



# HEMDAT YAMIM

Parashat Hashavua Chayei Sara, 19 Cheshvan 5783

Harav Shaul Israeli zt"l  
Founder and President

**P'shat, Drash, and the Ben Ish Chai**  
Harav Yosef Carmel

In our *haftara*, one of the supporters of the eventual succession of Shlomo to David's throne was a powerful, loyal, and capable follower of David, Benayahu ben Yehoyada. In Tzofnat Shmuel, we discuss the different approaches to the *navi's* coded description of the man, which begs deciphering (see Shmuel II, 23:20-22). Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad (1835-1910), the great and influential halachist and *kabbalist*, chose the names to several of his *sefarim*, including the one by which he is known, the Ben Ish Chai, from these *p'sukim*.

We will go through some of the descriptions in the *p'sukim* and see explanations of commentaries in both *p'shat* (simple, linguistic meaning) and *drash* (homiletic explanations). Of course, both "these and those are the words of the living G-d." It is clear that in choosing the names of his *sefarim*, Rav Yosef Chaim was thinking in terms of the *drash*. *Ben ish chay(il)* – While this literally means the son of a living man, Targum Yonatan renders the meaning: one who was fearful of sin. Abarbanel adds on that his father was so righteous that even when he was dead, he was considered alive. Mahari Kara and the Ralbag connect it to the word *chayil* and say that these words refer to Benayahu's physical valor. *Rav pe'alim* – while all agree that it means, like the words indicate, that he did many notable actions, Targum Yonatan and the Radak explain it means righteous actions. Mahari Kara and Ralbag explain it as acts of military skill and bravery, of which the *navi* shares four.

*Mikabtze'el* – Mahari Kara explains simply that he was from a town by that name. The *gemara* (Berachot 18a) expounds that he gathered many people to be involved in Torah study.

*Hu hika shnei ariel Moav* – Yonatan translates it along simple lines: he smote two great warriors from the Kingdom of Moav. Mahari Kara continued along the lines of *p'shat*, that he smote two palaces (*ariel*) of Moav, meaning the people who filled these palaces. The Ralbag explained similarly, that it was talking about the people of two fortresses, as the word *ariel* is made up of two words, lion and strong. Rashi on the above *gemara* goes in the direction of *drash*, that there was no one like him in the time of the two Temples, as Yeshayahu (29:1) talks about *ariel* as parallel to the place David built. The  *mishna* (Middot 4:7) also says that the Temple resembled a lion, which is wide in front and narrow in the back. He went down and smote the lion in the pit on the snowy day – All of the early commentaries explain this according to its literal meaning. They explain that fighting in such frigid conditions showed special bravery. With the lion in a desperate state and in confined quarters, the reality of near death to one of them made the feat more daring. He smote the Egyptian, the man of appearance – Yonatan translated this piece literally. The Radak points out that the parallel version in Divrei Hayamim renders it as a man of measure, meaning unusually large size, as we find regarding the spies in the desert (Bamidbar 13:32).

These are examples of the *p'shat* and *drash* complementing each other. This is appropriate for the Ben Ish Chai, who, on the one hand, was a great expert in the "revealed" areas of Halacha, while at the same time being a great expert in hidden matters.

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



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# Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

## Correcting Praise about Rain

**Question:** At a time of year when we do not mention rain in *Shemoneh Esrei's* second *beracha*, the *chazan* started saying “*Mashiv haruach ...*” People called out to him “*morid hatal*,” and right after he said “... *hagashem*,” he added “*morid hatal*” and continued. Was that valid?

**Answer:** One who says “*morid hagashem*” in the summer must go back (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 114:4), because we must not praise Hashem for rain when it is “a curse” (in Israel) (see Ta’anit 3b with Rashi). Although there are different opinions among *Rishonim* what the *gemara* means by making him go back (see Mordechai, Ta’anit 612; Rambam, Tefilla 10:8), we *pasken* that it means going to the beginning of the *beracha*. (If he went on to the next *beracha*, then it is to the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei* (Shulchan Aruch *ibid.*.)

There are two explanations of why to return to the beginning of the *beracha*. 1) The incorrect *beracha* was valueless, making starting again fundamentally necessary (Korban Netanel, Ta’anit 1:1). 2) If one continues, there is no way of showing that he regrets mentioning rain; by going back and omitting it where it is mentioned, he shows he takes back mentioning it (Mordechai *ibid.*; Ma’adanei Yom Tov, Berachot 4:14). One apparent *nafka mina* is whether it is enough to go back to the words before the place to mention rain (*rav l’hoshi’a*), where he can omit rain this time but it is not a full redoing of the *beracha*. Indeed, the Chayei Adam (I,24:6) says that while it is proper to go back to the beginning, it suffices to go back to “*rav l’hoshi’a*.” Your case is likely another *nafka mina* for those (Sephardim, Chassidim, as well as Ashkenazim in Israel) who say *morid hatal* in the summer. Although dew is not “rain negating” (after all, we ask for it along with rain in *Barech Aleinu* in the winter), the fact that it is the formula for the summer can make it sufficiently clear that he regrets mentioning rain. Therefore, Tehilla L’dovid (114:4) says it suffices (at least *b’dieved*) for such people to say *morid hatal* instead of going back to the beginning of the *beracha*. In fact, the Be’ur Halacha (to 117:3) says that one who said *v’ten tal u’matar* (in the ostensibly parallel *Barech Aleinu*; Shevet Halevi (VI:16) says they are not comparable in our context) in the summer and went back to say “*v’ten beracha*” fixed the *beracha*. Possible support for the position that the *beracha* is not inherently flawed is the fact that one does not need to go back to the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei* (see Pri Megadim, Eshel Avraham 114:9).

Despite all of this, several *Acharonim* posit that if one only went back to “*morid hatal*,” he has not fulfilled his requirement. The Shevet Halevi (*ibid.*) says that going back, even right away, does not suffice to erase the damage done, and starting the *beracha* anew is necessary, and this is Ohr L’tzion’s (II:7:29) bottom line as well. L’horot Natan VI:6 questions some of our assumptions, such as that going back to beginning requires the very first words, and that for those who say *morid hatal* it is an effective sign of retraction. Since there are formidable opinions on both sides, if one just added *morid hatal* and then finished the *beracha*, the matter is a doubt (Teshuvot V’hanhagot I:84). While generally it could be at least laudable to do another *Shemoneh Esrei*, with intention that if it is unnecessary, it should be an optional *tefilla* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 107:1). One cannot use this ploy on Shabbat, as optional *tefillot* are not possible then (*ibid.*).

The above relates primarily to a mistake made in the silent *Shemoneh Esrei*. While fundamentally the same rules apply to *chazarat hashatz* (Mishna Berura 126:3), a few factors are impactful. It is a true *tircha d’tzibbura* and embarrassment to the *chazan* to repeat *chazarat hashatz* because of the improperly corrected mistake. Additionally, since you describe the people calling out “*morid hatal*” as he started his mistake prompting the *chazan* to change course, it is clearer that he was taking back the mention of rain and one can rely on the opinions that *morid hatal* suffices.

### “Behind the Scenes” Zoom shiur

Eretz Hemdah is offering the readership to join in Rabbi Mann’s weekly Zoom sessions, analyzing with him the sources and thought process behind past and future responses. Email us at [info@erezhemdah.org](mailto:info@erezhemdah.org) to sign up (free) or for more information on joining the group.

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



# Igrot HaRe'aya - Letters of Rav Kook

## How Not to Combat Secularism – #132

**Date and Place:** 22 Nisan 5668 (1908), Yafo

**Recipient:** Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Bichovsky, a prominent Chabad rabbi, serving as a *rosh yeshiva* and *rav* in Europe, who later moved to *Eretz Yisrael*.

**Body:** I received your dear letter, written with the internal fire of Israel. On one hand, I am always ready to join a G-d-fearer, in whatever way they turn, in the quest to strengthen the sanctity of our holy Torah, especially in the Holy Land. On the other hand, I feel an obligation to point out to those who are involved in Hashem's work that they should make wisdom a guiding light, as "wisdom is great, as it was written between two Names of Hashem" (Berachot 33a). You should know, honorable Torah scholar, that only a very small part of what you want to fix can possibly be accomplished by means of the steps you suggest, namely, with government help.

However, the main point is more fundamental. The religious deterioration did not come because the rabbis did not protest against the institutions of the blasphemers, who destroy the Holy Land in spirituality and physicality. Rather, it is because the rabbis **only** protested and did not do other things.

There are not enough scrolls to write upon them even a small part of what the heart thinks on this matter. However, I will present a small part of the many things before a pure heart like yours.

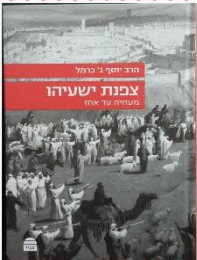
The way I see it, the main reason for the lack of success in our efforts to strengthen Judaism and the standing of the Jewish People in everything is that we have neglected the divine light in the heart and the mind. Everyone now turns just to fix simple *frumkeit* (practical religiosity), as if it will be possible to bring life to the world with a soulless body.

I am compelled to tell your honor that even *Chassidut*, the whole foundation of whose existence was to shine divine light generously and brightly into every heart and mind, has now changed its flavor. It now follows the path of simple *Charedism*, to the point that there is no difference between Chassidim and Mitnagdim. Indeed, the light of kindness has been removed from the heart, and people's internal parts are full of anger and strict judgments. They are hard and agitated; everything has fallen.

All of the practical things that your honor thinks we may possibly use to forcefully protect ourselves from the worst impurities that have appeared in our times, the days of *ikv'ta d'meshicha* (the period before the coming of *Mashiach*) are not the way to attain victory. The main thing is to join together as one unit to shine the divine light onto the world with wisdom and insight. We must strengthen the *yeshivot*, in the Diaspora and especially in the Holy Land, so that G-dly matters are studied regularly and with a broad intellect, purity and clarity.

We also must be involved actively in the practical settling of the Holy Land. We must found organizations, not only of international donations, but businesses and professions, run by people who know Hashem and who truly love His Name. As soon as we raise this banner, the strength of evil in the Holy Land will be weakened, and Hashem will be praised. The more we act in this manner the more light will appear, and many of those who act with impunity will repent, and the deep impurities will be removed and disappear.

Regarding the distribution of donations, I will help to the extent I am able to ensure that no irreligious person will receive them, and it seems that this principle has not changed. However, this is not the basis of our service of Hashem. We are suffering from those who despise those who receive the distributions entirely too much. The main thing is to shine the inner light, whether by an increase in the study of *Chassidut* or of other hidden parts of the Torah. By thereby serving Hashem and growing intellectually, the light of Hashem will be clear to the world, and then we will have the ability to fix things.



**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

## End of Rental Disputes – part II

(based on ruling 81121 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

**Case:** The defendant (=def) rented an apartment from the plaintiff (=pl), with several year-long contracts, during which time he raised the rent from 4,300 to 4,600 NIS monthly. During the last year, def did not make all of the rental payments (how much is owed is disputed). Def justified some of the lack of payment by his claim that pl had promised not to raise the rent. Pl is asking to recover the overdue payments and the money owed to the va'ad bayit. He also demanded that def move out all of his belongings, as when beit din instructed him to leave the apartment, he moved into a storage room to live in but left some belongings. Subsequently def moved everything out but did not paint the apartment.

**Ruling:** Last time we saw discussion of the general amount due and the ability to raise the rent.

**Payments to Va'ad Bayit (building residents' council):** Def refuses to pay some of the monthly payments because they demanded the same from him as from larger apartments and says that in any case, pl cannot intervene. Def is also suing for return of 9,000 NIS for overpaying in the past. The law is that payment is the obligation of the property owner, in which case, def's obligation to pay is based on contractual obligation, so that pl has a claim. On the other hand, the law is also that it is supposed to be according to apartment size, in which case def overpaid and does not have to pay anymore. However, that which pl "paid" by means of the money def gave is not refundable, so that pl is not required to pay back.

**Counter suit for defects in the apartment:** A landlord is not required to fix everything that is broken in an apartment but just to ensure that the apartment can be used as expected. He is also only required to repair things that require an expert to do (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 314:1). The obligation kicks in when the renter asks him to fix the problem, and if the landlord is repeatedly asked and does not take care of it, the renter can take care of it and charge the landlord, and at times take it off from the rent. Based on these considerations, beit din rejected almost all of def's claims in this regard, as he did not make demands of pl at the time.

**Rights of bar metzra (a neighbor's right to first chance to buy property):** There is a machloket between the Shulchan Aruch and Rama (CM 175:57) whether a renter has bar metzra rights on the property he is renting. However, that does not apply here because def does not presently have permission to be in the apartment. Additionally, we accept pl's refusal to do business with def because of the manner in which he has acted.

**Division of obligation:** Def rented the apartment with his wife, and they became separated during the course of the rental. The contract states explicitly that each spouse accepts half of the obligations. Therefore, def is only obligated in half of the contractual obligations, and pl is to make claims against def's wife on the rest. Those obligations that stem from the actions of def (e.g., not moving out in time), not from the basic agreement, are def's personal obligation.

Comments or questions regarding articles can be sent to: [info@erezhemdah.org](mailto:info@erezhemdah.org)

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Yisrael ben Rivka

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Yerachmiel ben Zlotta Rivka

Neta bat Malka  
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