



# THANK YOU HASHEM

## For Shabbos Kodesh!

### Parshas Vayechi

#### HaMeor Shebah

*A Short Burst of Relevance*

ברכת אביך גברה על-ברכת הורי עד-תאות גבעת עולם...

*The blessings of your father surpass the blessings of my ancestors, to the utmost bounds of the eternal hills...*

IN THIS WEEK'S parsha, Yaakov Avinu blesses his sons before his passing. In his glorious *beracha* to his favorite son, Yosef, Yaakov says, "The blessings of your father surpass the blessings of my ancestors, to the utmost bounds (*ta'avas*) of the eternal hills." The Sefas Emes reveals the awesome depth of this beautiful *beracha*. The Gemara teaches that one who takes pleasure in Shabbos merits a boundless inheritance, "*nachlah b'li meitzarim*". This boundless inheritance is associated with Yaakov Avinu, as the verse brought to support this teaching makes mention of "*nachlas Yaakov*". Yaakov Avinu is the man of truth, "*titein emes l'Yaakov*". This means that he is constantly plugged into the "*nekudah hapnimis*", the innermost kernel of holiness within creation which is bound to the Infinite One. This inner point of shining spirituality represents the foundation of truth upon which our *alma d'shikra* is founded; the ultimate goal served by every particle of physicality. This inner point is related to the day of faith, Shabbos, which embodies our belief in a Creator and thus a positive premise for creation. Just like Shabbos exists in the realm of time, an aspect of Shabbos may also be found in space - the inner point of spirituality that abides within everything. Just like Shabbos in time enables one to taste a boundless inheritance of the great expanse expressed as a sense of ultimate freedom and contentment, so does awareness of and connection with the Shabbos in space fill

MY CHILD,  
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH  
I'VE GOT THIS. REMEMBER?

*Love, Hashem*

one with an inner joy founded upon a constant awareness and perception of Hashem's presence and the purpose of existence. This, explains the Sefas Emes, was Yaakov's *beracha* to Yosef. Yaakov is blessing Yosef with "*birchas avicha*", his very own spiritual standing, the ability to discover the inner point of Shabbos, truth, within everything. Granting one a connection to the "*nachlas Yaakov, b'li meitzarim*", this *beracha* is "*ad ta'avas givos olam*", a blessing that represents the deepest yearning of a world stuck within the boundaries of a physical existence. 🤴

#### Parsha Roundup

*A 60-second Review*

- 🤴 Yaakov lives his final 17 years in Egypt. Before his passing, he asks Yosef to take an oath that he will bury him in the Holy Land. He then blesses Yosef's sons, Menashe and Ephraim.
- 🤴 Yaakov blesses his sons, assigning a particular role to each in addition to referencing episodes of the past.
- 🤴 A large funeral procession including Pharaoh's ministers, the leading citizens of Egypt, and the Egyptian army accompanies Yaakov to the Eretz Yisrael, where he is buried in the Me'aras HaMachpelah in Chevron.
- 🤴 Yosef, too, dies in Egypt, at the age of 110. Before his passing, Yosef conveys the testament from which the *b'nei Yisrael* will draw hope and encouragement in the difficult years to come: "Hashem will surely remember you and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov."

## P'nimiyus haParsha

### An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

ואולם אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו...

*Yet his younger brother will be greater than him...*

MIRRORING THE NATURAL world which progresses along a steady cycle of days and nights, summers and winters, and life and death, the human experience is marked by fluid motion of joy and hardship, laughter and tears, failure and progression. It has been noted that on an EKG monitor, the sign of life is a wavy line which rises and falls whereas a flat line signifies death – life is necessarily synonymous with an epic struggle and a tumultuous journey. In the life of a Jew and his struggle to turn the circumstances of his life into a dwelling place for the Master of the world, this process is magnified tenfold. Caught between the loving guidance of the *yetzer tov* and the malevolent seductions of the *yetzer hara*, the Jew is thrust into the fury of a constant struggle. With every victory, the heavens fill with the light of his unimaginable holiness and a spirit of healing, fixing, building, and magnifying comes upon all of creation. With every failure, the world is plunged into mourning and darkness abounds.

Throughout our history, the Jew viewed his avodas Hashem as comprising of his spiritual progressions; a sum total of the mitzvos he performed, the tefillos he prayed, the Torah he studied and practiced. Failures to heed the call of the *yetzer tov* were seen as “stepping off the train” of avodas Hashem, a hindrance to growth, entirely unrelated to any subsequent spiritual elevation barring having served as an obstacle to it.

One of the great revelations which the holy Baal Shem Tov brought to the world is that in truth, counterintuitive as it may seem, failure itself must be recognized as representing an important ingredient to any growth process. It is failure that enables us to learn from our

mistake and solidify our awareness of ultimate truth and ultimate falsehood; it is failure that allows us to express our commitment and resolve to the Master of the world and His holy service by refusing to surrender to the tempting impulse of despair. If responded to in a healthy, proper manner, it is possible to retroactively understand a spiritual failure as having been a “*yeridah l'tzorech aliyah*”, a necessary descent for the purpose of reaching even higher.

In this week's parsha, Yaakov gives blessings to Yosef's two sons, Ephraim and Menashe. Noticing that Yaakov places his right hand on Ephraim, the younger son, Yosef tries to correct him by reminding his father that Menashe is the firstborn. Yaakov responds, saying that although Menashe is the older brother, “*Achiv hakatan yigdal mimenu*”. On a literal level, these words mean “his younger brother will be greater than him,” but the Degel Machaneh Ephraim sees a hidden meaning as well.

The name “*Menashe*” represents spiritual failure – it connotes forgetfulness, disconnection from the ultimate purpose of existence (“*Nashani Elokim*”). “*Ephraim*”, on the other hand, represents spiritual success and fruitfulness (“*piryah v'rivya*”). Here, Yaakov Avinu is telling Yosef that although “*Menashe*” is the firstborn; “*Achiv Hakaton*”, “*Ephraim*”, spiritual success and elevation, “*yigdal mimenu*” – not simply “will be greater than him”, but “receives his greatness from him”! *Ephraim* depends on *Menashe* – failure itself can serve as a “*yeridah l'tzorech aliyah*”, the impetus for the greatest spiritual growth. 🕎



***Ephraim's greatness depends on Menashe – spiritual failures serve the purpose of compelling us to ever greater levels of resolve and commitment to avodas Hashem.***

## Tohameha

### Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

IN ORDER TO further portray the tzaddik who serves Hashem with *anivus* alluded to the parable we have explored the past two weeks, the Chernovitzer presents another *mashal*. There was a king who commanded three of his servants to fix his royal crown. These three servants each approached this task from a different perspective. The first servant, whose lack of understanding regarding the king's greatness caused him to feel little respect for him, considered the task a chore like any other; a job he agreed to do only because he was being paid. The second servant had some understanding of the king's greatness and therefore appreciated the import of the task at hand. He would do this job even if without the prospect of being paid. However, he grew haughty from having been appointed to this important post, thinking, “I am truly worthy of this task.” The third servant, who understood the king's true glory, approached this task with utmost humility. His awareness of the king's grandeur was such that he would consider even cleaning out the royal stable to be the greatest privilege and honor, with or without pay. When appointed to restore the king's crown, he shudders and shakes, thinking, “Who am I to occupy this position of honor, to take the king's crown in my hand? Indeed, I must do so because the king has so commanded. But I shall ensure that I wash my hands beforehand and wear freshly laundered gloves - even then touching only what I absolutely must.”  
*To be continued!* 🕎

*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

#### Reb Pinchas Koritzer zy"א

Reb Pinchas ben Avraham Abba Shapiro was born in Shklov, Russia in 1728 (5489). A descendant of Reb Nosson Shapiro, the famed Megaleh Amukos, the young Pinchas showed exceptional abilities in his studies from an early age. He received a traditional Lithuanian-style education. While still in his youth, Pinchas authored Talmudic dissertations and halachic discourses.

His father, Reb Avraham Abba, who was an opponent to the Chassidic movement and teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, was forced to move his family out of Shklov due to a blood libel, ultimately settling in the city of Miropol, Volhynia. Upon meeting the Baal Shem Tov for the first time, both Reb Avraham Abba and Reb Pinchas were immediately drawn to the tzaddik's court. Illuminated by his revolutionary teachings, heartfelt prayers, and passionate avodas Hashem, both father and son remained close disciples of the Baal Shem Tov until his passing.

It is said that the Baal Shem Tov once remarked, "A soul like that of Reb Pinchas descends into this world only once every 500 years." Before his passing, the Baal Shem Tov asked Reb Pinchas to move to the town of Koritz to continue spreading the light of Chassidus. It was in the city of Koritz that this tzaddik's influence began to spread, drawing simple working Jews and Talmudic scholars alike to seek his advice or to simply witness the incredible piety and purity of his tefillah and Torah study.

In 1790 (5551), Reb Pinchas decided to move to Eretz Yisrael and settle in the city of Tzfat. Tragically, however, he stopped over in the city of Shipitovka along his journey where he fell ill and eventually left this world that same year. Although Reb Pinchas didn't write any *seforim* of his own, his teachings are quoted numerous times in the writings of other tzaddikim. His students compiled and printed many of his teachings under various titles, such as *Pe'er LaYesharim* and *Nofes Tzufim*. After the Holocaust, a manuscript containing a comprehensive compendium of his teachings was discovered in Poland, having miraculously survived the war. It was compiled and published under the title *Imrei Pinchas*. 🤴

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

Matzeivah in the Ohel of Reb Pinchos Koritzer zy"א, Shepetovka



## Chassidus 101

### Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshischa is quoted as saying that each Jew should keep two notes on him at all times, one in each pocket. One note should say, "The world was created for me." The other note should read, "I am but dust and ash." The teachings contained in this idea form one of the foundational pillars of Chassidic thought as well as the basis for understanding our relationship with the Master of the world.

Many of us have been taught from a young age that our connection to Hashem is similar to that of a King to a servant. We are inclined to view Hashem only as an infinite Creator Who is infinitely beyond intellectual comprehension. It is only through the means of Torah and mitzvos that we are given the ability to develop a relationship with Him. Within this perspective, strict observance of Torah and Halacha are seen as a necessary requirement to have any sort of relationship with Hashem. After all, we are finite, imperfect creatures attempting to develop a connection with an infinite God.

While the idea that we are finite beings and developing a relationship to our infinite Creator requires work and unwavering dedication is an important recognition, maintaining this perspective alone can be quite detrimental to a healthy, thriving avodas Hashem.

The Baal Shem Tom and his talmidim wished to impart to each and every Jew that there is a second aspect to our relationship with Hashem as well. While we most certainly refer to Hashem and **Malkeinu**, our King, we also refer to Him as **Avinu**, our Father. Our connection to

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the Master of the world is much deeper, more than simply a master-servant relationship. As finite, imperfect, and flawed as we may be, there is always an aspect to our connection with Hashem which abides irrespective of our behavior. At the end of the day, regardless of our actions, Hashem will always be our Father.

These two lenses through which to view our relationship to Hashem are both infinitely important, and both are necessary to nurture a healthy avodas Hashem. If we only view our connection to Hashem with the first perspective, as finite, flawed beings attempting to develop a connection with an infinite God, then when we stumble or make a mistake, we will be prone to feeling a deep sense of detachment and insignificance in the eyes of Hashem. One the other hand, if we only view our relationship with Hashem as that of finite beings which, regardless of their actions, are always close to Hashem, there is a danger that we may become lax in our performance and adherence to Torah and mitzvos.

The role of our tzaddikim is to help us develop a proper balance between each of these perspectives. "The world was created for me," reflects the latter perspective, whereas "I am but dust and ash," symbolizes our relationship as it manifests in the former perspective. Journeying through the writings of the tzaddikim, we can begin to find a healthy synthesis of these ideas, ultimately enabling us to develop a and balanced relationship with the Master of the world. 🤴

## A Quick Mayseh

*A Story to Warm the Heart*

THE CHASSID ENTERED his Rebbe's inner sanctum, head bowed and note in hand. The holy Kotzker scanned the note, in which he had written, "Please bless me that my sons should study Torah with devotion."

The Rebbe looked up wistfully.

"You say you want a *beracha* for children who are *talmidei chachamim*. But it is you who hold the key to the materialization of this blessing!"

"What does the Rebbe mean?" whispered the chassid.

"The greatest thing a father can do to ensure that his children will be connected to Torah study is to himself study Torah with great commitment and devotion! When a son sees his father learning, he will strive to follow this example. And so should you do."

The Kotzker was silent for a moment before continuing.

"For if not, your sons will come with the same request - that their sons should study with devotion, while they occupy themselves with other matters."

*Our own efforts are often the vessel for the greatest blessing. May we be blessed with homes filled with the sweet sound of Torah study and the indescribable joy of watching our children and grandchildren carrying forward the torch of our ahavas haTorah. 🤴*

## "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"  
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