



# THANK YOU HASHEM

## For Shabbos Kodesh!

### Parshas Vayishlach

#### HaMeor Shebah

*A Short Burst of Relevance*

וַיֵּלֶקֶב נֹסֵעַ סֹכְתוֹ וַיִּבֶן לּוֹ בַּיִת וַלְמִקְנֵהוּ עָשָׂה סֹכֶת עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמֵהֶּם מְקוֹם סֹכוֹת...

*And Yaakov journeyed on to Succos and built a house for himself and made huts for his cattle; that is why the place was called Succos...*

THE HOLY MEI HaShiloach points out a difficulty in this verse. If both the construction of Yaakov's own house as well as the building of huts for his cattle took place in this location, wouldn't it seem more proper for the place to be called "Bayis", after Yaakov's house which is certainly of greater significance than the huts he built for his cattle? The tzaddik answers with the most beautiful idea. Where does the holiness of Am Yisrael come from? The answer is that our holiness has two aspects. The first aspect is an essential spiritual inheritance from the *Avos HaKedoshim* which is undeserved and abiding regardless of our actions. The second is an additional measure of holiness that each individual Jew brings upon his or herself in accordance with his commitment to aligning his thoughts, words, and actions with the Torah's ideal. Yaakov Avinu, too, contained this unconditional holiness from his father and grandfather. This level is referred to by the word "Bayis", a house whose protection is mighty and guaranteed. But Yaakov did not want to settle for this holiness alone. Rather, he constantly sought to acquire holiness of his own. This level is referred to by the word "Succah", a hut whose protection is weak and uncertain. When the Torah tells us that in addition to building himself a house, Yaakov Avinu built *Succos* "I'mikneihu", it is teaching that

ALONG MY JOURNEY  
I HAVE LEARNED  
THAT THE MORE  
THANKFUL I AM,  
THE MORE I HAVE  
TO BE THANKFUL FOR.  
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in addition to the abiding and unconditionally present holiness in his spiritual DNA, Yaakov strove to acquire his own, individualized greatness. It is because the holiness a Jew acquires with his own actions is all the more precious to Hashem that instead of calling the place "Bayis", Yaakov called it "Succos". 🙏

#### Parsha Roundup

*A 60-second Review*

- 👑 Upon meeting, Yaakov and Eisav embrace before parting ways. Yaakov acquires a plot of land near Shechem, whose prince — also called Shechem — abducts and assaults Yaakov's daughter, Dinah. Shimon and Levi avenge the deed by killing all male residents of the city.
- 👑 Rachel dies while giving birth to Binyamin and is buried in a roadside grave. Reuven loses the birthright.
- 👑 Yaakov arrives in Chevron and Yitzchak dies at age 180.
- 👑 A detailed account of Eisav's wives, children, and grandchildren is given, as well as the family histories of the people of Seir and a list of the eight kings who ruled Edom.

## P'nimiyus haParsha

### An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

הַצִּלֵּנִי נָא מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֵשָׂו כִּי־יָרָא אֹנְכִי אֹתוֹ פֶּן־יָבֹוא וְהִכָּנִי אִם־עַל־בְּנִימִים...

*Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav; for I fear, lest he come and strike me down, mothers and children alike...*

IN THE BEGINNING of this week's parsha, Yaakov Avinu wrestles with his brother's ministering angel until daybreak before meeting with Eisav himself. Reb Shlomo Carlebach reveals the inner dimension of this struggle.

Eisav's overarching challenge to Yaakov is that while his avodas Hashem may look good on the surface, it is ultimately standing on a weak foundation and does not represent his deepest desire, the point of truth within. This point is reflected in the episodes of Yaakov's encounter with both Eisav and his ministering angel.

Eisav's angel attacks Yaakov when he is alone; "*Vayevasair Yaakov levado.*" The angel uses this context to imply that Yaakov's avodas Hashem is founded solely upon a host of external circumstances which range from societal expectations to promise of reward in the world to come. Left *alone*, he claims, without any external force, Yaakov doesn't truly want to serve Hashem or live his life in alignment with the divine Will. It is only an external mask, a fraud, a facade.

Chazal teach that the dust from Yaakov's struggle with Eisav's angel reached the *Kisei HaKavod*. While dirt enables a seed to take root and

grow, it is impossible to plant anything in dust. Eisav's angel is telling Yaakov, "Because your avodas Hashem isn't truly connected to your essence, it never has, and never will, bear fruit."

Yaakov's response to this attack, and the response of every Jew throughout history who struggles with the internal voice of the *sar shel Eisav*, is to stand firm and defiant in our knowledge that our face is ever etched on the *Kisei hakavod*. Try as he may to obscure this truth with the dust of his attack, Eisav can never negate this fact – avodas Hashem sits at the very core of our being. Sure, there is a wide expanse between the "facade" of our Jewishness in this world and the shining face of our true holiness etched onto the Kisei HaKavod where we frolic and oftentimes lose ourselves to the notion that, "left alone", we don't truly desire avodas Hashem. But it is our responsibility to constantly cry out to Hashem as the tzaddikim teach Yaakov did: "*Hatzileini miyad achi, miyad Eisav*"; "Hashem, please save me from thinking that, in truth, Eisav is my brother, my friend, and that deep down I wish I could be free from serving You – his kiss is his bite! This is not what I truly desire! Please allow me to dig beyond Eisav's challenge to the "*emmeser emes*", the truth beyond all truth: my commitment to You and Your Will sits at the deepest core of my identity. 🕎



***Eisav tries to convince us that our Avodas Hashem is just a facade. We must respond with firm defiance: Our face etched on the kisei hakavod, we are holy to the core.***

## Profiles of Tzaddikim

### Biographical sketches of the Chassidic Masters

#### Reb Meshulem Zusha of Anipoli zy"ra

The Rebbe Reb Meshulam Zusha of Anipoli was born in Galicia, Southeast Poland in 1718 (5479). Reb Zusha was the younger brother of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and was one of the most beloved of the Chassidic masters. Together with his renowned brother, Reb Zusha joined the court of the Maggid of Mezritch, gleaning all he could from his saintly Rebbe. While all of the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid were great luminaries in their own right, the Chassidim understood that there was a unique piety about Reb Zusha. The Alter Rebbe, Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi, once remarked about Reb Zusha, "His tefillos were uttered with an intensity and awe that is beyond compare."

Reb Zusha's love for each and every Jew was second to none. The chassidim would say that the Baal Shem Tov could witness the sinful behavior of a Jew and love him nonetheless and the Kedushas Levi could witness sinful behavior and find a way to justify it by judging the situation favorably. But Reb Zusha was unable to perceive any negativity in another Jew at all.

Although he lived most of his life in abject poverty and suffered from a protracted illness in his final years, Reb Zusha never complained. On the contrary, throughout every experience, whether apparently good or seemingly bad, Reb Zusha would rejoice in his recognition that everything that happens to us is a blessing from the Master of the world. In fact, Reb Zusha's acceptance of his difficult circumstances was so wholehearted that when fellow students of the Maggid asked him to explain how it was possible for a Jew to bless Hashem over negative news with the same joy as he would bless Hashem after hearing positive news, the tzaddik responded, "I wouldn't know. Nothing bad ever happened to me!"

Although he never wrote any *seforim* of his own, Reb Zusha's teachings and commentaries were compiled from the writings of his disciples and published under the title *Menoras Zahav*.

*Zechuso Yogen Aleinu!*

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

The Ohel of the Rebbe Reb Zusha in Anipoli, Ukraine



## Tohameha

### Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

WHEN A PERSON wants to relay a wondrous account of salvation, he begins by describing the depth of despair that existed before the salvation began to sprout. This enables the listener to understand the extent of the salvation that occurred. Indeed, on Seder Night, we begin telling the story of *yetzias mitzrayim* by recounting the bitterness of our servitude in Mitzrayim and the hopelessness that filled our lives. Once having described the difficulty of our predicament, we tell of how Hashem redeemed us from slavery in the most remarkable manner. We read in the Haggadah that five *Tannaim* sat together Seder Night in B'nei Brak and told the story of *yetzias mitzrayim* all night with such intensity that their students needed to inform them, "*highiya zeman keriyas shema shel shacharis*", dawn had arrived. In an incredible lesson, the Chernovizter teaches that the students weren't simply telling their teachers that it was time to complete the seder and daven Shacharis. Rather, on a deeper level, this statement should be read as one of amazement over the spiritual intensity that permeated the room; the energy had reached that of Shabbos Morning! The students perceived that the spiritual energy of Binah, elevated freedom, was filling the room and expressed their wonder over the fact that the *Tannaim* had been able to tap into the energy of Shabbos Kodesh even during the week. Indeed, the words they used, "*Keriyas shema shel shacharis*" hints to their intention, as the words "*Shema shel shacharis*" are numerically equivalent to "Tefillas Yom Shabbos." 🕯

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

## Chassidus 101

### Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

WHILE MANY UNDERSTAND *emunah* to be a quality devoid of reason, a unique attribute empty of logic or finite comprehension, the truth is that *emunah* doesn't evade logic - it transcends it. It is specifically through developing a greater understanding of ourselves and our relationship with Hashem which strengthens our *emunah*, developing it like a muscle every day of our lives.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explains that *atzvus*, sadness, is a terrible quality. The tzaddik sees one's inability to daven properly, to learn properly, to serve Hashem properly as stemming from *atzvus*. He explains that this *middah* stems from a lack of *emunah*; one's lack of recognition that the Master of the world is constantly watching over him and listening to all of his *tefillos*. For if one were to understand this and truly feel it in his bones, he would be able to overcome whatever difficult circumstance or situation he is placed in.

One of the most fundamental concepts in the writings of the tzaddikim is the concept of *bittul*, self-negation, the ability to totally forego our own personal needs, wants, or desires for Hashem. On a practical level, this ability generally manifests as humility. This is why Moshe Rabbeinu is described as being more humble than any man who ever lived. While there were many incredible qualities the Torah could have used to express the greatness of Moshe Rabbeinu, it specifically mentions his humility because it is this *middah* which transcends all others.

In truth, it is *ga'ava*, haughtiness, that is our greatest obstacle in serving Hashem. If we think about it, many of our unique

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internal struggles stem from this terrible *middah*. Even sadness stems from haughtiness. The tzaddikim teach us that *atzvus* is generally associated with one's disappointment regarding how a particular circumstance or situation turned out. We expect things to go a certain way, we have a vision of how things should be, and when nothing seems to be falling into place, *atzvus* kicks in. This applies in all areas of life; in our relationships with others, in our understanding of ourselves, and in our relationship with Hashem.

If we can train ourselves to recognize and remember that we are not in control, and that the Master of the world is constantly guiding us and orchestrating every step of our lives in the most beautiful way, these difficult experiences would be completely transformed. Rather than feeling *atzvus*, a deep disappointment regarding how things are turning out, we will be able to wholeheartedly rejoice in the knowledge that Hashem is in control. This form of *bittul* to Hashem, the ability to completely remove all doubts and uncertainties about a given circumstance is true *emunah*.

In addition to representing one of the most important qualities in serving Hashem, *emunah* it is also the key to living a more meaningful life. Whether we are working on rectifying a certain *middah* within ourselves, overcoming a difficult situation, or mending a broken relationship with another, every step we take in strengthening our *emunah* will propel us ever higher in our avodas Hashem and make our experience in this world that much more sweet and meaningful. 🕯

## A Quick Mayseh

*A Story to Warm the Heart*

Young Yechiel Michel, grandson of Rebbe Boruch of Mezhibozh, was playing hide-and-seek with his friends in the woods behind the house. When it was time to hide, he found a perfect hiding spot behind an old oak tree and waited for his friends to search for him. He waited and waited, but no one came. After waiting for a very long time, he came out of his hiding place, but his friends were nowhere to be seen. Immediately, Yechiel realized that his friends had not been searching for him at all. Distraught, the boy broke into tears and ran to the study of his illustrious grandfather and told him what had happened.

The tzaddik gathered the boy into his arms and listened to Yechiel Michel's tale of woe, wiping away his tears. When the boy had calmed down and went back outside to play, Reb Boruch's gabbai noticed that the tzaddik was weeping softly.

"Rebbe!" cried the gabbai, concerned. "What is it? What's wrong?"

The tzaddik looked up, his eyes red with tears. "Didn't you hear what the boy said? 'I hid so they would find me, but they weren't even searching.' These weren't simply the words of a child. No, these are the words of our Father in heaven: "I hid so they would find me, but they aren't even searching."

*Hashem hides Himself from our world and our individual awareness not to cast us away and distance Himself from us. On the contrary! Hashem hides only so that we will be moved to search Him out from within every particle of physicality and every facet of the human condition. 🤴*

## "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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