

Se'udat Hodayah Schreiber – Part 2 – Jerusalem

Purim Katan 5774

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(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

3. *The holy Oil of Anointment*

The sages identify the allusion to Mordechai in this week's parashah, *Ki Tissa*, this is thus the link between the two. The Torah says, "And you, take for yourself spices of the finest sort: of pure myrrh five hundred [shekel weights]; of fragrant cinnamon half of it two hundred and fifty [shekel weights]; of fragrant cane two hundred and fifty [shekel weights]." The words "pure myrrh" (מֵרְרִיךְ טָהוֹר) are translated by *Onkelos* into Aramaic as, *meira dachya* (מֵיִרָא דַחְיָא). The allusions for Esther and Haman are from the Hebrew of other verses, but Mordechai is special because his allusion appears in the Torah's Aramaic translation. Mordechai is a *tzadik* who translates the Torah for his generation, who knows his generation's novel teachings. He is the head of his generation, and as such he is their mindset and their way of thinking.

The word translated as "pure" above, מֵרְרִיךְ, literally means "free." The commentaries explain that to be free is to be pure, free from imprisonment, like a free-bird. So the words "pure myrrh" can be understood as "a free man."

The Roke'ach: Anointing of three kings alluded to in the verses

There are a number of different mitzvahs in our parashah. One of them is the mitzvah to make the Oil of Anointment, a mitzvah that pertains to both the Priests and to the Kings, the leaders of the generation. The word Mashiach means "the anointed one," and he is so named because he is anointed by this oil. In the Arizal's terminology, the Oil of Anointment is an example of the inner aspect of Abba is the inner aspect of Atik.

The *Ba'al Haroke'ach* teaches that the phrase, "Oil of holy anointment" (שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחָת) appears three times as an allusion to the three kings that were anointed with it: Saul, David, and Solomon. These were the Jewish people's first three kings, and they all reigned over the entire people. The use of the oil of anointment to anoint a king is actually not even mentioned in this week's *parashah*, only the anointing of the Tabernacle and its vessels (altogether 13 things are anointed). Nonetheless, with this teaching, the *Roke'ach* is telling us that the main purpose of the oil of anointment is to anoint kings. Following what we learnt from the *Avnei Nezer*, we can say that the anointment of a king is not part of the mitzvah's requirements, but it is a *hidur*, the life of the mitzvah. These were the only three kings that were anointed with this oil.

Saul's anointment with the oil of anointment and the connection to Mordechai

The Chidah says that there are a number of commentaries (the *Radak*, the *Abarbanel*, and the *Kli Yakar*) who missed that Saul was also anointed with the Oil of Anointment—they understood that Saul was only anointed with the Aparsemon oil. But, he writes that the Ba'al Haroke'ach is correct, that Saul was anointed with the oil of anointment. Now Mordechai is hinted to and alluded to in the words describing the Oil of Anointment, as we said and he is a direct descendant of Saul the son of Kish.

Free myrrh and passing myrrh

The Arizal explains that Mordechai is the light of the foundation of Abba that reaches all the way down to the foundation of *Ze'er Anin*, and appears revealed at the top of the world of Creation, thereby passing beyond the revelation of the foundation of *Nukva*. This is alluded to in the idiom that the word "myrrh" (מָר) appears in, in the Song of Songs. The idiom there is "myrrh that passes" (מִזֹּר עֵבֶר).

Let's see a *gematria*. Since Mordechai is both the "pure myrrh" (מָר דְּרוּר) in this week's *parashah* and he is the "myrrh that passes" (מִזֹּר עֵבֶר) in the Song of Songs, what is the numerical relationship between the two?

"Pure myrrh" (מָר דְּרוּר) equals 650, a multiple of *Havayah* (26) and a therefore also a multiple of 13.

If we subtract Mordechai (מִרְדֵּכַי), 274 from 650 (מָר דְּרוּר), the difference is 376, the value of "Peace" (שְׁלוֹם). In Megillat Esther it says that, "Mordechai sought peace for all his offspring" (דִּרַשׁ שְׁלוֹם לְכָל זְרַעוֹ). In our own generation Mordechai and Shalom came together in the figure of a father and his son whose names were Mordechai and Shalom [Lapid]. The two were murdered together by Arabs. Then on Purim, someone rose and avenged their murder. The *gematria* of his name was exactly the same as that of their two names, Mordechai and Shalom, 650!

Now, the phrase "myrrh that passes" (מִזֹּר עֵבֶר) equals 518, and it is a multiple of 7. Since "pure myrrh" is a multiple of 13, two phrases are like male and female counterparts (the relatively masculine phrase being the one whose value divides by 13, the relatively feminine phrase being the one whose value divides by 7).

The three instances of "Holy oil of anointment"

Returning to the Ba'al Haroke'ach, who says the phrase, "holy oil of anointment" (שֶׁמֶן מְשַׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ) appears three times in correspondence with the three kings who were anointed with the anointing oil. We see that if we add the three phrases שֶׁמֶן מְשַׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ, each time there are additional words in the phrase surrounding these 3 words. The first two instances of the phrase appear in the same verse. The first time it simply says, "[You shall make this into] a holy oil of anointment" (שֶׁמֶן מְשַׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ), but the second instance it reads, "a holy oil of anointment it shall be" (שֶׁמֶן מְשַׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה). The third time, the phrase is further expanded and reads, "This shall be a holy oil of anointment to Me for your generations" (שֶׁמֶן מְשַׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה זֶה לִּי לְדוֹרֹתֵיכֶם). Now, each phrase alludes to one of the three monarchs, Saul, David, and Solomon. The first instance corresponds to Saul.

The second to David. There is a beautiful allusion to David in the second instance, because the word that is added, “it shall be” (יְהִיָּה) is equal to *Yehudah* (יְהוּדָה); David is of course the first king from the tribe of Yehudah. Of course, whenever we hear this word, “it shall be” (יְהִיָּה), we are immediately reminded of the verse, “On that day, God will be one and His Name will be one” (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה הוּי אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד). The word “it shall be” (יְהִיָּה) is similar to God’s essential Name, *Havayah* (יְהוָה), except that the unification between the *vav* and *hei* (*Ze’er Anpin* and *Nukva*) which at the present does not happen constantly, will be constant, just like the unification between the *yud* and the *hei* (*Abba* and *Ima*). Additionally, the value of “it shall be” (יְהִיָּה) and *Yehudah* (יְהוּדָה), which is 30, is the number of traits by which kingdom is acquired. “It shall be” also seems to indicate eternity, alluding to the eternity of the House of David (whereas, in the phrase alluding to Saul, there is no allusion to eternity, suggesting that the House of Saul reigned for just a single generation).

Solomon’s anointment

The eternal reign of the House of David began with Solomon, who built the First Temple in Jerusalem. David prepared the material with which the Temple was constructed, but Solomon constructed it, in practice. What do the sages learn from the final instance of “holy oil of anointment?” They learn that the entire quantity of the anointing oil is perfect and constant, in the present (when it was made) and for all time. Each of the additional words, “...to Me for your generations” (יְהִיָּה זֶה לִי לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם) is full of nuance. “It will be” (יְהִיָּה) is as we said before, a connotation for the oil’s eternity and unchanging nature and quantity, while the word “this” (זֶה) is the word associated with the special prophecy level of Moshe Rabbeinu. The word, “this” also alludes to the amount of oil used to create the holy oil of anointment. On top of the fragrances (pure myrrh, fragrant cinnamon, aromatic cane, and cassia), the Torah states to add a hin of oil. Rashi says, that a hin (הֵינ) is 12 *log* (לוֹגִין), the *gematria* of the word “this” (זֶה). The word hin (הֵינ) is quite rare, it only appears here, and 4 more times in the prophecy of the future Temple at the end of Ezekiel.

From the word “for your generations” (לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם), we learn that only Moshe Rabbeinu made this oil and no one ever made anything like it. This is consummate wholeness, which alludes to Solomon, the third king anointed with the oil. Solomon’s name in Hebrew actually means “whole” or “consummate wholeness” (שְׁלֵמוֹת).

The development and structure of the three phrases

We’ve seen that the phrase, “holy oil of anointment” develops, or evolves very clearly here, each time getting longer. How many letters in each stage? In the first variant (שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ) there are 10 letters. In the second variant (שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ יְהִיָּה זֶה לִי לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם) there are 14 letters. We didn’t note this before, but 14 is the value of “David” (דָּוִד) the second king to be anointed with the oil. Finally, the third variant contains 25 letters. So altogether, all three instances have 49 letters (and 7 words). Since 49 is the square of 7, and square numbers represent consummate inter-inclusion, we see that

these phrases do indeed complement one another. We can draw them in the form of a square of 7, like so:

ש מ ן מ ש ח ת
 ק ד ש ש מ ן מ
 ש ח ת ק ד ש י
 ה י ה ש מ ן מ
 ש ח ת ק ד ש י
 ה י ה ז ה ל י
 ל ד ר ת י כ ם

In this figure, the first line is whole, in the sense that it ends with a whole word, משחת. The final line is also the single word, לדרתיכם.

The three phrases and the three kings

Just the basic phrase, “holy oil of anointment” (שמן משחת קדש) equals 1542. When we multiply it by 3 and add the additional words, יהיה, זה לי, and לדרתיכם the total (which is the value of the entire square figure) comes to 5442. But, now let’s add to this the value of the 3 kings who were anointed with the holy oil of anointment, Saul (שאול), David (דוד), and Solomon (שלמה). Their values are 375, 14, and 337, respectively, and together their value is 726. Added to 5442, the grand total of the complete three phrases describing the oil and the 3 kings is 6168. But, what is amazing about this number, 6168 is that it is equal to exactly 4 times 1542, the value of the original basic phrase, “holy oil of anointment” (שמן משחת קדש). Not only that, but since the basic phrase contains 3 words, then 4 times its value is equal to what is known as the front and back (פנים ואחור) of the phrase, or שֶׁמֶן שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ מִשְׁחַת קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ. This is a beautiful mathematical illustration of the Ba'al Haroke'ach's ru'ach hakodesh that these three instances of “holy oil of anointment” allude to the three kings anointed with the oil.

The ingredients of the oil of anointment

Now let’s do another *gematria* pertaining to the oil of anointment. The ingredients that went into the oil also demonstrate a ratio of 1 to 4, since there were 4 fragrant materials added to olive oil: pure myrrh (מר דרור), fragrant cinnamon (קנמן בשם), aromatic cane (קנה בשם), and cassia (קדה) all added to olive oil (שמן זית). The value of all the ingredients is 2645, which is the product of 5 times 529. So the average value of each ingredient is 529, or 23 squared, the value of “pleasure” (תענוג).

Oil represents the inner aspect of the *partzuf* of Abba (wisdom), but certainly, we know that the inner essence Abba is the same as the inner aspect of Atik (פנימיות אבא). The oil of anointment is certainly a source of great pleasure, and it is used to anoint both the vessels of the Tabernacle and the priests, but the main thing about it, its final purpose is to be used to anoint the Mashiach, the kings.

4. Transforming the bitter into the sweet

Now let's return to the Rebbe's sichah about the dispute between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah regarding how the oil of anointment is made.

"Transforming darkness into light and the bitter taste into sweetness"

It is well known that the true tzadik that is described in the Tanya is able to transform the darkness into light and the bitter into sweetness. The main holiday when we are all *tzadikim* and able to transform darkness into light is Chanukah, during the mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah candles, until there are no longer people in the marketplace. The candle that we light transforms the darkness outside into light.

On Purim, we are able to transform the bitterness, the bitter drop as its called in Hebrew (alcohol) into sweetness.

These two idioms are both from the *Zohar*. What is the difference between them? To transform darkness into light is to rectify the *kelipah* of *nogah*, the intermediate husk, but to transform the bitter into sweetness is infinitely harder because it means transforming the 3 impure husks into holiness. But, a Jew has the power to do both.

About transforming the impure into the pure, it is written that it is similar to, "Who can bring the pure out of the impure, not one" (מי יתן טהור מטמא לא אחד), a verse that the sages say describes Abraham coming out of Terach and Mordechai coming out of Shimi. We mentioned the verse, "A Jewish man was in Susa the city and his name was Mordechai the son of Ya'ir [Ya'ir stems from "light" and so up to this point there is only the transformation of darkness into light] the son of Shimi." Shimi [the son of Gera] was the man who cursed David, the anointed king, when he fled from his son Absalom. For this he was to be killed, but David did not punish him, instead he left it to his son Solomon. The fact that Mordechai could come out of Shimi indicates the Purim is indeed a holiday of "the pure coming out of the impure."

Identifying the myrrh

What is the identity of this fragrance translated as myrrh (מֵרְרִיחַ)? All the Ge'onim [the Babylonian sages that led the people from the signing of the Talmud to about the year 1000CE) agree that it is musk. The word "musk" is also the meaning of the name [Chayah] Mushka. It too is a form of the pure coming out of the impure, since it is the blood of an impure animal which has very good smell, so good that it is considered the first and finest among all fragrances.

This animal is found in India. It has to be free running. And when it roams freely, drops of its blood come out of its neck.

Transforming the impure animal

How do you identify this animal? It looks like a deer (צִבִּי). But, this is an impure animal unlike the deer. Who else resembles a deer? The Jew's power to transform the the bitter into sweetness—which is far greater than the ability to transform darkness into light—also pertains to the power of imagination, the ability to see resemblance between

two thing. The verse says that God is like a deer (דוֹמָה דוֹדֵי לְצִבִּי). So, two resemble the deer: the Almighty Himself and this impure animal.

The word deer (צִבִּי) is an acronym for “A tzadik lives by his faith” (צַדִּיק בְּאֵמֶנתוֹ יֵחִיד). A tzadik, as we said, is someone who can rectify the power of imagination. Like the deer, he holds on to two extremes (the impure animal and the Almighty). But, he has the ability to transform the bitter (the bitter drop—alcohol) into the most wonderful fragrance. The sages describe the mitzvah to drink wine on Purim with the word לִבְשׁוּמֵי, which literally means to drink to the point that one gives off a good fragrance, meaning that one has transformed the bitter drop, the alcohol, into the sweetest, most fragrant perfume in the world. Then one has attained the level of “My beloved is like a deer” (דוֹמָה דוֹדֵי לְצִבִּי).

The Ramban’s identification

The Ramban in analyzes this whole topic of the מַר דְּרוּר. To begin with he doesn’t agree with the Gaonim that this is blood from an impure animal. He says that in the languages, be they Semitic or otherwise, this is the name of a fragrance that is made from a type of grass called myrrh. His discussion is an example of elevating secular knowledge to the level of pure holiness.

Using blood from an impure animal in the oil of anointment

One of the reasons to reject the Ge’onim’s opinion that this is blood from an impure animal is that it seems unreasonable to take something that we are not permitted to eat, something impure, and use it for the anointing oil. There is a lot of discussion on this point, and the bottom line is that the blood from the impure animal is no longer impure, its impurity is gone.

But, how can this be? It still comes from something impure. This is a very good example of “Who can take the pure out of the impure, not one,” which means that only He who is “not one,” in the sense that He is nothing like anyone, the Almighty, can do this. In Chassidut this is connected with the level of God’s unity that is above the level of oneness—the singular (the three levels are: singular, one, primordial—יְחִיד אֶחָד קְדָמִין). And so, only out the power of God’s singularity can the impure be made pure. So we have here three examples of transforming the impure into the pure: Abraham, Shimi, and musk.

5. Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Sichah on the Dispute between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah

Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah – “the dispute between the sages of Israel”

Now we come to the dispute between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah that the Lubavitcher Rebbe addresses in a sichah.¹ We’ve seen that following the 4 fragrances,

¹. *Likutei Sichot v. 16.*

the Torah mentions a hin of olive oil. We saw that Rashi explains that the hin is 12 log of oil. Then Rashi adds that the sages of Israel disputed this point, because it presents a difficulty: How could just 12 *log* of oil be enough to make the oil given the very large amounts of the 4 types of fragrance prescribed by the Torah. Rabbi Yehudah says, that 12 *log* of oil (each *log* is 6 *beitzim*, so 12 *log* is equivalent to 72 *beitzim* of olive oil) prescribed by the Torah is not enough to even oil all the raw material from which the fragrances are made (לְסוּדָה אֶת הָעֵקָרִין אֵינוֹ סָפֵק). Therefore, Rabbi Yehudah holds that the raw material was first deeply cooked in water, until the water took the fragrance. Then the oil was placed on the water until the fragrance had been transferred to it. Finally, the oil was separated out of the water.

Rabbi Meir though says that this amount of oil was used to deeply cook (שְׁלִיקָה) the raw materials and for that, 12 *log* is enough.

How can Rabbi Meir's understanding be realistic?

Now the Rebbe says that since *Rashi* says that the sages of Israel disputed how the oil was made, and mentions both Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah, it means that both are acceptable according to the literal meaning of the verses. Both are a viable explanation for the reality of how the oil of anointment was made. But, how can we say that Rabbi Meir's opinion is realistic after Rabbi Yehudah's explanation that 12 *log* of oil is not enough to even oil the raw material.

Also, why doesn't Rashi at least explain how according to each opinion the oil of anointment was prepared? These are obviously very strong questions.

Mentioning the names of disputants is rare

Before we give the Rebbe's answer, let's say something about Rashi's choice of phrase, "the sages of Israel" (חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). In all, Rashi uses this phrase 9 times in his commentary on the Pentateuch. However, in 7 instances where he uses this phrase, he doesn't mention the names of the disputants. But, two times he does, and in both cases, the sages are the same: Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Meir. What this indicates is certainly that the cases are linked and that there is a similar reasoning (לְשִׁטַּת־הוֹ) that each follows in both cases. This is a very straightforward conclusion, but I haven't seen that any of Rashi's commentaries mention it. It also means that a sharp young child could pick up on the connection between the two instances in which their names are mentioned (especially since the first instance was only a few parashot back).

Before we continue let's bring a gematria, "the sages of Israel, Yehudah, Meir" (חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוּדָה מֵאִיר) equals 900, which is 30 squared, or Yehudah (יְהוּדָה) squared. The disputes between them are usually ruled like Rabbi Yehudah.

The first dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Meir

Usually the ruling follows Rabbi Yehudah. The first time Rashi mentions Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah as disputants is in regard to the laws of rental (שׁוֹכֵר). Though we know there are four categories of temporary possession: the safekeeper (שׁוֹמֵר הַנְּגִים), the

renter (שׂוֹכֵר), overseer for pay (שׂוֹמֵר שְׂכָר), and the borrower (שׂוֹאֵל). Of the four, the laws of rental are not mentioned explicitly when it comes to special cases such as when the object rented has been stolen. Rabbi Meir says that the renter is likened to a safekeeper (שׂוֹמֵר חֲנָיִם) while Rabbi Yehudah says that he is treated like an overseer for pay (שׂוֹמֵר שְׂכָר). Again, the Rebbe's point is that we should be able then to connect these two disputes, since in both cases, Rashi mentions Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah by name.

“The sages of Israel” – essence vs. reality

If Rashi describes these two sages explicitly as “the sages of Israel,” to what sefirah should we correspond them? Since they are *two* sages (חֲכָמִי), and “sage” in Hebrew is “wise,” they allude to the higher and lower wisdom. Higher wisdom is the *sefirah* of wisdom and lower wisdom is the wisdom in the *sefirah* of kingdom. King Solomon too had two wisdoms, “God’s wisdom to do” (חֲכֻמַּת אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת) and “Solomon’s wisdom” (חֲכֻמַּת שְׁלֹמֹה). Higher and lower wisdom are also known as higher and lower honor (כְּבוֹד). Since this word, honor, equals 32, it represents the 32 pathways of wisdom mentioned in Sefer Yetzirah. Between them, Rabbi Meir is higher wisdom, supernal wisdom. Rabbi Yehudah is the lower wisdom.

In the books discussing the general rules regarding the Talmud and its disputes, disputes between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah are likened to those between Rabbi Shimon (bar Yochai) and Rabbi Yehudah. Thus, Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Meir are similar, *vis a vis* their disputes with Rabbi Yehudah. It is well known that Rabbi Shimon (and now, Rabbi Meir) approach a topic from its inner essence, while Rabbi Yehudah approaches it from its external, realistic aspect. This fits, very nicely with Rabbi Yehudah being the wisdom of kingdom, since wisdom represents essence and kingdom represents reality.

“The sages of Israel” – the leader and the spokesman

If we’d like to go another step in this meditation, maybe we can correspond each of the two words in the phrase, “the sages of Israel” (חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) with Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah. Which of them is the “sages” and which is the “Israel?” Rabbi Yehudah knows how to speak, he is called the First Speaker (רִאשׁ הַמְדַבְּרִים). Why is he the spokesperson? Because he has an eye for reality, he knows how to communicate himself and his opinions properly.

On the other hand are Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Shimon communicates poorly, and gets into trouble. When he’s asked a question about the Romans his answer gets him in a lot of trouble, and so he has to hide himself in a cave for 13 years just to stay alive. Rabbi Meir is a little better. His answers are very complex and they really confuse everybody. With his answers he can purify the impure and make impure seem pure. That is why in the end, the sages couldn’t understand Rabbi Meir’s opinions.

In any case, the Israel is Rabbi Yehudah and the sages is Rabbi Meir. Since both words have 4 letters, we can multiply them one by the other, letter by letter. We call this a “dot product” (because of its similarity to a dot product in mathematics). The dot

product between **חכמי** and **מאיר** is 2740, or 10 times the value of Mordechai (**מְרֻדְכַי**). Adding the dot product between **יְהוּדָה** and **יִשְׂרָאֵל** (each has 5 letters) gives us 5694, or 26 times 219, where 219 equals the 13th of Adar (**יג אדר**), our date today. 5694 is also equal to 26 times 3 times “wisdom” (**חֵכְמָה**), 73.

Nullifying the raw material in the olive oil

Now let's get back to the main thing. The Rebbe says that it is a *pshat* in Rashi that for Rabbi Meir, what is produced in the end does not have to be pure oil. It can be oil mixed with raw materials. But, for Rabbi Yehudah it has to be pure oil in the end, because after all, at the end, the Torah describes the product as, “an oil of anointment it shall be.” So even though the raw material from which the fragrances come needs to be cooked, the cooking can't cause the olive oil to be lost, to change. It has to stay olive oil.

But, according to Rabbi Meir it is fine that the original oil is changed by the cooking. This explains why Rashi doesn't have to explain Rabbi Meir's opinion in relation to Rabbi Yehudah's question about the quantity of oil not sufficing to even oil the raw material. Rabbi Meir says, you just add the oil into the mixture and the fact that it changes by the time your done is not a problem, the main thing is the mixture created by the deep cooking.

So, we can say that their dispute centers on the question of whether the oil can contain the raw materials left in it after the cooking (Rabbi Meir) or whether, the oil must remain pure and only the fragrance (but not the matter) of the raw materials be introduced into it. Rabbi Meir has no problem with the oil being infused with the raw material itself.

Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah – the present vs. the future

In effect, we can see both their opinions in the Torah's wording. First, the Torah states, “You shall make it into sacred anointing oil, a blended compound as made by mixing,” suggesting Rabbi Meir's opinion, that the oil too should be mixed and blended with the raw material. But, then it continues, “an oil of anointing it shall be,” which stresses Rabbi Yehudah's opinion, that the main thing is that it be oil in the end.

Now, to connect their dispute here with their dispute regarding rental (**שְׂכִירוּת**), the Rebbe first states the essence of each one's reasoning (his **שֵׁטָה**). Rabbi Meir sees the present moment and state as most important, while for Rabbi Yehudah, the future is most important.

The same is true, says the Rebbe, regarding the renter. The dispute there is whether he is like a “safekeeper” (**שׁוֹמֵר הַנֶּמֶס**) who is not culpable if the object placed in his possession is lost or stolen, or whether he is like an “paid overseer” (**שׁוֹמֵר שְׂכָר**) who is culpable in these cases. What is the root of the two opinions? Again, it can be said to be the difference between focusing on the present vs. focusing on the future.

When the owner rents his ox, for instance, to the person renting it, Rabbi Meir says he focuses on the present, i.e., on the fact that he is now being paid to rent his ox. The payment is his main focus—the payment in the present moment. Therefore, if something

happens in the future—the ox is stolen or lost—the person renting is treated like a safekeeper who is not culpable in these cases. The owner rents with the present in mind.

But, according to Rabbi Yehudah, the owner renting his ox is very concerned with the ox's future—that it be returned to him in good health and on time. It's true that he is being paid to rent the ox out, but the payment is not his main focus, not as much as the ox's future state. Therefore, according to Rabbi Yehudah, the person renting is culpable for the ox in cases in which in the future it will be stolen or lost, just like a paid overseer. The owner rents with the future in mind.

Present is essential, the future is realistic

Let's return to the earlier definition, that Rabbi Meir sees the essence and that Rabbi Yehudah focuses on reality. We didn't ask this before, but we have to now: how does essence go together with the present, while the future correspond to reality. I probably would normally think the exact opposite.

To answer, let's introduce a word that the Rebbe doesn't use in his sichah: experience (חוויה). This has been a central word in our teachings over the years. What we will now say is of course applicable to all aspects of our lives. When the oil is prepared—and it is just once or all eternity—then during the preparation, the focus of one's consciousness is deeply immersed in the experience of cooking all the materials together. The idea is then that total immersion in the experience connects one with the essence. This is also what wisdom is about. Wisdom (which corresponds with the World of Emanation) is where all times are as one, the past, the present, and the future, are one (הַיְהִי הַיְהִי וְיַהֲיֶיָהּ are 1, together equals 73, the value of wisdom).

On the other hand, Rabbi Yehudah says that even when the oil is being prepared, the focus is not on the present moment, on preparing it itself, but that it be exactly suited to be an eternal, constant oil. Therefore, the focus is actually on the future product, what will come out of the preparation, what will realistically be produced. We rule according to Rabbi Yehudah because halachah looks at things externally, and now what we have gained is that a halachic frame of mind is also focused on the future. Rabbi Yehudah says the focus is on the utility of the action being taken, not on the action itself (on experiencing the action). Utility in general is related to the four lower *sefirot*, especially to kingdom.

Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon, present and posterity, sacred and eternal

In parashat Shemini there is a similar dispute between Moshe Rabbeinu and his brother Aharon. Moshe Rabbeinu judges the situation based on the present moment alone, while Aharon says that the moment is not necessarily the same thing as when you're judging things for posterity, when you take the future generations into account. Moshe Rabbeinu on the other hand thinks that the verdict should be the same in both cases.

Another way to state this is the difference between an ad hoc, a temporary ruling (הוראת שעה) and one that is for posterity. Rabbi Meir is a messianic figure. The initials of the description of the Mashiach, "The spirit of our nostrils, the Mashiach of God" (רוּחַ

spell Meir (מֵאִיר). His name is also the same letters as the Aramaic translation of “free myrrh” (מֵיִרָא דְכֵיִא), the allusion to Mordechai in the Torah. Rabbi Meir experiences the present moment and likewise as we shall momentarily see, does Mordechai. But, Rabbi Yehudah is concerned about the future.

We also define this dispute as the dispute between the sacred (מְקוֹדֵשׁ) and the continuous (תָּדוּר). There are things that are sacred, but not continuous. Being sacred is being more inner and essential, but it does not ensure continuous existence. The notion that the olive oil be cooked with the other raw materials is about sanctity. But, that the result be something eternal, continuous, that comes from the fact that the oil should be eternal.

We can now add that the root behind Rabbi Meir’s reasoning that the oil can lose its nature through the preparation process is linked to his goal of transforming the bitter into sweetness. The transformation is so complete (because it reaches the essence) that Rabbi Meir would not have a problem with the myrrh actually being musk. The transformation is such that it can make something pure out of an impure animal. In fact, we can easily state that the source for the two opinions about the מֶרְדָּוֹר (whether it is musk or myrrh) is the dispute between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Meir’s outlook is messianic, the musk can come from an impure animal and still become sacred. That is the power of the sacred (מְקוֹדֵשׁ). We can also add that Rabbi Meir holds by the medicine of the future, when like cures like (רְפוּאָת דְּרֻמָּה בְּרֻמָּה), the type of medicine exercised by the Almighty and that will be used by the Mashiach.

On the other hand, what bothers the *Ramban* is exactly what bothers Rabbi Yehudah—they both understand that everything that goes into the preparation of the oil will exist for posterity. How can you have an impure animal contributing to the eternal if the animal remains what it is—impure? (Again, Rabbi Meir understands that everything is cooked together, very deeply, so that in the end the essence is transformed). Bringing all the proof that he does from languages around the globe also connects the *Ramban* with Rabbi Yehudah, the spokesman, the one who communicates and judges from the present meaning.

Seven candles in the measurements of the raw materials

Let’s look for a moment at the measurements of the raw materials used to prepare the oil of anointment. Altogether there are 7 measures. Myrrh 500 units, fragrant cinnamon, half of it is 250, so the whole amount is 500 too. Aromatic cane 250, and cassia 500. So altogether we have here 7 times 250 units. 250 is the value of “candle” (נֵר). The total is then 1750, where 1750 is the value of, “How beautiful and pleasant is pleasurable love” (מֵה יָפִית וּמֵה נְעֻמַת אֱהָבָה בִּתְעֻנוּגִים).

Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah regarding zimun

The Rebbe brings a third dispute between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah regarding *zimun*, whether we perform *zimun* even when the quantity of bread consumed is just a *kazayit* (an olive)—Rabbi Meir—or whether the quantity has to be at least a *kabeitzah* (an

egg) is required—Rabbi Yehudah. The *pshat* in the Torah is that what one eats should be satisfying, “You shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall say a blessing” (וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ (וּבִרְכָתָּ). Thus, the Torah requires a person to say a blessing if he’s eaten a *kazayit*, because that is considered eating, but the sages ruled that in order to say the blessing, the grace after meals, it should be at least a *kabeitzah*.

So with regard to the *zimun* that comes before the grace after meals, Rabbi Yehudah looks at eating for the purpose of saying a blessing, eating is utilitarian from his point of view, and therefore he requires that it be at least the amount that would require one to say the blessing after the meal opinion. But Rabbi Meir, focuses on the present moment, on the experience, and therefore says that a person is obligated with *zimun* even if he only ate a *kazayit*.

The Tanya’s beinoni and focusing on the future

In every action there is the experience of the act and there is the impression left over. Rabbi Yehudah senses the impression, the residue (the *reshimu*) that is left over from the act. When one judges reality externally, the thing that he sees is the impression, the *reshimu*. The same is true for the Tanya’s *beinoni*—the intermediate individual. As much as the intermediate is in the present, he judges the present moment as it seems externally. Transformation is not really possible, so the important thing is the present moment’s utility—what will come out of it in the future. The *beinoni* has sanctity in the present moment of prayer (prayer itself is called present moment—חיי שעה), but then this sanctity departs because to constantly live the present moment is the lot of the *tzadik*, not the *beinoni*. The *tzadik* on the other is into transformation (אֲתֵּהפְּכָא), like Rabbi Meir.

The secret of the half

The entire concept of connecting with the Rebbe (הַתְּקִשׁוּת), that “the *tzadik* is the foundation of the world” (צַדִּיק יְסוּד עוֹלָם), and the King Mashiach are all related to the “oil of holy anointment.” The Torah does something very unique here. Instead of telling us that the quantity of the fragrant cinnamon should be 500 units, it tells us that it’s half is 250. The simple reason is that we should add to “small additions” to each quantity of 250.²

The notion of taking a half is similar to the parashah’s beginning with the half shekel. In the continuation of the parashah we read about the sin of the Golden Calf. The half shekels are meant to atone for the Golden Calf—everything that precedes the Golden Calf is meant to provide atonement for it. God provides the remedy before the affliction.

In the parahah there is another important quantity—the quantity of gold used to make the Golden Calf, 125 kantrin of gold (Rashi states this in his commentary). We

². When a merchant measures a quantity, he must measure it and then add a small additional amount in favor of the buyer. This small additional amount is called a *הַכְרָעָה*, literally “pushing down” since the scales are pushed down a little in favor of the buyer.

learn this from the word “image” (מִסְכָּה),³ whose value is 125. Now, 125 is another half, a half of 250. But, 125 is odd so it can’t be divided again.

Each 500 alludes to a shoulder (כַּתֵּף), the object of the Arizal’s yichud of memory. Since there are two 500 mentioned in regard to preparing the oil of anointment, then we have here both shoulders.

The middle letters of the perfumes are נִשְׂמֵשׂוּם, which equals 1000 or 10 to the third. So from 1000 we go to 500, to 250, to 125, this is like half-life, you split again and again until you reach zero.

The oil of anointment and the Holy Ark

We mentioned earlier that the eternal nature of the anointing oil is like the miracle of the Ark of the Covenant which did not take up any space. These are both like the Ba’al Shem Tov’s teaching regarding learning Torah, that however much you learn, you should feel that the Torah remains whole—it is as if you never started learning it.

The oil of anointment, in this sense, can’t be touched. You can’t subtract anything from it because you can’t really touch it, just as the Holy Ark can’t be touched. The Ark is in fact the first vessel to be anointed.

Good hope

What is the value of “a half” (מִחְצִית)? 548. Half of 548 is 274, the value of Mordechai (מְרֻדְכַּי). Half of Mordechai is 137, the value of Kabbalah (קַבְּלָה) and the most mysterious number in Modern Physics.

What we’ve learnt then is that each of us should take his half. For instance, someone whose name is Oded (עֹדֵד), half his name equals 42, and half of that is 21, the value of the Name Ekyeh. You should at least reach your final half.

The Chatam Sofer brings the observation that “cursed is Haman” (אֲרוּרֵי הָמָן) is equal to “blessed is Mordechai” (בְּרוּךְ מְרֻדְכַּי). He also says that one should have in mind when observing this point that they also both equal “hope” (שִׁבְר). He says a few more things, but that is his point. What is the hope? The hope is that even after you break something you should believe that you can fix it.

³. Exodus 32:4.