



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Behar-Bechukosai

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

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"ESSENTIALLY" ABOVE & BEYONDI

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

כי לי בני ישראל עבדים עבדי הם...

"For B'nei Yisrael are My Servants, they are My servants..."

THE SEFAS EMES points out a redundancy in the *pasuk*, "For B'nei Yisrael are My servants, they are my servants..." Why does Hashem repeat that am Yisrael are His servants twice in the very same verse? The tzaddik answers that a Jew's relationship with Hashem moves in two directions. From the standpoint of Hashem, "*ki li b'nei Yisrael avadim*" - His choosing of am Yisrael is unconditional and constant. However, in addition to being chosen, we are called upon to choose Hashem in return, and it is this aspect referenced in the words "*avadei heim*." Counterintuitively, the more we make ourselves "choosable", fortifying Hashem's unconditional love with fulfilled His conditions, the deeper Hashem's unconditional love grows. The Ishbitzer explains that Hashem's love for us is rooted in our essential goodness - our sharing in His essence. The more we use our *bechirah* to turn away from the foreign thoughts and lowly distractions of physicality and reveal our true self, the holiness of our soul, the more opportunity there will be for Hashem's unconditional love to manifest in our lives. The more we actively choose to reveal our holy essence by living a life of conscious engagement with Torah and mitzvos, the more we become the beneficiaries of Hashem's promise a few *pesukim* earlier: "*lo yemachru mimkeres eved*" - we will never be sold away

YOU MAY FEEL
LOST AND ALONE,
BUT HASHEM KNOWS
EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE,
AND HE HAS A GOOD
PLAN FOR YOU!

into servitude of the yetzer hara; "*mitzvah goreres mitzvah*." This is also hinted to in David HaMelech's tefillah, "*Sur meira v'aseih tov*" - the more we do good, building a ladder upon which to ascend to Hashem, the more Hashem will help us stay away from living lives of lowliness and negativity. 🤴

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 👑 Hashem speaks to Moshe on Har Sinai and teaches him the laws of *Shemittah*. Every seventh year, all work on the land should cease. Its produce becomes free for the taking for both people and animals.
- 👑 Seven *Shemittah* cycles are followed by a fiftieth year of *Yovel* during which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants are set free, and all ancestral estates in Eretz Yisrael that have been sold revert to their original owners. Laws are also given regarding the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against cheating, interest, and overcharging.
- 👑 Hashem promises that if klal Yisrael will keep His commandments, they will enjoy material prosperity and dwell secure in their homeland. But He also delivers a harsh "rebuke," warning of evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant with Him. Nevertheless, Hashem affirms that, come what may, He will never break His covenant with the Jewish nation.
- 👑 The parshah concludes with laws regarding how to calculate the values of different types of pledges made to Hashem.

P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

וְהָיִיתִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְהִיִּיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים...

"And I will walk among you, and I will be for you Elokim..."

COMMENTING ON THE verse "And I will walk among you, and I will be for you *Elokim*", Rashi writes: "I will travel among you in Gan Eden as one of you and you will not be terrified of Me. One might then think that you will not fear Me. Thus, the verse states, "and I will be for you *Elokim*."

The divine Name "*Elokim*" connotes the fearsome trait of *Gevurah*, severity and harsh-judgment. While the Midrashic interpretation of the beginning of the *pasuk* could imply the breakdown of *yiras Shomayim* in the face of ultimate closeness with Hashem, the *pasuk* ends with a fortification of the need for awe together with the intensity of ahavas Hashem.

The Kozhnutzer Maggid teaches that while the foundation of a Jew's avodas Hashem should be an intense love of Hashem and passionate desire to achieve closeness with our Father in heaven, it is imperative that this love be tempered with awe. It is true that Hashem is our Father, our dearest and closest Friend. But there is also an aspect of our relationship in which Hashem is the King and we are His subjects, an aspect in which we must live in a perpetual state of being overwhelmed by the awesome grandeur of the Infinite Being whose transcendent essence is an eternal mystery.

These two aspects, which respectively inspire love and fear in the heart of a Jew, are the two wings with which our service rises above. If one only serves Hashem with awe and not love, or love and not awe, one's avodas Hashem is compared to a bird with only one wing - unable to rise to the loftiest realms and make the most powerful impact in the spiritual worlds. No matter how mightily we may flap that single wing, we will only go around in circles, never up.

This is why the Jewish nation is descendent from Yaakov

Avinu. Yaakov Avinu represents *Tiferes*, the harmony and synthesis between the respective traits of his father and grandfather, *Chessed* and *Gevurah*. As descendants of Yaakov Avinu's sons, we are charged with relating to Hashem on these two levels by synthesizing our love and fear so that our passionate desire for transcendence can come to expression in a balanced, structured way, while ensuring that the rigidity of this structure does not prevent our *avodah* from bursting with the most intense spiritual energy.

In the words of R' Shlomo Carlebach, "The old forms are very holy, if they are done properly. All forms are garments, but if you have only the garments and no one's underneath them, it's nothing. Imagine that I love a girl very much and instead of seeing her I'm walking around with her dress. It's nothing. But if she is under it, suddenly it's not just the dress anymore. All the forms are just the forms of serving God."

We need lights, and we also need vessels. We need vessels, and we also need lights.

This, explains the Kozhnutzer, is the message of our *pasuk*. "**And I will walk among you**": Hashem wants us to build a relationship with Him through the thoughts, speech, and action involved in Torah study, *tefillah*, and good deeds that are bursting with closeness and familiarity. (On the verse "And do not make for yourself a strange god", the Kotzker once commented: "Let God not be a stranger to you.") But at the same time, "**and I will be for you Elokim**": we must also ensure that our *avodah* is always tempered with the proper awe and fear of the infinite Being we are called upon to serve, filled with respect for the boundaries of avodas Hashem. 🕯

 **The completion of a healthy avodas Hashem represents a synthesis between love and awe, between the rigid forms of avodas Hashem and the light fostered and contained within those holy compartments.**

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

UNDER THE PROPER (highly specific) conditions, a *mechalel Shabbos* is punished with *sekilah*, the most severe of the four methods of execution. The Chernovitzer explains that during the week, we have a specific *avodah* in carrying out the thirty-nine *melachos* both at work and at home. This is because, when performed with the proper intention, these activities can elevate lost sparks of holiness that exist within the materials of those crafts. However, Shabbos is a time when, as a result of our nation's unique *kedusha*, we are invited to Hashem's table. All work is done; we are able to enjoy a taste of the World to come, a time when all rectifications will be complete. Hashem takes great pride in us on Shabbos - bestowing upon us the greatest spiritual pleasures from the most elevated world of *Atzilus*. A Jew who performs work on Shabbos becomes cut off from the great *kedusha* of the Jewish nation as it demonstrates that his life is lived outside the boundaries of our national mission. Just as he does not join us at Hashem's table on Shabbos, his work during the weekday is also devoid of spiritual import - preventing, rather than hastening, the final redemption of which Shabbos is 1/60th. Because the four methods of execution correspond to the four spiritual worlds, this Jew is punished with *sekilah*, the most severe form of death which parallels the extreme pleasure of *Atzilus*, the Shabbos celebration he has sadly chosen to profane. 🕯

This section is adapted from the sefer "Sidduro Shel Shabbos" by R' Chaim of Chernowitz zy" a (1760-1816)



Profiles of Tzaddikim

Biographical sketches of the Chassidic Masters

The Ma'or Vashemesh zy"א

Reb Kalonymous Kalman HaLevi Epstein was born in Galicia in 1753 (5513). He was the son of Reb Aharon HaLevi Epstein, a descendant of Shmuel HaNavi and Dovid HaMelech. Reb Kalonymous Kalman, known in his youth as Kalmish, was one of 10 children. His early years were lived in abject poverty in Neustadt, Poland. When he was five years old, his family moved to Krakow to seek a better life. It was there that he was recognized as an *iluy*. As a child, he would sell bagels out of his parents' home to help support the family. After work, he would sneak into the local Beis Midrash to listen to *shiurim* from various *talmidei chachamim*, including the Chief Rabbi of Krakow.

One day, following one of the *shiurim*, one of the wealthiest Jews in Krakow by the name of Mordechai Gutgold asked young Kalmish in jest to repeat the *shiur* he had just heard. Without hesitation, he did - word for word, not missing a single detail of the immensely complex *pilpul*. Blown away by his brilliance, Gutgold agreed to support Kalmish and fund his yeshiva education, provided that Kalmish's father agreed to the marriage between the young *iluy* and Gutgold's daughter, Malka Raidel, after his Bar Mitzvah.

As a young man, Reb Kalmish was deeply influenced by the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. He soon traveled to Lizhensk to study under the tzaddik - against his father-in-law's wishes but with the support of his wife. Reb Kalmish eventually became the most celebrated of the students of Reb Elimelech, and in 1785 (5545), he was sent back to Krakow to serve as Rebbe to the chassidim there. Although he met with opposition from the *Misnagdim*, they eventually came to respect him, as they recognized his devotion and passion for Yiddishkeit as well as his genius in Torah.

The tzaddik left this world in 1827 (5587). His sefer, *Maor Vashemesh*, by whose title he is commonly referred, was published by his son. It is one of the most fundamental books of Chassidus, offering profound Chassidic insights interwoven with Kabbalistic thoughts. His teachings are studied today by Jews of all backgrounds and denominations. 🕎

Zechuso yagein aleinu! This section is written by R' Akiva Bruck, author of "From Behind the Curtain" (Mosaica Press)



Chassidus 101

Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

FOR SOMETHING TO perpetually exist, *chiyus* is required - a Divine flow of life-force from above which actively sustain it. Contained within everything around us are *nitzotzos*, spiritual sparks of holiness which fill the physical world around us with vitality. The tzaddikim explain that when a person encounters something - whether something he eats or even a utensil or tool which he uses for a given purpose - he is actively tapping into its *chiyus* and the Divine sparks contained within. When we engage with the physical world in an effort to draw closer to Hashem, we succeed in elevating those sparks to their source, bringing the world closer to completion.

While this deep concept is certainly beyond our finite comprehension, there is much practical application to this idea and its application in our *avodas Hashem*.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that all of our experiences in this world is essentially Hashem speaking to us. He explains that when a person has a certain inclination or proclivity towards a specific thing - whether it be a career, a certain type of food, a specific interest in music, etc. - it is merely the soul reconnecting with its unique source. The *chiyus* which actively sustains the things we encounter in this world stem from our *shoresh neshamah*, the very root of who we are.

We often speak of Hashem's constant providence and involvement in all that we experience. The Baal Shem Tov and his students explain that beyond the macro-recognition of Hashem's divine providence as it relates to the "bigger picture" of our lives, it is vital that we understand that the experiences and encounters we face are themselves actively

repairing the world. In other words, beyond the understanding that Hashem perfectly guides every step of our lives, we must recognize that the finer details seemingly under our own control – our interests, desires, hobbies, etc. that we may or may not choose to engage with – are vehicles through which we can bring the world closer to the Final Redemption.

There are essentially two aspects, both of which are equally necessary, that are developed through our understanding of *hashgacha pratit*. On the one hand, we strengthen our *emunah* through reminding ourselves that *ein od milvado* - everything is in Hashem's hands and is ultimately for the best, no matter how impossible it may be for us to understand in the present moment. On the other hand, the practical application meant to be drawn from this recognition of Hashem's *hashgacha* is that constantly, throughout every moment of our lives, we are given the opportunity to play our unique roles in bringing the world closer to its ultimate rectification. Everything we experience is bound with our *shoresh neshama* and the unique mission and role we are each given to bring the world closer to Moshiach.

More than anything, the tzaddikim wanted each of us to recognize our value and the necessary roles we play in Hashem's master plan. The more we can remind ourselves of that ultimate vision of perfection and our ability to utilize the world around us to draw all of physicality closer to Hashem, the more meaningful the seemingly mundane moments of our lives will be. May we merit to experience each day as bursting with a sense of purpose and closeness with Hashem! 🕎

This section is written by R' Akiva Bruck, author of "From Behind the Curtain" (Mosaica Press)

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

RAV BARUCH NEUSTADTER, a close chassid of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech, often traveled to Lizhensk in order to spend Shabbat with his revered Rebbe. One motzei Shabbos, as Rav Baruch was taking his leave of the Rebbe, the tzaddik said: "I want you to know that every mitzvah in the Torah makes us holy. For instance, we are forbidden to eat meat that was cooked together with milk. One who keeps this mitzvah properly becomes pure to such an extent that his organs simply cannot digest this combination. If milk and meat were to enter his throat together, he would not be able to swallow it. He would instantly cough them up." Puzzled by the seeming randomness of these words, Rav Baruch pondered this strange encounter the entire way home.

A few weeks passed. One night, as Rav Baruch studied Torah in the local Beis Midrash, one of his children suddenly burst into the shul. "Tatte, come quickly!" he exclaimed breathlessly, grabbing his father's hand. "A piece of meat got stuck in Mama's throat! She is having a hard time breathing! Hurry!" Rav Baruch raced home where he found his house full of neighbors all trying valiantly to save his wife. But despite all their efforts, nothing seemed to be working! "Reb Elimelech..." thought Rav Baruch desperately. "If only we could alert the Rebbe to daven for my wife..."

Suddenly, his mind lit up. The Rebbe... Lizhensk... It hit him like a ton of bricks: The Rebbe's cryptic message during his last visit! He knew just what to do. Rav Baruch quickly prepared a glass of hot milk. He rushed to the room where his life lay and poured some of the beverage inside. Just as he hoped, the moment the hot milk touched the meat that was stuck in her throat, his wife began to cough and gag. A moment later, the piece of meat was dislodged, and his wife was able to breathe properly again!

May we merit for the mitzvos to purify our bodies to the extent that we simply cannot tolerate acting against the Will of Hashem! 🙏

"THANK YOU HASHEM FOR SHABBOS KODESH!" IS A WEEKLY PROJECT OF @TYHASHEM

"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"
IS WRITTEN BY R' YAAKOV KLEIN,
AUTHOR OF **THE STORY OF OUR LIVES** (FELDHEIM)
AND EDITED BY **ASHIRA HERZFELD**
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