



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Yisro

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה...

“And Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe heard...”

COMMENTING ON THIS verse, the Midrash evokes the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* (19:25) “Beat the scoffer, and the foolish person will become wiser...” The Midrash teaches that the words “Beat the scoffer” refer to Amalek, while the words “and the foolish person will become wiser” refer to Yisro. The holy Mei HaShiloach reveals the depth of this teaching. The tzaddik teaches that a “*leitiz*”, a scoffer, is cynical by nature. He is not interested in investigating the various lifestyles one may choose to live. Rather, he stands perpetually outside of them all, finding comfort only behind his shield of skepticism, ridicule, and dismissiveness. However, the “*pesi*”, the foolish person, is a sincere and genuine seeker. Along his journey of openness and willingness to engage with various philosophies and lifestyles, he may take many wrong turns and arrive at misguided conclusions. But the Torah testifies that while the “*leitiz*” will ultimately be beaten, and nothing will remain of his arrogant scoffing, the “*pesi*” will, in the end, become wise and discover the proper path. Looking around today, we see many of our youth (and those of youthful spirit!) who are seeking, searching, experimenting, and free-thinking in pursuit of meaning. Oftentimes this turbulent journey may lead them down the wrong avenues, boulevards of waste and darkness. But as parents, educators,

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THE MORE LIMITLESS
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BECOME!

and friends, it is important to remember that although the process might be arduous and lengthy, the “*pesi*”, spiritual seeker, is poised to eventually discover what it is that he is searching for. If there is energy behind the search, then even though it may be currently misdirected, it will, with Hashem’s help, be ultimately redirected once more in the direction of a relationship with Him through the Torah and mitzvos. 🕎

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 🕎 Yisro, Moshe’s father-in-law, hears of the great miracles Hashem has done and comes to the Jewish camp from Midyan with Moshe’s wife and two sons. Yisro advises Moshe to delegate his authority to a hierarchy of judges.
- 🕎 Am Yisrael camps opposite Har Sinai. They are told that Hashem has chosen them to be a “kingdom of priests” and “holy nation.” The nation proclaims: “All that G-d has spoken, we shall do.”
- 🕎 On the sixth day of Sivan, klal Yisrael assembles at the foot of Har Sinai. Hashem descends on the mountain. Thunder sounds, lightning flashes, billows of smoke fill the air and the blast of the shofar grows progressively stronger. Hashem summons Moshe to ascend the mountain.
- 🕎 The Ten Commandments are given. The people cry to Moshe that they cannot handle the intensity of the revelation and beg him to receive the Torah from Hashem and convey it to them.

P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

וְכָל-הָעָם רָאוּ אֶת-הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת-הַלְפָּידִם וְאֵת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר...

"And the entire nation saw the sounds, and the fires, and the call of the Shofar..."

DESCRIBING THE AWESOME revelation upon Har Sinai, the Torah states, "And the entire nation saw the sounds, and the fires, and the call of the Shofar." R' Shlomo Carlebach perceived a very deep lesson hidden in this verse.

Gathered for Matan Torah at the foot of the mountain, six hundred thousand broken ex-slaves became bound to one another in the deepest way and elevated to the most unimaginable heights, assuming the glorious mantle of spiritual royalty as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." From that awesome moment, this nation was tasked with magnifying the Creator's presence in His world through prayer, following His commandments for an elevated life, and studying to internalize His word. Many would rise against them throughout history, intent on terminating their mission, but the Jewish people would find the strength to overcome, to ignite a new generation of candles with the very flame they had received from those who came before them.

To be a Jew is to live the present moment with intensity, consciousness, and an enormous sense of mission. To be a Jew is to remember the past in addition to forever looking toward a glorious future. Indeed, to

be a Jew is to view both past and present through the lens of the future awaiting us which, permeated with the light of Hashem's ultimate revelation, will wash away the pain of this bitter exile – leaving no pain unexplained, no question unanswered. To be a Jew also means to be focused on all of history; the beautiful, the good, the bad, and the ugly, all at the very same moment in time; to mourn the devastating tragedies we have endured along this long and winding road, and yet simultaneously rejoice in the gift of our faith; "*Bidimah b'rinah*"; "With tears and with joy, with joy and with tears."

Reb Shlomo saw our verse, referring to our nascent nation's response to the wondrous yoke placed upon their neck, as hinting to the unique personality we would need to adopt: "**And the entire nation saw the sounds**": A Jew is one who remains connected to the wonder of the past; the sounds of Har Sinai. "**And the fires**": At the very same time, he bitterly mourns the devastating fires of exile; pogroms, the Inquisition, the Holocaust. "**And the call of the Shofar**": Through it all, the eternal Jew must remain ever connected to the echoes of the Great Shofar, looking through the cracks in time to a brighter future that constantly approaches as the sun rays continue to spread across the inky sky. 🕎



A Jew remains connected to the entire Jewish experience each moment, both the glory and pain of the past as well as an eternal hope in a brighter future.

Profiles of Tzaddikim

Biographical sketches of the Chassidic Masters

The Kozhnitzer Maggid zy"א

Reb Yisrael Hopstein was born in Apta in 1740 (5500) to R' Shabsi, a bookbinder, and Perl. From a young age, he developed a vast knowledge of many areas of the Torah. Under the tutelage of Reb Shmuel Shmelke of Nihkolsburg, Yisrael was introduced to the world of Chassidus. Eventually, Reb Shmuel Shmelke sent him to study under the Maggid of Mezritch, where he immediately acclimated himself into the tzaddik's court, becoming one of the tzaddik's closest disciples. After the Maggid's passing, Reb Yisrael went to learn with the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, as well as Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov.

Reb Yisrael's knowledge of Torah astounded even the foremost scholars of his day. Reb Chaim of Volozhin once testified that after spending just one day with Reb Yisrael, he recognized his complete mastery of the Talmud, with the entire commentaries of both Rashi and Tosefos at his fingertips. The tzaddik settled in Peshischa for a short period of time until eventually moving to Kozhnitz where he established a Chassidic court of his own.

The Kozhnitzer Maggid's fame quickly spread and he became known as a *baal mofes*, a miracle worker, with many seeking his guidance and his *berachos* for the sick and needy. He authored many *seforim*, most notably *sefer Avodas Yisrael*, a commentary on the Torah and holidays, weaving together his expansive knowledge of the Talmud and Kabbalistic literature. Reb Yisrael led the town of Kozhnitz for nearly 50 years, transforming it into a thriving center of Chassidus. It was during this time that he developed a closed friendship with the Chozeh of Lublin and Reb Menachem Mendel of Rimanov zy"א.

The tzaddik left this world in 1814 (5574). His enchanting oratory abilities and unique teaching style earned him the title "Maggid", and until this day he is viewed as one of the foremost figures of Chassidic thought and a chief expositor of the teaching of his Rebbe, the Maggid HaGadol of Mezritch. 🕎

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

A well-known portrait purporting to depict the Kozhnitzer Maggid and his chassidim



Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

AFTER HAVING SPENT the last few weeks describing the unique *avodah* of the “third servant” and revealing some ways in which we can begin attempting to attain this level of awe and humility, the Chernovitzer Rav explains that this was the spiritual level of Moshe Rabbeinu. At first glance, the Torah’s characterization of Moshe as “the humblest person on the face of the earth” seems difficult to understand. How could it possibly be that Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest spiritual leader the world has ever known, who spoke directly to Hashem and, on a this-worldly level, attained the titles of “mighty”, “wealthy”, and “wise”, should truly consider himself to be the slightest *oveid Hashem* among the entire Jewish nation? The tzaddik answers, based on our discussion, that Moshe’s humility came not despite his unparalleled stature but specifically because of it. Like the third servant, Moshe’s appointment as the “go-between” in the relationship between Hashem and His nation caused him to be overwhelmed with feelings of awe and gratitude. Because he alone was privy to an elevated awareness of Hashem’s Glory, he felt that his service - lofty as it was - was less adequate than those on a lower level who did the best they could to serve Hashem in accordance with their limited perception. The greater Moshe grew, the humbler he became. The humbler he became, the greater he grew. And so Moshe proceeded, entering into further chambers of awe and humility until he finally stood in a state of total awe, ego obliterated, unable to proceed for fear that he wouldn’t be able to handle a greater perception than that of the courtyard in which he stood. Thus, it was Moshe Rabbeinu alone who Hashem chose to “fix his crown”, to rectify am Yisrael in the most perfect possible way. 🙏

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 CHASSIDUS TEACHES that even the most basic physical necessities are opportunities to draw closer to Hashem, it is important to develop an understanding, each of us on our own level, of the depth behind the basic staples of physical life in order to better understand our relationship with Hashem.

One of the concepts discussed throughout Chassidic literature is *achilah*, eating. While this concept encompasses ideas far beyond the scope of this article and includes lofty intentions reserved only for tzaddikim, the concept of *achilah*, or more specifically, *achilah b’kedusha*, is something that is relevant to each and every one of us.

Chazal teach us that every sin ultimately stems from the original sin of Adam HaRishon. Because that entire episode revolved around Adam and Chava’s having eaten from the tree, it is logical that the ultimate rectification of this sin would come about through eating as well. In fact, the Midrash tells us that the very last warning Hashem gives us before sending us into this world is to be cautious about what we eat.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov writes that each and every Jew, from the greatest of tzaddikim to the seemingly simplest of Jews, feels a certain level of spiritual pain and inner anguish due to the bitterness of exile. He explains that the *hamtakah*, the way to rectify this feeling, is through *achilah b’kedusha* (*Likutei Moharan, Tinyana, 77*). While we aren’t necessarily on the level to understand the different Kabbalistic intentions connected to eating, we are all

familiar with the most basic concepts surrounding the basic human need.

The fact that Chassidim spend many meals and *tishin* together, eating, drinking, and singing beautiful *niggunim*, is reflective of this very idea. Chassidus wishes to bring the most esoteric concepts down to the simplest of levels, enabling each of us to feel a tangible connection to the Master of the world. When we get together for a Shabbos or Yom Tov meal, a *Melaveh Malkah* or any other *seudah* - eating and drinking while drawing close to each other and to Hashem, we are actively rectifying the sin of Adam HaRishon and bringing the world closer to redemption.

We are taught that there are 4 primary levels of creations: *Medaber* (humans), *Chai* (animals), *Tzomeiach* (plantlife) and *Domeim* (inanimate objects). The tzaddikim teach that when a person eats a piece of meat, that animal (*Chai*) was nourished from different plants (*Tzomeiach*) which, in turn, are sustained from the dirt of the ground (*Domeim*). Therefore, when a person eats that piece of meat, he is connecting to all levels of creation. This is one reason why eating is of vital importance. When we eat properly, making sure to make the necessary *berachos* before and after with *kavanah*, we are actively rectifying all levels of creation which were damaged due to the sin of Adam HaRishon. More than simply providing physical nourishment, each time we eat or drink, we are given the ability to refine the world around us, bringing us one step closer to the ultimate *geulah* and the coming of Moshiach. 🙏

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

THERE WAS A wealthy Jew from the city of Ruzhin in Russia who travelled to Eretz Yisrael. He spent some time touring the land and visiting the *mekomos hakedoshim*. Upon returning home, he sought an audience with the Rebbe of Ruzhin to discuss his trip. During the conversation he commented that he didn't find the Land to be an especially attractive place and expressed his disappointment.

The holy Ruzhiner responded with a parable. "There was once a wealthy Jew who married off all his daughters to Torah scholars. However, he was unable to find a suitable groom for his eldest daughter and eventually married her off to a simple tailor. Before the wedding, the bride's father instructed her to adorn herself so she would look pleasing for her soon-to-be husband. With a wry smile, she responded: 'For a tailor, I am attractive enough as I am.'"

"The same is true for Eretz Yisrael," said the Rebbe. "For those capable of appreciating her lofty degree of holiness, she is sufficiently adorned. It is only to those immersed in physicality that she appears like any other land."

The Ruzhiner's response was very sharp, but there is a message here for us as well. Eretz Yisrael is our reflection. It is so easy to draw up a litany of criticisms and complaints of the Land and the portion of the Jewish nation it holds. But such an outlook ultimately reflects negatively on our own eyesight. If we refine ourselves and cleanse our way of looking at the world, we will be able to recognize only the sweet, gentle, holiness of this Land and its other-worldly beauty which shines for all eternity. 🕎

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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"
IS WRITTEN BY **R' YAAKOV KLEIN**,
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