

Repairing the Future



PARDES PROJECT
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Many of the topics included in the Pardes curriculum are far-reaching and have broad ramifications. The intent of Pardes is to promote sensitivity and spiritual growth through exposure to a variety of Torah sources. It is not within the purview of Pardes to arrive at conclusions relevant to decisions of Halacha. Please consult your Rabbi for personal decisions.



How Would You Respond?

Your teenage child comes home from school. He sits down with you at the kitchen table and begins to cry. He explains that he made a mistake. He borrowed \$300 from some of his friends and lost it on a bet. His friends tell him if he doesn't pay it back within three days they will take care of him. He begs you to give him the money.

It is customary to recite the following prayer
before entering into a Torah discussion:

Shulchan Aruch O.H. 110

May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that You illuminate my eyes with the light of your Torah and that You save me from all stumbling blocks and errors, whether it be in discussions of what is prohibited and what is permitted or in monetary matters, whether it be in any other Halachic decisions or just in theoretical study. I pray that I do not make any mistakes, and if I do, my study partners should not take delight in them. I pray that I should not proclaim the impure pure or the pure impure, the permitted forbidden or the forbidden permitted. I pray that I should not derive joy from the errors of my study partner. Open my eyes and allow me to see the wonders of Your Torah because it is from G-d that all wisdom comes forth, it is from His mouth that I will acquire wisdom and understanding. Amen.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי
ואלקי אבותי שלא יארע
דבר תקלה על ידי ולא
אכשל בדבר הלכה וישמחו
בי חברי ולא אופר על
טעם טחור ולא על טחור
טעם ולא על פזתר אסור
ולא על אסור פזתר ולא
יכשלו חברי בדבר הלכה
ואשמח בהם. כי ה' יתן
חוכמה מפיו דעת ודבונה.
אל עיני ואביטה נפלאות
פועותך.

Points for Study

1 The very idea of a blood libel borders on the ridiculous. Usually a lie can't last unless it has a kernel of truth. This libel doesn't even have an ounce of truth yet the lie has continued for thousands of years! This is one of the wonders of the world. I would like to humbly suggest that the success of this lie is a result of the action of the brothers of Joseph. They dipped Joseph's coat in blood and brought it to Jacob saying this is the blood of Joseph. Because of this the Jewish people have suffered for millennia. If I am mistaken, may G-d forgive me.

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, Kovetz Maamarim, pg. 89

Source, pg. 16 Biography, pg. 14

2 "You must realize that the Universe has an order and is not chaos, not one word or even one thought gets lost. All energy remains in the world and eventually will be accounted for." The Steipler Gaon, Kreina D'igrasa pg. 78

Source, pg. 17 Biography, pg. 11

3 If a Jewish man marries a non Jewish women and has 2.2 children (the national average) at the end of 20 generations over seven million children will have been born from this marriage that should have been Jews, and vice versa.

4 Even one's private actions effect the nature of the entire world. The King of the Universe has designed the world so that nature changes according to the deeds of man. Not only living things change but even the inanimate part of the world constantly changes according to the actions of man. When God brought the great flood onto the world he saw that "the Earth was full of corruption" even the earth that has no freedom of choice was corrupt as a result of to the corruption of man.

Rabbi Joseph Dov Baer Soloveichik in Beis Halevi, Noach
Source, pg. 18 Biography, pg. 12

5 Never favor one child over the other. Jacob favored Joseph and gave him a multicolored coat and the entire Jewish nation became slaves in Egypt.

Talmud Shabbos 10b
Source, pg. 19

6 Esau cried "a great and bitter cry" (when Jacob took the blessings from Esau). Because of this many generations later all the Jews in Persia cried "a great and bitter cry."

Breishis Rabba 67
Source, pg. 20

7 "I'd like you to know, my brother, that even if a person reaches the highest spiritual level in his relationship with the Almighty, even if he reaches the spiritual and behavioral level of the prophets he has not yet reached the level of a person who has guided others to do good. Because if one directs someone else to do good even in a small way he receives merit and blessing for all the good that that person, his chil-

dren or students will ever do for all future generations. On his day of final reckoning he will have merits for good deeds that surpass even his wildest dreams."

Chovos Halevovos Ahavas Hashem, chapter 6
Source, pg. 21 Biography, pg. 10

8 Picture the rain cycle. Water is on the earth, the water evaporates and forms a cloud, the cloud then bursts and replenishes the world with water. According to Reb Chaim Volozhin the good and bad we do form the raw material for the energy that then creates and recreates the world every second. In the case of acid rain a polluted liquid evaporates and descends in an unhealthy form, not necessarily where it went up. Pollution can go up in New York and come down in Canada, Africa or in Asia. So too, our actions are the positive and negative energy of creation. If a peace treaty is signed in Croatia, it might be because of a random act of kindness in Asia. If civil war breaks out in Rwanda, it might be because of an act of violence that takes place in New York.

Nefesh HaChaim, chapter 1
Source, pg. 22 Biography, pg. 8
Also see **For Further Study** section, pg. 24

Source Biography

Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan, The Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933)

For almost one hundred years he lit up our world. His was a soul from on high whose only desire in life was to fulfill the wish of his Creator through lifting the worth of individual lives as well as the life of the Jewish people as a whole. This was the substance of the marvelous life of this giant of justice and kindness.

He could find no peace when contemplating the state of the nation regarding the grave sin of slander, until he composed his first work which carried the name with which he has been identified ever since: Chofetz Chaim...He also was inspired to produce a work, Ahavas Chesed (Love of Kindness) detailing the laws between man and man.

The emigration to America made him fearful for the well-being of Judaism in places where Jewish settlements were not well organized. He recognized the trials of the new immigrants and to fill their needs he wrote Nidchei Yisrael, (Dispersed of Israel), replete with detailed laws specifically related to the new life of the emigres and heartfelt words of inspiration and encouragement to strengthen them in overcoming obstacles and preserving their Judaism. And his caring eye observed the young conscripts forced to live far from any semblance of Jewish life and desperately in need of special guidance. For them he composed Machne Yisrael, (The Camp of Israel).

In spite of all the writings of his predecessors he found that he must clarify many laws of the first portion of the Shulchan Aruch, and composed his famous Mishna Brura, which is firmly established as an authoritative source.

And within his heart there burned a holy fire: the hope for the full salvation. The final redemption of Israel was his constant concern. For the arrival of that event the laws of Kodoshim must be clear. But he saw that such learning was much neglected and so composed a monumental work on the order Kodoshim, Likkutei Halachos.

In spite of all these undertakings he was totally involved in all matters of Torah support with youthful enthusiasm even when he was well into his ninties, traveling to anywhere he might help to strengthen activities on behalf of Torah.

This is but a too-brief overview of the life of an extraordinary man whose saintly presence we were fortunate to encounter and from whose saintly life and pure character we were privileged to feel the impact.

—Excerpts from an article by Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak Kook which appeared in the journal *HaHaid*. Translated by Matis Greenblatt for Fall 1983 issue of *Jewish Action Magazine*

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821)

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin was the outstanding disciple of the Vilna Gaon and the founder of the Volozhin Yeshiva in 1802, the most important and most influential Lithuanian institution. Reb Chaim's philosophy is expounded in his *Nefesh HaChaim* where he emphasizes the power of Torah study and fulfillment of mitzvos to bring a Jew close to G-d. In a famous section of that work, he takes issue with those (an obvious reference to Hasidim) who see dveikus, or cleaving to G-d, as a prerequisite to fulfillment of mitzvos. The central importance of Torah study reached its heights in the yeshiva, which became a model for all Lithuanian Yeshivos.

—M.G.

Rabbi Bachya Ibn Pakuda (Eleventh Century) and the *Duties of the Heart*

Rabbi Saadyah wrote the first Jewish work of philosophy in 933. Rabbi Bachya wrote the first work of Jewish ethics more than a century later. Rabbi Saadya flourished during the twilight of once glorious Babylonian Jewry; Sephardic Jewry continued its magnificent history in Spain, reflecting the shift from Asia to Europe, where R. Bachya lived and created his magnum opus, *Duties of the Heart* (Chovot HaLevovot).

Rabbi Bachya lived in Muslim Spain, probably in Saragossa, and served as a judge, but little else is known about his life. He was thoroughly conversant with the entire Biblical and Talmudical literature and was also master of all the knowledge and science of his day. Though a philosopher in his own right, Rabbi Bachya's essential contribution is that of creator of a new genre in Jewish literature, Jewish ethics. The first chapter of his work which is devoted to the unity of G-d employs philosophical arguments which some felt were not readily understandable and was skipped over by many students. Rabbi Bachya's work, as indicated by its title, focused on the non-physical obligations of the Jew: the obligations of feeling, heart and mind in contrast to those mitzvot that involve the limbs. Pointing to the neglect of this group of mitzvot, he underscored their critical importance. Rabbi Bachya's central focus was on Service of G-d and abiding by His will, and fulfilling the duties of the heart was viewed as the entree to nearness to G-d, the ultimate objective. Understandably, the tenth and last chapter of the book is Love of G-d. Though emphasizing the importance of rational thought, Rabbi Bachya's real goal was the experience of G-d. A systematic, carefully constructed work, *Duties of the Heart*, has remained to this day a favorite of serious, sensitive students. The Chatam Sofer studied with his students from *Duties of the Heart* for 15 minutes before his lecture "in order to inspire their hearts with fear of G-d.. and almost all his musar was taken from that book" (Chut HaMeshulash). And, Rabbi Yonah Landsofer, an eighteenth century gaon wrote, "a person must attach

himself to the *Duties of the Heart* from whence he can acquire the choice midot for the service of the Lord. And one must plummet its depths more than when studying Negayim and Oholot (Two of the most difficult tractates of the Mishne) because of the greatness of its inwardness and refinement."
—M.G.

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky (1899-1985), The Steipler

Rabbi Mordecai Dov, son-in-law of R. Chaim Sanz, was rabbi in Horensteipel. One of his followers was a shochet, Reb Chaim Peretz, who was the father of three daughters. His wife died and Chaim Peretz was already 60. He visited his Rebbe, Reb Mordecai Dov and asked whether he should remarry. The reply was that he should marry a young woman and he would be blessed with sons. So he did and had three sons, the oldest was named Yaakov Yisrael.

At the age of 11 Yaakov Yisrael was recruited for the Novorodock Yeshiva under the great R. Yosef Yosel Hurwitz. The young man progressed rapidly and at the age of 19 was sent by R. Yosef Yosel Hurwitz to head a yeshiva in Rogatshov. At that time Yaakov Yisrael was conscripted into the Russian army where he continued to strictly observe all mitzvot in spite of the harsh conditions. His disciple, R. Ben Zion Bruck, sent him a gemara Succah and a Chaye Adam from which he studied assiduously. He insisted on wearing a summer uniform in the winter since there was no problem of shatnes. One volume of his Kehilas Yaakov contains the Torah he composed while in the army. He was appointed Rosh Yeshiva of the Novorodock yeshiva in Pinsk. In Bialystock he studied under R. Avrohom Jofen. His fame grew and the Chazon Ish heard of his great scholarship, but equally as important, of his yirat shamayim, and sought him as husband for his sister.

The Steipler wrote many works, his magnum opus being the multi-volume Kehilas Yaakov, containing his unique analysis of most of the

tractates and concepts of the Talmud. There are several volumes of letters (Karyana D'Igarata) and several volumes written by a disciple, Rabbi A. Horowitz, describe his daily life (Orchos Rabbeinu). There is an interesting volume of letters to an American psychologist, Dr. Yaakov Greenwald, in which The Steipler advises him on psychological problems (Eitsot V'Hadrachot).

Though he held no official position, The Steipler was universally recognized and was consulted by individuals from all walks of life on every imaginable problem and many claimed that he displayed knowledge which was inconceivable by natural means. In his relation with people he seemed both tough and tender, but as one who knew him very intimately said, "he would give someone a slap in order to sweeten the judgment." (L'hamtik Hadinim)

—M.G.

Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik (1820-1892), The Bais HaLevi

Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveitchik (hereafter R.Y.B.S.) was the great grandson of Rabbi Chaim Volozhin (foremost disciple of the Vilna Gaon and founder of Yeshivat Volozhin) and the great grandfather of Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1903-1993). Living during a period of great turbulence and transition, he represented the highest level of scholarship, absolute loyalty to tradition and extraordinary sensitivity for the plight of the poor and unfortunate.

R.Y.B.S. was possessed of one of the great minds of his time, and in 1854 was invited to become co-Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin together with the Netziv (R.N.T.Y. Berlin). However, it became apparent that the two giants were temperamentally incompatible and after serving in the Yeshiva for ten years the Bais HaLevi felt it necessary to leave. In 1865 he became Rabbi of Slutzk. One of his first acts after arriving in his new position was to visit the chedarim, and, when observing the impoverished state of many children, arranged for lunches to be served which

were paid for by the community. His son, R. Chaim Soloveitchik, renowned for his creative genius, but who was also known for his extraordinary acts of kindness, once compared himself to his father, stating that while he himself responded to peoples' needs, his father made sure to discover on his own what their needs were. While in Slutzk, R.Y.B.S. was deeply involved in communal affairs and also taught Torah to some of the great minds of the generation (i.e. R. Yosef Rosen the Rogotchover, R. Zalman Sender Shapiro). He was a fierce opponent of the Maskilim and it was because of the undue influence of a well-known Maskil that he left Slutzk in 1874 and moved to Warsaw where he lived in great poverty. When Rabbi Y.L. Diskind left for Eretz Yisrael in 1878, Rabbi Soloveitchik was offered the rabbinate of Brisk. He remained there until his death, when his son R. Chaim succeeded him.

It was said of the Bais HaLevi that his fear of sin was comparable to an ordinary person's fear when his life is in danger. His personal life was full of tragedy, but this did not break his powerful spirit and sense of justice. His works are characterized by their consistent brilliance and originality. In parshat Bo he posits the fascinating thesis that the mitzvot do not flow from their seeming reason, but rather the reasons arise because the mitzva existed in the Torah which preceded the world. In his youth he lived in Brod for a time where R. Shlomo Kluger was rabbi and the latter enjoyed discussing Torah with the young scholar. When R.Y.B. was leaving R. Shlomo said to him, "you have always resolved my difficulties (kushiot) but I have one difficulty you cannot resolve: how difficult for me is your parting."

In 1892 the government insisted that the Volozhin Yeshiva should extensively revise its curriculum to include a substantial amount of secular studies, much of which must be studied in the morning hours. The agonizing question arose whether to comply and totally transform the character of the Yeshiva or permit the Yeshiva to close. Some of the greatest leaders were called into session. Some of the assembled were

inclined to agree to the changes. Whereupon with tears in his eyes the Bais HaLevi spoke up expressing his sharp disagreement: "We are dutybound to teach Torah and bequeath our heritage to the next generation in the way of our forefathers, not by new, unacceptable means. We cannot assume responsibility for such changes. Let He who gave the Torah do His!"
—M.G.

Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (1875-1941)

The Hazon Ish once testified that Reb Elchanan totally fulfilled the principle "I placed G-d before me at all times". In a generation renowned for its many great Roshei Yeshivot, he was distinguished not only for his great learning but for the impact his personality made on his students.

Reb Elchanan was born in Birz, Lithuania. He studied in the Telshe Yeshiva under R. Shimon Shkop. In 1897 he met R. Chaim Brisker and became his disciple. Whereas R. Shimon was concerned with the "why" R. Chaim said "One has to know what is stated, not why". Reb Elchanan was deeply influenced by both but eventually developed his own approach.

A new era began for Reb Elchanan when he met the Chofetz Chaim in 1907. Though he had already served with noted success as Yeshiva head of Amtchislav and was now a mature man of 32, he joined the Kodoshim Kollel of the Chofetz Chaim. Reb Elchanan viewed the Chofetz Chaim as a living Torah and trembled in his presence. The Chofetz Chaim became Reb Elchanan's lifetime role model. In 1910 he became a Rosh Yeshiva in Brisk until the outbreak of the war in 1914. In 1921, he became head of the Yeshiva Ohel Torah in Baranovitch, where he remained for the rest of his life. Because of his great influence the Yeshiva grew and, in spite of its abysmal poverty, attracted many hundreds of disciples.

Besides his role as yeshiva head, Reb Elchanan was deeply involved in communal matters, and was active in Agudas Israel. In addition to his lectures and Talmudic writings, he was also a thinker and interpreter of contemporary events and his ideas were published in a book of essays (Kovetz Maamorim). He maintained that just as the Torah provides guidance in strictly halachic matters, it also provides illumination of the era in which we live. Thus, for example, his essay, The Footprints of the Messiah, presented a sweeping view of modern life. Two of his main points are the rapid pace with which the world is developing in contrast to previous generations and the idol of nationalism which he saw as striving to replace Torah as the central factor of Jewish life.

He visited America in 1939 and though, he could have remained and avoided the imminent catastrophe, he never considered it as a possibility. He felt that he must return to his Yeshiva and be with his students.

While on a visit to Kovno the Germans declared war on Russia and Reb Elchanan was unable to return to the yeshiva. On July 6, 1941 Reb Elchanan was studying in the house of R. Avrohom Grodzensky, in the company of a group of scholars, when four armed Lithuanians came in shouting and taunting. It was obvious that the end was near and Reb Elchanan spoke his last words:

"Heaven apparently considers us righteous people, for it wants us to atone with our bodies for Jewry as a whole. So we must repent now...if we repent, we will thereby save the remaining Jews, our brothers and sisters, so that they will be able to carry on as the remnant of Jewry."

—M.G.

בזוכי דחובי בני עבדי פנימו לעילא טו. וכן להיפך כגיל. וזשים העינות לאלקים. ובזוכי ריפ בל ויהי היום ויבאו גו להתיב על ה' נד בעאן לקיימא על איטן עובדין דישראל על ה' ודאי קיימין. דהא כד ישראל עבדין עובדין דלא כשרן כביכול מתיסין חילא דקביא. וכד עבדין עובדין דכשרן יבדין מוקפא וחילא לקביא. ועיד כתיב חט עו לאלקים כמה בעובדין דכשרן. ולכן אמר לאלקים. וכן באלקים בעשה חיל. שפי בעל הכחות כולם וככל :

פרק ג בן נדמיון זה כביכול. ברא הוא יתב' אח האדם והשליטו על רבי רבון כחות ועולמות אך מספר. ומסרם בידו שיהא הוא המדבר והמנהיג אחת עפי כל פרטי חנינות מעשו ודבוריו ומחשבותיו. וכל סדרי הסכמותיו. הן לטוב. או להיפך ח"ו. כי במעשיו ודבוריו ומחשבותיו הטובים הוא מקיים ונתן כח בכמה כחות ועולמות עליונים הקדושים. ומוסף בהם קדושה ואור. כמיש (ישעיה נ"א) ואשים דברי בפיך גו' לנטוע שמים ולבסוד ארץ. וכמאמרם ז"ל אית בניך אלף בוניך. כי המה המסדרים שלמות העליונים כגונה המסדר בנינו. ונתנים בהם רב כח. ובהיפוך ח"ו עיי מעשו או דבוריו ומחשבותיו אשר לא טובים. הוא מהרם ר"ל כמה כחות ועולמות עליונים הקדושים לאין ערך וטעור. כמיש (שם מ"ט) מהרסוך ומחריבך וגו'. או מחשיך או מקטיין אורם וקדושתם ח"ו. ומוסיף כח לעומת זה במדורות הטומאה ר"ל :

ורו וינרא אלקים את האדם בגלגלם אלקים גו. כי בגלגל אלקים בעשה גו. שכמו שהוא ית' שמו הוא האלקים בעל הכחות הנמצאים בכל העולמות כולם. ומסדרם ומנהיגם כל רגע כרצונו. כן השליט רצונו יתברך את האדם שיהא הוא הפותח והסוגר של כמה אלפי רבואות כחות ועולמות. עפי כל פרטי סדרי ההנהגותיו בכל עניו בכלעת ורגע ממש. כפי שראו העליון של מעשיו ודבוריו ומחשבותיו. כאלו הוא ג"כ בעל כח שלמה כביכול. ואמר ז"ל באיכה רבתי (בפסוק וילכו בלא כח גו') ריע בשם ריבנים אומר בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום מוסיפין כח נגבורה של מעלה כראי באלקים בעשה חיל. ובזמן שאין ישראל עושין רצונו של מקום כביכול מתיסין כח גדול של מעלה דכתיב צור ילדך חטו גו'. ובכ"ח בז"הק

פרק א



במה שהוא ית' משפיע בהם. ברצונו יתברך כל רגע כח השפעת אור הדש. ואי היה הוא ית' מסלק מהם כח השפעתו אף רגע אחת. כרגעונו טלם לאדם ותמו. וכמו שיכרו אנשי כנה"ג המחשם (*) במוצו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית. היינו תמיד ממש כל עת ורגע. וראייתם מפורשת כאמר לעושה אורים גדולים. שלא אמר עשה אלף עושה :

התעוררותם והכנתם כל עם ורגע שצדק שרשם אינו מוצב כלל. והוא ית' מודעם כל רגע לבי רצונו. וענין התעוררותם כל רגע הם התחנף לרובי הפס גיה על פי הסתנות נקדושים. תחנף כגוה הפס. וכן משתנים עוד כל שעה לנחותים אפרים. הם אין מדת יום שיה נגדל לילס. לא כל יום דומה למדירו שלטנו ואמרו כלל. יום המחשם גו' מעשה בראשית דיקא :

וזהו שנקרא הוא ית' האלקים בעל הכחות כולם. (*) שכל כח פרטי הגומל בכל העולמות. הכל הוא ית' הנעל כח שלמה שמשפיע בהם הכח וגבורה כל רגע. ותלויים בידו תמיד לטובתם ולסדרם ברצונו ית' :

ויבא אלקים דחייב בחיובו וכן וכלם מי הפך שלו. כי הם מחויבים עליהם להסכים. וכן דייני עשה נקדושים אלקים ובקשה גו' ו' ושמח מן מכל עבר שמח וכו' ע"ש. אמנם כולם אין בהם שלמה מעלם. רק מהם שקבע בהם הוא ית' כח וגבורה להיות מעלים וכו'. לכן נקרא הוא ית' אלפי האלקים. וכן כתוב כי גדול ה' מכל האלילים. השתחוו לו כל האלילים. ונס יסודיו טובים קוראים אותו יתברך אלהא דלחין ולכן נקראו אלילים אחרים ר"ל שאין בהם שלמה מעלם רק בהם רבובי מעט והגבורה חמט עושך ג"כ כמו מהכח מעליו. עד הבעל כח האמיתי של טלם הוא ית'. ולכן נאמר (יחזקאל) והאלקים חמת. שהוא בעל כח האלוהי של טלם עקוב מקבלים בהם ממש ית'. יום ויפלו על פניהם ויאמרו ה' הוא האלילים :

וינרא אלקים את האדם בגלגלם אלקים ברא אורו וכן כתיב כי בגלגל אלקים עשה את האדם.

הקה עומק פנימיות ענין האדם, הוא מדברים העומדים ברומו של עולם והוא כולל רוב סתרי פנימיות האור. (*) אמנם כאן נדבר במלה כלל בדרך הפשטים הראשונים ז"ל על פסוק בעשה אדם בגלגלו כדמותו :

והוא כי מלת כלל ודמות כאן אינו כמשמעו כי כתוב מפורש (ישעי' ט) ומה דמות תערכו לו. אלא פירושו דמיון מה בראיה דבר. כמו דומיה לקחת מדבר. כי לא נעשו לו כפיים וחרטום ולא נשתנה צורתו לטרת הקחת. רק שדומה לו במקרה פעולותיו שהיה נע וכד כמו הקחת מודד שהוא צפור בודד ומעופף ממקום למקום. כיה לפי הפשטים הראשונים ז"ל. וכן עדין הוא ענין מלת כלל. כי המה דומים כמשמעו נדר מה :

פרק ב אמנם להבין ענין אומרו בגלגל אלקים דיקא. ולא שם אחר. כי שם

אלקים ידוע פירושו שהוא מורה שהוא ית' בעל הכחות כולם כמיש בטור אית סימן ה'. וענין מה שהוא יתברך נקרא בעל הכחות. כי לא כדמת ב"ו מדת הקב"ה. כי האדם כשגונה בגין. ד"מ מען. אין הבגונה גורא וממילא או מכחו הענן רק שלוקח עינים שכבר נבראו ומסדרם בבנין. ואחר שכבר טרדם לסי רצונו. עם שכחו האור ונשתלק מהם. עב"ו הבנין קיים. אבל הוא ית'. כמו נעת בריאת העולמות כולם. בראש והמציאות הוא יתברך יש מאין בכחו הדי'ת. כן מאל כל יום וכל רגע ממש. כל כח מציאותם ומסדרם וקיומם. תלוי רק במה

For Further Study

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CREATION

During the Six Day war, when bomb shelters were full and air raid sirens were blasting, many of the inhabitants of the Meir Shearim area of Jerusalem sat together in one bomb shelter. Among them was the great Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, HaRav Chaim Shmuelevitz of blessed memory. Together, people said Tehillim and prayed that they should not be harmed and that Jerusalem should be liberated. Amongst them was a woman who was known to all. She had been divorced and had gone through a great deal of agony from her ex-husband. She had spent years in pain over matrimonial issues. Suddenly the woman blurted out and said to G-d, "I forgive my husband for all the pain he has caused me. Just let us come out of this alive." Rav Chaim turned to his students and said, "If we leave this shelter unharmed and in fact if the state of Israel wins the war, I believe it is in the merit of this woman."

One of the most trying epochs in the history of the Jewish people took place in the year 3828 better known as year 68 of the common era. The Jews lived in the land of Israel. Jerusalem was our religious center. The temple of Jerusalem stood gloriously and a renaissance of scholarship was underway. However, the Roman Empire was growing daily and the dreadful time had come when the Roman Empire decided to conquer Jerusalem. The Jews in Israel were in a state of shock, fear and controversy. A group known as Beryonim, militant nationalists, decided to fight till the bitter end. The Rabbinic leadership felt that the right thing to do was to make peace with the Romans. The Beryonim went so far as to threaten the lives of some of the leading Rabbinic leaders; Rabbi Yochanon Ben Zakai had to be smuggled out of Israel in a box portrayed as a dead man in order to negotiate with Vespasian. There apparently were many groups in the middle. The internal strife and battles escalated. We no longer felt a unity

amongst our people. We no longer enjoyed brotherhood. We experienced a culture which the Talmud labeled as *Sinat Chinom*, the 'causless hate generation'. In the year 70 CE the temple was destroyed by the Romans.

The world was created not just once, but continues to be created by G-d on an ongoing basis. Think about creation as a light bulb – where the energy must flow through the filaments constantly. The moment the switch is shut off, light ceases to shine. G-d did not create the world and walk away; He keeps his finger on the button, creating and recreating the world every millisecond.

The "juice" of creation goes through 4 stages before it reaches the level of creation that we can touch and feel. Kabbalistic literature refer to this as "ABYA", which stands for *Atzilout Briya Yitzirah and Assiyah*. The creative process begins in Atzilout, the highest spiritual level. That which will eventually become a creation, as we know it, starts off

as a concept of G-d. Then comes Briya, Yitzirah and finally Assiyah, the world of actualization, in which we live. Like a pipeline into which the world is plugged, the energy flows through it from G-d second by second.

A miracle, according to this understanding, is not a change in nature but simply different ingredients placed into the pipeline at the source where every creation is constantly being conceived of and formed. When so called "good" happens in the world this is because there is good energy coming through the pipeline, when seemingly bad things take place the energy coming through the pipeline is negative.

What is the raw material of the energy that is constantly creating the world? The Torah tells us that the source of this energy is the deeds of people, human beings living in the world of Assiyah.

PICTURE THE RAIN CYCLE. Water is on the earth, the water evaporates and forms a cloud, the cloud then bursts and replenishes the world with water. The good and bad we do form the raw material for the energy that then creates and recreates the world every second. In the case of acid rain a polluted liquid evaporates and descends in an unhealthy form, not necessarily where it went up. Pollution can go up in New York and come down in Canada, Africa or in Asia. So to, our actions are the positive or negative energy of creation. If a peace treaty is signed in Croatia, it might be because of a random act of kindness in Asia. If civil war breaks out in Rwanda, it might be because of an act of violence that takes place in New York.

—Based on Nefesh Hachaim

Immediately preceding World War II, the heat of world politics reached a crescendo. In a small town in Poland some young students asked their sagacious teacher the Chafetz Chaim whether it would be appropriate for them to contribute to the betterment of the world by leaving the yeshiva and joining the underground or pursuing some other involvement in world issues. The Chafetz Chaim replied with a legendary statement "The Torah which we study in the small unknown town of Radin is directly affecting the discussions taking place at this moment in the British Parliament."

The Talmud tells us that in fact it wasn't the Romans that destroyed the Temple but our infighting and hate.

According to the teaching of the Nefesh Hachaim, it was the negative energy that we circulated into the ongoing creative process, our *Sinat Chinam*, that positioned

the Temple for destruction. In the words of the Rabbis *kimcha tachun tochanta* the Romans ground already ground flour. By the time the Romans came to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem it was so devoid of its positive energy that it was a pushover, a straw house. Such is the power of *Sinat Chinum*.

