
Torah Portion: B'midbar, Numbers 1:1–4:20
Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22

Yehudah HaLevi interpretation of body and soul

Rabbi Myriam Klotz (*Erev Shavuot, May 2018*)

The medieval Jewish poet and philosopher Yehudah haLevi taught that in Bamidbar's description of the organization of the Israelite camp, the *mishkan* represents the heart and the community of Israel organized around it represents the body. "The whole body," he writes, "is thus harmoniously arranged, but under the control of the heart, which forms the primary home of the soul. Its localization in the brain is of secondary importance, the heart remaining its regulator. In exactly the same way is the living, godly people arranged." (*The Kuzari* chapter 2:26) Our body represents the camp of the Israelites. Our heart is the *mishkan*/Tabernacle, containing within it both the whole, unbroken tablets Moses received on Mount Sinai, as well as the broken set he shattered at the foot of the mountain.

Asher Yatzar

Music by Dan Nichols

I thank You for my life, body and soul
Help me realize I am beautiful and whole
(oh so beautiful, oh so holy)
I'm perfect the way I am and a little broken too
I will live each day as a gift I give to you (my God, my God)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, Rofei chol basar u'mafli la'asot

Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all flesh,
working wondrously.

Reflection

Rabbi John Rayner (*Mishkan T'filah* page 33)

Torah is what God has revealed to us, and what we discern of God: ideas and ideals, laws and mitzvot, our religious heritage. It unfolds our memories of Abraham and Sarah, of Moses and Miriam and the Prophets. It is legislation and explanation, allowing questions that challenge, answers that inspire: all a quest for meaning. It is our way of life, a path for our souls, and the design for a better world.

D'var Torah

Rick Cohen