

“Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned”

The Incredible Connection between Avraham Avinu’s Feast and the Feast HKB”H Will Make for the Tzaddikim in the Future

In this week’s parsha, parshas Vayeira, we read (Bereishis 21, 8): **“ויגדל הילד ויעש אברהם משתה גדול ביום הגמל את יצחק”** — **the child grew and was weaned; and Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned.** Tosafos (Shabbas 103a) write in the name of Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (29) that the feast took place on the day Avraham circumcised his eight-day-old son, Yitzchak. This fact is alluded to in the passuk as follows: The word **הגמל** can be broken down to the letters **הגמל**. The word **מל** means “he circumcised”; the numerical value of the letters **הג** equals eight (5+3), indicating that he performed this ritual on the eighth day. It is curious, however, that the passuk states: **“ויגדל הילד ויעש אברהם משתה גדול”** — **“the child grew and was weaned”** with regards to an eight-day-old infant.

Additionally, we should explain a curiosity found in the Midrash (B.R. 53, 10): **“ויעש אברהם משתה גדול, רבי יודא בר רבי סימון אומר, גדול עולמים היה”** — **“שם”**. Rabbi Yuda the son of Rabbi Simon states that HKB”H was present at the great feast Avraham made in honor of his son; he refers to HKB”H as **“גדול עולמים”** — the “gadol” of the universe. He sees the words of the passuk: **“משתה גדול”** as an allusion to this fact. We must endeavor to explain why, of all HKB”H’s appellations, he is referred to in this Midrash as **“גדול עולמים”** regarding His participation in this feast.

We will begin illuminating the matter by referring to an amazing elucidation by Chazal regarding this passuk in the Gemara (Pesachim 119b):

“מאי דכתיב ויגדל הילד ויעש אברהם משתה גדול” — **“לעשות סעודה לצדיקים ביום שיגמל חסדו לזרעו של יצחק, לאחר שאוכלים ושותים נותנים לו לאברהם אבינו כוס של ברכה לברך, ואומר להן איני מברך שיצא ממני ישמעאל. אומר לו ליצחק טול וברך, אומר להן איני מברך שיצא ממני עשו.”**

אומר לו ליעקב טול וברך, אומר להם איני מברך שנשאתי שתי אחיות בחייה שעתידה תורה לאוסרן עלי. אומר לו למשה טול וברך, אומר להם איני מברך שלא זכיתי ליכנס לארץ ישראל לא בחיי ולא במותי. אומר לו ליהושע טול וברך, אומר להן איני מברך שלא זכיתי לבן... אומר לו לדוד טול וברך, אומר להן אני אברך ולי נאה לברך, שנאמר (תהלים קטז-יג) כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא.”

What is the meaning of the passuk: **“And the child grew and was weaned”**? In the future, HKB”H will make a feast for

the tzaddikim on the day that He bestows His kindness on the offspring of Yitzchak. After they eat and drink, they will give the cup of berachah [Birkas HaMazon] to Avraham Avinu to recite the berachah. He will say to them, **“I cannot recite the berachah, because Yishmael came from me. He will then say to Yitzchak, “Take the cup and recite the berachah.” He will respond, “I cannot recite the berachah, because Eisav came from me.”**

He will then say to Yaakov, **“Take the cup and recite the berachah.” He will respond to them, “I cannot recite the berachah, because I married two sisters in their lifetimes — whom the Torah will prohibit upon me in the future. He will say to Moshe, “Take the cup and recite the berachah.” He will respond to them, “I cannot recite the berachah, because I was not privileged to enter Eretz Yisrael, neither in my lifetime nor in my death. He will say to Yehoshua, “Take the cup and recite the berachah.” He will respond to them, “I cannot recite the berachah, because I did not merit having a son . . . He will say to David, “Take the cup and recite the berachah.” He will respond to them, “I will recite the berachah, and it is fitting for me to recite the berachah — as it states (Tehillim 116, 13): “כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא” — “I shall raise the cup of salvations, and the name of Hashem I shall invoke.”**

This passage contains several surprising statements; it would be a tremendous mitzvah to reconcile them:

(1) Here in parshas Vayeira, the passuk depicts the great feast Avraham Avinu made on the eighth day after Yitzchak’s birth — when he performed the mitzvah of milah on his behalf. So, what is the connection between the feast in honor of Yitzchak’s bris milah and the future feast that HKB”H will make for Yisrael at the time of the future geulah? At first glance, these two feasts are entirely unconnected.

(2) We must endeavor to explain the precise language employed by the Gemara: **“לעשות סעודה לצדיקים ביום שיגמל חסדו לזרעו של יצחק”** — **“in the future, HKB”H will make a feast for**

the tzaddikim on the day that He bestows His kindness on the offspring of Yitzchak. After all, Yisrael are the offspring of all three holy Avos — Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov — as the Gemara teaches explicitly (Berachos 16b): **“אין קורין אבות אלא לשלשה” — only three are referred to as Avos.** We, the holy people descended from them, are referred to as Yisrael — named after Yaakov Avinu, the elite of the Avos, whom HKB”H called Yisrael. That being the case, why did the author of this passage associate the feast that HKB”H will make in the future with the offspring of Yitzchak specifically?

(3) Above all, it is a mitzvah to reconcile that which has perplexed all of the commentaries. After seeing that all of his illustrious predecessors — the three holy Avos and its two famous leaders — all declined the honor of reciting the berachah — due to personal flaws they attributed to themselves — how did David HaMelech boldly accept the honor immediately without any hesitation with the proclamation: **“I will recite the berachah, and it is fitting for me to recite the berachah”?** This is especially surprising in light of David HaMelech’s extreme humility. As our blessed sages point out (Chullin 89a), he said of himself (Tehillim 22, 7): **“ואנכי תולעת ולא” — but I am a worm and not a man, scorn of humanity, despised of people.** And regarding his transgressions, he confesses (ibid. 51, 5): **“כי פשעי אני אדע וחטאתי נגדי תמיד” — for my transgressions I recognize, and my sin is before me always.**

Le’asid La’vo Yitzchak Avinu Will Profess Yisrael’s Merit

We shall begin deciphering the sages’ riddles by referring to what the great author of the Ben Ish Chai writes in his commentary Ben Yehoyada on the allegories found in the Talmud (Pesachim ibid.). He reconciles very nicely the Gemara’s statement that HKB”H will make a feast in the future for the tzaddikim **“on the day that He bestows His kindness on the offspring of Yitzchak.”** He bases his explanation on another extraordinary passage in the Gemara. There it states that in the future, of all three of the holy Avos, it will specifically be Yitzchak Avinu who will stand up for the merit of Yisrael. Yitzchak Avinu will save them from being exterminated for their transgressions. Here is the passage from the Gemara (Shabbas 89b):

“לעתיד לבוא יאמר לו הקב”ה לאברהם בניך חטא לי, אמר [אברהם] לפניו רבונן של עולם ימחו על קדושת שמך, אמר [הקב”ה], אימר ליה ליעקב [אומר לו ליעקב] דהוה ליה צער גידול בנים [שהיה לו צער גידול בנים], אפשר דבעי רחמי עליהו [אולי יבקש עליהם רחמים], אמר ליה [הקב”ה ליעקב] בניך חטא, אמר [יעקב] לפניו רבונן של עולם ימחו על קדושת שמך, אמר [הקב”ה] לא בסבי טעמא ולא בדרדקי עצה, [לא באברהם הזקן טעם, ולא ביעקב הקטן עצה, איך להציל את ישראל].”

אמר לו [הקב”ה] ליצחק בניך חטא לי, אמר לפניו רבונן של עולם בני ולא בניך, בשעה שהקדימו לפניך נעשה לנשמת קראת להם בני בכורי, עכשיו בני ולא בניך. ועוד כמה חטא, כמה שנותיו של אדם שבעים שנה, דל עשרין דלא ענשת עליהו, פשו להו חמשי [תנכה

עשרים שנה הראשונות שאין אתה מעניש עליהם, נשאר חמשים שנה], דל כ”ה דלילותא, פשו להו כ”ה, [תנכה כ”ה שנה של הלילות שהם זמן של שינה, נשאר רק כ”ה שנה], דל תרתי סרי ופלגא דצלויי ומיכל ודבית הכסא, פשו להו תרתי סרי ופלגא [תנכה י”ב שנה ומחצה שהם זמנים של תפלה אכילה ובית הכסא, נשאר רק י”ב שנה ומחצה], אם אתה סובל את כולם מוטב, ואם לאו פלגא עלי ופלגא עליך, ואם תמצא לומר כולם עלי, הא קריבית נפשי קמך.”

Le’asid la’vo, HKB”H will say to Avraham, **“Your children have sinned against Me.”** He will respond to Him, **“Master of the Universe, let them be wiped out for the sake of the kedushah of Your name.”** Hashem will say to Himself: **“I will speak to Yaakov, since he experienced pain in raising his children. Perhaps he will ask Me to have mercy upon them.”** So, He will say to Yaakov, **“Your children have sinned.”** He will respond to Him, **“Master of the Universe, let them be wiped out for the sake of the kedushah of Your name.”** Hashem will say, **“There is neither reason among the elders nor counsel among the youth.”**

So, Hashem will say to Yitzchak, **“Your children have sinned against Me.”** He will respond to Him, **“Master of the Universe, are they my children and not Your children?! When they preceded the statement ‘na’aseh’ before ‘nishma,’ You called them: ‘My son, My firstborn.’ Now, they are my children and not Your children?! Furthermore, how much have they sinned? How many are a man’s years? Seventy years. Deduct twenty, since You do not punish for them. This leaves fifty. Deduct twenty-five, which are nights. This leaves twenty-five. Deduct twelve and a half for praying, eating and going to the Bathroom. Twelve and a half remain. If You will tolerate them all, fine; and if not, then half should be on me and half on You. And if You wish to say that all of them should be on me, behold! I have already sacrificed myself before You.”** In other words, Yitzchak states that he is willing to shoulder all of their sins in the merit of the fact that he offered himself to Hashem during the akeidah.

For this reason, our sages state specifically: **“In the future, HKB”H will make a feast for the tzaddikim on the day that He bestows His kindness on the offspring of Yitzchak.”** They are alluding to the fact that at the time of the future geulah, Yisrael will be judged and acquitted solely on the basis of Yitzchak Avinu’s defense: **“פלגא עלי ופלגא עליך” -- half should be on me and half on You.** This concludes his explanation. I would like to humbly add to the words of the Ben Yehoyada by explaining the connection between the feast that Avraham made on the day of Yitzchak’s bris milah and the feast that HKB”H will make for the tzaddikim Le’asid la’vo.

Specifically Yitzchak Whose Attribute Is “Din” Will Defend Yisrael

Let us present the comments of the Shela hakadosh (Vayeirah) concerning the surprising fact that neither Avraham Avinu

— whose attribute is “chesed” — nor Yaakov Avinu — whose attribute is “rachamim” — will find any grounds to defend Yisrael. Incredibly, both of them will demand that Yisrael pay for their sins, declaring unequivocally: **“ימחו על קדושת שמך” -- let them be wiped out for the sake of the kedushah of Your name.** In stark contrast, Yitzchak Avinu, whose attribute is “din,” in keeping with the designation of (Bereishis 31, 42): **“מחד יצחק” — the Dread of Yitzchak** — he, specifically, will defend Yisrael and save them from the impact and severity of the judgment.

The Shela relies on Rashi’s famous comment (Bereishis 1, 1): **“בראשית ברא אלקים, ולא אמר ברא ה’, שבתחילה עלה במחשבה לבראותו במדת הדין, וראה שאין העולם מתקיים, והקדים מדת הרחמים ושתפה למדת הדין, והיינו.”** The first passuk of the Torah employs the name Elokim rather than Hashem; this indicates that initially, He thought to create the world based on the attribute of “din”; however, He saw that the world could not live up to this standard and continue to exist; therefore, He gave precedence to the attribute of “rachamim,” and joined it to the attribute of “din.”

Let us provide an explanation. HKB”H thought to create the world based on “din,” because that is the attribute that will prevail Le’asid la’vo. When the world finally achieves a state of tikun, after Yisrael will have endured the terrible suffering of all of the exiles, HKB”H will conduct His world based on the attribute of “din.” Hence, HKB”H will orchestrate matters so that Yisrael will be vindicated by means of Yitzchak’s attribute of “din,” rather than the attributes of “chesed” or “rachamim” associated with Avraham and Yaakov. This will demonstrate that even from the aspect of “din,” Yisrael will deserve to be forgiven completely — after all that they endured during the exiles. The Shela concludes his words of kedushah as follows:

“נמצא מדת הדין הוא בעצם רחמים גדולים. וזהו ענין יצחק בן אברהם, כי אברהם מדת החסד ויצחק מדת הדין המדוקדק, ואדרבא יפה כח הבן מכה האב, כי מדת הדין הזה גורם בעצם הרחמים, ועומד הקב”ה מכסא דין ויושב על כסא הרחמים, ואז יהיה שם יצחק המורה [בגלות] על הדין ק”ץ ח”י כמו שכתב הזוהר (ח”א רנב); ירמוז [לעתיד לבוא] יצחק על צחוק ושמחה, וזה סוד שם ישחק.”

It turns out that the attribute of “din” is in truth tremendous mercy (“rachamim”). This is the significance of the designation **“Yitzchak the son of Avraham.”** For Avraham represents the attribute of “chesed”; while Yitzchak represents the attribute of exacting “din.” In fact, the strength of the son exceeds that of the father, because the attribute of “din” actually brings about the reality of “rachamim.” HKB”H rises from the throne of “din” and sits down on the throne of “rachamim.” Then the name יצחק, which during galut, indicates “din” (judgment), ק”ץ ח”י (the letters ק”ץ can be rearranged to form these two words which mean: the

end of life) ... **will in the future allude to laughter and joy; this is the secret underlying the name ישחק** (meaning: he will laugh).

This provides us with a very nice explanation for Sarah’s remark when Yitzchak is born (Bereishis 21, 6): **“ותאמר שרה צחוק עשה לי אלקים — Sarah said, “G-d has made laughter for me; whoever hears will laugh for me.”** With her prophetic powers, she foresaw that specifically Yitzchak, representing the attribute of “din,” would vindicate Yisrael Le’asid la’vo. Therefore, she remarks: **“צחוק עשה לי אלקים”** — she employs the name Elokim, the source of Yitzchak’s attribute of “din.” Elokim specifically made me laughter and joy, providing for Yisrael’s vindication in the future based on Yitzchak’s attribute of “din”; **“כל השומע יצחק לי”** — anyone who hears that Yitzchak specifically, whose attribute is “din,” will defend and exonerate Yisrael, will laugh and rejoice that I gave birth to such a son.

HKB”H Will Make a Thanksgiving Feast in Honor of Yisrael’s Salvation in the Merit of Yitzchak

Let us now propose a tremendous chiddush. The Gemara’s statement: **“עתיד הקב”ה לעשות סעודה לצדיקים ביום שיגמול חסדו לזרעו של יצחק”** — **in the future, HKB”H will make a feast for the tzaddikim, on the day that He will bestow His kindness on the offspring of Yitzchak** — alludes to the fact that the feast HKB”H will make in the future will be a thanksgiving feast celebrating Yisrael’s salvation from the decree of annihilation. As we have learned, Avraham and Yaakov, representing the attributes of “chesed” and “rachamim,” will both announce: **“ימחו על קדושת שמך” — let them be wiped out for the sake of the kedushah of Your name.** Only because of Yitzchak Avinu’s compelling arguments, representing the attribute of “din,” will Yisrael be spared. In celebration of this incredible, joyous occasion, HKB”H will make a thanksgiving feast for the tzaddikim in the future, on the day that He will bestow His “chesed” **“to the offspring of Yitzchak.”**

Based on this fact, we can begin to appreciate why our blessed sages associated this thanksgiving feast with the passuk in this week’s parsha: **“ויעש אברהם משתה גדול ביום הגמול את יצחק” — Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned.** They wanted to teach us that Avraham Avinu saw via “ruach hakodesh” that Yitzchak his son, embodying the attribute of “din,” was destined to defend Yisrael and save them from extermination. In this merit, HKB”H will make a thanksgiving feast for the tzaddikim. Therefore, as a precedent in preparation for that feast in the future, Avraham made a great feast serving as a symbolic gesture.

In this manner, we can explain why Avraham made that great feast in honor of the future feast: **“on the day Yitzchak was weaned.”** We

have learned from the Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer that the passuk refers to the day Yitzchak was circumcised -- ה"ג מל — at eight days of age. I came across an amazing idea in the sacred sefer Bris Kehunas Olam. He explains why HKB"H arranged for Yitzchak Avinu to be the first Jew in history to fulfill the mitzvah of milah at the age of eight days old.

He bases his explanation on the fact explained in the Arizal's Shaar HaMitzvot that by fulfilling the mitzvah of milah, the "chasadim" — divine favors — are revealed. Therefore, HKB"H arranged for Yitzchak Avinu — representing the attribute of "din," characterized as "Pachad Yitzchak" — to have his bris milah performed by Avraham — representing the attribute of "chesed" — when he was eight days old. This was intended to mitigate the element of "din" he embodied and transform it into "chesed." This is alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word די"ן is 64 (ס"ד). When we add to this the letter ה' — with a numerical value of eight, corresponding to the eight days of milah — they combine to form the word חס"ד. This concludes his remarks.

In this manner, we can justify very nicely the statement in the passuk: **“וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּנְמַל וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם מִשְׁתֵּה גָדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַגְּמֹל אֶת יִצְחָק”** -- **the child grew and was weaned; and Avraham made a great feast on the day Yitzchak was weaned.** We wondered how the passuk can say of an eight-day-old infant that he grew up and was weaned. Yet, it is well known that the attribute of "chesed" is called “גדולה”, as it is written (Divrei HaYamim I 29, 11): **לִךְ ה' הַגְּדוּלָּה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאָרָה** — **Yours, O Hashem, is the greatness (“גדולה”), the might, the glory, the triumph, and the splendor.**

Accordingly, we can interpret the passuk: **“וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד”** — as follows: Although Yitzchak's neshamah emanates from “din,” nevertheless, he became “גדול” (from the same root as “גדולה”) — implying that the severity of his “din” was diminished and tended toward “chesed.” Thus, the passuk continues: **“וַיִּנְמַל”** — he was weaned from the severe aspect of “din” that he was born with. Then the passuk explains how this tremendous transformation occurred: **“בְּיוֹם הַגְּמֹל אֶת יִצְחָק”** — on the day Avraham circumcised his eight-day-old son -- ה"ג מל — the letter ה' (8) joined with די"ן, which equals חס"ד to form חס"ד, “chesed.”

This explains very nicely why Avraham made a great feast on the day he circumcised his eight-day-old son Yitzchak and, in the process, diminished the severity of “din” within him toward “chesed.” Through “ruach hakodesh,” Avraham understood that as a result of this transformation in Yitzchak's element of “din,” he was destined to defend Yisrael and save them from annihilation. In honor of that event, HKB"H will make a thanksgiving feast for the tzaddikim Le'asid la'vo. In preparation for that feast, a symbolic gesture — “poel dimyoni” — was necessary; thus: **וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם**

מִשְׁתֵּה גָדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַגְּמֹל אֶת יִצְחָק. Therefore, we find the elucidation in the Gemara regarding this passuk: **“עֲתִיד הַקֵּב” לַעֲשׂוֹת סְעוּדָה לְצַדִּיקִים בְּיוֹם שִׁיגְמַל חֲסִדוֹ לְזַרְעוֹ שֶׁל יִצְחָק”**.

We can now appreciate the depth of the sages' statement in the Midrash: **“וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם מִשְׁתֵּה גָדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַגְּמֹל אֶת יִצְחָק”** — the “Gadol of the Universe was there at Avraham's feast. As a result of Yitzchak's bris on his eighth day of life, the “din” within him was mitigated and transformed into “chesed” — as reflected by the term “gadol.” Therefore, HKB"H appeared, as it were, at this feast with His attribute of “chesed,” as described by the appellation “Gadol of the Universe,” in His full glory. This entire ceremony constituted a preparation for the thanksgiving feast that HKB"H will make for the tzaddikim in the future — when He will exonerate Yisrael as a result of Yitzchak Avinu's enormous “chesed.”

David Established the Pathway of Teshuvah

Let us continue our journey with the second part of our essay. At the conclusion of the feast HKB"H will make for the tzaddikim, each of the Avos, Moshe Rabeinu and Yehoshua will all be offered the honor of reciting the berachah of Birkas HaMazon over the cup. Each will refuse due to some personal flaw they find in themselves. Ultimately the cup of berachah will be offered to David: **“Take the cup and recite the berachah.” He will respond to them, “I will recite the berachah, and it is fitting for me to recite the berachah — as it states: “I shall raise the cup of salvations, and the name of Hashem I shall invoke.”** We have already discussed how amazing and surprising David's response is. David's humility is legendary. Yet, after the greatest luminaries in the history of the world, Yisrael's shepherds, refused the honor, how did David not even hesitate to accept the honor? Instead, he responds immediately: **“I will recite the berachah, and it is fitting for me to recite the berachah.”**

I was stirred by a wonderful thought, which I would like to submit before the King. I would like to justify David HaMelech's response — explaining why he accepted the honor of reciting the berachah over the cup immediately. In addition, David will express his joy at doing so with the proclamation: **“I will recite the berachah, and it is fitting for me to recite the berachah.”** We shall refer to what we have learned in the Gemara (A.Z. 4b):

“לֹא דוֹד רָאוּי לְאוֹתוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה [דְּבַת שֶׁבַע] דְּכִתִּיב (תְּהִלִּים קט-כב) וּלְבִי חָלַל בְּקִרְבִּי... אֲלֵא לֹמַר לֵךְ שֶׁאִם חָטָא יַחֲדִי אֹמְרִים לוֹ כִּלְךָ אֶצֶל יַחֲדִי... וְהֵינּוּ דְּרַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן, מֵאִי דְּכִתִּיב (שְׁמוּאֵל ב כג-א) נֶאֱמַר דּוֹד בֶּן יִשִּׁי וְנֶאֱמַר הַגִּבֹּר הוֹקֵם עַל, נֶאֱמַר דּוֹד בֶּן יִשִּׁי שֶׁהָקִים עוֹלָה שֶׁל תְּשׁוּבָה”.

David was not suited to perform that deed (with Bas Sheva), as it is written (Tehillim 109, 22): “And my heart has died

within me.” . . . This teaches you that if an individual sins, we tell him, “Go reflect upon the actions of another individual.” . . . And this is the message conveyed by that which Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: What is the significance of that which is written (Shmuel II 23, 1): “The words of David ben Yishai, the words of a man who established on high.” The passuk conveys that these are: “The words of David ben Yishai,” who established the pathway of teshuvah.

We can suggest a reason as to why HKB”H arranged that the mitzvah of teshuvah for an individual be revealed specifically via David HaMelech. For, we find in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishis 41) that Adam HaRishon gave David HaMelech seventy years of his life. Adam was supposed to have lived one thousand years; he gave David seventy years; 930 years remained to Adam.

The Arizal explains in Sefer HaLikutim (Ha’azinu) that David HaMelech was a gilgul of Adam HaRishon and provided a tikun for his sin. Therefore, he willingly gave David seventy years of his life so that he would be able to rectify the damage he had caused. Le’asid la’vo David himself will have the privilege of being the Melech HaMashiach. This is alluded to by the very name אד”ם which is an acronym for אדם דוד משיח. Here are his sacred words:

“ומה שכתב כי ביום אכלך מות תמות הוא מדבר בדוד המלך ע”ה, שלזה הסיבה היה ראוי להיות נפל וימת ביומו כי היה אדם עצמו, ולולי שנתן לו אדם הראשון השבעים שנה מימיו היה מת, ובהיות ששב בתשובה שלמה ותיקן מה שעיוות, לא די שלא מת אלא חי וקיים, כי דוד חי וקיים הוא.

ואפילו שינה לא היה יושן כי אם שתינו נשמי כשינת הסוס כדי שלא יטעום טעם מיתה, כי השינה היא אחת מששים במיתה, ועוד לא די זה אלא כי יהיה הפך מאדם הראשון, כי אדם הראשון הביא המות על כל העולם וכולם מתו, ועל ידי התיקון יבא דוד ויעשה משיח ויחיה כל המתים, כי זהו אד”ם אותיות אדם דוד משיח.”

When it is written: “On the day you eat of it, you will surely die,” it is referring to David HaMelech, a”h. It is for this reason that he was meant to be an abortus and die on that very day; because he was Adam himself. Had Adam HaRishon not given him seventy years of his life, he would have died. Since he performed complete teshuvah and rectified that which he had perverted, not only did he not die, but he lives on in perpetuity. For, David lives on.

And he did not even allow himself to sleep but sixty breaths, akin to the sleep of a horse, so that he would not be subjected to the taste of death. For, sleep is one sixtieth of death. Additionally, not just this, but he would be the opposite of Adam HaRishon. For, Adam HaRishon brought death to all of creation; and they all died. As a result of the tikun, David will come and will be made the Mashiach and will revive all of the dead. This is the significance of the name אד”ם; it is the letters of דוד משיח.

His statement that David HaMelech himself will be the Mashiach is actually explained in the Zohar hakadosh (Lech Lecha 82b): דוד מלכא — David HaMelech lives forever; and even during the times of the Melech HaMashiach, he will be king. Similarly, in the piyut for Hoshana Rabbah, Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir declares: איש צמח שמו הוא דוד בעצמו — a man has sprouted up; Tzemach is his name; he is David himself.

With this understanding, we can appreciate why HKB”H arranged for David HaMelech to establish the pathway of teshuvah. Let us refer to Rashi’s comment regarding the status of Adam HaRishon after the sin (Bereishis 2, 25): לא נתן בו יצר הרע, עד אכלו מן העץ ונכנס — the yetzer hara was not placed in him until he ate from the tree; then the yetzer hara entered his being. Thus we learn that as a consequence of the “Cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” the yetzer hara entered Adam and all the neshamos contained within him. Seeing as Adam HaRishon was responsible for the introduction of the deceitful yetzer into mankind, it was fitting that David HaMelech — the tikun and gilgul of Adam HaRishon — should establish the pathway of teshuvah, the tikun for all transgressions.

Furthermore, we have learned in the Gemara (Yoma 86b): גדולה תשובה שמביאה את הגאולה — teshuvah is so great that it leads to the geulah. The Rambam states (Hilchos Teshuvah 7, 5): אין ישראל נגאלין אלא בתשובה — Yisrael will only be redeemed through the process of teshuvah. Seeing as David HaMelech is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach, it was appropriate for him to demonstrate for Yisrael the mechanism of teshuvah and its benefits. For, in its merit, we will realize the final and ultimate geulah in the near future.

We can now appreciate and comprehend with joy David HaMelech’s extraordinary wisdom. He sees that the holy Avos and Moshe Rabeinu and Yehoshua are all honored ahead of him. Each of them declines the honor to recite the berachah, because of a delicate flaw each sees in himself. Finally, the cup of berachah is offered to David HaMelech. Due to his extreme humility, he is bewildered by this sequence of events. Why would HKB”H leave him to be the last one available to recite the berachah over the cup? If the sacred and mighty were unsuitable, what would entitle him — a man who had fallen prey to sin — to claim this honor?

This led him to a vital conclusion. He had established the pathway of teshuvah; in the merit of teshuvah, Yisrael will be deserving of the future geulah. Now, it states in the Gemara (Berachos 34b): מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדין — in the place that those who perform teshuvah stand, the thoroughly righteous do not stand. Therefore, HKB”H orchestrated that he should recite the berachah over the cup

— in order to demonstrate the power of “ba’alei teshuvah.” It is precisely for this reason that David HaMelech immediately accepts the honor and declares: **“I will recite the berachah, and it is fitting for me to recite the berachah.”** For, I sinned and I performed teshuvah. Clearly, HKB”H wants me to be his vehicle for revealing the power of “ba’alei teshuvah” and the superiority they have over the tzaddikim.

**“I shall raise the cup of salvations
and the name of Hashem I shall invoke”**

Incredibly, we can now comprehend how the Gemara proved that David HaMelech would make the berachah over the cup from his own statement: **“כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא”** -- **I shall raise the cup of salvations, and the name of Hashem I shall invoke.** We shall refer to what the Shela (Masechet Shevuos) presents in the name of his father by way of explaining Rashi’s comment cited above: **“בראשית ברא אלקים, ולא אמר ברא ה', שבתחילה עלה במחשבה לבראותו במדת הדין, וראה שאין העולם מתקיים והקדים מדת רחמים ושתפה למדת הדין. והיינו דכתיב ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים”** The first passuk of the Torah employs the name Elokim rather than Hashem; this indicates that initially, He thought to create the world based on the attribute of “din”; however, He saw that the world could not live up to this standard and continue to exist; therefore, He gave precedence to the attribute of “rachamim,” and joined it to the attribute of “din.”

Let us explain. From the aspect of pure “din,” one who sins against HKB”H, the King of the Universe, does not deserve the opportunity of tikun via the process of teshuvah. Nevertheless, due to the aspects of “chesed” and “rachamim,” HKB”H accepts the sinner back as a result of his teshuvah. This is implicit in Rashi’s comment: **“Initially He thought to create the world based on the attribute of “din,” but He saw that the world could not survive and continue to exist”** — because from the perspective of “din,” teshuvah does not afford the sinner a tikun. According to that scenario, the world would not continue to exist, as it is written (Kohelet 7, 20): **“כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא”** — **for there is no man so wholly righteous on earth that he always does good and never sins.** Therefore, HKB”H gave precedence to the attribute of “rachamim,” and joined it to the attribute of “din.” Thus, if a sinner performs teshuvah, it atones for his sins; if he fails to do so, he dies as a result of his sins.

So, it is quite clear that from the perspective of the name Elokim, the name of “din,” the sinner cannot achieve tikun by means of

teshuvah. It is only from the perspective of the name Havaya, which HKB”H gave precedence over the name Elokim at the conclusion of creation, that teshuvah affords a person tikun. We can suggest that this is the message conveyed by David HaMelech, who established the pathway of teshuvah (Tehillim 25, 11): **“למען שמך ה' וסלחת לעווני”** **— for the sake of Your name, Havaya, forgive my sin, though it is great.** In other words, for the sake of Your name Havaya, which You gave precedence to over the name of Elokim during the process of creation, in order to teach us that a sinner is afforded tikun via the process of teshuvah: **“וסלחת לעווני כי רב הוא”**

This enlightens us with regards to David HaMelech’s revelation. In the future, he will accept the honor of reciting the berachah over the cup: **“כוס ישועות אשא”** — **I shall raise the cup of salvations.** The reason I will do so is: **“ובשם ה' אקרא”** — because I established the pathway of teshuvah to reveal to the world the mercy inherent in the name Havaya, which allows the sinner the opportunity to perform teshuvah and to be accepted back in good standing. Therefore, I will recite the berachah and it is fitting that I do so — in order to demonstrate that in the place that “ba’alei teshuvah” stand, total tzaddikim are unable to stand.

We can now add a pleasant tidbit based on what the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (31) writes by way of explanation of this passuk: **“כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא”**. When a person raises the cup in his hand to recite Birkas HaMazon, he should have in mind that the word **כוס (cup)** possesses a numerical value equal to **אלהים (86)**. By raising the cup to recite the berachah over it, he sweetens and mitigates the “din” of the name Elokim with the “rachamim” of the name Havaya. This then is the meaning of the passuk: **כוס — יושועות אשא — I raise the name Elokim, which equals כוס; ובשם ה' אקרא — to sweeten it and mitigate it with the name Havaya representing “rachamim.”**

Based on what we have discussed, this coincides beautifully with the fact that David HaMelech will recite the berachah over the cup in the future, in order to diminish the force of “din” from the name Elokim, which possesses the numerical equivalent of **כוס**. From the perspective of “din,” a sinner would not have the opportunity of tikun through the process of teshuvah. Yet, by reciting a berachah over the cup: **“ובשם ה' אקרא”** — the “din” is mitigated by the name Havaya, which HKB”H gave precedence over the name Elokim, in order to teach us that from the perspective of “rachamim, everything can be rectified by means of teshuvah.

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