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# HEMDAT YAMIM

## Parashat HaShavua

Vayeitzei, 9 Kislev 5780

### A Working Malach – part I

Harav Yosef Carmel

Yaakov's journey to and from Charan was accompanied by meaningful meetings with *malachim* (angels).

In the beginning of our *parasha*, it says that Yaakov was *pogei'ah* in a holy place, where he had his famous dream about angels on a ladder (Bereishit 28:10-12). Our *parasha* ends with Yaakov being *pogei'ah* with *malachim* of Hashem and calling the meeting place Machanayim because it was an encampment of godly beings (ibid. 32:2-3). We have discussed in the past that angels accompanied Yaakov wherever he went.

We have also mentioned the *machloket* on whether angels are wondrous creatures or whether they are just emissaries of Hashem's "natural world." Depending on our approach to the matter, we will explain differently what *peg'i'ah* is. One opinion in *Chazal* (see Berachot 26b) is that *peg'i'ah* is prayer, and Yaakov's first *peg'i'ah* is connected to his institution of Ma'ariv (the evening prayer). The other opinion says that it means to meet up with something, a language that *Chazal* often use (see for example Kalla Rabbati 5:9).

We want to offer an explanation of the word *malach* according to the approach that we are to view *malachim* as natural parts of the world. *Malach* means someone who carries out a task of a variety of types. One of the overarching themes of *Parashat Vayeitzei* is that while it seems as if Yaakov was a dedicated worker for Lavan, in fact the same things that he did made him a "servant of Hashem," i.e., a *malach*.

Yaakov teaches us important lessons as a role model for life. He recognized the good he received and worked with integrity and dedication for the person who provided his livelihood. Service of Hashem is predicated on the idea that when we do work in this world, it is as *malachim* of Hashem. As long as working for Lavan did not conflict with serving Hashem, Yaakov did so with great dedication and toil. As soon as Hashem told him that it was time to leave Lavan and return home (see Bereishit 31:4), Yaakov included his wives in the vision of *malachim* that he saw (ibid. 11) and returned home. Along the way, he returned to Beit El, where he had seen the *malachim*, and resumed his own mission as a human *malach*.

The last words of the *parasha* provide an indication that our approach is true. Yaakov met angels in Machanayim. These were the same angels that he saw on the ladder. Yaakov deserved this because he spent his days and nights as a *malach*, making sure that whatever jobs he did, it was an act of serving Hashem. (Next week we will see what David did in Machanayim.)

May we succeed, so that the work we do in this world in a proper manner will make us worthy of being called *malachim*.

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Deans: Harav Yosef Carmel, Harav Moshe Ehrenreich  
2 Bruriya St. corner of Rav Chiya St.  
POB 8178 Jerusalem 91080  
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# Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

## Partial Participation in a Wedding

**Question:** If one does not have enough time to take part in a whole wedding, is it better to come for the *chupa* or for the meal?

**Answer:** Although they are sometimes discussed interchangeably, there are two distinct, albeit closely related, *mitzvot* in which non-principals at a wedding should try to take part.

The *gemara* (Ketubot 17a) discusses the *mitzva* of *hachnasat kalla* – joyously escorting the *kalla* from her father's house to the place of the “*chupa*.” A large part of the townspeople were expected to join in, and this is important enough to warrant suspending Torah study and gaining right of way over a funeral procession (ibid.). It is a sign of *kavod* (see Tosafot ad loc.) for the participants in the important institution of marriage (there is a *machloket* whether marriage is a formal *mitzva*). While we no longer escort the *kalla* through the streets, *poskim* identify parallel events in today's wedding ceremony in which one can fulfill this (see Taz, Even Haezer 65:2).

Presumably, one who is a full participant in a wedding ceremony fulfills this element of showing respect. There is not much precedent for a formal *mitzva* to watch the performance of *mitzvot* (while appreciation of *mitzvot* is generally a nice thing). However, if the *chupa* is not well attended or people are not attentive or are talkative (I have seen both), it is a *zilzul* to the institution of marriage, the *chatan/kalla*, and the families, who rightfully expect interest in the momentous moments.

*Chazal* held the celebratory *seuda* after the *chupa* in very high regard. Regarding the provisions, significant time should be used to prepare for it (Ketubot 2a) and a burial of a parent can be pushed off so that the provisions are not wasted (ibid. 4a). The music is seen as deserving of far-reaching leniencies (see Rama, Orach Chayim 338:2; Igrot Moshe, OC II:95). Regarding participants' mandate to be *mesame'ach* (bring joy), we find great rabbis praised for compromising their honor (Ketubot 17a) and relaxing the standard level of *tzniut* in dancing before the *kalla* and praising her (ibid.), including the controversial Chassidic *minhag* (with earlier sources – see Beit Shmuel 21:11) of the *mitzva tantz*. The *gemara* (Berachot 6b) warns of Hashem's disapproval of one who “benefits from the feast of a *chatan* and is not *mesame'ach* him” and praises those who are *mesame'ach*. The Perisha (Even Haezer 65:2) limits this obligation to one who benefits from the meal. The Beit Shmuel (65:1) says that one should go to the wedding in order to be *mesame'ach*. The Tiv Kiddushin (EH 65:1) suggests that all can agree on a middle position – there is a *mitzva* to go, but only one who benefits and is not *mesame'ach* is criticized.

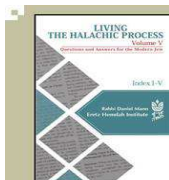
How each individual is *mesame'ach* is subjective (Ezer Mikodesh to EH 65:1), but it can include appropriate words, presents, dancing, or the very presence of an important person (ibid.). If one has a relationship only with the couple's parents, one can presumably be *mesame'ach* the couple vicariously.

Let us return to the question of preferences. Regarding a *brit mila*, the famous idea of not inviting actually refers to the *seuda*, not the *brit* itself (Tosafot, Pesachim 114a; Rama, Yoreh Deah 265:12). The Rama cites this idea of angering Hashem by failing to take part only regarding a *brit*, as we generally assume, but Tosafot also applies it to the *seuda* of a wedding of a *talmid chacham*. This points to the prominence of participation in the *seuda*. On the other hand, the Tiv Kiddushin (ibid. 3) says that the idea of suspending Torah study is for the escort, not the meal. Perhaps, though, that is because escorting when the procession passes one's place was likely not very time-consuming. We have thus seen the importance of various elements of participation at a wedding. No element seems to have a clear advantage over others, so subjective factors can be decisive. The factors can relate to the guest (e.g., convenience, whether he is better at dancing or verbal encouragement) or the couple/families (e.g., ask what they prefer; their budget).

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# Ein Ayah

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

## The Reaction to an Overwhelming Revelation

(condensed from Ein Ayah, Shabbat 9:91-92)

**Gemara:** With each of the commandments that Hashem spoke, the souls of Israel left them, as the *pasuk* says: “My spirit departed as I spoke with him” (Shir Hashirim 5:6). Considering that their soul departed after the first commandment, how did they receive the second one? Hashem brought down dew for resuscitating the dead and revived them, as it says, “You, Hashem, poured rain of giving; when Your portion was tired, You sustained them” (Tehillim 68:10). With each of the commandments that Hashem spoke, the people retreated 12 *mil* (several miles), and the angels had them jump forward, as the *pasuk* says, “*Malchei tzeva’ot yidodun yidodun*” (Tehillim ibid. 13) – read it as “*yedadun*” (they will cause others to jump).

**Ein Ayah:** When the light of limitless light, which is the source of the life of individuals, is revealed, the limited life of individuals implodes and is made small like a candle in the face of a torch. Hashem’s speech at Sinai caused the flow of limitless light, which caused the souls of Israel to leave them, as the souls were swept away by the flow.

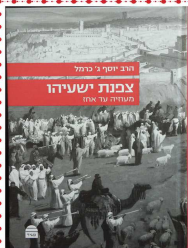
However, when there is no limited individual life, the live element of the divine speech cannot be projected onto people. So the *gemara* asks how there could have been a second commandment after the departure of the soul. The remedy could only come from the full light of life, which contradicts death – this is the dew that descends from Hashem. It makes lowlier people become capable of reaching great spiritual heights. When the lower-level life, with all its dreariness, ceased, Hashem gave Israel the ability to live on a higher level. This occurred even though Israel had not yet reached that level themselves. It was made possible with the help of the divine dew, even though it is on a lower level of spirituality than will exist in the future. This help to Hashem’s portion, Bnei Yisrael, who had become worn out, was arranged directly by Hashem.

[Besides the exit of their souls, the people were also forced into a retreat of twelve *mil*.] When there is powerful, heavenly light, which is much higher than those who are supposed to receive it, it must fill the recipient with a certain darkness, which draws them away from the close connection to the light. When the recipient retreats to a “shadier” place, the lessening of the intimidating shining of light prepares them to jump back quickly, not in a measured manner. The return is also not based on an internal revelation of spiritual strength, but by the addition of a new source of power and life.

There becomes a merging together of two lights – the lightening-like brilliant light and the “darker” light, which a normal individual is able to appreciate. It is actually the lower light, which comes from a place of humility and relative lowliness, that will be the source of spiritual advantage. It will be the anger that turns into laughter and the tears that turn into rejoicing with eternal grandeur.

Indeed, from the light that accompanied Hashem’s speech, the people retreated twelve *mil*, [which was the size of their encampment,] representing their full stature. They became full of the lower light that enables them to receive the higher light. It was the angels who returned them, as they represent the higher form of spirituality in the world. They needed to take the spirituality they had from serving Hashem and impart some to Israel.

The return to the place of more intense sanctity did not progress in an orderly manner, but came in jumps of surprise. They did not have to create something new, but shine on Israel special powers that were hidden but were prepared to emerge. The group of angels who carried this out were like a torch of life-giving light. Because we sat in darkness, Hashem was a light for us.



### 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.

"Tzofnat Yeshayahu – from Uziya to Ahaz" introduces us to three kings who stood at this crossroad in our nation's history: Uziya, a king who sought God but was stricken with leprosy because of his sin; Yotam, the most righteous king in the history of our people; And Ahaz, the king who knew God but did not believe in His providence.

In his commentary on the prophecies of Yeshayahu, Rabbi Yosef Carmel, Head of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit rabbinical court and a disciple of Rabbi Shaul Israeli zt"l, clings to the words of Hazal, our sages, and to the commentaries of the Rishonim, the great Jewish scholars of the middle ages, and offers a fascinating way to study Tanach. This reading attempts to explain the Divine Plan in this difficult period and to clarify fundamental issues in faith. Tzofnat Yeshayahu reveals to the reader the meaning of the prophecies in the context of the prophet's generation and their relevance to our generation.

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# P'ninat Mishpat

## Poisoning a Dog

(based on ruling 78007 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

**Case:** The plaintiff (=pl) hired the defendant (=def), who advertises his “natural” system, “without poison or danger,” to rid his house of rats, for a price of 4,680 shekels. Def placed several strips of material in strategic areas. Upon finishing, he wanted to give pl instructions, but pl was busy. Two weeks later, pl's dog became very sick (veterinary intensive care). The veterinarians suspect that rat poison was the cause of illness. Pl claims that if not for the advertisement of “no poison,” he would not have hired def. Def responds that no poison means only that it is not dangerous for people in the house, but certainly there is poison – after all, it says “extermination.” Def admits being aware of the dog and not warning pl, explaining that he did not expect a dog to eat the poison. He suggests that there was other poison in the area. Pl demands 4,790 shekels, the cost of the veterinary bills plus half off the price of the extermination charge (2,340 shekels) due to misrepresentation. Pl argues that the guarantee that def gives is useless for him, since he does not trust def in his house.

**Ruling:** It seems evident to us that def is the source of the poisoning of the dog, even though it cannot be proven conclusively. It is clear, though, that this type of damage causation is only *gerama* (too indirect to be able to obligate payment), as the *gemara* (Bava Kama 56a) says about a slightly more direct case of poisoning an animal. Although the *gemara* says that there is a moral obligation to pay in its case and our arbitration agreement enables us to obligate payment for *gerama*, we will not make def pay the veterinary bills because this was done by accident. (It is also not clear that the payment for doctors' bills (*ripuy*) applies to animals (see Pitchei Teshuva, Choshen Mishpat 307:3).)

However, pl is correct that def's advertisement created misrepresentation. Therefore, pl can claim *mekach ta'ut* (a mistaken and thus void sale). One cannot implement a normal voiding of the sale because the material was already used, the work was done (and cannot be returned), and positive impact (regarding the rats) was already made. Therefore, we will give back only 4,000 shekels (the majority of the agreed price for def's work for pl). It is true that pl asked only for half off due to misrepresentation, but pl made that limited claim with the understanding that he would be getting payment for the medical bills. This is thus a case of *mechilla b'ta'ut* (relinquishing rights through a mistake), and pl can receive a greater refund, which is less than the total he asked for.

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