

The Struggle of Rav Elazar ben Shimon and His Colleagues

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Interpreters of Midrashim

Rambam divides the interpreters of midrashim into three categories:

The first group constitutes the majority of those whom I have met and whose works I have seen and heard about; they understand them literally and do not understand them at all, and all things that are impossible are considered by them to be necessary, and this is because of their lack of knowledge of the wisdoms and sciences... this group destroys the beauty of the Torah and darkens its light. The second group is also large who also take the words [of the Midrash] literally believing there is no other meaning intended and thus they mock and degrade them and consider strange that which is not strange, and make fun of the words of the *chachamim* considering themselves smarter than they... and they are dumber than the first group and greater fools... had they prepared themselves with the [study of] the wisdoms until they understood how one writes about G-dly matters and other abstract issues in a way that it can be read both by the masses and the scholars¹ and had they understood anything of practical philosophy, they would understand if the *chachamim* were indeed wise, and could understand the meaning of their words. The third group is... very small, and they are those who have recognized how great the *chachamim* are and... realized that in their words there is the simple meaning and the secret meaning (סוד) and in all statements of impossibilities the intent is allegorical and metaphorical. (*Perush HaMishnah*, Introduction to tenth chapter of *Sanhedrin*)

Rambam explains in his introduction to the *Moreh HaNevuchim* that he decided against writing a book explaining midrashim. “For I observed that

¹ To each on his own level.

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by expounding these passages by means of allegorical and mystical terms, we do not explain anything, but merely substitute one thing for another of the same nature, whilst in explaining them fully our efforts would displease most people; and my sole object in planning to write those books was to make the contents of midrashim and the exoteric lessons of the prophecies intelligible to everybody.”

To some degree Maharal set out to write this book that Rambam had intended to write,² and of course Maharal’s work is important and valuable. Being faced with the difficulty Rambam articulated, however, he too was forced to “substitute one thing for another of the same nature,” and the meanings often remain hidden. In works like *Toras HaOlah* of Rema, *Tzror HaMor*, *Meiri*, *Rabbenu Bachye*, and sometimes in *Abarbanel* and *Akedas Yitzchak*, as well as in later works of a mystical nature such as *Kedushas Levi*, a clearer picture of *Chazal*’s intent is often presented.

Rema is a good example of a commentator who is in this third category. He struggles to find meaning in midrashim with the knowledge that their thought must be reconciled with the philosophical principles of Rambam. He saw *Kabbalah* as a language for expressing philosophical ideas, and his *Toras HaOlah* integrates the philosophy of Rambam with the philosophical ideas expressed in the Zohar in a different, and even more abstract manner.

The Symbolism of Man and Woman, *Chomer* and *Tzurah*, in Rambam, Plato, and Jung

Although not writing a commentary on midrash, Rambam throughout *Moreh HaNevuchim* gives us insight into understanding allegory, especially when he explains how to interpret the physical attributes of G-d.³ In his introduction, he uses the allegory of male and female to explain the methodology of prophetic allegories.⁴ He expounds on the prevalent metaphor in *sefer Mishlei* that speaks of the harlot. She represents the physical urges of the flesh. The last chapter of the book deals with the “woman of valor,” the perfected flesh that Rambam refers to as the *chomer hamesukan*, that has imbibed the values of the intellect, i.e., the *tzurah*, which is the צלם אלקים, the image of G-d.

² See Rav Chaim Eisen’s essay “Maharal’s *Be’er Ha-Golah* and His Revolution in Aggadic Scholarship,” *Hakirah* 4.

³ The first section of *Moreh HaNevuchim*.

⁴ See also *Moreh* 1:17, 3:8.

Rambam notes that this allegory is universal and is found in Plato.⁵ Modern scholars of psychiatry, such as C. J. Jung,⁶ identify Logos (intellect) with the male, and Eros (the desire for physical contact) with the female. In analyzing this allegory, it is important to understand a basic Jungian principle. Jung clarifies the concept of allegory by using the word “symbol” and defining what it is. A “symbol” is not a word or object that is used arbitrarily to stand for something else,⁷ but that which symbolizes an idea does so because it innately identifies with that which it represents. Among colors, red often is used to represent danger because it is the color of blood, and in the human psyche—in the⁸ collective unconscious—the sight of red conjures up a feeling of danger. So too, woman identifies with *chomer*, as in Mother Earth for example, because physical life springs from the body of woman. Moreover, women are more prone to emotion, which is part of the human *chomer*, while men are more inclined to be detached intellectual thinkers. Thus, the allegory of man/woman as *tzurah/chomer* is not merely some universal sign-language, but innate symbolism.

I believe this allegory is a key in understanding much of aggadah. *Chazal* say⁹ that *maaseh merkavah* cannot be taught to one person, *maaseh bereishis* to two, and *arayos* to three. Rambam comments that¹⁰ we are talking about סתרי עריות—literally, the “secrets” of *arayos*. Perhaps these are the *aggados* dealing with male and female. We will refer to this concept often in our analysis.

Talmudic Aggadah

The aggadic stories in Talmud Bavli are especially challenging. Midrashic explanations of the *mikra* are rooted in the *mikra*. We have as an aid, our

⁵ See *Moreh* 1:17.

⁶ See, for example, “Man and His Symbols,” Chapter 3, p. 179.

⁷ This is merely a “sign.” In “Man and His Symbols,” Jung and his students explain the importance of “symbols” to people. The book was written for laymen and is easily understood. Jung begins the first chapter, “Approaching the Unconscious,” by distinguishing between “signs” and “symbols.” My extremely brief description of his view, including the example of blood, is my own framing of his insight.

⁸ See the above note. The “collective unconscious” is explained in Jung’s chapter “Approaching the Unconscious.” Because there is substantial commonality between all men and their experience of life, certain symbols will impact all people in a similar way even though they are never consciously and intellectually able to explain why.

⁹ *Mishnah Chagigah* 2:1.

¹⁰ *Perush HaMishnah*.

ability to discern the simple meaning of the Torah, *peshuto shel mikra*, to anchor our understanding of the *drash* of *Chazal*. The midrash is giving a deeper understanding of the message of the *mikra*.¹¹ The context points us in the direction of the proper interpretation. But the aggadah in the Gemara generally tells fantastic stories and moves from case to case in what seems like a stream of consciousness with no real connection. One of the longest, most difficult and most famous of these Talmudic aggados appears in *Bava Metzia* 83b.

In studying the halachic elements of the Talmud, the first step is translating the words of *Chazal*. The second step is analyzing the ideas. The first step itself is often difficult, the second a much longer process and perhaps even never-ending, as a halachic statement is the product of a *mesorah* going back to Moshe Rabbenu coupled with deep analysis by the greatest minds of Israel. This two-step process applies equally to understanding Aggadah. First, we must understand the words, and then the analysis begins. My goal in what follows is not to do the analysis that is required to fully understand this Gemara, but to translate the allegory into a language we can work with. After that, the second step begins.

Tosafos,¹² at the end of the *sugyah*, notes how the closing episode seems unrelated to anything before it, but recognizes a connection in the unusual heaviness of the *tanna* involved and says it connects back to the two heavy *tannaim* mentioned at the beginning of the stories. *Tosafos* thus says that everything in this long exposition is connected. We will study these passages with this assumption.

Bava Metzia 83b: The Animals Frolic at Night

דרש רבי זירא ואמרי לה תני רב יוסף, מאי דכתיב (תהלים קד, כ) תשת חשך ויהי לילה בו תרמוש כל חיתו יער, תשת חשך ויהי לילה זה העולם הזה שדומה ללילה. בו תרמוש כל חיתו יער אלו רשעים שבו שדומין לחיה שביער. תזרח השמש יאספון ואל מעונתם ירבצון, תזרח השמש לצדיקים, יאספון רשעים לגיהנם. ואל מעונתם ירבצון, אין לך כל צדיק וצדיק שאין לו מדור לפי כבודו. יצא אדם לפעלו יצאו צדיקים לקבל שכרן ולעבודתו עדי ערב במי, שהשלים עבודתו עדי ערב.¹³

¹¹ My book, *Encountering the Creator: Divine Providence and Prayer in the Works of Rambam* (Targum Press, 2004) uses Rambam's thought to understand the key themes explored by *midrashei Chazal* on *Bereishis*.

¹² BM 86a s.v. Rebbe Shimon.

¹³ *You make darkness, and it is night*—this refers to this world, which is comparable to night; *wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth*—to the wicked therein, who are like the beasts of the forest. *The sun rises*—for the righteous; the wicked are gathered in—for *Gehinnom*; and lay them down in their habitations—not a single righteous man lacks a habitation as befits his honor. *Man goes forth unto his work*—i.e.,

The Gemara is engaged with the halachic issue of discerning when the laborers are to begin their workday and when to end it and find a key in a verse in *Tehillim*. They cite the verse יצא אדם לפעלו ולעבודתו עדי ערב and see in it an analogy to the struggles of man in this world. The context of the verse states that the world is dominated by evil—animals who frolic at night, תשת חשך ויהי לילה בו תרמוש כל חיתו יער, that will end with the light of *Olam HaBa* for the righteous who have fulfilled their task, במי ערב ששהשלים עבודתו עדי ערב—each receiving his reward according to the level of righteousness he has attained in this world, while the evil will go to *Gehinnom*. *Chazal* tell us that the individual must look towards his personal *Gan Eden*, but we will see that they also wish to relate to *yemos haMashiach* and *tehiyas hameisim*¹⁴ and they wonder about the path Israel must take to bring the *Geulah*. Their desire to explore this idea leads directly to a story about Reb Elazar ben Shimon.

ר' אלעזר ב"ר שמעון אשכח להווא פרהגונא דקא תפיס גנבי. אמר ליה היכי יכלת להו. לאו כחיותא מתילי דכתיב בו תרמוש כל חיתו יער. איכא דאמרי מהאי קרא קאמר ליה, יארב במסתר כאריה בסוכו. דלמא שקלת צדיקי ושבתקת רשיעי. א"ל ומאי אעביד הרמנא דמלכא.¹⁵

R. Elazar b. Shimon (REbS) presents the verse¹⁶ תשת חשך ויהי לילה בו to the gentile government officer involved in prosecuting criminals, to argue that it is almost impossible to identify evil in the world. Of course, if the crime is done publicly, government will stop it, and the Torah clearly provides us with a justice system. But REbS is asking about a criminal justice system that looks for criminals, identifying the source of past crimes and working to thwart crime before it is committed.

the righteous go forth to receive their reward; and to his labor until the evening—as one who has worked fully until the very evening.

¹⁴ The Gemara will later speak of *tehiyas hameisim* and that would imply that we are not merely talking about the reward of the individual's life after death. But what is true for each human on a personal level applies to the *tzibbur* in their historic role. There is an analogy that one's personal life is also a quest for *geulah* so what applies to the life of the world also applies to the life of the individual.

¹⁵ R. Elazar, son of R. Shimon, once met an officer of the [Roman] Government who had been sent to arrest thieves. "How can you detect them?" he said. "Are they not compared to wild beasts, of whom it is written, 'Therein [in the darkness] all the beasts of the forest creep forth?'" (Others say, he referred him to the verse, "He lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den.") "Maybe," [he continued,] "you take the innocent and allow the guilty to escape?" The officer answered, "What shall I do? It is the king's command."

¹⁶ See also the verse יארב במסתר כאריה.

Of this REbS asks how, without seeing the crime, do we know we are punishing the wicked and not the righteous? The officer agrees. Nevertheless, he responds, הורמנא דמלכא, the king's command, necessitates law enforcement. There must be the fear of *malchus*, otherwise, say *Chazal*, one person will swallow the other alive.¹⁷

REbS had apparently been suggesting that the frolicking of evil is inevitable, and that government is as much likely to do harm as good, and¹⁸ thus there is perhaps no point in man instituting a governmental criminal justice system in this world that does anything more than punish overt criminals. Real justice will be by G-d in *Olam HaBa*. What is the alternative that he was suggesting? When people reform, when Mashiach arrives, then there will be justice. There is nothing that can be done by the government to address the crime and corruption in the world that indeed has plagued every nation. All efforts of government should be towards educating people and improving conditions and human character. But the officer responded correctly. Without government planting fear, society could not function. The errors of law enforcement are better than giving a free hand to criminals.

Fighting Evil

אמר תא אגמרך היכי תעביד. עול בארבע שעי לחנותא. כי חזית איניש דקא שתי חמרא, וקא נקיש כסא בידיה וקא מנמנמ, שאול עילויה, אי צורבא מרבנן הוא וניימ אקדומי קדים לגרסיה. אי פועל הוא, קדים קא עביד עבידתיה. ואי עבידתיה בליליא, רדודי רדיד. ואי לא, גנבא הוא ותפסיה. אישתמע מילתא בי מלכא אמרו קריינא דאיגרתא איהו ליהוי פרונקא. אתיוה לרבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון וקא תפיס גנבי ואזיל.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Mishnah Avos* 3:2: שאלמלא של מלכות, שאלמלא מוראה, איש את רעהו חיים בלעו.

¹⁸ In communist and third-world countries, this is the norm. We have in our lifetime seen even in America how the justice system has been turned by some officials into a weapon for destroying political enemies.

¹⁹ Said the Rabbi, "Let me tell you what to do. Go into a tavern at the fourth hour of the day. If you see a man dozing with a cup of wine in his hand, ask what he is. If he is a learned man, [you may assume that] he has risen early to pursue his studies; if he is a day laborer, he must have been up early to do his work; if his work is of the kind that is done at night, he might have been rolling thin metal. If he is none of these, he is a thief; arrest him." The report [of this conversation] was brought to the Court, and the order was given: "Let the reader of the letter become the messenger." R. Elazar, son of R. Shimon, was accordingly sent for, and he proceeded to arrest the thieves.

REbS agrees to work with secular governments and proposes a radical justice system, to place suspicion on and prosecute those who neither work nor learn and still seem to have means. Citizens would have to prove where their assets came from and how they spend their time. The government accepts his plan. It would be implemented against gentiles and Jews alike. The focus of such a government reform would be to stop crime by demanding that citizens are involved in *ישובו של עולם*, the welfare of their community, and they are accountable to prove it. Government sanctions and suspicion would be placed on loiterers. Rights to privacy and other aspects of freedom are curtailed.

שלח ליה ר' יהושע בן קרח חומץ בן יין. עד מתי אתה מוסר עמו של אלקינו להריגה. שלח ליה קוצים אני מכלה מן הכרם. שלח ליה יבא בעל ויכלה את קוציו.²⁰

R. Yehoshua ben Karchah (RYbK) is horrified, calling him *חומץ בן יין*, vinegar the son of wine. His approach—to subject even Jews to the authority of overbearing gentile justice—is a break with Jewish society, with tradition, with the conduct of his father. REbS says this is needed for society to be reformed; to stop the flourishing of *יער*. REbS is looking towards Messianic times, the days when each Jew will sit in his own *כרם*.²¹ RYbK says this is the job of G-d; we should not be involved. He sees REbS as breaking from tradition. This is the meaning of *חומץ בן יין*. Their disagreement was about whether in the *galus*, before *yemos ha-Mashiach*, we should be involved with influencing the nations of the world and their governments and thus hasten the coming of Mashiach; or should we do our best to separate from them and let G-d's plan work without our input. RYbK feels by working with them one only makes their goal of destroying us easier.

Self-Evaluation

יומא חד פגע ביה ההוא כובס קרייה חומץ בן יין. אמר מדחציף כולי האי שמע מינה רשיעא הוא. אמר להו תפסוהו. תפסוהו. לבתר דנח דעתיה אזל בתריה לפרוקיה, ולא מצי. קרי עליה שומר פיו ולשונו שומר מצרות נפשו. זקפוהו. קם תותי זקיפא וקא בכי. אמרו ליה רבי אל ירע בעיניך שהוא ובנו בעלו נערה

²⁰ Thereupon R. Yehoshua, son of Karhah, sent word to him, "Vinegar, son of wine! How long will you deliver up the people of our God for slaughter!" Back came the reply: "I weed out thorns from the vineyard." Whereupon R. Yehoshua retorted: "Let the owner of the vineyard himself [God] come and weed out the thorns."

²¹ איש תחת גפנו

מאורסה ביום הכפורים. הניח ידו על בני מעיו אמר שישו בני מעי שישו. ומה
ספיקות שלכם כך, ודאית שלכם על אחת כמה וכמה. מובטח אני בכם שאין רמה
ותולעה שולטת בכם.²²

REbS is stunned and chastened when he fears that his own personal concerns or prejudices may have affected his judgment. This is what goes on in all government and law enforcement, and this is the argument for refraining from acting upon circumstantial evidence. After receiving confirmation that his evaluation of the criminal was correct, he outwardly expresses confidence in his judgment. This is the image he needed to project to the world. Nevertheless, inwardly he goes through a process of soul searching and self-examination.

אשקוהו סמא דשינתא ועיילוהו לביטא דשישא וקרעו לכריסיה הוו מפקו מיניה
דיקולי דיקולי דתרבא כל תרבא לא סריח שורייקי סומקי מסריח הכא אף על גב
דאיכא שורייקי סומקי לא מסריח.²³

The description of the self-analysis as an operation suggests that he involved others in the analysis to discover what is at the root of his actions. No stench could be discerned in his thoughts, but the Gemara questions this, suggesting that the analysis of the logic behind one's actions is purely an analysis of the logic and this will not reveal corruption of one's character. To this it responds, that while even in pure logic (the white fat) there is something of the person's character (red streaks) that is always

²² One day a fuller met him, and dubbed him: "Vinegar, son of wine." Said the Rabbi to himself, "Since he is so insolent, he is certainly a culprit." So, he gave the order to his attendant: "Arrest him! Arrest him!" When his anger cooled, he went after him to secure his release, but did not succeed. Thereupon he applied to him [the fuller] the verse: *Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles*. Then they hanged him, and he [R. Elazar son of R. Shimon] stood under the gallows and wept. Said they [his disciples] to him: "Master, do not grieve; for he and his son seduced a betrothed maiden on the Day of Atonement." [On hearing this,] he laid his hand upon his heart and exclaimed: "Rejoice, my heart! If matters on which you [sc. the heart] are doubtful are thus, how much more so those on which you are certain! I am well assured that neither worms nor decay will have power over you."

²³ Yet, in spite of this, his conscience disquieted him. Thereupon he was given a sleeping draught, taken into a marble chamber, and had his abdomen opened, and basketsful of fat removed from him and placed in the sun during Tammuz and yet it did not putrefy. But no fat putrefies! [True,] no fat putrefies; nevertheless, if it contains red streaks, it does. But here, though it contained red streaks, it did not. Thereupon he applied to himself the verse, *My flesh too shall dwell in safety*.

involved in decisions, and this can be discerned—this too was pure in REbS.

Separating from the Nations

אף ר' ישמעאל ברבי יוסי מטא כי האי מעשה לידיה. פגע ביה אליהו. אמר ליה עד מתי אתה מוסר עמו של אלקינו להריגה. אמר ליה מאי אעביד, הרמנא דמלכא הוא. אמר ליה אבוך ערק לאסיא, את ערוק ללודקיא.²⁴

R. Yishmael also took this position of working with the gentiles to enforce justice. He sees Eliyahu in his dreams. Eliyahu is the harbinger of Mashiach, as Rambam explains that prophecy will return before Mashiach.²⁵ Thus, this warning from Eliyahu is a vision that this path will not lead to Mashiach. He counterclaims (to himself) that in our *galus* government requires it and even if it is not the ideal path, practicality calls for it. He is told (in his vision) that his father avoided taking part in it and so should he—even if separation will result in hardship. This path of separation is the traditional path, that of the *mesorah*, that of his father.²⁶

Masculinity

כי הוו מקלעי ר' ישמעאל ברבי יוסי ור' אלעזר בר' שמעון בהדי הדדי, הוה עייל בקרא דתורי בינייהו ולא הוה נגעה בהו. אמרה להו ההיא מטרוניתא, בניכם אינם שלכם. אמרו לה שלהן גדול משלנו. כל שכן. איכא דאמרי הכי אמרו לה כי כאיש גבורתו. איכא דאמרי הכי אמרו לה אהבה דוחקת את הבשר. ולמה להו לאהדורי לה, והא כתיב אל תען כסיל כאולתו. שלא להוציא לעז על בניהם. א"ר יוחנן איבריה דר' ישמעאל [בר' יוסי] כחמת בת תשע קבין. אמר רב פפא איבריה דרבי יוחנן כחמת בת חמשת קבין. ואמרי לה בת שלשת קבין. דרב פפא גופיה כי דקורי דהרפנא.²⁷

²⁴ A similar thing befell R. Yishmael son of R. Yosi. [One day] Eliyahu met him and remonstrated with him: “How long will you deliver the people of our G-d to execution!” “What can I do?” he replied. “It is the royal decree.” “Your father fled to Asia,” he retorted. “You flee to Laodicea.”

²⁵ *Hilchos Melachim* 12:2. Not necessarily that Eliyahu returns, but that prophecy will return.

²⁶ Fleeing from government and non-involvement may lead to worse governments arising. His decision to flee is based on his belief that resistance is futile. Evil must be left to frolic.

²⁷ When R. Yishmael son of R. Yosi and R. Elazar son of R. Shimon met, one could pass through with a yoke of oxen under them and not touch them. Said a certain [Roman] matron to them, “Your children are not yours!” They replied, “Theirs [sc. our wives] is greater than ours.” “[But this proves my allegation] all the more!” [she observed]. Some say, they answered thus: “For as a man is, so

The Gemara then gives a metaphor to speak of the powerful masculinity of these great Rabbis. These two who worked against crime had tremendous courage and power and the desire to be משפיע, to influence. That is associated with masculinity. The Gemara allegorizes this as their large size. A Roman woman asks, how can they mate with their wives? Coming from a foreign woman, the question is that femininity would be crushed by such overwhelming power and could not mate with it or produce offspring. The Gemara answers that the wives of these Rabbis also have this characteristic and are compatible with their masculinity and will not be crushed by it.²⁸ But the Gemara responds to this claim by stating that the needed attraction for reproduction requires the full feminine qualities, not male qualities. Two answers are then provided. The male attraction to the female qualities of their women is so powerful that it can overcome any resistance upon the side of the feminine; or that, on the contrary, the female side is so drawn to this masculinity it will not be crushed by mating. This ability to mate means that these qualities can indeed make up the future of Israel.

The Gemara goes on to say that the greatest Rabbis of subsequent generations had this masculine characteristic but in a smaller degree.

Beauty

אמר רבי יוחנן אנה אשתירי משפירי ירושלים. האי מאן דבעי מחזי שופריה דרבי יוחנן, נייתי כסא דכספא מבי סלקי, ונמלייה פרצידיא דרומנא סומקא, ונהדר ליה כלילא דוורדא סומקא לפומיה, ונותביה בין שמשא לטולא. ההוא זהרורי מעין שופריה דר' יוחנן. איני והאמר מר שופריה דרב כהנא מעין שופריה דרבי אבהו. שופריה דר' אבהו מעין שופריה דיעקב אבינו. שופריה דיעקב אבינו מעין שופריה דאדם הראשון. ואילו ר' יוחנן לא קא חשיב ליה. שאני ר' יוחנן דהדרת פנים לא הויא ליה. ר' יוחנן הוה אזיל ויתיב אשערי טבילה. אמר כי סלקן בנות ישראל מטבילת מצוה לפגעו בי כי היכי דלהו להו בני שפירי כוותי, גמירי אורייתא

is his strength.” Others say, they answered her thus: “Love suppresses the flesh.” But why should they have answered her at all; is it not written, Answer not a fool according to his folly? — To permit no stigma upon their children. R. Yochanan said: The waist of R. Yishmael son of R. Yosi was as a bottle of nine kabs capacity. R. Papa said: R. Yochanan’s waist was as a bottle containing five kabs; others say, three kabs. That of R. Papa himself was as [large as] the wicker-work baskets of Harpania.

²⁸ Here we begin to connect with our introduction about male and female but not with the qualities of male and female I had related there. The symbolism of male and female qualities is broad, and we will follow the Gemara and the laws of nature to learn how *Chazal* understand the details of male and female.

כוותי. אמרו ליה רבנן לא מסתפי מר מעינא בישא. אמר להו אנא מזרעא דיוסף קאתינא דלא שלטא ביה עינא בישא, דכתיב בן פורת יוסף בן פורת עלי עין. ואמר ר' אבהו אל תקרי עלי עין אלא עולי עין. ר' יוסי בר חנינא אמר מהכא וידגו לרוב בקרב הארץ, מה דגים שבים מים מכסים אותם ואין העין שולטת בהן, אף זרעו של יוסף אין העין שולטת בהן.²⁹

R. Yochanan had this masculinity, but to a much lesser degree; where he excelled was in beauty. This beauty is a remnant of the lost Jerusalem, and it is described as related to his coloring and casting a glow. The Gemara then discusses the beauty of R. Kahana and others before him that resembles that of Adam HaRishon.³⁰ Their beauty differed from that of R. Yochanan as it was of *הדרת פנים*, i.e., theirs was of their features. Their *צלם אלקים*, image of G-d, could be recognized and their actions could be emulated as their essence was made up of the 13 *middos* of G-d's mercy. With R. Yochanan, one was overpowered by his presence and uplifted but could not understand his ways. Thus, just seeing him was inspiring—but it was emotional, not educational. Like Yosef, it is *עלי עין*, above the concrete vision of the eyes. He had the women look at him when they went to the *mikveh* to absorb his beauty and transmit it to their children. His aura, his majesty, should be what the women want in their children and a mother can tangibly transmit to them what she feels at her inner core.

²⁹ R. Yochanan said: "I am the only one remaining of Jerusalem's men of outstanding beauty." He who desires to see R. Yochanan's beauty, let him take a silver goblet as it emerges from the crucible, fill it with the seeds of red pomegranate, encircle its brim with a chaplet of red roses, and set it between the sun and the shade; its lustrous glow is akin to R. Yochanan's beauty. But that is not so; for did not a Master say: R. Kahana's beauty is a reflection of R. Abbahu's; R. Abbahu's is a reflection of our Father Jacob's; our Father Jacob's was a reflection of Adam's; whereas R. Yochanan is omitted! R. Yochanan is different, because he lacked a beard. R. Yochanan used to go and sit at the gates of the *mikveh*. "When the daughters of Israel ascend from the bath," said he, "let them look upon me, that they may bear sons as beautiful and as learned as I." Said the Rabbis to him: "Do you not fear an evil eye?" "I am of the seed of Yosef," he replied, "against whom an evil eye is powerless." For it is written, Yosef is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well: whereon R. Abbahu observed: "Render not [by a well] but, 'above the power of the eye.'" R. Yosi, son of R. Chanina, deduced it from the following: *and let them multiply abundantly like fish in the midst of the earth*: just as fish in the seas are covered by water and the eye has no power over them, so also are the seed of Yosef—the eye has no power over them.

³⁰ Rashi says it refers to a beard and R. Yochanan had no beard. But the Zohar associates *הדרת פנים* with the features of G-d.

Resh Lakish vs. Rebbe Yochanan—Power vs. Beauty

יומא חד הוה קא סחי ר' יוחנן בירדנא. חזייה ריש לקיש ושוור לירדנא אבתריה.
אמר ליה חילך לאורייתא. אמר ליה שופרך לנשי. א"ל אי הדרת בכ יהיבנא לך
אחותי דשפירא מינאי. קביל עליה. בעי למיהדר לאתויי מאניה ולא מצי הדר.³¹

Rav Yochanan (RY) sees in the masculinity of Resh Lakish (RL) a great power in Israel and the potential for strengthening of the Torah. Resh Lakish is attracted to the beauty of R. Yochanan.³² Since ³³ *אין אשה*, a woman is for beauty, we can connect this with feminine traits. Thus, RY wins him over by offering him his sister. The Gemara tells us that accepting to be schooled by the Torah already reduces this masculinity. Thus, his shoes were too big for him after he decided to learn Torah.³⁴

RL and RY are thus to be understood as power vs. beauty. The concept of beauty is an alternative means to power for influencing and bringing Mashiach. Bilam, the prophet of the nations, observes this beauty in Israel, *מה טובו אהליך יעקב*. RY's argument is for passivity and influencing by example. He intimated this by saying that the daughters of Israel should just observe him, and hence this same approach should apply to our relationship with the nations. RY is from the remnant of Yerushalayim and stands for their ancient approach.

I believe it becomes clear here in the contrast between RY and RL that if the *sugya* has one theme, as I believe and as *Tosafos* implies, that theme is the debate about the two approaches Israel should take in the *galus*.

אקרייה ואתנייה, ושווייה גברא רבא. יומא חד הווי מפלגי בי מדרשא, הסיף והסכין
והפגיון והרומח ומגל יד ומגל קציר, מאימתי מקבלין טומאה, משעת גמר מלאכתן.
ומאימתי גמר מלאכתן. רבי יוחנן אמר משיצרפם בכבשן. ריש לקיש אמר
משיצחצחון במים. א"ל לסטאה בלסטיותיה ידע. אמר ליה ומאי אהנת לי, התם רבי

³¹ One day R. Yochanan was bathing in the Jordan, when Resh Lakish saw him and leapt into the Jordan after him. Said he [R. Yochanan] to him, "Your strength should be for the Torah." — "Your beauty," he replied, "should be for women." "If you will repent," said he, "I will give you my sister [in marriage], who is more beautiful than I." He undertook [to repent]; then he wished to return and collect his weapons, but could not. (According to Rashi, he wished to put on his shoes, but they were too big. According to Soncino, he perhaps could not carry the weight of the weapons.)

³² His jumping into the river after him represents this.

³³ TB *Kesuvos* 59b.

³⁴ TB *Sanhedrin* 19a. Thus, his size or strength decreased by merely accepting to be ruled by the Torah.

קרו לי הכא רבי קרו לי. אמר ליה אהנאי לך דאקריביןך תחת כנפי השכינה. חלש דעתיה דרבי יוחנן, חלש ריש לקיש.³⁵

Just as REbS feared he acted out of pride to cause a death, so too RY acts out of pride and causes the illness of RL. RL felt that strength and power must dominate beauty, while RY felt that beauty should dominate power. The issue raised in the *beis midrash* had been with regard to weaponry.³⁶ RY thought טומאה (impurity) associated with implements of power and violence comes with the fire that forms them. RL argued the fire behind this power does not impart טומאה and continued that the cooling and softening element of washing with water is what creates טומאה. RY's apparent slight was to point out how tools of power are connected with crime that he associates with RL's nature. RL argues that there is no טומאה in the forces that create power and which burn brightly within him. RY says there is.³⁷ They both agree that both elements are necessary; but disagree about what is primary. RL says his greatness in Torah springs from his powerful character that has remained consistent within him and that he brought from his former life. RY says that his own element of beauty was necessary to bring RL under כנפי שכינה (the wings of the Holy Presence). Now that he has been transformed by Torah, he must realize that power is limited and we live by the protection of G-d.

אתאי אחתיה קא בכיא. אמרה ליה עשה בשביל בני. אמר לה עזבה יתומיך אני אחיה. עשה בשביל אלמנותי. אמר לה ואלמנותיך עלי תבטחו. נח נפשיה דר' שמעון בן לקיש, והוה קא מצטער ר' יוחנן בתריה טובא. אמרו רבנן מאן ליזיל ליתביה לדעתיה. ניזיל רבי אלעזר בן פדת דמחדדין שמעתתיה. אזל יתיב קמיה. כל מילתא דהוה אמר רבי יוחנן אמר ליה תניא דמסייעא לך. אמר את כבר לקישא, בר לקישא כי הוה אמינא מילתא, הוה מקשי לי עשרין וארבע קושייתא ומפריקנא ליה עשרין וארבעה פרוקי. וממילא רווחא שמעתא. ואת אמרת תניא דמסייעא לך.

³⁵ Subsequently, [R. Yochanan] taught him Bible and Mishnah, and made him into a great man. Now, one day there was a dispute in the schoolhouse [with respect to the following. Viz.,] a sword, knife, dagger, spear, handsaw and a scythe—at what stage [of their manufacture] can they become unclean? When their manufacture is finished. And when is their manufacture finished? R. Yochanan ruled: When they are tempered in a furnace. Resh Lakish maintained: When they have been furbished in water. Said he to him: “A robber understands his trade.” Said he to him, “And wherewith have you benefited me: there [as a robber] I was called Master, and here I am called Master.” “By bringing you under the wings of the *Shechinah*,” he retorted. R. Yochanan therefore felt himself deeply hurt, [as a result of which] Resh Lakish fell ill.

³⁶ And other sharp objects that are work implements but can be used as weapons.

³⁷ Interestingly, Rambam does not *pasken* like either and טומאה comes even later.

אטו לא ידענא דשפיר קאמינא. הוה קא אזיל וקרע מאניה, וקא בכי ואמר היכא את בר לקישא, היכא את בר לקישא. והוה קא צוה עד דשף דעתיה [מיניה]. בעו רבנן רחמי עליה ונח נפשיה.³⁸

The dominance of the יופי (beauty) of RY causes RL (power) to fall to his deathbed. RL's wife, the sister of RY, who embodies this quality of יופי more than RY does, pleads that her husband's qualities are needed for the protection and survival of wives and children. But RY argues that G-d will provide. Indeed, RY, who had recognized RL was necessary for Israel⁴⁰ and had brought him into the leadership of *klal Yisrael*, grieves the loss of this important quality while still insisting it must not dominate. But he understands that the truth lies somewhere between their two extreme positions. Beauty must not smother power. He needed RL's opposition to refine his own positions; without the questioning and challenging of RL there was no point to his life; he could not refine his position without that of RL. He could get no clarity without him; he had nothing more to contribute and he died. In his suffering his students pray for his death; they realize that his life as a teacher of Israel has ended.

Reb Elazar ben Shimon: Perfecting Power

ואפילו הכי לא סמך רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון אדעתיה. קביל עליה יסורי. באורתא הווי מייכי ליה שיתין נמטי. לצפרא נגדי מתותיה שיתין משיכלי דמא וכיבא. למחר עבדה ליה דביתיהו שיתין מיני לפדא, ואכיל להו וברי. ולא הות שבקא ליה דביתיהו למיפק לבי מדרשא כי היכי דלא לדחקוהו רבנן. באורתא אמר להו אחיי ורעיי בואו. בצפרא אמר להו זילו מפני ביטול תורה. יומא חד שמעה דביתיהו. אמרה

³⁸ His sister [sc. R. Yochanan's, the wife of Resh Lakish] came and wept before him: "Forgive him for the sake of my son," she pleaded. He replied: "Leave your fatherless children. I will preserve them alive." "For the sake of my widowhood then!" "And let your widows trust in me," he assured her. Resh Lakish died, and R. Yochanan was plunged into deep grief. Said the Rabbis, "Who shall go to ease his mind? Let R. Elazar b. Pidas go, whose disquisitions are very subtle." So he went and sat before him; and on every dictum uttered by R. Yochanan he observed: "There is a *Baraisa* which supports you." "Are you as the son of Lakisha?" he complained. "When I stated a law, the son of Lakisha used to raise twenty-four objections, to which I gave twenty-four answers, which consequently led to a fuller comprehension of the law; while you say, 'A *Baraisa* has been taught which supports you.' Do I not know myself that my dicta are right?" Thus, he went on rending his garments and weeping, "Where are you, O son of Lakisha, where are you, O son of Lakisha"; and he cried thus until his mind was turned. Thereupon the Rabbis prayed for him, and he died.

³⁹ RY had lured RL with his sister who was more beautiful than he.

⁴⁰ חילך לאורייתא.

ליה את קא מייטית להו עילויך, כלית ממון של בית אבא, אימרדה. אזלה לבית נשא, סליקו ואתו הנך [שיתין] ספונאי. עיילו ליה שיתין עבדי, כי נקיטי שיתין ארנקי. ועבדו ליה שיתין מיני לפדא, ואכיל להו. יומא חד אמרה לה לברתה זילי בקי באבור, מאי קא עביד האידנא. אתיא אמר לה זילי אמרי לאמך שלנו גדול משלהם. קרי אנפשיה היתה כאניות סוחר ממרחק תביא לחמה.⁴¹

We have not left Rav Elazar ben Shimon, as this seeming digression of RY and RL had been introduced to clarify exactly what the position of REbS represents and what his battle with the mainstream was about. We are discussing aggressive strength vs. passivity in our task to bring the *Geulah*. REbS learned Torah during the day, but at night he tortured himself with thoughts of his sinfulness. Was he acting for G-d and Israel or for his own pride? Was his approach to life and thus his Torah analysis correct? His *ahst hyl* (woman of valor), ⁴² *hachomer hametukon* helped him survive the intellectual torture imposed on the *tzurah*, the pure intellect he embodied. His wife leaving him means that eventually he abandoned any solace that his wife/*chomer* provided him.⁴³ He returns in his mind to the cave he shared with his father, Rav Shimon ben Yochai. Yet he finds that

⁴¹ [Reverting to the story of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon] yet even so, R. Elazar son of R. Shimon's fears were not allayed, and so he undertook a penance. Every evening, they spread sixty sheets for him, and every morning, sixty basins of blood and discharge were removed from under him. In the mornings his wife prepared him sixty kinds of pap, which he ate, and then recovered. Yet his wife did not permit him to go to the schoolhouse, lest the Rabbis discomfort him. Every evening, he would exhort them, "Come, my brethren and familiars!" while every morning he exclaimed, "Depart, because you disturb my studies!" One day his wife, hearing him, cried out, "You yourself bring them upon you; you have [already] squandered the money of my father's house!" So she left him and returned to her paternal home. Then there came sixty seamen who presented him with sixty slaves, bearing sixty purses. They too prepared sixty kinds of pap for him, which he ate. One day she [his wife] said to her daughter, "Go and see how your father is faring now." She went [and on her arrival] her father said to her, "Go, tell your mother that our [wealth] is greater than theirs" [sc. of his father-in-law's house]. He then applied to himself the verse, *She is like the merchant's ships; she bringeth her food from afar*.

⁴² See above, *The Symbolism of Man and Woman, Chomer and Tzurah*, in Rambam, Plato, and Jung.

⁴³ The Gemara says that the separation was at the instigation of the wife/*chomer*. But allegorically she is also a part of her husband. We interpret the Gemara to mean that the desire for physical easing of pain interfered with the drive to find the truth about himself.

the strength of his Torah itself⁴⁴—having abandoned any interest in pleasures of this world—brings him the comfort he needed to cure himself and in fact stimulates him to rejoin society.

The intermediary between wife and husband is the daughter, i.e., the product of his *tzurah* and wife's *chomer*, and, having determined to remain connected to the world, he returns to his wife and society. Just as he and his father had emerged from the cave, he emerges now.

אכל ושתי וברי, נפק לבי מדרשא. אייתו לקמיה שתי מני דמא, טהרינהו. הוה קא מרגני רבנן ואמרי, סלקא דעתך לית בהו חד ספק. אמר להו אם כמותי הוה יחיו כולם זכרים. ואם לאו תהא נקבה אחת ביניהם. היו כולם זכרים, ואסיקו להו ר' אלעזר על שמייה. תניא אמר רבי, כמה פריה ורביה ביטלה רשעה זו מישראל.⁴⁵

His wife, his drive to preserve his physical health—his selfish material interest—had kept him from joining with others in the *beis midrash* to argue his beliefs and to risk the added stress of responsibility for the *tzibbur*. But having survived his inner struggle and been healed, and having clarified his beliefs, he is ready to promote these beliefs and to take the responsibilities of society upon his shoulders. In fact, his immersion in his self-doubts gave him the clarity to see the *טהרה* (purity) in the world. He judged himself more harshly and the world less so. His earlier position of harsh judgment of society had driven him to aggressively fight evil, *קוצים*. Now he sees that since G-d commanded man in *פרו ורבו*, that man is to multiply throughout the earth, we can infer that G-d did not implant *טומאה* in man's nature.⁴⁶ The Rabbis blamed his *chomer/wife* for preventing him from coming earlier to help society. At this point he was *משפיע*, he influenced the world, and created many students who would bear his name, i.e., emulate him. Since his influence was born from the *tzurah*, all the children were males.

⁴⁴ refers to the Torah itself having brought him his needs.

⁴⁵ He ate, drank, and recovered, and went to the schoolhouse. Sixty specimens of blood were brought before him, and he declared them all clean. But the Rabbis criticized him, saying, "Is it possible that there was not [at least] one about which there was some doubt!" He retorted, "If it be as I [said], let them all be males; if not, let there be one female amongst them." They were all males, and were named "Elazar" after him. It has been taught, Rebbe said: How much procreation did this wicked (his wife) prevent in Israel.

⁴⁶ When the wife is *טמא* she cannot unite with her husband.

The Legacy of R. Elazar ben Shimon

כי הוה קא נחא נפשיה, אמר לה לדביתהו ידענא בדרבנן דרתיחי עלי, ולא מיעסקי בי שפיר. אוגנין בעיליתאי ולא תידחלין מינאי. א"ר שמואל בר נחמני, אישתעיא לי אימיה דרבי יונתן, דאישתעיא לה דביתהו דרבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון לא פחות מתמני סרי, ולא טפי מעשרין ותרין שנין. אוגניתיה בעיליתא. כי הוה סליקנא, מעיננא ליה במזייה כי הוה משתמטא ביניתא מיניה, הוה אתי דמא. יומא חד חזאי ריחשא דקא נפיק מאוניה. חלש דעתאי. איתחזי לי בחלמא. אמר לי לא מידי הוא. יומא חד שמעי בזילותא דצורבא מרבנן, ולא מחאי כדבעי לי. כי הוה אתו בי תרי לדינא, הוה קיימי אבבא. אמר מר מילתיה ומר מילתיה. נפיק קלא מעיליתיה ואמר, איש פלוני אתה חייב איש פלוני אתה זכאי.⁴⁷

Yet REbS does not recant his fundamental world view of activism and joining with the nations of the world to fight evil. His identity remained as the aggressive power and *מדת הדין*, and he remained estranged. He did not want to depart this world as an outcast, as his influence would be lost. Thus, ⁴⁸דביתהו, his family, kept his approach alive for 18–22 years. The Gemara thus says that his decisions emerged from his home after he had died to those who wished to come to his house, i.e., to follow his judgments. Sustaining his views for this longer period of time allowed them to take root in the minds of a new generation of scholars and to have a lasting influence. The examination of his hairs by his household refers to the fact that his followers also re-evaluated his path, deciding that it passed the test of time but was not completely without flaw.

יומא חד הוה קא מינציא דביתהו בהדי שבבתא. אמרה לה תהא כבעלה שלא ניתן לקבורה. אמרי רבנן כולי האי, ודאי לאו אורח ארעא. איכא דאמרי רבי שמעון בן

⁴⁷ On his deathbed he said to his wife, "I know that the Rabbis are angry with me, and will not properly attend to me. Let me lie in an upper chamber, and do you not be afraid of me." R. Shmuel b. Nachmani said: R. Yonasan's mother told me that she was informed by the wife of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon: "I kept him lying in that upper chamber not less than eighteen nor more than twenty-two years. Whenever I ascended there, I examined his hair, and [even] if a single hair had fallen out, the blood would well forth. One day, I saw a worm issue from his ear, and I was much grieved, but he appeared to me in my dream and told me that it was nothing. [‘This has happened,’ said he,] ‘because I once heard a scholar insulted and did not protest, as I should have done.’ Whenever two people came before him [in a lawsuit], they stood near the door, each stated his case, and then a voice issued from that upper chamber, proclaiming, ‘So-and-So, you are liable; So-and-So, you are innocent.’"

⁴⁸ Although this term generally refers to his wife, I believe this term here refers to wife as family and it is his household that keeps his *shittah* alive.

יוחאי איתחזאי להו בחלמא. אמר להו פרידה אחת יש לי ביניכם ואי אתם רוצים להביאה אצלי. אזול רבנן לאעסוקי ביה.⁴⁹

At this later date, after his active opposition had been absent for many years and after his ideas no longer seemed so revolutionary, the Rabbanan were willing to put him to rest beside his father, to acknowledge him as part of the *mesorah*. They were also motivated by seeing how among the unlearned, the hatred towards his followers (כולי האי) was intense and irrational.

לא שבקו בני עכבריא, דכל שני דהוה ניים רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון בעיליתיה, לא סליק חיה רעה למתייהו.⁵⁰

His supporters saw him as a rebel against the mainstream and one who gave them support and protection for practices that were despised by others. *עכבריא*, mice-like people, did not want him filed away as just another member of the mainstream who had been misunderstood.

יומא חד מעלי יומא דכיפורי הוה, הו טרידי. שדרו רבנן לבני בירי ואסקוהו לערסיה, ואמטיוה למערתא דאבוה. אשכחוה לעכנא דהדרא לה למערתא. אמרו לה עכנא עכנא פתחי פִּיך ויכנס בן אצל אביו. פתח להו.⁵¹

The opposition of the *עכבריא* recedes when they sought the Heavenly *כפרה* of Yom Kippur. The snake that opposed the burial was the force of evil speech (*לשון הרע*), with its negative and unfair evaluations of people of the present generation,⁵² that preclude even the greatest people of the time from being considered the equal of the greats of the past—but the resemblance of father and son was finally acknowledged.

⁴⁹ One day his wife was quarreling with a neighbor, when the latter reviled [her, saying], “Let her be like her husband, who was not worthy of burial!” Said the Rabbis: “When things have gone thus far, it is certainly not the way of the land.” Others say: R. Shimon b. Yochai appeared to them in a dream and complained: “I have a pigeon among you which you refuse to bring to me.” Then the Rabbis went to attend to him [for burial].

⁵⁰ But the townspeople of Akabaria did not let them; because during all the years R. Elazar son of R. Shimon slept in his upper chamber no evil beast came to their town.

⁵¹ But one day, the eve of the Day of Atonement, when they were busily occupied, the Rabbis sent [word] to the townspeople of Biri, and they brought up his bier, and carried it to his father’s vault, which they found encircled by a serpent. Said they to it, “O snake, O snake, open your mouth, and let the son enter to his father.” Thereupon it opened [its mouth] for them.

⁵² As the midrash says of the snake that appeared to Moshe at the burning bush.

The Superiority of R. Elazar ben Shimon

שלח רבי לדבר באשתו. שלחה ליה, כלי שנשתמש בו קודש ישתמש בו חול. תמן אמרין באתר דמרי ביתא תלא זייניה כולבא רעיא קולתיה תלא. שלח לה נהי דבתורה גדול ממני, אבל במעשים טובים מי גדול ממני. שלחה ליה בתורה מיהא גדול ממך לא ידענא, במעשים ידענא, דהא קביל עליה יסורי. בתורה מאי היא. דכי הוו יתבי רבן שמעון בן גמליאל ורבי יהושע בן קרחה אספסלי יתבי קמיהו רבי אלעזר בר' שמעון ורבי ארעא. מקשו ומפרקו. אמרי מימיהן אנו שותים, והם יושבים על גבי קרקע. עבדו להו ספסלי אסקינהו. אמר להן רבן שמעון בן גמליאל פרידה אחת יש לי ביניכם ואתם מבקשים לאבדה הימני. אחתוהו לרבי. אמר להן רבי יהושע בן קרחה מי שיש לו אב יחיה ומי שאין לו אב ימות. אחתוהו נמי לרבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון. חלש דעתיה. אמר קא חשביתו ליה כוותי. עד ההוא יומא כי הוה אמר רבי מילתא הוה מסייע ליה רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון. מכאן ואילך כי הוה אמר רבי, יש לי להשיב, אמר ליה רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון כך וכך יש לך להשיב. זו היא תשובתך. השתא היקפתנו תשובות חבילות שאין בהן ממש. חלש דעתיה דרבי. אתא א"ל לאבוה. אמר ליה בני אל ירע לך שהוא ארי בן ארי, ואתה ארי בן שועל.⁵³

We are now told how a slight to his honor in his youth had placed Rav Elazar ben Shimon apart from Rebbe and gave him a hostile attitude towards him. He had previously acknowledged the creativity of Rebbe

⁵³ Then Rebbe sent [messengers] to propose [marriage] to his wife. She sent back: "Shall a utensil, in which holy food has been used, be used for profane purposes?" There [sc. in Palestine] the proverb runs: Where the master hung up his weapons, there the shepherd hung up his wallet. He sent back word: "Granted that he outstripped me in learning, was he [also] my superior in good deeds?" She returned: "Yet at least he outstripped you in learning, though I did not know it. But I do know [that he exceeded you] in [virtuous] practice, since he submitted himself to mortification in learning." To what is the reference? — When Rabban Shimon b. Gamliel and R. Yehoshua b. Karhah sat on benches, R. Elazar son of R. Shimon and Rebbe sat in front of them on the ground, raising objections and answering them. Said they, "We drink their water [i.e., benefit from their learning], yet they sit upon the ground; let seats be placed for them!" Thus were they promoted. But R. Shimon b. Gamliel protested: "I have a pigeon among you, and you wish to destroy it!" So Rebbe was put down. Thereupon R. Yehoshua b. Karhah said: "Shall he, who has a father, live, while he who has no father die?" So R. Elazar son of R. Shimon too was put down, whereat he felt hurt saying, "You have made him equal to me!" Now, until that day, whenever Rebbe made a statement, R. Elazar son of R. Shimon supported him. But from then onward, when Rebbe said, "I have an objection," R. Elazar son of R. Shimon retorted, "If you have such and such an objection, this is your answer; now have you encompassed us with loads of answers in which there is no substance." Rebbe, being thus humiliated, went and complained to his father. "Let it not grieve you," he answered, "for he is a lion, and the son of a lion, whereas you are a lion, the son of a fox."

and supported him in it, bringing evidence to his *chiddushim*. Later he claimed that the innovative thought of Rebbe was obvious. Without this animosity, the creativity of REbS would likely have been supportive of that of Rebbe and perhaps have guided a slow movement towards acceptance of REbS's positions. But the newborn aggressive attitude itself, on the one hand spurs the creativity of REbS and makes him superior in Torah, and on the other hand distances his ideas from the house of the Nasi. The Gemara then contrasts the modesty of the father of Rebbe with the self-confidence and inherited aggressiveness of REbS. Thus, REbS and Rebbe, the leader of the mainstream, are at odds with regard to the character of Torah itself.

היינו דאמר רבי שלשה ענוותנים הן ואלו הן, אבא ובני בתירה ויונתן בן שאול.
 רבן שמעון בן גמליאל הא דאמרן. בני בתירה דאמר מר הושיבוהו בראש ומינוהו
 לנשיא עליהן. יונתן בן שאול דקא"ל לדוד, ואתה תמלוך על ישראל ואני אהיה
 לך למשנה. ממאי דלמא יונתן בן שאול דחזא דגריר עלמא בתר דוד. בני בתירה
 נמי דחזו להלל דעדיף מיניהו. אלא רבן שמעון בן גמליאל ודאי ענוותן הוה.⁵⁴

The Gemara actually says that R. Shimon ben Gamliel was in fact no less than Rav Shimon ben Yochai (RSbY) in understanding of Torah and only his modesty made him put RSbY before himself. So when we are told Rebbe wished to acquire for himself REbS's (the son of RSbY) wife, i.e., his greatness, it is not his deeper understanding of Torah that he sought; rather, he wanted to possess the wife/ *חומר המתוקן* that had come from REbS's internal suffering—the character traits that had emerged as strength and independence of thought and action. He came to understand that to acquire this he had to go through a period of soul searching, confronting his own shortcomings.

⁵⁴ To this Rebbe alluded when he said, Three were humble; viz., my father, the Bnei Basyra, and Jonathan, the son of Saul. "R. Shimon b. Gamliel," as has been said; "the Bnei Basyra," as a Master said: They placed him at the head and appointed him Nasi over them. "Yonasan, the son of Shaul," for he said to David, *And thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee*. But how does this prove it: perhaps Yonasan the son of Shaul [spoke thus] because he saw that the people were flocking to David? The Bnei Basyra too, because they saw that Hillel was their superior [in learning]? But R. Shimon b. Gamliel was certainly very modest.

Immersion in *Olam HaZeh*

אמר רבי חביבין יסורין. קבל עליה תליסר שני, שית בצמירתא ושבע בצפרנא. ואמרי לה שבעה בצמירתא ושית בצפרנא. אהוריידיה דבי רבי הוה עתיר משבור מלכא. כד הוה רמי כיסתא לחיותא הוה אזיל קלא בתלתא מילי. הוה מכוין דרמי. בההיא שעתא דעייל רבי לבית הכסא. ואפי' הכי מעבר ליה קליה לקלייהו, ושמעו ליה נחותי ימא. ואפ"ה יסורי דר' אלעזר בר' שמעון עדיפי מדרבי. דאילו ר"א בר"ש מאהבה באו ומאהבה הלכו. דרבי ע"י מעשה באו וע"י מעשה הלכו. ע"י מעשה באו מאי היא. דההוא עגלא דהוון קא ממטו ליה לשחיטה. אזל תליא לרישיה בכנפיה דרבי וקא בכי. אמר ליה זיל לכך נוצרת. אמרי הואיל ולא קא מרחם ליתו עליה יסורין. וע"י מעשה הלכו. יומא חד הוה קא כנשא אמתיה דרבי ביתא, הוה שדיא בני כרכושא וקא כנשא להו. אמר לה שבקינהו. כתיב ורחמיו על כל מעשיו. אמרי הואיל ומרחם נרחם עליה.⁵⁵

The Gemara talks of Rebbe's suffering while relieving himself. The concept of going to the bathroom allegorically refers to immersing oneself into the physical world. It is the epitome of removing oneself from the spiritual realm.⁵⁶ Rebbe took all the burden of *gashmiyus*, the material world, upon himself and made himself responsible for the woes of the Jewish People. But while REbS in fact needed no major *tikkun* (correction), and his path was correct and his יסורים (suffering) passed with no fundamental change in his character, Rebbe was in need of תקון. He did not have full compassion and needed to fully feel the suffering of others.

⁵⁵ Rebbe observed: Suffering is precious. Thereupon he undertook [to suffer likewise] for thirteen years, six through stones in the kidneys and seven through scurvy. Others reverse it. Rebbe's house-steward was wealthier than King Shapur. When he placed fodder for the beasts, their cries could be heard for three miles, and he aimed at casting it [before them] just when Rebbe entered his privy closet. Yet even so, his voice [lifted in pain] was louder than theirs, and was heard [even] by seafarers. Nevertheless, the sufferings of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon were superior [in virtue] to those of Rebbe. For whereas those of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon came to him through love, and departed in love, those of Rebbe came to him through a certain incident and departed likewise. "They came to him through a certain incident." What is it? A calf was being taken to the slaughter, when it broke away, hid his head under Rebbe's skirts, and lowed [in terror]. "Go," said he, "for this you were created." Thereupon they said [in Heaven], "Since he has no pity, let us bring suffering upon him." "And departed likewise." How so? One day Rebbe's maidservant was sweeping the house; [seeing] some young weasels lying there, she made to sweep them away. "Let them be," said he to her. "It is written, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Said they [in Heaven], "Since he is compassionate, let us be compassionate to him."

⁵⁶ It is even forbidden to think Torah while in the bathroom.

Two types of psychological pain accompanied him separately for 13 years—perhaps alternate years—and the Gemara is uncertain which came first (6 vs. 7). Perhaps the number 13 gives us the key to his suffering as the number is associated with the 13 מדות (qualities) of G-d which man is required to emulate.⁵⁷ He felt a lack in each of these qualities, each torturing him for a year until he corrected that particular מדה. These qualities are referred to as the 13 מדות of רחמים.⁵⁸

כולהו שני יסורי דר' אלעזר לא שכיב איניש בלא זמניה. כולהו שני יסורי דרבי לא איצטריך עלמא למיטרא. דאמר רבה בר רב שילא, קשי יומא דמיטרא כיומא דדינא. ואמר אממר אי לאו צריך לעלמא, בעו רבנן רחמי עליה ומבטלי ליה. אפי' הכי כי הו' עקרי פוגלא ממשרא, הוה קיימא בירא מליא מיא.⁵⁹

The time of the יסורין of REbS characterize the era of his influence. Men did not die before their time, i.e., each person fulfilled his potential. He represents the acceptance of hard conditions and living difficult lives—the suffering of Israel through the generations. Yet this strengthens us, and Israel has survived in the *galus*.

Rebbe's leadership allowed for the growth of his people without the negative consequences (symbolized by the inconvenience of rain) that are usually needed for it. Israel has often thrived in *galus*. He represented great wealth, but the price was his suffering, constantly addressing his shortcomings—something of “Jewish guilt.”

Preserving and Integrating Minority Positions

איקלע רבי לאתריה דר' אלעזר בר' שמעון. אמר להו י'ש לו בן לאותו צדיק. אמרו לו י'ש לו בן. וכל זונה שנשכרת בשנים שוכרתו בשמנה. אתייה אסמכיה ברבי ואשלמיה לר' שמעון בן איסי בן לקוניא אחות דאמיה. כל יומא הוה אמר לקרייתי אנא איזיל. אמר ליה חכים עבדו יתך, וגולתא דדהבא פרסו עלך, ורבי קרו לך, ואת אמרת לקרייתי אנא איזיל. אמר ליה מומי עזובה דא. כי גדל אתא יתיב במתיבתא דרבי. שמעיה לקליה אמר הא קלא דמי לקליה דר' אלעזר בר' שמעון. אמרו ליה בריה הוא. קרי עליה, פרי צדיק עץ חיים ולוקח נפשות חכם. פרי צדיק עץ חיים זה ר' יוסי בר' אלעזר בר' שמעון. ולוקח נפשות חכם, זה ר' שמעון בן

⁵⁷ והלכת בדרכיו.

⁵⁸ אדם לחבירו and אדם למקום. Perhaps the two groups refer to qualities related to

⁵⁹ During all the years that R. Elazar suffered, no man died prematurely. During all those of Rebbe the world needed no rain; for Rabbah son of R. Shilah said: The day of rain is as hard [to bear] as the day of judgment. And Amemar said: But were it not necessary to the world, the Rabbis would have prayed that it might cease to be. Nevertheless, when a radish was pulled out of its bed, there remained a cavity full of water.

איסי בן לקוניא. כי נח נפשיה אמטוהו למערתא דאבוה. הוה הדרא לה עכנא למערתא. אמר ליה עכנא עכנא פתח פיך ויכנס בן אצל אביו. לא פתחא להו. כסבורים העם לומר שזה גדול מזה. יצתה בת קול ואמרה לא מפני שזה גדול מזה אלא זה היה בצער מערה וזה לא היה בצער מערה.⁶⁰

Rebbe differs from REbS as he is an insider and not a rebel, and he is modest and works together with the other scholars and remains part of the mainstream. REbS is the loner. He is power and דין. As REbS is the loner, his son is an outcast. But his outstanding, most recognizable, quality is the beauty that he got from his mother, the wife of REbS, not the power of his father.⁶¹ Rebbe, who had sought to acquire the wife of REbS, the חומר המתוקן formed from the qualities of REbS, seeks out their son and hands him over to the brother of his mother. He gives him *semichah* (Rabbinic ordination), symbolically acknowledging him as part of the *mesorah*. He returns to learn under Rebbe and he brings with him the voice of REbS. Rebbe acknowledges also the input of his uncle, i.e., the masculine component of the חומר המתוקן. Yet, despite the son's greatness of mind,

⁶⁰ Rebbe chanced to visit the town of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon. "Did that righteous man leave a son?" he inquired. "Yes," they replied, "and every harlot whose hire is two [zuz], hires him for eight." So he had him brought [before him], ordained him a Rabbi, and entrusted him to R. Shimon b. Issi b. Lakonia, his mother's brother [to be educated]. Every day he would say, "I am going to my town"; to which he [his instructor] replied, "They have made you a Sage, spread over you a gold trimmed cloak [at the ceremony of ordination] and designated you 'Rabbi,' and yet you say, 'I am going back to my town!'" Said he, "I swear that this [my desire] has been abandoned." When he became a great [scholar], he went and sat in Rebbe's academy. On hearing his voice, he [Rebbe] observed: "This voice is similar to that of R. Elazar son of R. Shimon." "He is his son," they [his disciples] told him. Thereupon he applied to him the verse, *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that wins souls is wise*. [Thus:] "*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life*," refers to R. Yosi, the son of R. Elazar, the son of R. Shimon. "*And he that wins souls is wise*," to R. Shimon b. Issi b. Lakonia. When he died, he was carried to his father's burial vault, which was encompassed by a snake. "O snake, O snake," they adjured it, "open your mouth and let the son enter to his father"; but it would not uncoil for them. Now, the people thought that one was greater than the other but there issued a Heavenly Voice, proclaiming: "It is not because one is greater than the other, but because one underwent the suffering of the cave, and the other did not."

⁶¹ Thus, according to one translation the men use him as a woman. Alternately, even the harlots crave his beauty.

he is not allowed into the cave alongside his father and grandfather. He was not the equal of REbS, who experienced a lifetime of isolation.⁶²

איקלע רבי לאתריה דר' טרפון. אמר להו יש לו בן לאותו צדיק שהיה מקפח את בניו. אמרו לו בן אין לו בן בת יש לו, וכל זונה שנשכרת בשנים שוכרתו בשמנה. אתיוהו לקמיה. אמר ליה אי הדרת בך יהיבנא לך ברתאי. הדר ביה. איכא דאמרי נסבה וגירשה. איכא דאמרי לא נסבה כלל כדי שלא יאמרו בשביל זו חזר זה.⁶³

R. Tarfon put his own integrity before progeny.⁶⁴ He believed though man must look to the future, his main concern must be on his own merit. Did he, with such a focus, leave progeny? Only the son of a daughter. From his feminine side there was continuity. As with the son of REbS, even without Torah this feminine beauty survived. This refers to beauty of character. Because this grandson comes strictly from the feminine side, there could be no marriage to Rebbe's daughter. Rabbi Tarfon's quality of putting self-perfection before the building of the future could not produce a lasting future.⁶⁵

ולמה ליה כולי האי. דאמר רב יהודה אמר רב, ואמרי לה אמר ר' חייא בר אבא אמר ר' יוחנן, ואמרי לה אמר ר' שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר' יונתן, כל המלמד את בן חבירו תורה זוכה ויושב בשיבה של מעלה, שנאמר, אם תשוב ואשיבך לפני תעמוד. וכל המלמד את בן עם הארץ תורה אפילו הקב"ה גוזר גזירה מבטלה בשבילו, שנאמר, ואם תוציא יקר מזולל כפי תהיה. אמר ר' פרנך אמר ר' יוחנן כל שהוא תלמיד חכם ובנו תלמיד חכם ובן בנו תלמיד חכם שוב אין תורה פוסקת מזרעו לעולם, שנאמר, ואני זאת בריתי וגו' לא ימוש מפך ומפי זרעך ומפי זרע זרעך אמר ה' מעתה ועד עולם. מאי אמר ה'. אמר הקב"ה אני ערב לך בדבר זה. מאי מעתה ועד עולם. אמר ר' ירמיה, מכאן ואילך תורה מחזרת על אכסניא שלה. רב יוסף יתיב ארבעין תעניתא. ואקריהו, לא ימוש מפך. יתיב ארבעים תעניתא אחריני ואקריהו לא ימוש מפך ומפי זרעך. יתיב מאה תעניתא אחריני, אתא

⁶² The suffering REbS accepted upon himself is connected to this upbringing in the cave.

⁶³ Rebbe chanced to visit the town of R. Tarfon. Said he to them: "Has that righteous man, who used to swear by the life of his children, left a son?" They replied: "He has left no son, but a daughter's son remains, and every harlot who is hired for two [zuz] hires him for eight." So he had him brought before him and said to him: "Should you repent, I will give you my daughter." He repented. Some say, he married her [Rebbe's daughter] and divorced her; others, that he did not marry her at all, lest it be said that his repentance was on her account.

⁶⁴ The *meforshim* explain this is the import of "swearing on the life of his children."

⁶⁵ I suspect that the Gemara's explanation זה חזר זה חזר כדי שלא יאמרו בשביל זו חזר זה was a later Saboritic addition.

ואקריהו לא ימושו מפיו זרע ומפי זרע זרעך. אמר מכאן ואילך לא צריכנא, תורה מחזרת על אכסניא שלה.⁶⁶

Rebbe engaged in the *kiruv* of the sons of his counterparts, as he knew that in so doing he would elevate himself. This is the *ישיבה של מעלה* to which he aspired and attained. He thus subsumed into himself the qualities of his colleagues. By going a step further and teaching the *עמי הארץ* one cancels the pending judgment against Israel, for in so doing he elevates the entire people.

To implant Torah that will last throughout one's generations requires deprivation on the part of the original ancestor, symbolized by the fasts of R. Yosef. He must influence the grandchildren that he sees. If successful, the process works automatically. This sheds further light on the suffering of REbS and Rebbe.

Adapting to the Torah of R. Elazar ben Shimon

ר' זירא כי סליק לארעא דישראל יתיב מאה תעניתא דלשתכח גמרא בבליה מניה, כי היכי דלא נטרדיה. יתיב מאה אחרניתא דלא לשכוב ר' אלעזר בשניה, ונפלין עילויה מילי דצבורא. ויתיב מאה אחרני דלא נשלוט ביה נורא דגיהנם. כל תלתין

⁶⁶ And why did he [Rebbe] take such [extreme] measures? Because, [as] Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name, others say, R. Chiya b. Abba said in R. Yochanan's name, others say, R. Shmuel b. Nachmani said in R. Yonasan's name: He who teaches Torah to his neighbor's son will be privileged to sit in the Heavenly Academy, for it is written, *If you [sc. Jeremiah] will cause [Israel] to repent, then will I bring you again, and you shall stand before me.* And he who teaches Torah to the son of an *am ha'aretz*, even if the Holy One, blessed be He, makes a decree, He annuls it for his sake, as it is written, *and if you shall take forth the precious from the vile, you shall be as my mouth.* R. Parnak said in R. Yochanan's name: He who is himself a scholar, and his son is a scholar, and his son's son too, the Torah will nevermore cease from his seed, as it is written, *As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord; My spirit is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, says the Lord, from henceforth and forever.* What is meant by "says the Lord"? —The Holy one, blessed be He, said, I am surety for you in this matter. What is the meaning of "from henceforth and forever"? R. Yirmiyah said: From henceforth [i.e., after three generations] the Torah seeks its home. R. Yosef fasted forty fasts, when he was made to read [in his dream], "They shall not depart out of your mouth." He fasted another forty, and was made to read, "They shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed." He fasted another forty, and was made to read, "They shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed." Henceforth, said he, I have no need [to fast]; the Torah seeks its home.

יומי הוה בדיק נפשיה. שגר תנורא, סליק ויתיב בגויה, ולא הוה שלטא ביה נורא. יומא חד יהבו ביה רבנן עינא ואיחרכו שקיה, וקרו ליה, קטין חריך שקיה.⁶⁷

R. Zera left the opulence of Bavel to adapt to the life and learning of Eretz Yisrael. He needed to transform and toughen himself for the harder lifestyle associated with masculinity and *תורת דין* that had been passed down from REbS. He needed to toughen himself to learn the Torah of *דין* from REbS. But while this approach called for one to engage oneself with influencing the outside world, he directed all his energies to avoid responsibilities, as REbS had done in his early years. Likewise, he needed to be vigilant that he not be susceptible to the animosity of the Israelis and be scorched by their fire = *Gebinnom*. He constantly needed to monitor himself against being sensitive to the scorn he would encounter as a misfit, and once he did partially fail and was visibly scorched by the Rabbis' fire. Forever after the relationship was damaged; they attributed weakness to him. Those rooted in Bavel could not become fully integrated Israelis.

How to End the Galus: Preserving Past, or Innovation?

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב מאי דכתיב, מי האיש החכם ויבן את זאת ואשר דבר פי ה' אליו ויגידה על מה אבדה הארץ. דבר זה אמרו חכמים ולא פירשוהו. אמרו נביאים ולא פירשוהו, עד שפירשו הקב"ה בעצמו, שנאמר ויאמר ה' על עזבם את תורת אשר נתתי לפניכם. אמר רב יהודה אמר רב שלא ברכו בתורה תחילה. אמר רב חמא מאי דכתיב בלב נבון תנוח חכמה ובקרב כסילים תודע. בלב נבון תנוח חכמה זה ת"ח בן ת"ח. ובקרב כסילים תודע, זה ת"ח בן ע"ה. אמר עולא היינו דאמרי אינשי, אסתירא בלגינא קיש קיש קריא. אמר ליה ר' ירמיה לר' זירא מאי דכתיב, קטן וגדול שם הוא ועבד חפשי מאדניו. אטו לא ידעינן דקטן וגדול שם הוא. אלא כל המקטין עצמו על דברי תורה בעוה"ז נעשה גדול לעוה"ב, וכל המשים עצמו כעבד על דברי תורה בעוה"ז נעשה חפשי לעוה"ב.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ When R. Zera emigrated to Palestine, he fasted a hundred fasts to forget the Babylonian Gemara, that it should not trouble him. He also fasted a hundred times that R. Elazar might not die in his lifetime, so that the communal cares should not fall upon him. And yet another hundred, that the fire of *Gebinnom* might be powerless against him. Every thirty days he would examine himself [to see if he were fireproof]. He would heat the oven, ascend, and sit therein, but the fire had no power against him. One day, however, the Rabbis cast an [envious] eye upon him, and his legs were singed, whereafter he was called "Short and leg-singed."

⁶⁸ Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: What is meant by, *Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it, why the land perished?* This question was put by the Sages, but they could not answer it; by the prophets, but they [too] could not answer it, until the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself resolved as it is written, *And the Lord said, Because*

Now the Gemara looks to the past for guidance with regard to the theme of the *sugyah* of how to end the *galus*. Why was Israel lost in the first place and why did the *galus* descend? This Torah of Eretz Yisrael is lost because לא ברכו בתורה תחלה, which according to Rambam⁶⁹ means that the *talmidei chachamim* did not make the first blessing over the Torah and ceded it to Kohanim or others of power. *Chazal* say this is why the sons of *talmidei chachamim* are not *talmidei chachamim*,⁷⁰ as the primacy of the honor of the Torah was not transmitted to them, and they did not associate the role of *talmid chacham* with being leaders of Israel. Thus, the lack of continuity of generations of *talmidei chachamim* is the cause of *galus*. The Gemara thus follows with the high value of *talmid chacham ben talmid chacham* and by disparaging *talmidei chachamim* who arise from outside the *mesorah*. To this R. Yirmiyah responds with a different understanding of the verse (in *sefer Yirmiyah*) brought to criticize the rise of *talmidei chachamim* outside of the *mesorah* and perhaps he disputes the entire principle that has been espoused. He says the verse teaches that the key to the future is *talmidei chachamim* staying in the background and acting with modesty—and this will bring *Olam HaBa*, by allowing other, perhaps uncelebrated *talmidei chachamim* to become the leaders.

Resh Lakish's Search for Connection to the Past

ריש לקיש הוה מציין מערתא דרבנן. כי מטא למערתיה דר' חייא איעלמא מיניה. חלש דעתיה. אמר רבש"ע לא פלפלתי תורה כמותו. יצתה בת קול ואמרה לו, תורה כמותו פלפלת, תורה כמותו לא ריבצת. כי הווי מינצו ר' חנינא ור' חייא אמר ליה ר' חנינא לר' חייא בהדי דידי קא מינצית. ח"ו אי משתכחא תורה מישראל מהדרנא לה מפילפולי. אמר ליה ר' חייא לר' חנינא בהדי דידי קא מינצית דעבדי

they have forsaken my law which I set before them. Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: [That means] that they did not first utter a benediction over the Torah [before studying it]. R. Chama said: What is meant by, *Wisdom rests in the heart of him that has understanding; but that which is in the midst of fools is made known?* "*Wisdom rests in the heart of him that has understanding*" refers to a scholar, the son of a scholar; "but that which is in the midst of fools is made known" to a scholar, the son of an *am ha'aretz*. Said Ulla: Thus, it is proverbial, One stone in a pitcher cries out "rattle, rattle." R. Yirmiyah questioned R. Zera: What is meant by *The small and great are there* [sc. the next world]; and the servant is free from his master? Do we then not know that "the small and great are there"? — But [it means that] he who humbles himself for the sake of the Torah in this world is magnified in the next; and he who makes himself a servant to the [study of the] Torah in this world becomes free in the next.

⁶⁹ תשובת הרמב"ם קובץ נ'.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

לתורה דלא תשתכח מישראל. מאי עבידנא. אזלינא ושדינא כיתנא. וגדילנא נישבי וציינא טבי ומאכילנא בשרייהו ליתמי ואריכנא מגילתא וכתבנא חמשה חומשי. וסליקנא למתא ומקרינא חמשה ינוקי בחמשה חומשי ומתנינא שיתא ינוקי שיתא סדרי. ואמרנא להו עד דהדרנא ואתינא אקרו אהדדי, ואתנו אהדדי ועבדי לה לתורה דלא תשתכח מישראל. היינו דאמר רבי כמה גדולים מעשי חייא. אמר ליה ר' ישמעאל בר' יוסי אפי' ממר. אמר ליה אין. אפי' מאבא. אמר ליה ח"ו, לא תהא כזאת בישראל. אמר ר' זירא אמש נראה לי ר' יוסי בר' חנינא. אמרתי לו אצל מי אתה תקוע. אמר לי אצל ר' יוחנן. ור' יוחנן אצל מי. אצל ר' ינאי. ור' ינאי אצל מי. אצל ר' חנינא. ור' חנינא אצל מי. אצל ר' חייא. אמרתי לו ור' יוחנן אצל ר' חייא לא. אמר לי באתר דזקוקין דנורא ובעורין דאשא, מאן מעייל בר נפחא לתמן.⁷¹

Resh Lakish, the outsider, perhaps the son of an *am ha'arets*, who Ulla just disparaged, connects himself to the *gedolim* of the past. He rejects the *mesorah* of R. Yochanan but attaches himself back to greater scholars of earlier generations. He analyzes and defines their contributions (i.e., מציינ), looking to find a spiritual father—looking to refine his instinctive דרך (approach). He sized up each one's דרך but with all the depth of his learning

⁷¹ Resh Lakish was marking the burial vaults of the Rabbis. But when he came to the grave of R. Chiya, it was hidden from him, and he experienced a sense of humiliation. "Sovereign of the Universe!" he exclaimed, "did I not debate on the Torah as he did?" Thereupon a Heavenly Voice cried out in reply: "You did indeed debate on the Torah as he did, but you did not spread the Torah as he did." Whenever R. Chanina and R. Chiya were in a dispute, R. Chanina said to R. Chiya: "Would you dispute with me? If, Heaven forbid, the Torah were forgotten in Israel, I would restore it by my argumentative powers." To which R. Chiya rejoined: "Would you dispute with me, who achieved that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel? What did I do? I went and sowed flax, made nets [from the flax cords], trapped deer, whose flesh I gave to orphans, and prepared scrolls [from their skins], upon which I wrote the five books [of Moses]. Then I went to a town [which contained no teachers] and taught the five books to five children, and the six orders [of the Talmud] to six children. And I bade them: 'Until I return, teach each other the Pentateuch and the Mishnah'; and thus I preserved the Torah from being forgotten in Israel." This is what Rebbe [meant when he] said, "How great are the works of Chiya!" Said R. Yishmael son of R. Yosi to him, "[Are they] even [greater] than yours?" "Yes," he replied, "and even than my father's." "Heaven forbid!" he rejoined. "Let not such a thing be [heard] in Israel!" R. Zera said: Last night R. Yosi son of R. Chanina appeared to me [in a dream], and I asked him, "Near whom are you seated [in the Heavenly Academy]?" "Near R. Yochanan." "And R. Yochanan near whom?" "R. Yannai." "And R. Yannai?" "Near R. Chanina." "And R. Chanina?" "Near R. Chiya." Said I to him, "And is not R. Yochanan [worthy of a seat] near R. Chiya?" He replied, "In the region of fiery sparks and flaming tongues, who will let the smith's son enter?"

he could not understand R. Chiya. The *Bas Kol* (an echo of prophecy) finally reveals to him what R. Chiya saw as the key to the *Geulah* and what influenced the creativity of his thought, the spread of Torah and the education of the sons of the *amei ha'aretz*.

R. Chanina vs. R. Chiya on Bringing the *Geulah*: Depth vs. Breadth

R. Chanina believed that Torah had to be deeply understood and *lomdishe* principles captured and preserved so that the great scholars could reconstruct the details after study has been suppressed for generations. This is the work of the Talmud. R. Chiya said that the preservation of Torah was dependent upon making it widespread⁷² and also providing the material prosperity, *gashmiyus*, to support it. As *Chazal* were entrusted to make *משמרת למשמרת* (a protective fence around the mitzvos) in legislating, so too they had the responsibility to legislate so as to spread and preserve Torah. Rebbe says this was even more important than his constructing of the Mishnah which is a fulfillment of what R. Chanina stressed. Still, Rebbe points out that R. Yosse,⁷³ one of the five *talmidim* of R. Akiva who received *semichah* in times of *shmad*, was even more important in preserving the Torah. He kept the *mesorah* alive when it was in critical danger of extinction.

אמר רב חביבא אשתעי לי רב חביבא בר סורמקי, חזי ליה ההוא מרבנן דהוה שכיח אליהו גביה. דלצפרא הוה שפירן עיניה, ולאורתא דמיין כדמיקלין בנורא. אמרי ליה מאי האי. ואמר לי דאמרי ליה לאלוהו, אחוי לי רבנן כי סלקי למתיבתא דרקיע. אמר לי בכולהו מצית לאסתכולי בהו, לבר מגוהרקא דר' חייא דלא תסתכל ביה. מאי סימנייהו. בכולהו אזלי מלאכי כי סלקי ונחת, לבר מגוהרקא דר' חייא דמנפשיה סליק ונחת. לא מצאי לאוקמא אנפשי, אסתכלי בה. אתו תרי בוטיטי דנורא ומחיוהו לההוא גברא וסמינהו לעיניה. למחר אזלי אשתטחי אמערתיה. ⁷⁴אמינא מתנייתא דמר מתנינא ואתסאי.

⁷² Rav Chiya, of course, is also credited with the authorship of the *Tosefta*. Yet this work explains the Mishnah and makes it more accessible. Rebbe's Mishnah is constructed primarily of succinct abstract formulations.

⁷³ And his four fellow *musmachim*.

⁷⁴ Chaviva said: R. Chaviva b. Surmakia told me: I saw one of the Rabbis whom Eliyahu used to frequent, whose eyes were clear in the morning, but in the evening, they looked as though burnt in fire. I questioned him, "What is the meaning of this?" And he answered me [thus]: "I requested Eliyahu to show me the [departed] Rabbis as they ascend to the Heavenly Academy. He replied: 'You can look upon all, except the carriage of R. Chiya: upon it you shall not look.' 'What is their sign?' 'All are accompanied by angels when they ascend and descend,

The Abstract vs. the Practical

There is a gap in stature between R. Yochanan, and R. Chanina and R. Chiya. The latter two are like fire while R. Yochanan is ben Nafcha, son of a blacksmith, i.e., he works with the fire they have created. There is a gap between the Tannaim and Amoraim. R. Chiya created the *Tosefta*. But the Gemara says that his Torah was so deep—perhaps involved in deep philosophy—that a *talmid*'s attempt to analyze it would spiritually blind him. But he is saved by relating these philosophical issues to halachos of the *Tosefta*. Since Eliyahu will precede Mashiach, we understand that the Gemara here is continuing its theme of bringing the *Geulah*. Looking at the *merkavos* of *chachamim* means trying to grasp their understanding of G-d which is at the root of their *shittos*. But R. Chiya's understanding of G-d's ways was not within the grasp of the community of *chachamim*.⁷⁵ Even though we saw R. Chiya as apparently focusing on practical concerns, these concerns were rooted in first understanding the whole creation, including the sciences. He needed to plant the seeds. He needed to master all of nature and embrace it (וכבשוה). He taught הסתכל באוריינתא וברא עולמא (G-d looked at the Torah and created the world).⁷⁶

The double use of the name *Chaviva* and then of an anonymous *talmid* implies that the storyteller is speaking about himself. There is love⁷⁷ that drives this *talmid* to seek G-d. And this is where there is a danger of being burned, as were Nadav and Avihu who wished to enter the Holy of Holies.⁷⁸

Geulah in Its Time

אליהו הוה שכיח במתיבתא דרבי. יומא חד ריש ירחא הוה נגה ליה ולא אתא. א"ל מאי טעמא נגה ליה למר. אמר ליה אדאוקימנא לאברהם ומשינא ידיה ומצלי ומגנינא ליה. וכן ליצחק. וכן ליעקב. ולוקמינהו בהדי הדדי. סברי תקפי ברחמי ומייתי ליה למשיח בלא זמניה. א"ל ויש דוגמתן בעולם הזה. אמר ליה איכא ר'

except R. Chiya's carriage, which ascends and descends of its own accord.' But unable to control my desire, I gazed upon it, whereas two fiery streams issued forth, smote and blinded me in one eye. The following day I went and prostrated myself upon his grave, crying out, 'It is your *Baraisa* that I study!' and I was healed."

⁷⁵ The *talmid* is not named, though conversant with Eliyahu.

⁷⁶ Rambam says (*Moreh HaNevochim* 2:41-42) that general prophecy is viewed as coming through *malachim* (filtered through the natural forces within nature), while Moshe's is directly from G-d. R. Chiya as well saw directly intuitively into G-d's creation.

⁷⁷ **הביב** means "beloved."

⁷⁸ This is the simplest rendering of the *mikra* in *parashas Shemini*.

חייא ובניו. גזר רבי תעניתא. אחתינהו לר' חייא ובניו. אמר משיב הרוח, ונשבה זיקא. אמר מוריד הגשם ואתא מיטרא. כי מטא למימר מחיה המתים רגש עלמא. אמרי ברקיעא מאן גלי רזיא בעלמא. אמרי אליהו. אתיהו לאליהו מחיהו שתין פולסי דנורא. אתא אידמי להו כדובא דנורא. על בינייהו וטרדינהו.⁷⁹

Rebbe wishes to bring Mashiach and thus the precursor, Eliyahu, is always on his mind. Rosh Chodesh, התחדשות (renewal), is associated with David and Mashiach ben David.⁸⁰ Eliyahu must go through the three stages of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov to bring Mashiach and Rebbe sees that because of this, time is dragging on. He wishes to speed up the process.⁸¹ The attempt is possible because R. Chiya and his sons embody the three elements of the *Avos*. But Rebbe's use of them is via the mechanism of *tefillah* and *taanis*⁸² rather than the activism of REbS. As we have noted above, Rambam says Eliyahu preceding Mashiach refers to the return of prophecy, and the actions of these three have been triggered by their prophetic abilities—symbolized as this interaction with Eliyahu. This prophetic insight triggers the *taanis* of R. Chiya coupled with the yearnings of the people to spur the *Geulah*, and the blessings of משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם are fulfilled. But despite the yearning, the common people were not ready, though the greatest amongst them were. Thus, the prayers triggered actions of confusion and the project fails. Perhaps this is the confusion over Zionist visions.

⁷⁹ Eliyahu would frequent Rebbe's academy. One day—it was New Moon—he was waiting for him, but he failed to come. Said he to him [the next day]: “Why did you delay?” He replied: “[I had to wait] until I woke Avraham, washed his hands, and he prayed and I put him to rest again; likewise to Yitzchak and Yaakov.” “But why not wake them together?” “I feared that they would wax strong in prayer and bring Mashiach before his time.” “And is their like to be found in this world?” he asked. “There is R. Chiya and his sons,” he replied. Thereupon Rebbe proclaimed a fast, and R. Chiya and his sons were bidden to descend [to the reading desk]. As he [R. Chiya] exclaimed, “He causes the wind to blow,” a wind blew; he proceeded, “he causes the rain to descend,” whereat the rain descended. When he was about to say, “He awakens the dead,” the universe trembled, [and] in Heaven it was asked, “Who has revealed our secret to the world?” “Eliyahu,” they replied. Eliyahu was therefore brought and smitten with sixty flaming lashes; so, he went, disguised himself as a fiery bear, entered among them and scattered them.

⁸⁰ See Nachman Levine's “David Melech Yisrael Chai VeKayam,” *Hakirah* 28.

⁸¹ Here the goal of *Geulah* is described as תחיית המתים.

⁸² Which leads to *Teshuvah*. See *Hilchos Taanis* 1:1-4.

Shmuel the Chacham

שמואל ירחינאה אסייה דרבי הוה. חלש רבי בעיניה. א"ל אימלי לך סמא. א"ל לא יכילנא. אשטר לך משטר. [א"ל] לא יכילנא. הוה מוטיב ליה בגובתא דסמני תותי בי סדיה ואיתסי. הוה קא מצטער רבי למסמכיה, ולא הוה מסתייעא מילתא. א"ל לא לצטער מר. לדידי חזי לי סיפרא דאדם הראשון וכתיב ביה שמואל ירחינאה חכים יתקרי, ורבי לא יתקרי. ואסו דרבי על ידו תהא. רבי ור' נתן סוף משנה, רב אשי ורבינא סוף הוראה. וסימנך, עד אבוא אל מקדשי אל אבינה לאחריתם.⁸³

Rebbe could not give *semichah* to Shmuel because he was known as Shmuel the astronomer.⁸⁴ Shmuel accepts this, seeing that the Divine plan in Creation was that he be known as Shmuel the *Chacham*, and, indeed, the title Rabbi would not be given. Rambam says the name *Chacham* refers to understanding without the *mesorah*⁸⁵ what *Chazal* had known by *mesorah*, understanding via logic why the Torah is true. Shmuel would heal Rebbe and make the Mishnah possible. His contribution to Torah was wisdom that came from the outside, from the understanding of nature and scientific principles that explained what the Torah meant. He was to be the cure for the lost wisdom that Rebbe did not possess, in order to explain the reasons behind some of the Mishnah.⁸⁶ This is a continuation of the scientific explorations of R. Chiya and *מלאו הארץ וכבשוה*.

The passage ends with recounting the final stages of the structuring of the Talmud. Shmuel, whose knowledge imparted to Rebbe was so integral to the structuring of the Mishnah, also saw all the way to the end of the process of development of Torah with the full utilization of *בינה* in analysis and the clarification of the concepts of *קדושה* that are embodied in the Talmud.⁸⁷

⁸³ Shmuel Yarchina'ah was Rebbe's physician. Now, Rebbe having contracted an eye disease, Shmuel offered to bathe it with a lotion, but he said, "I cannot bear it." "Then I will apply an ointment to it," he said. "This too I cannot bear," he objected. So he placed a phial of chemicals under his pillow, and he was healed. Rebbe was most anxious to ordain him, but the opportunity was lacking. "Let it not grieve you," he said. "I have seen the Book of Adam, in which is written, 'Shmuel Yarchina'ah shall be called 'Sage,' but not 'Rabbi,' and Rebbe's healing shall come through him." Rebbe and R. Nassan conclude the Mishnah, R. Ashi and Rabina conclude [authentic] teaching, and a sign thereof is the verse, *Until I went to the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*"

⁸⁴ The title *ירחינאה* is not used elsewhere for Shmuel.

⁸⁵ *Moreh HaNevuchim* 3:54.

⁸⁶ Rambam says in *Hilchos Kiddush HaChodesh* 17:24 that the tribe of Yissachar had a *mesorah* of the wisdom of astronomy that was lost. In monetary matters apparently Shmuel mastered economics. *Halachah k'Shmuel b'dinei*.

⁸⁷ As the passage ends with *מקדשי אל אבינה לאחריתם*.

Torah in Galus

אמר רב כהנא אשתעי לי רב חמא בר ברתיה דחסא, רבה בר נחמני אגב שמדא נח נפשיה. אכלו ביה קורצא בי מלכא. אמרו איכא חד גברא ביהודאי דקא מבטל תריסר אלפי גברי מישראל, ירחא בקייטא וירחא בסתוא, מכרגא דמלכא. שדרו פריסתקא דמלכא בתריה ולא אשכחיה. ערק ואזל מפומבדיתא לאקרא, מאקרא לאגמא, ומאגמא לשחין, ומשחין לצריפא, ומצריפא לעינא דמים, ומעינא דמים לפומבדיתא. בפומבדיתא אשכחיה. איקלע פריסתקא דמלכא לההוא אושפיזא דרבה. קריבו תכא קמיה ואשקוהו תרי כסי, ודליוה לתכא מקמיה. הדר פרצופיה לאחוריה. אמרו ליה מאי נעביד ליה גברא דמלכא הוא. אמר להו קריבו תכא לקמיה ואשקוהו חד כסא. ודליוה לתכא מקמיה ולתסי. עבדו ליה הכי ואתסי. אמר מידע ידענא דגברא דקא בעינא הכא הוא. בחיש אבתריה ואשכחיה. אמר אזלינא מהא אי מקטל קטלו לההוא גברא לא מגלינא, ואי נגידי מנגדין ליה מגלינא. אתיוהו לקמיה, עייליה לאדרונא וטרקיה לבבא באנפיה. בעא רחמי פרק אשיתא. ערק ואזיל לאגמא. הוה יתיב אגירדא דדקולא וקא גריס. קא מיפלגי במתיבתא דרקיעא, אם בהרת קודמת לשער לבן טמא ואם שער לבן קודם לבהרת טהור. ספק, הקב"ה אומר טהור וכולהו מתיבתא דרקיעא אמרי טמא. ואמרי מאן נוכח. נוכח רבה בר נחמני. דאמר רבה בר נחמני אני יחיד בנגעים, אני יחיד באהלות. שדרו שליחא בתריה. לא הוה מצי מלאך המות למקרב ליה, מדלא הוה קא פסיק פומיה מגרסיה. אדהכי נשב זיקא ואויש ביני קני. סבר גונדא דפרשי הוא. אמר תינח נפשיה דההוא גברא ולא ימסר בידא דמלכותא. כי הוה קא ניחא נפשיה אמר טהור טהור. יצאת בת קול ואמרה אשריך רבה בר נחמני שגופך טהור ויצאתה נשמתך בטהור.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ R. Kahana said: R. Chama, the son of the daughter of Chassa, related to me [that] Rabbah b. Nachmani died through persecution, information having been laid against him to the State. Said they [the informers]: There is an Israelite who keeps back twelve thousand Israelites from the payment of the royal poll-tax one month in summer and one in winter. Thereupon a royal officer was sent for him, but did not find him. He [Rabbah] then fled from Pumbedisa to Akra, from Akra to Agama, from Agama to Sahin, from Sahin to Zarifa, from Zarifa to Ena Damim, and thence back to Pumbedisa. In Pumbedisa he found him; for the royal officer chanced to visit the same inn where Rabbah [was hiding]. Now, they placed a tray before him [the royal officer], gave him two glasses of liquor, and then removed the tray; whereupon his face was turned backward [by demons]. "What shall we do with him?" said they [the inn attendants] to him [Rabbah]; "he is a royal officer." "Offer him the tray again," he replied, "and let him drink another goblet; then remove the tray, and he will recover." They did so, and he recovered. "I know," said he, "that the man whom I require is here"; he searched for and found him. He then said, "I will depart from here; if I am slain, I will not disclose [his whereabouts]; but if tortured, I will." He was then brought before him, and he led him into a chamber and locked the door upon him [to keep him there as a prisoner]. But he [Rabbah] prayed, whereupon the wall fell down, and he fled to Agama; there he sat upon the trunk of a [fallen] palm and

After discussing the יסורין of R. Elazar ben Shimon and Rebbe we see the difficult life of Rabbah. He is pursued by the government for wasting the productivity of the Jewish People with Torah. Unlike the cooperation of REbS, here clearly the government has no tolerance for Torah. When this is the attitude of the secular world, there is no dealing with them and no escape from persecution—and he flees from the Torah centers ultimately to the swamps and shantytowns and to stages of increasing physical suffering,⁸⁹ but the pursuit continues. There is zero tolerance of Torah. At the end he returns to Pumbedisa—the enemies of Torah must be fought in the Torah centers—in the midst of society. Yet, when Rabbah has the opportunity to watch his pursuer die, he saves him. And in so doing he is captured. As is true of his pursuer, there is a recognition amongst the gentiles that the Torah is the remedy they need and still they are committed to its eradication. The Torah of Rabbah survives as he ends his life learning alone under a tree. His experience is that of Israel in *galus*.

Rabbah, *Sfeko Tahor*

The closing *sugyah* deals with uncertainty. We began with the doubts and uncertainty of REbS and now as we draw to the end, Rabbah is consulted as to how to deal with it. The *machlokes* is between those who had in this world come to the conclusion that when uncertain, one should judge one's afflictions and those of the world, צרעת, leprosy, as טמא.

That is the halachah of *Chazal*, that ספק דאורייתא לחומרא, but Rambam explains that in fact מן התורה, the Torah law, is that ספק דאורייתא לקולא,⁹⁰ all cases are to be judged leniently, and the ruling to treat Torah laws stringently is of a Rabbinic nature. Thus, the Creator tells us that He Himself

studied. Now, they were disputing in the Heavenly Academy thus: If the bright spot preceded the white hair, he is unclean; if the reverse, he is clean. If [the order is] in doubt, the Holy One, blessed be He, ruled, He is clean; while the entire Heavenly Academy maintained, He is unclean. Who shall decide it? said they, Rabbah b. Nachmani; for he said, I am pre-eminent in the laws of leprosy and tents. A messenger was sent for him, but the Angel of Death could not approach him, because he did not interrupt his studies [even for a moment]. In the meantime, a wind blew and caused a rustling in the bushes, when he imagined it to be a troop of soldiers. "Let me die," he exclaimed, "rather than be delivered into the hands of the State." As he was dying, he exclaimed, "Clean, clean!" when a Heavenly Voice cried out, "Happy are you, O Rabbah b. Nachmani, whose body is pure and whose soul had departed in purity!"

⁸⁹ Names like שחין עינא דמים are clearly references to times of persecution.

⁹⁰ הלכות טומאת מת ט:יב.

judges man with the benefit of the doubt. But interestingly, in this world Rabbah says that actually in this case the halachah is ספקו לחומרא.⁹¹

Rabbah was uncertain if he had done the right thing in curing the foreign officer, as it ended up in his own death. He knows that there is a war being waged against the Torah, so why did he save the officer? He concluded that Torah alone would be the salvation. He judged the world as essentially טהור waiting ultimately to be saved by the Torah.

Despite all that happened, he claimed טהור. Perhaps the *psak* of Rabbah suggests that he was wrong.

נפל פתקא מרקייעא בפומבדיתא, רבה בר נחמני נתבקש בישיבה של מעלה. נפקו אביי ורבא וכולהו רבנן לאיעסוקי ביה. לא הוו ידעי דוכתיה. אזלו לאגמא חזו צפרי דמטללי וקיימי. אמרי שמע מינה התם הוא. ספדוהו תלתא יומי ותלתא לילותא. נפל פתקא כל הפורש יהא בנידוי. ספדוהו שבעה יומי. נפל פתקא לכו לביתכם לשלום. ההוא יומא דנח נפשיה דלייה זעפא ודרי לההוא טייעא כי רכיב גמלא מהאי גיסא דנהר פפא, ושדייה בהך גיסא. אמר מאי האי. אמרי ליה נח נפשיה דרבה בר נחמני. אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם כולי עלמא דידך הוא ורבה בר נחמני דידך. את דרבה ורבה דידך, אמאי קא מחרבת ליה לעלמא. נח זעפא.⁹²

The world was seemingly kept alive because of Rabbah, who would not stop learning and teaching and then, at the end, just learned by himself. Even the Arab merchant would be destroyed without his Torah. The world, upon realizing that this Torah supports the existence of society, will be saved.

⁹¹ יראה לי שטומאתו מספק but see הלכות טומאת צרעת ב: ט.

⁹² A missive fell from Heaven in Pumbedisa [upon which was written,] “Rabbah b. Nachmani has been summoned by the Heavenly Academy.” So Abaye and Raba and all the scholars went forth to attend on him [at his burial], but they did not know his whereabouts. They went to Agama and saw birds stationed there and overshadowing it [to give protection]. “This,” said they, “proves that he is there.” They bewailed him for three days and three nights; but there fell a missive from Heaven, “He who [will now] hold aloof [from the lamentations] shall be under a ban.” So, they bewailed him for seven days, and then there fell a missive from Heaven, “Return in peace to your homes.” On the day that he died a hurricane lifted an Arab who was riding a camel and transported him from one bank of the River Papa to the other. “What does this portend?” he exclaimed. — “Rabbah b. Nachmani has died,” he was told. “Sovereign of the Universe!” he cried out. “The whole world is Yours, and Rabbah b. Nachmani too is Yours. You are [the Friend] of Rabbah, and Rabbah is Yours; why do You destroy the world on his account!” Thereupon the storm subsided.

Geulah Lies Within Nature

רבי שמעון בן חלפתא בעל בשר הוה. יומא חד הוה חמימא ליה. הוה סליק וייתיב
אשינא דטורא. אמר לה לברתיה, בתי הניפי עלי במניפא ואני אתן לך ככרין
דנרד. אדהכי נשבא זיקא. אמר כמה ככרין דנרד למרי דיכי.⁹³

We end with R. Shimon the brother of R. Yosse who was even greater than Chiya in preserving the Torah. We connect back to REbS and R. Yishmael, the two “fat” activist Rabbis who were willing to engage other governments and work for destroying evil everywhere. He too is a powerhouse of masculinity.⁹⁴ Yet at the end he is hot and needs the feminine breeze from his daughter. Then he acknowledges that G-d is the source of all salvation. Mashiach will arrive in the natural order. ❧

⁹³ R. Shimon b. Chalafta was a fat man. One day, feeling hot, he climbed up, sat on a mountain boulder, and said to his daughter, “Daughter, fan me with a fan, and I will give you bundles of spikenard.” Just then, however, a breeze arose, whereat he observed, “How many bundles of spikenard [do I owe] to the Master of the [breeze]?”

⁹⁴ *Tosafos* points out that his fatness connects back to the other fat *tannaim* two *dappim* back—as the *sugyah* is all connected.