



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Shemos

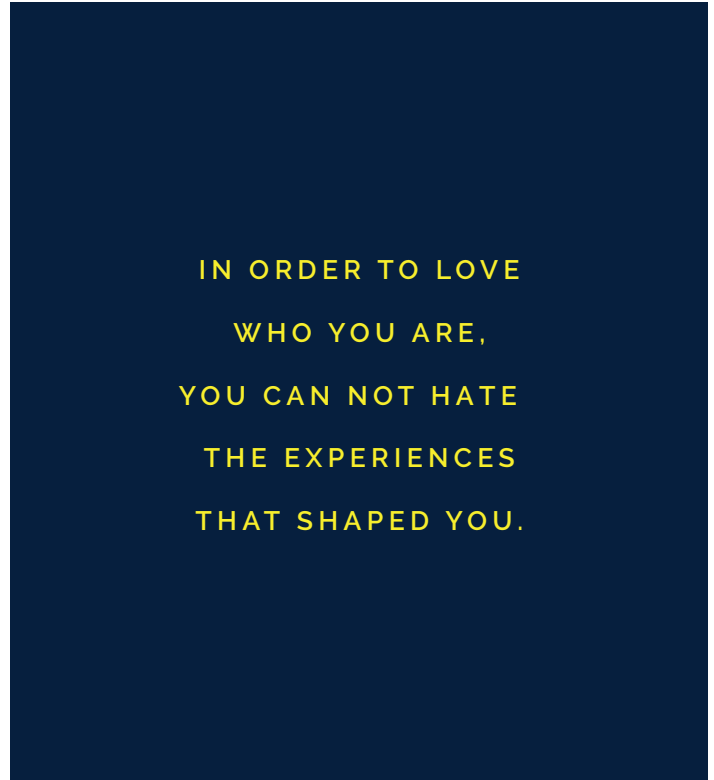
HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

ויאמר אל-ים אל-מִשֶׁה אֶשֶׁר אֶ-הּ...

And G-d said to Moshe, "Ekyeh Asher Ekyeh"...

THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS made the halachic requirement of recognizing Hashem in all one's ways a focal point of their spiritual path. They stressed that, if guided by the proper intention, even the most mundane areas of the human experience could become vessels for the divine presence. No matter how far removed from the spiritual realm an action may appear to be, if performed in the proper manner, it could reveal Hashem's light to a degree even the most elevated angels could never match. The underlying factor necessary to affect this transformation is an eye for the *tachlis*, the ultimate purpose of creation. A Jew lives life in a way that is deep. He sees this world not as an end unto itself, but as a means for a greater purpose – to create a dwelling place for the Divine by aligning his life with the ways of the Torah. Before taking any action, a Jew must think, "Will this bring me closer to Hashem, or further away?" He is constantly focused on the effects of his actions; not only in this world, but in all of the spiritual realms above. The holy Berditchover teaches that this was Hashem's message to the Jewish nation on the threshold of redemption: The way to live a life of true inner freedom which is founded upon a sense of meaning and purpose is to maintain a future-oriented focus in all aspects of life. "Ekyeh Asher Ekyeh"; every action should be seen as a means, a link in the grand chain that culminates in the greatest possible end. If you are busy at the office trying to make a living,



"Ekyeh", let your intention be to put food on the table, "Asher Ekyeh", so that you should be able to have the strength to serve Hashem. When we live with this expanded consciousness, we will be able to taste the sweetness of redemption in all of our ways. 🤖

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 👑 Klal Yisrael multiply in Egypt. Pharaoh enslaves them and orders Shifrah and Puah to kill all Jewish male babies at birth. They do not comply, and he commands his people to cast the babies into the Nile.
- 👑 A child born to Yocheved and Amram is placed in a basket on the river, while his sister, Miriam, watches from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moshe.
- 👑 Moshe sees an Egyptian beating a Jew and kills him. When the deed is revealed, Moshe is forced to flee to Midyan where he rescues Yisro's daughters, marries one of them (Tzipporah), and becomes a shepherd of his father-in-law's flocks.
- 👑 Hashem appears to Moshe in a burning bush and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand that he let the Jews go. Ahron is appointed to serve as his spokesman. Moshe and Ahron assemble the elders of am Yisrael to tell them that the time of their redemption has come. The people believe; but Pharaoh refuses to let them go. When Pharaoh intensifies the suffering of the Jewish nation, Moshe expresses his bewilderment and pain to Hashem.

P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

...אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ...

These are the names of the sons of Yisrael who came to Mitzrayim with Yaakov, each coming with his household...

WHERE WOULD WE be without the tzaddikim? How could we find the strength to hold fast to Hashem and His Torah in the midst of a spiritual storm the likes of which the world has never seen if not for the angelic souls Hashem sent to grant us the hope, guidance, wisdom, and encouragement necessary to make it to the finish line? Commenting on the verse, “*Yemin Hashem peshutah l'kabel shavim*”, “Hashem’s right hand is outstretched to receive penitent sinners,” the Degel Machaneh Ephraim explains that this hand refers to the souls of the tzaddikim Hashem gifts His people in a bid to bring them back to Him. The tzaddikim and their life-giving teachings represent Hashem’s love letter to each and every member of the Jewish nation, an open door through which we are able to find our way back into His embrace.

But what was it about certain tzaddikim that made their wisdom and advice so much more useful to the common man than the teachings of their contemporaries? Why are the teachings of some tzaddikim more impactful than others?

The holy Noam Elimelech writes that Hashem orchestrates for certain tzaddikim to experience spiritual difficulties which are truly distant from their exalted levels in order to enable them to understand the struggles of the common man. Even though they have personally surpassed the lowliness associated with these challenges, the tzaddik is subjected to this experience in order to make him and his teachings relatable to the masses.

This idea is hinted to in the opening words of our parsha. “**V'eileh shemos b'nei Yisrael**”: This refers to the tzaddik whose spiritual essence - referred to as a “name” (for indeed, the Noam Elimelech writes, when one wishes to wake his friend, whispering his name is often more effective than shaking him, as a name is bound up with one’s soul) - is *Yisrael*, a lofty spiritual level. “**Haba'im mitzrayma**”: The reason such an elevated tzaddik personally experienced - on his level - an aspect of the lowliness and impurity of Egypt, despite his distance from this experience, is, “**eis Yaakov**”: for the purpose of being able to understand and relate to those who are on a lower spiritual plane. “**Ish ubeiso**”: So that ultimately, when the tzaddik (“*ish*”) reconnects with his spiritual source (“*beiso*”), this will impact the souls of the common people, and “**bau**”: they will be able to rise together into Hashem’s embrace.

The wisdom and encouragement of a tzaddik like Rebbe Nachman of Breslov is so incredibly relevant and impactful because one can sense that he deeply understood the challenges of doubt, failure, sadness, and despair that he was addressing. It was in order so that he should be able to understand the final generation before the coming of Moshiach that Hashem caused him to experience - on his level - the difficulties we face and the darkness we must battle. What an incredible expression of kindness and care! What a gift we have been given! *Thank you Hashem for the tzaddikim!* 🙏



The tzaddik experiences spiritual challenges far below his true level in order to enable him to understand the struggles of the common man and to make his teachings relatable to all.

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

CONTINUING THE MASHAL of three servants of the king who are appointed to fix the crown, the third servant - who was completely overwhelmed with awe over this incredibly weighty task - has finished his work. When the king comes to inspect his labor, he stands trembling violently. “Why are you trembling?” asks the king. “You have done very impressive work!” Shyly, the servant quietly responds, “How could I not tremble, when I wonder how I can ever repay the king for the great honor he has bestowed upon me in using me for such an important service! If the king had commanded me to do something else, my joy over being able to do his bidding would have been so great - all the more so when the task is so exalted and important! There is nothing with which to repay the king for this, except perhaps my very soul. But I know that even this would be insufficient, for you who are king over the entire land have given of your honor to a lowly person like myself. This is why I stand trembling, for I have nothing with which to repay the king for this great honor!” The Chernovitzer concludes his parable: The first servant who fulfilled the task only because of the pay simply receives his payment. The second servant is better off, for at least he recognizes the king’s honor, but his arrogance repulses the king and no deeper relationship develops. But when the king sees the reaction of the third servant and understands how enthralled he is with the crown and the honor of the task with which he had been entrusted, the king feels a surge of everlasting love toward this person and cherishes his presence very greatly, Next week, we will delve into the *nimshal, b'ezras Hashem. Good Shabbos!* 🙏

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 Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov zy"ra

Reb Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov was born in Galicia in the year 1721 (5482). Much like many of the students of the Baal Shem Tov, he was originally opposed to the movement of Chassidus. His father, Reb Yitzchak of Drohobych, stood in ardent opposition to the movement as well, although he, too, eventually became a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov.

Following the Baal Shem Tov's passing, Reb Yechiel Michel naturally joined the court of the Maggid of Mezritch. Known for his incredible lectures and mastery over homiletical interpretations of the Torah, Reb Yechiel Michel was a highly sought-after speaker or *Maggid* in his own right. However, it was during these years after the Baal Shem Tov's passing that the movement against Chassidus was beginning to gain traction. Book burnings and public excommunications of those involved in spreading the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch forced Reb Yechiel Michel to journey from town to town throughout Galicia. Before finally settling in Yampol in Volhynia, the cradle of Chassidus, he served as Rav in the town Zlotchov, by whose name he continued to be known.

Reb Yechiel Michel had one daughter and five sons, all exceptional scholars as well. Many Chassidim lovingly refer to them as the Maggid's five *chumashim*. The Zlotchover Maggid formed the foundation of what would eventually become a multi-branched dynasty, ultimately giving rise to sects of Chassidim still thriving today, including Skolye, Zvhill, Zvhill-Medziboz, and Shotz. His students included the Oheiv Yisrael and Rav Mordechai of Neshchiz, also known as the *Rishpei Eish*. Reb Yechiel Michel was a gifted composer and many of his *niggunim* are still sung today, including one which was highly regarded by the Baal Shem Tov. The Zlotchover Maggid passed away in Yampol, Volhynia in 1786 (5547). Although the tzaddik didn't pen any *seforim* of his own, his writings were compiled by his students under the name *Mayim Rabim*. 🕯

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

Ohel of Reb Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov zy"ra



Chassidus 101

Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

LIVING LIFE IN a physical world and bound by its limitations, it is quite easy for us to overlook just how great an impact our actions have on the world around us. The Arizal taught that the Jewish soul is comprised of all spiritual realms. Before the creation of Man, the Torah says, "Let us make man in our image and likeness." The tzaddikim teach that Hashem used the word "us" rather than "Me" because all of the worlds took part in the creation of man.

Beyond our *souls* being woven from the spiritual worlds above, our *physical bodies* are manifestations of the upper realms as well. The Ramchal, Nefesh HaChaim, and others describe at great length how the physical makeup of the human body reflects the orientation of the worlds above as well as how it mirrors the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. It follows, therefore, that more than merely affecting recognizable change within our surroundings through our choices and actions, the reach of the Jewish soul extends beyond the boundaries of this world and permeates the entire realm of existence. Every thought, speech, and action of a Jew has a cosmic impact, sparking a ripple-effect felt throughout all of creation.

This understanding sheds light on a most fundamental aspect of Chassidic thought. It is much easier for us to focus and recognize the negative things we do rather than the positive. Oftentimes, we lend too much thought to our mistakes and shortcomings while ignoring all of the incredible things that we do on a daily basis. The tzaddikim

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wanted to ingrain in each and every one of us that regardless of how lowly we may feel or how insignificant we may think we are, the impact our actions have on the world is far beyond our comprehension. Every mitzvah we perform, word of tefillah we utter, and piece of Torah that we learn radiates throughout all the worlds and draws infinite blessing into our lives and the world around us.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zy"ra famously taught, "The more one grows, the more the world grows with him (*Shemoneh Kevatzim*, 1:454)." The ability to constantly be striving to refine ourselves and strengthen our relationship with Hashem requires that we take the time to recognize the incredible things each of us do on a daily basis. However damaging we feel our negative actions are, we must always remind ourselves how much greater still are the mitzvos we perform; how much more of an impact they have on our lives and on the entirety of existence.

Each and every one of us experiences roadblocks and hurdles, necessary tests we strive to overcome in a bid to further develop and refine our nature. With each positive step taken toward building a stronger, more tangible relationship with our Father in heaven, the more we affect the world around us, illuminating our own lives and preparing our holy nation for the coming of Moshiach and the Final redemption. May we witness it speedily in our days! 🕯

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

AS A YOUNG boy, Shalom-Ber Schneersohn, who would later come to be known as the Rebbe Rashab, often played with his brother, Reb Schneur Zalman Ahron, commonly referred to as the RaZA, who was two years older than him. His brother once convinced him to climb into a pit. Thinking that it was part of the game, he dutifully did so, thinking that he would soon be helped out. However, when he called for help, his older brother stood a few feet away from the pit, smiling happily. Hurt, the Rashab began to cry. Upon hearing his brother crying, the RaZA immediately pulled him up out of the pit.

The boys' father, the Rebbe Maharash, had also heard the cry. Exiting the house, he asked what was happening.

The Rashab tearfully replied that his older brother Zalman Ahron had placed him in a pit and left him there for a while.

Calling over the RaZA, the Rebbe Maharash demanded an explanation.

The RaZA replied, "Shalom Ber is taller than me, and this is not fair! I am the older brother, and an older brother should be taller than his younger brother. When he was in the pit, he was no longer taller than me. And that is the way it should be, for the older brother is more important!"

The Rebbe Maharash responded, "Your point is fair, but you are making a big mistake. If you truly desire to be higher than your brother, there is a more proper way to do it. Instead of putting your brother down by placing him in a low place, you should have taken a stone or a chair and stood on top of it. By elevating yourself, you can be the bigger one without having to denigrate or belittle the other."

In our bid for personal greatness, let's make sure our ascension comes not by putting others down but only through rising above - and bringing others along with us! 🙏

"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
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