

## Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim Tetzaveh-Zachor-Purim 5773

(From the archives)

### Shabbos in the Parasha

In this week's parashah the Torah records the instruction that HaShem gave to Moshe regarding the holy vestments to be worn by the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, and his sons. One of the eight garments worn by the Kohen Gadol was the Ephod, which was like an apron. It is said (Shemos 28:6) *vicheishev afudaso asher alav kimaaseihu mimenu yihyeh zahav techeiles veargaman visolaas shani visheishes mashzar*, the belt with which it is emplaced, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, it shall be made of it, of gold; turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, and twisted linen. The Meshech Chochmah writes that the Gemara (Erchin 16a) states that the Ephod served to atone for the sin of idolatry. The Gemara elsewhere (Kiddushin 40a) states that regarding idolatry, even if one has an idolatrous thought, it is akin to having actually worshipped idols. Thus, our verse alludes to this idea, as the word *vicheishev* can be interpreted to mean thoughts, and the words *kimaaseihu mimenu yihyeh* alludes to the idea that the thoughts are considered like a maaseh, an action. Perhaps we can expound further on this idea. Why is this idea hinted to specifically regarding the ephod? It is noteworthy that there are a few words that equal the same number in

gematria, numerical value. These words are *ephod*, *malach*, *haElokim*, and *Sukkah*. All these words equal 91 in gematria. What is the association between these words? A Sukkah symbolizes protection from foreign influences. When the Kohen Gadol would enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, he was required to be completely focused on his role of gaining atonement for the Jewish People. Were the Kohen Gadol to entertain one deviant thought, he would die inside the Holy of Holies. Thus, the Kohen Gadol was required to be akin to a *malach*, an angel. *Elokim* means G-d, and this Name is also used to depict one who has ascended to great spiritual heights. The manner in which one gains spiritual perfection is by not allowing foreign influences to penetrate one's inner domain. Thus, it is fitting that the ephod served to atone for idolatry. The ephod was worn over the tunic and the robe, thus symbolizing protection from all external influences. We do not currently have the Bais HaMikdash and the Kohen Gadol serving within, but HaShem has bestowed upon us His precious gift of the Holy Shabbos every week. Shabbos is the opportunity that we need to be shielded from foreign influences so that we can ascend the spiritual ladder. On Shabbos one is prohibited from performing *melechtes machasheves*, intended labor. On Shabbos one should

focus on avoiding the performance of any prohibited act. Furthermore, one should focus on delighting in the Shabbos, and he will then be spared from any negative influences.

This week is Parashas Zachor, when we read aloud how Amalek, the archenemy of the Jewish People, sought to infiltrate the Jewish camp and they were defeated by Yehoshua and the Jewish army. We read Parashas Zachor prior to Purim as Haman, the enemy of the Jewish People in Persia, was a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite king. The commentators point out that for all practical purposes, the true Amalekite does not exist amongst us anymore. Yet, we are still biblically commanded to remember the evil that Amalek sought to perpetrate towards the Jewish People and how HaShem has promised us that the memory of Amalek will eventually be obliterated. One must wonder how we can be required to remember the evil wrought by Amalek and how we can be instructed to obliterate the memory of Amalek, when Amalek does not exist in the physical form. In order to gain a better understanding of this obligation, we must first examine the festival of Purim and how we relate to this holiday in a practical manner. We celebrate Purim by reading Megillas Esther, making a feast, giving presents of food to our friends and by proffering charity to the indigent. What is the significance in these four rabbinically ordained mitzvos? I recently saw a fascinating explanation from one of the Gerrer Rebbes regarding Mordechai's exhortation to Esther. It is

said (Esther 4:13-14) *vayomer Mordechai lihashiv el Esther al tidami vinfafsheich lihamaleit bais hamelech mikol haYehudim ki im hachareish tacharishi baeis hazos revach vihatzalah yaamod layehudim mimakom acher viat uveis avich toveidu umi yodeia im laeis kazoos higaat lamalchus*, then Mordechai said to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine in your soul that you will be able to escape in the king's palace any more than the rest of the Jews. For if you persist in keeping silent at a time like this, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, while you and your father's house will perish." The conventional understanding of these verses is that Mordechai was warning Esther that if she did not act, then HaShem would save the Jewish People through other means, but Esther and her family would not survive. The Gerrer Rebbe, however, understands that Mordechai was informing Esther that the way to accomplish the salvation was by *viat uveis avich toveidu*. The Gerrer Rebbe renders the word *toveidu*, normally translated to mean perish, as to forfeit your life. Thus, Mordechai was instructing Esther that the vehicle to salvation was by forfeiting her life for the Jewish People. Based on this premise, we can begin to understand the particular manner in which we can approach our requirement to remember what Amalek sought to do the Jewish People and how we are required to obliterate the memory of Amalek. Amalek was willing to forfeit their lives in order to destroy the Jewish People, so

we must act in the same manner and sacrifice our lives for HaShem and His Torah. The Gemara (Megillah 7b) states that one is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim until he cannot distinguish between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai. The Seder Hayom writes that one is required to become so intoxicated that he falls to the ground. The reason for this, writes the Seder Hayom, is because Haman sought to spill our blood to the ground, so we must act in a manner that counters Haman's desires. Based on the interpretation of the Gerrer Rebbe, we can place this ruling in perspective and also understand an incident recorded in the Gemara. We become intoxicated to the point that we are willing to forfeit our lives for HaShem, and the Gemara demonstrates this with an incident where Rabbah and Rabbi Zeira celebrated the Purim feast together. Rabbah killed Rabbi Zeira and then brought him back to life. This Gemara clearly is telling us that on Purim one must attain a level where he is willing to forfeit his life for HaShem. Now we can understand the function of the four mitzvos that we perform on Purim. We feast and drink and become intoxicated, and we thus demonstrate that we are willing to forfeit our lives for HaShem. Furthermore, we give each other food gifts. Unlike the rest of the festivals where we essentially conduct private feasts, on Purim we are required to give of our food to others. This also reflects on our sacrifice for HaShem and His people. Additionally, we are obligated to give alms to the

poor, to the extent that we must fulfill the rabbinic dictum that *kol haposehit yad nosnim lo*, anyone who extends his hand on Purim receives charity. This certainly is a sacrifice on our parts. Lastly, we are required to read the Megillah, and we must even forgo Torah study to fulfill this mitzvah. For a Jew, studying Torah is akin to a fish swimming in water, and we are still required to interrupt our Torah study for the reading of the Megillah. There can be no greater sacrifice than forgoing Torah study. Thus, the four mitzvos that we perform on Purim all reflect a degree of sacrifice, which counters the sacrifice that Amalek and their descendant Haman demonstrated in threatening the Jewish People. The Gemara (Shabbos 118b) states that had the Jewish People only observed the first Shabbos in the Wilderness, no race or nation could have assailed them. Proof of this is because some of the Jewish People violated the first Shabbos and this violation was followed by the arrival of Amalek. We are required to sacrifice everything except our lives to observe Shabbos. The Medrash (Esther Rabbah 1:9) states that the reason Achashveirosh was able to conduct his parties is because the Jewish People had desecrated the Shabbos. It is well known that when we slack off in our sacrifice for mitzvah performance, the gentiles are allowed to dominate us. It should be HaShem's will that we observe the Shabbos and the festivals properly, and then we will merit the fulfillment of the verse that the Jewish children quoted to Haman (Yeshaya

8:10) *utzu eitzah visufar daberu davar vilo yakum ki imanu kel*, plan a conspiracy and it shall be annulled; speak your piece and it shall not stand, for G-d is with us.

## Shabbos in the Zemiros

### Eishes Chayil

Composed by Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei

יָדֶיהָ, שְׁלָחָהּ בְּכִישׁוֹר וְכַפֵּיהָ, תִּמְכּוּ פָלֶךְ, she stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her palms support the spindle. Continuing the theme that these verses allude to Shabbos, we can suggest that the verse alludes to the idea stated in the Zohar that Shabbos sustains a person during the six days of the week. This is the meaning of the words יָדֶיהָ, שְׁלָחָהּ בְּכִישׁוֹר, and her palms support the spindle. It is noteworthy that the words יָדֶיהָ, שְׁלָחָהּ בְּכִישׁוֹר equal in gematria the words הִיא שַׁבָּת, it is Shabbos.

## Shabbos in Tefillah

### Accepting heavenly sovereignty in unity

*Vichulam mikablim ol malchus shamayaim zeh mizeh*, then they all accept upon themselves the yoke of heavenly sovereignty from one another. What does it mean that they accept the yoke of heavenly sovereignty from one another? One would think that accepting the yoke of heavenly sovereignty is something that one does on his own. The

Iyun Tefillah writes that it is said (Yeshaya 6:3) *vikara zeh el zeh viamar*, and one would call to another and say... Targum Yonasan renders these words to mean *umikablin dein min dein*, which Rashi explains to mean that the angels take permission from each other. Perhaps we can offer an alternative explanation to this passage. Regarding the Jewish People receiving the Torah, it is said (Shemos 19:2) *vayichan sham Yisroel, neged hahar*, and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain. Rashi (Ibid) writes that this wording teaches us that the Jewish People encamped opposite the mountain *kiish echod bileiev echod*, like one man with one heart. This teaches us that in order to accept the yoke of heavenly sovereignty, one must be united with all the Jewish People. Although one can recite Shema and contemplate HaShem's unity, we are declaring *shema Yisroel*, hear O Israel, which reflects the idea that true acceptance of heavenly sovereignty can only be accomplished when the Jewish People are united. In a similar vein we can suggest that the actions of the angels on high reflects our conduct down below. Thus, the angels also, so to speak, unite in their acceptance of the yoke of heavenly sovereignty.

## Shabbos Stories

### Giving tzedakah properly

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky writes: When the Satmar Rav came to this country after World War II he had a handful of Hungarian immigrants, most

of them Holocaust survivors, as his Chasidim. As the custom is with Chasidic rebbes, they would come for a blessing and leave a few dollars for the rebbe to give to charity on their behalf. The poor immigrants would come in for blessings, some leaving a dollar, others some coins and on occasion a wealthier chasid would leave a five, a ten, or even a twenty-dollar bill. The Rebbe would not look at the offerings; rather he would open the old drawers of his desk and stuff them in, ready, and available for them to be put to charitable use.

Of course, givers were not the only one who visited the Rebbe. Those who were in need came as well. Each of them bearing their tale of sorrow, asking for a donation.

Once a man came desperately in need of a few hundred dollars, which the rebbe gladly agreed to give.

The Rebbe opened his drawer, and began pulling out bills. Out came singles and fives, a few tens and even a twenty. Then the Rebbe called in his Gabbai (sexton), "Here," he said, "please help me with this."

The Rebbe began straightening out the bills one by one. Together, they took each bill, flattened it and pressed it until it looked as good as new. The Rebbe took 100 one dollar bills and piled it into a neat stack. Then he took out a handful of five-dollar bills and put them into another pile. Then he took about five wrinkled ten dollar bills, pressed them flat, and piled them as well. Finally, he slowly banded each pile with a rubber band, and then bound them all together. He handed it to the gabbai and asked him to present it to the supplicant.

"Rebbe," asked the sexton, "why all the fuss? A wrinkled dollar works just as well as a crisp one!"

The Rebbe explained. "One thing you must understand. When you do a mitzvah, it must be done with grace, and class. The way you give tzedakah is almost as important as the tzedakah itself. Mitzvos must be done regally. We will not hand out rumbled bills to those who are in need." ([www.Torah.org](http://www.Torah.org))

## **Shabbos in Navi**

### **Shmuel I Chapter 28**

#### **Shabbos is a day for the living**

In this chapter we learn how Shaul feared the Plishtim who had mobilized their army to battle the Jewish People. Shaul disguised himself and sought out a female necromancer who raised up Shmuel from the dead. Shmuel informed Shaul that his kingship would be torn from him and given to Dovid. Furthermore, Shmuel informed Shaul that the Jewish People and Shaul would be delivered into the hands of the Plishtim and Shaul and his sons would die. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 65b) states that proof that Shabbos exists in the world is because a necromancer cannot raise up the dead on Shabbos. Perhaps the deeper meaning of this statement is that Shabbos is the life of the world, and the dead do not take part in Shabbos in any form. Similarly, the Gemara (Ibid and Rashi ad loc) states that the wicked are not punished in Gehinnom on Shabbos. This statement also implies that Shabbos is for the living and the

holiness of Shabbos even extends to those who are no longer alive.

## **Shabbos in Agadah**

### **Shabbos in lieu of lashes**

The Imrei Emes, the Gerrer Rebbe, writes (Ki Seitzei 5677) that it is brought in Tikkunei Zohar that on Shabbos we are prohibited from performing forty acts of labor minus one, and this number corresponds to the forty minus one lashes that one receives upon violating a negative commandment. One who is scrupulous to avoid performing one of the thirty-nine acts of labor on Shabbos does not require thirty-nine lashes. The Imrei Emes cites the Targum attributed to Yonasan who states that regarding lashes it is said (Devarim 25:3) *viniklah achicho lieinecho*, and your brother will be degraded in your eyes. The Targum renders the words to mean that your brother should not be ashamed. The Imrei Emes writes that this means that one should not be ashamed because of the lashes. Rather, one should be ashamed because of the sin that he has committed. On Shabbos, however, one can shame himself without actually being whipped. The Zohar states that the word *Bereishis* is an acrostic for the words *yarei Shabbos*, fear of Shabbos, and for the words *yarei boshes*, fear which leads to shame. Shabbos contains within it a chastisement to an understanding heart, and it is for this reason that one does not receive lashes on Shabbos.

## **Shabbos in Halacha**

### **Exception to the prohibition of insulating with a heat-retaining material**

There are certain instances in which a container can be insulated in a heat-retaining material on Shabbos. [These exceptions only apply to fully cooked food. One is never permitted to insulate partially cooked food on Shabbos.] One example of this permit is that one can rewrap a pot of fully cooked food that was wrapped in a heat retaining material, i.e. a towel, prior to Shabbos and then became uncovered on Shabbos. Furthermore, one can unwrap the container on Shabbos to remove some food and re-insulate it. One is also allowed to add an extra layer of insulation i.e. another towel to a pot that was insulated prior to Shabbos.

## **Shabbos Challenge Question**

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Last week we posed the question: why do we recite in the blessing of Retzei in Bircas Hamazon that there should be no distress, grief, or lament on this day of contentment? Do we only desire that Shabbos should be free of strife and not the rest of the week? The Pinei Menachem answers that the Zohar states the source of all blessing during the weekday is from Shabbos, so it follows that if there is no distress, grief, or lament on Shabbos, then there will not be distress, grief, or lament during the week either.

This week's question is, the Gemara (Shabbos 119b) states that if everything is prepared properly on Friday night, then the bad angel must declare that it should be this way the following Shabbos. How is it possible that angels who do not change can be transformed from bad to good? If you have a possible answer, please email me at [ShabbosTaamHachaim@gmail.com](mailto:ShabbosTaamHachaim@gmail.com) and your answer will be posted in next week's edition of Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim.

### **Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim Tetzaveh-Zachor-Purim 5773**

Is sponsored in memory of Rav Yehuda (ben Shmuel) HaChasid, author of Sefer Chasidim (1150-1217). His father (1120-1175), led a famous yeshiva in Speyer, and served as Rav Yehuda's rebbe.

Rav Moshe (ben Yehuda Hersch) Langner, the fifth Strettiner Rebbe (1959). In 1921, he moved the family from Galicia to Toronto.

Rav Moshe (ben Dovid) Feinstein (1895-1986). Born in Uzda (near Minsk), Belorussia, he was a great-grandchild of the Be'er Hagolah. His mother was Feige Gittel, daughter of R' Yechiel, rov of Kopolia. He joined the yeshiva of Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer in Slutzk at the age of twelve. At the age of sixteen, Rav Moshe completed Shas and Shulchan Oruch. He was rabbi of Luban from 1921 to 1936. He escaped the Stalinist regime in 1936 and settled in

New York as rosh yeshiva of Tiferes Yerushalayim. He authored Igros Moshe, Darash Moshe, and Dibros Moshe and was universally acknowledged as the posek of the American Litvish community.

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