

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

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BEHAR ~ BECHUKOSAI



❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits.

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

Dvar Torah (Behar)

The Right Reasons

What does the *Torah* mean when it states, "The land will rest a *Shabbos* for Hashem" (*Vayikra* 25:2)? In what sense is the observance of the *mitzva* of *Shabbos* "for Hashem" more so than other *mitzvos* in the *Torah*?

The observance of *Shabbos*, explains Rav Levi Yitzchok, actually predated the *Torah*. According to the *Tur* (281), when Moshe requested that Pharaoh give his Jewish captives a day of rest, he designated the seventh day of the week as that day. Therefore, says the *Arizal*, "Moshe rejoices in the gift of his portion", as we say in *Shacharis* on *Shabbos*, since he actually instituted the Jewish observance of *Shabbos* before the *Torah* was given. And therefore as well, Hashem declares (*Shemos* 31:13): *Ve'ata dabeir el Bnei Yisrael leimor ach es Shabsosai tishmoru* – "Tell the people of Yisrael to observe My *Shabbos*." They should observe *Shabbos* because I gave it to them, not because they were accustomed to observing it from before.

This is also what the *Torah* is telling us here. It is quite customary for farmers to leave their fields fallow so that the earth will replenish itself and be more fertile the following year. But this should not be your motivation when observing *Shemitta*. It should be done "for Hashem", not for the perceived benefits a sabbatical year provides. And should you fail to do so, the land will be devastated and depopulated, thereby causing it to lie fallow "for Hashem".

Story

Great *Tzaddikim* can sense each other's thoughts even if they are separated by distance, especially when they share a close relationship, as did Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov and Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev.

One day, Rav Moshe Leib called together a few of his *Chassidim*.

"Come, let us go out to greet Rav Levi Yitzchok," he said. "He is coming here, and we should welcome him with honor by going forth from Sassov to meet him at the gates."

"When is he coming?" the *Chassidim* wanted to know.

"Right now," said Rav Moshe Leib. "We must leave immediately."

Rav Moshe Leib and his *Chassidim* walked out of the town and into the fields, but there was no sign of Rav Levi Yitzchok. They continued along the road in the direction of Berditchev for a long time, but still they did not catch sight of Rav Levi Yitzchok.

The road began to climb so that they could not see ahead of them beyond the crest of the hill.

Rav Moshe Leib held up his hand signaling the group to stop. He stood still for a moment or two, then clapped his hands with joy.

"Rav Levi Yitzchok is here," he exulted. "He's just ahead of us. Let's go greet him."

He set off at a brisk pace, his *Chassidim* following closely behind. They reached the top of the hill and looked down the other side. A horse and wagon were coming along the road toward them. The wagon driver saw the crowd and pulled to a stop.

Rav Levi Yitzchok emerged from the wagon. He rushed toward his friend Rav Moshe Leib, and the two *Tzaddikim* embraced.

"My friend," said Rav Levi Yitzchok, "I've come to spend a *Shabbos* with you."

Rav Moshe Leib's face clouded over, and he put his head in his hands. "If only I had known," he lamented. "If only I had known."

"Is there a problem?" asked Rav Levi Yitzchok.

"I have to spend *Shabbos* in one of the outlying villages. One of my *Chassidim* is making a *bris* this coming week, and I promised to attend the *sholom zochor* on Friday night."

"That's no problem. I'll come too. I'm sure your *Chassid* can find a little hay so that I can lie down on the floor in a corner and go to sleep."

Rav Levi Yitzchok had assumed the *Chassid's* house would not be opulent, but he had not anticipated the extreme squalor they encountered. The house was tiny and lacked even rudimentary amenities, with a dirt floor and walls stained black by years of cooking and heating. The shelves and cupboards were bare of food. All there was for *Shabbos* was a barrel of pickled cabbage past the bloom of freshness.

When they returned from *shul* that night, Rav Levi Yitzchok paid no attention to the food. He just leaned back and sang the *zemiros* in his beautiful and passionate voice. Rav Moshe Leib did take a few spoonfuls of the cabbage. "In honor of *Shabbos*," he declared. "This cabbage tastes as if it came from *Gan Eden*."

Later, when it came time to retire for the night, Rav Moshe Leib took it upon himself to act as the host and make the arrangements. He pulled together two benches and made a makeshift bed for Rav Levi Yitzchok.

"And where will you sleep?" asked Rav Levi Yitzchok.

"Since I'm the host tonight," said Rav Moshe Leib, "you cannot ask me such questions. You are my guest, and I have to make sure you are comfortable. Let me worry about myself."

After *Shabbos* they set out for Sassov with the retinue of *Chassidim* who had accompanied them and who had found accommodations elsewhere in the village. Along the way, they stopped on a deserted stretch of road when it came time for *Mincha*, but they were two men short of a *minyan*.

"Back home in Sassov," said Rav Moshe Leib, "when I'm short of a *minyan*, I go into the street, clap my hands and call for people to come join us."

"So do it now," said Rav Levi Yitzchok.

Rav Moshe Leib clapped his hands, and in a short time, two Jewish men came walking along the road.

"When *Moshiach* arrives," Rav Levi Yitzchok said to him, "you will be the one who claps his hands and summons people to the *minyan*. How fortunate you are."



Dvar Torah (Bechukosai)

Sources of Illumination

When Moshe took a census of the Jewish people, *Hashem* instructed him not to include the members of the tribe of Levi in the census. Rather, they were to be counted separately. Why were the *Levi'im* set apart from the rest of the Jewish people?

The Jewish people have a direct connection to the *Torah* in that every single Jewish person corresponds to a particular letter in the *Torah*. A person's body is made up of six hundred and thirteen major components: two hundred and forty-eight limbs and organs and three hundred and sixty-five circulatory vessels, all of which are meant to be used in the service of *Hashem*. A person also has six hundred and thirteen components in his spiritual anatomy. These are the six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos*, which are actually six hundred and thirteen sources of spiritual illumination that connect a person to *Hashem*.

These six hundred and thirteen sources of spiritual illumination are the conduits for the divine emanations that descend into the minds of the people who fulfill them. With the power of the intellect, a person can then perceive the divine emanations flowing into his life. But in actuality, the ultimate Source of these emanations is far beyond the conception of the human intellect, which can only perceive the emanations when they come into the realm of his rational perception. Some people, however, have the ability to perceive the emanations as they derive from their supernal sources. This perception is beyond the rational, and usually, it takes the form of prophecy. It has to be shown.

This explains an interesting distinction between the *Mishkon* and the *Menora*. Regarding the *Menora*, the *Torah* tells us (*Bamidbar* 8:4) that Moshe made the *Menora* according to the image *Hashem* had shown him. We find no such comment regarding the *Mishkon*. Why? It is because the *Mishkon* is a microcosm of the world and contains within itself the six hundred and thirteen points of spiritual illumination, which can be perceived by the rational mind. But

the *Menora* represents the supernal sources of the illumination, which cannot be perceived with the intellect and therefore had to be shown to Moshe by *Hashem*.

Within the Jewish people, we also find this symbolic division. The Jewish people as a whole represent the aspects of the divine emanations that can be perceived by the intellect. The *Levi'im*, however, represent a sensitivity to the higher sources of illumination, and therefore, they must be counted as a separate entity.



Story

The Kozhnitzer *Maggid*, one of the leading *talmidim* of Rav Levi Yitzchok, was destitute. He did not even have enough money to pay for the most basic necessities. In desperation, he traveled in the middle of the winter to Zhelichov, where Rav Levi Yitzchok was serving as *Rav* at the time.

"What shall I do?" he said to Rav Levi Yitzchok.

Rav Levi Yitzchok did not have an immediate answer for the *Maggid*. They discussed the situation and the different available options, but they did not come to a resolution.

After the meeting the *Maggid* prepared to leave. He waited until the wagon driver arrived, and then he bid farewell to Rav Levi Yitzchok.

"Not yet," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Come, I will escort you to the wagon."

The *Maggid* bundled up against the biting cold in his threadbare winter coat lined with ratty pieces of fur discolored with age. Rav Levi Yitzchok wore only a thin house robe; he did not bother to put on a coat just to walk the *Maggid* to the wagon.

"Come, let us go for a walk," Rav Levi Yitzchok suddenly said to the *Maggid*.

Rav Levi Yitzchok took the *Maggid's* arm, and they walked down the street. After a while, Rav Levi Yitzchok began to shiver from the cold.

"Could I borrow your coat?" he said to the *Maggid*.

"Of course," said the *Maggid*. He quickly took off his coat and helped Rav Levi Yitzchok into it.

"This is much better," said Rav Levi Yitzchok, and they continued their walk.

The *Maggid* was now the one who was left exposed to the bitter cold, and fairly soon, his teeth were chattering loudly.

"It sounds as if you are cold," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Here, take your coat and put it back on, and from this moment on, may you know only comfort and warmth."

As the *Maggid* put on his coat, he felt enveloped in a blanket of spiritual illumination and warmth. He returned to Kozhnitz refreshed and encouraged, and from that time on, never suffered privation again.

הילולא

The anniversary of the *petira* of a *Tzaddik* is known as a *Hilula*, which means “A Day of Joy”.

One of the tools that *Kabbola* teaches is to connect to a *Tzaddik* (righteous person). The method to connect to a *Tzaddik* is to adopt the following ritual:

1) Learn the anniversary of his *petira* or, if this information is not available, the days of *Erev Rosh Chodesh*, *Rosh Chodesh* and the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month can be utilized for a connection.

2) Light a twenty-five-hour candle in his or her honor. There is no specific *berocha*. Some say the following: This candle is being lit in the merit of _____.

Others say that it is the custom within *Klal Yisrael* to light a *yahrzeit* candle on the day that a relative or a *Tzaddik* has passed away. The lighting has no accompanying blessing, and people would like to express themselves in a *tefilla* when lighting the candle. This is not only true on a *yahrzeit* but on every *Yom Tov* as well.

The author of the *Pele Yo'etz*, Rav Eliezer Papo (1785–1828), did in fact compose such a *tefilla*. Rav Papo was the *Rav* of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The *tefilla* of the *Pele Yo'etz* is reproduced and translated below, as a public service.

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלה המגן מבעל הפלא יועץ על פרשת ויצא עמוד כ"ד]

הריני מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעילוי נשמת אבי / אמי מורתי / הצדיק
בן/בת _____, יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתקבל ברחמים
וברצון כל מעשה הטוב שאני עושה, בין במחשבה, בין בדיבור, בין במעשה ויהיה הכל
לזכות ולמנוחת ולעילוי לנשמות עמך ישראל, ובפרט לנפש רוח ונשמה של אבי / אמי /
צדיק _____. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים.

Translation:

Behold I am lighting this lamp for the resting and uplifting of the soul of my father/my mother/the *Tzaddik* _____ the son/daughter of _____. May it be Your will before you, *Hashem*, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that all my good deeds whether in thought, speech or action be done for a merit and a resting and an elevation of the souls of your nation Yisrael. It should be especially for the soul of my father/mother/the *Tzaddik* _____. May it be Your will that their souls be bound in the bond of life.

3) Learn about the person including history, culture, writings and teachings.

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

See more at: www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm





❁ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❁



YAHREZITS BEGINNING SHABBOS BEHAR BECHUKOSAI

http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Iyar/Sivan

Biographical information and yahrzeits compiled by Reb Manny Saltiel and www.anshe.org

❧ 26th of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night (May 7th)

- ✳ **Rav Sa'adia ben Yosef Gaon** (882–942). Born in Egypt, he led an all-out war against the Karaites when he was just twenty-three, criticizing their theories with articulately advanced arguments. In 915, he moved from Egypt to Teverya to further his studies. However, the *Yeshiva* of Sura in Babylonia invited him to join them. Six years later, in 928, he was appointed *Gaon* of the *Yeshiva*. Two years later, a rift between him and the *Reish Golusa*, Rav Dovid ben Zakai, over a *Bais Din* decision, prompted Rav Sa'adia's move to Baghdad. He returned seven years later, having mended the relationship. His most famous written work is *Ha'Emunos VehaDeyos*, the first Jewish philosophy book, originally written in Arabic and translated into Hebrew by Rav Yehuda *ibn* Tibbon. His translation of the *Chumash* into Arabic is used by Yemenite Jews to this day, (4702/942);
- ✳ **Rav Aharon Lapapa** (1590–1667). Born in Magnesia (Manisa), Turkey, he was a *talmid* of Rav Avrohom Motal and Rav Yosef Trani in the *Yeshivos* of Salonika and Constantinople. Late in life, on *Rosh Chodesh Iyar* in 1665, he was appointed *Dayan* of Smyrna (Izmir), effectively splitting rabbinical functions with Rav Chaim Benveniste. On the 6th of *Teves* that year, Shabbesai Tzvi proclaimed Rav Benveniste “supreme *Rav*” of Smyrna, no doubt having learned of Rav Aharon's disbelief of Messianic claims. As such, he was forced to remain homebound. Some of his responsa and *chiddushim* to *Tur Choshen Mishpot* were published in *Bnei Aharon*, (5427/1667);
- ✳ **Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto**, the *Ramchal* (1707–1747), *mechaber* of *Mesilas Yeshorim*, *Derech Hashem*, *Pis'chei Chochma* (138 chapters on the entire scope of the *Kabbala* in what many authorities consider the most systematic manner ever achieved), and *Daas Tevunos*. Born in Padua, Italy, the *Ramchal* was a *talmid* of Rav Yitzchok Lampronti, *mechaber* of the *Pachad Yitzchok*, the first major Talmudic encyclopedia ever assembled. The novelty of his approach drew opposition from a number of his contemporaries. Partially as a result of this opposition, the *Ramchal* left his native Italy in 1735 and settled in Amsterdam. In 1743, he traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* and settled in Acco. He died in a plague a few short years later, along with his wife and his son. The *Vilna Gaon* declared that the *Ramchal* had the most profound understanding of *Yiddishkeit* that any mortal could attain. He furthermore stated that if the *Ramchal* had been alive in his generation, he would go by foot from Vilna to Italy to sit at his feet and learn from him. According to a *mesora*, the *Gaon* was going to *Eretz Yisrael* to be a *talmid* of the *Ramchal* but then found out that the *Ramchal* was *niftar* and so returned to Vilna. There is also a *mesora* that the *Ramchal* was a *gilgul* of Rav Akiva; the two are buried right next to each other. The *Ramchal* was *niftar* when he was forty, the number of years said to make up for the first forty years of Rav Akiva's life, prior to his *teshuva*, (5507/1747);
- ✳ **Rav Yitzchok ben Chaim of Volozhin** (1779–1849 or 1851), the son of, and successor to, Rav Chaim of Volozhin. Rav Yitzchok's works include *Mili D'Avos* on *Pirkei Avos* and a *Torah* commentary entitled *Peh Kodosh*. Father-in-law of Rav Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (the *Netziv*), (5609/1849 or 5611/1851);

- * **Rav Shmuel Eliyohu** of Zhvill, (5648/1888);
- * **Rav Shlomo (“Shlomke”) Goldman**, the Zhviller *Rebbe* (1870–1945), the younger of the two sons of Rav Mordechai of Zhvill, and a descendant of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. When a pogrom in Zhvill targeted his brother’s compound and killed the *Rebbetzin* along with many Jews in the area, his brother, Rav Yaakov Yisrael, moved to Boston, and Rav Shlomo moved to Yerushalayim in 1926. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Gedalia Moshe, (5705/1945).

27th of Iyar ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (May 8th)

- * **Rav Eliezer Ze’ev** of Kretchenif, (5704/1944);
- * **Rav Shlomo Zalman Schneerson** (1830–1900), *Rebbe* of Kapust (Kopys) and *mechaber* of *Mogen Avos*, (5660/1900);
- * **Rebbetzin Yocheved “Jackie” Wein** (1934–2006), born in Vaskai, Lithuania, the youngest child of Rav Lazer and Rebbetzin Sora Menucha Levin. (Rav Lazer was a *talmid* of Kelm and learned with the *Chofetz Chaim* for five years.) In the mid 1950s, Jackie, a young woman trained as a teacher (at the urging of the legendary Rav Simcha Wasserman), married Rav Berel Wein, son of Rav Zev and Esther Wein, who was the daughter of Rav Chaim Tzvi Rubenstein, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Medrash L’Torah*. The young couple set up their new home in Chicago. In the early sixties, after several productive years in Chicago, Rav Wein’s *Rav*, Rav Chaim Kreiswirth, advised the brilliant young scholar to go into *Rabbonus*, where he could contribute so much to *Klal Yisrael*. When a position became available in Miami, the Weins packed up and moved south. But before they left, Rav Wein was instrumental in founding the Telshe *Yeshiva* in Chicago. The family remained in Miami for about a decade, until the early seventies, when Rav Wein became the Rabbinic Administrator of the OU, and then founded the *kehilla* of *Bais Torah* in Monsey, New York. In addition to raising her young family, Jackie accepted a fourth-grade teaching job at Yeshiva Spring Valley, a position she held until they moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. In 1994, when the Weins moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, she once again accepted the role of *Rebbetzin* with grace, reaching out from their new home in Rechavia, near the *Shaarei Chessed* neighborhood, where Rav Berel serves as *Rav*, (5766/2006).

28th of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night (May 9th)

- * **Shmuel HaNovi**, (930–878 BCE);
- * **Rav Yosef Yehuda Reiner**, *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Yeshiva Kol Torah*;
- * **Rav Yitzchok** of Corbeil (or Kurweil), the *Ba’al HaChotem*. A *talmid* and son-in-law of Rav Yechiel of Paris, he authored a *halachic* compendium called *Amudei HaGola*. Because it is briefer than the *Semag* of Rav Moshe of Coucy, his work is referred to as the *Sefer Mitzvos Koton*, or *Semak*. It lists all post-*Bais HaMikdosh* *mitzvos* with pertinent *halachic* details. He also authored some of the writings of the *Tosefos*, (5040/1280);
- * **Rav Yerachmiel Yehuda Meir Kalish**, the Amshinover *Rebbe* (1901–1976), born in Peshis’cha. He learned with his grandfather, Rav Menachem, who was the grandson of the first Amshinover *Rebbe*, Rav Yaakov Dovid. When Rav Menachem passed away in 1918, one of his sons, Rav Yosef, became the *Rebbe* of Amshinov, and the other son, Rav Shimon Sholom, Rav Meir’s father, became *Rebbe* in Otvotzk. Rav Shimon was a major driving force behind the exodus of thousands of *bochurim* in Mir, Kletzk, Radin, Novardok and

other *Yeshivos* to Japan and Shanghai at the outbreak of World War II. By the time Shanghai came under Japanese control, it held 26,000 Jews. After the war, Rav Shimon immigrated to America. Upon his *petira* in 1954, Rav Meir accompanied the *aron* to Teverya in *Eretz Yisrael*. He later moved to Tel Aviv, and then to the Bayit Vegan section of Yerushalayim. Rav Meir was noted for his genius in *Torah*, as well as his warmth and sensitivity to all Jews. His grandson, Rav Yaakov Arye Milikowski, succeeded him as the Amshinover *Rebbe*, (27 *Iyar*, according to *Yated* 2007), (5736/1976);

✳ **Rav Yaakov Leib Twersky** of Trisk, (5678/1918);

✳ **Rav Shlomo Avrohom Eliyohu Green** of Bnei Brak, the tailor *Mekubol*, (5760/2000).

✧ 29th of *Iyar* ~ Begins Monday Night (May 10th)

✳ **Rav Shmuel Heide**, *mechaber* of *Zikukin D’Nura* on *Tonna D’vei Eliyohu*, (5445/1685);

✳ **Rav Meir** of Premishlan, a *talmid* of the *Ba’al Shem Tov* (1850). He lived in abject but patient poverty, yet exerted himself tirelessly for the needy and the suffering. His *Ruach HaKodesh* and his ready wit have become legendary. He wrote no works, but some of his teachings were collected and published by his *Chassidim* after his *petira*, (5533/1773).

✧ 1st of *Sivan* ~ Begins Tuesday Night (May 11th)

✳ **Rav Meir HaLevi Horowitz**, the *Maharam Tiktin*. Tiktin was founded in 1437. In 1522, ten Jews from Grodno, Lithuania, became the first Jews to settle there. At that time, Lithuania was three times the size of Poland, stretching from the Baltic almost to the Black Sea, including areas known today as White Russia and Ukraine. Tiktin’s first *Rav* was Rav Mordechai, (1538), (5503/1743);

✳ **Rav Avrohom Menachem Mendel HaLevi Steinberg**, *Rav* of Brody, the *Machazeh Avrohom*, (5688/1928);

✳ **Rav Eliezer Dovid Greenwald** of Satmar, *mechaber* of *Keren LeDovid* (1867–1928). Born in Tcharna, Hungary, to Rav Amram Greenwald, the son of Rav Yosef, *Rav* of Tchechowitz, the family traced its roots to the *Ponim Meiros*, the *Chacham Tzvi*, and the *Maharal*. As a youth, Eliezer Dovid was a *talmid* of his brother, Rav Moshe, the *Rav* of Chust and *mechaber* of *Arugas HaBosem*. He founded a large *Yeshiva* in Satmar, Romania, in 1921, (5688/1928);

✳ **Rav Mordechai Shapiro** of Kaminka-Koritz, (5707/1947);

✳ **Rav Alexander Sender Linchner**, son-in-law of Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz and founder of Kiryat Noar (Boystown), Bayit Vegan, in 1953 for for children who had escaped the Holocaust and other destitute Jewish immigrant children. Previously, he had started a trade school for fourteen boys from Yemen in 1949. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Moshe Linchner, (5756/1996);

✳ **Rav Aharon Yechiel Leifer**, the *Nadvorna Rebbe* of Tzefas, (5760/2000);

✳ **Rav Mordechai Don Waldman** of *Yeshiva Bais Dovid* Monsey, (5760/2000).

✧ 2nd of *Sivan* ~ Begins Wednesday Night (May 12th)

✳ **Rav Yisrael Hager** of Vizhnitz, the *Ahavas Yisrael* (1860–1936). The grandson of Rav Menachem Mendel of Vizhnitz (the *Tzemach Tzaddik*), he succeeded his father, Rav Boruch (the *Imrei Boruch*), as *Admor* of Vizhnitz after the latter’s *petira* in 1893. He was *Admor* for over forty years, during which time Vizhnitz grew to several tens of thousands of

Chassidim. Rav Yisrael had four sons, Rav Menachem Mendel of Vishav, Rav Chaim Meir (the *Imrei Chaim*), Rav Eliezer and Rav Boruch. Rav Yisrael's remains were moved to Bnei Brak in 1950, (5696/1936);

- ✳ **Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira** of Munkacz, the *Minchas Elozor* (1871–1937), a fifth-generation descendant of the founder of the Dinov dynasty, Rav Tzvi Elimelech (the *Bnei Yissos'chor*). He learned under his father, Rav Tzvi Hirsch, *mechaber* of *Darchei Teshuva* on *Yoreh De'a*. He succeeded his father as *Rav* of Munkacz in 1914. Munkacz, for centuries the capital of Carpathian Russia, belonged to Hungary before World War I and to Czechoslovakia when that country was created after World War I. He had no children with his first wife, and they decided to divorce. His second wife bore him one daughter, Frimet. From his youth and on, he completed the entire *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi* every two years. He was a prolific author. In addition to *Minchas Elozor*, he wrote *Nimukei Orach Chaim*, *Os VeSholom* on the laws of *tefillin* and *mila*, and many other *seforim*. In 1930, he fulfilled a lifelong desire and visited *Eretz Yisrael*. Sadly, the Munkaczer died only three years after his daughter's wedding. Soon after his *petira*, most of the fifteen thousand Munkacz Jews perished in the Holocaust. The son-in-law of the *Minchas Elozor*, Rav Boruch Yehoshua Yerachmiel Rabinowitz, was the son of the Partzever *Rebbe*. He immigrated to *Eretz Yisrael* with his first wife, who fell ill and passed away there. In 1947, he remarried, moved to the United States, and then established a *kehilla* in Sao Paulo, Brazil, remaining for fifteen years. He then returned to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he became the *Rav* of Cholon. The Munkacz dynasty was reestablished in Brooklyn and is presently led by two grandsons of the *Minchas Elozor*, the Munkaczer *Rebbe*, Rav Moshe Leib Rabinowitz of Boro Park, and his brother, the Dinover *Rebbe*, Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Rabinowitz of Flatbush, (5697/1937);

✧ 3rd of Sivan ~ Begins Thursday Night (May 13th)

- ✳ **Rav Ovadia Bartenura**, (1440–1516). He lived in Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century and eventually moved to Yerushalayim. He was well known for his role as a *Rav* in Bartenura, Italy, and for his illuminating *peirush* on the *Mishna*. He also wrote *Omer Nekeh*, a supercommentary on *Rashi's peirush* on *Chumash*. Considered one of the wealthiest men in all of Italy, he settled in Yerushalayim in 1488, (5276/1516);
- ✳ **Rav Yosef Irgas**, Italian *Mekubol*, *mechaber* of *Divrei Yosef* and *Shomer Emunim*. He was born in 1684, and wound up becoming the preeminent *talmid* of Rav Benyomin Marjiv, who learned from Rav Moshe Zacut, who learned from Rav Binyomin *HaLevi*, who was a *talmid* of the *Ari* and then Rav Chaim Vital. As the Jewish world was still reeling from the disaster that was Shabbesai Tzvi, *Kabbola* was coming under considerable rabbinic attack. Rav Irgas not only encouraged the study of *Kabbola*, but wrote its definitive defense, which is his *Shomer Emunim*. The book is written as a dialogue between two individuals: She'altiel, who constantly questions the validity of *Kabbola* and raises numerous, seemingly valid, objections to its teachings, and Yehoyoda, who in turn answers those objections and expounds upon how *Kabbola* does not deviate so much as a hairbreadth from the foundations of the Jewish faith, (5490/1730);



- ✳ **Rav Yaakov Shimshon** of Shepetovka. He was a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch and a close friend of Rav Boruch of Mezhibuzh. He succeeded his father as *Rav* in Shepetovka, but in 1799 settled in Teverya, where he met Rav Nachman of Breslov. He passed away in Teverya, (5561/1801);
- ✳ **Rav Yisrael Tzvi** of Koson, the *Ohr Moleh*, (5704/1944);
- ✳ **Rav Eliyohu Munk** of Paris, *mechaber* of *The Call of the Torah*, *The World of Prayer* and *The Seven Days of the Beginning*. In the latter book, he cites Rav Dovid Zvi Hoffmann, and explains Creation as taking longer than six literal days. He also wrote *The Just Lives By His Faith*, a collection of essays written to explain difficult concepts in *Yiddishkeit*. One of his daughters, Amelie, married Rav Immanuel Jakobovits in 1949. Another married Rav Chaim Fasman, *Rosh Kollel* in Los Angeles, (5709/1949);
- ✳ **Rav Chaim Yitzchok Korb** (1870–1957). Born in the small Latvian town of Piltin, Courland, he entered the Telshe *Yeshiva* at the young age of sixteen. He married Lea Miriam, daughter of Rav Moshe Yitzchok Rabin (*mechaber* of *Miluim l'Moshe* on *Shulchon Aruch Yoreh Dea* and *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Dayan* in Ponovezh). After his *chasuna*, he remained in Ponovezh near his father-in-law. In 1909, Rav Chaim Yitzchok assumed his father-in-law's position as *Dayan* in the community. Eventually he left Ponovezh and became *Rav* in the city of Palangin, Lithuania. From there he became *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Pavlograd, Ukraine, and then in Zager. In 1926, Rav Chaim Yitzchok immigrated to the United States, assuming the position of *Rav* at the *Bais Medrash HaGodol* of Harlem. His *sefer*, *Nesivos Chaim*, was published at this period in his life. Two years later, he accepted the position of *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Medrash L'Torah* of Chicago. For over twenty years, Rav Korb delivered intensive *shiurim* in *Talmud* and *Halocha*. Every day he would arrive at 3:00 a.m. to learn. He would remain in the *Yeshiva* the entire day until 10:00 p.m., when he would return home. In 1947, Rav Chaim Yitzchok sustained a difficult blow with the passing of his wife of fifty-one years, Rebbetzin Lea Miriam. Two years later, Rav Chaim Yitzchok moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he lived until his *petira*, (5717/1957).



❧ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❧

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

The *Maharil*, in *Hilchos Taanis*, teaches us that the reason why there is a custom to visit the *Bais hachaim* on a fast is because “this place is the resting place of the *Tzaddikim* and is therefore sanctified, pure and holy and our tefillos are more readily heard, accepted and answered when *davened* on holy ground. When you *daven* there, do not make requests of the dead who are buried there; rather ask *Hashem* to answer you mercifully in their merit. Then circle around the graves and donate charity before reciting tefillos.”

בית הקברות הוא מקום מנוחת הצדיקים ומתוך כך הוא מקום קדוש וטהור התפילה נתקבלה שם יותר, אך אל ישים מגמתו נגד המתים, אך יבקש מהשי"ת שיתן עליו רחמים בזכות הצדיקים שוכני עפר, ויקיף הקברות, ויתן צדקה קודם שיאמר התחינות.

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have the custom to go and daven at the kevorim of *Tzaddikim*. The reason for this is that we approach them with fasting, remorse and repentance, and we have in mind that the departed souls ask and *daven* for us before *Hashem* on High, as opposed to the prohibition against speaking to the dead

which is an idolatrous practice where the idol worshippers sought out the impure dead souls and bodies using sorcery and witchcraft. Instead, beseech our *Tzaddikim* who, in *gan eden*, are truly alive, and ask through *tefilla* and fasting and *teshuva* alone.



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Shlomo Ben Mordechai Goldman of Zhvill, 26th of Iyar

The *Rebbe's kevod habriyos* – his compassion and caring for his fellow Jews – was on such a level that it astonished others. Here is a well-known anecdote:

The Erev Yom Kippur Ganav's Feelings

It was *Erev Yom Kippur* in Zhvill. The *Rebbe* had four *gabbo'im* sitting outside, simultaneously writings *kvittlach* and refereeing the throngs queued outside the *Rebbe's* door, the multitude of *Chassidim* and non-*Chassidim*, all the Jews of Zhvill, waiting patiently for the opportunity to receive the *Rebbe's berocha Erev Yom HaKodosh!* Just then, the door to the *Rebbe's* inner sanctum opened and he quickly departed for his short visit to the old *Bais HaChaim*, where his forebears, Rav Moshele and Rav Michele, were buried, to *daven* in their *zechus* for a *kappora* for Am Yisrael. When the *Rebbe* returned, the audiences and *berochos* continued well into the *seuda* itself.

At some point, when there was a lull in the tides of people and the tense rush quieted down and finally the house was empty, the *Rebbe* and his son went back toward the *Rebbe's* room – but the holy aura of the approaching *Yom Kippur* was broken by the sounds of someone searching around in the *Rebbe's* desk drawers in his room! A *ganav* – a thief! On *Erev Yom Kippur*, in the *Rebbe's* room, obviously tempted by the large sums from the *pidyonos* of the *Chassidim*!

The *Rebbe's* son felt an arm on his shoulder restraining him. The *Rebbe* shrank back against the wall and allowed the thief who, panic-stricken at his discovery, fled. The entire time, rather than to confront the brazen thief, the *Rebbe* did his best to ease the *ganav's* discomfort and shame. He pretended not to notice and avoided him, averting his gaze. Such was the *Rebbe's* compassion toward the *ganav* stealing from him on *Erev Yom Kippur*. (*Tzaddik Yesod Olom* p. 193–194)



Rav Meir Ben Aharon Leib of Premishlan, 29th of Iyar

We Both Serve the Same G-d

Not everyone was happy with Rav Meir Premishlan's open *Ruach HaKodesh*. Some of the other *Rebbes* and *Tzaddikim* believed that things like that needed to be kept secret and *Kevod Elokim Hester*

Dovor – some things were better left unsaid and unrevealed, for the sake of *Hashem's* honor and glory.

Among the Premishlaner's detractors was Rav Uri Strelisker and his *talmid*, Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Stretin. Both

Rav Meir and Rav Yehuda Tzvi were once in Levov and there was a grocer there who tried to make peace between them. He had a baby and invited them both to the *bris*. How did he do so? He invited the Stretiner as the *mohel* and the Premishlaner as *sandak*. He just didn't tell the *mohel* who the *sandak* was and he didn't mention to the *sandak* who would be the *mohel*. As neither of them asked, this worked out great, until the day of the *bris*. The father of the baby picked up the *mohel*, the Stretiner, from his lodgings in a fine carriage and explained that they would make a stop on the way to pick up the *sandak*. When the carriage stopped at the Premishlaner's lodgings and the Stretiner saw who the *sandak* was going to be, he was surprised, to say the least! When Rav Meir Premishlaner saw the Stretiner sitting in the carriage, he said: "Meir has a *minhag* to tell stories. Now Meir will also tell a story, and whoever wishes to listen will listen." And this is the story Rav Meir of Premishlan told:

During the times of the Spanish Inquisition there were many wealthy Jews who, rather than flee at the threat of conversion, disguised themselves and hid their Jewish observance. This act of being a Christian in public and a Jew in secret was against the *Halocha*, yet they mistakenly believed that the whole thing would soon blow over and be forgotten. They underestimated the Church and the Inquisition. Secret Jews would clandestinely observe *mitzvos*, such as lighting candles in basements, assembling disguised for *tefillos* and doing their best to appear as good Christians toward their neighbors and friends, while trying to keep and remember whatever Jewish customs and traditions they could.

Once, a wealthy converso became

deathly ill and they summoned the priest for his last rites and confessions, as good Christians did. No one guessed that the high-ranking government figure was really a secret Jew! When the priest arrived, everyone left out of respect for the high-ranking bishop, who came out of respect for the high-ranking government minister. Now the dying man turned his head away. The bishop called in the doctor, and the physician confirmed that the dying man was not so sick and could still speak. When the doctor left, the bishop realized why the minister had turned away. Slowly he removed the cross he had been wearing and with an expression of compassion he whispered into the ears of the dying minister the shocking words of revelation revealing that he too was a secret Jew, a converso. "*Shema Yisrael! Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echod* – Our G-d is One!" The minister's eyes opened in shock and astonishment. He turned his head and found compassion and love, with no cross around the bishop's neck! He fell on the false bishop and wept, and together they recited the Jewish *Vidui*!

"Please, we are brothers! We serve the same G-d!" he begged. "See that I receive a proper Jewish burial!"

Concluding the story, Rav Meir Premishlaner turned to the Stretiner and repeated the line, "We are brothers. We serve the same G-d. My ways that I received from my ancestors may differ somewhat, but why should we have *machlokes*? Why should there be anger and strife between us? We can serve *Hashem* out in the open and not in secret!"

Rav Yehuda Tzvi Stretiner agreed, as Rav Meir held out his hand and together they said *Sholom Aleichem* and sat side by side in the carriage on the way to the *simcha*. (*Ponim Meirim*, page 330–331)



Rav Yisrael Ben Boruch Hager of Vizhnitz, 2nd of Sivan

The Rebbe Ascends the Throne of Leadership

There was great friendship and love between the two brothers, Rav Yisrael of Vizhnitz and Rav Pinchas of Borsha. When the *Imrei Boruch* passed away, the *Ahavas Yisrael* declined all offers of taking over the *Chassidus*. Initially, the pressure from the *Chassidim* had no effect, until Rav Pinchas revealed what he had dreamed: Rav Pinchas was undecided where to live. One night, his father the *Imrei Boruch* appeared to him in a dream and said, "What are you so worried about? Go and ask the *Rebbe*!"

To Rav Pinchas's question as to which *Rebbe* his father meant, the *Imrei Boruch* replied, "*Rebbe* stands for the *roshei teivos Rosh Bnei Yisrael*! My son, Yisrael, will be the leader and *Rebbe*."

Upon hearing his brother's words, the *Ahavas Yisrael* finally relented and agreed to take upon himself the mantle of leadership. (*Kedosh Yisrael* Vol. I and *Noam Megodim Vizhnitz Pekudei* 5763 p. 3)



The Rebbe's Advice

When Rav Leibush Ber Halpert, *Rav* of Vasloi, was a *yungerman*, he tried his hand at business, buying and selling grain, but was unsuccessful. Toward the end of *Chodesh Iyar*, his uncle went to Grossvardein and took a *kvittel* to ask the *Ahavas Yisrael's* advice. The *Rebbe* was

lying sick in bed, toward the last days of his life, and the *gabbo'im* would not let his uncle see the *Rebbe*. They did, however, give the *Ahavas Yisrael* the *kvittel* and the *Rebbe* answered, "Let him try something else."

After the *Ahavas Yisrael* was *niftar*, Rav Halpert tried his hand at other business ventures but met again and again with failure. One night he had a dream; in his dream he saw the *Ahavas Yisrael* and told him about his difficulty with *parnossa*. The *Rebbe* replied, "I think you should go back to study *Torah*. I will have you appointed to serve as the *Rav* of one of the towns."

This idea was not one of the possibilities that Rav Halpert had even entertained and so when he awoke he was surprised. And he was totally unprepared for what happened next. A few days passed and before *Shabbos*, a telegram arrived from one of the towns in Romania, inviting him to apply for the open post of *Rav*! As the trip would take more than twenty-four hours and *Shabbos* was approaching, he let the mysterious matter rest. After a few days, however, another telegram from the former *Rav* arrived, asking why he hadn't come. He packed his bags, made the trip and was appointed the *Rav* despite the competition! Eventually, he served in the *Rabbonus* the rest of his life! (*Kedosh Yisrael* Vol. II p. 386)



Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira Ben Tzvi Hirsch of Munkacz, 2nd of Sivan

Mechaber of *Shu"t Minchas Elozor*

The Kvittel for the Kosel

During his well-known travels in *Eretz Yisrael* in the year 5690, Rav Chaim Elozor of Munkacz, the *Minchas Elozor*, made a trip one day to Har HaZeisim in Yerushalayim. There he went to *daven* at

the *kever* of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* and after *davening* told his *Chassidim* the following story:

When the *Ohr HaChaim* lived in Yerushalayim, he was once visited by one of his *talmidim*, who cried bitterly at his

lowly, pitiful state and lack of means, and how his level of poverty and destitution had reached the point of starvation!

"I can't even feed my own family!" he cried bitterly. "Please, *Rebbe*, help me! *Daven* for me and beseech on my behalf!"

The *Ohr HaChaim* was filled with compassion and so he took a slip of paper and wrote a few words, a short note. He handed the folded note of paper to his *talmid* and told him to approach the *Kosel HaMaaravi* – the Western Wall, the last standing remnant from the *Bais HaMikdosh*, and to place it into one of the cracks of the large stones.

The *talmid* left, taking the folded paper note, and headed toward the *Kosel*. Just then, a strong gust of wind blew off his head covering and as he struggled to keep

his head covered, the note too slipped and flew out of his hand far away! The sad *talmid* headed back and told the *Ohr HaChaim* what had happened. He sighed and remarked, "What can I do? It didn't work out!"

Afterward, someone in Yerushalayim found the note signed by the *Ohr HaChaim*. It was a petition and request directed to the *Shechina* in the language of *Shir HaShirim*: "*Achosi raayosi yonosi samosi* (my sister, my friend, my dove, my perfect one) – I ask and request of You in mercy and compassion to send bountiful blessings of *shefa* to Ploni ben Ploni." (*Masa'os Yerushalayim* by Rav Moshe Goldstein – Munkacz)



Rav Yosef Ben Immanuel Irgas, 3rd of Sivan

Mechaber of Shomer Emunim HaKadmon, Mavo Pesochim and Shu"t Divrei Yosef

One of the greatest Italian *Mekubolim*, Rav Yosef Irgas, is perhaps most well known for his *sefer Shomer Emunim HaKadmon*, which, written in the form of an argument, explains *Kabbola's* ideas and defends them against their detractors.

He was a *talmid* of Rav Binyomin Kohen of Regio, who in turn received the tradition from Rav Moshe Zechut, who in turn studied under Rav Yisrael Saruk, a *talmid* of the *Arizal*. He was noted for his scholarly greatness in the revealed *Torah* as demonstrated in his responsa *Shu"t Divrei Yosef*, although his erudition and scholarliness were eclipsed by his saintliness and piety, through which he grew and gained in the esoteric secrets of *Kabbola* under his *Rebbes*, himself becoming an authority back in his hometown of Livorno (Leghorn).

He is also well known for his war against the Sabbateans, especially the false

kabbalist, the despicable Nechemia Chiya Chayun, who paraded himself as an elder kabbalist and master of *Rabbonim* from the Holy Land. Chayun, may his name be blotted out, was a sly serpent who dressed in white, sported a long, white beard and distributed amulets and his *sefer Mehemenus DeKola*, a disguise for his true intentions to spread the false messiah Shabbesai Tzvi's nefarious teachings under a new name.

Though young in years (Rav Yosef Irgas was half Chayun's age), he recognized the trickery and deceit of Chayun and exposed his shame; Rav Irgas' reputation was solid enough that Chayun was run out of town in dishonor. Afterward, Chayun traveled from town to town tricking whomever he could until finally he even fooled the *Semichas Chachomim* Rav Naftoli *HaKohen* Katz of Prague. When the *Chacham Tzvi* discovered this ruse, he wrote letters to Rav Naftoli, who realized he had been taken in, and revoked all his

previous support for Chayun, who by then had gone on, eventually reaching Amsterdam, where he invoked *machlokes* against the *Chacham Tzvi* himself. Chayun fought his detractors and wrote many vile letters and treatises against them. Rav Irgas again went to defend the honor of *Torah* and the true *Kabbola* and denounced Chayun in a series of *seforim* such as *Tochachas Megula* (“An Open Rebuke”) and *Tzad Nochosh* (“Hunting the Serpent”), where he exposed all his false treachery and lies. Eventually, Chayun was

kicked out of Amsterdam as well, and was exposed as a liar and *rosha*. Chayun threatened the Jewish communities that if they withdrew financial support he would publicly convert to Christianity and denounce them. His end has been lost and forgotten, but we do know that his son did indeed convert and became an informer and denouncer against Jews and *Torah*, may their names be blotted out. Rav Irgas’ *talmid*, Rav Malachi, collected his writings, edited them and helped produce the great works we have today.



לזכר נשמת אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה
אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות
מרת זיסל ז"ל בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א
ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטויב זי"ע מבריד
אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

She was a Holocaust survivor who never let that period of time define her life. Although she lost most of her family - she claimed that *Hashem* gave her an amazing life. She had a unique knack of making everyone who encountered her feel like they were the most important loved person. Her inimitable smile never left her face.

She transmitted a strong value system stressing *Emunas Hashem* and *Tzaddikim*. Her love for stories of *tzaddikim* gave her *chiyus* and she conveyed that *chizuk* to anyone who met her. In her eighty-nine years of life, there wasn't one person who had an untoward word or adverse feelings about her.

She loved her family deeply and immensely. May *Hashem* console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*, אמן.

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה
(והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,
היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה)
נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה
ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק
ותקים לתחייה לקץ הימין במהר תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה תנ"צ'בה'



MEOROS

HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —

A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits. - Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

Parshas Behar

CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA

Sefiras Haomer

In Zera Kodesh to Behar, the heilige Ropshitzer Rav asks:

As a nation, Am Yisrael counts Sefira in order to purify our souls from filth and tuma. Is this some kind of segula? Is it some kind of supernatural process that we are automatically purged and purified just by counting the days of the Omer?

This cannot be, because we do see plenty of people who count Sefira and not only do they not cleanse and refine themselves for their past misdeeds, we see that they do not even desist from their current tumas chet, instead continuing their filthy activities, sinning and defiling themselves.

We therefore conclude, says the Ropshitzer, that the days of Sefira are meant to be days of teshuva. There are fifty gates of teshuva and counting the forty-nine days of the Omer leads us to the fiftieth gate, as the pasuk (Vayikra 23:16) tells us, "You shall count fifty days." The pasuk says we begin counting for seven weeks the day after Shabbos. Since

the week is seven days long and Shabbos is the seventh day and we begin counting “the day after Shabbos”, the day we begin counting is in effect the eighth day.

The eighth attribute among the Sefiros is Hod, associated with healing the sick, which is why at Matan Torah all judgments were sweetened and all the sick were healed (Tanchuma Yisro #8).

The Ropshitzer explains that the days of Sefira - these days of teshuva - therefore rectify and sweeten all judgments and transfer the judgments onto our enemies instead of us! The forty-nine days spell mem tes, which means to lower or push down, hinting at the wicked, now subdued and pushed down before the Tzaddik. Forty-nine is also the gematria of the words for a good heart - lev tov. This is because in order to count down forty-nine days towards Shavuot, Zeman Matan Toraseinu, we need to acquire a good heart - a lev tov. The gematria of the fiftieth year, the Yovel, is also equal to lev tov (with the kollel), because whoever acquires a good heart goes free!

Our pasuk therefore talks about Behar Sinai, the location of Kabbolas HaTorah, and also teaches us about Shemita, a preparation for receiving the Torah, because the counting of Sefira and Yovel achieve the same end - to sweeten judgments and acquire a good heart, a lev tov.

Examples Of The Connection Between Bechukosai And Pirkei Avos

Below are just a few examples from among the forty-two explanations of Bechukosai that also connect with Pirkei Avos:

Way #6 The Ohr HaChaim cites Avos chapter 2 that an Am HaAretz (ignoramus) cannot be a Chassid. This means that an Am HaAretz is actually forbidden to act like a Chassid and to try and take on various chumros (stringencies), because he does not understand what is appropriate and might decide to act in way he believes is pious and end up transgressing. The example given is that Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year. There are various things that we must forgo on Yom Kippur, including abstaining from food and drink - five forms of affliction in all. The Am HaAretz might misconstrue this and because he knows Yom Kippur is the holiest day, he might transgress some of the five afflictions, thinking he is acting piously and doing holy things on a holy day, when instead his actions would be a terrible sin! Therefore, Im bechukosai seileichu - if you walk in My laws, says

Hashem - and safeguard My mitzvos and do them - you shall safeguard the path by adding fences and boundaries to prevent mistaken transgression.

Way #9 Pirkei Avos chapter 6 teaches that the Torah is acquired in forty-eight ways. The Ohr HaChaim sees this hinted at in our pasuk: Hashem says, "If you walk on the path of My laws and wish to acquire Torah, the condition is - safeguard My mitzvos and fulfill them and do them." This refers to the forty ways of acquisition; if you fulfill these kinyonim you will acquire Torah. There are many barriers and different hindrances that prevent us from acquiring Torah; engaging in and fulfilling the forty-eight kinyonim helps us to overcome those hurdles and to acquire Torah.

Way# 12 Pirkei Avos chapter 3 says that whoever has wisdom in greater abundance than his deeds and actions, his wisdom endures; whoever has actions in greater number, however, his wisdom will not endure. The Ohr HaChaim sees this hinted at in our pasuk. Hashem says, "If you walk on the path of My laws" - if you toil in Torah and your mitzva observance complements your effort, then your wisdom shall not exceed your deeds. This is why mitzva observance is written in our pasuk immediately following the toil in Torah: "Safeguard My mitzvos and fulfill and do them".

Way #21 Pirkei Avos chapter 4 teaches, "You are forced to die against your will and forced to live against your will." The Ohr HaChaim explains that Tzaddikim and Ba'alei Torah are different; unlike the average people to whom our Mishna in Avos applies, Ba'alei Torah can leave this world for the next world of their own free will whenever they wish. They simply decide to leave and even before their time has come and the King has called for them, they can go. He sees this hinted at in our pasuk: Hashem says, "Im bechukosai - then seileichu - If you toil in Torah, you can go, leaving whenever you wish to leave."

Way #30 Pirkei Avos chapter 3 says, "If there is no flour, then there is no Torah." The Ohr HaChaim here and in Haazinu explains that if we see that Hashem has stopped the Heavens from giving rain and withheld a bounty of blessings, if there is no flour, the reason is because there is a lack of Torah study and observance on our part.

This is seen in our pasuk: Hashem says, "Im bechukosai - If you wish to have My chok - chok means food - if you want food, then - seileichu - walk on the path of mitzva observance and Torah study. The amount of rain and food produced depends on your observance and diligence in Torah study.

Praises for the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

Defending the Honor of Torah and Her Scholars

Last week, we told of the Ohr HaChaim's Golus and how he revealed forty-two peirushim on Bechukosai. This week we will tell what led the Ohr HaChaim into that Golus to begin with:

The Ohr HaChaim had a gemach, a charity foundation that provided meat and chicken for the poor and Torah scholars. A great plague had struck, and all the animals were sick and suffering. Many of the animals that had been schechted through kosher slaughter were examined and found to be treif because of lung lesions or other internal blemishes that rendered the meat unfit for kosher consumption. There was a severe shortage of kosher meat and many families had to forgo meat even on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

One of the wealthy gevirim, whose desire for meat could not be sated, was at his wits' end. What was he going to do? He then heard the strangest thing; apparently there was kosher meat available and plenty of it - but only through Rav Chaim ben Attar's gemach!!!

It turned out that by some miracle, all the animals and fowl slaughtered to supply the Ohr HaChaim's gemach with chicken and meat were kosher lemechadrin! The gevir approached Rav Chaim ben Attar and demanded that he too be given from this meat. The Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh refused and explained that this meat was designated only for the poor and destitute, such as widows and orphans, and for the support of Talmidei Chachomim. The gevir tried to raise his price and buy the meat but the Ohr HaChaim would not be bribed and stood his ground. Just then, a recipient of the gemach's generous kosher provisions came in to collect his meat for Shabbos. The sight of this poor Talmid Chochom getting what he was denied enraged the rich man, who was so used to getting his way that he poured out his wrath on the Talmid Chochom. The Ohr HaChaim refused the wealthy man's demands and he left. However, the damage had been done. A heavenly voice proclaimed that as punishment for seeing and hearing the shame and disparagement of this Talmid Chochom and not properly rebuking the wealthy man's wicked ways the Ohr HaChaim was sentenced to exile to atone for his sins. It was this Golus that found the Ohr HaChaim wandering until he was released after suffering imprisonment when he berated himself in his humility, as we told last week. May his merit shield us!

Stories on the Parsha



Hamotzi Lechem Min Ho'oretz

At first the *Bas Ayin's* family had a hard time adjusting to the new climate and harsh conditions in Eretz Yisroel, but he did his best to help them adjust and accept the hardships with love.

While the *Rebbetzin* complained about the flat dry pitas, she was unused to baking from the coarse flour that she had to hand-grind herself, the *Avritsher Rav's* reaction was the exact opposite. The *Bas Ayin* was delighted to eat such bread. Again and again he would excitedly recite the *pasuk*, "And it shall be when you consume the bread of the Land," repeating it with happiness and joy! So saying, he would break bread and joyfully share it with all those around. The members of his household and his followers later testified that they had never eaten such tasty bread as those pitas that the *Avritsher Rav* handed out himself that the *Rebbetzin* had baked.

The *Avritsher Rav* was in fact so delighted to be able to eat the bread of Eretz Yisrael that one year when there was a severe drought and the local populace was forced to use imported grain from *Chutz Lo'oretz*, the *Bas Ayin* refused to eat any bread that was baked with such grain. He justified his actions based on the following argument:

It says in *Vayikra* 25:20: "What shall we eat during the seventh year?" Why would they worry about a shortage or lack of food for observing *Shemitta*, when they could easily have solved the problem by importing grain from *Chutz Lo'oretz*? Rather, the answer lies with the end of the very same *pasuk*: "because we shall not be able to plant or reap and gather our own grain." The emphasis is placed on "our own grain." What shall we do if we lack our own grain from Eretz Yisrael? This then is a clear proof straight from the *Torah*, concluded the *Avritsher Rav*, that the primary objective is to eat from the produce of Eretz Yisrael.

Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



Yahrzeits For Parshas Behar



**Rav Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Epstein of
Homel, Maamar Hashefelos V'Hasimcha
(Iyar 26)**

Son of Rav Mordechai HaLevi Epstein, Rav Yitzchak Isaac was born around the year 5530 (1770). He received his primary education from his grandfather, Rav Dovid HaLevi Epstein, Chief Rabbi of Lutsk.

In 5565 (1805), he was appointed as Rav of Homel. His discourses were deep and profound, and his *tefillos* were quite lengthy. Tradition has it that his davening once took eight hours, during which he remained standing in a fixed position, without moving, the entire time.

He was a disciple of the Baal HaTanya, Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, who was the founder of Chabad *chassidus*, as well as of his son Rav Dov Ber, known as the Mittler Rebbe, and his grandson, Rav Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch,

author of *Tzemach Tzedek*.

It was said of Rav Yitzchak Isaac that he was so attached to his mentors and rebbes that to hear their chassidic discourses and lectures was for him, literally a matter of life and death!

The Tzemach Tzedek testified that his genius was so vast that it stretched from one end of the world to the other.

When one of the opponents of *chassidus* called him for a debate in Mogilev, he was challenged to answer questions on the Bavli and Yerushalmi. He answered them so well and with such skill that he amazed his opponent and all those present.

He was often sent as a *shaliach*, an emissary and representative of the Chabad rebbes on various missions, including a meeting with Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin as well as to the capital city of St Petersburg. He attended two rabbinical conferences there in 5612 (1852) and 5615 (1855).

At age seventy he began to lead followers. He dressed in the white garments of a rebbe but forbade *chassidim* to come from out of town.

Among his most famous disciples were Rav Hillel of Paritsch, Rav Menachem Nachum of Tsheringov, Rav Aryeh Leibush Epstein, Av Beis Din of Lviv, Rav Moshe Meirov, Rav Elazar Ziva of Mazur and his son Rav Aryeh Leib of Dinberg.

He was a prolific author whose works include:

Chanah Ariel al HaTorah, *Chanah Ariel Ma'amarim* (Various topics), *Chanah Ariel on Matzah and Arba Kosos*, *Ma'amer Hashiflus V'hasimcha*, *Ma'amer Yetzias Mitzrayim*, and *Ma'amer Shte HaMeoros*.

He passed away on 26 Iyar 5617 (1857) and was laid to rest in Homel. His grave became a pilgrimage site for locals seeking *yeshuos*.

He left behind one son, Rav Yaakov Yosef, and two sons-in-law -- Rav Eliezer Shimon Tomarkin and Rav Tzvi Dov Latker, who succeeded his father-in-law in Homel.



Rav Yitzchok Itzkowitz Rav Itzele Volozhiner, Peh Kodosh (Iyar 26)



Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto Ramchal, Mesilas Yeshorim (Iyar 26)



Rav Saadia Gaon Emunos Vedeos (Iyar 26)



Rav Shmuel Eliyohu Taub Zvoliner Rebbe (Iyar 26)



Rav Shlomo Goldman Zvhiller Rebbe, Reb Shlomke (Iyar 26)



Rav Shmuel Wilner Av Beis Din of Helitch (Iyar 26)



Rav Pinchos Rabinowitz Avodas Yitzchok (Iyar 26)



Rav Shimon Chaim Segal Pelter Av Beis Din of Elad (Iyar 26)



Rav Aharon Lapapa (Iyar 26)



Rebbetzin Yocheved 'Jackie' Wein (Iyar 27)

Rebbetzin Yocheved "Jackie" Wein (1934-2006). Born in Vaskai, Lithuania, the youngest child of Rav Lazer and Rebbetzin Sarah Menucha Levin. (Reb Lazer was a talmid of Kelm and learned with the Cofetz Chaim for five years.) The family moved to Detroit in 1938, to escape the growing terror in Europe. By the time of his petirah, fourteen years ago, he was respected as the Chief Rav of Detroit. In the mid 1950s, Jackie, a young woman trained as a qualified teacher (at the urging of the legendary Rav Simcha Wasserman,) married Rabbi Berel Wein, son of Rav Zev and Esther Wein, who was the daughter of Rav Chaim Tzvi Rubenstein, Rosh Yeshiva of Bais Medrash L'Torah. The young couple set up their new home in Chicago. In the early sixties, after several productive years in Chicago, Rabbi Wein's rebbi, Rav Chaim Kreiswirth advised the brilliant young scholar to go into rabbonus, where he could contribute so much to Klal Yisrael. When a position became available in Miami, the Weins packed up and moved South. But before they left, Rav Wein was instrumental

in founding the Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago. The family remained in Miami for about a decade, until the early seventies, when Rabbi Wein became the Rabbinic Administrator of the OU, and then founded the kehilla of Bais Torah in Monsey, New York. In addition to raising her young family, Jackie, a trained teacher, accepted a fourth grade teaching job at Yeshiva Spring Valley, a position she held until they moved to Eretz Yisrael. In 1994, when the Weins moved to Eretz Yisrael she once again accepted the role of Rebbetzin with grace, reaching out from their new home in Rechavia, near the Shaarei Chesed neighborhood, where Rav Berel serves as a Rov.



Rav Pinchos Elimelech of Zebarov (Iyar 27)



Rav Aharon Aryeh of Leshkovitz (Iyar 27)



Rav Shlomo Shneur Zalman Schneerson Mogen Ovov (Iyar 27)



Rav Eliezer Zev Rosenbaum Roza D'Shabbos (Iyar 27)



Rav Tzvi Hirsch Friedlander Shaarei Hayoshor (Iyar 27)



Rav Moshe Leib Tziltz Shu't Milei D'Avos, Rav & Av Beis Din of Nikolsburg (Iyar 28)



Rav Yechizkiya Fisch Av Beis Din of Hadas, Lev Yechizkiya (Iyar 28)



Rav Yechezkel Shraga Weinberger (Iyar 28)



Rav Yerachmiel Yehuda Meir Kalisch Rebbe of Amshinov (Iyar 28)



Shmuel Hanavi (Iyar 28)



Rav Yitzchok of Kurbeil Baal Hachotem, Sma"K (Iyar 28)



Rav Shlomo Avrohom Eliyohu Green the tailor Mekubel (Iyar 28)



Rav Shraga Feish Fishman Ohr Shraga (Iyar 29)



Rav Yisroel Chaim Weiss Av Beis Din of Salish Spinka (Iyar 29)



Rav Shmuel Shlomo Leiner (Iyar 29)



Rav Alexander Sender Linchner (Sivan 1)

Rav Alexander Sender Linchner (1996), son-in-law of Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz and founder of Kiryat Noar (Boystown), Bayit Vegan, in 1953 for for children who had escaped the Holocaust and other destitute Jewish immigrant children. Previously, he started a trade school for 14 boys from Yemen in 1949. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Moshe Linchner.



Rav Aharon Yechiel Leifer Nadvorna Rebbe of Tzfas (Sivan 1)

Rav Aharon Yechiel Leifer, the Nadvorna Rebbe of Tzefas (1912-2000). After losing his wife in children during World War II, Rav Aharon Yechiel moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Tzefas, setting up the Nezer Hakodesh shul. In Yisrael, he became a chassid of the Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe.



Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Rozla (Sivan 1)



**Rav Avrohom Menachem Halevi
Steinberg Machaze Avrohom (Sivan 1)**



**Rav Eliezer Dovid Greenwald Rav of
Satmar, Keren L'Dovid (Sivan 1)**



**Rav Yosef Aharon Marilus Yad Yosef
(Sivan 1)**



**Rav Eliezer Lipa Halevi Zilberman Av
Beis Din of Ratzfurt (Sivan 1)**



Rav Mordechai Shapiro (Sivan 1)



**Rav Mordechai Don Waldman
Yeshivas Beis Dovid - Monsey (Sivan 1)**



**Rav Chaim Yitzchok Isaac Halberstam Av
Beis Din of Slatfina, Oros Chaim (Sivan 2)**

Av Beis Din Slatfina

Author of Oros Chaim (on Chanukah)

Son of Rav Yehoshua of Dalina Hy'd.

Grandson of Rav Moshe A'B'D Bardiyov, son of
Rav Baruch of Gorlitz, son of Rav Chaim of
Sanz (the Divrei Chaim).



**Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira Minchas
Elozor, Munkaczer Rebbe (Sivan 2)**



**Rav Yitzchok Rachlitz Av Beis Din of
Tosh & Bergsaz (Sivan 2)**



**Rav Mordechai Yechezkiah ben
Shimon (Sivan 2)**



Rav Yaakov Wehl (Sivan 2)

Gedolim Be'Masayhem



STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yisrael Hager
Ahavas Yisrael (Sivan 2)

The Rebbe's Advice

When Rav Leibush Ber Halpert, Rav of Vasloi was a yungerman, he tried his hand at business buying and selling grain, but was unsuccessful. Towards the end of chodesh Iyar, his uncle went to Grossvardayan and took a kvitel to ask the Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz advice on the matter. This was in last days of the rebbe's life and he was lying sick in bed. The gabbaim would not let his uncle see the rebbe; they did however give the Ahavas Yisroel the kvitel and the rebbe answered, "Let him try something else."

After the Ahavas Yisroel

passed away, Rav Halpert tried his hand at other business ventures but was met again and again with failure. One night he had a dream. In his dream, he saw the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, the Ahavas Yisroel, and Rav Halpert told him about his difficulty with parnassa. The rebbe replied, "I think you should go back to study Torah; I will have you appointed as the Rabbi of one of the towns." When he awoke, he felt taken by surprise because this idea was not even one of the possibilities that Rav Halpert had even entertained. He was totally unprepared for what happened next.

A few days later, before Shabbos, a telegram arrived from one of the towns in Romania inviting him to apply

for the open post of rabbi! As the trip would take more than twenty-four hours and Shabbos was approaching, he let the mysterious matter rest. However, after a few days, another telegram from the former rabbi arrived asking why he hadn't come? He packed his bags and made his way to Romania. Once there, was chosen from among the other candidates and was appointed rabbi. Eventually he served in the rabbanus the rest of his life! (Kadosh Yisroel Vol. II p. 386)

Anecdotes Regarding The Ahavas Yisroel

Rav Eliezer Dovid Friedman, shlit'a, of London told the following illustrative stories and anecdotes regarding the Ahavas Yisrael:

The Tiferes Shlomo teaches that the rebbe, Reb Zisha of Anipoli would have a daily morning ritual. After reciting the blessing of birkas haTorah, he would go outside into the marketplace searching for Jews to bless with the bounty of the shefa which he had just found and harnessed from saying his own birkas haTorah. He would bless the first Jew he could find, no matter who he was!

Similarly, Rav Friedman relates, "I was on the bus in Givas Shmuel and I sat next to a Jew I knew from Grossvardein who unfortunately was not counted among the most religious. However, he had come from a Chassidic family and he was not ignorant of the value of a rebbe's berachah. He told me how once he was passing by the holy tzaddik, the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz, when he was in Grossvardein and he went in for a berochah. After he left, the Ahavas Yisrael sent his shamosh after him. Surprised, he came back in. He was even more taken aback when the Ahavas Yisrael said to him, 'Tit mir a toyva, un zayt matzliach - Do me a

favor and you should succeed!'

"'You should know,' he said to me, 'that year, I had tremendous success in all my endeavors - whatever I did was successful.'"

Rav Friedman concluded, "The Ahavas Yisrael obviously sensed that it was an eis rotzon, an auspicious moment when his berochos could do and achieve - and he sought out the first Jew to bestow them upon, whoever that Jew was!"

**Rav Chaim Elozor
Shapira** Minchas Elozor,
Munkaczer Rebbe (Sivan
2)

Defending Adam

The Munkaczer Rav, in Divrei Torah (II:35), relates a tradition he received from his holy forebears that once the Apta Rav delayed significantly in the middle of davening. Afterward, he explained how he had previously taught an explanation of Odom HoRishon's sin, which expunged his guilt and explained why his error was much less severe because his

crime had been committed without any previous experience or knowledge of commandments or divine punishment. Since he was the first man, he had never seen or heard of the observance of any commandment and did not realize that a mitzva must be observed literally; he had his reasons for disobeying and rationalized that therefore the command did not apply to him. He did not understand that a commandment had to be obeyed literally by an action if it was a positive command, or by abstention from action, as in his own case, where he was commanded not to eat. Having never seen or experienced mitzvos, he did not realize that a true action or abstention was tied into the obedience of a command.

After having offered this explanation, said the Apta Rav, Odom HoRishon himself appeared to him during davening to thank him for interceding on his behalf, causing such a lengthy delay.

A True Cheat And Swindler Agrees To The Alshich's Derosha

The *Minchas Elozor* of

Munkacsz told the following story:

The *Arizal* testified that he witnessed the entire heavenly host – the *pamalya shel maala* – all go together to hear the *deroshos* of Rav Moshe Alshich and therefore he also went to hear his holy words when he sat and sermonized in public.

One time, the *Arizal* was present when Rav Moshe Alshich was giving a *derosha* about Lovon *HaArami* and how he swindled, tricked and hoodwinked Yaakov. The *pasuk* says he cheated Yaakov *aseres monim* (Bereishis 31:8 & 31:41) and this, explained the *Alshich*, meant ten times ten, or a hundred times over! He then proceeded to explain and detail each of the hundred ways in which Lovon cheated Yaakov this way and that. The audience sat mesmerized and transfixed, enjoying the *derosha* and how the *Alshich* enumerated again and again the tricks that Lovon had employed against Yaakov one hundred different ways. During this *derosha*, the *Arizal* laughed and left.

Afterward, they asked the *Arizal* why he had laughed. The *Arizal* explained that he actually saw Lovon *HoArami* standing beside the *Alshich* as he spoke and gave his *derosha*.

“With each explanation of the hundred deceptions, Lovon nodded his head, agreeing with the *Alshich* saying, ‘Yes, that’s it...that’s true...that’s exactly how I did it and tricked Yaakov and cheated him that time. Yes, and that’s the other way I cheated him again...uh huh...’ That’s what made me laugh,” explained the *Arizal*. (*Maso’os Yerushalayim* Day 9 Footnote 17 p. 190)

Zera Shimshon

Behar Bechukosai

The Zera Shimshon, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachmon Michael Nachmani, was born in 5467 (1706/1707) into an illustrious family with great Rabbinical lineage. He studied the revealed and concealed parts of the Torah by the Torah greats of his day.

He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sienna and Reggio, Italy, and was recognized as a holy and pious individual, as well as a tremendous Torah scholar in all areas of Torah. He passed away on the 6th of Elul 5539 (1779).

His Seforim were named, Toldos Shimshon (The 'Offspring' of Shimshon) on Pirkei Avos and Zera Shimshon (The 'Seed' of Shimshon) on the Parshi'os of the Torah. In his introduction, he explains that since his only son had died during his lifetime, he wrote his Seforim to perpetuate his own memory after his passing.

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

"I implore of you with ten terms of supplication to choose from my Chiddushim (novella) the piece that finds favor in your eyes, for your learning will sooth my soul etc..."

"This righteousness will stand by you forever – to 'eat' in this world, and be satiated in the next. In this merit, Hashem will repay you with children, health and sustenance.

"...and now my brothers and friends etc. do a true kindness, and with your eyes you will see children and grandchildren surrounding your table, houses filled with all that is good, wealth and honor will not cease from your children..."

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות רחמים בן יוכבד שיזכה
לשוב בתשובה שלימה בקרוב
לזכות רפואה שלימה משה
שניאור זלמן בן רחל
ולזכות רפואה שלימה משה בן
לאה

לזכות כל עם ישראל
בכל מקום שהם

ואכלתם ולא תשבועו (כו' כו')

You will eat and not be sated (26:26)

Although the passuk says that there will be what to eat, nevertheless, the curse is that it will not be satiating.

This phenomenon, the Zera Shimshon uses to explain the Mishna in Pirkei Avos. The Mishna says (5:7), that when some people separate tithes and others do not, the punishment is that a hunger comes and some are starving while others are satiated.

The Zera Shimshon explains that although there is food to be found, and that is why those that gave Ma'aser eat and are satiated, those that did not separate Ma'aser, although they will eat - they will not be satiated from the food. They will feel as though they are starving.

The Zera Shimshon says that usually whenever the Jewish people are faced with difficult times, one is not allowed to separate himself from their suffering and eat and drink, even if he personally is not affected by the suffering (Ta'anis 11a). However, in this case where those that did not tithe are targeted, the people that did tithe do not have to refrain from eating and drinking since they are not the reason that this suffering came about.

The Zera Shimshon stipulates though, that this is only true is when a small part of the people are afflicted. If however, a large part of the congregation is being punished, even those that did tithe properly may not separate themselves from the suffering of the majority of the community.



והארץ תעזב מהם (כו' מג')

And the land will be bereft of them (26:43)

The Mishna says (Avos 5:7), that the Jews are punished with exile on account of the sins of idol worship, adultery, murder and for not keeping Shemita.

The Zera Shimshon asks why the sin of not resting the land during Shemita is so severe that it is grouped together with the three cardinal sins that one must give up his life rather than transgress them?

The Zera Shimshon answers based on the following halacha.

The Gemara says (Baba Basra 54a), that the rules issued by the king must be followed. The Shulchan Aruch rules (Choshen Mishpat §369:8), that this is particularly true with taxes that the king demands must be paid for owning land in his country. The Sma explains that since the land is his, he has the absolute right to demand that taxes are paid. In fact, everyone understands that even a private person who owns land can charge others who wish to benefit from his land.

By not keeping Shemita, one is in essence declaring that Hashem is not the owner of the land and therefore does not have the jurisdiction to command us not to work it during Shemita. This is equivalent to denying Hashem's sovereignty on the world. It is very well understood why this sin is grouped together with the three cardinal sins, one of which is idol worship which denies Hashem's sovereignty.

זכות רבינו ימליץ טוב בעד רבקה רחל בת שיינדיל בלומא לזרע של קיימא במהרה
זכות רבינו יעמוד לר' חיים דוד בן טויבא חוה וכל משפחתו להצלחה ברכה שפע רב וסייעתא דשמיא
מרובה בכל מעשה ידיו ובכל הענינים

Behar
Bechukotai
May 8th 2021
26th of Iyar 5781
901



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Hilula

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Luzatto**

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28 - Shmuel HaNavi

29 - Rabbi Meir of Parmishlan

1 - Rabbi Meir HaLevi Horowitz

2 - Rabbi Yisrael of Vizhnitz

**3 - Rabbeinu Ovadiah of
Bartenura**

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

True Freedom

"For the Children of Israel are servants to Me, they are My servants, whom I have taken out of the land of Egypt – I am Hashem, your G-d" (Vayikra 25:55)

On more than several occasions we find that the Torah mentions the idea that Bnei Yisrael are Hashem's servants. After being enslaved to the Egyptians, Hashem redeemed Bnei Yisrael with many miracles and wonders, and also gave them the Torah, so they could become completely subservient to Him alone, utterly detached from the Egyptian bondage.

On the one hand, the Torah can be viewed as a burdensome commitment, for man is required to forgo his personal wishes and desires, sacrificing them for the sake of Hashem's will. Sometimes, following the correct path can even cause us financial loss, embarrassment or other similar difficulties. Nevertheless, man is instructed to obey the Holy Torah and conduct himself according to its teachings. However, the Mishna lays down an interesting idea: Despite man being subservient to the Torah, we are told (Avot 6:2), "You can have no freer man than one who engages in the study of the Torah." In light of this, the question arises: should Torah be considered a yoke and burden, or does it contain an aspect of freedom, to the extent that one who toils in it is considered as a free man?

At the beginning of Parshat Bechukotai (Vayikra 26:3) it says, "If you will follow My decrees" and Rashi explains on these words: Engage in intensive Torah study. This means the Torah demands that we invest considerable toil and effort. It is not enough for a person to study Torah inattentively and observe its mitzvot out of habit without effort and investment. This fact strengthens our question: If Torah study requires toil and effort, besides which, toiling in Torah is an inseparable part of the mitzvot and actually a Torah commandment, how then can one define those who engage in Torah as free men?

The answer is that indeed accepting the yoke of Torah and mitzvot is a form of servitude, and this was in fact Hashem's goal when giving us the Torah. He wished to eradicate from us the yoke of the Egyptian bondage and instead place us under the yoke of Torah and mitzvot. However, despite this, anyone who observes the Torah and its commandments sees the fulfillment of "A servant of Hashem, he alone is free" (Psalm 'Avdei Hazman' of the Rihai, Sha'arei Ha'avodah of Rabbeinu Yonah 45).

In order to clarify this matter, we will explain with a parable. On Erev Pesach man is forced to clean his home because he is obligated to remove the chametz from every corner and crevice. Who better than us can testify that this cleaning effort before Pesach amounts to a form of slavery and involves enormous toil? However, as soon as Pesach arrives, all feelings of servitude felt up until that point disappear and are forgotten about, as if they never existed. Right now we feel like liberated men, free of any toil and trouble.

Similarly, in most Jewish homes, Erev Shabbat is a de-

manding time, with everyone in the household engaged in preparations for the fast-approaching Shabbat. If a stranger turns up in our home on a Friday, he will certainly notice frenzied activity, and might even feel a certain pressure in the atmosphere. But, when Shabbat is about to enter – the wife lights the candles and the men hurry off to the Beit Knesset – then the home is immediately enveloped with a feeling of great tranquility. The entire household feels relaxed and delighted, as it says (see Rashi Bereishit 2:2), "When Shabbat arrives, rest arrives". Concerning this Chazal say (Avodah Zara 3a), "One who toils on Erev Shabbat will eat on Shabbat", meaning one who invests effort and labors in good time on Erev Shabbat will then merit feeling the tranquility and serenity that is inherent to Shabbat. He will also be able to enjoy and delight in the Shabbat delicacies.

It would be appropriate to apply the lesson of these pressurized and stressful times, such as Erev Pesach and Shabbat, to the times we are obligated to observe those mitzvot that involve intensive effort. There is no doubt that fulfilling mitzvot sometimes demands an investment of strength, including the fight against one's Evil Inclination who tries hard to exert his authority over us so we should not become subservient to the yoke of Torah and mitzvot. But when a person succeeds in overcoming this Yetzer Hara and for example, gets up early to pray with a minyan, that burdensome feeling of servitude he feels when pulling himself out of bed is very quickly transformed into feelings of joy and tranquility, a result of successfully compelling his inclination.

This is the meaning of the Chazal (Avot 6:2), "You can have no freer man than one who engages in the study of the Torah", meaning he is free of the Yetzer Hara and his offensive grasp. When the Yetzer Hara no longer stands in wait and is not in control of the person, then fulfilling the mitzvot, despite all the inherent exertion, lends him a feeling of satisfaction and joy. This is true freedom that has no parallel.

Avodat Hashem is unlike other slaveries that are simply an expression of suffering and pain. Rather, this servitude is a manifestation of the connection and commitment that Bnei Yisrael have towards their Creator. Therefore, on the contrary, when a person is careful to protect and even intensify this servitude, it quickly leads to feeling like a truly free man.

In the Shabbat morning prayers, we say "Moshe rejoiced in the gift of his portion: that You called him a faithful servant." This shows us that being defined as Hashem's servant brought Moshe Rabbeinu enormous joy. He was not just any servant, but a faithful servant to his Creator. Furthermore, Hashem is the One who endowed him with this title, as it says, "You called him a faithful servant." Similarly, we find that the tzadikim and great Sages would add the words 'Eved Hashem' when signing their name. This demonstrates the great joy and merit the tzadikim felt at being servants of Hashem.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

What Caused the Most Punctual Train in France to be Detained?

The great virtue of fixing times for Torah study can lead man to the highest summits. This idea finds expression in the following incident that took place with my talmid, HaRav Gavriel Elbaz n"y, today the president of our institutions in Lyon.

The story took place on a Motza'ei Shabbat, when I was scheduled to fly to Brazil for a wedding at which I was asked to officiate.

I had planned to travel by train from Lyon to Paris, where I would take a connecting train to the airport. There, I would take a direct flight to Brazil. The trip was perfectly timed, and any delay might make me miss the wedding.

The only train from Lyon to Paris on Motza'ei Shabbat was scheduled to leave ten minutes after Shabbat ends. Immediately after havdalah, I rushed to the train station, accompanied by Rav Elbaz and his brother.

As soon as I reached the train station, much to my dismay, I realized that I had taken my thirteen-year-old son's hat instead of my own. It would certainly arouse attention, if not cause an outright chillul Hashem, were I to walk around in this too-small hat. I was very distressed by this and told Rav Elbaz that it seemed to be a sign from Heaven that I should not take this trip.

I must insert here that those who planned the wedding obligated themselves to conduct it according to Jewish law only if I would be there. My missing the train could have disastrous results.

Rav Elbaz's brother spoke up. "Doesn't the Rav always preach to us, day in and day out, about the importance of trust in Hashem? Aren't we enjoined to place

our trust in Him in every situation? Let us believe wholeheartedly that Hashem will send the Rav his hat, and we will make the train on time for the wedding."

His words certainly planted seeds of hope within me, but I still didn't believe that an actual miracle would occur. Sceptically, I turned to him and said, "Look, it's already late. In another minute, the train is scheduled to stop here. How do you think I will manage to retrieve my hat in that short time?!"

Rav Elbaz suggested I phone my family and ask them to rush my hat to the train station. I followed his suggestion, although it seemed futile. By the natural order of things, there was no chance I would get my hat in time.

The train arrived at the station with a roar. I looked at it with a worried glance, whereas Rav Elbaz stood by calmly, certain it would wait for the hat to make an appearance.

For some unknown reason, the train stood in the station much longer than usual. It ended up waiting a full quarter of an hour, the exact amount of time it took for a member of my family to rush over and bring me my hat. I took the hat and, without waiting a second longer, jumped onto the train, just as its doors were about to close. HaRav Elbaz and his brother taught me a lesson in faith.

To this day, I cannot fathom how the most punctual train in all of France was detained for such a long time at one stop. But I was impressed by Rav Elbaz's complete faith in Hashem. I am certain that the merit of the delayed train stemmed from the fact that he fixes regular times for Torah study which he upholds at all costs, and one who does so merits faith and trust in Hashem. This is why his prayers were answered immediately.



In Our Father's Path

Just Being Family is Not Enough

The Chafetz Chaim relates a wonderful story which demonstrates the difference between one who toils in G-d's gift to mankind, to one who studies Torah without investing effort. As an introduction, he quotes the Mishna from Sanhedrin, read as an introduction to each chapter of Avot, "All Yisrael has a share in the World to Come, as it is said: 'And your people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever.'"

"Your people are all righteous!" If this is the case, why should one go to the trouble of continually doing and progressing, if each person is promised a share in the World to Come? This question is asked by the Chafetz Chaim zt"l, which he answers by way of the following story:

Kiev was home to a very affluent individual called Yisrael Brodatzky. He owned many large factories, employing hundreds of workers, managers, accountants, secretaries and cleaners. Each received a wage in line with his position and rank.

Brodatzky was renowned for his open-handedness. He generously donated to all charitable causes, distributing his money freely in support of Torah institutions and poor and needy families. His concern for his relatives was well-known and if one of them fell upon hard times, he would support them with a monthly allowance, saying "It is as if I have an additional employee."

He made it his custom to visit his factories from time to time and show an interest in the goings-on. He would sit with the managers and assess the state of the factories.

On one occasion he said to himself: "My managers are always the focus of my attention. It is about time I showed an interest in the dedicated workers too, expressing my appreciation for their work and efforts."

He decided to drop in at the factories, taking the opportunity to give his workers a nice bonus for their efforts and share in the success of his business. He arrived at one of the workplaces and during the break all the workers stood on line as he spoke to each one. He showed an interest in their work, offered words of encouragement and handed over the bonus.

The first in line was a veteran worker who introduced himself as having eighteen years' experience. Brodatzky patted him on the shoulder and gave him the bonus.

The next in line introduced himself as responsible for the morning shift. Brodatzky thanked him and presented him with the bonus.

The third introduced himself as the operator of the factory's central machine. Brodatzky expressed his appreciation and handed over the bonus.

And so it went with all the workers; they introduced themselves, Brodatzky thanked them profusely and presented them with their bonus.

Finally, he approached the last in line and asked him what position he holds. He answered: "I am a third cousin of your father and I hang around here." All the workers burst out laughing. Brodatzky replied, "Very nice. As a relative, your presence is welcome." But the bonus – he did not receive.

The Chafetz Chaim concluded: Now it is clear. Indeed, all Yisrael have a portion in the World to Come! All are family! But what size is the reward of those who not only hang around here in This World as part of the family of Am Yisrael, but also invest in the service of the Factory Owner; the Creator of the World! How great is their reward and the kindness with which they are showered by Hashem!

How terrible it is if man simply loiters around and passes the time in This World. He then has to say thank you just for being allowed to continue staying on the premises. It is most worthwhile to toil in Torah and observe the mitzvot with at least a bit of effort, so as to merit, in return, the bonus and blessings of Hashem.

The Haftarah

"Hashem, my Strength, my Stronghold" (Yirmiyahu 16)

The connection to the Parshah: The Haftarah talks about the punishments Hashem will bring on the Jewish people if they do not follow His decrees and do not observe His mitzvot. This is the message of the rebuke which is mentioned in the Parshah – it is a prophecy of the evil that will befall Bnei Yisrael if, G-d forbid, they do not observe the Torah laws.

Guard Your Tongue

Prior Discussion and Persuasion to Repent

There are a few conditions that must be in place before being allowed to relate something derogatory about someone else.

One requirement is to clarify the matter with the person himself. Also, before bringing someone else into the picture, one must first try and rebuke the person who transgressed and try to persuade him to rectify his ways. (This rule is not applicable if talking to him will completely thwart, or even just diminish, the desired effect.)



Pearls of the Parsha

All I Did Was Say a Few Words

"Each of you shall not aggrieve his fellow" (Vayikra 25:17)

This verse, as Chazal explain in the Gemara (Baba Metzia 58b) refers to hurting someone with words, for hurting someone financially has already been addressed in a previous verse, "When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow, do not aggrieve one another."

How do we define the prohibition of hurting someone with words?

The Gemara continues: If he is a ba'al teshuva, do not say to him, remember your previous ways. If he is the son of converts, do not say to him, remember your father's ways. If he is a convert and comes to learn Torah, do not say to him, the mouth that ate non-kosher meat and unclean creatures wishes to study the Torah which was uttered by the Almighty?

Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai says: Hurting someone with words is more severe than hurting someone financially. This is derived from the fact that the prohibition of hurting someone with words is followed by "and you shall fear your G-d", whereas when talking about hurting someone financially it does not say "and you shall fear your G-d".

The reason why the Torah considers it more severe to hurt someone personally, explains Rabbi Chaim Casar zt"l, a Yemenite Sage, in his sefer 'Kaitz Hamizbe'ach', is so that man should not think 'this does not involve any insult', for all he did was talk in the way people speak; he did not actually take anything away from the person.

This is why the Torah is stricter with this prohibition. Even though it is mere words, a person's speech can cause more harm than anything else. This demonstrates the importance of taking the utmost care to distance ourselves completely even from seemingly harmless talk, since it can quickly lead to prohibitions of hurting others with words.

He Removed His Shoes Himself

"But with your brethren, the Children of Israel, a man with his brother, you shall not subjugate him through hard labor" (Vayikra 25:46)

The grandson of the Gaon Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyahsiv zt"l related the following incident (Reisha Degaluta, third section):

In 5763 when Saba zt"l was sick and very weak, he did not even have the strength to take off his shoes.

Suddenly I saw Saba getting up from his place with superhuman strength. He bent down and removed his shoes with enormous effort.

I said: "Saba, why are you taking off your shoes by yourself? Why do you not ask me to do it for you?"

Saba looked at me and replied with a Torah outlook:

"The Rambam writes that one is forbidden to make a Jewish bondsman do servant's labor. He explains that an example of this type of work would be to ask him to remove his master's shoes. This is because when he takes off his master's shoes he is bending down right under his master"...

When Does Rain Fall for Yisrael?

"My Shabbats shall you observe and My Sanctuary shall you revere, I am Hashem" (Vayikra 26:2)

The Midrash Yonatan brings a beautiful explanation on the connection between the end of Parshat Behar and the beginning of Parshat Bechukotai.

Parshat Behar concludes with the verse "My Shabbats you shall observe and My Sanctuary shall you revere, I am Hashem" which is followed by Parshat Bechukotai where it says "If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them, then I will provide your rains in their right time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit".

He explains the reason according to the Gemara (Shabbat 118b), "Whoever observes the Shabbat according to its laws is forgiven for all his sins."

There is another Gemara that tells us (Ta'anit 7b), "Rain falls when the sins of Yisrael are forgiven."

This is a wonderful gem! Through "My Shabbats you shall observe" all Yisrael's sins will be forgiven and then automatically they merit Hashem's promise of "I will provide your rains in their right time", for as we explained, when Yisrael's sins are forgiven, they then merit the blessing of rain.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



Torah Toil Enters Our Bodies

"If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them" (Vayikra 26:3)

Rashi writes on the words "and observe My commandments": You should engage in intensive Torah study.

The Mussar commentaries write that through toiling in Torah which causes our bodies to warm up, the Torah thereby enters our innards. As David Hamelech said (Tehillim 40:9), "Your Torah is in my innards".

One can add that Torah is unlike other foods that enter the intestines, which are then partially excreted as waste. Rather, the Torah enters and does not leave. This is the meaning of David Hamelech's words; his insides contain only Torah without any waste.

However, due to our many sins there are some people who misuse their Torah study and use it as a tool for conceit. Their punishment is severe because they transform the Torah into waste r"l.

This is the reason why the Generation of the Wilderness did not have bodily needs because "Torah was given to those who ate the manna". Just as Torah is Heavenly, so was food that descended from Heaven. Just as the manna was absorbed by their intestines and not excreted in any form, so too the Torah was fully absorbed in their intestines.

Hashem wants man to be submissive to the Holy Torah, since only with submission can man come to properly fulfil the Torah. Rashi derives the command of toiling in Torah from the command to observe the mitzvot, to teach us that if there is a lack of toil in Torah, our observance of the mitzvot will also be deficient since one is dependent on the other.

There are some who do not schedule regular times for Torah study but outwardly appear as if they are Torah observant. However, a reality in which a person does not toil over Torah but at the same time is meticulous to fulfil all the mitzvot with great care, is non-existent. The Torah understands man's soul and testifies that observing mitzvot with meticulousness requires toil and effort and this is the only way man will come to observe them. Toiling in Torah demonstrates that this person is subservient to G-d's mitzvot and in this way he feels that he is truly a servant of Hashem.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Keep the Pain in Your Heart

Do not Ignore Other People

The obligation to take someone else into consideration is detailed in this week's Parsha: "If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him – proselyte or resident – so that he can live with you" (Vayikra 25:35). The Torah obligates us to take positive measures, and refrain from certain behaviors, so that a fellow Jew can continue living his life with respect.

Beyond the specific commands mentioned here in the Torah, the command "so that he can live with you" is the general directive from which all other details stem. With this the Torah addresses the Jewish person and directs him to consider not only himself but also others; to step out of a selfish, inward, stance and turn our attention to others.

This is the Torah attitude concerning the severity of overlooking other people.

In this spirit, the Mashgiach of Kfar Chasidim, Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian zt"l, would routinely instruct his talmidim that after they wash their hands, they should fill up the cup for the next in line. "Either way, each person has to fill up the cup once, so why not fill up for your friend?" was his answer to someone who wondered

about this custom. The Mashgiach explained that since we must accustom ourselves to thinking about others and their needs, it is preferable for each student to do something specifically on behalf of his friend.

He Concealed His Pain in His Heart

The sefer 'Noam Siach' relates that on the fateful Motzei Shabbat, when the Gaon Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Kol Torah', was told the bitter news of his wife's passing, he hurried over to Sharei Tzedek hospital. In the elevator on the way up to the room, those present were treated to an awesome sight: By chance, an ex-talmid entered the same elevator and to his surprise, met his Rebbe. He hurried to share the news of the birth of his son.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman zt"l grasped his hand and blessed him with his famous smile, showing a detailed interest in the birth and the welfare of mother and baby, as he always did, as if he was not on the way to sit by his wife's body...

We find a source in the Torah for this outstanding conduct. Avraham Avinu wished to bury Sara his wife. She had just passed away but in order to bury her, he had to conduct a business deal with Ephron the Hittite. But first it says, "Avraham rose up from the presence of his dead, and spoke to the children of Het" (Bereisit 23:3). The Gaon Rabbi Yerucham of Mir zt"l explains:

The point of "Avraham rose up from the presence of his dead" is that when Avraham had to speak to the Hittites, "He rose up", it was

as if his dead was not lying in his presence! Since he was about to address human beings, out of respect for others he wiped away all his tears, washed his face and hid his pain in his heart, as if nothing had happened. For he was speaking to human beings and it would be disrespectful to address them with tears on his face, to speak to them while sobbing. He therefore took control of himself and his feelings and spoke to them with a smile on his face. This is kavod habriyot!

Every Jewish Person is 'Your Brother'

What then, can give us the power to follow in the footsteps of our great leaders? To rise above ourselves and break through our self-absorbed focus, thereby fulfilling the Torah command "so that he can live with you"? This is a directive which compels us to be benevolent to others through acts of charity and kindness, taking all their needs into consideration so they can continue living in a respectful fashion.

The answer lies in one word which repeats itself with impressive consistency throughout these Parshiot. Achicha – your brother! What is demanded of man is that he should help his brother. Not just anyone, but your brother! Consider, in your awareness and imagination, that every Jewish person is simply 'your brother'! You will then automatically proceed according to the Torah guidelines, because a person is always prepared to go above and beyond the norm – for a brother.

"So that he can live with you".



MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —



Parshas Behar

"The land shall rest a *Shabbos* for *Hashem*," (VaYikra 25:4)

Rashi there says for the sake of *Hashem* as it says regarding *Shabbos Bereishis* - Rav Mordechai explained that this means as follows:

Naturally speaking, *Shemita* makes no sense, how can it be that we cease and desist and rest for all agricultural labor when we know that the best way for the land to yield its blessings is for us to work the land and then we can see its produce be blessed?!

Furthermore, *Hashem* works with us within nature and the natural order, and the laws of nature dictate that rest and cessation of labor does not lead to the growth of produce. How can it be that if we rest the land will be blessed with greater yields?

The truth is, that we can ask the very same question regarding *Shabbos* observance, this too makes no common sense and naturally you would expect that we need to work to earn a living. How can it be that we are blessed with *parnassah* for resting one day a week and not working, if work is what produces the *berachah* - how can cessation, rest and non-engagement yield that blessing? How can the holy *Zohar* say that all the blessings of the whole entire week depend on *Shabbos*?

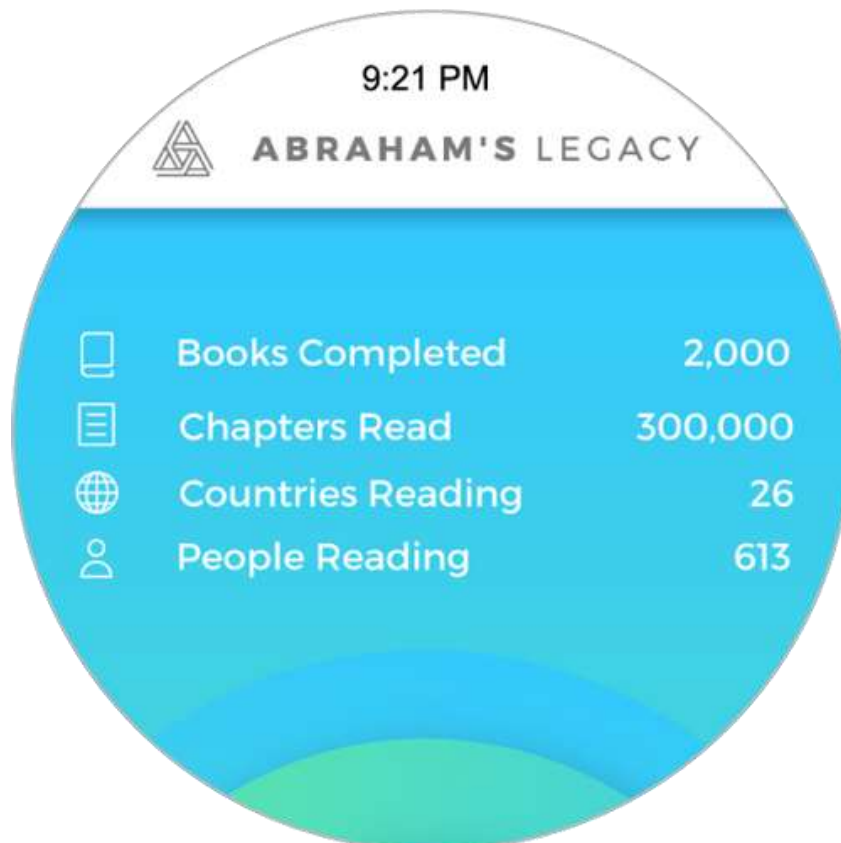
The *pasuk* advises us to prepare everything before *Shabbos* and then by advance preparation we will achieve all the *shefa* and bounty of blessings for the whole entire week. The same is true regarding *Shemita* that by working for six years, this sends down *shefa* for the seventh year. That is what *Rashi* means that the land shall rest a *Shabbos* for *Hashem*, and even so you shall still have *parnassah*, since just like it says regarding *Shabbos Bereishis*. This is the primary lessons we need to learn that regarding spiritual matters when we want to merit *shefa* from *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* - we need to strengthen ourselves in *avodas Hashem*.

However, *Shabbos* itself is not a time for *teshuvah*, rather that is the preparatory engagement for us to prepare in advance before *Shabbos* arrives, and then by doing so, we are preparing in advance for the whole entire week and the light of *Shabbos* shines and changes the whole week. May *Hashem* help us and grant us that final day that shall be entirely *Shabbos* and rest for the final redemption - speedily in our days, *Amen*.



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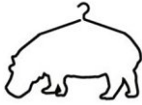
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