



THANK YOU HASHEM For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Ki Seitzei

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

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

וַיִּגְדַּל תְּהִיָּה לְךָ עַל-אֲזַנְךָ וְהָיָה בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ חוּץ וְחִפְרָתָהּ בָּהּ וְשִׁבְתָּ וְכִסִּיתָ אֶת-צִאְתְּךָ...

You shall have a spike with your gear, and when you sit outside you shall dig a hole with it and cover your waste...

IN DISCUSSING THE requirement to preserve the ritual purity of the Jewish nation's encampment, the Torah states that a place should be prepared outside the camp for the purpose of relieving oneself. The verse states, "You shall have a spike with your gear, and when you sit outside you shall dig a hole with it and cover your waste." The Degel Machaneh Ephraim sees an important message hinted in these words that is deeply relevant for you and me, today. The tzaddik writes that when a Jew studies or hears a Torah concept that touches his heart, he should do his best to acquire it - not simply to file it away as "a nice vort", but to allow it to become part of his outlook on life. When we allow Torah to affect us in such a way, we will be able to make use of these ideas to give us strength even when we have fallen into a constricted consciousness and lost our clarity. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zy" a writes something similar: "A person needs to be cheerful always, and to serve Hashem with joy. And even if he occasionally falls from his level, he must strengthen himself with earlier times, when some small measure of light did shine on him... That is, since in earlier times [the light] shone for him somewhat, and he strengthened himself and stirred his heart toward Hashem, even though now he has fallen from this and his eyes and heart are closed, nevertheless, he should hold on to those earlier times and follow them." In order to accomplish this, we must absorb the



moments of inspiration deep into our bones so we may make use of them at a later time. This, explains the holy Degel, is the deeper meaning of our pasuk: "**V'yaseid tihyeh lecha al azeinecha**": The words of Torah we hear with our ears ("ozen") should be deeply rooted in our hearts. Then, "**b'shivtecha bachutz**": when we find ourselves outside the camp of holiness, "**v'chafarta bah v'shavta v'chisisa es tzei'asecha**": Using the inspiration of the past, we will be able to cover up our spiritual waste and return to our former purity. 🙏

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- Parshas Ki Seitzei presents many of the mitzvos of the Torah (74, to be exact), including the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance of the firstborn, the *Ben Sorer Umoreh*, laws concerning the burial and dignity of the dead, *hashavas aveidah*, *Shiluach HaKan*, the obligation to erect a fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of *kilayim*.
- Also recounted are the procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl, and for a husband who falsely accuses his wife of infidelity. The following people cannot marry a Jew: a mamzer, a male descendent from Amon or Moav, and a first or second generation descendant of Edom or Mitzrayim.
- Ki Seitzei also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an escaped slave; the duty to pay a worker on time and to allow employees to eat while working; the proper treatment of a debtor and the prohibition against charging interest; the laws of divorce; the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for *yibum* and *chalitza*.
- Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to remember Amalek's attack on the fledgling Jewish nation.

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P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

כי-יהיה לאיש בן סוטר ומורה...

If a man has a wayward and defiant son...

AT THE BEGINNING of this week's parsha, we learn about the fate of the "Ben Sorer Umoreh", the wayward and defiant son. The Torah teaches that if a child fits the description of the *Ben Sorer Umoreh*, his parents bring him before a *beis din* to pronounce his sins, after which he is stoned to death. Our Sages teach that the wayward son is not being killed because of his past behavior. Rather, the Torah foresees that a child who shows such a strong propensity toward gluttony and thievery etc. will end up being a danger to society. It is for his own good and the good of society at large that he is put to death, so as to prevent any future harm.

Chazal teach that if the father of the boy wishes to forgive him for his behavior, he does not have to bring him to *beis din*. Even if the child's behavior indeed earns him the title of "Ben Sorer Umoreh", it is the father's right to overlook the gravity of his crimes and forgive him entirely.

The Shem M'Shmuel asks the following question. Being that, as we have mentioned, the reason the Torah gives the *Ben Sorer Umoreh* the death penalty is in order to prevent the future thievery and even murder he will surely commit, why does the father have the right to forgive him? The Torah itself testifies that this child will end up being a menace to society! How does the father's clemency negate the inevitability of this prediction?

The Shem M'Shmuel answers with the most amazing idea. He says that the ability of a Jew to perform teshuva and earn forgiveness from Hashem for past misdeeds is granted by our connection to our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Returning to Hashem means to return to *ourselves*, to return to our true roots – the spiritual DNA we contain within which binds us to those who devoted their lives to revealing Hashem's presence in the physical world. This, says the Shem M'Shmuel, is why the Torah is certain that the *Ben Sorer Umoreh's* future is so dismal. If this child's father is willing to have him be put to death, this indicates that the boy's connection with the *Avos HaKedoshim* has been completely severed and he therefore has no hope. However, if the boy's father is willing to work with him – finding the glimmer of goodness he yet contains and believing in his potential for transformation and ultimate success – he reconnects the boy with his true source and enables him to take control of his future and turn himself around.

This is such a powerful idea! A parent mustn't wait for a glimmer of light to appear before believing in the child's ability to succeed. It works the other way around! If a parent truly believes in the child, regardless of how bad the situation may appear, this belief will grant the child the strength to turn him or herself around and exceed all and any expectations. 🤴



Armed with our faith in their unique potential for greatness, there is nothing our children cannot achieve.

Zechus Avos

Yahrtzeit of the Week

13 Elul: Tuesday night, Wednesday – September 2nd

Rav Yosef Chaim of Baghdad zy" a (1835 - 1909)

13 Elul is the *yahrtzeit* of the author of *sefer* Ben Ish Chai, Rav Yosef Chaim (ben Eliyahu) of Baghdad zy" a. This brilliant tzaddik wrote many *sefarim* on numerous subjects including Tanach, Gemara, Halacha, Kabbalah, and Tefillah. His Ben Yehoyada is one of the basic resources for understanding Aggadah. There are some very great tzadikim who wrote that despite having been initially buried in Baghdad, Rav Yosef Chaim was brought to burial on Har Hazeisim via mystical means.

The Ben Ish Chai passed away י"ג אלול תרס"ט which is equal to הצדיק רבי יוסף חיים בן אליהו.

Rav Shimon Agassi (a great mekubal and disciple of the Ben Ish Chai) writes that Rav Yosef Chaim was a gilgul of Yosef Hatzadik. A *remez* to this is that the day of his passing, י"ג אלול, is equal to יסוד – the *middah* of Yosef Hatzaddik.

המספרים 13 אלול is numerically equivalent to the word דרך which is connected to Elul, as the Arizal teaches that the mystical intention of Elul is contained within the words הנותן בים דרך.

The gematria of רבינו יוסף חיים מבגדאד is equal to מתוק – "sweet." Rav Elazar Rokeach of Amsterdam says that the 524 *perakim* in Talmud Bavli, equal to תלמוד בבלי, together with the 22 letters of Torah Sh'bichsav equal 546 - מתוק (Maaseh Rokeach, Beshalach). The Ben Ish Chai wrote *sefarim* on Tanach and Talmud Bavli.

Zechuso Yogen Aleinu! This section is adapted from the *yahrtzeit* remazim of R' David Friedman. 🤴

While contested by some, the alleged kever of the Ben Ish Chai on Har Hazeisim tells a story of the miraculous transfer of his body from Baghdad to Yerushalayim.



Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

CONTINUING TO EXPLAIN the way in which Shabbos atones for all sins, the Chernovitzer Rav explains a *pasuk* in Yeshayahu in a remarkable manner. The *pasuk* states, “*Chodesh v’Shabbos kro mikra lo uchal aven v’atzarah*” - “Roshei Chodashim and Shabbosim, calling of gatherings together with iniquities, I am not able to handle.” On the surface, the Navi is transmitting the *mussar* of Hashem to a wayward nation. But there is a deeper meaning as well. The tzaddik writes that Shabbos - the beginning of a new week, is also an aspect of Rosh Chodesh - the beginning of the new month. The word “**Shabbos**” is numerically equal to **27** times Hashem’s essential Name, and the word “**Chodesh**” is numerically equal to **12** times Hashem’s essential Name. Together, this adds up to **39** times *Shem Havayah*. These 39 holy Names combat the negative forces associated with the forbidden **Lamed Tes Melachos**, triggering a shower of “**Tal**”, life-giving dew, upon the Jewish nation. This dew of holiness naturally repels all sin and forces of impurity. This, then, is the deeper meaning of the *pasuk*: “**Chodesh v’Shabbos kro mikra**”: Because of the awesome holiness of Shabbos/Chodesh and the 39 Names associated with this remarkable day, “**lo uchal aven**”: no sin is able to remain, because of “**v’atzarah**”, the holiness of the *mitzvos hayom* expressed in refraining from engaging with the 39 Melachos. The tzaddik explains that this is the meaning of Chazal’s statement introduced in last week’s column, “*Kol hashomer Shabbos meichalelo - al tikrei ‘meichalelo’ elah ‘machal lo*”: The residual impurity that a Jew’s *teshuvah* is unable to remove is pushed away by the incredible holiness of Shabbos. In order to ensure that “*shomer Shabbos meichalelo*”, he does not profane Shabbos with his impurity, “**machal lo**”, he is forgiven for all of his sins and his *teshuvah* is completed by Hashem. 🕎

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

B’EZRAS HASHEM, OVER the next few weeks we are going to delve into the *halachos* of the *Yomim Nora’im* and *Succos*. Let’s begin with the laws of the essential *mitzvas hayom* of Rosh Hashana, the blowing of the shofar. *Mid’Oraysa*, one is required to listen to only nine shofar blasts. This is derived from *pesukim*: three *teruos* are required, and each needs a *tekia* before and after, totaling nine. However, the Gemara records that a question arose as to what constitutes a proper *teruah*. Is it three short sounds (*shevarim*), many rapid sounds (*teruah*), or both together (*shevarim terua*)? Because of this uncertainty, the halacha, codifying an enactment Rebbe Avahu, requires one to listen to all of these blasts for a total of 30. The *meforshim* struggle to understand how this doubt arose if the Jewish people have been blowing shofar consistently since Matan Torah. The Rosh (Rosh Hashanah, 4:10) suggests that there were always different groups that blew according to their opinion regarding how to interpret these specific *pesukim*. In order to present a common mitzvah of shofar on Rosh Hashanah to demonstrate our unity, Chazal require us to hear shofar according to all the different interpretations. The Rambam (*Hilchos Shofar* 3:2) holds that somewhere along the way the tradition was indeed lost and Chazal enacted to blow all variations of the *Teruah* because of *safek d’Oraysa l’chumrah*. Rav Hai Gaon (see Ritva to Rosh Hashana 34a) argues and says that in truth, one fulfills one’s obligation regardless of which interpretation of *teruah* one follows. It was only when some sects began casting aspersion on the practice of others that Rebbe Avahu established his ruling that each group should blow like the others as well so there would be no debate.

In the process of reconciling two seemingly contradictory teachings from Chazal, the holy Berditchover Rav (Kedushas Levi, Rosh HaShana, “*B’nusach*”) reveals one facet of the deep spiritual rectifications effected by blowing the shofar on Rosh

HaShanah. The tzaddik is bothered by the fact that in one place, Chazal tell us that a person is judged on Rosh HaShanah for the entire year while in another, we are taught that a person is judged each and every day! Rav Levi Yitzchak begins his explanation by outlining a fundamental distinction between voice and speech. When a person takes a deep breath and produces a voice with his vocal cords, this sound is unquantifiable in the sense that it can potentially be used to form any word, in any language. **Voice** is therefore related to the concept of **infinity**. Speech, on the other hand, is limited. When the faculty of speech is used to transform a vocal expression into a specific word, that measure of voice can no longer be used to express any other word. Therefore, **speech** is related to **finitude**.

The Berditchover goes on to explain that just as humans communicate using voice and speech, so does Hashem communicate His blessings which manifest throughout our lives using the aspects of “voice” and “speech”. On the level of voice, this spiritual bounty is unquantified and can take on any shape or form. On the level of speech, it begins to take shape and manifest in good health, easy childrearing, financial security etc. With this idea in mind, we are able to reconcile the teachings quoted above. When Chazal teach that we are judged on Rosh Hashana, this refers to the level of “voice” - we are judged with regard to how much unspecified spiritual bounty will fill our lives over the course of the coming year. However, we are judged each day with regard to the aspect of “speech” this unspecified bounty will undergo, what form it will take in our daily lives.

This, explains the tzaddik, is why we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana. The Shofar represents “*kol b’lo dibbur*”, “voice without speech”, a representation of the spiritual process taking place on this glorious day during which unspecified spiritual energy flows down into the collective soul of the Jewish soul. 🕎

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

BEFORE THE REBBE Reb Zusha became well-known as a tzaddik and miracle worker he would wander from village to village. Nobody knew who he was or had any inkling of his unfathomable spiritual greatness.

One evening, the tzaddik was sitting in the shteibel of a town he was passing through when a woman suddenly burst through the door and asked loudly, "Have any of you seen my husband?" No one knew who she was. She explained that her husband had abandoned her, and no one knew where he had run off to or if he was even still alive. This poor woman was now an *aguna*, and forbidden to remarry. Desperate to escape from this status, she decided to travel to as many places as she could in search of her husband. In every city, town, village, and settlement she arrived, she would ask for help in finding her husband - but to no avail. When she finished her tale of woe, the Rebbe Reb Zusha jumped up and said, "Go quickly now to the inn at the entrance of town. You will find your husband there." The woman neither hesitated nor asked a single question. She darted away to the inn. There, remarkably, she discovered her runaway husband.

Those present were amazed. How could this wandering beggar, Zusha, know the whereabouts of this person he had never met? They concluded excitedly that he must have divined this information through miraculous means. But Reb Zusha protested this conclusion. "There is no miracle here," the tzaddik hastened to disclaim. "It's just that something strange happened to me this morning. After Shacharis, I overheard two men conversing, and one of them said to the other that there was a new guest in town who had just showed up at the inn.

"I couldn't help wondering about the significance of my happening to hear this. Why should my ears have heard this particular snippet of information from the midst of all the other conversations?"

"I thought about this for a while, and, not finding the answer, set the question aside and turned to my studies. When the woman came into the shteibel and asked if we had seen her husband. I immediately thought to myself, "That's it! This man I heard them talking about must be her husband!"

A truly righteous person is able to realize the heavenly messages that abound throughout his daily life. To him these messages are not miraculous because to him, everything is miraculous. 🙏

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"THANK YOU HASHEM
FOR SHABBOS KODESH! WEEKLY"
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