

Rabbi Moshe Pinchuk, former Rosh Kollel Melbourne

About Miracles

Judaism has identified and defined two distinct modes of Divine intervention in worldly life: An evident miracle – God reveals himself as sole creator and owner of nature and its laws. He invades the world in a fury of action, breaking barriers, nullifying existing laws of nature, replacing them with new ones. The splitting of the Red Sea is an example par excellence of such an intervention.

At other times divine intervention occurs in a more subtle way, on the surface the chain of events seem natural and inevitable, one incident causes the next. But behind the curtains, the faint silhouette of G-D's hand can be seen, tugging on the strings of the events. Megillat Esther is a vivid account of one such hidden miracle.

The Ramban (Ex. 6, 3) associates two distinct names with these modes – The divine name of Havaya refers to miraculous intervention: "But I have not revealed to them (the forefathers) my name of Yod – Heh with which all has come into existence, through which new is created whilst changing the old, therefore go teach them my great name for with it I will do awesome things". The divine name of Shaddai applies to hidden intervention: "G-D has revealed himself to the forefathers only with this name (Shaddai) when he uses the laws of nature to bring about the desired outcome without changing the order of nature...for they are all miracles but are veiled with the cloak of nature". Nature itself is miracles in disguise!

How do these two types of miracles measure up one to the other? To the speculative Agnostic the evident miracle is more impressive and persuasive than the hidden miracle. To be sure, a hidden miracle can be ignored and attributed to the hand of chance. But in the presence of an evident miracle, when the sea is torn apart, when fire and brimstone pour down from heaven, even a firm atheist must bow his head in

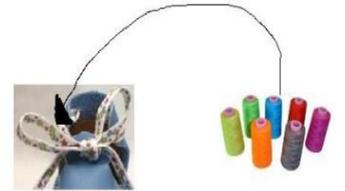
acknowledgment of divine presence! But to a devout believer a hidden miracle is greater than an outright violation of the laws of nature! God has created the world and its laws it is no wonder that he can change them at his will. What is more impressive, is that nature and its laws have been created in such a way that they need not be changed or violated when the need arises. Rather, nature itself is synchronized in advance to achieve the desired results when they are needed.

The Hungarian "Rubik Cube" is a perfect illustration of these different miracles: Twenty-seven small cubes make up a larger cube, each face is of a different color. The faces of the cube can be rotated in every direction, the aim is to restore color-order and have each face of a solid color. This objective can be achieved in one of two ways: By adroitly and skillfully rotating the faces the small cubes can be properly positioned thus restoring order. This is the hidden miracle, the laws of rotation of the cube are applied in order to achieve the desired result. Alternatively, one can dismantle the cube into twenty-seven small cubes and then rebuild the cube in the proper order. This is the evident miracle, the internal laws of the system are violated, the cube is dismantled and then reconstructed. A person capable of reorganizing the cube colors the first way impresses everybody; nobody is impressed the second way!

In our Parsha we encounter the greatness and unique character of Avraham aveinu, through the miracles that we have found in the midrash eg the miracle of the furnace with Nimrod etc

This is a classic example of a miracle that was done against nature. However the real greatness of Avraham is even more apparent from the way in which he perceived the natural power of the Almighty in the day to day existence in this world. As a result of this, Avraham arrived at

Picture the Parasha



Shabbat Times

	Local	Jerusalem
In		16:12
Out		17:25

(Continued on page 2)

Rabbi Chanan Porat zt"l – A Torah Scholar Rooted in the Land of Israel

Courtesy of Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayims website, Written by Harav Shlomo Aviner

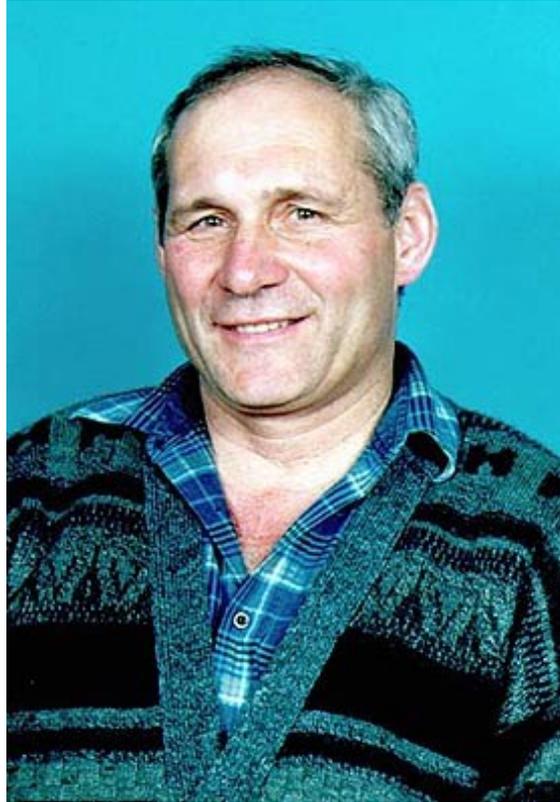
Due to the modesty of my dear friend the late Rav Chanan, due to his simple dress and his unaffected behavior, many people did not know that they were dealing with a true Torah scholar - one of the best and brightest to emerge from our yeshiva, Mercaz HaRav. They did not even know that he had received Rabbinic ordination.

Rav Chanan never sought to make the Torah a spade with which to dig. Quite the contrary: inspired by the light of Torah, he made himself into a spade. He immersed himself in a life of productive work on behalf of the Nation of Israel. This noble individual was living fulfillment of our Sages' praise for one who practices what he preaches. This brave paratrooper was chosen by divine providence to be among the fighters of the Six Day War, and amongst Jerusalem's liberators, thereby publicizing the fact that the Nation's inner holiness is G-d's guarantee that it will survive.

And because the Land of Israel doesn't just have to be conquered, but inhabited as well, HaRav Chanan closed his tome of Talmud and sacrificed himself to become one of those who brought Kibbutz Kfar Etzion back to life. More precisely, he sacrificed his soul.

In other words, he sacrificed his spiritual life, his Torah studies, for the sake of settling the Land of Israel.

Yet he also sacrificed his body and spirit literally. In the Yom Kippur War he was severely wounded on the southern front, and was saved through the grace of G-d. Afterwards he was



one of the founders of Gush Emunim and an initiator of the settlements in Judea and Samaria.

Yet let us not suppose that only Torah and the Land of Israel interested him. The Jewish People interested him as well, and he was active in the seminars of the "Gesher" organization,

which strove to link the two portions of the Nation who, unfortunately, are called "religious" and "secular". I say "unfortunately", because there is certainly no "secular" Jew. Every Jew has a holy soul.

Indeed, Torah, the Land of Israel and the Jewish People do not constitute three separate interests. Rav Chanan liked to relate how once they were deliberating in yeshiva over what is more important – the Torah, the Nation or the Land. They took the question to Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, and he answered with a smile: "We take the holistic approach."

This idea, that all these goals are one, served as a guiding principle for Rav Chanan.

Therefore, even during his extensive public service tenure, Rav Chanan never ceased studying and teaching Torah. It was especially important to him to provide guidance in the quest for attaining complete faith, as in his book, "Et Achai Anochi Mevakesh" [I Am Looking for My Brothers]. There we find the foundations of the deepest, most ethereal faith, presented in a language and style that reach directly to the heart and mind of any thinking person.

A Righteous man / Continued from page 1

the conclusion, that there is a greater Driving Force to the world-Hashem.

Throughout history there have been those who have endeavored to demonstrate that the miracles recorded in Torah are natural phenomenon occurring at the right time at the right place. Simple physical oceanographic processes explain the splitting of the Red Sea. Velikovsky's, "Worlds in collision" explains the entire exodus in astronomic terms. Paradoxically, these works serve only to enhance and strengthen the believer's belief. They demonstrate that evident miracles are

natural processes, hidden miracles. G-D's grand design is more perfect than we thought – not a single natural law had to be violated or changed during the entire Exodus – everything was meticulously planned for in advance – natural, physical, astronomical and geological processes were set in motion to occur precisely where and when they were needed. G-D's Rubik cube has been solved the first way! ◻

Reciting Bakashat Geshamim: When and Where

Rabbi Moshe Abermen , former Rosh Kollel, Chicago

This coming Shabbat, the seventh of Cheshvan the people of Israel begin asking “Veten tal umatar livracha al pnei ha’adama” let there be dew and rain upon the land. In the Diaspora this request is not recited until the 4th of December. We will attempt to understand the background for these differing customs and their relevance globally.

The Mishna in Taanit (10a) relates a dispute between Tana Kama, (the first unnamed opinion in the Mishna) who is of the opinion that we begin asking for rain on the third of Cheshvan, and Raban Gamliel, who feels that Bakashat Geshamim (asking for rain) should commence on the seventh of Cheshvan. Raban Gamliel’s position, as explained in the Mishna, is that though it would be preferable to begin with Bakashat Geshmim immediately after Succot, we postpone our request until all of the Olei Haregel (those who come for the Holiday to Yerushalayim) have returned to their homes so as not to trouble them with rains during their travels. As to the opinion of Tana Kama we find several varied understandings. The Ritva understands that both Tanaim feel that the rain season begins after Succot, yet they differ on how much should we delay asking for rain on account of the Olei Haregel. Raban Gamliel feels we should wait until all of the Olei Haregel have returned to their homes. Tana Kama feels we should create a balance between the needs of rain and the hardship of the Olei Haregel; therefore we should wait to ask until a majority of the Olei Haregel have returned home. The Ran, on the other hand, understands the dispute of the Tanaim as pertaining to the question of the relationship between asking for rain and the beginning of the rain season. Tana Kama is of the opinion that Bakashat Geshamim should commence with the opening of the rain season, which according to Rabi Meir begins on the third of Cheshvan.

Raban Gamliel on the other hand feels that there is no need to link the asking of rains to the start of the rain season. Accordingly, due to the need to consider the hardship of the Olei Haregel we should postpone the commencement of Bakashat Geshamim until they have returned to their homes.

Two other opinions are found in the Gemara. According to one understanding (Taanit 4b), Rabi Yehuda is of the opinion that

we must commence asking for rain immediately after Succot regardless of the Olei Haregel. (The other understands the position of Rabi Yehudah only when there are no Olei Regel.) A second opinion quoted in the Gemara (Taanit 10a) is that of Chananya who states that in “The Diaspora” (Bavel) Bakashat Geshamim should commence on the sixtieth of Tekufat Tishrei. (Halacha recognizes a Solar year divided into four periods, one of which is called Tekufat Tishrei. The sixtieth of this period correlates to the 4th of December.)

The Gemara (Taanit 10a) teaches us that Rabi Eliezer declared that we should rule like Raban Gamliel and commence with Bakashat Geshamim on the seventh of Cheshvan. Shmuel ruled that we follow the opinion of Chananya to commence asking for rain on the sixtieth of Tekufat Tishrei. Since Chananya’s opinion is limited to Bavel, we can

conclude that the Halacha is to begin reciting Bakashat Geshamim in

Eretz Yisrael on the seventh of Cheshvan and in Bavel on the sixtieth of Tekufat Tishrei, the fourth of December.

We find several varied opinions in the Rishonim on what should be the proper practice in the Diaspora, outside of Bavel, and what should be the practice in Eretz Yisrael after the destruction of the Mikdash, (See Ritva Taanit 10a and Rambam Hilchot Tefila 2/16-17). The accepted custom as found in Shulchan Aruch (OC 117/1) is: In the Diaspora we begin asking for rain on the eve of the fourth of December

While in Eretz Yisrael we commence asking on the seventh of Chesvan.

The Rosh in a Halachic Responsa (Shut Harosh Klall 4 siman 10) proposed a completely different understanding. According to the Rosh the Gemara concluded that there is no preset time to begin Bakashat Geshamim, rather different places commence according to local needs. The Rosh limits this by defining that specific needs apply to an entire country not an individual city. He explains this limitation on the grounds that the Gemara (Taanit 14b) states that Rebi defined the people of Ninve as individuals and not a community in the matter of asking for rain in the summer months.

Though most Rishonim rejected the opinion of the Rosh and



Rabbi Chanan Porat ז"ל – A Torah Scholar Rooted in the Land of Israel

Continued from page 2

The true climax of this hero's self-sacrifice was when he entered politics – that harsh, bleak place that wears down even the noblest spirit. Yet Rav Chanan, though he walked in that complicated valley, retained all of his holiness and purity. He never fell in love with his Knesset seat -- a rare phenomenon indeed in our political sphere. Thus, when the "Matzad" political list was formed, he joined, (Continued on page 4)

but did not take his National Religious Party mandate with him to the new party. He instead quit the Knesset. Later on as well, he left the National Union to leave his spot free for another Knesset member.

There is a story of a Knesset member who tried to convince his acquaintances that his actions were sincere, "for the sake of Heaven". One wit remarked by quoting G-d's pronouncement from Yeshayahu 66:1: "My seat is the heavens". Our friend Chanan, however, really did act for the sake of Heaven. That is why he twice gave up his seat. He toiled untiringly on the Jewish People's behalf in all that he did. He was always looking forward to see how best to renew his activities for the sake of the Nation, how not to let the light of truth be obscured, and how always to increase the Nation's spiritual might. Indeed, Torah scholars have no rest, neither in this world nor in the World-to-Come.

After he left national politics, Rav Chanan was among those who set up the great Herzog College. He not only taught there, but also in Yeshivat Beit Orot, and in many other yeshivot, including Machon Meir. At that point it was revealed to all

that here was a great Torah scholar and a deep thinker.

We can also point out that the weekly Torah leaflet he humbly edited, "Me'at Min Ha-Ohr" [a Little of the Light], contained a great deal of light. It was a gentle light, a sweet light. It wasn't a blinding light, or a burning light.

What sphere of activity did our pristine hero not touch? He had an ongoing radio program on Galei Yisrael. He was one of the founders and heads of "Orot Ha-Chessed", an organization which provided food, electrical appliances and clothing to people lacking means.

About a year ago, our friend Rav Chanan fell ill with cancer, but his spirit remained unharmed. In a radio interview he proclaimed that he was not afraid of death, because "death is not the end of life. Rather, one just undergoes a change. One passes on to a great light."

Without a doubt, our hero is presently enjoying that great light, but we are left orphans. We miss his light. How shall we be comforted? We send our condolences to his wife Rachel who was his partner in work, and to his eleven children.

This Torah scholar, so rooted in the Land of Israel, so rooted in redemption, has ascended on high. Yet his spirit beats on in our midst, and in all of our enterprises. It will illuminate them forever. "The righteous in their deaths are called living". He lives on in our midst through the enormous works he performed for the Nation's rebirth in the Land, according to the Torah. ◻

Reciting Bakashat Geshamim/ Continued from page 3

he himself felt compelled to accept the view of the majority of Poskim, it has become a central focus in the Halachic discussion of what should be done (Continued on page 4) in the Southern Hemisphere. Some Poskim feel that the opinion of the Rosh was rejected only in reference to places where the general seasons of summer and winter are the same as in Bavel.

Places where the seasons are reverse have no reason to do as in Bavel. In practice we find several different halachic rulings and practices. On one side of the spectrum, we find the view of Rav Kook (Orach Mishpat 24) who felt that the Southern Hemisphere should do just as is done in all other countries of the Diaspora. On the other end of the spectrum is the opinion of Rav Shlomo Vozner, as elaborated by his son, (Shevet Halevi section 9 siman 148) that the people of the Southern Hemi-

sphere follow their seasons and ask during their winter months.

Midway between the above views is the opinion of Rav Yitzchak Weiss (Minchat Yitzchak vol. 6 siman 171) who suggests that during the winter months of the Southern Hemisphere rain should be asked for in Shomea Tefila as an individual's request. During the time Bakashat Geshamim is recited in the Northern Hemisphere, they too should recite it unless rain in that period of time is considered harmful.

In practice those residing in the Northern Hemisphere outside of Israel should recite Bakashat Geshamim from the fourth of December until the first day of Pesach. Those in countries in the Southern Hemisphere should follow the direction of the local authorities and the accepted local custom.

The Establishment of Petah Tikva—Em Hamoshavot

This day in History: 7 of Cheshvan 5638

Petah Tikva was founded in 1878 by religious pioneers from Europe, who were led by Yehoshua Stampfer, Moshe Shmuel Raab, Yoel Moshe Salomon, Zerach Barnett, and David Gutmann, as well as Lithuanian Rabbi Aryeh Leib Frumkin. It was the first modern Jewish agricultural settlement in Ottoman Palestine and has since grown to become one of Israel's most populous urban centres.

The name of Petach Tikva was chosen by its founders in 1878 from the prophecy of Hosea (2:17), "And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for an *opening of hope*: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

Petach Tikva's emblem appears on a postage stamp designed by Yitzhak Goldenhirsch, a founding member of Petah Tikva.

The plow symbolizes Petach Tikva's origins as an agricultural settlement, the field symbolizes the drying of the Yarkon River swamps and cultivation of the land, and the orange tree

symbolizes Petach Tikva's citrus industry, starting with the first tree planted by Rabbi Arye Leib Frumkin.

Originally intending to establish a new settlement in the Achor Valley, near Jericho, the pioneers purchased land in that area. However, Abdülhamid II cancelled the purchase and forbade them from settling there, but they retained the name Petah Tikva as a symbol of their aspirations.

Undaunted, the settlers purchased a modest area (3.40 square kilometers) from the village of Mulabbis (variants: Mlabbes, Um-Labbes), near the source of the Yarkon River. The Sultan allowed the enterprise to proceed, but because their purchase was located in what was a malarial swamp, they had to evacuate when the malaria spread, founding the town of Yehud near the Arabic village Yehudiyya about 20 kilometres (12 mi) to the south.[citation needed] With the financial help of Baron Ed-



mond de Rothschild they were able to drain the swamps sufficiently to be able to move back in 1883, joined by immigrants of the First Aliyah, and later the Second Aliyah.

During World War I, Petah Tikva served as a refugee town for residents of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, following their exile by the Ottoman authorities due to their refusal to serve the Ottoman army to fight the invading British forces. The town suffered heavily as it lay between the Ottoman and British fronts during the war.

Petah Tikva became the school for thousands of pioneer workers, who studied the craft of farming there before they ventured out to establish dozens of settlements in all parts of the country. The agricultural schools are still active to this day. Petah Tikva was also the birthplace of the Labor Zionist Movement, inspired and encouraged by the writings of A. D. Gordon who lived in the town.

The first recorded Arab attack on Jews in what would become Israel took place in Petah Tikva in 1886. Petah Tikva was also the scene of Arab rioting in May 1921, which left four Jews dead.

In the 1930s, the pioneering founders of Kibbutz Yavneh from the Religious Zionist movement immigrated to the British Mandate of Palestine, settling near Petah Tikva on land purchased by a Jewish-owned German company. Refining the agricultural skills they learned in Germany, these pioneers began in 1941 to build their kibbutz in its intended location in the south of Israel, operating from Petah Tikva as a base.

In the early 1920s, industry began to develop in the Petah Tikva region. In 1921, Petah Tikva was given the status of a local council by the British authorities, and in 1937 it was recognized as a city. Its first mayor, Shlomo Stampfer, was the son of one of its founders, Yehoshua Stampfer. ◻

After reading, please be sure to place this Torah Sheet in a Geniza (Sheimus)

Torah MiTzion establishes Religious Zionist Kollels (centers of Jewish learning and outreach) in Diaspora Jewish communities to strengthen the study of Torah, Jewish identity, the unity of the Jewish people, and the connection between Torah study and Israel.

The Kollels, led by a *Rosh Kollel*, are comprised of Israeli shlichim (emissaries) - married men and their wives, or young single men, graduates of Yeshivot Hesder in Israel - who serve in the communities for a period of one-three years.

Torah MiTzion is also proud to be a partner of the "**Jewish Learning Initiative**" program on college campuses.

The Head Office in Jerusalem:
Beit Meir, 54 King George Street
PO Box 71109
Jerusalem, 91710
Israel

Tel: +972-2-620-9020

Email: office@torahmitzion.org

Look for us on the web: www.TorahMiTzion.org

For support and sponsoring options, please visit our website.

