

A PARASHA THOUGHT

His Kingdom

The Torah records how Moshe, Aaron, and other leaders of *Klal Yisroel* "[S]aw the G-d of Israel, and under His Feet was that which had the form of a sapphire brick..." Being that it is impossible for a living human to see Hashem, the commentators explain that these leaders were not observing a physical reality but were experiencing a prophetic vision. Furthermore, as G-d is an Incorporeal Being, any physical attribute ascribed to Him is simply imagery, utilized to teach us something about Hashem's relationship with the world.

While there certainly are many layers of understanding in this *passuk*, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch offers one interpretation that highlights a fundamental concept. Rabbi Hirsch explains that "under His Feet" refers to Hashem's Presence in this world, which is recognized when His Will is followed, and His Name glorified. It is the responsibility of man to build The Kingdom of G-d on Earth, and the "brick" represents the building blocks of this Kingdom. That a mundane brick is used to depict the formation of a resting place for G-d in this world demonstrates how even things earthly and material

can be transformed to lofty and holy when used in the true service of Hashem. With the acceptance of the Torah, the Jewish people laid the first brick in the construction of this Kingdom, but it is our very lives, and lifestyles reflecting the Presence and Sovereignty of Hashem, that are the additional "bricks" of His Throne. The means by which to elevate the mundane to the spiritual is to focus all our endeavors towards the goal of *Kavod Shmayim*. Judaism does not seek to divorce spirituality from physicality. On the contrary, a primary element of our mission is to utilize the world in serving Hashem. As such, religiosity and piety are not to be relegated to symbolic acts of worship, nor are they reserved for the sincere fulfillment of *mitzvos* and other observances. Rather, religion is to play a central role in our conduct through every area of life. Our everyday lives can become heavenly, the bricks can become "sapphire." By living a life in consonance with Torah values, we elevate the world around us. Keeping this in mind will enable us to transform our daily activity to divine service, helping in our mission to create a place for the Divine Presence to rest in this world. 🕯



RABBI
YEHUDA
LEVI

LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL (BASAR B'CHALAV)

WITH

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

One eating meat may not share a table with one eating dairy. *Chazal* (the Sages) were concerned that if two people eat at one table, one meat and one dairy, they may share their food and transgress the prohibition of *Basar B'chalav* (meat and milk). This prohibition applies only to two people who are on friendly terms and would feel comfortable partaking of one another's food. Strangers may share a table even if one eats meat and one dairy. Even acquaintances may share a table if they put a *heker* (sign) or marker that will remind them not to share food.

For example:

- They may place a separate table cloth for each individual or one of the parties may use a table cloth while the other eats on the table itself.

- If they normally do not use place mats, they can each eat on a separate place mat or one uses a place mat while the other places his plate on the table itself.

- One may place an object that is usually not placed on the table to serve as a separation and reminder between the two. This object must be of sufficient size to be noticeable.

If the two are sitting apart and are not within hands-reach of one another (that is, the food of one is not within the reach of the other), they may eat together.

According to some opinions, this *halacha* applies when only two people are eating together. However, if a third person is present who is not eating and who is familiar with Jewish tradition, a *heker* is not required.

One may not even place meat upon the table at which dairy is being eaten (or

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LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL (CHOSHEN MISHPHAT)

CONTINUED

the reverse) since one may absent-mindedly eat some of the meat. If, however, the table is large and the meat is not within hands-reach this is permitted.

If three or more people ate bread together, and two people ate meat and one person ate dairy (or vice versa), they may form a *mezuman* (group to say *Birchas Hamazon* together) because in theory the one who ate dairy can switch from dairy to meat. (This can be done by inspecting / washing the hands and then eating at least a small amount of *pareve* food and drinking something or waiting a half hour). The *minhag* (custom) is that the one who ate dairy should lead the *mezuman*, since he can also eat meat. If two individuals ate meat and one ate hard cheese, they may not join in *Birchas Hamazon* with *mezuman*. This is because the individuals who ate meat cannot switch to dairy, and the one who ate dairy (hard cheese) may not eat meat; hence, they do not constitute a "group" or *mezuman*.

Although *halachically* one is permitted to eat directly on the table both meat and dairy cold meals providing that one wipes the table clean, common custom is not to eat meat and dairy on the same surface. The table may be uncovered for dairy meals and covered during the meat meals (or the reverse). 🕒

A SHINING EXAMPLE

RABBI EPHRAIM SKOLNIK

Aaron Green had done it again; he knew he had pushed things too far. For a moment, the seventh graders waited, wondering how the rebbi would respond. In a firm but quite voice, Rabbi Freidberg let Aaron know that his behavior was unacceptable and he would have to sit detention the next afternoon.

The dreaded hour arrived and Aaron watched out the window as his classmates boarded the bus. Aaron slowly returned to his desk and saw the assignment waiting for him. Aaron threw a glance at the clock, but only ten minutes had passed. Then Aaron thought to himself, "What's the point of this anyway? Who needs school and who needs a rebbi?" Even though Aaron knew his behavior was inappropriate he began to feel resentful.

Suddenly, a familiar face caught Aaron's attention. Into the classroom walked Rabbi Freidberg holding a brown paper bag. "Here Aaron," the rebbi said, "I brought you something." Aaron took the bag and peeked inside. Seeing a cheese danish and a bottle of coke, Aaron looked up at his rebbi with a puzzled face. The rebbi responded, "I knew you'd be here late and thought you might get hungry so I brought you

TEFILLA TIDBITS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

Perhaps the most powerful word found in the *siddur* is the word "Atah," which means *You*, where we address Hashem directly in the second person. I once heard a beautiful insight that although *halacha* tells us to speak to one's rabbi in third person there is no such *halacha* when it comes to one's parents. Even though there is a *mitzvah* to honor one's parents, the relationship with parents dictates that we talk without any barriers. So too, when talking to Hashem, even though there is a *mitzvah* to fear Him, He is our Father and therefore we feel close to Him and can speak in second person. 🕒

something to eat." Aaron's anger melted away. He realized that his rebbi cared about him. If this is how my rebbi treats me, thought Aaron, it is worth putting in the effort to control myself and make my rebbi proud. 🕒



THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ZOHAR

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

The Testimony of Rabbi Yitzchak of Akko (Part I)

Recap: Rabbi Yitzchak of Akko, a student of the Ramban and a survivor of the massacres in Akko in 1291, fled to Spain where he set out to discover how the *Zohar* came to be. The vast majority of his intriguing findings have been preserved in Rabbi Avraham Zacuto's *Sefer Yuchsin*.

What follows is a loose translation of the account:

Rabbi Yitzchak of Akko came to Spain to investigate how the *Zohar*, which had been composed by Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai and his son, Rebbe Elazar, in the cave, came into being in its literary form. Rabbi Yitzchak writes that upon his arrival in Spain he questioned many people and received different answers. Some say that the Ramban sent it from *Eretz Yisrael* to his son in Catalonia and the winds brought it to the Kingdom of Aragon. Others say that the Ramban sent it to Alicante (a coastal town on the southeastern side of Spain) and from there it made its way into the hands of Rabbi Moshe de Leon of Guadalajara (a town just northeast of Madrid). Yet others said that Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai didn't author the *Zohar*; rather, Rabbi Moshe de Leon himself composed it. In order to sell it for a high price, he attributed the work to the great *Mishnaic* Sages, Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai and his son, Rebbe Elazar.

To be continued... 🕒