



# THANK YOU HASHEM

## For Shabbos Kodesh!

### Parshas Ki Savo

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לזכות רפואה שלמה מלכה בת רחמי, מיכאל בן שולמית, יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה ואברתם יחודה בן שרה הרבקה

#### HaMeor Shebah

*A Short Burst of Relevance*

וְהַיּוֹם תִּיְרָא תֵּלְאִים לָךְ מִיָּמֶיךָ וּפְחָדַי לַיְלָה וַיּוֹמַם...

*The life you face shall be precarious; you shall be in terror, night and day...*

THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS were fond of interpreting the terrible curses of the Tochecha in a positive way. When the tzaddikim finished with their *derashos*, the curses emerged to in fact carry the greatest blessings. One such example is the following teaching from the Degel Machaneh Ephraim, in which the tzaddik explains the words, *"The life you face shall be precarious; you shall be in terror, night and day."* At the very outset of Shulchan Aruch, the Rama writes that the verse, *"Shivisi Hashem l'negdi samid"*, "I have placed Hashem before me at all times", embodies the lifestyle of the tzaddikim who live their lives with great *yiras Shamayim* founded upon the constant awareness of Hashem's presence. Rav Avigdor Miller *zt"l* once likened this overwhelming feeling of awe to a daredevil driver who becomes aware of a police car behind him. The realness of the police officer and the consequences of illegal driving are enough to cause him to slow down and keep the rules. In the same way (although the *mashal* is certainly limited), the tzaddikim are constantly aware of Hashem's realness, of His presence in the world and the way He sees all our actions. This - in addition to their great love for Hashem and their striving never to act in a way that would be detrimental to their intimate relationship with Him - enables the tzaddikim to live elevated lives within the lofty boundaries of the Torah's ideals. The holy Degel uses this concept to explain our *pasuk* in a deeper way:

ON SHABBOS  
EVERYTHING SEEMS  
THE SAME PHYSICALLY  
BUT IT'S SO DIFFERENT  
SPIRITUALLY.

*"V'hayu chayecha"*: And the Source of your life-force, Hashem, *"teluyim lecha m'neged"*: will be the subject of your constant awareness, as the *pasuk* states, *"Shivisi Hashem l'negdi samid."* Then, *"Ufachad'ta Laylah v'yomam"*: you will attain a lofty level of *yiras Shomayim*, enabling you to live a life of elevation and closeness to Hashem. Is there any greater blessing than this? 🙏

#### Parsha Roundup

*A 60-second Review*

- 🙏 Moshe communicates the mitzvah of Bikkurim - upon entering the Holy Land, the first-ripened fruits must be brought to the Beis HaMikdash and one must express one's gratitude to Hashem.
- 🙏 Ki Savo includes the laws of the different kinds of *Maasar* as well as detailed instructions on how to proclaim the blessings and the curses on Har Gerizim and Har Eival. Moshe reminds the nation that they are Hashem's chosen people, and that they, in turn, have chosen to serve Hashem.
- 🙏 After listing the blessings with which Hashem will reward the Jewish nation when they follow the laws of the Torah, Moshe delivers the *"Tochecha"*, a long, harsh account of the tragedies that shall befall them if they abandon Hashem's commandments.

## P'nimiyus haParsha

### An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

ה' האמירך היום להיות לו לעם סגלה כאשר דברך וְלשמר כל-מצותיו...

*And Hashem has affirmed you, this day, to be His treasured people as He spoke, to guard all of His commandments...*

IN THIS WEEK'S parsha we read, *"V'Hashem he'emircha hayom lihyos lo l'am segulah"* – "And Hashem has affirmed you, this day, to be His treasured people." The holy Ishbitzer, Rebbe Mordechai Yosef Leiner zy"א, reveals the deepest depths of this "affirmation".

Chazal teach that the two words for "speech" most commonly used in the Torah, *"Dibbur"* and *"Amirah"*, have contrasting definitions: While *Dibbur* (*"Vayedabeir"*) connotes *Gevurah*; strength and harshness, *Amirah* (*"Vayomer"*) connotes *Chessed*, kindness and comfort. The Zohar HaKadosh reveals another, concurrent, facet of *Amirah*: *"Amirah b'lechisha"*, this kind of speech is related to the concept of whispering, the method used to communicate a concealed matter, a hidden truth, in inner reality.

Hashem reveals Himself with many Names, each of which refers to a different mode of His governance and relationship with the world. The system of Names through which Hashem interacts with His creation is largely founded upon the concept of *"Din"*, harsh-judgement and immediate causality. On the level of these Names, our access to and relationship with the King of kings is conditional, dependent upon our actions. In this system, sins cause walls to go up between Hashem and ourselves and one's actions can cause himself to be cut off from Hashem entirely *r'l*.

But even when this system of Names demands that Hashem hide Himself behind mighty walls of concealment, the Ishbitzer teaches that an *"amirah"*,

a whisper that transcends all Names, filters through these barriers, tacitly communicating the deepest level of His love for us which is ultimately unconditional. This is the meaning of David HaMelech's declaration, *"Ki higdalta al kol shimcha imrasecha"* – "For You have exalted Your Word above Your Names." Here, David is referring to the whispering of Hashem's unconditional love which rises above, and reaches beyond, the system of His Names. This whispering is further defined in another verse which states, *"Emor l'nafshi yeshuaseich ani"*, "Say to my soul "I am your salvation"; even when we fall into the darkest pit of distance from Hashem, Hashem continues to whisper to us that He is our salvation. In a third verse, David expresses the joy he feels from this whispering: *"Sas anochi al imrasecha k'motzei shalal rav"* – "I rejoice over Your sayings as one who has discovered great spoils." The *amirah* – whispering of Hashem communicating His infinite and unconditional love for each Jewish soul is a true source of joy and comfort.

The Ishbitzer teaches that this is the meaning of Hashem's affirmation, *"V'Hashem he'emircha hayom"*. If we could close our eyes and ears to reality as it appears on the surface, we are able to tap into the place in our soul within which Hashem's whisperings constantly echo, affirming our worth, our inherent holiness, and just how much we mean to Him. Even in the darkest situation, amidst the storm clouds of Hashem's terrifying wrath and concealment, *"Emor l'nafshi yeshuaseich ani"* – our Father in heaven is constantly whispering loving words, words of strength, hope, and endless love. 🕎



*Regardless of how far a Jew feels he has fallen away from the Master of the world, Hashem is constantly whispering into his ear, "I am your salvation."*

## Zechus Avos

### Yahrtzeit of the Week

18 Elul: Sunday night, Monday – September 7<sup>th</sup>

**Rav Yehuda ben Betzalel Loew (1512 - 1609)**

18 Elul is the yahrtzeit of the Rav Yehuda ben Betzalel Loew, better known as the Maharal M'Prague. This tzaddik, who traced his lineage back to David HaMelech, is universally recognized as one of the foremost Ga'onim, Mekubalim, and Jewish thinkers of all time. The Maharal's approach to Midrash and Aggadah has had an enormous impact on all subsequent scholarship, and his teachings are credited as having formed the foundations for the axioms of the Chassidic movement.

The Maharal held positions as Rav in Nokolsburg and Prague. Toward the end of his life, the tzaddik was appointed Chief Rabbi of Poland. Among the Maharal's prolific works are the *Gur Aryeh* on the Torah, *Chiddushei Aggados* on Shas, *Gevuros Hashem*, *Derech HaChaim*, *Nesivos Olam*, *Tiferes Yisrael*, and many other philosophical and halachic works. Rav Yitzchak Hutner, who was profoundly influenced by the Maharal's thought, described the tzaddik's writing style as *"nistar b'lashon nigleh"*, "the concealed in the language of the revealed". This refers to the fact that much of the Maharal's innovation centered around his couching Kabbalistic ideas in non-kabbalistic, philosophical terms. Three influential tzaddikim who continued in this path of the Maharal were Rav Hutner, as stated, Rav Eliyahu Dessler, and Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt"l. Further, this attempt to filter the ideas of the Kabbalah and present them in a way that is accessible to every Jew set a precedent for the Chassidic movement three centuries later which strove to further bring the heavenly concepts of the Kabbalah down to earth. Interestingly enough, the Maharal left this world on the 18<sup>th</sup> Elul, the same date the Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh was born 89 years later. Indeed, the date of his *petirah*, **בעל שם טוב**, ח"י אלול ה' שס"ט, is equal to **בעל שם טוב**.

One of the most well-known teachings of the Maharal is that the number eight represents the realm beyond nature - the eight days of Chanukah represent the miracle of the oil and the performance of the Bris Milah on the eight day from the child's birth similarly represents the Jew's ability to become elevated above the draw of physicality. Interestingly enough, the word **מילה** is initials of **יהודה ליווא המהרל מפראג**. In addition, the word **מילה** is numerically equivalent to **ח"י אלול**.

*Zechuso Yogen Aleinu!*

*This section is adapted from the yahrtzeit remazim of R' David Friedman. 🕎*



*The Maharal's kever in the Old Jewish Cemetery of Prague*

## Tohameha

### Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

LAST WEEK, WE spoke about the incredible power of Shabbos to cleanse a person with a “*Tal shel techiya*”, a life-giving dew of spiritual renewal. But what about the week of a person who has merited to experience the cleansing waters of the mikvah that is Shabbos Kodesh? The Chernovitzer quotes a famous teaching from Chazal which states, “If am Yisrael were to keep two Shabbaos, they would immediately be redeemed.” The tzaddik explains that the first three days of the week, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, draw their life force from the previous Shabbos while the final three days, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, draw their life force from the following Shabbos. If a Jew truly taps into the holiness of Shabbos, this will positively influence the first half of the week and cause spiritual illumination from the coming Shabbos to elevate the second half of the week as well. This illumination of the mundane week with the brilliant light of Shabbos is the light of the redemption, a time when the physical illusion of our world will be ripped away to reveal the spiritual coding - bursting with Hashem’s presence - behind each and every molecule of existence. Kabbalistically speaking, the first of the two Shabbosim represents the *Sefirah* of **Binah** (Source) while the second Shabbos represents the final *Sefirah* of **Malchus** (Vessel). When the six days of the week, which represent the six intermediary emotional *Sefiros* from **Chessed to Yesod** are purified and activated to serve as a channel linking the first and second Shabbosim, *Binah* and *Malchus*, this brings a spirit of redemption into the world. This redemption is rooted in *Binah*, whose fifty gates correlate to the fiftieth year of Yovel in which all indentured servants are granted their freedom. 🕎

*This section is adapted from the sefer “Sidduro Shel Shabbos” by R’ Chaim of Chernowitz zy”a (1760-1816)*

## P'nimiyus Ha'Halacha

### The Inner Dimension of Jewish Law

CONTINUING OUR OVERVIEW of some of the halachos regarding the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana, let's discuss who is obligated in this mitzvah. Because it is a time-bound commandment, only men are obligated in the mitzvah. However, although officially exempt from hearing the shofar, almost all women make a practice of fulfilling this mitzvah voluntarily. Whether or not a woman who chooses to fulfil the mitzvah of hearing shofar makes a *beracha* is a subject of dispute between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi *poskim* with regard to all similar cases. The Rambam (*Hichos Tzitzit* 3:9 and *Hilchos Sukkah* 6:13) holds that because women are exempt from the mitzvah of Tzitzis, they cannot make a Beracha on it. The Maggid Mishna explains that the Rambam holds it is impossible to say, “*V'tzivanu*”, “Who commanded us,” if a person is in fact exempt from the mitzvah. However, the Raavad (*Hilchos Tzitzit* 3:9) and Tosfos (*Eruvin* 96a, *Rosh Hashanah* 33a, *Kiddushin* 31a) argue that women may opt to recite a *beracha* even over mitzvos from which they are exempt. Shulchan Aruch (O”C 589:6) follows the opinion of the Rambam, while the Rama (O”C 17:2) accepts that of Rabbenu Tam. Therefore, Ashkenazim hold that a woman or one blowing shofar only for women may recite the *beracha*, while Sephardim hold that neither a woman nor someone blowing for women may recite the *beracha*. A child who reached the age of *chinuch* should hear the shofar being blown. According to Sephardi *poskim*, he can even fulfill his obligation by blowing shofar himself.

The tzaddikim explain that the different kinds of Shofar blasts - *tekiya*, *shevarim*, *teruah*, *tekiyah gedolah* - contain deep allusions to the process of teshuvah. The straight and steady *tekiyah* blast symbolizes the purity and untainted innocence of a childhood., a time when life was simpler and the yetzer hara hadn't yet taken hold. As life proceeds, we soon experience “*shevarim*”, the

brokenness of the human condition. As the forces of material selfishness and spiritual altruism battle within for our very identity, we experience failure, lowliness, and defeat. Eventually, **teruah**, our spirit becomes shattered into shards of hopelessness. As the burden of our sins becomes more and more difficult to carry, we collapse under the weight of our inner demons, defeated by the illusion of the insurmountable barriers before us. The bright light of our idealism is dimmed by the shadow of a dismal reality, visions of a broken world drowning in confusion and despair. We give up trying, disgusted by our failed efforts to return to the innocence, faith, wonder, and vibrancy of our youth.

But then, somewhere along the way, we hear the redemptive echo of the shofar. From the depths of our slumber we are reminded of Hashem’s endless mercy, His ever-present desire for us to utilize this world - with all of its challenge, struggle, and failure - to forge an intimate bond with Him. We recognize the miracle of life and the breaths we take as being breathed into us by our loving Father in heaven Who consciously chooses, each and every moment, to grant us this gift in His belief in our ability to repair what we have broken and return to our truest state of being. The **tekiyah gedolah** is twice as long as the tekiya because it demonstrates how all of the brokenness of the shevarim and teruah were also part and parcel of the journey toward elevation and a spiritual perspective that simply couldn't be accessed any other way. This Rosh Hashana, may we merit to a shofar blowing that rouses us to the ever-present hope of total rectification, a kind of teshuvah that reframes the errors of the past and lifts us back into the loving embrace of our Father in heaven. 🕎

## A Quick Mayseh

*A Story to Warm the Heart*

ONE TIME, THE holy Berditchover Rav was walking down the street when he bumped into a well-known heretic. This was a man who was well-known for his many sins, and he had the reputation of a scoundrel, a cruel and wicked man. As the tzaddik passed, he stopped suddenly and gave this man a warm and hearty greeting. To the great shock of this heretic, Rav Levi Yitzchak grabbed him by the lapels of his coat and cried out, "I am so jealous of you!"

Nothing could have surprised the man more. "You, Rebbe?" he said, dumbfounded. "You are jealous of me?!"

"Yes!" cried the Berditchover. "I know you have spent many years entrenched in sin. But our Sages taught that when a Jew repents out of love, his willful transgressions are transformed into merits. Now, if you consider how many sins you must have committed over the decades, just think of how many merits you will have when you repent!"

"If that's the case," the man retorted, "just wait a few more days, and you will be even more jealous of me!"

But despite his callous bravado, the Rebbe's sincere words and warm demeanor worked their magic, and the man repented. He eventually became one of the most pious Jews in all of Berditchov.

*No matter how severely entrenched in sin and lowliness we may be, teshuvah remains an ever-present option. It is in our hands to transform all of our sins into the greatest merits! What a privilege! What a gift! 🙏*

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"Thank You Hashem" is a powerful sound bite. These simple words are a prayer, blessing, appreciation, sanctification, and expression of spiritual intimacy—all in one. Jews from all walks of life utter them in all life circumstances, finding meaning and strength in direct access to Hashem. Our mission is to ignite that passion and pride in every Jew worldwide. To remind us all that Hashem exists in every single aspect of life. That He loves each of us in every situation, environment, and spiritual position. And that by saying His name with gratitude, we return His love every day.

"THANK YOU HASHEM  
FOR SHABBOS KODESH! WEEKLY"  
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