



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 17 | Tazria* | Sichah 2

From One into Seven

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* And *siyum* on tractate *Kinnim* (and *sefer Kodshim*)

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1.

THE MISHAP BRINGS GREATNESS

After giving birth, a woman is obligated to offer a “sheep... as an *olah*.”¹ And “if she cannot afford a sheep, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young doves, one for an *olah* and one for a *chatas*.”² The *mishnah* at the end of tractate *Kinnim*³ says:⁴

If a woman says: “I vow a pair of birds, *kan*, if I give birth to a male child” (meaning, if she pledges to bring a sacrifice in addition to “one for an *olah* and one for a *chatas*,” sacrifices that Torah obligates her to bring), if she gives birth to a male child, she must offer up two pairs, *kinnim*, one for her vow and one for her obligation. If {before she assigned them} she gave them to the *kohen*, the *kohen* should offer {i.e., apply the blood of} three birds above {the red line}⁵ and one below.

(For the two birds that she pledged are *olos*,⁶ and one of the birds of the mandatory pair is an *olah* [as mentioned, “one for an *olah* and one for a *chatas*”]. The law is that {the blood offering of} “a bird *chatas* is performed below {the red line},” and “a bird *olah* is performed above,”⁷ as the *mishnah* says at the beginning of the tractate.)

The *mishnah* then continues and adds details regarding the law when mistakes or doubts occur both on the part of a woman who has given birth, what she did or did not pledge, or on the part of the *kohen*, whether he did or did not offer the sacrifices as required by law. The *mishnah* concludes with a case involving the most doubts. She pledged to bring two species, and it is unknown how the *kohen* offered the sacrifices. In such a case, “she must bring four other

¹ {Commonly translated as “an elevation offering,” an *olah* is consumed completely on the altar.}

² *Vayikra* 12:6,8. {Commonly translated as “a sin offering,” a *chatas* was brought for the violation of specific sins.}

³ {*Kinnim*, pl. of *kein*, refers to the pair of birds that the Torah obligates a mother who has recently given birth to offer in the Temple.}

⁴ {*Kinnim* 3:6.}

⁵ {The Red Line — The blood of certain sacrifices was applied to the upper part of the wall of the Altar, and the blood of other sacrifices was applied to the lower part. A red line (*chut hasikrah*) delineated the border between the upper and lower parts.}

⁶ {Plural of *olah*.}

⁷ {*Kinnim* 1:1.}

birds for her vow, and two for her obligation and one for her *chatas*. Ben Azzai says: ‘two *chatos*.’⁸

The *mishnah* then continues:

Rabbi Yehoshua said: This is what is meant when they said: “While it {a sheep} is alive, it makes one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold.” In what way is its sound sevenfold? Its two horns are made into two trumpets, its two leg-bones into two flutes, its hide into a drum, its entrails for lyres and its large intestines for harp strings; and some add that its wool is used for the blue pomegranates.

Commentators⁹ explain the meaning of Rabbis Yehoshua’s statement, “**This is what is meant when they said:** While it is alive.” Just as the sound of a sheep is **amplified** (“more *mitzvos* are performed through it”)¹⁰ — seven, or eight according to the other authorities — specifically by the sheep being degraded (death), so, too, is this true regarding the pairs of birds, קנין, in the case of the woman who has given birth. Originally, she only needed to bring “one pair of birds for her vow and one pair for her obligation.”¹¹ But because of the mistakes and doubts, “she does not know what she established, and the *kohen* does not know what he has offered up as a sacrifice.”¹² Consequently, she must now bring seven or eight (according to Ben Azzai) sacrifices.

2.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE EXPLANATION OF THE COMMENTATORS

But according to this interpretation, we need to clarify the following:

a) The *mishnah* could have offered any number of analogous cases to demonstrate this concept that a single entity expands to seven, specifically by it becoming degraded, or something similar. For example: A simple scenario of

⁸ {Plural of *chatas*.}

⁹ See Rambam, “*Commentary on Mishnah*”; Rav Ovadia Bartenura; *Peirush Rabbeinu Zerachya Halevi*.

¹⁰ Rambam, *Comm.*, *ibid*.

¹¹ The wording of Bartenura, *loc. cit.* {which differs slightly from the wording of the *mishnah* quoted above}.

¹² Bartenura, *ibid*.

property that a father bequeaths to seven or eight inheritors. As long as the one who is bequeathing the inheritance is alive, the property belongs to one person. After he dies and his children inherit the property, the property now belongs to seven or eight people. Thus, there is an increase. This also holds true regarding *mitzvos* (“more *mitzvos* are performed through it”): Now, the portion of the field that was bequeathed to each person is obligated separately in the *mitzvos* of *pe’ah*,¹³ *bikkurim*,¹⁴ etc. This is similar to the increase in the number of sacrifices in the case of a woman who has given birth.

By bringing **this** analogous case {regarding a sheep}, Rabbi Yehoshua indicates that the particular theme of this analogy more closely corresponds to our case than any other analogous case.

We need to clarify: What is this theme?

[We cannot suggest that the *mishnah* avoids the analogy of inheritance since regarding the pairs, the original sacrifices that she needed to offer do not change; she merely adds to them, whereas, in the case of inheritance, the bequeather perishes. Because the sound that the sheep had while it was alive also ceases.]

b) Parallels or examples are brought in order to aid in our understanding of a subject matter. Certainly, this applies in our situation, regarding which *Rambam* writes {explicitly}, “since this matter {of the birds} is strange” therefore, Rabbi Yehoshua brings an analogous case, “{informing us that the law concerning birds} is similar to what was taught about a sheep.” This is difficult to understand: What additional insight into the subject matter do we gain {by Rabbi Yehoshua’s illustrative case}: “This is what is meant when they said: “While it is alive, it makes one sound...”?”

c) The simple understanding of Rabbi Yehoshua’s words, “**This is what is meant when they said,**” as opposed to, “like they said,” or, “to what is this comparable?” implies that he doesn’t (only) seek to explain the pairs in the

¹³ {*Pe’ah*: lit. “corner,” the portion of the crop that must be left standing for the poor.}

¹⁴ {*Bikkurim*: lit. “choicest,” the first ripe fruits offered to Hashem.}

mishnah, but (also, and) on the contrary, this law in *Kinnim* explains, “This is what is meant when they said: While it is alive, it makes one sound...” This seems strange: “While it is alive, it makes one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold” is an ordinary, natural occurrence, requiring no explanation.

Furthermore: Even if the statement, “while it is alive...” called for explanation, the purpose of a *mishnah* (or the Torah, in general) is not to explain common expressions.

We must conclude that by saying, “while it is alive...,” Rabbi Yehoshua aims (not only to give an example from a common expression, but) to teach something relevant **in law and halachah**: This is what the *mishnah* means when it says, “**This** is what is meant when they said...” The explanation of the **halachah** that emerges from the aphorism, “while it is alive...,” is understood from the law in our *mishnah* regarding the sacrifices offered by a woman who has given birth.

3.

IGNORANT ELDERLY PEOPLE

The *mishnah* continues:

Rabbi Shimon ben Akashiah says: Ignorant old people, the older they become, the more their thinking gets muddled, as it says,¹⁵ “He removes speech from the faithful and deprives elders of their reason.” But when it comes to elderly Torah scholars, it is not so. On the contrary! The older they get, the more their minds become composed, as it says,¹⁶ “There is wisdom in the elderly, and understanding in the aged.”

The relevance of this in our context:¹⁷

Just as after the animal is dead, its sound becomes sevenfold, so, too, aged Torah scholars: When they age and become feeble in strength, they accrue wisdom.

¹⁵ *Iyov* 12:20.

¹⁶ *Iyov* 12:12.

¹⁷ *Bartenura*, loc cit.

We need to clarify:

a) Why is the lesson that “ignorant old people, the older they become...,” relevant to us at all? b) What is the novelty here? It is obvious and self-evident that the waning of physical strength causes “weakening” of wisdom. c) Moreover, this idea runs contrary to the adjacent discussion in the *mishnah*. (Our discussion emphasizes how specifically with age — “when they become feeble in strength” — their wisdom grows. d) The author of the *mishnah* should have at least only taught this idea after the novel lesson about elderly Torah scholars. (Meaning, although their minds become more composed as they age, the opposite occurs to the elderly who are ignorant.)

4.

THE SHEEP’S SOUND

The gist of the explanation for all of the above:

This law of *kinnim* teaches us a novel concept. In truth, a woman who has given birth is only obligated to offer one pair of birds, “one for an *olah* and one for a *chatas*.” And in our case, she is also obligated to offer what she pledged — two birds as *olos*. The mistakes and doubts that arise concerning the woman and the *kohen* obligate many more sacrifices to be offered, as many as seven or eight.

How could she be obligated to bring additional sacrifices in the *Beis Hamikdash* when it is possible that she is not obligated to offer them at all? The offerings that she was obligated to bring, were already sacrificed; and she already attained forgiveness and fulfilled all her obligations. (Regarding the remainder of the sacrifices, however, the question arises: How may we bring *chullin*¹⁸ into the Temple courtyard?)¹⁹

¹⁸ {Lit., mundane items, such as animals that have not been sanctified.}

¹⁹ {Since she is not obligated to offer these animals, they have the status of *chullin*, which are prohibited from being offered in the Temple.}

Granted that that in the case of a bird *chatas* offered out of doubt, such as when a woman may {or may not} have birthed a child, or the like, we can posit that Torah introduces the novelty that even a case of doubtful impurity warrants a sacrifice for atonement, based on the straightforward understanding of the *Gemara*.²⁰ (This sacrifice then permits the woman to eat consecrated foods.) **This is similar** to the law of an *asham talui*:²¹ The Torah²² obligates a person to bring a sacrifice if a doubt arises if he had sinned. “This is referred to as an *asham talui*, as it brings atonement when the person is in doubt, tentatively, until he knows with certainty that he sinned inadvertently....”²³

But in our circumstance, originally, the obligation was certain at the very outset. The doubt arose only later because of the woman and the *kohen*: Did she complete the addition to her obligation and attain atonement?

Additionally, what category do these seven or eight sacrifices fit into? The only reason why they are offered is because of a doubt on the part of the woman or the *kohen*.

To answer, Rabbi Yehoshua says: “This is what is meant when they said: While it is alive, it makes one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold.” Ostensibly, this is an oxymoron. The seven sounds — “its two horns are made into two trumpets...” — are sounds emerging from horns, its leg-bones, etc. Seemingly, these have no connection to the sound made by the sheep. Nonetheless, “they said... **its sound** is sevenfold.”

After the sheep dies, its original single sound ceases, and **new** sounds emerge from the horns, etc. But “they said” that all these sounds are “its sound,” of the sheep.

²⁰ *Nazir* 29a.

²¹ {*Asham talui*: lit., “a conditional guilt offering,” offered by a person who has a doubt as to whether he is obligated to offer a *chatas*.}

²² {*Vayikra* 5:17-19.}

²³ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Shegagos*,” ch. 8, par. 1.

This explains which category the sacrifices fit into. (Although the offering of these sacrifices came about as a result of doubts that only emerged **after** her [original] obligatory offerings, nonetheless, these sacrifices are also [analogous to] “its sound.”) These sacrifices are considered obligatory, etc., exactly as were her original sacrifices.

5.

OTHER INSTANCES

Now, this sacrifice is offered only because of a doubt. If so, how could this sacrifice become obligatory — equivalent to her obligatory sacrifices? We find numerous instances where a consequence has greater force than its cause.

To mention a few:

a) Regarding the law of using four-*tefachim*-wide²⁴ boards to cover a *sukkah*:²⁵ “If a person turned them on their side so that they would not measure four *tefachim* wide,”²⁶ the law is that they remain unacceptable. The reason is that “since the boards were labeled as invalid, they become equivalent to metal rods that are unacceptable as *schach*, no matter how they are turned.”²⁷ Thus, we see that although the reason these boards “are labeled as invalid” is because of a “decree concerning roofs,”²⁸ and this reason only applies to the four-*tefachim*-wide side, nonetheless, these boards become like metal rods, i.e., they become inherently unacceptable. As a result, the boards remain unacceptable even when turned on their side, i.e., even when the “decree concerning roofs” doesn’t apply.

²⁴ {A *tefach*, commonly translated “a handbreadth,” is a talmudic measure of length.}

²⁵ *Sukkah* 14b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Sukkah*,” ch. 5, par. 7; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* (*Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch*), “*Orach Chaim*,” ch. 629, par. 18 (par. 30).

²⁶ {A board four *amos* or more wide is invalid for use as *schach*.}

²⁷ *Rashi* loc. cit., s.v. “*pesulah*”.

²⁸ *Rashi* loc. cit., s.v. “*kasheirah*”.

b) The opinion of *Chasam Sofer*²⁹ regarding the second day of the Yom Tov of Shavuos is well known: The second day of Shavuos is stricter than the second day of Yom Tov of other festivals.³⁰ Whereas the second days of Yom Tov of other festivals were {instituted and} observed {originally} because of a doubt, observance of the second day of Yom Tov of Shavuos was always mandated with certainty. Since there was never a doubt about Shavuos as there was regarding Pesach and Sukkos (for Shavuos was established as falling on the 50th day of the *omer*),³¹ we observe two days of Shavuos only “so as not to differentiate between the **festivals**.”³²

Thus, the second day of Yom Tov of Pesach and Sukkos, which exist only because of a **doubt**, give rise to the existence of the second of Yom Tov of Shavuos, “so as not to differentiate between the festivals.” However, the second day of Yom Tov of Shavuos has the force of **certainty** more so than do {the second days of} Pesach and Sukkos.

6.

WHAT DOES *KINNIM* TEACH US ABOUT THE DEAD SHEEP?

In light of the above idea (in Section 4), we can posit that the same holds true in the reverse. Meaning, the law of *kinnim* helps to explain the lesson that “when the animal is alive it possesses one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold,” as Rabbi Yehoshua implies, “**This** is what is meant when they said.” This exemplifies {the aphorism}: “This came to teach, but in the end, it was taught.” The law of *kinnim* is relevant, and it explains elements of, and laws about, a live sheep, and the changes that take place when it dies.

²⁹ *Sheilos Uteshuvos*, “*Orach Chaim*,” ch. 145; see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1030. {*Chasam Sofer* — Moshe Schreiber (1762–1839), one of the leading rabbis of European Jewry in the first half of the nineteenth century.}

³⁰ {*Yom tov sheini shel galuyos* — the observance in the Diaspora of the major festivals (*Pesach*, *Shavuos* and *Sukkos*) as two-day, rather than one-day festivals. Instituted in Talmudic times because of the doubt as to which day the festival should be observed.}

³¹ {*Omer* — a barley offering brought on the second day of *Pesach*.}

³² *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh*,” ch. 3, par. 12.

One of the relevant laws: A sheep worshiped as an idol, *halachically*,³³ cannot be offered on the Altar.

The *Gemara* asks,³⁴ “Is a worshiped object subject to change or not?”³⁵ The *Gemara*³⁶ then clarifies the question: “One who bows to an animal, what is the *halachah* with regard to its wool? May it be used for *techeles*?...³⁷ With regard to its horns, what is the *halachah* concerning their use for trumpets? With regard to its leg-bones, what is the *halachah* concerning their use for flutes? With regard to its large intestines, what is the *halachah* concerning their use for *faros* (harp strings)?”³⁸

This, then, is the ***halachic*** application of the statement, “When it (sheep) is alive, it makes one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold.” The trumpets, etc., made from the (horns, etc., of the) dead sheep have been separated from the sheep and have changed their form. Thus, the seven sounds are **not** the sounds of a **sheep**. They are not even the sound (of the sheep’s leg-bones, hide, etc.). They are the sounds of **trumpets, flutes, drums**, etc. These seven sounds have nothing to do with the single sound of the living sheep. Nonetheless, they said that **these sounds are “its sound** {which} is sevenfold.” Even as the sounds become **seven** sounds, their connection with the single sound of the living sheep³⁹ remains in full force (in the context of **Torah law**, i.e., the prohibition to use these items in Temple service). Thus, their lawful status of “worshiped objects” (in the context of offering them to Hashem) does not change.

This idea can be applied in one of two ways:

a) The law is that “its horns are disqualified for use as trumpets and its leg-bones as flutes....” Only because these items are made from the sheep, automatically, they remain **prohibited** for use in Temple service. However, they

³³ *Temurah* 28a, ff.; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Issurei Mizbeach*,” ch. 3, par. 6.

³⁴ *Avodah Zarah* 46b.

³⁵ {If an item has been used for idolatry, it may not be used in Temple service, unless its status has changed.}

³⁶ *Ibid* 47a.

³⁷ {Blue dye used to make *tzitzis*.}

³⁸ Rashi on *Avodah Zarah* 47a, s.v. “*lefaros*.”

³⁹ {That had been worshiped as an idol.}

are not subjected to the “**label** of idol-worship,”⁴⁰ to be regarded as worshiped objects (in the context of using them for Hashem), since they have changed and become a new entity.

b) The law that the horns are disqualified for use as trumpets, etc., applies in the same way as the law invalidating the sheep for use in the Temple service.⁴¹ These instruments attain the “label of idol worship,” i.e., they are considered to be items that have been worshiped {as idolatry} (with respect to using them in Temple service). Thus, these items are loathsome to Hashem.

We can posit that the practical difference between these two approaches is as follows:

According to the first approach, since these objects have become new entities, their prohibition is only rabbinic in nature. But according to the second approach, these worshiped objects are biblically prohibited (from being used in Temple service).

Rabbi Yehoshua teaches us this very idea: “**This is what** is meant when they said: “While it is alive....” Meaning, the law in the *mishnah* about the sacrifices of a woman who has given birth explains the concept of, “while it is alive....”

Just as in the case of pairs of birds, although the source of her obligation is a doubt (regarding the pairs of birds which the woman is obligated to offer), nonetheless, these sacrifices are similar to “its sound.” Meaning, they retain the same class of obligation as the original sacrifices. The same applies to the law of the worshiped sheep.

The horns and leg-bones, etc., have changed and become new entities. Thus, ostensibly, the law invalidating them for Temple service⁴² should not apply as it did when these parts were still part of the living sheep. Nevertheless, “after

⁴⁰ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Issurei Mizbeach*,” ch. 4, par. 7.

⁴¹ {Lit. “the Altar.” I.e., they can not be used to make musical instruments, which were played in conjunction with certain sacrificial offerings.}

⁴² {Lit. “for the Altar.”}

it is dead, **its sound is sevenfold.**” These body parts retain an inherent biblical prohibition, just like its sound — “they become like rods of idol-worship.” The “label of idol-worship” — of being a worshiped object (and thus — forbidden to be offered to Hashem) is the label applied to the horns and leg-bones, etc. They are unacceptable {for use in Temple service} as trumpets and flutes because they themselves are loathsome to Hashem.

7.

MORE AND MORE PROBLEMS EQUALS MORE AND MORE GROWTH

The idea that “while it is alive, it makes one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold” contains an element not entirely similar to the pair of birds offered by a woman who has given birth:

Regarding the sheep, the *mishnah* emphasizes one (type of degradation and one) circumstance: The change in state to “after it is dead,” from its previous state, “while it is alive.” In contrast, regarding the pair of birds, the *mishnah* records several possibilities: The *kohen* did not seek guidance; she doesn't know what she gave; he does not know what he did, etc. (and the detailed differences between one species and two species, etc.). Each doubt, etc., obligates additional sacrifices, etc., until the point that she must offer seven (or eight) sacrifices.

Therefore, the *mishnah* continues: “Rabbi Shimon ben Akashiah says: Ignorant old people, **the older they become**, the more their thinking gets muddled... But when it comes to aged Torah scholars... **the older they become**, the more their minds become composed....” For in this single idea, we see the same point that was discussed above.

For this reason, he **prefaces** and writes, “Ignorant old people, the older they become, the more their thinking gets muddled” together with the previous statement.

Rabbi Shimon ben Akashiah says that upon reaching old age (Torah scholars “become feeble in strength, their bodies weaken and deteriorate,” nevertheless, “their wisdom increases,”⁴³ however), people’s **intellectual abilities** naturally deteriorate. We see this happen in ignorant people. However, “aged Torah scholars... their minds become more composed.” Meaning, their unique advantage (and the first cause) is the fact that they are Torah scholars. This seemingly suggests that their intellectual abilities **not deteriorating**, by itself, is already an adequate advantage. In contrast, regarding elderly ignorant people (mentioned previously) — “their thinking gets muddled.” But, in truth, there is a greater novelty here: “their wisdom increases, their intellectual capacities become stronger, and they add to their perfection.”⁴⁴ That is, they become even greater Torah scholars than before.

In **this** respect, Rabbi Shimon ben Akashiah’s lesson is more similar to *kinnim* discussed above. For (elderly Torah scholars), “**the older they get...**” This development is not a one time occurrence (cause, or degradation). Rather, every day their bodies weaken, and naturally, their intellectual capacities should also weaken every day. (As is the case with elderly ignorant people, “**the older they become**, the more their thinking gets muddled.) But on the contrary! Every day they develop further, “their minds become more composed.”

[We can posit that this is relevant *halachically* regarding the law that only men of “older age” were eligible to sit on the *Sanhedrin*.⁴⁵ {For Torah scholars, the older they become, the more their minds become composed.}]

This is similar to *kinnim*, as discussed above, where every mishap and doubt gives rise to more and more sacrifices.

⁴³ Rambam, “Commentary on Mishnah,” commenting on our *mishnah* in *Kinnim*.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *Sanhedrin* 17a. {*Sanhedrin*, the supreme court of Jewish law. The *Sanhedrin* comprised 71 judges. They sat in a designated chamber in the Temple.}

8.

RESTING ON THE DEAD ONES

The explanation according to the deeper perspective of Torah, and the connection of these ideas to Rabbi Yehoshua specifically (who is the author of the unattributed *mishnayos* in *Kinnim*)⁴⁶ is:

Seder Kodshim {lit., “Order of Holy Items”} refers allegorically to the Jewish people who are categorized as a “holy nation”;⁴⁷ yet even the “(tractate) *Chullin* {lit., ‘mundane matters’}” of the Jewish nation are part of (*Seder*) “*Kodshim*.” The conclusion of *Seder Kodshim* addresses the laws of a woman who has recently given birth. This alludes to the redemption of the Jewish nation. For as known, exile is compared to pregnancy; and redemption, to birth.⁴⁸ And as it says in the prophecy about the redemption,⁴⁹ “Zion went through her labor and gave birth to her children.”

Rabbi Yehoshua concludes the *Seder* and explains how the Jewish people can survive exile and can reach the stage of “birth” — redemption: “This is what is meant when they said: While it is alive, it makes one sound, but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold.”

The *Midrash* says:⁵⁰

Hadrian said to **Rabbi Yehoshua**: “Mighty is the lamb that can survive standing among seventy wolves.” And he replied: “Mighty is the shepherd who can save and protect the lamb, and destroy the wolves surrounding her.”

This raises a question: Sometimes the Jewish people are on the level {allegorically} of a “living” sheep. This refers to times when the {spiritual} stature of the forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov is “alive” {revealed} in

⁴⁶ *Zevachim* 67b, ff.

⁴⁷ {*Shemos* 19:6.}

⁴⁸ See *Torah Ohr*, *parshas Va'era*, at the beginning.

⁴⁹ *Yeshayahu* 66:8.

⁵⁰ *Midrash Tanchuma*, *parshas Toldos*, sec. 5; *Esther Rabbah*, ch. 10, sec. 11.

the Jewish people. At such times, we understand that the shepherd protects the Jewish people who are on the level of “living” sheep.

But when the sheep “dies” — the {spiritual} level of the forefathers does not illuminate the Jewish people openly, and they become seven **new** independent sounds who do not stand at the level of the single voice of a forefather. At times like these, when the Jewish people break away from one another into different groups, on what basis does the Shepherd protect them?

Rabbi Yehoshua responds to this question: “but after it is dead, its **sound** is sevenfold.” As Rabbi Yehoshua says in the *Midrash*:⁵¹

You caused a grapevine to journey out of Egypt...⁵² Just as a vine is nurtured and supported by dead branches, so, too, the Jewish nation is **nurtured**, maintained and supported by the “**dead ones**” — the forefathers.

Meaning, “its sound is sevenfold,” i.e., the seven different types of Jews are not a (completely) separate entity. Rather, they are connected to (and are enlivened by) the single sound of the living sheep — the **forefathers**. For the forefathers are the fathers of every single Jew.

Just as the forefathers’ **single** voice was devoted to “our Father in Heaven,” the same applies to the seven independent sounds. All of them — all seven distinct levels within *avodas Hashem*⁵³ — contain within their own essence-character, the **single** voice devoted to our Father in Heaven.

Every one of the seven sounds contains “the voice — the voice of Yaakov,”⁵⁴ which prevents “the hands of Esav from ruling over them”⁵⁵ — the Shepherd protects them.

⁵¹ *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 44, sec. 1.

⁵² *Tehillim* 80:9.

⁵³ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*behaaloscha*,” at the beginning {where it discusses the seven levels of serving Hashem, based on the seven *midos*.}

⁵⁴ *Bereishis* 27:22.

⁵⁵ *Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 65, sec. 20.

Rabbi Yehoshua emphasizes this idea by saying, “but after it is dead, its sound is sevenfold.” The reason why all seven distinct levels are alive and exist is because “it is dead”; meaning, “they are supported by the ‘dead ones,’ i.e., the forefathers.”

9.

FORGET IT

But a question emerges: True, “Mighty is the shepherd who can save and protect the lamb.” But for how long must the sheep live among the seventy wolves — throughout the inordinately long period of exile?

In response to this, the *mishnah* continues and teaches that by “growing old,” in exile “with aged men,” and having “length in days,” more “wisdom” and “understanding” accrues.

This was the case at the exodus from Egypt.⁵⁶ Although the Jewish people were willing to forego the {promised} “great wealth,”⁵⁷ in order to leave Egypt sooner, Hashem wanted them to leave with great wealth, specifically.

On a deeper level, the purpose of exile is to refine the sparks of holiness.⁵⁸ Only when the Jewish people take “their gold and silver with them”⁵⁹ — when they refine all the sparks of their portion of the world — will the redemption arrive in a complete sense.

Nowadays, we have already surpassed “elderliness” and “old age” in exile according to all opinions; in fact, we have reached a very advanced old age.⁶⁰ [Although, “there is no forgetfulness **before** the Throne of Your Glory,”⁶¹ the very existence of exile is located **beneath** the Throne of Glory. Over there,

⁵⁶ *Berachos* 9a, ff.

⁵⁷ {*Bereishis* 15:14.}

⁵⁸ *Torah Or*, “*Lech Lecha*,” beg.; *ibid.*, 117b.

⁵⁹ *Yeshayahu* 60:9.

⁶⁰ “For **all** the deadlines for redemption have passed” (*Sanhedrin* 97b).

⁶¹ {*Berachos* 32b.}

forgetfulness is possible.⁶² Thus, may all the calculations be forgotten.] If, G-d forbid, a few moments remain until we reach the ultimate old age in exile — may it be His will that He “forgets” all calculations, and we are redeemed “**immediately**,”⁶³ in this very moment, in this physical world, through our righteous Moshiach.

— Based on talks delivered on the 20th of Av, *Shabbos parshas Eikev*, and *Shabbos parshas Re'eh*, 5737 (1977)

⁶² See Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Hilchos Talmud Torah*”, ch. 2 sec. 1.

⁶³ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Teshuvah*,” ch. 7, par. 5.