

# OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT CHUKAT · 3 TAMMUZ 5776 - JUL. 9, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 40

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS WEEK CHUKAT IS READ IN ISRAEL AND KORACH IS READ OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL

*“This is the chok (decree) of the Torah...” (19:1)*

Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, managed to explain the reasons for all of the *mitzvot*. All but one, that is. When he came to the law of the Red Cow, despite all of his efforts he was not able to plumb its depths. He then abandoned his attempt to give reasons for *all* of the *mitzvot*, and concluded that all of his explanations were not absolutely accurate.

The question arises: Why didn't he just admit that *one* mitzvah was beyond his comprehension, but all of his other reasons were still valid?

King Shlomo realized that if he could not comprehend one mitzvah, then he had understood nothing up until then as well. He realized that every single mitzvah of the Torah is interlaced with all the others, and a failure to understand one is a failure to understand any of them completely.

G-d is One — an ineffable Unity — and His Torah reflects this. It too is an ineffable unity.

Shlomo HaMelech says in the Book of Tanach called *Kohelet*: “I thought I could become wise, and it is beyond me. What existed is elusive and so very deep. Who can fathom it?” (7:23)

In other words, “*I thought I could become wise,*” and understand the meaning of every mitzvah, “*and it*” — the mitzvah of the Red Cow — “*is beyond me.*” Thus, even “*what existed is elusive*” — even my understanding of the *mitzvot* that I have examined is imperfect. For “*Who can fathom*” the ineffable unity of the Torah?

• Sources: Beit HaLevi for Parshat Ki Tisa as seen in Talei Orot

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

The laws of the *Para Aduma* — the red heifer — are detailed. These laws are for the ritual purification of one who comes into contact with death. After nearly 40 years in the desert, Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. The people complain about the loss of their water supply that until now has been provided miraculously in the merit of Miriam's righteousness. Aharon and Moshe pray for the people's welfare. G-d commands them to gather the nation at Merivah and speak to a designated rock so that water will flow forth. Distressed by the people's lack of faith, Moshe hits the rock instead of speaking to it. He thus fails to produce the intended public demonstration of G-d's mastery over the world, which would have resulted had the rock produced

water merely at Moshe's word. Therefore, G-d tells Moshe and Aharon that they will not bring the people into the Land. *Bnei Yisrael* resume their travels, but because the King of Edom, a descendant of Esav, denies them passage through his country, they do not travel the most direct route to Eretz Yisrael. When they reach Mount Hor, Aharon dies and his son Elazar is invested with his priestly garments and responsibilities. Aharon was beloved by all, and the entire nation mourns him for 30 days. Sichon the Amorite attacks *Bnei Yisrael* when they ask to pass through his land. As a result, *Bnei Yisrael* conquer the lands that Sichon had previously seized from the Amonites on the east bank of the Jordan River.

## BAVA KAMA 37 - 43

Shimon Ha'amsoni (others say it was Nechemia Ha'amsoni) was explaining the significance of each and every time the word "et" appears in the Torah. However, when he reached the verse "et Hashem Elokecha tira" (Deut. 6:13) — fear the L-rd your G-d — he stopped. His students said to him, "Our Rabbi, what will become of your explanations of the word "et" that you taught until now?" He replied, "Just as I received reward for explaining, so too I will receive reward for abstaining from explaining." Then Rabbi Akiva came and taught that the word "et" in the verse "et Hashem Elokecha tira" teaches to include Torah scholars (i.e., just as the verse teaches the mitzvah to fear G-d, likewise it teaches to fear Torah scholars).

This *beraita* on our *daf* is based on the idea that every word and letter in the Torah has meaning. Therefore, even the word "et", which does not have any particular translation, must be there to include something else that is not mentioned explicitly each time it appears in the Torah. This is why these Sages sought to explain what each "et" in the Torah is meant to teach. Shimon Ha'amsoni "did not know" what to do with the "et" in this verse (Rashi).

The Maharsha on our *daf* refers to Rashi's commentary in Masechet Kiddushin (57a), where Rashi writes that the Sage "feared" to equate the fear of "anything else" to the fear of G-d, and could therefore not attribute any meaning to the word "et" in the verse that appears in the command to fear G-d. Based on this explanation, the Maharsha explains why this Sage said that he would receive reward for *ceasing* to explain the meaning of each "et" in the Torah, just as he had received reward for toiling in Torah study to attempt attributing special meaning to this word in other cases. His act of "cease and desist" when encountering the word "et" in the verse commanding fear of G-d was itself a true act of awe and fear of G-d, and therefore deserving of the reward for fulfilling this mitzvah to fear G-d.

Tosefot asks a question on the stance of the Sage Shimon Ha'Amsoni. "Why did he cease?" asks Tosefot, who cites a *gemara* (Kiddushin 30b) which in fact equates the fear of one's parents to the fear of G-d. Why didn't he continue to interpret "etim" in the Torah, and include the fear of one's parents from the "et" in this verse? Tosefot answers that the Sage did not want to include the fear of one's parents from the "et" in this verse since he did not want to derive from here a *second*, additional mitzvah to fear one's parents from the existence of this word in this verse. Which begs the question: "Why not?" I once suggested the following explanation of the answer of Tosefot to a great Rabbi in Jerusalem: If the Sage would derive from the word "et" in this context that there are actually two positive commands to fear one's parents, as opposed to "only" one positive mitzvah to fear G-d, doing so would be an act of "lack of fear of G-d" — and contrary to the mitzvah stated explicitly in the verse.

(As a parenthetical remark, it appears that Tosefot understands Shimon Ha'Amsoni's reason for stopping differently than Rashi does, as explained by the Maharsha. According to Rashi he ceased since "fear of G-d" inherently means that there is no other entity to be equated to G-d, and therefore to be feared to the same degree. If so, even the fear of one's parents would not "equate", and would not be a "candidate" to learn from the word "et" in the mitzvah to fear G-d, and Tosefot's question would not pose any difficulty to Rashi's explanation (and the *gemara* in Kiddushin 30b could be reconciled with this approach in a number of ways). But since Tosefot asks the question regarding fearing one's parents, Tosefot appears to understand that the Sage ceased to interpret "etim" "only" because he could not find anything suitable to include, and therefore Tosefot asks, "Why not include from this "et" fear of one's parents?")

Unlike the first Sage in our *beraita*, Rabbi Akiva felt it correct to explain that the word "et" in this verse teaches to include fear of Torah scholars as well as fear of G-d, since fearing Torah scholars is *also* showing honor to G-d and His Torah, because Torah scholars dedicate their lives to the study of G-d's Torah. (Maharsha)

• Bava Kama 41b

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. “Take a perfect *Para Aduma* (red heifer).” What does the word “perfect” — *temima* — mean in this context?
2. How many non-red hairs disqualify a cow as a *Para Aduma*?
3. A man dies in a tent. What happens to the sealed metal and earthenware utensils in the tent?
4. What happens to the one who: a) sprinkles the water mixed with the ashes of the *Para Aduma*; b) touches the water; c) carries the water?
5. Why was the *mitzvah* of the *Para Aduma* entrusted to Elazar rather than to Aharon?
6. Why does the Torah stress that *all* of the congregation came to *Midbar Tzin*?
7. Why is Miriam’s death taught after the law of *Para Aduma*?
8. During their journey in the *midbar*, in whose merit did the Jewish People receive water?
9. Why did Moshe need to strike the rock a second time?
10. When Moshe told the King of Edom that the Jewish People would not drink from the well-water, to which well did he refer? What do we learn from this?
11. The cloud that led the Jewish People leveled all mountains in their path except three. Which three and why?
12. Why did the *entire* congregation mourn Aharon’s death?
13. What disappeared when Aharon died?
14. Which “inhabitant of the South” (21:1) attacked the Jews?
15. For what two reasons did G-d punish the people with snakes specifically?
16. Why did the Jewish People camp in Arnon rather than pass through Moav to enter *Eretz Canaan*?
17. What miracle took place at the valley of Arnon?
18. What was the “strength” of Amon that prevented the Jewish People from entering into their Land?
19. Why was Moshe afraid of Og?
20. Who killed Og?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this week’s Questions!

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

1. 19:2 - Perfectly red.
2. 19:2 - Two.
3. 19:14,15 - The metal utensils are impure for seven days, even if they are sealed. The sealed earthenware vessels are unaffected.
4. 19:21 - a) Remains *tahor*; b) He, but not his clothing, contracts *tumah*; c) He and his clothing contract *tumah*.
5. 19:22 - Because Aharon was involved in the sin of the Golden Calf.
6. 20:1 - To teach that they were *all* fit to enter the Land; everyone involved in the sin of the spies already died.
7. 20:1 - To teach that just as sacrifices bring atonement, so too does the death of the righteous.
8. 20:2 - Miriam’s.
9. 20:11 - After he hit it the first time, only a few drops came out since he was commanded to *speak* to the rock.
10. 20:17 - To the well that traveled with the nation in the *midbar*. This teaches that one who has adequate provisions should nevertheless purchase goods from his host in order to benefit the host.
11. 20:22 - *Har Sinai* for receiving the Torah, *Har Nevo* for Moshe’s burial, and *Hor Hahar* for Aharon’s burial.
12. 20:29 - Aharon made peace between contending parties and between spouses. Thus, everybody mourned him.
13. 20:29 - The clouds of glory disappeared, since they sheltered the Jews in Aharon’s merit.
14. 21:1 - Amalek.
15. 21:6 - The original snake, who was punished for speaking evil, is fitting to punish those who spoke evil about G-d and about Moshe. And the snake, for whom everything tastes like dust, is fitting to punish those who complained about the manna which changed to any desired taste.
16. 21:13 - Moav refused them passage.
17. 21:15 - The Amorites hid in caves in the mountain on the Moabite side of the valley in order to ambush the Jews. When the Jews approached, the mountain on the *Eretz Canaan* side of the valley moved close to the other mountain and the Amorites were crushed.
18. 21:24 - G-d’s command, “Do not harass them” (*Devarim* 2:19).
19. 21:34 - Og had once been of service to Avraham. Moshe was afraid that this merit would assist Og in battle.
20. 21:35 - Moshe.

Chukat

## THE WATER AND THE ROCK

In this Torah portion the nation cries out for water, and G-d instructs Moshe to speak to a particular rock so that it should miraculously bring forth water. Moshe, however, takes his staff and strikes the rock instead of just speaking to it. G-d then says to Moshe and Aharon: “Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Children of Israel, therefore you will not bring this congregation to the Land that I have given them.”

Numerous commentators attempt to explain why Moshe’s action resulted in the drastic punishment of being denied entry into the Land of Israel, the ultimate goal of the Exodus from Egypt. Abarbanel summarizes ten different answers to this question and rejects them all as insufficient reasons for such a drastic punishment. Instead, Abarbanel offers a novel solution to the problem.

He states that they were actually being punished for two much more serious previous transgressions. Aharon was punished for his role in the incident of the Golden Calf, and Moshe for his role in sending and instructing the men who spied out the Land of Israel. Even though Aharon certainly tried to prevent idolatry, his actions ultimately led to the tragedy of the death of thousands. Just as these individuals were prevented from entering the Land, Aharon too — according to the principle of “measure for measure” — was prevented from entering the Land as well.

Moshe’s transgression was that he essentially went beyond the simple request of the people to “send men ahead of us and let them spy out the Land, and bring word back to us; the road on which we should ascend and the cities to which we should come.” Moshe, however, added his own instructions to their basic request, telling them to find out if the inhabitants were strong or weak, few or numerous, and if the cities were open or fortified. Even though Moshe’s intention was to impress upon them G-d’s

ability to overcome any adversary, no matter how strong, this still gave them the opening to doubt their ability to conquer the Land. The result of course was mass panic, and once again G-d invoked the principle of measure for measure: just as the nation no longer merited the Land of Israel, so too Moshe was denied the opportunity to lead it into the Land.

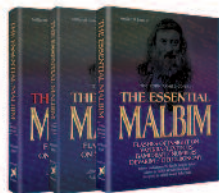
Although it appears that G-d is punishing them for hitting the rock instead of speaking to it, in reality they are being punished for their previous transgressions. However, in order to protect their honor, G-d covers up the real reasons. Abarbanel compares this to a father who, because of his love for his son, ignores his transgressions until a relatively minor incident causes him to come down hard. When asked, “Why such a drastic punishment for such a minor infraction?”, he will answer that the punishment is for all the other serious transgressions he can no longer ignore as a result of this final, minor infraction. In the case of Moshe and Aharon, the incident with the rock and the water was the catalyst to actualize the potential punishment.

Abarbanel brings numerous proofs to his interpretation. Included among them is the fact that in Sefer Devarim Moshe does not mention this incident with the rock at all, attesting to its relatively minor importance. Furthermore, in Sefer Devarim Moshe and Aharon’s punishments are both mentioned in the context of the incidents of the Golden Calf and the Spies. Also, since Aharon had no involvement in the incident of the water and the rock other than assisting Moshe in gathering the people, it is illogical to think that this would result in such a drastic punishment. Finally, when G-d declares that the generation of the wilderness would not enter the Land of Israel, He excludes only Kalev and Yehoshua. Moshe and Aharon are included in the decree, even prior to the incident of the water and the rock.

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## MYSTERIOUS WAYS

From: Melissa

Dear Rabbi,

*I got into a situation which I knew I shouldn't have been in. It's not that I knew that would be the case beforehand. Maybe I wasn't careful enough, but in any case, it wasn't intentional. Anyway, despite the fact that I shouldn't have been involved, after the fact, it seems to me that some good actually came of it. So I'm wondering, given the outcome, would G-d have wanted me to knowingly choose to be there? Or, if not, did He put me there in order to bring about that result? Or is He not pleased that I was there at all, and the end doesn't justify the means?*

Dear Melissa,

This is a very interesting and intriguing question. Certainly G-d wants and expects us to make proper decisions according to the teachings of the Torah, to try our best to do what's right, and make every effort to foresee and avoid what's wrong.

That said, there are times when, for whatever reason, we may not be in a "good place" physically, emotionally or spiritually, and G-d nevertheless orchestrates that some good should come out of it.

We may be in that "place" either by mistake, or as a result of being careless, or even as a result of some momentary lapse into wrong. Still G-d may intervene in order to effect some redeeming outcome.

However, even in such cases, G-d does not want us to choose to be in that "place", nor does He force or cause a person to be there. He does not want us to transgress or fall short of the mark. Rather, if one gets there by accident, or even intentionally, G-d may choose to capitalize on the "opportunity" to catalyze some good.

This being so, is He at least ultimately pleased that we were there in order to be agents for some good? The answer to this is also "no". He would rather have had the good come out some other way or through some other agent. Still, once we're there, in His Grace, He may compensate for our misdeeds or slip-ups.

An example of this is Samson's forbidden union with Delilah. The Sages (Sotah 9b) note that, on the one hand, he "rebelled with his eyes" in marrying the Philistine woman; yet the verse says that the marriage was "from G-d". They resolve this apparent contradiction by teaching that even though Samson transgressed by going after looks alone, G-d saw to it that this forbidden marriage would result in some good — in this case, to save Israel from the Philistines (Maharsha).

Despite this redeeming aspect, Samson's deed was certainly not condoned, as is demonstrated by his unfortunate demise.

The Talmud (Berachot 34b) teaches, "In a place where *ba'alei teshuva* (penitents) stand, the righteous cannot stand". Among the various explanations of this teaching is the idea that certain Divine sparks of holiness and goodness are captive in dark and impure "places" where the righteous would never go to redeem them. In such cases, only a Jew who has fallen may come near, and they cleave to him. When he repents, those exiled sparks of holiness are redeemed. This may be likened to those who probe the murky depths of the sea for impure oysters which, when brought ashore, are pried open to yield pure and precious pearls.

As a case in point, someone told me that he and some friends went down to vacation in Mexico shortly before Tisha b'Av, something they should not have done at that time. On the eve of Tisha b'Av they decided that they should get back to San Diego in order to properly observe the commemoration of the destruction of the First and Second Temples. When they approached the border they found out that no crossing would be allowed for hours, which meant no properly-observed Tisha b'Av night for them.

With no *shul* or appropriate prayer books, they checked into some hotel south of Tijuana intending to use the hotel Wi-Fi to access the liturgy and read Eicha (Lamentations) from their phones in their room. However, the Wi-Fi didn't work in their rooms. But the Wi-Fi worked properly in the hotel's lobby. So rather than give up, they decided to read Eicha in this "unorthodox" fashion while sitting on the floor in the lobby of this Mexican hotel despite the spectacle it would make among the non-Jews.

As they prayed, a young woman was watching them from the corner of the lobby where she sat. She was very moved by what she had seen, and when they had finished she asked them what they had been reading. They somewhat awkwardly explained to her about G-d, the Jewish People, the Temple, exile and the hope for Redemption.

As the group was preparing to leave the hotel, the young woman suddenly appeared, wearing a Jewish Star of David on her neck! She explained that after she left the group and told her mother everything that happened, her mother revealed to her for the first time in her life that they are descended from Jews, and that this Jewish Star was a relic from her maternal grandmother!

Through their fault in being in the "wrong" place for the "wrong" reasons, G-d nevertheless compensated for their misdeed by using them as unwitting agents for the revelation of, and hopefully for the redemption of, this lost Jewish spark rekindled south of Tijuana!

## THREE STEPS FORWARD

“**W**hen one stands up before beginning the *Shemoneh Esrei*, he should take three steps forward, as one would do when approaching something he needs to do. (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 95:1* — Rema in the name of the Rokeach)

According to the Rokeach the custom corresponds to three occasions that the Torah mentions “approaching” in connection to prayer; by Avraham, Yitzchak and Eliyahu. Though the Rema mentions only three steps forward, the prevalent custom today is to first take three steps backward before taking three steps forward (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*; *Mishnah Berurah*; *Kaf Hachaim* and others).

The *Kitzur Shelah* explains that the correct understanding of the Rokeach is to take three steps backward in order to take three steps forward. He explains that these three steps forward are connected with the three steps Moshe took when approaching G-d on Mount Sinai to pray, as mentioned in the verse: “Moshe approached the thick cloud where G-d was (*Shemot 20:18*).” In *Devarim 4:11* three levels are mentioned: “darkness, cloud and thick cloud”. This is a basis for the three steps, corresponding to these three levels.

In the *sefer Chut HaShani* (54), as well as in the Ben Ish Chai (*Parshat Beshelach*, *Halacha 3*), another reason is offered for the three steps backward and forward. They par-

allel the distance of three “*mil*” (approximately three kilometers) that the Jewish People were forced backwards at Mount Sinai, followed by a three *mil* forward movement. The Ben Ish Chai adds that according to Kabbalah one is obligated to take these three steps. The *Yalkut Yosef* states that, strictly speaking, one is not obligated to take these three steps. Perhaps his reason is due to the *Shulchan Aruch*’s not including this rule in his laws of prayer.

The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* explains the above procedure in detail. He writes: Before Saying “*Tehillat La’E-I Elyon*” (found just before the conclusion of the blessing before the *Shemoneh Esrei*), you should stand (this was also the custom of the Arizal) and prepare yourself to pray... and then walk backward three steps and say: “*Tehillat La’E-I Elyon*”, and continue until “*Ga’al Ysrael*”. Then take three steps forward in the manner of one approaching a king. (*Chapter 18, Halacha 2*)

Regarding the prohibition to cause an interruption between the blessing of redemption and the beginning of the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the question arises: Why aren’t these three steps considered an interruption? The *Tehillah L’David* (111:1) answers that, since it is necessary to take these three steps, they are not an interruption. This answer is certainly understandable according to the Ben Ish Chai, who explains that these steps are needed according to Kabbalah.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## KEREM BEN ZIMRA — NAMED FOR A SAGE

Located about eight kilometers west of Tsefat is the Moshav Kerem ben Zimra, which the Jewish community built on the site of the village, evacuated by the Arabs during the War of Independence.

The name of the moshav stems from the tradition that buried in that area is the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Yossi



ben Zimra.

One of the statements for which this Sage is famous goes like this:

“Just as a woman is not ashamed to ask her husband for the needs of her family, so too are the Prophets not ashamed to ask G-d for the needs of His people.”

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## MRS. ROSALIE MORIAH

**B.A. — St. Lawrence University, NY**

**M.A. — The Sorbonne, Paris**

**Secretary at Ohr Somayach since 1989**

Rosalie played the role of Saint Bernadette in high school and went Xmas caroling with her scout troupe in her hometown of Hudson, NY. Today, and for the past 27 years, Rosalie has been a secretary at Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. How did this transformation come about?

Rosalie's family was totally secular — i.e., no Shabbat, no *kashrut*, no *Chagim*. She knew she was Jewish but not much more than that. When she was offered the leading role in "The Song of Bernadette", she had no hesitation in accepting. Paradoxically, the priest who reviewed the play for the local paper wrote: "Miss Epstein sustains the deep religious mood."

As salutatorian of her graduating class in 1949, Rosalie eschewed the obvious choice for her speech — the return of the Jewish People to their ancestral Homeland after 2,000 years — and spoke instead of her love for theater. Rosalie spent the next four years at St. Lawrence, a small, co-ed university near the Canadian border, with just a handful of Jewish students. During those years she strayed even farther, if that were possible, from her Jewish roots. A Divine wake-up call sounded in her freshman year when the professor of Philosophy 101 extolled the contributions of the Hebrews to civilization: the concept of one G-d, a day of rest, protection of widows and orphans, and much more. She felt proud to belong to such an exalted People, and resolved to delve into her heritage someday — someday, but not just then.

As a graduation present from her parents, Rosalie embarked on a two-month world tour that included a stop in Israel. Her bland diary entry for the day she visited David's

tomb on Mount Zion shows that she felt no more emotion there than at the Blue Mosque in Istanbul or at St. Peter's Square in Rome.

On her return Rosalie found a position in the travel department of UN Headquarters in NY. It was a "dream job", she says, "rubbing shoulders" with diplomats from all over the world, and seeing the travel arrangements she had made reported in the next day's New York Times. However, after two years at the UN, Rosalie heard a small, still voice, telling her to move on, and move on she did. Paris became her home for the next few years as she earned her M.A. in 19th century French painting and 20th century literature.

It was during a "chance visit" to the Jewish Student Center in the Latin Quarter that she met a young religious artist, Shlomo, who was exhibiting his paintings at the Center. They became friends, and little by little, and with infinite patience, he opened Rosalie's eyes to the beauty of Judaism. She began to keep Shabbat and gradually took on more *mitzvot*. Rosalie had already become observant when she and Shlomo were married. Three years later, in 1960, they made Aliyah and settled in Jerusalem where Rosalie, a widow since 1987, still lives. Besides her work at Ohr Somayach, Rosalie enjoys spending time with her four children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

And her "Ohr Somayach Family" says "Thank you!" to Mrs. Rosalie Moriah for helping us all daily with great efficiency and kindness!

## PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

*"Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land — may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon."*

## SUBTLETIES OF SIMCHA AND SASSON

In the blessing which we customarily say for a newly-married bride and groom, we wish upon the couple different forms of happiness: *sasson*, *simcha*, *gilah*, *rinah*, *ditzah* and *chedva*. What are all these different types of gladness and how do they differ from each other? To answer these questions we will first resolve the age-old dichotomy of *sasson* and *simcha*, and then we will explain the meanings of the other words for happiness.

The Talmud (*Succah* 48b) relates a disagreement between the personified concepts of *simcha* and *sasson*: Simcha said to Sasson, "I am better than you because it says, (regarding the resolution of the story of Purim) *for the Jews... simcha and sasson* (Esther 8:16)". Sasson said back to Simcha, "I am better than you because it says, (regarding the happiness of the Messianic Era) *They will attain sasson and simcha* (I Samuel 14:45)". In the first verse, *simcha* is mentioned before *sasson*, which implies that *simcha* is superior; but, the second verse implies *sasson*'s superiority by mentioning it before *simcha*. So which one is a higher form of joy, *sasson* or *simcha*?

Malbim explains that *simcha* refers to internal gladness which is continual, while *sasson* is the external expression of one's inner happiness. In other words, *sasson* denotes what a person does to show that he is happy, for example wearing special clothes for holidays or playing music at happy times, while *simcha* is the happy feeling inside of him.

We can highlight the differences between these two forms of happiness by pointing out what the Malbim says are their antonyms. The opposite of *simcha* is *yagon* (despondency), which is the internal form of sadness. On the other hand, *sasson* is the antonym for *aveilut* (mourning), the outward way of expressing sadness, as well as *anachah* (which literally means "a sigh").

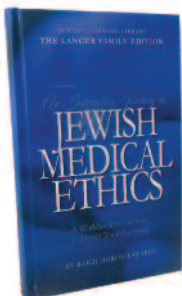
Regarding the disagreement between Simcha and Sasson as to which is greater, it seems that both are correct, but their disagreement is reflective of a "chicken/egg" complex. Meaning, sometimes *simcha* precedes *sasson* because sometimes the inner feeling of happiness arrives first and bursts

forth outwards in joyous expressions; whereas at other times, outward expressions of happiness rouse one's feelings of inner happiness, and positively influence his inner thoughts and mood.

The Vilna Gaon explains the difference between *simcha* and *sasson* somewhat differently. He writes that *simcha* denotes the beginning of the process which leads to complete elation, while *sasson* refers to the realization of that happiness. He explains that both *simcha* and *sasson* are superior in different contexts, and that is why one is sometimes mentioned before the other, and the other is sometimes mentioned before the one. In "this world" *simcha* is more prominent because people first pursue happiness (*simcha*), and only then can eventually achieve the happiness that is their end goal (*sasson*). However, in the Messianic Era, one's ecstasy will *begin* with the experience of happiness (*sasson*), and *afterwards* open a person to the opportunity of attaining further happiness (*simcha*) depending on the merits he has accrued in this world.

With our understanding of the first two types of happiness, we can now try to understand the rest. The Malbim explains that while *simcha* is continual, *gilah* refers to a stroke of fleeting happiness which does not continue. Alternatively, the Vilna Gaon explains that *simcha* refers to a new happiness while it is still fresh, while *gilah* refers to a nostalgic happiness which recalls the joys of the past. The Midrash (*Ber. Rabbah* 63:1) seems to understand that *gilah* refers specifically to the happiness of a man when he fathers a son. *Machzor Vitri* — a commentary to the *siddur* (prayer book) written by Rabbi Simcha of Vitri, a student of Rashi — explains that *rinah* is the type of happiness which stirs the celebrant to sing G-d's praises. *Ditzah* and *chedva*, according to many commentators, are Aramaic forms of the words for happiness. Adding these happy words from another language signifies the all-inclusive happiness and elation which we wish upon newlywed couples at the start of their blissful marriage.

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