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### THREE WEEKS

#### Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

According to Ashkenazic custom, the period beginning on the fast of the 17th of Tamuz and ending after the fast day of the ninth day of Av is the longest slice of time dedicated to remembering any historical event having occurred to the Jewish people on the Jewish calendar.

In the general world such days and commemorations are usually limited to one day such as a Memorial Day commemoration. But to have this period of time of mourning and reflection stretched into weeks is a particularly Jewish phenomenon. One of the reasons that such a considerable period has been set aside for sad remembrance is that mourning and self reflection are processes that build themselves on a cumulative basis.

Our emotions and mindset require time to be able to understand and respond to tragedies, both personal and national. If the fast day of the ninth day of Av would arrive without preparation and introduction, it could very well be deemed only a formality and become an insignificant day on the Jewish calendar. It is the buildup that allows for a true assessment of the events in the history of the day itself.

These three weeks that lead to the commemoration and fast day of the ninth of Av are necessary in order that that special day carry with it significance and historical meaning. Almost two millennia have passed since the events of that day of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the holy Temple in the year 70 CE. The fact that that they have been remembered and commemorated over such a long period of time is testimony to the power of the ritual and observance that this three-week period imposes upon Jewish life.

It is interesting to note that the apparent discomfort that this period imposes upon us is relatively of minor consequence. Even the restrictions regarding eating meat and drinking wine during the days immediately preceding the fast of the ninth of Av are of relatively little discomfort to us. Fish restaurants look forward an entire year to these days. Yet, all the restrictions of the three weeks that precede the fast day of the ninth of Av do have a spiritual and emotional effect upon us, even if only subliminally.

Somehow over the centuries and through the dark and abysmal nights of Jewish history, this time of remembrance kept the memory of Zion and Jerusalem, of the holy Temple and of Jewish sovereignty alive and real. Today's State of Israel is a product of this three-week period. There have been many twists and turns in the Jewish story over the past millennia. However, the one constant has been the fact that the Jewish people instinctively realize that wherever they live in the world and no matter how successful and peaceful their sojourn might be, they are not really at home. Home is our ancient land promised to us by Heaven and struggled for by Jews over all of the ages.

There are those who say that since we have been privileged to regain Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel and that Jerusalem is now a large, modern and inhabited city, there is little reason for us to preserve the observances that the three-week period preceding the fast day of the ninth of Av has imposed upon us. In my opinion this would be a classic example of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. It is only because of the three-week period that we can appreciate the gift that Heaven has bestowed upon our time, in restoring the Jewish people to their homeland and to national sovereignty. Without perspective, nothing in life can truly be appreciated. Generations now born, 70 years after the founding of the state of Israel and 50 years after the liberation of Jerusalem, really have no background to judge the wonders that have occurred and continue to occur. This three-week period before the fast day of the ninth of Av allows us to frame the events of our time and our current situation. It gives us a sense of gratitude and understanding instead of just relying upon sometimes vapid patriotism and formal staged commemorations. The ninth of Av will yet be a day of joy and feasting when Jewish history has finally completed its long journey.

Shabbat shalom  
Berel Wein

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From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva  
Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

#### Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

The Holiness of the Kotel

1. When we speak of the "Kotel", the Western Wall, we must speak with great reverence. We must follow the example of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, who never dared to approach it at all, or of Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, who prayed there only on special, sacred occasions, at which time he would tremble with reverence, and he would keep on trembling for about two hours after he returned home.
2. All the more so that we don't insult the Western Wall by saying that it is less holy than the Temple Mount. The Kotel, today, is like the Temple was in its time. Presently, the Western Wall is our Temple.
3. The Kotel, besides constituting the retaining wall of the Temple Mount, was also sanctified through Israel's prayers, self-sacrifice and pristine longing, such that it constitutes the holiest synagogue of the Jewish people.
4. When our Sages said that "the Divine Presence has never left the Western Wall," they were not talking about the wall of the Temple, but about the Kotel, as the Sages of Israel have proven. A strident debate over historical/national issues need not spill over into matters of Jewish law and faith. Rather, it should remain humbly in its place. Otherwise, even the Kotel's special value will be lost.
5. The Temple Mount was never a place of prayer or a place of various religious ceremonies, and it was forbidden to go there for any other purpose than the Temple worship or building the temple. Maran Ha-Rav Kook saw with his prophetic spirit, as is mentioned in Shut Malki Bakodesh, a great

vision of a single synagogue shared by the entire Nation, near the Temple Mount at the Western Wall.

6. Laws regarding the Temple Mount are not within the domain of the rulings of Rabbi X or Rabbi Y, but rather, they belong to the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, serving the entire Jewish People. Moreover, the decision that one should not enter the Temple Mount is not just anybody's opinion, open to rejection. Rather, it is a final decision of whichever Judge "will be in those times" (Vayikra 17:9).

7. The site of the Temple Mount and of the Temple is not a matter of national conquest that we need to maintain a presence or a settlement there, the way all other parts of the Land of Israel are. Rather, as its name clearly states, it is the place and the mountain of the Temple. Its entire essence is the supreme holiness of G-d letting His Divine Presence rest upon us.

8. The Western Wall is the lobby and the Temple is the banquet hall, and there is no way to reach the banquet hall but through the lobby. Millions of lights from the banquet hall shed their light upon it.

Golden Mean

Q: When the Rambam writes about the "Golden Mean" (Hilchot De'ot, Chapter 2. Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 2. Commentary on Pirkei Avot 4:4), is it identical to what Aristotle wrote or an expansion of it?

A: Aristotle is not the Rambam's source, the Torah is the source. The Rambam, however, does employ some of Aristotle's terminology. There are also some of Aristotle's thoughts on this matter with which the Rambam disagrees. See starting from Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 5.

Charedim and Religious-Zionists

Q: Why are the majority of observant Jews Charedi and not Religious-Zionists?

A: They are mistaken.

Q: Why are the majority of Religious-Zionists lax in observing Mitzvot?

A: They are mistaken.

Q: Then what should we do?

A: Fulfill the entire Torah.

Aristotle

Q: Is it true that Aristotle repented at the end of his life?

A: No. There is no reliable source for this.

Holy Sefer to Non-Jew

Q: At the end of the year in High School, is it permissible to give a holy Sefer to the students when there are few Arabs in the class? After all, it is forbidden for non-Jews to learn Torah.

A: It is permissible since there is a doubt whether they will learn it. And there is no other way to give the book to the Jewish child (Ha-Rav Pinchas Teitz, who served as Rabbi of Elizabeth, NJ, used similar reasoning to permit broadcasting Daf Yomi on the radio in America. 'Ha-Pardes' Journal - Tammuz 5714 - journal #10).

Visiting Parents on the Holidays

Q: Is there an obligation of honoring one's parents by staying with them on the holidays? It is very difficult for my wife.

A: There is no such obligation unless one's parents are sick or in need of help.

Tearing One's Garment when Seeing Amona

Q: Should I tear my shirt if I see the Yishuv of Amona which was destroyed?

A: No, since it is still under Israeli control. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 581:1 and Mishnah Berurah there.

Student in Teachers' Room

Q: I am a high school student. Is it permissible for me to drink coffee in the teachers' room? After all, my parents pay for me to learn there.

A: Certainly not. They pay for what the school agrees to give you.

White Wine at Wedding

Q: At the Chupah, the bride prefers white wine in case it spills on her dress, but the groom prefers red wine symbolizing the covenant (Brit) being formed. What should they do?

A: The bride's reasoning is clear and stronger than a symbol.

Wearing White Clothing on Shabbat

Q: Is there an obligation for one to wear all white clothing on Shabbat, as the Arizal says?

A: This is not our level but rather the level of supreme Tzadikim, and it "Yehura" - religious arrogance" to do so. Biur Halahah (#262 d.h. Begadim). Ruach Chaim of Ha-Rav Chaim Palagi. Piskei Teshuvot (#262 note #27). Wearing a white shirt is not "Yehura" and this is the custom.

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**Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

**The Lost Masterpiece (Pinchas 5778)**

**Covenant & Conversation Judaism & Torah**

A true story that took place in 1995: It concerns the legacy of an unusual man with an unusual name: Mr Ernest Onians, a farmer in East Anglia whose main business was as a supplier of pigswill. Known as an eccentric, his hobby was collecting paintings. He used to go around local auctions and whenever a painting came on sale, especially if it was old, he would make a bid for it. Eventually he collected more than five hundred canvases. There were too many to hang them all on the walls of his relatively modest home, Baylham Mill in Suffolk. So he simply piled them up, keeping some in his chicken sheds.

His children did not share his passion. They knew he was odd. He used to dress scruffily. Afraid of being burgled, he rigged up his own home-made alarm system, using klaxons powered by old car batteries, and always slept with a loaded shotgun under his bed. When he died, his children put the paintings on sale by Sotheby's, the London auction house. Before any major sale of artworks Sotheby's puts out a catalogue so that interested buyers can see in advance what will be on offer.

A great art expert, Sir Denis Mahon (1910-2011), was looking through the catalogue one day when his eye was caught by one painting in particular. The photograph in the catalogue, no larger than a postage stamp, showed a rabble of rampaging people setting fire to a large building and making off with loot. Onians had bought it at a country house sale in the 1940s for a mere £12. The catalogue listed the painting as the Sack of Carthage, painted by a relatively little known artist of the seventeenth century, Pietro Testa. It estimated that it would fetch £15,000.

Mahon was struck by one incongruous detail. One of the looters was making off with a seven branched candelabrum. What, Mahon wondered, was a menorah doing in Carthage? Clearly the painting was not depicting that event. Instead it was portrait of the Destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. But if what he was looking at was not the Sack of Carthage, then the artist was probably not Pietro Testa.

Mahon remembered that the great seventeenth century artist Nicholas Poussin had painted two portraits of the destruction of the second temple. One was hanging in the art museum in Vienna. The other, painted in 1626 for Cardinal Barberini, had disappeared from public view sometime in the eighteenth century. No one knew what had happened to it. With a shock Mahon realised that he was looking at the missing Poussin.

At the auction, he bid for the picture. When a figure of the eminence of Sir Dennis bid for a painting the other potential buyers knew that he must know something they did not, so they too put in bids. Eventually Sir Dennis bought the painting for £155,000. A few years later he sold it for its true worth, £4.5 million, to Lord Rothschild who donated it to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem where it hangs today in the memory of Sir Isaiah Berlin.

I know this story only because, at Lord Rothschild's request, I together with the then director of the national gallery, Neil MacGregor, gave a lecture on the painting while it was shown briefly in London before being taken to its new and permanent home. I tell the story because it is so graphic an example of the fact that we can lose a priceless legacy simply because, not loving it,

we do not come to appreciate its true value. From this we can infer a corollary: we inherit what we truly love.

This surely is the moral of the story of the daughters of Zelophehad in this week's parsha. Recall the story: Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, had died in the wilderness before the allocation of the land. He left five daughters but no sons. The daughters came before Moses, arguing that it would be unjust for his family to be denied their share in the land simply because he had daughters but not sons. Moses brought their case before God, who told him: "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and give their father's inheritance to them" (Num. 27:7). And so it came to pass.

The sages spoke of Zelophehad's daughters in the highest praise. They were, they said, very wise and chose the right time to present their request. They knew how to interpret Scripture, and they were perfectly virtuous.[1] Even more consequentially, their love of the land of Israel was in striking contrast to that of the men. The spies had come back with a negative report about the land, and the people had said, "Let us appoint a [new] leader and return to Egypt" (Num. 14:4). But Zelophehad's daughters wanted to have a share in the land, which they were duly granted.[2]

This led to the famous comment of Rabbi Ephraim Luntschitz of Prague (1550-1619) on the episode of the spies. Focussing on God's words, "Send for yourself men to spy out the land of Canaan" (Num. 14:2), Luntschitz argued that God was not commanding Moses but permitting him to send men. God was saying, "From My perspective, seeing the future, it would have been better to send women, because they love and cherish the land and would never come to speak negatively about it. However, since you are convinced that these men are worthy and do indeed value the land, I give you permission to go ahead and send them." [3]

The result was catastrophic. Ten of the men came back with a negative report. The people were demoralised, and the result was that they lost the chance to enter the land in their lifetime. They lost their chance to enjoy their inheritance in the land promised to their ancestors. The daughters of Zelophehad, by contrast, did inherit the land – because they loved it. What we love, we inherit. What we fail to love, we lose.

I cannot help but think that in some strange way the stories of the daughters of Zelophehad and the auction of the missing Poussin illustrate the state of Jewish identity today. For many of my contemporaries Judaism was like the story of Ernest Onian's penchant for paintings. Judaism was something their parents had but not something that was meaningful to them. Like Onians' children they were willing to let go of it, unaware that it was a legacy of immense value. When we don't fully appreciate the value of something, we can lose a treasure without ever knowing it is a treasure.

Judaism, of course, is not a painting. It's an identity. And you can't sell an identity. But you can lose it. And many Jews are losing theirs. Our ancestors have given us the gift of a past. We owe them the gift of a future faithful to that past. At least we should not relinquish it simply because we don't know how valuable it is.

The life-changing idea here is surely simple yet profound: if we truly wish to hand on our legacy to our children, we must teach them to love it. The most important element of any education is not learning facts or skills but learning what to love. What we love, we inherit. What we fail to love, we lose.

Shabbat Shalom

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date: Thu, Jul 5, 2018 at 11:05 PM

subject: Hamaayan - Investment Advice

Hamaayan

By Shlomo Katz Parshas Pinchas

Investment Advice

BS"D

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Sponsored by Judy and David Marwick in memory of Abe and Helen Spector

In this week's Parashah, we read of the Mussaf sacrifices that were to be brought on Shabbat and each festival. The Torah says (28:10): "Olat Shabbat be'Shabbato" / "The elevation-offering of each Sabbath on its own Sabbath." Literally, this teaches that, if, for any reason, the Korban Mussaf was not brought on one Shabbat, it may not be made up the following week.

R' Moshe Yehoshua Hager z"l (1916-2012; Vizhnitzer Rebbe) writes that this verse alludes, as well, to a lesson about Shabbat observance: "Olat Shabbat be'Shabbato" / "The elevation a person experiences as a result of observing Shabbat is in his Shabbat." What a person gets out of Shabbat depends on what he puts into Shabbat.

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe continues: We say in the Friday night Zemiroh, "Whoever sanctifies the seventh day as befits it, his reward is very great, according to his deeds." At first glance, the song appears to contradict itself. Is the reward for Shabbat observance "very great," or is it "according to his deeds"? In reality, there is no contradiction, the Rebbe explains. Imagine an investment with a return of 100% — a "very great" return. Nevertheless, a person's profits will be "according to his deeds." If he invests \$1,000, he will get back \$2,000. But, if he invests only \$100, he will get back only \$200. The same is true of Shabbat. What a person gets out of it depends on what he invests in it—referring, of course, to preparing oneself spiritually and getting a spiritual return. (Yeshuot Moshe: Ma'adenei Ha'shulchan)

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"Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen, turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael, when he zealously avenged Me among them . . ." (25:11)

Rashi z"l writes: Because Bnei Yisrael spoke disparagingly of him saying, "Have you seen this grandson of Puti, this person whose maternal grandfather used to fatten calves for idolatry, and he has dared to slay a prince of one of Yisrael's tribes!" Therefore, the Torah comes and connects his genealogy with Aharon. [Until here from Rashi]

R' David Halevi z"l (1586-1667; Poland; known as the "Taz") asks: If the prince of the tribe of Shimon deserved the death penalty for what he did, then why were Bnei Yisrael speaking disparagingly of Pinchas? Why was it relevant that his grandfather was an idolator or that the person he killed, Zimri, was a prince? Likewise, if Zimri did not deserve to die, why was it relevant that he was a prince? Any murder is abhorrent! He explains: Halachah provides that Bet Din may impose punishments harsher than the Torah specifies when doing so is necessary to combat lawlessness by making an example out of a particular sinner. That is what happened here. Zimri's sin was not one that ordinarily incurs the death penalty. However, Pinchas, in his zealotry, made an example of Zimri.

Not just anyone has the authority to do that, however. Therefore, the people said: Who is Pinchas, the grandson of an idolator, to take the law into his own hands and kill someone who was above his (Pinchas') station? To that argument, the Torah answers: Pinchas is "son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen." Moreover, he did this for Me, Hashem, "when he zealously avenged Me among them." (Divrei David)

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) answers the Taz's question as follows: If a person wants to hold himself above the law, as Pinchas did when he killed Zimri (who did not technically deserve the death penalty), his intentions must be entirely "L'shem Shamayim" / "For the sake of Heaven." Bnei Yisrael wondered: How could a person whose grandfather was an idolator have such pure intentions?

R' Kook continues: Many commentators ask why the Egyptians deserved to be punished for enslaving Bnei Yisrael when Hashem decreed that Avraham's descendants would be enslaved. One of the common answers given is that Hashem never decreed that a specific Egyptian enslave a Jew; therefore, an Egyptian who "volunteered" to do so deserved to be punished. Still, R' Kook asks, why should the Egyptians who "volunteered" be punished? They were actually fulfilling a Mitzvah by carrying out Hashem's decree!

He answers: In many situations, the Torah doesn't mind if a person has an ulterior motive alongside his intention to do a Mitzvah. [For example, it is okay to give Tzedakah with an ulterior motive.] However, that is true only when the act being done is not an inherently bad act. Enslaving Bnei Yisrael was an inherently bad act, so any improper motivation was sufficient to make the entire act bad. Likewise, killing Zimri, who was not liable for the death penalty, would have been a bad act if Pinchas' motivation had not been entirely proper. Therefore, the Torah testifies on his behalf. (Metziut Kattan 146)

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"But the sons of Korach did not die." (26:11)

R' Henach Leibowitz z"l (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim Rabbinical Seminary of America in Queens, New York) writes: Our Sages ask how a person as intelligent as Korach could do something so foolish as to mutiny against Moshe. They answer, "He saw great lineage descending from himself." Korach reasoned that since his descendants would include the Prophet Shmuel, he obviously would not perish and,

presumably, would succeed. What he failed to take into account was that his sons, who seemed to be so closely aligned with him, would repent and survive him.

What inspired the sons of Korach to repent? The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni relates: By going to the tent of Datan and Aviram, Moshe saved four Tzaddikim from Gehinnom: the three sons of Korach and the co-conspirator On ben Pelet. In what merit were Korach's sons saved? When they were sitting with their father and they saw Moshe approaching, they were embarrassed to look at him. They said, "If we stand for Moshe, we are degrading our father, contrary to the Mitzvah of honoring one's parents. But, if we don't stand for Moshe, we are transgressing the command to stand for an elder. It is better if we stand for Moshe Rabbeinu." At that moment, they had thoughts of repentance. [Until here from Yalkut Shimoni]

R' Leibowitz explains: This Midrash is teaching us the powerful impact that actions have on a person. Korach's sons were aligned with their father in believing that Moshe had selfishly appointed his brother, Aharon, as Kohen Gadol without being commanded by Hashem to do so. Nevertheless, the act of standing for Moshe, of showing him a small amount of honor, because he was an elder was a catalyst to cause them to rethink their positions.

From here we learn, continues R' Leibowitz, that a person who wants to acquire any good Middah / character trait should perform actions that reflect that trait even if, at first, they will not be genuine reflections of his feelings or his current state of mind. [For example, rather than saying, "I will study Torah after I learn to appreciate it," a person should just start studying. Rather than saying, "I will be nice to people after I learn to appreciate them," a person should just start being nice to people.] (Chiddushei Ha'lev)

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### **Prayer by Non-Angels**

#### **By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Question #1: Ahavah Rabbah

Brocha Rishonah asks me: "In the middle of reciting the brocha of Ahavah Rabbah, I feel a mild need to use the bathroom. Must I stop davening immediately, or can I delay using the bathroom and finish davening first?"

Question #2: The Baal Keriyah

"I am a baal keriyah (often mispronounced as baal korei). It occasionally happens that while I am leining, I realize that I need to use the facilities. May I continue leining until I have finished reading?"

Question #3: Cantorial Quandary

Mr. Fine Cantor calls me. "I just found out that one may not pray when one has a minor urinary urge, which for me is quite common. I often have such a need prior to repeating the chazaras hashatz. It is rather embarrassing for me to leave the shul prior to beginning the repetition. What do I do?"

#### **Introduction**

Since Tehillim (106:30) emphasizes that Pinchas was rewarded in the merit of his prayer, we have an ideal opportunity to discuss this aspect of the laws of davening.

In the fourth chapter of Hilchos Tefillah, the Rambam lists and explains five essential prerequisites of prayer. This means that one may not be permitted to daven if he is unable to fulfill these requirements. The five requirements are:

1. One's hands must be clean.
2. One's body must be covered.
3. The place where one is praying must be clean.
4. One may not be distracted by bodily needs.
5. One must have proper kavanah when praying, meaning that there is a requirement that one's thoughts be focused.

This article will be devoted to factor number 4, that one must not be distracted by bodily needs. This means that it is prohibited to daven when feeling an urge to relieve oneself. Chazal derive this requirement from several biblical sources. One verse reads *hikon likras Elokecha, Yisroel*, "Prepare yourself, Israel, when you approach your G-d" (Amos 4:12). Of course, that verse does not specify what type of preparation is necessary. According to the midrash, another verse, *Shemor raglecha ka'asher teileich el beis HaElokim*, "Pay attention to your legs when you walk into the House

of G-d" (Koheles 4:17), serves as an allusion to this specific type of preparation.

#### **The Gemara background**

The passage of Gemara that provides the background to this discussion reads as follows: "One who needs to relieve himself may not pray, and if he did pray, it is an abomination" (Brochos 23a). The fact that the Gemara calls this prayer an "abomination" teaches that one who prayed when he needed to relieve himself is required to pray again (Kesef Mishneh, Hilchos Tefillah 4:10; see also Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 92:1). In this situation, the brochos of the tefillah are considered brochos levatalah, brochos recited in vain (Biur Halachah 92:1, s.v. Hayah).

In general, when one needs to relieve himself, it is prohibited to wait unnecessarily. We will continue the discussion on this point shortly.

When is the prayer invalid?

The Gemara explains that a prayer recited when one senses an urge to relieve oneself is not always invalid. This depends on how strong the need was to relieve oneself at the time that he prayed. The Gemara rules that if he could have waited for a parsah, then he has fulfilled his obligation to pray.

However, if he davened knowing that he would not be able to wait this long, the davening is invalid and must be repeated, since it is considered an abomination.

How long is a parsah?

A parsah is a distance of 8000 amos, approximately 2½ to 3 miles, and the Gemara means the amount of time it takes to walk a parsah. The authorities dispute how much time this is, some ruling that it is an hour (Bach, Orach Chayim 92), whereas most authorities consider it longer. Some opinions consider it as long as 96 minutes. The consensus of the late authorities is that if one would not have been able to wait for 72 minutes, the prayer is invalid (Aruch Hashulchan 92:2; Mishnah Berurah 92:3).

Milder needs

What is the halachah if someone feels a mild urge to use the facilities – meaning that he knows that he could wait more than 72 minutes? Is he permitted to pray?

We find a dispute among the rishonim whether, under these circumstances, one is permitted to pray, the Rif and Rashi contending that one may, whereas most authorities rule that it is still not appropriate to daven without first relieving oneself (Rambam, Rosh, Rabbeinu Yonah, Tur and Shulchan Aruch). This dispute appears to depend on two variant texts of the passage of Gemara involved. (However, we should note that the Aruch Hashulchan proposes a completely different way to understand this topic, and he concludes that all rishonim prohibit davening when one feels any urge.)

The Rambam codifies this requirement as follows:

"One who needs to relieve himself may not pray. Furthermore, one who needs to relieve himself and prays, the prayer is an abomination, and upon relieving himself, he must pray again. However, if he could hold himself the amount of time it takes to walk a parsah, his tefillah is acceptable, after the fact. In any instance, one should not daven without first checking oneself very carefully. He should also remove any mucous and phlegm and anything else that distracts him, and only then pray" (Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 4:10).

Type of need

There is a dispute among the authorities whether the requirement to daven again is only when one needed to defecate, or also when one needed to urinate. The Magen Avraham, the Chayei Odom and the Aruch Hashulchan are lenient, ruling that even if the need was intense, one is not required to repeat the davening if one needed only to urinate, whereas the Elyah Rabbah and the Derech Hachayim require one to daven again. When the Mishnah Berurah records this dispute (Mishnah Berurah 92:2), he writes that he is unable to render a decision as to which position is correct, since both sides have early sources that follow their opinion (Biur Halachah, 92:1, s.v. Vetzarich).

Should he miss tefillah betzibur?

What is the halachah if someone has a minor urge to use the facilities, and he will certainly be able to wait longer than a parsah: may he postpone relieving himself in order to be able to daven together with a minyan?

The conclusion is that even though the prayer would be valid after the fact, he should not pray until he has had a chance to relieve himself.

Should he miss praying altogether?

Let us assume that the latest time to daven is approaching, and, if our individual relieves himself, he may miss davening altogether. Is he permitted to daven, even though he feels a mild urge to relieve himself, or does the requirement to use the facilities before davening require that he miss davening?

There is a dispute among the early acharonim as to what one should do.

According to the Bach, he may not daven when he needs to use the facilities, even when this means that he will miss davening as a result.

However, according to the Magen Avraham, this depends on how severe the need is to use the facilities. If it is strong enough that he feels that he will not be able to wait until a parsah, he cannot pray. However, if the need is not that great, the Magen Avraham rules that one can rely on the Rif that one may daven. The Mishnah Berurah concludes in accordance with the Magen Avraham.

Make-up

Under the circumstances in which he was not permitted to daven, he would be required to make up the prayer, called tefillas tashlumim. This means that immediately after davening the next shemoneh esrei, after taking three steps backward at the end of the prayer, he waits for a few seconds, then steps forward and recites the shemoneh esrei again, as a makeup for the missed prayer.

What parts of prayer?

Until now, the rules that we have been describing apply to the shemoneh esrei. How do these rules apply regarding the other parts of prayer and regarding other brochos or learning Torah?

The laws regarding all these other Torah and tefillah activities are as follows: If one is in the middle of reciting brochos or tefillos other than shemoneh esrei and he has an urge, but he knows that he can wait a parsah, he may continue and complete the section of davening in which he is holding and then relieve himself (Shu"t Harashba, Volume 1, #131; Mishnah Berurah 92:9). However, he should not continue the next section of davening without first relieving himself. Therefore, if this happens during pesukei dezimra, he may continue until the end of yishtabach and then relieve himself. However, he is required to relieve himself before he answers borchu, since this begins the next section of davening (Shoneh Halachos). If this happens during the brochos surrounding the Shma, he could continue davening before he relieves himself, but he cannot start shemoneh esrei without first relieving himself. However, in this instance, he should not wait until he completes the brocha of ga'al yisroel, since ga'al yisroel should be recited immediately before beginning shemoneh esrei (this is called semichas geulah litefilah). Instead, he should relieve himself beforehand, so that he can complete the brocha of ga'al yisroel and begin shemoneh esrei immediately (Mishnah Berurah 92:9).

In this last instance, he should not recite the brocha Asher Yatzar until completing the shemoneh esrei. Whether one can recite the brocha of Asher Yatzar in the middle of pesukei dezimra or not is a dispute among the late authorities, which we will leave for a different time.

What is considered a new topic?

All of hallel, all of the megillah or all of bensching are each considered one unit. Therefore, someone who was in the middle of any one of them and began to feel an urge may complete them first. However, the haftarah is considered a new unit after keriyas hatorah (Biur Halachah 92:2, s.v. Korei). Therefore, someone who felt an urge during keriyas hatorah may wait until it is complete, but should attend to his need prior to the beginning of the haftarah.

In all of these instances, if the urge is great enough that he could not wait a parsah, he should not recite any brochos or tefillos. However, according to most authorities, someone who recited a brocha or a tefillah when he could not wait a parsah does not need to repeat them, although it was prohibited for him to recite them (Milchemes Hashem, on Rif Brochos page 16a; Pri Megadim, Introduction to Mishbetzos Zahav, Orach Chayim, Chapter 92; Mishnah Berurah 92:7; Biur Halachah 92:1, s.v. Afilu; however, the Lechem Yehudah, cited by Biur Halachah ad locum, rules that one did not fulfill the requirement and needs to recite the prayer or brocha again.)

Ahavah Rabbah

At this point, we can address the first of our opening questions, from Brocha Rishonah: "In the middle of reciting the brocha of Ahavah Rabbah, I feel a mild need to use the bathroom. Must I stop davening immediately, or can I delay using the bathroom and finish davening first?"

Based on the information that we now have, we can analyze the details and provide Brocha with an answer.

Brocha may not begin shemoneh esrei until she uses the facilities. However, since this is only a minor need and also because her question is germane to the brochos surrounding Shma, she is permitted to continue davening and to complete Shma and its brochos before she does so. However, if she completes the prayer up to Boruch Atta Hashem Ga'al Yisroel, she will create a problem, in that she will not be able to recite shemoneh esrei immediately after completing that brocha. Therefore, she should take care of matters sometime between where she is now in davening and before she recites the words Tzur Yisroel. She should not recite Asher Yatzar until after she completes shemoneh esrei.

If she felt this need during pesukei dezimra, she should relieve herself some time before she begins reciting the brochos of Shma, meaning the brocha that begins with the words Boruch Ata Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam yotzeir or uvorei choshech. If she is in shul, she should take care of it before she answers borchu.

Are there any differences between men and women regarding these halachos?

No, there are no differences between men and women.

Learning and teaching Torah

If one has a great urge to relieve oneself, not only is it forbidden to pray, but it is also forbidden to learn Torah (Rema, Orach Chayim 92:1).

Public teaching

Someone who is in the middle of teaching a class or giving a public lecture who feels a need to relieve himself may finish the class he is teaching before doing so (Mishnah Berurah 92:7). Similarly, the baal keriah who feels such a need in the middle of the reading may complete it before relieving himself (Biur Halachah 92:1, s.v. Hayah). The reason is because we have a general halachic principle that kavod haberiyos, human dignity, supersedes a rabbinic prohibition, and the prohibition of teaching Torah when he needs to relieve himself is only miderabbanan (Magen Avraham 92:3).

The Baal Keri'ah

At this point, we can answer one of our opening questions: "I am a baal keriah. It occasionally happens that while I am leining, I realize that I need to use the facilities. May I continue leining until I have finished reading?"

The answer is that, based on the above, he may.

What about a Chazzan?

The later authorities are lenient, ruling that if the chazzan completed his personal shemoneh esrei and has a minor need to use the facilities, he may repeat the shemoneh esrei without first using them. The reason for this lenience is that the requirement to use the facilities is rabbinic, and the concept of kavod haberiyos supersedes it (Brochos 19b). An additional reason that one may be lenient in this instance is because of the opinion of the Rif, mentioned above, that one who can wait for a parsah may daven lechatchilah. Although we do not usually follow the Rif's minority opinion, under extenuating circumstances, one can rely upon it (Biur Halachah 92:1 s.v. Hayah).

Cantorial quandary

Back to our third question:

Mr. Fine Cantor calls me. “I just found out that one may not pray when one has a minor urinary urge, which for me is quite common. I often have such a need prior to repeating the chazaras hashatz. It is rather embarrassing for me to leave the shul prior to beginning the repetition. What do I do?”

Since Mr. Cantor is embarrassed to exit to use the facilities during the time that he is leading the davening, he may delay doing so until he finishes the davening. However, this is true only if his need is mild enough that he feels he can wait 72 minutes. If he feels that he cannot wait this long, he has no choice but to use the facilities, since, otherwise, he will not fulfill the mitzvah of davening, and his brochos will be in vain.

Caught in the middle

What is the law if someone is in the middle of the shemoneh esrei and he feels an urge to relieve himself? Should he interrupt the prayer to do so?

The halachah is that he should try to wait until he completes the tefillah and not interrupt the shemoneh esrei (Shu”t Harashba Volume 1, #131; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 92:2). However, he should not answer kedushah if his need is great, since this constitutes a new section of davening (Shoneh Halachos).

If his need to relieve himself is very great, he should go, even though he is in the middle of davening. When one needs to relieve himself, it is prohibited to wait unnecessarily. This prohibition is referred to as bal teshaketzu.

Must he repeat?

If someone needed to relieve himself in the middle of the shemoneh esrei, when he returns, does he continue the tefillah from where he was, or does he start it over again from the beginning?

Whether or not he returns to the beginning depends on the following:

Should his delay have been long enough that he could have recited the entire shemoneh esrei, then he is required to begin again from the beginning of the shemoneh esrei. If his delay was shorter, then he returns to the point where he interrupted his prayer.

In either instance, one should not talk during this interruption, and one should not recite Asher Yatzar until after he finishes the shemoneh esrei.

Men or women?

Are there any differences between men and women regarding these halachos?

No. Although I have been using male gender for this entire article, there are no differences between men and women.

Conclusion

The Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 2:3) explains that angels are made of a different type of matter than we are. They have no physical body, and Hashem made them in such a way that they have spiritual aspects and no true material appearance. This is why they can, at times, assume different forms. It is also a factor in their having no physical needs, and why they do not have free choice. Man was created by Hashem as the only creation that has free choice. Therefore, our serving Hashem and our davening is unique in the entire spectrum of creation.

Understanding how much concern Chazal placed in the seemingly minor aspects of davening should make us more aware of the fact that davening is our attempt at building a relationship with Hashem. As the Kuzari notes, every day should have three very high points -- the three times that we daven. We should gain our strength and inspiration for the rest of the day from these three prayers.

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subject: Rabbi Frand on Parsha

**By Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

**Parshas Pinchas**

### **Interpreting the Motivation for Kanaus [Zealotry]**

Pinchas' Peace Prize — Why the Wait? Is it Not Ironic?

The first five pesukim of Parshas Pinchas refer to the incident mentioned at the end of last week's parsha. Bilam's 'curses' did not work. (They turned into blessings.) As a final parting shot, he advises Balak to have the daughters of Moav seduce members of Klal Yisrael. (“The G-d of these people hates sexual immorality” [Sanhedrin 106a]) To emphatically protest this brazen desecration of G-d's Name, Pinchas killed the Prince of the Tribe of Shimon, Zimri, and the Moavite woman, Cozbi, with whom he was consorting.

In this week's parsha, Pinchas receives his due reward, which is, “Behold I give him My covenant of peace” [Bamidbar 25:12]. The truth of the matter is that this is how the parsha begins, but the rest of Parshas Pinchas has almost nothing to do with this story. If you and I were creating the parshios, we would say, “These first five pesukim really belong at the end of Parshas Balak.” After all, this is the end of the story. It is only natural that the narration of the reward given to Pinchas should be placed at the conclusion of the parsha which records his meritorious act of zealotry. Why is what happened to Pinchas put into a separate parsha, and why do we, in effect, need to wait a week to find out what happened to Pinchas?

The Tolner Rebbe shlit”a addresses this question. Pinchas acted as a kanaee.

There is not a good English word which fully captures the nuance of the Hebrew term kanaee, even though it is usually translated as ‘zealot’. Pinchas is the quintessential kanaee (noun). Kanaus is what we call zealotry today. Being a kanaee is a very tricky business. When a person does an act of kanaus, it becomes imperative to judge his motives. There are people who will do an act of kanaus for all the right reasons, totally for the ‘Sake of Heaven.’ A travesty has occurred and they stand up for that which is right. They do an act of zealotry which may be shocking, and may even offend people, but they hold that it has to be done. The Honor of the Almighty or the Honor of Torah, or the Honor of whatever it may be must be defended! This is one type of act of kanaus.

However, there is another type of kanaus which is different. There are people who go around looking for these types of things. They enjoy it, either because they are hotheads or rabble-rousers, or they like a good fight, or they do it for the adrenaline rush it provides for them. In short, people can have less than pristine motives for performing acts of kanaus.

Sometimes, when someone performs such an act, we are unable to know immediately why he did it. It often takes time to see how he behaves in the future. It takes time to assess what was done — was it the right thing, etc. Sometimes we cannot immediately judge why a person takes certain actions which involve kanaus. There is a very fine line between kanaus that is done l'Shem Shamayim, for the right reasons, and a kanaus that is done for ulterior motives.

It is mentioned in last week's parsha that when Pinchas approached Zimri and Cozbi “he took a spear in his hand” [Bamidbar 25:7]. There are those who point out that Pinchas had to look around to find a spear with which to execute his act of zealotry. Some people do not need to look around for the “spear” — they always carry it on their person and are just waiting for the opportunity to use it. Pinchas was not such a person. He was not “looking for a fight.” However, when the moment called for appropriate action on his part, he knew what had to be done, and he then sought out the proper tools with which to carry out those actions.

Pinchas was the son of Elazar, son of Aharon Ha'Kohen. He was a grandson of Aharon the Kohen, the personality known to Israel as “the lover of peace and the pursuer of peace.” Pinchas was a man of peace. The act he needed to do was offensive, it was an anathema to him. But he did it for the Sake of Heaven.

Of course, the Ribono shel Olam knew right away what Pinchas did, and why he did it. There was no doubt in His mind that Pinchas' act was entirely for the Sake of Heaven. However, by not putting the reward in Parshas Balak, but rather “waiting a week” to put it Parshas Pinchas, the Torah is

perhaps teaching us a lesson — that we cannot judge an act of zealotry immediately. Kanaas is a very tricky business, and if there is any personal agenda involved, then forget it. Under such circumstances, the perpetrator cannot be praised as a “true kanae”. You have to be in it 100% l’Shem Shamayim, or do not do it all!

Let us explain this concept in practical terms. Reuven does something in shul that is inappropriate. He should be chastised. He should be taken to task for his inappropriate behavior. But Shimon happens to not like Reuven for other reasons. This is the opportunity Shimon has been waiting for to take Reuven down a peg or two. “I’ll put him in his place once and for all and I will be justified in doing it!” Yes, but it is not pure. Shimon’s actions will not be 100% l’Shem Shamayim, and therefore will not be an act of true kanaas.

Someone recently told me that he was in Eretz Yisrael in 1972 when Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt”l was still alive, and he went into the Beis Medrash of the Mir Yeshiva. Just as this fellow walked into the Beis Medrash, Rav Chaim gave a “schmooze” [mussar talk]. The topic of the talk was the following: A store in Tel Aviv was selling very objectionable material. Certain religious zealots firebombed the store. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz got up in the Mir Yeshiva and said, “To be a kanae, you need to be like Pinchas — a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace. You need to only desire peace. When the situation demands it, then you take the ‘spear’ and act l’Shem Shamayim. However, someone who is not acting 100% for the sake of Heaven, who is just an arsonist or a pyromaniac, a rabble rouser, or someone looking for an adrenaline rush — he is not the type of person who should engage in acts of zealotry.

This explains the end of the section narrating G-d’s reward to Pinchas. “Therefore, I will give him my covenant of peace.” At first blush, this is a most incongruous reward. Is the “Peace Prize” given to a person who just killed two people? L’Havdil, the Nobel Peace Prize is not typically given to a warrior or general. Peace is one thing, and war is another. How then does Pinchas receive the “Peace Prize” (i.e., “My covenant of peace”)?

The answer is that the Ribono shel Olam is trying to send us a message: Do you think Pinchas wanted this? He would have wanted that the incident should never have occurred. He wanted that there should be Shalom, that this should not have had to come about. The situation demanded action, so he took care of it, but that was not his personality, and that was not who he really was. The biggest gift he can be given is the covenant of peace — the promise that this is not going to happen again!

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date Thu, Jul 5, 2018 at 5:22 PM

subject: Drasha - A View from Above

**By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

**Parshas Pinchas A View from Above**

Imagine you have been the Chief Operating Officer of a major corporation. The owner and Chairman of the board spotted you some forty years back. Observing your commitment and concern during a totally different mission, he picked you to steer his fledgling group of workers into a major force in the corporate world. During your forty year tenure with the firm, you fulfilled every one of your boss’s wishes with honesty and skill. You cared for the corporation and every one of its employees as if they were your offspring. The Chairman, who supplied every one of the company’s needs, financial, moral, physical, and spiritual, commended you as the greatest individual that would ever lead the corporation. But before you get to lead the company into a new phase of operation, the boss says it is time to retire.

So far so good. But then in a parting request you come into your boss’s office and begin to lecture him on the qualifications of a successor. You tell him to make sure that the next corporate officer has the qualities of leadership that will be able to bring the corporation into the next millenium.

Then you add the kicker. After all, you tell the boss, “you don’t want to leave the company like sheep without a leader.” In simple terms, it sounds like there is a word that defines the move — chutzpah.

Though it may not be a perfect parable, it seems like Moshe did just that. After he realizes that he will not lead the Jewish people into the Land of Canaan he approaches Hashem with a request. “May Hashem the Lord of all spirits appoint a man over the assembly, who shall take them out and bring them in and let them not be like sheep that have no shepherd” (Number 27:15-18). The question is simple. How does Moshe have the gall to tell the Master Of The Universe, He who breathes life into the centipede while splitting the sea and delivering manna, the qualifications of the next leader? Out of the multitudes of earthlings that are on the planet, does the Lord need guidance in appointing a new leader of the Jewish people?

During the last months of the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezhriz life, the decrees against the Jews living in Russia increased many fold. Young men were forced into the Czar’s army and ripped from their families, heritage, and faith. Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk went to beseech Rabbi Dov Ber, the Holy Magid of Mezhriz to intercede on their behalf by praying to the Almighty to force an annulment of the Czar’s dastardly decrees.

“Perhaps,” suggested the Rebbe Elimelech, “we should declare a communal fast led by the Magid — surely our united prayers will evoke Heavenly compassion!”

But the Rebbe Dov Ber quietly assured his disciple of an amazing secret. “Soon I will be departing this world. There is no need to gather the community and have them deprive their weak bodies of food. I will personally approach the heavenly throne and plead for mercy from the Almighty.”

Sure enough, two weeks later the Mezhrizter Maggid passed from this world. The week of shiva passed, but the decrees were not annulled. The thirty period of morning passed as well, and still no change. The conscriptions were as ferocious as ever. Rabbi Elimelech became frustrated. Didn’t the Magid promise salvation?

Desperate for an answer, he went to the Magid’s grave and asked him why the decrees were not abolished.

That night the Magid appeared to his disciple and revealed to him the reason that nothing had occurred.

“On earth there is one view — one that I shared with you. Like you, I also saw the decree as a most terrible event befalling our nation. But here in Heaven I see a different picture. Now I understand everything from an entirely different perspective. And frankly, the view from above is not as bleak as the view from below. In fact, I don’t even see the decree as a curse. I cannot pray to annul the decree. At this point, your only salvation is to ask an earthly rabbi to help you. Only a human leader can feel the mortal pain as you and the community feel it. Only someone who sees life from your perspective can pray on your behalf.”

Moshe knew that Hashem can choose whomever He wants. But he felt it was his obligation to beseech the Almighty to continue his particular legacy and direction in leading the people. Moshe wanted the appointment based on his opinion of what the Jewish nation needs, not based on a Divine choice. A ruler with the attribute of pure justice may have been harsher on the people. He would not respond to each complaint by beseeching the Almighty for a miraculous solution. The sweetened waters of marah, the deliverance of quail, the splitting of the sea, the victories over Amalek, and the healing of Miriam were all preceded by a common denominator Moshe’s intervention. A different leader with a different personality may have chosen a different direction. And an immortal leader may have not felt the despair of the people. Moshe created a destiny for his people based on his humility and understanding of the plight of his fellow Jews. And he wanted a shepherd like himself to care for his sheep. Even if it meant attempting to cajole his Creator with a very human philosophy.

Good Shabbos

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Dedicated in honor of the first wedding anniversary of Larry & Marcia Atlas by Mr. & Mrs. Larry Atlas  
Drasha is the email edition of FaxHomily which is a Project of the Henry and Myrtle Hirsch Foundation  
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The author is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore. Drasha is the e-mail edition of FaxHomily, a weekly torah facsimile on the weekly portion which is sponsored by The Henry and Myrtle Hirsch Foundation

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Masorah and the Role of the Jewish Woman

Rav Mayer Twersky:

January 10, 2016

I

In this study we seek be”H not originality, rather renewed understanding and appreciation of ancient, eternal truths.

This study draws heavily from, and is framed by, Rav Soloveitchik’s (the Rov’s) Torah.

II

וזכרתי את בריתי יעקב ואף את בריתי יצחק ואף את בריתי אברהם אזכר והארץ אזכר

I will remember my bris (covenant) with Ya’akov as well as my bris with Yitzchok, and I will remember my bris with Avrohom, and I will remember the land.[1]

ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקלי ושמרתם את בריתי והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ

And now if you will comply with my words and observe my bris you will be My treasure from amongst all the nations, for the entire earth belongs to Me.[2]

אלה דברי הברית אשר צוה יקוק את משה לכתר את בני ישראל בארץ מאב מלבד הברית אשר כרת אתם בחרב

These are the elements of the bris that Hashem commanded Mosheh to establish with Bnei Yisroel, in addition to the bris that He established with them at Har Sinai.[3]

A bris, or covenant, always implies obligations and commitment. The Torah speaks of two[4] brisin, bris avos and bris Sinai. We understand that bris Sinai entails a commitment to taryag mitzvos. But bris avos is opaque. Its only mitzvah, bris milah, serves only as an os, a representative sign, of the bris; it does not comprise its substance. What obligations and commitments are imposed by bris avos?

“(Bris avos) expresses attitudes, ideals, and sentiments... it guides our feeling and consciousness... it is the backdrop of (bris Sinai); (bris Sinai) is the behavioral fulfillment of the truths, values, and Jewish self-awareness established by (bris avos).”[5]

In short, bris avos consists of core values and attitudes, an approach to life and avodas Hashem. These values and attitudes obviously have practical, normative applications to and implications for all situations – old and new.

In truth, normative, repercussive values are not limited to bris avos; they are prominently featured and reiterated in bris Sinai as well. See, for instance, Ramban’s tour de force explanation of the mitzvah of ve-aseeso ha-yoshor ve-ha-tov.

הכוונה בזה, כי מתחלה אמר שתשמור חקותי ועדותי אשר צוך, ועתה יאמר גם באשר לא צוך תן דעתך לעשות הטוב והישר בעיניו, כי הוא אוהב הטוב והישר

וזה ענין גדול, לפי שאי אפשר להזכיר בתורה כל הנהגות האדם עם שכניו ורעיו וכל משאו ומתנו ותקוני הישוב והמדינות כלם, אבל אחרי שהזכיר מהם הרבה, כגון לא תלך רכיל (ויקרא יט טז), לא תקום ולא תשור (שם פסוק יח), ולא תעמוד על דם רעך (שם פסוק טז), לא תקלל הרש (שם פסוק יד), מפני שיבה תקום (שם פסוק לב), וכיוצא בהן, חזר לומר בדרך כלל שיעשה הטוב והישר בכל דבר, עד שיכנס בזה הפשרה ולפנים משורת הדין, וכגון מה שהזכירו בדינא דבר מצרא (ב”מ קא א), ואפילו מה שאמרו (זומא פו א) פרקו נאה ודבורו בנחת עם הבריות, עד שיקרא בכל ענין תם וישר

The meaning of this (mitzvah according to Chazal): it is impossible for the Torah to specifically legislate all of a person’s interactions with his neighbors and friends, all his business dealings, and civil obligations. The Torah provides many specific directives, such as “do not gossip”, “do not take revenge or hold a grudge”, “do not stand by idly when your fellow Jew is in mortal danger”, “do not curse (even) a deaf person”, “stand up in honor of the elderly”, and the like. Then the Torah generalizes (that extrapolating from these specific directives) in all matters we must do what is good and straight, an overarching imperative which encompasses, inter alia, the mandate to compromise in litigation, go beyond the letter of the Law, to follow the guidelines of Chazal in the halachah of granting a neighbor the right of first refusal, and even Chazal’s mandate to speak gently, so that in all areas a person’s behavior will be wholesome and straight.[6] Ramban’s compelling, value based depiction of Torah speaks for itself. Nevertheless, in our generation the following needs to be underscored. The normative, core values (and principles) of Torah, are pivotal; they make Torah relevant, applicable and normative at all times and in all situations. A particular situation, or constellation of circumstances, may be new and unprecedented, and yet the Torah ha-kedoshah through its timeless, transcendent values (and principles) contains clear directives.

III

יברא א' את האדם בצלמו בצלם א' ברא אותו זכר ונקבה ברא אתם

The Almighty created man in His image; in the image of the Almighty He created him; male and female He created them[7]

The Torah’s account of brias ha-adam focuses on his defining spiritual, metaphysical quality, tzelem Elokim. It is seemingly incongruous that, in the same breath, the Torah mentions the physiological differentiation of masculinity and femininity. The Torah is highlighting Adam as a unique spiritual being; why, in such a context, would the Torah mention mere biological variations of masculinity and femininity?[8]

A brief excursus into one element of theology and religious experience will iy”H resolve this incongruity.

HKBH is, of course, echod, one, singular, and unique in the simplest, most absolute sense. In speaking of HKBH Himself we cannot speak of different aspects or qualities. Nevertheless, in His interaction with the world, we perceive different aspects or qualities and may legitimately speak in such terms. In fact, the Torah itself does so in listing the yud gimel midos ha-rachamim. We perceive HKBH as acting with compassion, grace, etc. Similarly, within our personal religious experience, we experience different qualities or aspects. Whenever we speak of HKBH we must bear this crucial distinction in mind. We are speaking of our perceptions and experiences, not describing HKBH Himself.

On the one hand, we perceive, and experience, HKBH as immanent. He is very much present in this world, but His presence is limited and understated. Otherwise His presence would be too overwhelming.[9] Divine will and providence, masked by teva, are self-effacingly exercised. We perceive, and experience, HKBH as tolerant and passive. He does not impose his divine will. Instead He modestly allows for human free will and “suffers” people’s actions even when r”l they contravene His will and thereby further obscure His presence.

דבי רבי ישמעאל תנא: מי כמוכה באלים ה' - מי כמוכה באלמים

In the academy of Rabbi Yishmael it was taught: “Who resembles You amongst the mighty?!” (should be understood to mean) who resembles You amongst the silent?!”[10] Kabbalah teaches that all these qualities associated with HKBH’s self-effacing immanence belong to the feminine sefirah of malchus, a/k/a shechinah.

On the other hand, we also know and perceive HKBH as transcendent, existing in infinitude above and beyond His creation. He is Being, and, as such, is the source of all being. He is the omnipotent creator whose inscrutable will inexorably governs the world. He is the ultimate giver and mashepe’a.

Kabbalah teaches that these qualities belong to the masculine sefiros.

In the words of the Rov, “God is both our Father and Mother. Masculine and feminine motifs in our approach to and craving for God are of great significance for the understanding of our universal religious experience... The principles of creativity and receptivity, acting and being acted upon, energizing and absorbing, aggressiveness and toleration, initiating and completing, of limitless emanation of a transcendent being and measured reflection by the cosmos, are portrayed by the dual motif of masculinity and femininity within our religious experience... Unconditioned, creative, infinite transcendence and self-conditioned, receptive, finite immanence of God are symbolized by masculinity and femininity.”[11]

We perceive, and experience, HKBH in maternal terms as loving and comforting, giving and forgiving. But we also perceive and experience HKBH in paternal terms as a demanding teacher and disciplinarian. Once again in the words of the Rov, “Both modes of loving, caring and helping are manifested by the Almighty. He is our disciplinarian: “the Lord your God disciplines you just as a man disciplines his son.” We invoke Him as Avinu She-bashamayim, our Father in heaven. We also have trust and faith in Him in a manner reminiscent of the child’s trust in its mother. In fact, God is our mother, the Shechinah. “As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you... Every sensitive Jew knows that at times we run to the Almighty for advice and encouragement just like a confused, frustrated and disappointed child runs to its father, while at other times we cling to the Shechinah, just like a child who, in despair, hides his head in shame in his mother’s lap, finding there solace and comfort. May we call God both Father and Mother? Certainly yes!”[12]

The Torah’s seemingly incongruous description of brias ha-adam is now resolved. There are two tzelem Elokim, masculine and feminine. Zochor u-nekeivah constitute two different spiritual personae. Man and woman were created differently not only physiologically, but also psychologically, spiritually and metaphysically. They represent and express different facets of tzelem Elokim.

In the words of the Rov, “We are mystified by the inclusion of the physiological fact of sexual differentiation in the story of man created in God’s image. It is obvious that the difference between man and woman, Adam and Eve, asserts itself... in personality differentiation as well... The spiritual essence of man differs from that of woman...”[13] “The Qabalah based its doctrine of bi-personalism upon the verse, “And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them... Sexual differentiation expresses more than a physical property; it

manifests an ontic contrast, a dual aspect within the essence of creation, something deeper and more fundamental than natural sexual differentiation, which finds its full expression in two bi-existential experiences, in two ideas of personalism.”[14]

IV  
There is, of course, no hierarchy within tzelem Elokim. Thus while man and woman constitute two distinct spiritual personae, they are axiologically equal. They possess equal kedushas yisrael. In the words of the Rov, “There is no doubt that in the eyes of the Halacha man and woman enjoy an equal status and have the same worth as far as their humanitas is concerned. Both were created in the image of God, both joined the covenantal community at Sinai, both are committed to our metahistorical destiny, both crave and search for God, and with both He engages in a dialogue... The mere fact that among our prophets we find women to whom God has addressed Himself is clear proof that we never differentiated between the sexes axiologically.”[15]

V  
As a natural expression and vital consequence of their different tzelem Elokims men and women are blessed with different strengths[16] and entrusted with different missions. In the words of the Rov, “There is a distinction between mother’s and father’s mission within the covenantal community, since they represent two different personalistic approaches. Father’s teaching is basically of an intellectual nature. Judaism is to a great extent an intellectual discipline, a method, a system of thought, a hierarchy of values... However, Judaism is not only an intellectual tradition but an experiential one as well. The Jew not only observed but experienced the Shabbas, the Jew experienced Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. He did not only recite prayers on those days. The sederwas... a great experiential event. There is beauty, grandeur, warmth, and tenderness to Judaism. All these qualities cannot be described in cognitive terms. One may behold them, feel them, sense them. It is impossible to provide one with a formal training in the experiential realm. Experiences are communicated not through the word but through steady contact, through association, through osmosis, through a tear or a smile, through dreamy eyes and soft melody, through the silence at twilight and the recital of Shema. All this is to be found in the maternal domain. The mother creates the mood; she is the artist who is responsible for the magnificence, solemnity and beauty. She somehow communicates to him the heartbeat of Judaism, while playing, singing, laughing and crying.”[17]

In his hesped for the Talner Rebbitzin the Rov returned to this theme. Here are his beautiful words. “We have two massoros, two traditions... – the massorah community of the fathers and that of the mothers. “Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob (= the women) and tell the children of Israel (= the men). “Hear my son the instruction of thy father (mussar avicho) and forsake not the teaching of thy mother (toras emecho)... One learns much from father: how to read a text – the Bible or the Talmud – how to comprehend, how to analyze, how to conceptualize, how to classify, how to infer, how to apply, etc. One also learns from father what to do and what not to do, what is morally right and what is morally wrong. Father teaches the son the discipline of thought as well as the discipline of action. Father’s tradition is an intellectual-moral one. That is why it is identified with mussar, which is the Biblical term for discipline.

What is toras emecho? What kind of a Torah does the mother pass on?... Permit me to draw upon my own experiences. I used to have long conversations with my mother. In fact, it was a monologue rather than a dialogue. She talked and I “happened” to overhear... She talked me-inyana de-yoma. I used to watch her arranging the house in honor of a holiday. I used to see her recite prayers; I used to watch her recite the sidra every Friday night and I still remember the nostalgic tune. I learned from her very much.

Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavor, a scent and warmth to mitzvos. I learned from her the most important thing in life – to feel the presence of the Almighty and the gentle pressure of His hand resting upon my frail shoulders... The fathers knew much about the Shabbas; the mothers lived the Shabbas, experienced her presence, and perceived her beauty and splendor.

The fathers taught generations how to observe the Shabbas; mothers taught generations how to greet the Shabbas and how to enjoy her twenty-four hour presence.”[18]

The Rov’s beautiful, stirring words provide a framework for us to understand and appreciate the words of earlier Chachmei Hamasorah.

אמר ליה רב לרבי חייה: נשים במאי זכיין? באקרובי בנייהו לבי כנישתא, ובאתאנויי גבריהו בי רבנן, ונטרין לגבריהו עד דאתו מבי רבנן.

Rav asked of Rabbi Chiya: what special merit do women enjoy? (He answered:) bringing their sons to Yeshiva to learn, and sending their husbands to Yeshiva and awaiting their return.[19]

Chazal do not refer here simply to arranging the logistics of carpool. They also refer to the vital role of mother and wife in influencing her sons and husband, her capacity to motivate, and her ability to touch the inner lives and core of her husband and children. Rabbi Chiya answers that women exert a formative influence by imparting their toras

emecho which inspires their husband and sons to Talmud Torah.

This understanding of the Gemorah is further borne out by Chazal’s comment on the verse of koh somar leveis Ya’akov ve-sageid levnei Yisrael.

כה תאמר לבית יעקב, אלו הנשים, ותגיד לבני ישראל, אלו האנשים, למה לנשים תחלה... כדי שיהו מנהיגות את בניהן לתורה

Why in offering the Torah to Klal Yisrael does HKBH instruct Mosheh Rabeinu to speak first with the women and only subsequently to the men?...So that they will assume responsibility to guide their sons to Torah.[20]

This theme echoes as well in the words of Rabeinu Yonah.

ולמה נצטוו לדבר עם הנשים תחלה? מפני שהן שולחות בניהן לבית הספר, ומשימות עיניהן על בניהם שיתעסקו בתורה, ומרחמות עליהם בבאם מבית הספר, ומושכות לבם בדברים טובים שיהא חפצם בתורה, ושומרות אותם שלא יבטלו מן התורה, ומלמדות אותם יראת חטא בילדותם... ונמצא על פי הדברים האלה כי הנשים הצנועות מסבבות התורה והיראה

Why was Mosheh Rabeinu commanded to speak with the women first? ... because they send their sons to school, supervise them that they should be preoccupied with Talmud Torah, envelop them with love when they return from school, inspire and motivate them that they should desire Torah, guard them to prevent neglect of Talmud Torah, and teach them fear of sin in their youth. Due to all this, women are the catalysts of Talmud Torah and fear (of sin).[21]

Our final representative quote is from the Malbim’s commentary to Sefer Tehilim.

אשר בנינו כנשעים מגדלים בנעוריהם בנתינו כזויות מחטבות תבנית היכל

For our sons are like saplings, nurtured from their youth; our daughters are like cornerstones, crafted in palatial form[22]

Malbim explains the comparison of bnos yisrael to the cornerstones of a building:

בנתינו דומים כזויות שהם מחוטבות תבנית היכל, כי תבנית היכל ילקח מן הזויות אם עשוי ביושר, כן הם צנועות יושבות בירכתי הבית, ובכ"ז הם יתנו תכנית היכל כולו, וכפי צדקתם תהיה הנהגת הבית בכלל

Our daughters resemble the cornerstones of a palace. The structure of a palace depends upon the correct, straight placement of its corners. Similarly bnos yisrael are modest, residing at home. Nevertheless they determine the character of the home. The overall conduct of the home reflects their righteousness.[23]

VI

The Rov’s portrait of the feminine tzelem Elokim reveals the profound nature and true depth of the Jewish woman’s tzne’us. Of course, modest dress and behavior are crucial, indispensable expressions of tzne’us. But they are only external expressions. A woman’s avodas Hashem being concentrated in the privacy of the home is also a key, crucial expression of tzne’us. But this too only reflects but does not constitute the essence of modesty. Ultimately, a woman’s tzne’us consists of her rich, inner life which is hidden from view, an inner strength which, inter alia, allows her to imperceptibly mold character and inspire behavior. Therein lays the ultimate tzne’us, the focus on inwardness and inner experience. Publicity and public roles are antithetical to the femininetzelem Elokim which emphasizes inwardness. An isha tzenu’ah, focused on authentic inwardness for herself and others, enjoying a rich inner life and eschewing the inauthenticity and vulgarity of extroversion and ostentatiousness, naturally lives self-effacingly and dresses and acts modestly.

VII

The Rov further elaborates the respective strengths of the differing tzelem Elokims. “While intellectual involvement is important, in times of crisis and distress the experiential commitment is indispensable. Were it not for the mother, the Jews would not have been able to defy and survive so many crises which threatened to annihilate our people... The greatness of the man expresses itself in everyday action, when situations lend themselves to logical analysis and discursive thinking. The greatness of the woman manifests itself at the hour of crisis, when the situation does not lend itself to piecemeal understanding but requires instead instantaneous action that flows from the very depths of a sensitive personality. ‘God gave woman binah yeserah, an additional measure of understanding over men.’”[24]

The Rov illustrates this feminine strength with examples from Chumash. Sarah Imeinu safeguards zerah Avrohom by demanding the expulsion of Yishma’el; Rivkah Imeinu ensures that themasorah is exclusively transmitted to Yaakov Avinu, etc.[25] In the Rov’s words, “The Biblical woman ... was a dialectical personality. She combined two mutually exclusive characteristics. (She) was humble and shy, and yet she possessed an indomitable will and an unshakeable determination. She was simple and tenacious, meek and fearless. The Biblical woman was never at the center, always in the wings. She was never loud, always quiet. At the same time, the Biblical woman was the leader and the head of the household. In times of crisis, the Biblical woman assumed unlimited responsibilities and made the gravest decisions... Sarah was a humble woman, always in the tent, always shy and modest. Abraham sat in front of the tent; she was inside. She was always ready to comply with Abraham’s requests and yet, in critical times, when she was concerned over the destiny of her son, the humble Sarah displayed unlimited strength of will and made Abraham listen to her. She instructed Abraham: ‘Cast out that slave woman and her son,’ and God instructed Abraham to listen to Sarah.”[26]

## VIII

Before proceeding let us pause and summarize. In our perception HKBH is both immanent and transcendent. In His understated immanence He models self-effacement and modesty, a paragon of inwardness and receptivity (being tzuana and a mekabel). These qualities are emphasized in the feminine tzelem Elokim. In His Majestic transcendence HKBH appears as the Almighty, who created and governs the world, revealed Himself at Har Sinai and continues to teach Torah to Klal Yisrael, a paragon of leadership and influence (being a mashpe'a). These qualities are emphasized in the masculine tzelem Elokim.

## IX

The Rov's identification and exposition of the two tzelem Elokims relies heavily on Kabbalistic teachings. Most assuredly Kabbalah is an esoteric discipline, and entrée into its portals is reserved for the elite. Primo facie, it might seem inappropriate to draw upon Kabbalistic lore in an exoteric, normative discussion of "Masorah and the Role of the Jewish Woman". Understanding at least one dimension of the relationship of Halachah and Kabbalah will iy"H dispel this erroneous impression and account for the exoteric relevance of the Rov's exposition: Kabbalah "simply" provides a deeper understanding of Halachah. It delves into the conceptual, metaphysical underpinnings of concrete, normative Halachah.

Consider the following analogy. Electrical appliances come with instructions for safe, responsible use, with explicit warnings about dangerous, reckless misuse. These instructions allow the consumer to safely use the appliances. Knowledge of physics, however, provides an understanding of the scientific underpinnings of the instructions. The analogue is clear.

In our context the contours of the respective roles of men and women emerge clearly from halachic sources. By providing insight into the underpinnings of the various halachos Kabbalah helps us better understand and appreciate Halachah.

Let us turn to some representative halachic sources. The Torah associates the mitzvah of procreation with conquest.

ויברך אתם א' ויאמר להם א' פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשה ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרמשת על הארץ

God blessed them; and God said to them "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue (conquer) it and rule over the fish of the ocean and the bird of the sky[27]

Based upon this association Chazal see the mitzvah as being incumbent only upon men inasmuch as

אמר ר' אילעזר משום ר' אלעזר בר' שמעון, אמר קרא: ומלאו את הארץ וכבשוה, איש דרכו לכבש, ואין אשה דרכה לכבש

It is the nature of aggressive man, not reticent woman, to engage in conquest.[28]

The mitzvah of honoring one's parents is incumbent upon men and women. Nonetheless, the Torah associates it primarily with men. Chazal explain,

איש אמו ואביו תיראו - ומדרשו אין לי אלא איש, אשה מניין, כשהוא אומר תיראו, הרי כאן שנים אם כן למה נאמר איש, שהאיש סיפק בידו לעשות, אבל אשה רשות אחרים עליה

A man should (honor and) feel awe for his parents. We derive that a woman is likewise obligated because "feel awe" is written in the plural. If so, why did the Torah speak in terms of man? Because he always has the ability to fulfill the mitzvah whereas a woman is subject to the authority of others[29]

In other words, married women are often exempted from the mitzvah because (and when) it conflicts with her responsibilities to her husband.

According to Rambam, only men can be appointed to communal positions of serorah (authority).

אין מעמידין אשה במלכות שנאמר עליך מלך ולא מלכה, וכן כל משימות שבישראל אין ממנים בהם אלא איש.

One may not appoint a woman to kingship, as is written king (in the masculine form) and not king (in the feminine form) and similarly for all positions of authority only men may be appointed[30]

A husband is obligated to go out and provide for his wife; reciprocally, she shoulders domestic responsibilities.

מתני'. ואלו מלאכות שהאשה עושה לבעלה: טוהנת, ואופה, ומכבסת, מבשלת, ומניקה את בנה, מצעת לו המטה, ועושה בצמר

These are the services a wife performs for her husband: she grinds, bakes, launders, cooks, nurses her son, makes the bed and works with wool[31]

The halachic lines delineating the different personae and roles of men and women respectively are clearly drawn. The kabbalistic teachings regarding masculine and feminine tzelem Elokimbroaden our perspective, enrich our understanding and deepen our appreciation for the halachic structure. But clearly, in this context, Kabbalah is interpreting halachic norms, not generating its own. In the words of the Rov, commenting upon a gemorah in maseches Kidushin,

רב יוסף כי היה שמע קל כרעה דאמיה, אמר: איקום מקמי שכינה דאתיא

'Whenever Rav Yosef heard the footsteps of his mother, he would say: Let me rise because the shechina is coming.'[32]

"Behind every mother, young or old, happy or sad, trails the shechina. And behind every father, erect or stooped, in playful or stern mood, walks Malka Kadisha, the Holy King. This is not mysticism. It is Halachah. The awareness of (Malka Kadisha and) the shechina results in the obligation to rise before father and mother."[33]

## X

The foregoing depiction of the Jewish woman/feminine tzelem Elokim, culled from the Rov's writings, despite being limited to a representative sampling, draws from an incredibly broad and comprehensive array of sources. Biblical, halachic and kabbalistic sources converge; they paint a single, consistent and beautiful picture. The complimentary antinomies of public and private, mekabel and mashpe'a, aggressive and reticent, gevurah and rachamanus, pesach ha'ohel and bo'ohel depict the respective roles and strengths of men and women.

Our foregoing discussion provides a framework for commenting, as requested, upon the consensus of all gedolim that ordination of women violates Halachah.

At the outset we noted the pivotal role of values and principles within our Masorah, both bris avos as well as bris Sinai. The eternal, universal relevance and applicability of Torah depends upon applying Masoretic values and principles to new situations.

The mandate of tzne'us is always operative; standards of tzne'us must be adhered to in both the religious and secular spheres. Accordingly, guidance must be sought as to what is permissible and what prohibited, what appropriate and what inappropriate for women in the secular sphere as well. (My ensuing comments are not intended, in any way, to provide or even imply such guidelines. The present forum does not allow for addressing this crucial aspect of our topic.) There are, however, at least two crucial, defining differences between the two spheres. First of all, the religious sphere is real in a sense that the secular is not. There is no analogy whatsoever between the synagogue and the corporate boardroom. Whatever meaningfulness, if any, roles and positions in the boardroom possess they do not in the least compare to the significance of roles and positions in the Torah community. Behavior in the religious sphere most directly upholds or violates the Torah's axiomatic gender differentiation in avodas Hashem. Thus the question of women serving as CEOs is not linked to the question of women being ordained and/or serving as rabbis.

Second of all, regardless of the sincere, le-shem shomayim motivation of some individual women who aspire to serve as rabbis, the broader religio-social context is crucial. Let us be honest and straight forward with ourselves. There is currently an undeniable, concerted effort afoot to egalitarianize Yahadus, r"l. The profane roots of this antinomian movement reach back to the 1970s with the demands for sifrei Torah for women during hakafos and women's tefillah groups. Ordination of women is one of the more recent fronts in that misguided effort.

In light of all of the above we are privileged to understand and appreciate the authoritative position of all gedolim. (Of course, its authoritativeness does not depend upon our oftentimes inadequate understanding.) It is overwhelmingly clear that a woman serving in the very public, religious leadership role of rabbi directly violates and contradicts the entire Masorah regarding the Jewish woman and her feminine tzelem Elokim.

In order to be"H forestall misunderstanding two further points must be underscored. Firstly, by no means am I implying that masorah is the "only" (sic) impediment to having women rabbis. I comment from the Masoretic vantage point because that vantage point has been the focus of our discussion.

Moreover, the claim that the possibility of women rabbis represents a new and unprecedented situation is somewhat dubious. Formal schooling and instruction for Jewish girls is relatively new; instances of remarkably learned Jewish women are not. Most famously Bruriah, wife of Rabi Meir and daughter of Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon, was a very great Torah scholar who even adjudicated a dispute between Rabbi Tarfon and the Chachamim. Rabbinic literature and lore through the centuries knows of other remarkable instances as well.[34] And yet the existence of such eminent, learned noshim tzenu'os never yielded women rabbis or even a suggestion therefor. The explanation would seem to be simple. It was self-evident that such a development was unthinkable as it contradicts the Torah's religious gender differentiation.

## XI

Communal introspection is vital, and, to be candid, long overdue. With open minds and hearts please join me.

We tend to think of assimilation in concrete, practical terms – eating treif, chilul Shabbos, etc. And, obviously, such behaviors are painful instances of assimilation, r"l. But assimilation often begins more subtly. It often begins in the realm of thought, ideas, and values. Practical assimilation with its frightening manifestations is often the result of ideational and axiological assimilation.

Ideational assimilation occurs when we absorb ideas and values, antithetical to Torah, from the surrounding culture. Often these ideas and values imperceptibly penetrate our minds and hearts by osmosis. Having penetrated our minds, they dictate our mindset. Sometimes the infection of assimilation reaches so deeply within our being that we

mistake transient Western societal values for absolute, universal values. And then we proceed to zealously, self-righteously reinterpret (in reality, obviously, misinterpret) Torah accordingly.

To be specific: Western society is aggressively egalitarian. It equates equality with uniformity, and diversity with inequality. This Western social axiom stands in marked contrast to the traditional Jewish view. In the words of the Rov, "The Halachah has discriminated between axiological equality pertaining to their Divine essence and metaphysical uniformity at the level of the existential personal experience. Men and women are different personae, endowed with singular qualities and assigned distinct missions in life. Hence, axiological equality should not level up the uniqueness of these two sexual personalities." [36]

Another truism: over the past half century Western society has denigrated traditional women's roles, attributing them to a misogynist patriarchal society. Once again the Rov has formulated the Torah outlook. "The narrative in the Bible that both the male and female were created in the image of God suffices to refute the... misogynous tradition... The Bible, however, sees the uniqueness of man expressed in... his ability to withdraw... to sacrifice... in his giving of himself to others, in his craving... for communion with God; therefore, there is hardly any cogent reason to place the worth of man above that of (woman). On the contrary, sacrificial... action is more characteristic of... woman than of man." [37]

Both of these axiomatic Western values – i.e., egalitarianism and denigration of traditional Women's role have infiltrated and infected our minds and hearts. They represent insidious ideational assimilation, deeply disturbing and entirely intolerable, in its own right. But they are also fueling practical assimilation and, if unchecked, will continue to do so, and at a frightening pace.

Let us step back for a moment and reflect. Obviously, there is never any reason whatsoever to feel apologetic, insecure or inferior in openly rejecting transient societal mores and axioms in favor of tze'us Hashem. But a moment's reflection will be" H strengthen our yeitzer ha-tov in combating the yeitzer ha-rah. Without minimizing the accomplishments or virtues of modern society an objective assessment is simply staggering. In the realm of intimacy where, above all, kedushah is to be sought and realized, popular Western culture rejects chastity and sanctity in favor of vulgarity and promiscuity. In general, Western culture rejects tzne'us in favor of ostentatiousness. It rejects self-effacement in favor of self-aggrandizement. It rejects bushah (shame) in favor of shamelessness. It rejects moral-religious discipline, the bedrock of Halachah, in favor of self-gratification. It rejects inwardness and authenticity in favor of extroversion and empowerment. Obviously, such a society cannot appreciate the sanctified lifestyle of tzne'us. Obviously, such a society cannot understand or appreciate the feminine tzelem Elokim.

But Bnei Yisrael are bishonim. And we have the Torah ha-kedoshah. We can appreciate authentic Torah values. Why do we allow ourselves to be brainwashed and assimilate? And why, even when we appropriately reject ordination of women, do we do ourselves the disservice of constantly talking about increasing leadership roles for women as though that were an ideal? Such talk only reinforces ideational assimilationist tendencies. Instead of such short-sighted accommodationism we should be accurately, effectively, and proudly projecting the Torah's beautiful vision of tzne'us inavodas Hashem.

In our generation, surrounded as we are by self-aggrandizement and extroversion, every single one of us should commit to memory and etch in our hearts the following passage from Reb Chayim Vital

הוראת מעשיו לבריות, ידעת מה שאמרו חז"ל באותה האשה שהיתה נענשת בגהנום על שהיתה מספרת לחברותיה היום התענית. ולא די שאינו מקבל שכר אלא שנידון בגהנום, כי הרי מגלה דעתו שאין מעשיו לשם שמים וכו', ואם יכול האדם שיעשה כל דרכיו לשמים ולא יפרש לבריות אפילו אחד מהם, שכרו כפול ומכופל, מפני שכבוד אלקים הסתר דבר

With regard to publicizing one's actions: you are familiar with our Sages' account of the woman who was being punished in Gehinom because she used to tell her friends "I fasted today". Not only is one not rewarded but is instead punished because he reveals that his actions are not for the sake of heaven etc. And if a person can gear all his activities for the sake of heaven and not reveal any of them to others, his reward increases manifold, because (one renders) glory to the Hashem by concealing one's (divine) service [38]

## XII

Unquestionably, a woman's mandate to cultivate and maintain uncompromising tzne'us at all times is, privilege notwithstanding, a perennial challenge. Moreover, undoubtedly it is true that being called upon to resist contemporary societal influences poses an additional challenge to the modern Jewish woman in devoting herself to authentic avodas Hashem. It was with this perennial challenge with its added contemporary dimension in mind that the Rov penned the following lines. "The Biblical woman is modest, humble, self-effacing. She enters the stage when she is called upon, acts her part with love and devotion in a dim corner of the stage and then leaves softly without

applause and without the enthusiastic response of the audience which is hardly aware of her... It is quite interesting that although Abraham survived Sarah by thirty eight years, his historical role came to an end with Sarah's passing. Isaac leaves the stage together with Rebecca. Jacob relinquishes his role to Joseph with the untimely death of Rachel. Without Sarah there would be no Abraham; no Isaac were it not for Rebecca; no Jacob without Rachel... The Halachah was cognizant of the greatness of the covenantal mother when it formulated the rule that kedushas yisrael, one's status as a Jew, can only be transmitted through the woman. The Halachah was also conscious of the loneliness and the tragic note in the feminine commitment when it accepted a (seemingly) contradictory rule that the child takes his father's name and family status." [39]

## XIII

Our penultimate quote concerning gender differentiation in avodas Hashem is an incredibly powerful, eschatological statement of Chazal.

גדולה הבטחה שהבטיחו הקדוש ברוך הוא לנשים יותר מן האנשים

The Holy One, blessed be He, promised a greater reward to women than to men [40]

## XIV

Our final quote comes from the Rov. The Rov was responding to a halachically outrageous initiative to try and obviate the need for a get; the assimilationist mindset which produced that initiative is hauntingly familiar. The excerpt that we are iy"H about to read together addresses that mindset. "We must not yield – I mean emotionally, it is very important – we must not feel inferior, experience or develop an inferiority complex, and because of that complex yield to the charm – usually it is a transient and passing charm – of modern political and ideological sevoros. I say not only not to compromise – certainly not to compromise – but even not to yield emotionally, not to feel inferior, not to experience an inferiority complex. The thought should never occur that it is important to cooperate just a little bit with the modern trend or with the secular modern philosophy. In my opinion Yahadus does not have to apologize ... to the modern woman ... There is no need for apology – we should have pride in our Masorah, in our heritage. And of course certainly it goes without saying that one must not try to compromise with these cultural trends and one must not try to gear the halachic norm to the transient ways of a neurotic society, which is what our society is." [41]

[1] Vayikrah 26:42 [2] Shemos 19:5, see Rashi ad loc. [3] Devarim 28:69 [4] Bris Mo'av, is not our focus presently. [5] Man of Faith in the Modern World: Reflections of the Rav, Vol. Two (adapted by Rabbi Abraham R. Besdin), p.68 [6] Commentary to Devarim 6:18 [7] Bereishis 1:27 [8] Rav Soloveitchik, Family Redeemed (henceforth FR), p.160 [9] "The attribute of tzimtzum expresses itself in two ideas: concealment and disclosure. On the one hand, God sustains the cosmos through concealing and hiding His glory, and were He to reveal Himself, then all would revert to chaos and the void, for who can withstand the splendor of His excellence when He comes forth to overawe the earth? It is the concealment of the Divine countenance which brings into being all existence. On the other hand, the Almighty gives life to and sustains all existence through the disclosure of His glory, for He is the root and source of reality, and the concealment of the Divine countenance would result in the destruction of the world and the negation of reality. Only the act of disclosure creates. This powerful antinomy, "splendid in its holiness", is practically the central axis of Chabad doctrine. Concealment and disclosure – both equally sustain the cosmos, but both equally cause it to revert back to nothingness and naught." Rav Soloveitchik, Halakich Man, fn61. [10] Gitin 56b. That is, quiet, self-effacing endurance expresses incomparable strength. [11] ibid p.69 [12] Ibid pp.166-7 [13] Ibid p.160 [14] Ibid p.70 [15] Ibid pp.71-2 Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igras Mosheh 4:49) and Rav Shmshon Refoel Hirsch (Ha'ishah Ha'yehudis) also emphasize this equality. The formal rules and criteria for triage adumbrated in Mishnah Horiyos are just that – formal classifications which do not reflect ultimate, respective value of two lives. Only HKBH can render such a judgment. On the other hand, Halachah wanted as much as possible to avoid human arbitrariness in triage. Hence the formal mitzvah-based criteria. [16] Clearly, to a degree men are called upon to cultivate the "feminine" qualities of tzne'us et al. and vice versa. כי עיקר הענין הוא כי יזכר ב ונקבה כל אחד כלול מזכר ונקבה (פרוש הגר"א לספרא דצניעותא, פרק ב Circle, Arrow, Spiral, p.346. See also Family Redeemed, p.161. Still, the "feminine" and "masculine" qualities define women and men respectively, and their respective missions. [17] Ibid pp.114-5 [18] "A Tribute to the Rebbeztzin of Talne" (henceforth, Hespel), Tradition, Vol.17, No.2, Spring 1978, pp.76-7 [19] Berachos 17a [20] Shemos Raba to 19:3 [21] Igeres HaTeshuva, para.51. I do not recall where in the secondary literature I first came upon this reference. [22] 144:12, Artscroll trans. [23] Ad loc. Cited by Rav P.E.Falk in Oz Ve-hadar Levushah [24] FR pp.115-7, concluding with quote from Niddah 45b [25] Ibid pp. 117-9 [26] Hespel, pp.79-80 [27] Bereishis 1:28 [28] Yevamos 65b See also Kidushin 2b, דרכה של אשה, לעשות מלאכה ואי דרכה של אשה, לדבריו של איש לעשות מלאכה ואי דרכה של אשה, לעשות מלאכה, and Sefer Ha'chinuch mitzvos 603,604. [29] Rashi to Vayikrah 19:3, citing Toras Kohanim and Kidushin 30b. The translation of "subject to ..." taken from Artscroll [30] Hilchos Melachim 1:5[31] Kesubos 59b [32] Kidushin 31b [33] FR p.168. The words supplied in the parentheses are either assumed or, alternately, were accidentally omitted. [34] Rav Wahrman, She'aris Yoseif, vol.2, siman 4. I thank one of Rav Wahrman's Talmidim who wishes to remain anonymous for sharing this source with me.[35] Re the discussion of assimilation in this section see my article "Halakich Values and Halakich Decisions: Rav Soloveitchik's Pesak Regarding Women's Prayer Groups", esp. section III.[36] FR p.72 [37] Ibid p.71[38] Sha'arei Kedushah Part 3, Gate 4, quoted in Rav Aviezer Bernig, Eishes Lapidos, p.39[39] FR pp.119-20[40] Berachos 17a [41] Excerpt from talk known as, "Talmud Torah and Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim", available at various places on line, e.g., arikah.blogspot.com copyright © 2016 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.