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TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Shabbat 121-127

Muktzeh: Hands Off!

The Prophet Nechemia ben Chachalya said, “In those days, I saw in Judea that people were treading winepresses on Shabbat, and bringing sheaves of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, and figs and all types of loads, and bringing them to Jerusalem on Shabbat. And I warned them not to do it on the day that they were selling food and provisions.” (Nechemia 13:15)

This statement by the prophet Nechemia is taught on our *daf* as a reason for the prohibition against moving certain items on Shabbat under certain conditions. These items that were made off-limits to be moved on Shabbat are called *muktzeh*, which literally means “set aside” – i.e. not needed for Shabbat.

When did the prohibition of *muktzeh* begin? Did it begin in the era of Nechemia? Or did the *muktzeh* ban occur at a different point in our history? Let’s have a closer look at our *gemara*, *Rishonim* and a select later commentary – and I propose that we will arrive at an answer to this question that may come as quite a surprise!

You may wonder: What is the reason for the prohibition of *muktzeh*? Good question! Numerous answers are found in Torah sources. Perhaps the most notable reasons are found in the writings of the Rambam and the Ravad (Rabbeinu Avraham ben David), who both lived in the 12th century.

The Rambam lists three reasons for the prohibition of *muktzeh*. One is to help ensure that a person rests on Shabbat. In his words (free translation), “Our Sages prohibited moving certain things on Shabbat in a manner that a person does during the week. Why? They reasoned: ‘We see that the prophets warned and commanded that a person’s walk on Shabbat should not be like his walk during the week, and his speech on Shabbat should not be like his speech during the week as the verse states, *v’daber davar*’ (see “Talmud Tips” for Shabbat 107-113 in Ohrnet Magazine). Therefore, it should be all the more so that the way and manner a person moves objects on Shabbat should be different in the way moves objects during the week, so that Shabbat should not be like a weekday to him. If he were allowed to move them as usual, he would come to pick up and arrange items, moving them from corner to corner or from room to room, and he will hide away useful stones and the like, because on Shabbat he is not working and he is sitting idly at home, seeking to occupy himself with any activities at hand. Therefore, it would turn out that he would not be resting on Shabbat, which would nullify the reason the Torah gives for keeping Shabbat (Devarim 5:14) – ‘In order to rest.’”

A second reason for *muktzeh* offered by the Rambam is that if a person would be permitted to move items that could be used to do *melacha* (activities that are forbidden by the Torah to do on Shabbat), it is possible that he will not only move these items but also (unintentionally) use them to do a *melacha* on Shabbat. The Rambam’s third reason is for the sake of people who are not normally working during the weekdays, such as travelers, who are not doing *melacha* any day of the week. If it would be permitted to walk and speak and to move objects on Shabbat in the manner that is permitted on the other days of the week, it would turn out that these people were not resting a “recognizable rest.” Therefore, refraining and resting from these matters – including not handling *muktzeh* – will provide a recognizable resting that is equal to every type of person.

The Ravad, as he is wont to do, disagrees with the Rambam regarding the reason for the *muktzeh* prohibition. The reason the Ravad gives for *muktzeh* is to stem the transgression of *hotza'ah* – transferring an object from a private domain to a public one (or the reverse). He asks two main questions on the Rambam. The question I'd like to discuss here is from a *beraita* on our *daf* which states that “*at first*” the movement of all objects was prohibited on Shabbat with the exception of three small eating utensils that were necessary for normal eating at the Shabbat table. Then, the *beraita* continues, our Sages permitted the movement of more and more objects for more and more purposes. Rabbi Chanina says in our *gemara* that this *beraita* was taught at the time of Nechemia ben Chachalya, who, as we saw at the very beginning of this essay, was shocked and distraught at the rampant *chillul* Shabbat he saw, and, as a result, enacted a prohibition of *muktzeh* that forbade moving virtually any object on Shabbat. Therefore, the Ravad asks: Since our *gemara* cites Nechemiya's decree as *the reason* for the ban of *muktzeh*, why does the Rambam give three other reasons?

The Aruch Hashulchan offers a novel approach to *muktzeh*, suggesting that it existed from the time of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. He also asserts that Nechemia's decree was certainly only intended to apply to his generation, but not afterwards. With these two principle, the Aruch Hashulchan defends the Rambam against the Ravad's questions and explains why the Rambam wrote his three reasons for *muktzeh* in a beautifully detailed manner. (Recommended learning: Aruch Hashulchan 308:1-5)

▪ *Shabbat 123b*

PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Know Your Enemy

“Harass the Midianites and smite them” (25:17)

I think I'm not alone in finding it difficult to maintain an appropriate weight for my height and my age. (In other words: “The Battle of the Bulge”). One of the techniques that seems to work is to “know your enemy.” I remember once sitting in front of a beautiful and delicious piece of cake and saying to the cake, “Cake, I love you, but you hate me!”

Demonization – the stigmatizing of other's beliefs not in accord with one's own – is usually seen as an irrational defense, and is called upon only by those who are uncertain of the rightness of their own beliefs in the first place.

Take the case of the “battle cry” for example. A battle cry is a yell or chant taken up in battle to arouse aggression and esprit de corps on one's own side (and cause intimidation on the hostile side.) Often the battle cry is a way of submerging one's own lack of confidence. Now I doubt that the aforementioned piece of cake was much affrighted by my “battle cry” – but it worked to remind me that the beguiling fondant cream oozing from the

cake was really half-an-hour on the treadmill. As the Italians say: “A moment on the lips – a lifetime on the hips.”

But raise the stakes a bit, and things get to be more serious. Maybe instead of considering the challenge of merely a couple of (hundred) extra calories, consider instead the lure of big-time lust and immorality. What do you do to fight that?

“Harass the Midianites and smite them”

There are two commandments in this passage: The first is to view the *Midianites* as enemies – to demonize them – and then to concretize that perception by constantly harassing them. The word “harass” here is in the infinitive, to imply a constant state of mind rather than just a specific and tangible action. The lust for immoral pleasure, which is the very essence of Midian, can only be counteracted by a constant state of loathing. And that can come only by demonization. And that mindset results only from a constant internal battle cry.

Q & A

Questions

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *kohen*?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. What does the *yud* and *hey* added to the family names testify?
4. Korach and his congregation became a "sign." What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach's children survive?
6. Name six families in this Parsha whose names are changed.
7. Who was Yaakov's only living granddaughter at the time of the census?
8. How many years did it take to conquer the Land? How many to divide the Land?
9. Two brothers leave Egypt and die in the *midbar*. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will the one son get?
10. What do Yocheved, Ard and Na'aman have in common?
11. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
12. What trait did Tzlofchad's daughters exhibit that their ancestor Yosef also exhibited?
13. Why does the Torah change the order of Tzlofchad's daughters' names?
14. Tzlofchad died for what transgression?
15. Why did Moshe use the phrase "G-d of the spirits of all flesh"?
16. Moshe "put some of his glory" upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
17. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
18. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
19. Why is Shavuot called *Yom Habikkurim*?
20. What do the 70 bulls offered on Succot symbolize?

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.

Answers

1. 25:13 - *Kehuna* (priesthood) was given to Aharon and his sons (not grandsons), and to any of their descendants born *after* they were anointed. Pinchas, Aharon's grandson, was born *prior* to the anointing.
2. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav.
3. 26:5 - That the families were truly children of their tribe.
4. 26:10 - That *kehuna* was given forever to Aharon and his sons, and that no one should ever dispute this.
5. 26:11 - Because they repented.
6. 26:13,16,24,38,39,42 - Zerach, Ozni, Yashuv, Achiram, Shfufam, Shucham.
7. 26:46 - Serach bat Asher
8. 26:53 - Seven years. Seven years.
9. 26:55 - Two portions. That is, the four cousins merit four portions among them. These four portions are then split among them as if their fathers were inheriting them; *i.e.*, two portions to one father and two portions to the other father.
10. 26:24,56 - They came down to Mitzrayim in their mothers' wombs.
11. 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim*, only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
12. 27:1 - Love for *Eretz Yisrael*.
13. 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
14. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva says that Tzlofchad gathered sticks on Shabbat. Rabbi Shimon says that Tzlofchad was one who tried to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.
15. 27:16 - He was asking G-d, who knows the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person on that person's level.
16. 27:20 - That Yehoshua's face beamed like the moon.
17. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the west side of the slaughtering area and the afternoon offering on the east side.
18. 28:15 - For unnoticed ritual impurity of the Sanctuary or its vessels.
19. 28:26 - The Shavuot double-bread offering was the first wheat-offering made from the new crop.
20. 29:18 - The seventy nations.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

The Chayah and Yechidah (Part 3 of 3)

In this 3-part mini-series we will discuss the five Hebrew words for the “soul.” In Part 1 we discussed the different etymologies of the words *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*; in Part 2 we discussed the functions of the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*; and in Part 3 we will discuss the role of the *Chayah* and *Yechidah*, as well as their etymological basis. In doing so, we will better understand how these five words are not merely synonyms. Rather, each word has its own unique meanings and implications.

In the Creation narrative, the Bible uses the term *Nefesh* in conjunction with sea-life, birds and land animals (Gen. 1:21-30). When describing the creation of Man, the Bible reports that G-d blew into Man’s nostrils a *Nishmat Chaim*, which made Man into a *Nefesh Chayah* (Gen. 2:7). Targum Onkelos famously renders the term *Nefesh Chayah* in Aramaic as *Ruach Memallala* (“a verbal *Ruach*”). Either way, in these two passages *Chayah/Chaim* enters the lexicon as a term for the “soul.” Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821) in *Nefesh HaChaim* (2:17) calls the *Chayah* “the *Neshamah* of the *Neshamah*.” In many sources, the *Chayah* is paired with the *Yechidah*. In this essay we will seek to understand what exactly the *Chayah* and *Yechidah* are, as well as the etymological basis for those words. We will also explore the differences between them and the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*.

In *Cheshek Shlomo*, Rabbi Pappenheim traces the words *Chayah/Chaim* to the two-letter root CHET-YOD, which means “life” (*chai*). He understands that the two-letter root CHET-VAV is an extension of that biliteral root that also means “life.” This connection is likely due to the interchangeability of the letters VAV and YOD (for example, *hayah* means “was” in Hebrew, while *havah* means “was” in Aramaic; see also Rashbam to Num. 21:14 and Ibn Ezra to Amos 5:5). As a result of this, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the verb *chaveh* (Ps. 19:3, Iyov 32:17) refers to “speech,” because verbalizing something “gives life” to an idea which hitherto existed only in thought. Adam’s wife was named *Chava* (“Eve”) because she was the mother to all “life” (Gen. 3:20). A “farm” is called a *chavah* (Num. 32:41) because it provides life and sustenance through its products. [Rabbi Aharon Marcus (1843-1916) connects the word *Chayah* to *hayah* (“was,” “existed”), explaining that “living” denotes the most complete form of “existing.”]

In *Yerios Shlomo*, Rabbi Pappenheim traces *Chayah* to the monoliteral root represented by the letter CHET. He

explains that that letter denotes “rest,” “peace,” “harmony,” or “lack of strife/contradiction.” In that sense, he explains, *Chayah* recalls “life” as a state of equilibrium among all the components of one’s body. Life can exist only when all those components co-exist with one another.

Although the word *Yechidah* in the sense of “soul” does appear anywhere in the Bible, and Rabbi Pappenheim’s lexical insights apply specifically to Biblical Hebrew, we can still draw from Rabbi Pappenheim’s explanations to better understand the meaning of *Yechidah*. Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the root CHET-DALET refers to the concept of “singularity/unification.” The word *Yechidah* appears once in the Bible (Judges 11:34), when describing Yiftach’s daughter as an “only” child. In that sense, the word *Yechidah* – similar to other CHET-DALET words – means something that is unique and unparalleled.

As Rabbi Pappenheim has it, the word *echad* (the number “one”), which refers to something singular and unique, and the word *yachad* (“together”), which is a “single” unit comprised of sub-units who joined to become one, are both derived from the CHET-DALET root. Rabbi Pappenheim also explains the etymological basis of the word *chad/chidud* (“sharp”) as stemming from the fact that the brunt of its force focuses on “one” point. As a corollary to this meaning, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that a *chidah* (“riddle”) is called so, because it requires one to *sharpen* one’s mind and harness all of one’s mental energies towards the resolution of “one” question.

With Rabbi Pappenheim’s explanations in hand, we can better appreciate how Chazal explained the function of the *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. The Midrash (*Ber. Rabbah* 14:9) says that *Chayah* refers to the transcendental nature of the soul that continues to “live” when the physical body dies, while *Yechidah* refers to the “uniqueness” of the soul, in that it is man’s only limb that has no counterpart. These perceptions

clearly allude to the etymological bases for the words in question.

The Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) in *Aderes Eliyahu* (to Gen. 2:7) writes that *Chayah* refers to the overall holistic life-force, like what we have seen above. He further explains that man – as he stands now – does not have a *Yechidah*, but in the future, in Messianic Times, man will have a *Yechidah*. Rabbi Yeshayahu Horowitz (1555-1630), author of *Shnei Luchos HaBris (Shelah)*, similarly writes that not everyone can be cognizant of their *Chayah* and *Yechidah* during their lifetimes. Only those who are *Bnei Aliyah* (“upwardly mobile” people in a spiritual sense) can merit connecting with their *Chayah-Yechidah*.

Rabbi Alexander Sender Shor (1660-1737) explains that an ordinary person has a *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*, but some people have more than that and some have less than that. He explains that a prophet – who attains the pinnacle of spiritual awareness – has the added elements of *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. In the opposite direction, when a person sins, he “kills” a part of himself, which causes him to lose his *Neshamah*. And if he continues to sin, he eventually loses his *Ruach* as well, such that he is left with only a *Nefesh*, like an animal.

Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk (1680-1756) presents a different model for understanding these five parts of the soul that we have been discussing. He explains that the first three components which make up the soul are given to man at three different stages of life. When a child is first conceived and can start moving around in utero, it receives its *Nefesh*. Afterwards, when a child is born, he or she receives their *Ruach*. Finally, when the child begins to nurse, he/she receives their *Neshamah*.

Rabbi Falk then explains that *Chayah* is not something bestowed to every person. Rather, once a person reaches maturity (i.e. post-puberty), then the repeated performance of mitzvahs and allowing one’s Good Inclination to guide oneself, readies one to receive a *Chayah*. When it comes to the highest level – *Yechidah* – Rabbi Falk writes that no human being was ever able to receive it during their lifetime, except for Moses. But, he notes, those who are perfectly righteous are able to receive a *Yechidah* after their deaths.

Rabbi Yitzchak Karo (1458-1535) – an uncle of the more famous Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575) – writes that the five names of the soul can be explained with two different models. He relates to them as powering different parts of one’s body, or (like Rabbi Falk) as referring to different times in a person’s lifecycle.

Rabbi Karo writes that if one views the five words for the “soul” as powering different parts of the body, it should be mapped as follows: The *Neshamah* powers one’s head and brain (nervous system), the *Chayah* powers one’s respiratory system, the *Yechidah* powers one’s hands (which make man *unique* amongst the animal kingdom because other animals have natural weapons, while man’s hands allow him to defend himself with a whole arsenal of weapons), the *Ruach* powers the heart (circulatory system), and the *Nefesh* powers the legs (ambulatory system).

Alternatively, Rabbi Karo cites a tradition that these names for the soul correspond to five different stages of life (similar to Rabbi Falk’s model). When a baby is first born, his soul is called *Neshamah*, because that is when he first begins to breathe. When one reaches the age of 10 years old, his soul is called *Ruach*, because he is now imbued with a Good Inclination that helps him fight off his Evil Inclination (see Prov. 18:14). When a person reaches the age of 20, the battle that rages on between the Good and Evil Inclinations calms down a bit, such that his soul is now called a *Nefesh*, which is an expression of “rest” or “respite.”

From the age of 30 until 40, a Jew’s soul is called a *Chayah*, because he can be assumed to have performed so many mitzvahs that those merits serve as the basis of his life-force. Rabbi Karo explains that the battle between the inclinations continues until one reaches the age of 40, when his Evil Inclination can be almost completely subdued. From that age until a person’s demise, his soul is called a *Yechidah*, because one’s Good Inclination is there “alone” without the Evil Inclination thwarting its efforts.

After citing this model, Rabbi Karo actually slightly differs with this tradition, dividing the five time-periods as spanning from birth to 13, from 13 to 25, from 25 to 40, from 40 to 60, from 60 until death – but the same basic idea is there. (Special thanks to Dr. Shaul Regev for sending me the relevant sources from his edition of Rabbi Karo’s homilies.)

For questions, comments, or to propose ideas for a future article, please contact the author at rcklein@ohr.edu

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

BLESSING SEVEN: FREE AT LAST

“Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, Who releases the bound.”

Blessing number seven thanks G-d for releasing us. But it makes no mention of what we are being released from. It is reasonable to think that if a person goes to sleep free, they will wake up in the morning just as free. In general terms, a person's physical reality does not change intrinsically from one day to the next. And, yet, our Sages instituted a blessing thanking G-d for having “released the bound.” Like with everything that our Sages initiated, there is enormous depth to the blessing.

There are many different forms of being “bound.” There are so many things that infringe on our personal freedom, sometimes without our even being aware. For example, we are all addicted to things. As the wife of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (one of the foremost authorities in Jewish Law in the previous generation) famously put it, “My husband is like an alcoholic. It is just that he needs Torah instead of wine!” Hopefully, our addictions are nothing more threatening than a weakness for chocolate cake. But there is definitely a plethora of terrifying addictions out there that are extremely dangerous, both to our physical health and to our emotional wellbeing. A person who battles against such cravings requires an inordinate amount of inner strength. These desires are so deep-set that they can overcome a person's very identity. And to conquer those desires necessitates both external assistance and a constant mental awareness that their addiction is not “them.”

During the 1970s, there were Jews in what was then the Soviet empire whose dream was to leave the “communist paradise” and to immigrate to Israel. Their desires came at a great personal price, because officially wanting to leave the USSR was regarded as subversive and it automatically caused them to lose their jobs.

Once they no longer had a job, they were labeled as “parasites,” and then the official harassment began. Often, they were arrested and relocated, or they were thrown into prison on trumped-up charges. In more extreme cases they were exiled to Siberia and put to work in labor camps. At one point, in Siberia, one of these Refuseniks (as they called themselves) was found guilty of a minor infraction and put into solitary confinement for *nine months*. Writing about his experiences afterwards, he related that he went through several different mental phases while he was there, some of which were agonizingly painful. But, at some point he came to the most astonishing realization that the Communists could take away everything from him, except for one thing – his freedom.

Because freedom is sometimes a state of mind and not a state of being.

We are all tied down to so many things in this physical world. These things can influence us, causing us to become obsessed and consumed by their allure. Sometimes this occurs to the point where we lose sight of who we really are. “Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, Who releases the bound.” It is G-d's Torah and His commandments that give us the tools to combat our obsessions. They are not guarantees for success, but they provide the most effective method to help a person overcome “binding” obsessions. And, so, when I start keeping the commandments, I am tapping into an inner strength that gives me the ability to shatter the “chains” that are restraining me. G-d and His Torah help me disregard obsessive focus on the physical and to better focus on the spiritual. With this awareness, with this guidance from Above, I can truly release my “bound” self.

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Herschman

Roofless Renaissance

The festival of Sukkot is unique in its sacrificial offerings. On the first day of the festival, fourteen sheep, two rams and thirteen bulls are brought. While the number of rams and sheep remain constant, the number of bulls decreases by one each day, such that on the seventh day there are six. When the total number of bulls for the seven days is calculated, we arrive at a total of seventy, a number, which our Sages explain, represents the nations of the world. Thus, the offerings of Sukkot are distinct in that they are an expression for all of mankind. Our Sages say that Israel's offering represents a plea for the atonement of mankind.

The Prophet Zechariah links Sukkot to the future goal of the nations. He describes the efforts of the nations, who employ their power *against* G-d – they will ultimately pay homage to G-d in Jerusalem, and all of mankind will then... celebrate Sukkot. But what is the connection of the nations of the world to the festival of Sukkot?

On the festival of Sukkot, Israel builds its sukkah under the protection of G-d. We leave our permanent dwelling, and construct a temporary hut whose roof must be made from produce of the earth. While the walls – which demarcate the social sphere of man – may be made of any material, the roofing must bear no sign of the power and nature of man. By dwelling under this roof, we acknowledge that G-d alone protects, and we rejoice in that protection.

The final wars that the nation will wage against G-d and against His workings will be led by Gog. This name, Gog, stems from the same root as *gag* – roof. Gog is the *opposite* of sukkah – that roofless dwelling under the protection of G-d. Indeed, the whole content of the world history of man is encapsulated in this contrast. Just as people have the power to erect strong and artificial walls, to enclose their sphere and safeguard it against others, so too do they imagine that they can secure themselves against G-d and the effects of His power. They think that they can protect themselves with their own power, and crown the building of human greatness with a gabled roof, rendering them independent of G-d!

This is precisely the struggle of Gog against the sukkah – the roof-delusion of human power and ingenuity against the roof of G-d's protection. So it will come to pass when the Jewish People will have led humanity to its goal, and the futile efforts of man will have been laid bare. No longer will mankind seek protection by its physical and intellectual prowess. Instead, they will rejoice in the only enduring protection, together in one great roofless sukkah.

- Sources: *Commentary, Bamidbar 29:13, Vayikra 23:43*

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authority for a ruling.

SEASONS - THEN AND NOW

by Rabbi Chaviv Danesh

Harmony of a Nation - Overcoming baseless hatred (Part 2)

The Gemara says that the First Beit Hamikdash was destroyed because of the three cardinal sins: idolatry, illicit relations, and murder. The Second Beit Hamikdash, though, was destroyed because of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred). Since the First Beit Hamikdash was destroyed from idolatry, illicit relations, and murder, and the second was destroyed because of baseless hatred, the Gemara concludes that baseless hatred is akin to the three cardinal sins (Yoma 9b).

What is Baseless Hatred?

Last week we addressed how the question of how the seemingly light transgression of “hating someone in one’s heart” can be compared to the severe transgressions of idolatry, illicit relations, and murder. This week we will focus on an even more fundamental question on the Gemara above. The Gemara says clearly that it was *baseless* hatred that destroyed the Beit Hamikdash. However, this idea is very hard to grasp. What is the meaning of baseless hatred? Don’t people usually have a reason for hating someone? Why would people hate each other for no reason at all?

This question is not only a historical investigation of what took place in the generation when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, but it is also very relevant to us in the present day as well. Chazal tell us: *In every generation that the Beit Hamikdash is not rebuilt, it is as if it was destroyed in that generation* (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1). This is because if we would do sincere *teshuva* for the sins that caused the Beit Hamikdash to be destroyed, then we would merit seeing it rebuilt. The fact that the Beit Hamikdash is not yet rebuilt is therefore testimony to the fact that we are continuing in the wrong ways that led to its destruction. This means that we are also guilty of baseless hatred. Therefore, it is our duty to investigate the meaning behind baseless hatred and how we are guilty of it today.

Hatred that is Permitted

Before addressing this issue directly, we need a brief background regarding the prohibition of hating others. Even though baseless hatred is forbidden, there is a type of hatred that is not only permitted, but is also a mitzvah. The

halacha dictates that in certain cases it is actually a mitzvah to hate those who go against the words of Hashem (see below the many limitations of this halacha) (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 272:11). There are two primary reasons given for the mitzvah of hating those who go against Hashem: one is for the benefit of the transgressors themselves, and the other is for the benefit of others.

One reason given is so that one will hate the actions of the transgressor and not come to learn from and be influenced by his bad ways (Tzivyon Ha’amoodim on Smak, *aseh* 8). Another reason given is that when people see that one who transgresses is hated, it will deter them from going after their *yetzer hara*, and will also cause those who sinned to do *teshuva* (Megillat Sefer on Smag, *lo taaseh* 5). According to the latter reason, the hatred has to be shown outwardly in order to bring about the intended results.

Limitations of Permitted Hatred

Even when it comes to hating someone who goes against the words of Hashem, the instances are very limited. While this is not a halachic work, and in a practice one should consult a *posek* about each individual case, the following is a general list of opinions that limit the cases for which hatred is allowed.

The hatred of a wicked person is limited to a case where one personally witnessed someone intentionally committing a well known sin, or if two witnesses testified in Beit Din (Jewish court run according to Torah law) that they saw him sin. If the sin is not well known, then one can hate the sinner only if the sinner rejects his rebuke (meaning, he admitted his sin and still refuses to do *teshuva*. If he denies having done wrong, however, it is not considered as having rejected rebuke.) (See Chafetz Chaim, Be’er Mayim Chaim 4:14, 6:31). Even with all this, it is important to note that some prominent *Poskim* hold that since today we do not know how to give proper rebuke, sinners are never considered as having rejected rebuke (See Chazon Ish, Yoreh Deah 2:28. See also Marganita Tava, printed at the end of Sefer Ahavat Chessed).

Even in a case where it is clear that the person transgressed purposefully, if the sinner did *teshuva* one is not allowed to hate him (Rambam, Hilchot Rotzeach 13:14). Therefore, if

he is a righteous person – or even someone “average” when it comes to keeping mitzvahs – one should assume he already did *teshuvah* and may not hate him (see Chafetz Chaim 4:4).

Even if he is a person who does not generally keep Torah and mitzvahs, often it is because he is lacking a basic Jewish education and his sins are usually a result of total ignorance – and not of rebellion. In such a case, one is not allowed to hate him as a result of seeing him sin (see Rambam, Hilchot Mamrim 3:3, Chazon Ish, Orach Chaim 87:14 and Yoreh Deah 1:6, 2:16, 2:28, Marganita Tava, printed at the end of Sefer Ahavat Chesed). A halachic authority should be contacted to determine who exactly falls under this category.

Even in the cases where one is allowed to hate, according to some opinions one has to have pure intentions when hating the sinner, which means that he has to hate the sinner for the sin committed – and not for personal reasons (Dibrot Moshe, Bava Metzia ch. 2 note 77 and Kovetz Shiurim, Bava Kama 104). Furthermore, some opinions hold that one should only hate the bad in him, and not the person as a whole (Tanya, *perek* 32).

Even in the cases where one is allowed to hate, one still has to help the transgressor when he needs it, and have mercy on him (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 272:11, Ahavat Chesed vol. 1 3:2-3, 4:2).

It is important to note that those who sin out of spite, heretics, inciters to sin and transgressors of more serious sins, all have stricter laws when it comes to this halacha, and, depending on the case, the above limitations may not apply. As mentioned above, since there are many details with regards to this halacha, one must discuss each individual case with a competent halachic authority.

What is Considered “Baseless”?

Let’s now go back to our original topic, which is the definition of baseless hatred. The commentaries explain that anytime that the halacha does not consider the hatred to be justified, then it is considered *baseless* (see Rashi on Shabbat 32b “*sinat chinam*”). Now, as mentioned above, the only time that halacha allows hatred is toward people who intentionally go against Hashem’s words. Taking into consideration all of the above limitations, it is clear that in the vast majority of cases the hatred that one feels is considered baseless even if we feel that there is good reason for it (see Peleh Yoetz “*sinah*”).

There are many factors that contribute to baseless hatred. Depending on the root of the reason for the hatred, there are different ways to combat it. In the next few articles we will try, *iy”H*, to present ideas from Chazal about how to battle the hatred within and thereby help rebuild the Beit Hamikdash speedily in our day.

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that Pinchas will receive G-d's "covenant of peace" as a reward for his bold action – executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. G-d commands Moshe to maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites, who lured the Jewish People into sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. G-d instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the Levites' families is recorded.

Tzlofchad's daughters file a claim with Moshe. In the absence of a brother, they request their late father's

portion in the Land. Moshe asks G-d for the ruling, and G-d tells Moshe that their claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance.

G-d tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter it. Moshe asks G-d to designate the subsequent leader, and G-d selects Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The *parsha* concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash.