



# THANK YOU HASHEM For Shabbos Kodesh!

## Parshas Matos-Masai

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לדעות 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*

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עַבְדְּיָיִךְ נָשְׂאוּ אֶת-רֹאשׁ אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדֵינוּ וְלֹא-נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ:

*They said to Moshe, "Your servants have made a check of the warriors in our charge, and not one of us is missing."*

OUR SAGES TEACH that above the most serious transgressions in the Torah, it was baseless hatred and disunity among our holy nation that caused the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. It follows, then, that the Three Weeks are a time to work on this particular area of avodas Hashem, a time to combat baseless hatred with baseless love by focusing on "Knesses Yisrael", the Collective Soul we all share instead of the external differences that divide us. One way to work on ahavas Yisrael is by taking an interest in the spiritual growth of our fellow Jews and lending a helping hand of encouragement when needed. Oftentimes we are so chained by our own self-doubt and perceived limitations that we cannot begin to imagine the extent of the impact our words might have on someone else's life. Regardless of how low and insignificant we may feel, a kind word, pat on the back, or genuine smile can go a long way in brightening someone's day and giving another Jew the strength to keep on climbing. When we work on encouraging our fellow Jews in their fight against the elements that seek to prevent us from growing closer to our Father in heaven, we have a far better chance of rising together, as a nation, to our lofty potential. Rebbe Velvel of Zabriz saw this idea hinted to in the above verse from this week's parsha. "Avadecha": When those Jews who have seen successful in their service of Hashem "nas'u es rosh": elevate the spirits and lift the heads, with words

ALLOW THE LIGHT OF THE  
SHABBOS CANDLES  
TO SHINE BRIGHT  
THE WHOLE WEEK.  
GOOD SHABBOS!

of encouragement, "anshei hamilchama asher b'yadeinu": of the "men of war", those among our holy nation who are battling with forces of darkness preventing them from attaining spiritual success, "v'lo nifkad mimenu ish": then nobody is missing. That spirit of friendship, responsibility, and support will ensure that all of our brothers and sisters remain focused and committed to carrying out their mission in this world. Let's use this Shabbos to reach out to our fellow Jews with love, setting the final bricks in the third Beis Hamikdash! 🕎

### Parsha Roundup

*A 60-second Review*

- Moshe teaches the laws governing the annulment of vows to the leaders of the Jewish nation. War is waged against Midyan for their role in plotting the moral destruction of am Yisrael, and a detailed account is given of the division of the spoils amongst the people, the warriors, the Leviim, and the Kohen Gadol.
- Reuven and Gad (later joined by half of Menashe) ask for the prime pasturelands east of the Yarden as their portion in Eretz Yisrael. Initially angered by this request, Moshe agrees on condition that they first join and lead the nation's conquest of the lands west of the Yarden.
- The forty-two journeys and encampments of the Jewish people are listed, from the Exodus to their encampment on the plains of Moav across the river from the land of Canaan. The boundaries of the Eretz Yisrael are given and cities of refuge are designated for inadvertent murderers. The daughters of Tzelafchad marry within their own tribe of Manashe so the estate inherited from their father should not pass to another tribe.



# P'nimiyus haParsha

## An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

יִקְרָב מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל-פִּי ה' וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם:

*“Moshe recorded the starting points of their various marches as directed by Hashem. Their marches, by starting points, were as follows...”*

THE DEGEL MACHANEH Ephraim notes that whereas the opening verse in parshas Masai, “These are the journeys of the b’nei Yisrael who started out from the land of Egypt, in accordance with their troops, in the charge of Moshe and Ahron” does not reference Hashem’s guiding these travels, the second verse, “And Moshe recorded the starting points of their various marches as directed by Hashem,” does. Why is the all-important detail of these journeys being in accordance with the will of Hashem omitted from the first pasuk and only included in the second? The tzaddik answers with the following beautiful idea.

As the Chassidic masters revealed in their works, the travels of the Jewish nation in the desert were founded upon the deepest secrets of creation. With every step, our ancestors were bringing about the most awesome spiritual unifications. Each leg of their odyssey was paving the path for all future generations to come. However, the B’nei Yisrael were not necessarily aware of these secrets. The Jews traveled with simplicity, following the bidding of Moshe. Still, although they may have been unsure of the purpose of their difficult and circuitous route, they plodded on with perfect faith that there was indeed a deeper meaning to their journey. Moshe Rabbeinu was the only one who was privy to the secrets, the aspect of “*Al pi Hashem*” which served as the

foundation for these challenges. He alone was aware of the awesome rectifications being accomplished in the difficult travels of the Jewish nation.

The Degel explains that because the Jewish nation wasn’t aware of the secrets of their mission, the first verse, in which the B’nei Yisrael are mentioned, does not make reference to the aspect of “*al pi Hashem*” – the hidden mystical agenda of their odyssey. It is only in the second verse, in which only Moshe Rabbeinu, who understood these secrets, is mentioned, that the Torah refers to the fact that Hashem was directing these paths in accordance with the awesome reasons He had for doing so.

The tzaddikim revealed that just as the fledgling Jewish nation did at the outset of our glorious history, each and every individual Jew in every age must similarly undergo forty-two travels in his or her own emotional and spiritual life. While many of these journeys seem difficult, arduous, and even meaningless or absurd, it is important to remember that they are founded upon the deepest secrets of creation and touch the core of our particular soul’s mission in this world. Although we may not be privy to the deeper meaning of these travels, the true tzaddikim who are an aspect of “*Moshe Rabbeinu*” are guiding us along the way with teachings founded in their deep and abiding wisdom. 🕊



**Each Jewish soul must travel forty-two journeys in this lifetime. Every step is founded upon unfathomable secrets.**

# Zechus Avos

## Yahrtzeit of the Week

A segulah from  
Rav Shamshon  
Ostropoler for  
an epidemic

3 Av: Thursday night, Friday – July 24<sup>th</sup>

Rav Shamshon Ostropoler (1599 -1648)

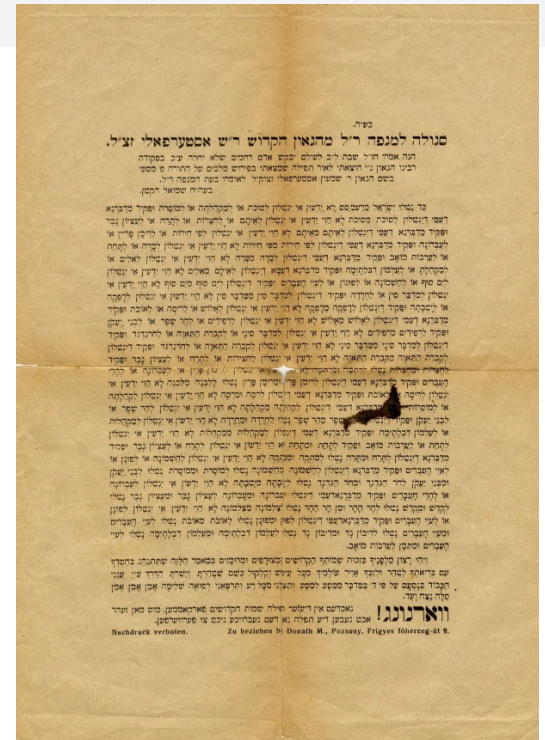
3 Av is the *yahrtzeit* of Rav Shamshon (ben Pesach) Ostropolier, a legendary tzaddik and mekubal who was murdered at *kiddush Hashem* in the Khmelnytsky Uprising, also known as *gezeiras Tach V’Tat*. Rav Shamshon revealed exalted secrets of Torah and is quoted by many great tzaddikim, among them the Chida and Bnei Yissaschar.

As mentioned, this tzaddik gave his life al kiddush Hashem, together with 300 of his congregants who stood wrapped in their talleisim, deep in prayer until the final moments. **שמע ישראל יקוק אלקינו יקוק אחד** (with the *kollel*) is equal to **רב שמשון בן פסח היידי**.

The verse **שמע ישראל יקוק אלקינו יקוק אחד** is often quoted as a *remez* to the *gezeiras Tach V’Tat*. This pasuk is from the beginning of Acharai Mos which speaks about the passing of tzaddikim. **ת״ח** is equal to **זאת**, the year the uprising began. Rav Shamshon Ostropoler said that this was a year that Moshiach could come. However, if he wouldn’t come, large portions of Klal Yisroel will fall into despair. This was ultimately the year Reb Shamshon Ostropolier was killed. **שמשון היידי** is equal to **יבא אהרן אל הקודש**.

Rav Shamshon is perhaps most famous for a letter he wrote explaining the Arizal’s explanation of the 10 *makkos*. He states at the end of the letter that, “anyone who studies the wondrous and awesome secrets written here even one time in a year, and especially Erev Pesach, is guaranteed that he will be saved from any kind of accident or disaster or strange death for the whole of that year, and that everything that he turns his hand to will be successful!” It is interesting to note that the author of this legendary Pesach letter, Rav Shamshon, was the son of R’ **Pesach**.

*Zechuso Yogen Aleinu This section is adapted from the yahrtzeit remazim of R’ David Friedman. 🕊*



## Tohameha

### Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

LAST WEEK, WE learned that the true purpose of the Jewish nation is to encourage all elements of physicality to recognize their Creator and praise Hashem. When we say the words, "Praise Hashem from the heavens" in davening each morning, we are speaking to the forces of heaven and earth and urging them to grow conscious of and communicate with their divine Source. The Chernovitzer explains that the collective Jewish soul is a "*Klal*", a general and collective entity, while other elements of existence are "*Pratim*", individual details. When the "*Klal*" is consciousness of Hashem and engages in praise and communication, this stirs all "*Pratim*" to become included in this endeavor. However, there is a difference between the function and mission of the "*Klal*" during the week and on Shabbos. The tzaddik explains this distinction with an analogy to a king who tasks his viceroy with different missions at different times. When the king is engaged in a war, he instructs his viceroy to train in new recruits as well as to collect taxes from the subjects to help fund the costly battles. However, when the war is complete and victory declared, the viceroy is tasked with training the troops to properly express their gratitude and praise to the king when he appears at the royal celebration so they will receive gifts from him in his great joy. **During the week**, we wage war against the forces of mundanity that surround us in a mighty effort to perform acts of holiness and connect with Hashem. At this time, our declaration of "*Hallelu es Hashem min hashamayim*" is in the way of training troops to join in the battle for the sanctification of physicality. However, **on Shabbos** that battle is already won - "*k'illu kol melachtecha asuyah*"; we declare victory over the negative forces and enter a realm of Emunah, God-consciousness, and *deveikus*. Therefore, when we say "*Hallelu es Hashem min hashamayim*" on Shabbos morning it carries a different meaning. At that moment we are inviting the forces of heaven and earth to celebrate in our victory and share in our taste of a perfect world. 🕎

*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

CHAZAL PLACED GREAT emphasis on the importance of answering "*amen*" when one hears a *beracha*. Whenever one hears a proper *beracha* (as well as *tefillos* such as *yehi ratzon* which do not include *Shem u'Malchus* - see *Mishna Berurah* 215:9) made by a Jew, one must answer "*amen*" - whether one intends to fulfill his obligation with the *beracha* or not. On a simple level, the word "*amen*" derives from the word "*Emunah*". When we answer "*amen*" to a *beracha*, we are declaring our affirmation that the words spoken are true and trustworthy. "*Amen*" must be said within *toch k'dei dibbur* (2-3 seconds) of the *beracha*. If one is in a congregation, "*amen*" may be said until the majority of the congregation has finished saying amen. (*V'zos HaBeracha* pg. 189) One should not answer "*amen*" louder than the *beracha* itself unless one is doing so for the sake of motivating others to answer "*amen*". (*Mishna Berurah* 124:47) Three common mistakes to avoid when answering "*amen*" are: 1. **Amen Chatufa**: Responding "*amen*" before the *beracha* is concluded or not enunciating the *kametz* under the "*aleph*" of amen clearly. (*Shulchan Aruch* 124:8) 2. **Amen Ketufa**: Not enunciating the "*nun*" at the end of the word or speaking the word too quickly. 3. **Amen Yesomah**: Answering "*amen*" without hearing the *beracha*, or too long after the *beracha* has been completed.

We are taught that answering a proper "*amen*" after a *beracha* is so precious that "*gadol haoneh amen yoser min hamevareich*", the one who answers "*amen*" is even greater than the one who made the *beracha*! In his classic work of Chassidus, sefer Bas Ayin (*parshas Vayakhel*), Rav Avraham Dov of Averitch zy"a reveals the inner dimension of this teaching.

The tzaddik explains that there are three elements upon which all of creation is founded: **Chessed**-kindness, **Yirah**-awe, and **Ne'emanus**-trustworthiness. *Chessed* represents the divine kindness that serves as a premise for the world's creation; "*Olam*

*chessed yibaneh*". *Yirah*, which denotes strictness and unwavering judgment, refers to the strictures and rigid systems within nature that allow for the world to function, such as time, causality, and gravity. Finally, *Ne'emanus* refers to the ultimate future of our world heralded by the coming of Moshiach; Hashem's trustworthiness in guiding this ship to its final destination and bringing redemption to the world.

When we make a *beracha* and say, "*Elokeinu Melech ha'olam*", we are referencing the first two of these elements. "*Elokeinu*" refers to *Chessed* ("*E-I*" is the name of *Chessed*), and "*Melech*" refers to *Yirah* (the Mishna in Pirkei Avos makes reference to "*mora'ah shel malchus*".) But the third element, the element of *Ne'emanus-Moshiach* is missing. However, when a Jew answers "*amen*", which includes the opening letters of the phrase "**E-I Melech Ne'eman**", he references *Chessed* ("*E-I*"), *Yirah* ("*Melech*") as well as Moshiach ("*Ne'eman*"), thus completing this elemental triad. This, writes the Bas Ayin, is the deeper meaning of Chazal's statement that the one who answers amen is even greater than the one who made the *beracha*, for only he can introduce the element of *Ne'emanus-Moshiach*.

There are a few ways of understanding this teaching. But perhaps the most direct is the idea that while serving Hashem alone is beautiful and holy, it is only when two Jews are serving Hashem together with great love and unity that the avodah becomes *redemptive*, that the avodah is imbued with the spirit of *eternity*. In this period of the three weeks, it is incumbent upon us to focus on fostering a sense of unity and togetherness in our communities. May we merit to use this time of reflection to grow closer to our fellow man, and - together - to grow closer to our Father in heaven - "*ohev es habriyos umikarvan laTorah*." In doing so, may we merit the coming of *Mashiach tzikeinu*, speedily and in our days! 🕎

## A Quick Mayseh

*A Story to Warm the Heart*

WHEN THE HOLY tzaddik Rav Shmelke Seilisher, student of the Chasam Sofer and author of Tzror HaChaim, was studying in the yeshiva of Rav Shalom Ullman, he would travel through the forest each Thursday to a nearby village where he would spend the night. He would return the next morning with the following week's provisions donated by the townspeople for the boys in the yeshiva. One Thursday, the young genius began his trek to the village. Along the way, he was deep in thought, grappling with a difficult and complex concept from the writings of the Shaar HaMelech. When he reached the benefactor's home, he went straight to sleep, exhausted from the physical and mental exertion.

A short while later he awoke and glanced out the window. The night did not seem so dark, and he assumed the first rays of dawn were spreading over the horizon. Eager to return to his bench in the beis midrash, he quickly grabbed the sack of provisions and began the journey home. What Rav Shmelke couldn't have known was that in truth, not more than two hours had passed since midnight. But the young tzaddik was already too engrossed in the Shaar HaMelech's teachings to notice.

At that same hour, Rav Shalom Ullman was traveling in the opposite direction along the very same path to reach another village where he would serve as mohel at a bris the following morning directly after dawn. As he walked, he suddenly saw the most astonishing sight! In the distance, six wild wolves were marching in a straight line while two people, an old man and a teenager, were walking with them at their side. As he drew closer, the wolves fled and the older man suddenly disappeared. Squinting in the dim twilight, Rav Shlomo recognized the teenager as his beloved student, Shmelke!

Pressed for the details of what had occurred, Rav Shmelke told how he had set out in error and was attacked by a pack of wolves. But before they could pounce, an old man had appeared and protected him. The man then said, "Shmelke my son, you were just in very grave danger. But since you had entered this situation because you were so preoccupied with my writings, I was sent to save you from these wild beasts." After speaking these words, the old man had disappeared into the darkness.

*May the merit of the tzaddikim whose words fill these pages each week protect us from all harm! 🙏*

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"THANK YOU HASHEM  
FOR SHABBOS KODESH! WEEKLY"  
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