**S.A.L.T. – PARASHAT RE’EI**

**By Rav David Silverberg**

Motzaei Shabbat

 The Torah in Parashat Re’ei commands *Benei Yisrael* to destroy the Canaanites’ houses of worship upon entering into the Land of Israel, and then warns, “*Lo ta’asun kein le-Hashem Elokeikhem*” – “Do not do so to the Lord your God” (12:4). The simple reading of the verse is that *Benei Yisrael* are warned not to set up places of sacrificial worship to God throughout the country, following the Canaanites’ model of sites of pagan worship spread throughout the land. (Indeed, the subsequent verses command to establish just one single site of sacrificial worship, and not to offer sacrifices anywhere else.) The Gemara, however, in Masekhet Makkot (22a), explains this warning as a prohibition against destroying sacred property – specifically, the *Beit Ha-mikdash*, the altars, and sacred texts. After commanding *Benei Yisrael* to destroy the pagan temples of the Canaanite tribes, the Torah warns them not to destroy their own sacred property. Included in this prohibition, as the Gemara states, is erasing the Name of God. The Rambam includes this prohibition in his list of the Torah’s 613 commands (*lo ta’aseh* 65; Hilkhot Yesodei Ha-Torah, chapter 6).

 The *Minchat Chinukh*, in his discussion of this prohibition (437), makes a fascinating observation regarding the writing of God’s Name in a *Sefer Torah*. The Name known as “*Havaya*” is spelled with the letters *yod*, *hei*, *vav* and *heh*, in that sequence. However, the first two letters – *yod* and *hei* – spell on their own one of the Names of God, which is forbidden to erase. It turns out, then, that when a scribe writes the Name of *Havaya* in a *Sefer Torah*, he first forms the shorter Name of *yod*-*hei*, and then “erases” that Name by writing the next letter, *vav*, which has the effect of undoing the writing of the Name of *yod-hei*, as the letters *yod*-*hei-vav* do not spell a Name. This “erasure” is permissible, the *Minchat Chinukh* reasons, because it is done for the purpose of writing a different Name of God.

However, the *Minchat Chinukh* wonders why *Chazal* did not require writing the Name of *Havaya* out of sequence, adding the first letter – *yod* – at the very end, after the other three letters have been written, in order to avoid this situation of “erasure.” The Gemara in Masekhet Nedarim (10b) rules that when one designates an animal as a sacrifice, he should formulate his declaration, “*Korban le-Hashem*” (“A sacrifice to God”), rather than saying, “*Le-Hashem korban*” (“To God a sacrifice”). If somebody begins consecrating an animal by declaring, “*Le-Hashem chatat*,” he may change his mind, or die, after saying the word “*Le-Hashem*,” without completing the declaration, in which case he will be in violation of uttering God’s Name in vain. In order to avoid this risk, *Chazal* ordained that one should mention God’s Name only at the end, after declaring the word “*korban*.” Seemingly, the *Minchat Chinukh* notes, a similar concern arises in the case of writing the Name of *Havaya* in a Torah scroll. If the scribe decides not to continue writing, or if he dies, after writing the first three letters, without writing the fourth letter to complete the Name, he will then be in violation of “erasing” the Name of God, as he had added the letter *vav* to the letters *yod* and *hei*, changing the script from the Name of God to some other sequence of letters. Therefore, we might have expected *Chazal* to make a similar enactment to the one they made with regard to the consecration of an animal, and require scribes to write the *yod* of the Name *Havaya* at the end. A *Sefer Torah* – unlike *tefillin* and *mezuzot* – does not have to be written in sequence. Thus, for example, if a mistake is found in the script of the *Sefer Torah*, the scribe may correct the mistake, and does not have to discard the entire scroll. (This is in contrast to *tefillin* and *mezuzot*, which cannot be corrected, since the script must be written in sequence.) Why, then, did the Sages not require scribes to write the Name of *Havaya* out of sequence, in order to avoid the risk of not completing the Name after writing the letter *vav* and thus being in violation of “erasing” the Name of *yod*-*hei*?

From the fact that no such requirement exists, the *Minchat Chinukh* draws proof to the position he cites from the *Noda Bi-yehuda* that a scribe must, in fact, write the text of the *Sefer Torah* in its proper sequence whenever possible. Although a *Sefer Torah* written out of sequence is valid for use – and thus, when a mistake is found, it may be corrected – nevertheless, it must be written in proper sequence when this can be done. Later *Acharonim*, as the *Minchat Chinukh* cites, noted that this claim of the *Noda Bi-yehuda* does not appear to have any source in halakhic literature. The *Minchat Chinukh* suggests that the source of this *halakha* is the fact that *Chazal* did not require writing the Name of *Havaya* out of order to avoid the risk of ending up “erasing” the Name of “*Yod-Hei*” by adding the *vav* without ever writing the final *hei*. *Chazal* did not establish such a requirement because the proper way of writing a *Sefer Torah* is to write the text in sequence, even though the *Sefer Torah* is valid when some text is written out of sequence.

Tomorrow we will *iy”H* discuss this topic further.

Sunday

 Yesterday, we noted the discussion of the *Minchat Chinukh* (437) concerning the forming of the Name of *Havaya* (*yod-hei-vav-hei*) when writing a Torah scroll. The first two letters of this Name – *yod* and *hei* – spell a shorter Name of God, which, after being written, may not be erased. It stands to reason, the *Minchat Chinukh* writes, that by adding the letter *vav* to form the Name of *Havaya*, one halakhically “erases” the Name of *yod-hei*, in that he transforms it from a Name of God into a different assemblage of letters. The *Minchat Chinukh* explains that this is nevertheless permissible because in this case, one erases a Name of God for sake of writing a Name of God. However, the *Minchat Chinukh* raises the question of why *Chazal* were not concerned that the scribe may not complete the Name after writing the letter *vav*, and will thus be in violation of “erasing” the Name “*yod-hei*,” as the “erasure” will then not have achieved the purpose of writing a different Name. The *Minchat Chinukh* draws a comparison to the Gemara’s ruling in Masekhet Nedarim (10b) that one who consecrates an animal should declare, “*Korban le-Hashem*” (“A sacrifice to God”), rather than “*Le-Hashem korban*” (“To God a sacrifice”), as he might not end up completing the declaration and will have thus recited God’s Name in vain. Seemingly, the *Minchat Chinukh* observes, a similar concern arises when writing the Name “*Havaya*,” and we might have therefore expected *Chazal* to enact that a scribe should write this Name out of sequence, first forming the final three letters and only then writing the first letter, *yod*, in order to avoid this risk.

 As we saw, the *Minchat Chinukh* explained that this analysis provides proof to the position taken by the *Noda Bi-yehuda* that a scribe must write the text of the *Sefer Torah* in proper sequence whenever possible. Although a *Sefer Torah* is valid even if the text was written out of sequence – and thus a mistake which is found in the lettering of a *Sefer Torah* may be corrected – it should, when possible, be written in proper order. This is the reason, the *Minchat Chinukh* contended, that *Chazal* did not require scribes to reverse the sequence of writing when forming the Name “*Havaya*.”

 Rav Meir Dan Platsky, in his [*Keli Chemda* (Parashat Devarim)](http://hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=21263&st=&pgnum=144), takes issue with the *Minchat Chinukh*’s contention, and advances two refutations of his proof to the *Noda Bi-yehuda*’s position. First, Rav Platsky references a responsum of the *Tashbatz* ruling that if one writes the letters of a Name of God without intending them to form a divine Name, they are not endowed with halakhic sanctity, and, according to Torah law, they may be erased. According to this ruling, when one writes the letters *yod* and *hei* with the intention of continuing to write the Name of *Havaya*, the combination of these letters has no halakhic sanctity. Since they were not written with the intention of forming the Name “*yod-hei*,” they are not considered a Name, and thus one is not considered “erasing” the Name by adding the *vav*.

 Additionally, Rav Platsky adds, even according to those who disagree, and maintain that a Name of God has halakhic sanctity regardless of the intention with which it was written, an important distinction exists between the case of writing “*Havaya*” and that of consecrating an animal. If a person begins consecrating an animal by declaring, “*Le-Hashem*” and then changes his mind, there is no possibility at all of “redeeming” the Name he uttered so that it would not have been recited in vain. In the case of writing “*Havaya*” in a *Sefer Torah*, however, even if the scribe dies or stops writing for some other reason after writing the *vav*, it is possible for others to complete the Name so that the first scribe will not have committed a forbidden act of erasure.

 We might also add the claim advanced by Rav Baruch Epstein, in his *Torah Temima* (to Vayikra 1:2), that the law mentioned by the Gemara in Masekhet Nedarim applies only in that particular context, and does not apply in other situations. Rav Epstein notes the Mishna’s description in Masekhet Yoma (39a) of the lots drawn by the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur to determine the fates of the two atonement goats. When he announced the results of the lottery, the *kohen gadol* pointed to the goat destined to be offered as a sacrifice in the Temple and announced, “*Le-Hashem chatat*” (“To God as a sin-offering”), mentioning God’s Name before mentioning the word “*chatat*.” Likewise, we read in *Megillat Rut* (2:4) that Boaz greeted his workers with the blessing, “*Hashem imakhem*” (“May God be with you”), mentioning the Name of God before the word “*imakhem*.” Rav Epstein explained, based on the Rosh’s commentary to Masekhet Nedarim, that *Chazal* were concerned only in the context of consecrating voluntary sacrifices, because one might change his mind and decide not to make this costly investment. In other contexts, however, the Sages did not go so far as to worry that a person who begins a proclamation with God’s Name might not complete it. By the same token, then, they were not concerned that a scribe might not complete writing the Name “*Havaya*” after writing the letter *vav*.

Monday

 Earlier this week we noted Moshe’s warning to *Benei Yisrael* after commanding them to dismantle the Canaanites’ sites of idolatrous worship: “*Lo ta’asun kein l-Hashem Elokeikhem*” – “Do not do so to the Lord your God” (12:4). The Gemara (Makkot 22a), as we saw, interprets this warning as a prohibition against destroying sacred property, such as the *Beit Ha-mikdash*, an altar, or sacred texts. This prohibition is listed by the Rambam as one of the 613 Biblical commands (*Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, *lo ta’aseh* 65; Hilkhot Yesodei Ha-Torah, chapter 6).

 This explanation of the verse appears also in the *Sifrei*, which then cites Rabban Gamliel (in some texts, Rabbi Yishmael) as objecting. It is inconceivable, Rabban Gamliel argued, that the Torah found it necessary to warn *Benei Yisrael* not to destroy their sacred articles. Rabban Gamliel therefore offers a different interpretation of the verse, claiming that the Torah here warns us not to bring about the destruction of our *Beit Ha-mikdash* through our sinful conduct.

 As mentioned, *Halakha* accepts the first interpretation of the verse, that the Torah here forbids destroying sacred property. We might wonder, then, how the other Sages responded to Rabban Gamliel’s objection. Why was it necessary for the Torah to introduce a special prohibition against dismantling the Temple or an altar, or destroying a *Sefer Torah*?

 One possible answer, perhaps, is that the warning was necessitated by the preceding command to dismantle, destroy and leave no vestiges of the sites of the Canaanites’ pagan worship. *Benei Yisrael* were to launch a full-blown assault on idolatry, demolishing all structures and articles involved in pagan rituals. The warning of “*lo ta’asun kein l-Hashem Elokeikhem*” perhaps reflects the fear that the people’s revulsion for pagan worship, which they were required to express, would then be extended to their own mode of worship. Once they fulfill the command to eradicate and passionately reject the abominable religious practices of the Canaanites, which Moshe describes later in Parashat Re’ei (12:31), *Benei Yisrael* might become disillusioned with religious practices generally, and thus be moved to dismantle their own sanctuaries and discard their own altars and texts. Their disdain for paganism might lead to disdain for all religious worship, thus prompting Moshe to warn that after the people destroy the Canaanites’ Temples, they must not do the same to their own Temple and other structures and articles of sanctity.

 When we observe and contemplate the atrocities committed in the name of religion, we can easily become cynical towards and dismissive of religion altogether, including our own. We might decide that if the desire to worship and serve a supreme being, or multiple supreme beings, leads people to wanton violence and corruption, then the entire enterprise of religion should be discarded. Moshe therefore warns *Benei Yisrael*, “Do not do so to the Lord your God,” to retain their faith in and commitment to our own religious doctrines, values and obligations even as they set out to oppose those of pagan faiths, and not to allow this opposition to translate into contempt for religion generally.

Tuesday

 As we’ve discussed this week, the Gemara (Makkot 22a) interpreted Moshe’s warning in Parashat Re’ei (12:4), “*Lo ta’asun kein l-Hashem Elokeikhem*” – “Do not do so to the Lord your God” as a prohibition against destroying sacred property. After commanding *Benei Yisrael* to demolish the sites of the Canaanites’ pagan worship in *Eretz Yisrael*, he warned them to ensure not to damage their own sites of sanctity, a prohibition which includes the erasing of the Name of God.

 The Rambam, in his discussion of this prohibition in Hilkhot Yesodei Ha-Torah (6:1), adds that it is also forbidden to erase or destroy any Torah text, even if it does not contain an actual Name of God. And thus we are required to treat with respect all books and papers of Torah literature, and properly bury them rather than just discard them. From the Rambam’s formulation it appears that this extension of the prohibition – to include even Torah texts that do not contain a divine Name – applies by force of Rabbinic enactment, and is not included in the Torah prohibition of “*lo ta’asun kein*.”

 Rav Asher Weiss, in his *Minchat Asher* (Parashat Re’ei, 18:2), addresses the interesting question that was posed to him regarding the status of the thousands of written prayers that are placed in crevices in the Western Wall, with respect to this prohibition. If a person writes a request on a piece of paper, does it attain the status of a “sacred text” such that it may not be discarded regularly in the trash?

 The basis for this question is the ruling of the Tashbatz (1:2) that pages of prayers and blessings must be treated as sacred texts and not discarded even if they do not contain the Name of God (as they instead use representations of the Name, such as a double *yod*, as is commonly done today). According to this ruling, seemingly, there is no distinction between prayer texts and Torah texts with respect to this *halakha*, and thus even personal prayers scribbled on a piece of paper must be treated respectfully and not discarded.

 However, Rav Weiss contends that the Tashbatz’s ruling was stated specifically with regard to the blessings and prayer texts formally instituted by the *Anshei Kenesset Ha-gedola* (Men of the Great Assembly). Such texts, Rav Weiss explains, have the status of *Torah she-be’al peh* – our oral Torah tradition. Just as the texts discussing the laws ordained by *Chazal* have the status of *kitvei ha-kodesh* (sacred text) and may not be discarded, similarly, liturgical texts composed by *Chazal* have this status and must be treated accordingly. In Rav Weiss’ view, the Tashbatz never intended to apply this ruling to personal prayers that people write, and which were not formally instituted by *Chazal* as liturgy. Rav Weiss draws proof from a passage in the Gemara (Shabbat 115b) cited by the Rashbatz, which discusses the severity of allowing liturgical texts to be destroyed. Rashi, in his commentary to the Gemara, explains that the Gemara refers to liturgy formulated by *Chazal*, indicating that informally written personal prayers are not included in this prohibition.

 Later in his discussion, Rav Weiss adds that even if somebody happened to incorporate a Biblical verse in the prayer which he placed in the Western Wall, it may nevertheless be discarded. He cites the ruling of Netziv, in *Meishiv Davar* (2:80) that words of Torah that were not written for the purpose of study are not endowed with halakhic sanctity. The context of Netziv’s discussion is the question surrounding pages used as templates in printing presses. Since the text on these pages was produced solely to serve as a template, and not to be studied from, the pages may be discarded regularly and do not need to be buried. This ruling would certainly apply also to personal prayers written to be placed in the Western Wall, and thus such pages are not endowed with sanctity.

 Rav Weiss concludes by noting that it is customary, reportedly, to collect the notes placed in the Western Wall and to bury them, and he writes that if this is the case, then although this practice is not strictly required, it should be followed. However, when this is not possible, such as when there is overabundance of notes and they cannot all be collected and buried, they may be discarded.

Wednesday

 The Torah in Parashat Re’ei discusses a master’s obligations to his indentured servant, specifically, the requirement to release the servant after six years of service, and to give him generous gifts when releasing him.

 Addressing the second obligation – the requirement of *ha’anaka*, to give the servant gifts – the Gemara in Masekhet Kiddushin (15a) comments that if the servant dies before he receives his gifts, the master must give them to his inheritors. The Gemara reaches this conclusion on the basis of the comparison drawn by the Torah in this context (15:18) between an indentured servant and a salaried employee. In light of this comparison, the Gemara reasons that just as the wages owed to an employee who dies before receiving them are transferred to the inheritors, similarly, the *ha’anaka* – which is akin to the servant’s wages – must be transferred to the servant’s inheritors if he dies before receiving it. The *Sifrei*, however, presents a different view, based on the Torah’s formulation of the *ha’anaka* requirement: “*Ha’aneik ta’anik* ***lo***” (15:14). The word “*lo*” (“to him”) in this verse, the *Sifrei* comments, indicates that *ha’anaka* is owed as a personal obligation to the servant, and thus need not be paid to his inheritors if he dies. Although the Torah compares a servant to a salaried employee, this comparison does not impact upon the nature of *ha’anaka*, and therefore it is owed only to the servant himself, and not to his heirs.

 This debate, as noted by Malbim, reflects two different perspectives on the *ha’anaka* requirement. Already the *Mishneh Le-melekh* (Hilkhot Avadim 3:14) observed that this obligation can be viewed in one of two ways – as a form of payment for service, or as a form of charity. According to the first perspective, a master owes his servant *ha’anaka* in exchange for the service he received from him, similar to the wages owed to an employee. Alternatively, however, we may view *ha’anaka* as the Torah’s way of assuring that the servant, who is now regaining his freedom and must therefore begin fending for himself, will have his needs cared for while he seeks employment, or has some capital to invest in a new venture. According to this perspective, the Torah requires the master to give the servant gifts not in exchange for his service, but to help him begin his life anew, as a sort of mandatory charitable donation. (One might draw support for this second perspective from the fact that this section appears immediately after the Torah’s presentation of the command of charity and lending to the poor.) The *Mishneh Le-melekh* noted that these different perspectives would affect the question of whether there is a de facto lien on the master’s property for this purpose. If an employer does not have cash with which to pay his worker, *Beit Din* can authorize the worker to take property that the employer has sold in the interim, as that property was owed to the worker in exchange for his service. Therefore, if we view *ha’anaka* as a kind of salary, then this provision would apply to the *ha’anaka* payment, as well. If, however, we view *ha’anaka* as a kind of charitable gift, then it stands to reason that the master’s property is not owed to the servant for this purpose, and the servant would thus have to wait until the master has the funds to pay for his gift.

 This basic question likely underlies the debate regarding inheritors, as well. The Gemara clearly states that the *ha’anaka* payment is akin to wages, and must therefore be given to the inheritors if the servant passes away. The *Sifrei*, however, disputed this premise, and viewed *ha’anaka* as a charitable gift, such that it is not owed to the servant’s inheritors if the servant does not receive the gifts before his passing.

Thursday

 Yesterday, we briefly examined the nature of the obligation of *ha’anaka*, which the Torah introduces in Parashat Re’ei (15:14), and which requires a master to provide his servant with gifts at the time of his release. As we saw, the *Acharonim* noted two possible perspectives from which this requirement could be viewed. It could be seen either as a type of “salary” owed to the servant in exchange for his years of service, or, alternatively, we might view it as a form of charity, intended to assist the servant as he now becomes independent and must regain his financial footing. This question could affect a number of interesting questions, as we saw, such as whether or not the master owes these gifts to the servant’s inheritors if the servant dies before receiving them.

 A third possibility that has been noted is to view *ha’anaka* as a composite obligation, serving two distinct functions – as wages, and as charity. This possibility emerges from the discussion of Rav Meir Simcha Ha-kohen in his *Meshekh Chokhma* (commenting to Parashat Re’ei, 15:14). Rav Meir Simcha addresses the Torah’s requirement that the master grant the servant gifts from “that which the Lord your God has blessed you” (“*asher beirakhekha Hashem Elokekha*”). The Gemara in Masekhet Kiddushin (17b) initially suggests on the basis of this formulation that the master owes *ha’anaka* to the servant only if he was indeed “blessed” as a result of the servant’s work, meaning, if the master’s assets increased during the period of service. This possibility is dismissed, however, in light of the Torah’s phraseology earlier in the verse – “*ha’aneik ta’anik lo*” – which suggests that this payment is owed regardless of whether the master profited as a result of the servant’s work. The Torah links the *ha’anaka* payment to the “blessing” brought by the servant, the Gemara explains, to indicate that the amount the master must pay is commensurate to the extent of the “blessing” he enjoyed over the course of the servant’s stay. The basic obligation, however, applies irrespective of any such “blessing.” Analyzing the Gemara’s discussion, Rav Meir Simcha asserts that the Torah essentially establishes here two distinct obligations towards the servant. First, regardless of whether the master actually derived financial benefit from the servant’s work, he must give him a gift to help him as he starts to build a new life of self-sufficiency. Additionally, the master owes the servant a portion of the profits he received thanks to the servant’s work, as fair compensation for the valuable services he provided.

 On this basis, Rav Meir Simcha reconciles the two seemingly divergent sources that address the question of whether the *ha’anaka* payment is transferred to the servant’s inheritors. The Gemara (15a) states that the payment must, indeed, be given to the inheritors if the servant dies, whereas the *Sifrei* understands that *ha’anaka* is given only to the servant himself, and thus if he dies before receiving the gifts, the master is exempt from this requirement. Rav Meir Simcha explains that these sources address different situations. The Gemara speaks of a case where the master enjoyed financial gain as a result of the servant’s work, and he thus owes the servant a portion of his profits as a type of “salary,” which is transferred to the inheritors in the event of the servant’s death. The *Sifrei*, by contrast, deals with a servant whose work ended up yielding no financial benefit to the master, and who must be given only the minimum sum of *ha’anaka*, a gift that is owed to him as a charitable donation of sorts, and is not given to his inheritors.

 It has been suggested that Rav Meir Simcha’s theory may help explain the otherwise puzzling comments of Rashi that point to a “double” nature of the *ha’anaka* obligation. The Torah (15:15) associates the requirement of *ha’anaka* with the Exodus from Egypt: “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt… I am therefore commanding you with regard to this matter.” Rashi, citing the *Sifrei*, explains that God granted *Benei Yisrael*’s “gifts” on two occasions after their period of bondage in Egypt – on the night of the Exodus, when the Egyptians gave them their riches, and on the shores of the sea, when *Benei Yisrael* collected the jewels from the drowned chariots and horsemen. Correspondingly, Rashi writes, the Torah commands masters to give gifts to their servants “and then give again” (“*…ha’aneik ve-shanei lo*”). Already the *Minchat Chinukh* (482:4) raised the question as to the meaning of this requirement mentioned by the *Sifrei*, to make two different payments to the servant upon his release. According to Rav Meir Simcha’s analysis, however, the explanation becomes perfectly clear. The Torah imposes two distinct obligations upon the master – to grant the servant financial assistance as he embarks upon his new life of independence, and to pay the servant his due portion of the financial success he helped to bring.

(Based on [*Peninei Minchat Chinukh*, Parashat Re’ei, 5776](http://beinenu.com/sites/default/files/alonim/170_47_76.pdf))

Friday

 In our last two editions of S.A.L.T., we addressed the question as to the nature of the *ha’anaka* obligation, which requires a master to give his servant generous gifts at the time of his release from his state of servitude. As we saw yesterday, the *Meshekh Chokhma*, commenting to Parashat Re’ei (15:14), asserts on the basis of the Gemara’s discussion (Kiddushin 17b) that the obligation of *ha’anaka* actually consists of two separate requirements. First, the master must give the servant a minimum sum as a kind of mandatory charitable donation, to assist him as he starts his new life. Additionally, if the master benefited financially from the services provided by the servant, he owes the servant a portion of his profits as type of “salary.” The difference between these two payments is that if the servant dies before receiving his *ha’anaka*, the master does not have to pay the first sum to the inheritors, but the second sum, which is owed as the servant’s wages, must be given to the inheritors.

 It is worth reflecting on the broader implications of this two-tiered obligation that a master has towards his servant. According to the *Meshekh Chokhma*, the master has two separate, unrelated responsibilities to his servant: to help the servant even if he had derived no benefit from him, and to repay him if he did receive benefit from him. Symbolically, these two obligations represent the distinct responsibilities we all have to each other. We are bound to offer assistance to those in need even if they had done nothing for us, simply by virtue of the fact that they require help. Compassion and sensitivity to people facing hardship is unrelated to any benefit we have received or hope to receive from them. Conversely, we owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to those who have helped us, who have enriched or enhanced our lives, who have brought us blessing and joy, or who have brought us any type of benefit, irrespective of their specific needs. Even if we are not in a position to fulfill any need that they have, we owe a debt of gratitude to all those who have benefitted us in any way.

The law of *ha’anaka* thus teaches us about both kindness and gratitude, requiring us to be sensitive to people in need and offer them assistance, and also to not take for granted the benefits we receive from the people in our lives, and to express sincere gratitude and appreciation.

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