



Harav Shaul Israeli zt'l  
Founder and President

# HEMDAT YAMIM

## Parashat Hashavua

Toldot, 2 Kislev 5783

### The National Significance of Intergenerational Connection

Harav Yosef Carmel

The *parasha*'s first *pasuk* contains a famous apparent redundancy, referring to "Yitzchak the son of Avraham," followed by "Avraham begot Yitzchak" (*Bereishit* 25:19). We will survey some of the many insights on this issue.

The *midrash* comments that a son's following his righteous father's path brings double joy (*Bereishit Rabba* 63:1). *Midrash Aggada* (*Bereishit* 25:19) says that repeating the connection between father and son in a different order stresses that each one reflected positively on the other. Yitzchak was elevated by being Avraham's son, as the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 17:6) says, "The glory of children is their father." Avraham was seen positively for having a son like Yitzchak, as the *pasuk* (*ibid.*) says, "The crown of elders is their grandchildren," and thus certainly their children. The *Rashbam* (*Bereishit* 25:19) says that since the Torah had referred to Yishmael as the "son of Avraham who was born to Hagar the Egyptian," here it writes, in contrast, that Yitzchak was begot by Avraham, to stress that he was considered Avraham's main progeny. The redundancy excludes other biological children of Avraham from the standing of "sons of Avraham" in the fullest sense (*Bereishit* 21:12 and *Divrei Hayamim I*, 1:28-34 also indicate Avraham's sons' levels of connection to him).

We humbly present an additional explanation of our opening *pasuk*.

The fathers of our nation, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, were leaders, who can be considered kings or princes of great groups of people, including people outside their family, who followed them devotedly. Therefore, their discourses were with kings. This is evident from the story of Avraham's life. Avraham struggled against Nimrod, the leader of mankind's first mega-state. Avraham competed against him in the generation of the Tower of Bavel and defeated him spiritually, when he emerged unscathed from the furnace in Ur Kasdim. He also militarily defeated the four Mesopotamian kings, led by Amrafel, whom *Chazal* identify as Nimrod, who fought Eretz Canaan's five kings and captured Avraham's nephew Lot.

Avraham had connections with the kings he had helped, such as the King of Sodom and Malkitzedek, the King of Shalem (which, *Chazal* say, was Yerushalayim). Avraham also negotiated with the kings of Egypt and of Plishtim, Paroh and Avimelech, respectively. Sarah herself was an Arameite princess, and the *midrash* says that Hagar was Paroh's daughter. Avraham's status justified his taking a concubine, which the *Rambam* says is permitted only for kings.

One of the features of a kingdom is that it turns into a dynasty. A leader who does not create a dynasty is not a king, but is at most a "judge." We have explained that David could not build a *Beit Mikdash* but had to wait until Shlomo, his son, sat on the throne, as David did not enjoy the full status of king until his son succeeded him. David only prepared the infrastructure, upon which Shlomo brought the matter to fruition (see also *Tehillim* 132:11-14). Based on this, we can explain our *pasuk* as stressing that as Yitzchak developed to sit on Avraham's "throne," a king was created.

We pray that the whole world will recognize the special status that Avraham and Yitzchak established, which will bring great advantages for all of Avraham's progeny, as the father of many nations, and indeed of all of humanity.

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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

## Mezuza for a Storage Room

**Question:** I am moving into an apartment and want to know whether the storage room (in the building's basement) requires a *mezuza*.

**Answer:** We will start with the basic question – whether a room used for storage is considered “*beitecha*” (your home – see Devarim 6:9). The *gemara* (Yoma 11a-b) cites conflicting opinions about whether various areas in one’s property that are not for classic “living purposes” require a *mezuza*. These include animal pens and storage places for straw, wood, and general items. The *gemara* also raises the possibility that it depends on whether more classic living needs are also performed there. The Rif (Mezuza 6a) and Rosh (Mezuza 15) accept as *halacha* the opinions that *mezuzot* are required in such places. In contrast, the Rambam (Mezuza 6:7) says that only with additional, personal use of the room does one require a *mezuza*. The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 286:2) rules like the majority opinion that it is necessary to attach a *mezuza* to the entrance of a storage room unless it is also used for disgraceful activity.

Nevertheless, the Aruch Hashulchan (YD 286:9) reasons (although he is inconclusive regarding practice) that because of the *machloket* on the matter, one should not make a *beracha* for such a room. This is also the ruling of Yalkut Yosef (YD 285:28) and the leaning of Chovat Hadar 2:(11), although the latter does not fault one who attaches a *mezuza* there with a *beracha* (*ibid.*). In a case of doubt regarding whether a *beracha* is appropriate for a certain room, the preferred system to use is to attach the *mezuza* after attaching one to a place that certainly requires one, with the intention that the *beracha* goes on both *mezuzot* (see Shach, YD 286:23).

That which makes the *halacha* regarding storage rooms is unclear is likely because in one’s daily activities, one does not frequent such a room, as putting things in and taking out of storage are periodical rather than ongoing actions (see Derisha, YD 286:2). It seems clear that a room used just for a family’s refrigerator would require a *mezuza* because that type of short-term storage is considered part of normal living. In contrast, in a place where one stores objects long term and a very long time goes by between times entering it, it should be exempt from a *mezuza*. However, most cases of storage rooms likely fit within the gray area that is governed by the opinions presented above (see Chovat Hadar 2:(12)).

Other factors could possibly make a *mezuza* unnecessary for a storage room. The minimum size for a house that needs a *mezuza* is four *amot* (somewhere between 6 and 8 ft.); less than this is not considered a house regarding several relevant *halachot* (Sukka 3a). The Rosh (*ibid.* 16) posits that both its length and width have to be at least 4 *amot*. Most early sources understand the Rambam (*ibid.* 2) as saying that it suffices that the room’s area be 16 sq. *amot*, even if one dimension is less than 4 *amot*, and the Shach (286:23) treats the matter as a doubt. According to these rules, many storage rooms may be too small to require a *mezuza*. (The whole space does not need to be traversable, as boxes that are placed there do not reduce the halachic size, since they can be moved (Mikdash Me’at 286:40). Even if shelves are permanently attached to the wall, if it is used for the room’s purpose (storage), it does not reduce the room’s size (see Chovat Hadar 4:(21))).

The Pitchei Teshuva (YD 286:11) cites an opinion that a room whose size makes sense for the purpose for which it is used requires a *mezuza* even if it is less than four *amot*. While it is difficult to ignore this opinion (see Minchat Yitzchak I:8), it is not clear we accept it and its application is not always clear. Therefore a small storage room would raise further doubt whether a *mezuza* is necessary and certainly further reason not to make a *beracha* if attaching a *mezuza* (see Chovat Hadar 4:(16)).

In summary, regarding most storage rooms, there is doubt whether they require a *mezuza*, and attaching one there without a separate *beracha* is the best way to go.

### “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@eretzhemdah.org](mailto:info@eretzhemdah.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

## Reaction to the Encyclopedia “Otzar Yisrael” – #133

**Date and Place:** 3 Iyar 5668 (1908), Yafo

**Recipient:** Yehuda David Eisenstein, the editor of “Otzar Yisrael,” whose 10 volumes, were published between 1907 and 1913. Eisenstein participated in the Jewish Encyclopedia, but he felt that it was not traditional enough and therefore put out “Otzar Yisrael” as an alternative.

**Body:** I was filled with joy when the first volume of “Otzar Yisrael” appeared before me, as your honor decided, in his generosity, to honor me with it. I was happy with the treasure that it is, written in Hebrew. It is a tremendous volume of information relating to the Jewish People. Even more so, I was happy to see the spirit of moderation and a settled mind (as opposed to the more prevalent spirit of liberalism in Jewish academia at the time), which is generally found throughout the encyclopedia. This is something that can be credited to the editors’ wise understanding that they should not be overly moved by the many new movements that come to destroy rather than to build. I am full of hope that this encyclopedia will provide much good for the Jewish home, in the way it is structured, with its many entries.

On the other hand, I feel that I have an obligation to point certain entries that I felt, when I went through them, included incorrect matters. [Rav Kook took issue with three points. One was a rather technical one about the background of someone mentioned in the gemara, who, Rav Kook argued was not only not a rabbi, as the encyclopedia said, but was not even Jewish. The second was the way the encyclopedia dealt with the “original man.” The third was the overly critical explanation of a controversial action that the amora Rava took.]

Regarding your request that I take part in writing certain entries in the encyclopedia, be aware that I am very busy with various jobs and matters that I need to deal with. On the other hand, your important work is dear to me, as I think it will promote the furtherance of a Judaism that is faithful [to its proper goals] and will cause a broadening of the mind of Jews in an honorable manner. Therefore, I hope (without promising) to take part in some matter or matters, whether long or short, according to the amount of time I will have. However, first, it is proper that you tell me which entries you need my help with, and which entries were already done. Then I can, with Hashem’s help, fulfill your request in this type of work, when I will know that it was not done by someone else.

I will end with a blessing and by expressing my great regard for you. May Hashem see fit to give you success with much grandeur in raising the status of the Jewish People and making the Torah and its study valued, along with all elements of authentic Judaism regarding our nation. May your lot be among those who make the masses increasingly righteous forever and ever.

[Apparently, Rav Kook did take part in the effort regarding additional volumes.]



### 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

## Did the Realtor Help? – part I

(based on ruling 82097 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

**Case:** A real-estate agent (=*pl*) publicized in a WhatsApp group an apartment for rent, with a video of the interior and basic details (with name of street but not building #). The defendants (=*def*) set up an appointment to see the apartment. While waiting for *pl* to finish with a previous client, *def* figured out that the apartment was owned by friends and that they had considered renting it months ago, but it had been too expensive (7,500 NIS a month). *Def* promptly called the owner, who said that it was not on the market but looked into it and found out that the present renter wanted to leave early and had asked *pl* to put it on the market. *Def* then told *pl* they knew the apartment and refused to sign the agent agreement and ended up renting it directly from the owners for 7,000 NIS. *Pl* demands a full realtor's fee because he gave *def* the information through which they were able to rent it. *Def* argue that they are exempt because they did not sign the contract and because the owners had promised to tell them if the price went down, which they would have done when they found out the renter was looking for a replacement.

**Ruling:** Israeli law regarding real estate agents determines that they are entitled to their fee only if three conditions are all met: 1. They are licensed agents. 2. They signed the client to a detailed contract. 3. They were the "effective factor" in bringing the sides to an agreement. In several *piskei din* of our network, we have determined that we generally view this law as the valid "law of the land" for these purposes. This is to a great extent because the law is designed to prevent quarrels over when the agent deserves payment (see Shut Harashba II, 356).

We should therefore determine whether *pl* was the effective factor for *def*'s renting of the apartment. On the one hand, *def* claimed that they had a promise in hand from the owners to let them know if the apartment was on the market in a manner that was feasible for them. On the other hand, *def* could not assure us that this definitely would have happened. *Pl* is correct that the fact that the owners had already lowered the price from 7,500 to 7,000 NIS (for the present renter) without telling *pl* raises questions if they would have let *def* know this time, and especially if the renter would have presented them with someone ready to rent at their price.

However, we believe that there is still doubt on the matter. If the renter had not found a new renter promptly, the renter might have told the owners who then likely would have approached *def*. We note that while in the beginning, *pl* rejected *def*'s entire story as a fabrication to get out of paying, evidence presented during the hearing caused him to accept *def*'s story. We note also that *def* suggested calling the owners while in *beit din* to hear their perspective and *pl* refused (as was his right) to do so. Therefore, the question of credit for facilitating the rental remains unsolved.

*We continue with other elements next time.*

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

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 Yisrael ben Rivka

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