



# THANK YOU HASHEM

## For Shabbos Kodesh!

### Parshas Beshalach

#### HaMeor Shebah

*A Short Burst of Relevance*

וְחַמְשֵׁים עָלָיו בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם...

*“And the b’nei Yisrael left Mitzrayim armed with weapons...”*

THE HOLY SEFAS Emes wonders about the association made between am Yisrael and weaponry. We know that the primary patriarch of the Jewish nation, Yaakov Avinu, is associated with the voice - *“hakol kol Yaakov”* - while it is Eisav who is associated with the hands; battle and combat. Indeed, Eisav was told, *“al charbecha tichyeh,”* “You shall live by your sword.” Why, then, did the Jewish nation, whose essence is so far removed from the concept of the weaponry traditionally associated with Eisav, leave Mitzrayim armed? The tzaddik explains that the negative traits unique to each of the 70 nations contains a parallel on the side of holiness - the proper expression of that ultimately holy trait. One of the hidden meanings of the many exiles our holy nation has experienced throughout our glorious history is for the sake of rectifying all of these traits. Although we remain “a nation apart” and never allow our staunch convictions to become negatively impacted by the nations of the world, each exile affords us the ability to incorporate the holy parallel of that nation’s negative trait into our avodas Hashem, redeeming these lost sparks of *kedusha* and strengthening our national soul. Having experienced the merciless violence and cruelty of Egypt, the Jewish nation left that place with a new acquisition - the sword of holiness, the parallel in holiness of being armed with weapons. Indeed, it was this new

SHABBOS IS NOT JUST  
A DAY OF THE WEEK,  
IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD!  
**GOOD SHABBOS.**

capacity that enabled them to surmount the next major obstacle they would face, the attack of Amalek, whom the Torah tells us Yehoshua battled *“I’fi charev”*, using a sword. Although it may sometimes feel like aimless, endless wandering, our experience of *galus* is intricately planned by the Master of the world for the purpose of bringing about the rectification of the world and our national completion. 👑

#### Parsha Roundup

*A 60-second Review*

- 👑 Pharaoh chases after the Jewish nation to force their return, and the Jews find themselves trapped between Pharaoh’s armies and the impassible Yam Suf. As per Hashem’s guidance, Moshe raises his staff over the water and the sea splits to allow the Jews through and after crashes down upon the Egyptians.
- 👑 Moshe and the *b’nei Yisrael* sing a song of praise and gratitude to Hashem.
- 👑 The Jewish nation suffers from thirst and hunger in the desert and complain to Moshe and Ahron. Hashem sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and water flows from a rock after Moshe strikes it. Hashem sends *manna* from the heavens each morning, and quails appear in the camp each evening.
- 👑 The *B’nei Yisrael* are told to gather a double portion of *manna* on Friday, as none will descend on Shabbos. Ahron saves a small quantity of this substance in a jar as a testimony for future generations.
- 👑 The Jews are attacked by the Amaleki’im in Rephidim. The enemy is defeated by way of Moshe’s prayers and an army led by Yehoshua.

## P'nimiyus haParsha

### An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

הֲיֵשׁ ה' בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ אִם-אֵין...?

*"Is Hashem among us, or not?..."*

EVERYONE IS LOOKING for a connection to our Father in heaven, a portal to a world beyond where the presence of Hashem is shining with brilliant clarity. We want to transform our lives into a chariot for the divine presence, to allow the light of the Torah's "hora'ah", direction, to elevate every aspect of our lives and allow us to taste the true sweetness of a God-conscious existence. But we often have a difficult time finding the path. We don't have a grasp on the proper *sefer*-order of what comes first and what comes second. We spend much time building grand structures in a proverbial swamp, structures whose shaky foundations cannot support their own weight. What is the first step in building a true relationship with the Master of the world? What is the absolute prerequisite which enables a Jew to begin climbing the mountain of avodas Hashem and without which everything else remains blemished? The holy Tzemach Tzaddik of Vizhnitz sees the golden key hinted at in a verse from our parsha.

Immediately preceding Amalek's brazen attack, the fledgling Jewish nation expressed doubt over whether Hashem's presence was found among them. The words they used were, "*Hayeish Hashem b'kirbeinu, im ayin*" – Is Hashem among us or not? The tzaddik sees a deeper meaning in these words.

The Gemara in Sotah makes a few very strong statements about the scourge of arrogance. Perhaps the most well known is their paraphrase of Hashem's perspective on the egoist: "He and I cannot occupy the same space." When a person sees life through the lenses of their own gratification and concern only for matters pertaining to himself alone, he shuts Hashem out of his life. "God is there wherever one lets Him in", taught the Kotzker. But any such cracks in the iron barrier that separates the egoist's world from

the spiritual realm are stuffed up by the arrogant obsession with personal gain and dismissal of matters of spirituality and the soul. By placing exclusive import on his personal feelings, tendencies, and opinion alone, such a person shuts Hashem out of his life. Any space it would be possible for Hashem to dwell is already occupied by his own delusions of grandeur and insatiable appetite for this-worldly prestige.

This, then, says the Tzemach Tzaddik, is the fundamental foundation of avodas Hashem, the steady platform upon which everything else is built: *Bittul*, humility – "*ayin*". When a person makes himself small, recognizing his limits and utter reliance upon Hashem who gifts him with life each minute for the purpose of the mission we are collectively sent here to accomplish, he makes room for the Infinite One to fill his life and transform the darkness of the human experience into a marvelous journey of wonder and passion. Such a person will find it possible to stay within the boundaries of our holy Torah even when they seem at odds with his personal interests. He will taste the sweetness of casting his bundle – understood as being too heavy for him to carry alone – on our loving Father in heaven.

The Vizhnitzer tzaddik teaches that this is the message of our verse: "*Hayeish Hashem b'kirbeinu*": The affirmative certainty that Hashem fills a Jew's life is dependent upon "*im ayin*": whether he has attained the trait of "*ayin*", humility, getting himself out of the way to allow Hashem's light to illuminate the world through his daily thoughts, words, and actions of holiness. 🕎



*The foundation of avodas Hashem is humility. "Hayeish Hashem b'kirbeinu" – G-d dwells within a person. "Im ayin" – when one nullifies his ego before the Infinite One.*

## Tohameha

### Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

THE EXPERIENCE OF a Jew who serves Hashem in the way of the third servant described in the Chernovitzer's *meshal* is alluded to in a pasuk in Devarim: "*Utzedakkah tihyeh lanu ki nishmor es kol hamitzvah hazos lifnei Hashem Elokeinu...*" - "It will be our merit to guard the entire commandment before Hashem our G-d..." This pasuk highlights the proper approach to serving Hashem, conveying the earth-shattering realization that it is not an obligation to live as a committed Jew, but an undeserved opportunity. In addition to greatly impacting the way we think about the Torah and its mitzvos, living with this perspective completely transforms the manner in which we perform these shining actions of intimacy. When we view the mitzvos not as obligatory chores or favors we begrudgingly do for Hashem but as undeserved opportunities, in the way of "*Utzedakkah tihyeh lanu,*" we will naturally enter into the performance of the mitzvos with a sense of awe, reverence, joy, gratitude, and love. How can we attain this perspective? This perspective may be attained by internalizing the end of the *pasuk*, "*lifnei Hashem Elokeinu,*" realizing that our mitzvos reach the highest levels and are the subject of the infinite concern of our loving Father in heaven, who gifted us, in the Torah, which 613 ways to grow closer to Him. *Ashreinu!* 🕎

*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 Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov zy"za

Reb Levi Yitzchak, often referred to lovingly as the Holy Berditchover, is one of the legendary pillars of Chassidus. He was born in Hoshakov, Galicia in 1740 (5500) to Reb Meir and Sarah-Sasha Ruskov. From an early age Levi Yitzchak was recognized as an *illuy*, quickly developing a mastery over the concepts he studied. His mentor and Rebbe, Reb Shmuel Shmelke of Nikholsburg, suggested that he travel to Mezritch to delve into the teachings of Chassidus under the guidance of the Great Maggid. Reb Levi Yitzchak soon became one of the closest disciples of the Maggid, showing a unique propensity towards the *derech* of the Baal Shem Tov -specifically in his ability to connect to simple, unlearned Jews.

After leaving Mezritch, he took positions as the Rav in numerous towns, ultimately settling in Berditchov, where he remained for the rest of his life, developing the humble town into a flourishing center of Chassidus. He left this world in the year 1810 (5570).

While it is no question that the tzaddik's intellectual abilities and understanding of all areas of Torah were second to none, it was his all-consuming love for Hashem and the Jewish People that best characterizes Reb Levi Yitzchak's place in history. So overwhelming was his love for his fellow Jews that he became known as *Sanigoran shel Yisrael*, the defender of the Jewish People. There are numerous stories which records Reb Levi Yitzchak's "arguing" with Hashem, challenging the harsh conditions facing the Jewish nation, both physical and spiritual. He would constantly cry out to Hashem and plead with Him to end the exile and usher in the coming of Moshiach.

His monumental work, *Kedushas Levi*, is regarded as one of the most fundamental of all Chassidic texts, offering soul-stirring teachings for *talmidei chachamim* and simple Jews alike. To this day, the holy Berditchover remains a beacon of hope for all Jews, a constant reminder of our eternal holiness and unbreakable bond with the Master of the world. 🕎

*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

WHILE ON AN external level, the idea of *galus* seems to be related to the concept of punishment, or to atone for our sins as a collective people, the tzaddikim teach us that in truth, the implication of *galus* extends beyond these ideas. In fact, having been born into a physical world in which Hashem's presence is not readily perceivable, the goal of man's existence is often best reflected through the lens of *galus* and our understanding of what exile is truly about.

On a basic level it is true that exile is intended to serve as a certain level of rectification for our shortcomings. However, on a deeper level, the darkness of exile offers us the ability to bring about an even greater revelation of Hashem in our lives and the world around us. Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin writes that the experience of *galus* is meant to show us that, in truth, we share nothing essential with the nations of the world. Each nation to which B'nei Yisrael have been exiled represents a certain negative quality. It can be mistakenly understood that because of the similarities we developed with a given nation, we were exiled under their rule as a punishment. Reb Tzadok teaches, however, that the opposite is true.

The experience of *galus* shows us that in essence, the Jewish People don't have any real connection with the nations of the world or the negative qualities which they reflect. At our core, we forever remain pure. Instead, it is recognizing the all-expansiveness of Hashem's

Presence and developing a clearer understanding of His relationship with the world that warrants national exile as well as difficulties and struggles we each face on a personal level (*Resisei Lailah*, page 62).

Chazal teach us that the strength which the nations of the world develop over us is rooted in their complaint to Hashem that we are involved in the same negative qualities as they are (*Avodah Zarah*, 2b). In attempting to show that we aren't really any different and that our similarities run deeper than what's on the surface, the nations of the world wish to use our shortcomings as an excuse for the negative actions they have been involved in. Yet, it is exile itself, the seeming punishment for this very idea, which shows us that in truth, we were never essentially connected to whatever negative aspects they accuse us of. No matter how steeped in negativity it seems we have been throughout different periods of history and our many exiles among the nations, the Jewish People are given strength to overcome those times through the recognition of our eternal holiness and unwavering dedication to the Master of the world.

While journeying through this final exile, the tzaddikim wished to give us the proper perspective to prepare us for redemption. The coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption will reveal that regardless of the difficulties we currently face, the shortcomings we seemingly have, or the obstacles in our way, the Jewish People remain forever pure. 🕎

*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 ELIYAHU YOSEF of Drivin was one of the elder disciples of the Mittler Rebbe of Chabad, and, after his passing in 1827, one of the closest chassidim of the Tzamaz Tzedek. This chassid was a tremendous talmid chacham and posek. After serving as the rav of Drivin, he became the chief rabbi of Polotzk, which was then a major Jewish settlement.

In the later years Rav Eliyahu Yosef became dangerously ill, and his doctors despaired of saving his life. With his background in Halacha, the chassid suddenly remembered that his exact disease is the subject of a dispute recorded in Shulchan Aruch! The Beis Yosef rules that if an animal were to contract this disease, it is still suitable for shechita because the disease is non-fatal, while the Ramah rules that even after kosher slaughtering the animal is treif and must be discarded, because the disease is, in fact, fatal.

Suddenly, Rav Eliyahu Yosef knew what he needed to do. "I will leave Europe which is under the halachic authority of the Ramah and settle in Eretz Yisrael, which is under the halachic authority of the Beis Yosef! Then, my case will be settled in accordance with his view!"

After receiving the Tzamaz Tzedek's blessing, Rav Eliyahu Yosef set out at once for the shores of Eretz Yisrael and settled in Jerusalem in 1847.

After eighteen years (*gematriya "Chai"*) of extended life in Jerusalem, Rav Eliyahu Yosef of Drivin passed away in 1865, exactly three months after his beloved Rebbe.

*Halacha defines the reality. In fact, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov writes that it is important to try and obtain blessings from a posek, because the beracha of a posek isn't merely a blessing, it is a p'sak, a halachic ruling, which has the power to alter the reality of a situation. 🙏*

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"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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