



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Shoftim

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך:

You shall be wholesome with Hashem your God.

IN PARSHAS SHOFTIM we find the famous words, "*Tamim tihyeh im Hashem Elokecha*". These words are literally translated as, "You shall be wholesome with Hashem your God". Rashi interprets this *pasuk* as a process of cause and effect. "*Tamim tihyeh*": If a person will be wholesome, refraining from seeking out predictions through fortunetellers and understanding that Hashem is ultimately in control of all constellations and other influential forces, then "*im Hashem Elokecha*": one will merit closeness with Hashem. But the holy tzaddikim (*Kedushas Levi*, *Meor Einayim*, and others) teach that the cause and effect process here works in reverse as well. The word "*tamim*", while translated as simple, straightforward, and wholesome, can also mean complete. The tzaddikim teach that a Jew whose life is set against the backdrop of a loving relationship with Hashem always feels content.

Confident that his portion in life has been personally designed and lovingly wrapped for him by the Infinite One, he will be able to be "*sameach b'chelko*", perpetually happy with his circumstances. When one lives with true bitachon and casts his lot unto Hashem, even though he may have little in terms of quantity, he is able to proclaim - like Yaakov Avinu - "*Yeish li kol!*", "I have everything! There is nothing I lack!" Founded upon the gratitude stemming from a constant awareness that everything he has is gifted to him by our Father in heaven, this Jew's experience is saturated by a powerful infusion of other-worldly quality. The tzaddikim teach that this is the deeper meaning of our verse. In addition to telling us that one who is wholesome will enjoy a relationship with Hashem, the Torah is promising that, "*Tamim tihyeh*": You will always feel complete, and perfectly content, "*im Hashem Elokechah*": if you forge a deep and trusting relationship with Hashem and live in constant awareness of His presence. 🤴

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 🤴 Moshe instructs the nation to appoint judges and law enforcement officers in every city. Justice is to be pursued without corruption or favoritism. A minimum of two credible witnesses is required for conviction and punishment.
- 🤴 In every generation there will be those entrusted with the task of interpreting and applying the laws of the Torah. "According to the law that they will teach you, and the judgment they will instruct you, you shall do; you shall not turn away from the thing that they say to you, to the right nor to the left."
- 🤴 Our parsha also includes prohibitions against idolatry and sorcery; laws governing the appointment and behavior of a king; and guidelines for the creation of "cities of refuge" for the inadvertent murderer. Also presented are many of the rules of war: the rules of those exempt from battle, the requirement to offer terms of peace before attacking a city, and the prohibition against the destruction of something of value.
- 🤴 Shoftim concludes with the halachos of the eglah arufah - a special procedure followed when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body found in a field.

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

AMONG HIS MANY other exemplary traits, the holy Skulener Rebbe zy" a was well known for his loving devotion to hundreds of orphaned Jewish children before, during, and after WWII. He personally rescued these orphans from the Nazi violence and Communist oppression, and raised them in his own home with tender care.

One freezing winter night, the Rebbe noticed that one of the orphans in his care was shivering in his sleep. He tiptoed into the room, removed the blanket from his son, and covered the shivering boy.

After a while, his son woke up and began crying. "Tatteh, I'm so cold!"

The Rebbe comforted his son and gently explained the great merit he would receive for relinquishing his blanket to warm the freezing orphan. The words of comfort helped his son to calm himself, and he fell back asleep. After only a few minutes, the boy awoke once more from the bitter cold and cried out once more: "Tatteh, I'm so cold!"

The Rebbe again tiptoed into the room and over to his son's bed. He whispered in his ear. "I know you are suffering from the cold, my son. I know, I know. Believe me, I am suffering as well. But between the two of you, who is better off? Surely it is you. True, you may not have a blanket at the moment, and that is certainly frustrating. But you do have a father to cry out to. The poor orphan boy does not have even that."

Throughout life, we may experience difficulties and the bitter taste of lack. But it is important to remember that no matter what we may be going through, we always have the option of crying out to our Father in heaven. 🤴

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

LAST WEEK, WE discussed the intention one should have during the weekday recitation of the words, “*Shiru la'Shem shir chadash tehilaso b'kahal chassidim*”. The Chernovitzer rav now embarks on a lengthy introduction to the intention of these words on Shabbos kodesh. Chazal tell us that when one keeps Shabbos properly, all of his sins are forgiven. The tzaddik poses a two-sided question about the mechanism at work in this teaching: If the person did not do *teshuvah*, how is the sin removed? We know that Hashem doesn't accept mitzvos as a “bribe” to remove sins! And if the person did do *teshuvah*, why is his atonement credited to Shabbos - wouldn't his *teshuvah* have worked during the week as well? Additionally, what is the implication of Chazal's presentation of the proof-text, “*Kol shomer Shabbos meichallelo*” - all those who guard Shabbos from profaning it, “*al tikrei 'meichallelo' elah 'machal lo*” - read it not, 'from profaning it' but rather, 'they forgive him'”? Is this expression “*al tikrei*” to be taken literally, that we can read the word as “from profaning it” only after understanding the concept that keeping Shabbos can atone for a person's sins? The Chernovitzer prefaces his answer to these questions with a teaching from the *Chovos Halevavos*. The *Chovos Halevavos* teaches that although there are times that a person's sins are too great for him to rectify on his own, when he does *teshuvah* to the best of his abilities, Hashem Himself completes the process and wipes away whatever is left of the residual impurity. When Hashem sees that a Jew is trying his best to improve and to untether himself from a sinful past, all the negative angels created by his misdeeds are dissolved and transformed into holy forces. As we have learned, Shabbos - whose letters spell “*tasheiv*”, return - is associated with *Teshuvah*. The tzaddik writes that our preparations for Shabbos represent an expression of our deep desire to return to Hashem, to shake off the dust and arise from the mundane workweek to the elevated holiness of Shabbos kodesh. When Hashem sees our earnest preparation and sincere desire for closeness with Him, He banishes the negative forces that linger from our actions and completes the process of our purification so we can properly access the holiness of Shabbos kodesh. To be continued! 🕎

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

ON MOTZEI SHABBOS, we make a *beracha* on *besamim* during *havdalah*. The Rashbam (to *Pesachim* 102b) tells us that smelling *besamim* helps to console us after having lost the *neshama yeseira* upon the exit of Shabbos kodesh. Minhag Ashkenazim is to make *Boreh Minei Besamim*, the general *Beracha* for nice smells, regardless of what is being used for *besamim*. Still, one should ideally use a *besamim* spice whose proper *berachah* is indeed “*minei besamim*”, such as cloves. (*Mishna Berurah* 297:1) Minhag Sephardim is to make the appropriate *beracha* for whatever *besamim* is used. The *Mechaber* mentions a Sephardic practice to use *hadassim* when possible. (O.C. 297:4) One who does not have access to *besamim* does not need to go out of his way and may recite *havdalah* without them. (O.C. 297:1) If someone made *havdalah* without spices and gets spices later on Motzei Shabbos (*Mechaber* - O.C. 299:5 - rules that the mitzvah of *besamim* is only on Motzei Shabbos) he can recite the *beracha* of *besamim* on them at that point until *alos hashachar*. (*Eshel Avraham*)

Last week, we explored the idea of the all-inclusive “*devar Hashem*”, the source of all healing which can be tapped through elevated prayer and faith to infuse our food and drink with healing powers. We learned from Reb Nosson that smell, as the sustenance of the soul, is an aspect of *devar Hashem* and thus requires no *beracha acharonah*.

Reb Nosson goes on to explain that Shabbos is the *mekor haberacha*, an aspect of the spiritual source - *devar Hashem*. This is why when a person is ill on Shabbos, we say, “*Shabbos hi m'lizok, urefuah krovah lavo*”, which literally translates as, “It is Shabbos and crying out for personal requests in prayer is prohibited, but

may healing arrive soon.” Based on the idea that Shabbos is an embodiment of the lofty place of *devar Hashem*, the source of all blessing and healing, these words may also be read in the following manner: “***Shabbos hi m'lizok***”: It is Shabbos, and there is therefore no need to cry out with a personal request in prayer, for “***urefuah krovah lavo***”: connected to the source from which all healing derives, Shabbos is sure to remedy the situation.

The tzaddik writes that it is by virtue of this characteristic that the light of Moshiach - who embodies tefillah (the letters of the word “*Moshiach*” also spell “*Mei'siach*”, one who speaks words of prayer) begins to shine on Motzei Shabbos, filling the week with a redemptive energy. The concept of Moshiach is also related to that of smell, *reyach*, as Chazal tell us that Moshiach will be “*morach va'dain*”, able to resolve disputes by smelling out the truth. (See also Likutei Moharan 2 where the relationship between Moshiach, smell, and tefillah is discussed in great depth.) This, says Reb Nosson, is a deeper reason for why we make a *beracha* on *besamim* upon the departure of Shabbos. Smelling *besamim* during *havdalah* helps to activate the spirit of Moshiach-prayer fostered by Shabbos, the *mekor haberacha*. Additionally, as we move into the week and away from the *devar Hashem* embodied in Shabbos and the closeness with our Creator embodied by this glorious day, making a *beracha* on the *besamim* - a pleasure associated with the soul - kicks off the week with a reminder that making *berachos* consciously and with great feeling on everything we eat, drink, and smell throughout the week similarly binds us to this elevated place of awareness and fills the small pleasures of the human experience with the spirit of Moshiach. 🕎