

GOOD MIDDOT ARE A PREREQUISITE FOR RECEIVING THE TORAH (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

In this week's parsha the passage concerning the Nazir is juxtaposed to that of the Sotah. This is meant, the Sages say, "To tell you that whoever witnesses a suspected woman in her disgrace should withhold himself from wine" (Sotah 2b). How are we to interpret this link between the Nazir and the Sotah, for what does one have to do with the other? If this were clear to us, we would realize that our parsha has a close connection with Shavuot, the giving of the Torah.

Let us think about this for a moment. Why is a Nazir forbidden to drink even the smallest quantity of wine, or even raisins for that matter? After all, a small amount of wine would certainly not lead him act disgracefully. Would it not have been enough had Scripture prohibited a Nazir from drinking large quantities of wine? There is, however, an ever more difficult question facing us: Why is a Nazir forbidden to render himself impure for his parents or siblings (Numbers 6:7), whereas a priest could render himself impure for his? This goes without mentioning the fact that a razor was not allowed to touch a Nazir's head (v.5)! Since these prohibitions certainly have no connection to the conduct of an adulteress, why do they apply to a Nazir? In my humble opinion, all this can be fully explained. We know that when a person sees something bad, it is because there exists something in him that corresponds to it, a fact mentioned by the Baal Shem Tov (may his merit protect us all). Heaven does not expose a person to a sin unless he must repent and correct the same fault that is in him, in his very heart.

That being the case, when a person sees the Sotah in her disgrace and lowliness, and when he sees her obstinacy – which stems from jealousy and pride – in refusing to recognize her sin (since she believes herself to be pure), he should realize that he must perform these same middot, meaning jealousy and pride. He must then set about to correct these faults, ones that are certainly in him, even if he has been unaware of them until now.

This is why the passage on the Nazir is juxtaposed to that of the Sotah. It is meant to tell a person that he has to accept upon himself a Nazirite vow, which prohibits him from: 1) drinking wine or alcohol, be it even a little; 2) using a razor on his head (i.e., he must let his hair grow); and 3) rendering himself impure through contact with a dead body. At that point, by distancing himself from these three primary things, he will be able to fight the inner battle against jealousy and pride that, as we have explained, lie within him.

With regards to the prohibition against drinking wine, we note that wine can be very beneficial, as it is written: "Wine that gladdens the heart of man" (Psalms 104:15). Yet precisely because wine brings joy to the heart of man, it is also liable to allow pride and a love for honor to enter it as well. Furthermore, when pride, honor-seeking, and jealousy take shelter in a person's heart, drinking wine will further arouse such feelings in him. Hence a person who sees the Sotah in her disgrace must avoid even the smallest quantity of wine.

The prohibition against using a razor is given by the verse, "A razor shall not pass over his head" (Numbers 6:5). What is the reason behind this? Most sins have their source in the head, for the head gives orders to the rest of the body. Thus for a person to rectify his sins, he must sanctify the hair of his

head, at which point evil will disappear. In fact the word se'ar ("hair") is formed by the same letters as rasha ("evil"). Thus by his sanctity, a person transforms the evil within himself into a holy head of hair.

The prohibition against rendering himself impure means that a Nazir must augment his holiness by avoiding contact with a dead body, even if this involves his parents or close relatives. It is precisely in this way, by sanctifying himself to an even greater degree than a priest, that the Nazir betters himself in every respect. In this way he brings the jealousy and pride within him down to earth, thereby allowing him to reach the summit of holiness. This is the meaning of being a Nazir. From all we have said, it follows that when a person is filled with jealousy, greed, pride, and a love for honor, it can destroy his entire family.

Even if a person does not sense these faults within himself, he must still constantly fight against them and everything like them. Otherwise he can harm himself and bring about the destruction of his family, since his family members may copy his middot. At that point, it is impossible to know where things will lead.

At the beginning of this week's parsha, the Torah alludes to the fact that we must battle pride, for the very name of the parsha – Nasso – evokes the concept of rising higher. The parsha begins with the task of the children of Gershon (Numbers 4:24), whose name evokes the concept of divorce (gerushin). This alludes to the fact that man must expel (legareh) from his heart the feeling of rising higher, for this feeling stems from nothing other than pride and honor-seeking. By chasing pride from his heart, he may merit being consecrated to serve and support. At that point the Holy One, blessed be He, will elevate him and grant him honor, for everything comes from Hashem. As King David said, "Yours, O L-RD, is the greatness, the strength, the splendor, the triumph, and the glory" (I Chronicles 29:11), and man must not seek honor or even desire it.

Upon further reflection, we see that this is the primary goal in the giving of the Torah each year and in every generation. As we know, the Torah can only be acquired by humility. It is not found among the proud, among those who boast, for the proud cannot accept anything from anyone. Hence the Torah distances itself from anyone who is proud. Furthermore, such a person is filled with other sins and is certainly incapable of accepting any words of Torah. As a result, every Jew who possesses even the least amount of Torah must conduct himself with humility – without pride, jealousy, or any other fault – and in this way he will be able to fully acquire, study, and teach the Torah to others. In fact a person who possesses good middot is one whose words will be heeded by others, and he in turn will listen to them.

The Path To Follow

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GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

What Pleasure Does the Serpent Have?

The Gemara states that in the future, all the animals will gather around the serpent and say, "The lion attacks and devours, the wolf tears and consumes, but what benefit do you have?" The serpent will answer, "What benefit has he who uses his tongue?" (Arachin 15b; see also Taanith 8a). We need to understand what this means. A person who speaks Lashon Harah will experience pleasure when recounting an exciting story about a person and speaking ill of him. Similarly, Hashem placed a desire within the serpent to bite and inject venom into its victim. This is natural for a serpent to do, something that gives it pleasure.

However when the animals asked the serpent what benefit it derived by doing this, what they

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

Eternal Life

In the blessing that we recite on the Torah, it is stated that Hashem “planted eternal life within us.” This means that a person who studies the Torah that Hashem gave us, and who observes His mitzvot, will merit the life of the World to Come, meaning eternal life, forever and for all time.

The Rambam states, “The good that is reserved for the righteous is the life of the World to Come, which is life that has no death, with good that has no accompanying bad” (Hilchot Teshuvah 8:1). The same thing is said in the Torah: “So that your days may be long and so that it may be well with you” (Deuteronomy 5:16), on which the Sages teach: “‘So that it may be well with you’ means on the day that is wholly good... ‘So that your days may be long’ [means] on the day that is wholly long” (Kiddushin 39b), a reference to the World to Come.

We may gain some idea of the tremendous joy in the World to Come by the following story:

When Elisha ben Avuya became a heretic, he was no longer called by his name, but rather by the term Acher (“another”). As the Gemara tells us, “When Acher died, [Heaven] said: ‘Let him not be judged, nor let him enter the World to Come. Let him not be judged because he engaged in the study of the Torah, and let him not enter the World to Come because he sinned.’ Rabbi Meir said, ‘It would be better if he were judged and that he enter the World to Come. When I die, I shall cause smoke to rise from his grave [to signal that Acher was being judged and punished for his sins].’ When Rabbi Meir died, smoke rose up from Acher’s grave. Rabbi Yochanan said, ‘A mighty deed to burn his master! There was one among us [who went astray], and we could not save him. If I were to take him by the hand, who would snatch him from me?’ He said, ‘When I die, I shall extinguish the smoke from his grave [to signal that Acher’s punishment had ceased and that he had entered the World to Come].’ When Rabbi Yochanan died, smoke ceased from Acher’s grave” (Chagigah 15b).

Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer (a disciple of Rabbi Israel Salanter) said that by making a simple calculation, we see that Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yochanan died some 140 to 150 years apart. Acher endured the fire of Gehinnom during all that time, until Rabbi Yochanan finally saved him by his merit. Nevertheless, it was worth it for Acher to have been engulfed in the devouring fires of Gehinnom for some 140 years in order to merit the pleasures of life in the World to Come. If Rabbi Yochanan had not saved Acher by his merit, who knows how long he would have continued to be judged in Gehinnom? This gives us an idea of the immensity of joy in the World to Come, which a person receives as a reward for studying Torah and observing its mitzvot. It is even worth enduring excruciating pain in the depths of the abyss year after year, just so as to merit the goodness of life in the World to Come.

– Kochvei Ohr

A Pearl From the Rav

Concerning the giving of the Torah on Sinai, it is stated: “The entire people saw the thunder and the flames and the sound of the shofar” (Exodus 20:15). The sound of the shofar, which the Children of Israel heard on Mount Sinai, continues to be heard and echoed in the heart of every Jew to the present day. In fact the Torah states, “So that fear of Him will be upon your faces, so that you will not sin” (v.17). Yet what purpose would such fear serve if it were only for that generation, meaning that later generations would not hear and not fear? Certainly this sound must still be heard to the present day. Even in the hearts of the wicked there is an echo of the sound that they heard on Mount Sinai, for all the souls of the entire Jewish people without exception were present on Mount Sinai. The tzaddikim use the great holiness of this sound to help them study Torah, employing it to develop new teachings and to experience the pleasure of Torah study. Although the sound that the Children of Israel heard on Mount Sinai brings the fear of G-d upon them, the role of man is to retain this sound. Even if a person feels that the fear within him is diminishing, he must put an effort into hearing this sound once again, lest it becomes completely extinguished.

How Many Josephs Would There Be?

The Gemara says that on Shavuot, Rabbi Joseph ordered some choice meat to be prepared for him. He said, “But for the influence of this day, how many Josephs would there be in the market?” (Pesachim 68b). The Kehilat Yitzchak explains that the Jewish people received the Torah on the festival of Shavuot, though the initial giving of the Torah ended with the breaking of the first Tablets. The second time, however, Moses descended from Mount Sinai on Yom Kippur and gave us the Torah. That being the case, why do we celebrate the giving of the Torah on Shavuot, since it really took place on Yom Kippur?

The reason is because the fragments of the first Tablets (which were placed in the Ark along with the second Tablets) are also valuable.

The Gemara states, “Be careful [to respect] an old man who has forgotten his knowledge” (Berachot 8b). A person who has studied Torah, but has forgotten what he learned on account of age or illness, is like the fragments of the Tablets. Rabbi Joseph was ill and had forgotten his learning, yet his student Abaye often reminded him by saying, “This is what you told us” or, “Here is what you taught.” This is what Rabbi Joseph meant concerning the festival of Shavuot, the day in which we celebrate and demonstrate that the fragments of the first Tablets are also valuable. They were to prepare some choice meat for him on Shavuot, for without it, who knows how many Josephs there would have been in the market!

Joy Mingled With Heartache

It is written, “I rejoice over Your work like one who finds abundant spoils” (Psalms 119:162).

The gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger explained that when a person is walking in the desert and discovers a treasure – an immense and magnificent fortune consisting of box after box of precious stones and pearls – he will start by filling his pockets with as much as he can. He will then take off his shirt and use it to collect more, though even this has its limits, for his clothes cannot possibly help him take even the smallest part of such a vast treasure.

Although he will be happy about the precious stones that he could collect, his joy will be mingled with heartache because he was unable to collect everything. That is, he was forced to leave the lion’s share behind. Similarly, the heart of a Jew who studies Hashem’s Torah rejoices with each new teaching and concept that he studies and learns. However his joy will be “like one who finds abundant spoils,” spoils far too great for him to carry off. This is because the more he studies, the more he realizes how much more profound is Hashem’s Torah than the sea, and just how far he is from being able to understand it all. Thus “I rejoice over Your work like one who finds abundant spoils” – for though I am happy, I regret having to leave the rest behind because I cannot possibly collect it all.

“We’ve Done Our Part”

It is written, “Command the Children of Israel that they shall expel from the camp every leper, everyone with an emission, and everyone that is unclean by the dead” (Numbers 5:2).

The gaon Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin said that some people complain to a Rav for all kinds of things. When the Rav says that he will go with them to protest the situation, these complainers will refuse. They are content on having spoken to a Rav, and as such they believe that they have done their part. Thus the verse states, “Command the Children of Israel,” for they are the ones who must expel lepers and those with an emission from the camp. It is not very clever to put everything on the shoulders of the Rav.

“Are You Laughing at My Misfortune?”

It is written, “A man’s holies shall be his” (Numbers 5:10).

Tosaphot on Taanith 9 bring a story that appears in the Midrash: As a Jew was about to die, he bequeathed a field to his son. He said to him, “I’m leaving you a field that can yield 1,000 kor. Make sure that you give 100 kor each year as a tithe.” During the first year the son tithed the produce of the field, but in the second year he thought, “I’m not a philanthropist” and he refused to give. The following year the field yielded only 100 kor, a tenth of the previous amount, and

his relatives began to laugh. He said to them, "Are you laughing at my misfortune?" They replied, "No. It's just that last year you owned a field that produced 1,000 kor, and Hashem received your tithe as a priest would. Now Hashem has become the owner and He has 1,000 kor, while you've become the priest with only the tithe." Thus it is stated, "A man's holies shall be his" – but only if he gives to the priest, for only the one who gives shall receive.

Left and Right

Commenting on the expression, "Asser te'asser [You will surely tithe]" (Deuteronomy 14:22), our Sages said: "Asser k'day she'titasher [Tithe that you may become rich]" (Taanith 9a). Some explain this by citing the verse, "If you go to the left, I will go to the right, and if you go to the right, I will go to the left" (Genesis 13:9). How does this verse relate to tithing? In the expression *asser te'asser*, the letter *shin* appears twice. Now if the first *shin* has its vowel on the right (*asher*), the second *shin* will have its vowel on the left (*te'asser*). This means that if you want to become rich (*lehitasher*) by not tithing, then all you will have left is a tithe (*te'asser*). Conversely, if the first *shin* has its vowel on the left (*asser*), the second *shin* will have its vowel on the right (*te'asher*). Thus if you tithe (*asser*), you will become rich (*titasher*). This is the meaning of, "If you go to the left, I will go to the right, and if you go to the right, I will go to the left."

– Aish Dat

Overview of the Parsha

Parsha Nasso moves from the organization of the people and the Levites in the camp, which began in Parsha Bamidbar, to the realities of life with the Sanctuary being among the people. The parsha begins by describing the work of the Gershonites and Merarites in transporting the Sanctuary, as well as the command to number them. The purity required for the Sanctuary is then explained, along with the commandment to expel the impure from the camp. The fact that the Sanctuary was the focal point of Jewish life is then demonstrated by means of various laws. Thus the perpetrator of a crime was to make restitution to his victim or to the priest officiating in the Sanctuary, a man whose jealousy was aroused by his wife was to go to the Sanctuary and follow the rules governing the Sotah, and a Nazir was to go to the Sanctuary at the end of his vow in order to shave his head and bring an offering. Furthermore, Hashem's blessing of Israel would emerge from the mouths of the priests who served in the Sanctuary. The people went to the Sanctuary according to their tribe, which meant that each tribe took part in the inauguration of the Altar and the Sanctuary by means of an offering that was brought by its particular leader. One offering was brought during each day of a 12-day period, starting from the day the Sanctuary was anointed.

THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

Everything Depended on Rabban Gamliel

Rabban Gamliel the Elder was the third Nasi before the destruction of the Second Temple. He was also the first Sage to be called Rabban. He is called "the Elder" in order to distinguish him from his grandson (Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh), and it is by this name that he is most often cited. Everyone respected his wisdom and greatness, and even political leaders sought his advice. The Gemara recounts the following story about him: "A lizard was found in the [Temple] abattoir, and they wished to declare the entire meal unclean. [Note: Because the lizard is a crawling creature and its carcass defiles everything it touches, the cooks believed that the entire meal they had prepared was now impure.] They went and asked the king, who answered them: 'Go and ask the queen.' When they went to ask the queen, she said to them: 'Go and ask Rabban Gamliel.' They went and asked him, and he said to them, 'Was the abattoir hot or cold?' They replied, 'It was hot.' He told them, 'Then go and pour a glass of cold water over it.' They went and poured a glass of cold water over it, and it moved, whereupon Rabban Gamliel declared the entire meal clean. Thus the king was dependent on the queen, and the queen was dependent on Rabban Gamliel. Hence the entire meal was dependent on Rabban Gamliel" (Pesachim 88b)

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

A Missing Word in the Offering of Shavuot

The Jerusalem Talmud states, "Rav Mesharshia said in the name of Rav Idi: 'For every offering it is written *cheit* [an expression of sin], but for Shavuot *cheit* is not written. This is to tell us that the Holy One, blessed be He, said: "Since you have accepted upon yourselves the yoke of Torah, I consider it as if you never sinned in your days" ' ' (Rosh Hashanah 4:9). The commentators explain that for the Musaf (additional) offerings of the festivals, the Torah states: "One he-goat for a *cheit* [sin-offering] to make atonement for you" or, "One he-goat for a *cheit* [sin-offering]." However for Shavuot the Torah states, "One young he-goat to make atonement for you" (Numbers 28:30). Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: "Since you accepted upon yourselves the yoke of Torah – and since each year Shavuot is like the day that you stood before Me on Mount Sinai to receive the Torah – this day carries no mention of sin because the Torah atones for you." Although we understand the concept of "studying Torah" and the concept of "fulfilling mitzvot," we now encounter a new concept, that of "receiving the Torah." While 3314 years have passed since that day on Mount Sinai, the receiving of the Torah has never stopped. The festivals of the Jewish people are not some historic "memorial," but rather a constant and never-ending renewal of the same events that occurred at those times. Each year on the festival of Shavuot, we again find ourselves at a high enough level to receive the Torah.

What is the meaning of the expression, "You have accepted upon yourselves"? In his book *Shaarei Teshuvah*, Rabbeinu Yona states: "Listen well, surrender yourself, and return in teshuvah when you are admonished by sages and those who criticize you. Take each word of criticism to heart without exception. By doing this, you will go from darkness to great light in an instant. . . . In fact the very moment you accept those words in this way in your mind and take them to heart, you will earn the merit and reward of all the mitzvot and admonishments" (Gate 2, Par. 10). Happy is the person who does this, for he has purified his soul in an instant. This is *na'aseh v'nishma* ("we will do and we will hear"), meaning that a person who decides, deep down in his heart, to faithfully observe the Torah and everything he is taught, from that day on he will be rewarded for all the mitzvot. He will also acquire merit for what is revealed to him and what is hidden from him.

Commenting on the verse, "The Children of Israel went and did" (Exodus 12:28), Rashi cites the Mechilta in stating: "Now did they already do it? Was this not said to them on Rosh Chodesh? However since they accepted this upon themselves, Scripture credits them as if they had done it." The Gemara states, "In the days of Rabbi Zeira there was a religious persecution, and fasting was also prohibited. Rabbi Zeira said to his colleagues, 'Let us now firmly decide to fast, and when the decree is rescinded we will observe these fasts.' His colleagues asked him, 'What is your authority for this?' He replied, 'Because it is written: "Then he said to me, 'Fear not Daniel, since from the first day when you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your G-d, your words were heard" ' [Daniel 10:12]' ' (Taanith 8b). From here we see the tremendous power of good intentions in making a decision!

A TRUE STORY

The Sound of the Whistle

It is written, “He who turns aside his ear from hearing the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination” (Proverbs 28:9).

This means that a person who hears a word of Torah, a word of reprimand or Halachah, yet says: “I’ve already heard this” or “I already know this Halachah” or “I already celebrated Passover and Sukkot last year, and I don’t need to review its laws” – when such a person presents his requests to Hashem, they will be rejected. Hashem will say to him, “I already heard your prayer – ‘heal me’ or ‘hear my voice’ – a number of times.” Thus, “He who turns aside his ear from hearing the Torah” – claiming that he already heard and knows it – Scripture states that even his prayer is an abomination. His prayer will be rejected because Hashem will say to him, “I too have heard this before.”

Concerning this subject, Rabbi Nathan Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka, once summoned one of his students to admonish him in certain areas that he felt needed improvement. At the beginning of the following week, he again summoned the boy and repeated the very same words to him. Surprised by this, the boy said to the Alter, “The Rav already told me the exact same thing last week!” The Alter answered him, “When you’re standing on the rails in a large train station, and you keep on hearing the sound of a whistle as a train approaches, will you also remain in place and say that you’ve already heard the whistle before?”

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

Samson

It is written, “Manoah said to his wife, ‘We will surely die, for we have seen G-d’ ” (Judges 13:22).

After the revelation of Hashem’s angel to Manoah and his wife, Manoah took a young goat and offered it upon a rock. Since he had not brought a flame with him, he waited to see what would happen. Suddenly a fire arose from the rock and consumed the offering, and within the flame the angel ascended to Heaven. Manoah and his wife were so completely stunned by the angel’s appearance that they fell upon their faces to the ground. Since they had seen an angel (which is termed “seeing the face of Hashem”), and since it is written, “No man can see Me and live” (Exodus 33:20), Manoah said to his wife, “We will surely die.” His wife replied that, as Manoah could see, Hashem had accepted their offering. Furthermore, the angel would not have told them to abstain from drinking wine if, in fact, they were going to die. As it turned out, Manoah and his wife did not die, and the angel’s prediction came true. A son was born to them, and they called him Samson. Why was he called by this name? The Gemara cites Rabbi Yochanan’s statement that Samson carried Hashem’s Name, as it is written: “The L-RD G-D is a sun [shemesh] and a shield” (Psalms 84:12) – “for just as the Holy One, blessed be He, shields the whole world, so Samson shielded Israel during his generation” (Sotah 10a). Another interpretation is given in Me’am Loez: Just as the sun comes out of its sheath to burn the wicked and heal the righteous, so too was Samson’s strength hidden while he was a Nazir, for only his spiritual strength could be seen at that point. However when Samson revealed himself, he punished his enemies with full force. The same applies to all the heroic figures of Israel, men such as Joab the son of Zeruah, who was as fragile as a worm inside the Beit Hamidrash, yet displayed his power outside of it.

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

Rabbi Moshe Rivkes – The Author of Be’er HaGolah

Rabbi Moshe Rivkes was the son of Rabbi Naphtali Hirsch Sofer of Vilna, a great Torah scholar, and was known as a gaon and a tzaddik. In 5415, when Cossack hordes descended upon Vilna and committed widespread massacres, Rabbi Moshe fled the city along with Rabbi Shabtai Hacohen (the author of the Shach), Rabbi Ephraim Hacohen (the author of Sha’ar Ephraim), and Rabbi Aaron Shemuel Kaidanover (the author of Birkat HaZevach). They eventually found refuge in Amsterdam, where Rabbi Moshe was shown great respect. In Amsterdam he published his great work on the Shulchan Aruch, entitled Be’er HaGolah. It indicated the various sources for Halachic decisions, along with brief explanations to resolve contradictions among Poskim with differing viewpoints. At the beginning of Be’er HaGolah, Rabbi Moshe describes how he was hounded during all those months, though he still forced himself to maintain his regular hours of Torah study.

Rabbi Moshe yearned to return to Vilna, his hometown, and he was finally able to do so. Though he became very wealthy at one point, he devoted all his money to tzeddakah, leaving absolutely nothing for himself. He wrote a great number of books during his lifetime, which we can see from his will. In it he states how his books were to be shared among his sons, in order that they should continue to spread the light of Torah.

Rabbi Moshe Rivkes passed away in Vilna on Sivan 9, 5432, and his soul ascended to the celestial academy. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed.

EISHET CHAYIL

Does He Wear Flax?

The Gemara recounts that Rabbi Yossi met Eliyahu HaNavi and said to him: “It is written, ‘I will make him a help’ [Genesis 2:18]. How does a woman help a man?” Eliyahu replied, “If a man brings wheat, does he chew the wheat? If flax, does he wear the flax? Does she not, therefore, enlighten his eyes and stand him on his feet?” (Yebamot 63a).

This story requires an explanation. What did Eliyahu tell Rabbi Yossi that he didn’t know, since what he said was clear and obvious? In his book Kol Yehuda, Rabbi Yehuda Tsadka Zatzal said that we may understand the verse, “I will make him a help” as referring to two things: Material aid and spiritual aid. Thus the Talmud states that although Rabbi Chiya’s wife made him unhappy, he still respected her. When Rav said to him, “But surely she is tormenting the Master?” he replied, “It is sufficient for us that they raise our children and deliver us from sin” (Yebamot 63a-b). Thus Rabbi Chiya explained the verse, “I will make him a help” in terms of spiritual aid. This was what Rabbi Yossi had in mind when he questioned Eliyahu HaNavi: Did the verse refer to spiritual aid, as Rabbi Chiya understood it, or to both spiritual and material aid? Eliyahu then gave him two examples: (1) “Does he chew the wheat,” which alludes to the material realm; and (2) “Does he wear the flax,” which alludes to the spiritual realm. This is because clothing bestows respectability upon a man, which constitutes spiritual honor. The greatness of a woman is therefore immense, for she is a helper in both areas, the material and the spiritual.