



HaRav Shaul Israeli zt"l  
Founder and President

# HEMDAT YAMIM

## Parashat HaShavua

Ki Tetzei, 14 Elul 5779

### Different Types of "Arranged" Marriages

Harav Yosef Carmel

Our *parasha* opens with "difficult" *p'sukim* about the possibility of taking an *eshet yefat to'ar*, a beautiful woman from the enemy camp. *Chazal* depict this phenomenon as a step the Torah allowed to deal with a difficult situation for one's evil inclination (Kiddushin 21b). Ostensibly, we are talking about the possible overflowing of bad thoughts through the atmosphere produced by the heat of battle.

Let us try to give a broader context to the phenomenon. In our times, it is much easier to understand that "going out to war" is a wider experience than just rolling out the tanks. Warfare includes computers, which can be more powerful than Alfred Nobel's explosives. Even in ancient times, many of the struggles were held in fancy rooms, as people indulged in food and drink, without spears and swords. This was the world of diplomacy through which one nation could gain control over another nation by means of diplomacy, without bloodshed. The end of every such diplomatic effort was a wedding. The stronger king received the daughter of the weaker king, with the daughter representing the day-to-day dominion of the vassal to the dominant leader.

In the metaphorical sense, then, the "female captive" need not have had her hands bound, but could have been a princess given to the stronger king without her necessary interest in the matter. The idea of removing her "garments of captivity" refers to her changing her mode of behavior, as she must not bring the influences of her native nation into the Jewish king's palace.

We can prove the relevance of this approach from the story of David. David's third son, who was born in Chevron, was Avshalom the son of Maacha the daughter of King Talmay of Geshur (Shmuel II, 3:2-3). *Chazal* refer to Maacha as an *eshet yefat to'ar* and to Avshalom as a *ben sorer u'moreh*, a rebellious son, who is put to death, under certain unusual circumstances, due to expectations about his increasing moral/social deterioration. They say that David had such a bad son because the son's mother had been an *eshet yefat to'ar* (Pesikta Zutrata, Ki Teitzei 36a).

If an *eshet yefat to'ar* is only a literal POW, it is difficult to understand the scenario. That would mean that David fought the King of Geshur during the time he served as king in Chevron. At that time, though, David was only king over the Tribe of Yehuda and he was under the sphere of influence of the Plishtim. How would he dare go all the way to the Golan Heights to fight Geshur?

It is much more reasonable to posit that David "acquired" Maacha as a political arrangement. Some of the most influential people in the Tribe of Yehuda had married into the family of Machir from the tribe of Menashe, who had 23 cities in the area of the Gilad, making them neighbors of Geshur in the Golan (see Divrei Hayamim I, 2:21-22). The Tribe of Menashe had special connections with the neighboring kingdoms of Aram, which included the small kingdom of Geshur (see *ibid.* 7:14). In that context, the Judean up-and-coming king made a diplomatic connection with Geshur, one that resulted in getting the princess as a wife. This arranged marriage was equated with *eshet yefat to'ar* and indeed resulted in the problems with her son Avshalom.

Let us pray that the IDF will remain the world's most moral army and will not Heaven forbid get involved in any activity of *eshet yefat to'ar* or any other that could ruin its level.

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**Those who fell in wars for our homeland. May Hashem avenge their blood!**



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by Rav Daniel Mann

**Question:** Unfortunately, I did not look at a *siddur* last night when reciting *Al Hamichya*. I made a couple mistakes along the way, and I remember specifically leaving out the words “*al ha’aretz*” in the *chatimah* (end part). Was I *yotzeh*?

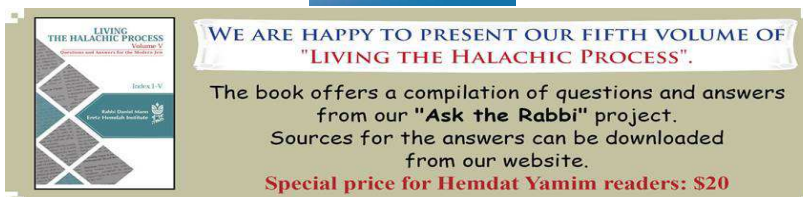
Al Hamichya's generic term is *Me'ein Shalosh*, which also covers the *beracha acharona* on prominent fruits of *Eretz Yisrael* and wine. The term means "similar to the three," i.e., the three (main) *berachot* of *Birkat Hamazon*. A *baraita* (Berachot 48b) derives from the *pasuk* about *Birkat Hamazon* that the three *berachot* need to cover three elements: the food Hashem gives us; the Land He has given us; Jerusalem, for whose rebuilding we pray. *Me'ein Shalosh*, the abridged *Birkat Hamazon*, also includes these elements, with overlapping language. In *Birkat Hamazon*, if one missed an entire *beracha* or even a crucial element of one, he needs to repeat *Birkat Hamazon* (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 188:3-4; see Mishna Berura 188:8). Does the same apply to your omission of *Eretz Yisrael* in *Me'ein Shalosh*?

Indeed, the Magen Avraham says (208:17; the Mishna Berura 208:55 and others agree) that if one does not mention the Land at the end, he is *yotzei*. His proof is from Tosafot (Berachot 44a), who deals with two versions of the ending of *Me'ein Shalosh* for wine: some mention "*gefen*" and "*pri hagefen*" and others mention "*ha'aretz*" and "*pri hagefen*." The Magen Avraham infers that the question is which is better, but that the first version would certainly be valid *b'di'eved*. It is possible to claim that he only refers to *Me'ein Shalosh* on wine, but most understand him to be talking generally (see V'ten Beracha 20:(56)).

It is likely that these lenient opinions are based on the fact that the Land was already mentioned. However, one can argue that, *b'di'aved*, *Eretz Yisrael* can be left out totally. The Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 17) says that if one recited the first *beracha* of *Birkat Hamazon* instead of *Me'ein Shalosh* for wine or dates (which are filling), he fulfilled his obligation. Since that *beracha* makes no mention of the Land whatsoever, we seem to see that it is not that critical to the *beracha acharona*. The Bi'ur Halacha (ad loc.) says that this is more understandable if *Me'ein Shalosh* is only a Rabbinically mandated *beracha*. On the other hand, the Chazon Ish (OC 34:4) says that what would work for a proper first *beracha* of *Birkat Hamazon* would not work for an improperly recited *Me'ein Shalosh* that omitted the Land or Yerushalayim (presumably he would agree with the Magen Avraham as presented above).

For one reason or another, if the only serious mistake you made in *Al Hamichya* is what you mentioned, it was valid *b'di'eved*.

**Do not hesitate to ask any question about Jewish life, Jewish tradition or Jewish law.**



# Ein Ayah

(from the writings of Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, z.t.l.)

## Too Basic for Free Choice

(condensed from Ein Ayah, Shabbat 9:67)

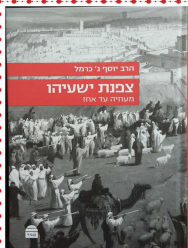
**Gemara:** “They stood at the bottom of the mountain” (Shemot 19:17). This teaches that Hashem held the mountain over them like a flask and said to them: “If you accept the Torah, that is good, and if you do not, this will be your burial place.”

**Ein Ayah:** Freedom of choice has special value in enabling the enhancement of man’s moral level. Therefore, it has special dominion in the areas to which it applies. However, the essence of a person’s set of desires is what defines him as a person. In that regard, one cannot fundamentally give any standing to freedom. We do not have freedom to desire or not desire. Desire is part of a person’s very life, and life is something that we have that is not based on our choice. What we control is how we push our desires to one side or the other, to the right or to the left. This is where the hand of choice comes into play.

If the Torah only applied to a person’s moral standing, it would make sense for it to have been given with full free will. But actually, the Torah is an expression of a person’s essence. If a person violates the Torah, he is betraying his own identity and changing his nature for the worse. It is as the *pasuk* says (about Adam’s sin – Bereishit Rabba 11:2): “He changed his face and was sent away” (Iyov 14:20). It is, therefore, appropriate that the Torah will be revealed in a manner that is of essence [and by necessity], in a manner that the root of desire is revealed and not the revelation of the branches of desire (i.e., what he decides given his desires).

A byproduct of this fact is that the Torah does not relate only to Israel, and it follows that Israel does not exist on its own in the world. Rather, everything is interwoven within the broad existence of everything in the world. All of existence necessitates that the Torah must exist, that it be mandated to mankind, and that Israel must accept it.

Mt. Sinai, the mountain that merited being the site of the giving of the Torah became the center of the world. This did not happen by chance, as there must be a reason that the Light of the World shone His light in a way that made Sinai so central. It thereby was saturated with the power of inclusiveness. Once all of this was decided, it became impossible to have a world in which Israel would exist without accepting the Torah. Israel’s status then was lined up to be a basis for all the centrality that developed upon the mountain. That is what is hinted at by the words, “They stood at the bottom of the mountain.” Within the power of the mountain upon which Hashem descended with fire was a hidden power that was able to coerce. In this context, Hashem said: “If you accept the Torah, that is good, and if you do not, this will be your burial place.” Only by accepting the Torah would Israel reveal their intrinsic existence in its true form. If not, all of existence would turn against Israel, as it would be turning against its true essence if they rejected the Torah.



### Tzofnat Yeshayahu- Rabbi Yosef Carmel

The Prophet Yeshayahu performed in one of the most stormy and dramatic periods of the Israeli nation's life, a period of anticipation for the Messiah that was broken by a terrible earthquake, and also caused a spiritual and political upheaval. The light at the end of the tunnel shone again only in the days of Chizkiyah.

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