divine perception of reality.⁴ Logically, she should have obeyed omnipotent G-d rather than a lowly snake.⁵ How could Eve fail to follow such simple logic? Eve failed because the serpent's alluring description of the fruit excited her imagination until it broke the grip of

² Maamarei Admur Hazoken, Inyanim, p.410

³ Genesis 2:17

⁴ Genesis 3:1-6

⁵ Rashi on Genesis 3:14 citing Sanhedrin 29a

her intellect. Her emotions were so aroused that she reached out to pursue her delusion without rational thought. Her sin thus represented an imagination unfettered by reason. Imagination is susceptible to the serpent's voice because of its indiscrimination. Regardless how absurd an idea may be, imagination depicts it in its own symbols and imagery. It can accept that $1+1=7$, appreciate magical fairytales as though they were factual, and view friend with suspicion when there is no reason to do so, as in the case of paranoia. Imagination opens the mind to all types of influence regardless of how illogical they may seem to reason.

However, not everything imagined is false. Imaginative expression may contain one of three degrees of truth:⁶

Pure fantasy which is imagery that is entirely false, such as imagining a creature comprised of many different animals.

Part false, which is where one imagines something real with an admixture of fiction such as exaggeration or distortion

Representation of Truth which is where the imagination translates information received from the senses or intellect into its own imagery so that it is representational of something true. [For example, when attempting to solve $7x7=?$ a child may imagine seven baskets containing seven apples each, in order to concretize the equation.]

In contrast, reason is highly discriminate. Governed by rules, logic, and systematic thinking, it rejects anything that defies its rigorous order.⁷ On account of the imagination's indiscriminate character, whatever it depicts should be assumed false unless proven true through reliance on intellect

⁶ Rabbi Pinchas Eliyahu of Vilna, Sefer Habrit, Sec. 1, 18:3

⁷ Ibid.

and sensory experience. In contrast, the conclusions of intellect are presumed true unless evidence is brought to the contrary. Intellect is innocent unless proven guilty; imagination is guilty unless proven innocent.⁸

Despite this poor rap, imagination actually plays an important role in discovering the truth. One can imagine solutions to various problems, even if the solutions are totally absurd or unrealistic, and then rely on intellect to find realistic ways of putting the proposed solution into practice.⁹ For instance, in searching for a way to speed up his accounting business, a sole practitioner may imagine how amazing it would be if there were ten copies of himself that could each meet with several clients a day. Though this particular scenario is impossible, it can spark the more practical idea of training others to perform the same job. Imagination also drives technological advancement. It was on account of people imagining themselves flying like birds that resulted in the creation of the aeroplane.¹⁰

TO FEEL SOMETHING AS TRUE

It is possible for one to completely understand an idea without considering it to be real outside of the person's mind. The cognitive faculty of Da'at can serve to bridge the mind and the heart; by employing Da'at, a person can bind his mind to a hypothetical idea or dream and think about it until he feels it become real - that is, affect his emotions and behaviour. Children generally have weak Da'at and therefore they are not

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ DeBono Edward, Textbook of Wisdom, Viking, 1996, p.110

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 96-98

punishable by Torah Law even if they are highly intelligent and knowledgeable.¹¹

The above discussion suggests the important link between Da'at and truth discovery. A person with weak or no Da'at may rationally understand a truth, yet at the same time not feel or behave as though it is true. An addict, for instance, may well know his addiction is killing him but does not change his behaviour because his cravings block his Da'at, preventing him from being touched by his understanding of the facts; the information remains aloof from his person; to him it is paradoxically true but unreal. This idea can also be used to highlight the importance of Da'at to the trait of mercy. A person can be well aware of another's predicament and anguish, but may not seek to minimise the other's suffering unless he also possesses strong Da'at.¹²

MERCY VERSUS KINDNESS; ACCURACY VERSUS INDEPENDENCE

Mercy also relates to truth in other ways. This can be appreciated by comparing mercy to kindness. Kindness is the ability to share with others, regardless of whether they are suffering or not. A kind host may often entertain guests because he enjoys sharing, not because of the particular guests' needs. In contrast, mercy is felt specifically for someone who is suffering. Mercy motivates one to find ways to extricate another from his distress, focusing the mind on the specific issues and needs of the recipient.¹³ Mercy thus engenders greater *accuracy of perception* than does kindness.

¹¹ Schneerson, Sholom Dovber, Kuntreis HaTefillah, Ch.4

¹² Ibid. Ch.8

¹³ Steinsaltz, Adin, Biur Hatanya, Iggeret Hakodesh, Ch.12, pp.351

On the other hand, kindness has a closer connection to the *independence* aspect of truth than mercy does. Rabbi Chaim of Chernovitz gleans this by focusing on Abraham's behaviour shortly after Abraham was circumcised. Abraham sat at the entrance to his tent in the desert heat looking for people in need of hospitality. Suddenly, three vague figures emerge from the horizon, and Abraham ran to greet them.¹⁴ In the heat, with no other lodging or food close by, surely Abraham knew these travellers would come to his camp. Why then did he run out to them?

This demonstrates an advantage of kindness over mercy: its' proactive nature. Kindness constantly flows within a generous person. Therefore when there is no one present to benefit, kindness motivates a person to search for others who he can assist. Kindness is thus compared to a mother's milk, which is produced by the body even in the absence of the child, and which makes the mother feel uncomfortable if it is not transferred to the infant. In contrast, mercy is merely a reaction to an external situation or object; it is only potentially evoked in someone upon observing a particular situation. Kindness is *proactive* and *independent* of external conditions whereas mercy is *reactive* and generally *dependent* on one's surroundings. Abraham ran out to the travellers before they approached him because he was motivated by kindness. He also knew that if he waited until he saw the travellers weary appearance, he would instinctively react with mercy toward them. But he preferred to act proactively.¹⁵

HUMOUR VERSUS ANGER; OOZING TRUTH VERSUS EXPLODING TRUTH

¹⁴ Genesis 18:2

¹⁵ Rabbi Chaim of Chernovitz, Be'er Mayim Chaim, Parshat Vayeira

Rabbi Nachman from Breslav considers that humour reveals a lot of hidden truths.¹⁶ This may occur because people deliberately or subconsciously want to convey a private or serious piece of information in a light and harmless way in order to minimise embarrassment. Alternatively, a person in a frivolous mood may lose their inhibitions and accidentally express heavy or personal issues in a flippant manner.¹⁷ Anger is another quality that can reveal truths about a person they may otherwise have concealed. Anger can cause people to emotionally explode and blurt out the truth in the form of blunt or sharp words.¹⁸ Conversely, adherence to truth may ignite anger. The Kotzker Rebbe points out that of the three patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - only Jacob, considered the paragon of truth,¹⁹ is ever described by the Torah as becoming vexed: 'And Jacob was angry with Rachel.'²⁰ The Kotzker Rebbe explains that one sensitive to truth cannot remain passive when encountering injustice or falsehood; a sensitivity which, at times, expresses itself as anger.²¹

But devotion to truth can also preclude or eliminate anger. To appreciate this point, let us distinguish anger from moral indignation. One committed to truth and morality may become indignant upon discovering that an injustice has been committed. In contrast, anger erupts when life

¹⁶ Kaplan, Aryeh, *Rabbi Nachman's Stories*, Breslov Research Institute, 1983, p.130

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Babylonian Talmud, *Eruvin* 65b: 'A person can be known through his cup, his wallet, his anger – and his humour'

¹⁹ As will be discussed in *Sec. Truth and Jacob*

²⁰ *Genesis* 30:2

²¹ Oratz, Ephraim, 'And Nothing But The Truth' *Judaica Press*, New York, 1990, p.46

does not coincide with one's selfish desires and expectations.²² In addition, anger is a reflex action evoked without earnest probing into the anger provoking incident; while indignation follows a thorough understanding of that event.²³ Furthermore, once the injustice has ceased, the victims compensated, and the perpetrators show remorse, indignation extinguishes. Anger, however, may continue burning long after its initial cause is eliminated.

Based on this, it appears that investigating the cause of anger can help to appease it. For example, one informed that his friend spoke badly about him, should ask questions such as "Am I sure my friend spoke this way?" or "If he did, what was the context and what was his tone of voice?" or "Even if he spoke this way maliciously, did I do something to upset him?" or "What are the consequences of his behaviour; how will it affect my life?" By investigating the incident in this manner, one often discovers that he lacks complete understanding of the event or its consequences and has unjustifiably become upset.²⁴

Silence: a sign of Truth

The connection between silence and truth is evident in their Hebrew words. Truth is Emet and silence is Dom, as in the word Adam, which is interpreted to mean 'I will be silent'.²⁵ The word *Adam* differs from *Emet* in only one letter: Adam has a Dalet instead of a Tav. These two letters, however, are considered interchangeable in the system of *gematriya*, and

²² Friedman, Mannis, 'Doesn't Anyone Blush Anymore?', Bais Chana Press, 1996, pp.43-45

²³ Twerski, Abraham. J, Addictive Thinking 2nd Edition, Hazeldon, 1997, pp.79-81

²⁴ Pliskin, Zelig, Gateway to Happiness, Aish Hatorah Publications, 1983, p.202 citing Sefer Chassidim Sec. 655

²⁵ Torah Ohr p.12

in at least two ways: a) Both the Dalet and Tav are articulated by pressing the tip of the tongue against the ridge behind the upper teeth and exhaling. In fact, the only difference in their pronunciation is that Dalet is voiced and Tav is voiceless, that is, solely breathe;²⁶ b) Dalet is numerical value 4 and Tav is 400, a 4 with two 0's.²⁷ Additionally, the *mispar Katan* - reduced numerical value - of both *Adam* and *Emet* is 9.²⁸ And as explained, 9 is one of the numbers strongly associated with truth.²⁹

A clear psychological link between silence and truth is the Talmudic principle, 'silence is like acquiescence.'³⁰ When a person hears a statement and does not protest against it, he is assumed to agree with it; his silence indicates that he believes the statement is true. The Hebrew for acquiescence, *Hoda'ah*, also connotes surrender.³¹ This implies that often, when exposed to truth, people silently surrender before it, overwhelmed by its power. This theme is dramatically illustrated by a well known Talmudic episode where blind Rabbi Sheshet attends a royal procession to greet a King.³²

On one occasion R. Sheshet joined the masses to greet the passing king. One Sadducee present mocked him for attempting to behold the King when he could not see him...As the first troop passed by and the crowd shouted and cheered, the Sadducee exclaimed: 'The king is coming.' But R. Sheshet disagreed. A second

²⁶ Sefer Yetzirah Chapter 2:3-5

²⁷ Cordovero, Moshe, Pardes Rimonim 30:8, a method referred to as **איך-בכר**

²⁸ Horowitz, Yeshaya, Shnei Luchot HaBrit, Toldot Adam, Bet Yisrael 11

²⁹ Chapter One, Independence

³⁰ Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 87b; Bava Metzia 37b, Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer 39

³¹ Tanya, Iggeret Hokodesh, 123b

³² Babylonian Talmud Berachot 58a

troop marched by and the masses roared again. And again the Sadducee urged: Now the king is coming, but R. Shesheth was unaffected...A third troop passed by and silence fell upon the crowd. R. Shesheth exclaimed, 'Now indeed the king is approaching.' The Sadducean asked him: 'How did you know this?' To which he replied, 'Because the royalty on earth reflects the royalty of heaven. And concerning the Heavenly King it is written: 'Go [Elisha] and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.'

A well-known aphorism, 'Still waters run deep' further captures the relationship between silence and truth. Though it is open to several possible interpretations:

a) An individual inclined toward stillness and silence, speaking only when he has something meaningful and substantial to say, usually talks from a place deep within him, and his words too, are generally profound, pertinent, and potent. In contrast, one predisposed to chatter, blurts much nonsense and both shallow thoughts and feelings.³³

b) Deep reflective thinking and speech stand in opposition to one another. When speaking, one tends to communicate ideas that he has previously learnt. Through deep reflection however, he typically develops

³³ Stern, Yosef, 'Pirkei Avot Sfas Emes, Mesorah Publications, USA, 1999, p.58

a richer understanding of ideas. Simply, one of silent disposition tends to dive deeply into concepts, probing for the truth.³⁴

c) Shouting, excessive passion, and overdone arguments when attempting to prove a point, are common indicators of insecurity; signs that a person is compensating for the lack of substance in his opinion with emotion or a raised voice. In essence he is saying: 'I don't believe you'll be convinced by my weak argument, so I better force you to agree through assertiveness!' However, one who is genuinely confident with his view is inclined to express himself succinctly and calmly, for words of truth speak for themselves and are easily discerned.³⁵ As King Solomon expressed it, 'The speech of the wise is tranquil'.³⁶

d) An individual who observes Torah for its own sake, or engages in any activity because he deems intrinsically valuable, lacks the urge to boast about his achievements. This is because he does not engage in them to gain people's approval or to climb in social status, but with truth, and is rewarded by the nobility of the accomplishments themselves. Rabbeinu Bacheya explains that this quality is the hallmark of a 'Tam'³⁷, a sincere/whole individual. And as mentioned above,³⁸ *Tam* is directly related to the word Emet.

e) Another interpretation may be along the lines of King David's sentiments concerning his inability to find words – and indeed, even

³⁴ Bassar, Tuvia, 'Maharal of Prague Pirkei Avot', Mesorah Publications, USA, 1997, p.58

³⁵ Rabbeinu Nissim, Deroshot Haran, Derush 3

³⁶ Ecclesiastes 9:17

³⁷ Rabbi Bachya ben Asher, Rabbeinu Bachya Al HaTorah, Intoduction to Parshat Noach

³⁸ Chapter One, Congruence

thoughts - to praise G-d. Afterall, which finite descriptions or praises can do justice to the Infinite G-d? Thus David exclaimed, 'Silence is praise to You, O'God'.³⁹ Meaning, my greatest praise to You, Lord, is the declaration that you are infinitely beyond praise - evident in my silence.



³⁹ Psalms 65:2