

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF MOHOROSH ZT"l
GIVEN OVER BY THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

PARSHAS VAYAKHEL
SHABBOS SHEKALIM
29 ADAR 1, 5784
ISSUE #2

Chizuk from the Parsha

THE JOY OF SHABBOS

השבת לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת - Do not ignite a fire on Shabbos.

It was time for Moshe Rabbeinu to give over Hashem's commandment to build the *mishkan*, but first he told the Yidden to keep Shabbos. What's the connection between these two *mitzvos*? Why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to give this introduction before teaching about building the *mishkan*?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 2:17*) that by being very happy on Shabbos, a person can attain true *yiras shamayim*.

What is *yiras shamayim*? It is when a Yid is afraid only of Hashem. It's when he knows with certainty and with clarity that Hashem "runs the show;" nothing at all can happen without Hashem. Hashem is with me; I am not afraid of anything. Nobody can do anything to harm me.

That is the level a person can reach on Shabbos. All week, he is busy making a living and trying to get by. He attributes power to people and thinks that they can take away his livelihood or cause him to lose money. Occupied with the "reality" of his day-to-day life, he forgets the true reality: that Hashem runs the world.

Shabbos is a break from the mundane. Being happy on Shabbos liberates the mind, as the *passuk* says (*Yeshaya 55:12*) בשמחה - תצאו - with *simcha*, you will be freed. With *simcha*, we can come to the awareness that Hashem is in control. With *simcha*, we realize that our worries were just foolishness and we can stop fearing others. With *simcha*, we can attain true *yiras shamayim* - the knowledge that Hashem is in control.



The purpose of the *mishkan* was to bring the *shechina* into our physical world and spread the awareness that there is nothing in the world but Hashem. This is why the Yidden needed to learn about Shabbos before building the *mishkan*. Through Shabbos and *simcha* on Shabbos, they could leave their worries behind and develop a real and pure *emunah*, and then the *shechina* would truly rest among them in the *mishkan*.

What is the significance of the prohibition not to light a fire on Shabbos? Why did the Yidden specifically have to hear this *halacha*?

The *Zohar* says that this fire refers to the fire of anger. On Shabbos, anger is more dangerous than fire! Anger can exist only when a person attributes power to people; he blames them when things go wrong and forgets that everything is from Hashem. If a person loses himself and gets angry on Shabbos, he brings poverty and suffering upon himself in the coming week.

It's crucial to avoid any fighting on erev Shabbos and on Shabbos. Be smart and give in! Do whatever you can to make your home a happy place on Shabbos. Allow the shechina to rest in your home! Allow yourself to feel the presence of Hashem and the light of Shabbos.

Let's work on ourselves to be happy on Shabbos *Kodesh* and thereby free ourselves to develop a pure *emunah* and true *yiras shamayim*. Let's welcome the *shechina* into our homes, and then we will be *zoche* to all the *brachos* and *yeshuos* we need.

Mohorosh Speaks

שבת שקלים



Chodesh Adar is in the air! At last, it is Shabbos *Me-vorchim Adar Beis!*

This week is also the beginning of the *Arba Parshios*, which is a time that every person can become very close to Hashem.

Each of the *Arba Parshios* teaches us important foundations in *Yiddishkeit*. The **first** of the four is *Parshas Shekalim* because *tzedakah* is the **beginning** of *avodas Hashem*. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan, 2:4*) that when a Yid gives *tzedakah*, it clears the way for him to start serving Hashem properly. This is the reason for the *halacha* to give *tzedakah* before davening - it is where *avodas Hashem* begins.

Tzedakah protects a person from *aveiros*. The Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Tzedakah 2:19*) that the *machatzis hashekel* saves a person from the *yetzer hara*; this refers to hearing *Parshas Shekalim* (which is like giving the *machatzis hashekel*) and giving *tzedakah*. Both protect a person from falling into the *yetzer hara's* net.

This is especially true when



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I received your letter.

It takes time for a newly married couple to live together in harmony. Each couple is made up of two separate people coming from different worlds, each with their own nature and temperament. Only by working on their relationship and by being patient can they live a blessed life.

Regarding the fact that your husband spends a lot of time at his parents' house, this is normal and very common with young couples. It takes time for husband and wife to truly get to know each other and start living together as one; until then, either spouse may still feel more comfortable at his/her parents' home.

The key to *shalom bayis* is honest and direct communication. Tell your husband how much it would mean to you if he would come home on time. Explain that while you respect his *kibbud av v'em*, you are lonely and don't want to go to sleep by yourself. Tell him how much you love him and think about him and how much you want to spend time with him - he will surely start coming home to you. If he does/says something insensitive, be open with him and tell him that it hurts your feelings. With time, he will certainly change his behavior.

On your end, stay positive and always be ready for your husband. Greet him with a smile; Shlomo Hamelech says (*Mishlei 27:19*) כמים הפנים לפנים, כך לב האדם לאדם - just like your reflection imitates the expression you show, so too, people will mirror the treatment you show them.

Take the Rebbe's advice of *hisbodedus* and pour out your heart to Hashem. Tell Him everything that is on your mind; ask Him to reawaken your affection for your husband and his affection for you. This will cause everything to change for the better.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 88



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hara as well.

giving *tzedakah* to print and distribute *sefarim* that bring Yidden back to Hashem. When a person helps save others from their *yetzer hara*, Hashem acts *mid-dah k'neged middah* and saves him from his *yetzer*

Complete with Hashem

Hashem commanded every person to give only **half** a *shekel* to teach us that a person alone is incomplete; he can do nothing without Hashem. *Chazal* say (*Kiddushin 30*) that none of us can fight the *yetzer hara* alone; we all need Hashem's help to win the battle. When a person realizes that he alone is only half and he begs Hashem to help him, he becomes a whole person and can lead a successful life.

The *Gemara* says (*Yerushalmi Shekalim 2:3*) that the Yidden who crossed the *Yam Suf* had to give a *machatzis hashekel*. What's the connection between the two?

When the Yidden stood before the *Yam Suf*, they were trapped with no way out. They suddenly realized that they needed Hashem for their very survival. At this crucial moment, they turned to Hashem and begged for help, and He made wondrous *nissim* to save them. The *machatzis hashekel* reminds us of this same concept: we can do nothing alone. We need Hashem's help every moment.

Dramatic *nissim* weren't only for those times - even today, we need *nissim* like the Yidden experienced. Both *parnassa* and *shid-duchim* are compared to *krias Yam Suf* (*Pesachim 118, Sotah 2*). Just like the Yidden at the *Yam Suf*, every Yid today needs to come to the realization that he is incomplete and incapable without Hashem.

Complete with Oneself

The *machatzis hashekel* also teaches us to aspire to completion within ourselves. The *neshama* is a *chelek elokah mima'al* - a piece of Hashem Himself. When a Yid forgets about Hashem and does *aveiros*, he causes a disconnect within himself and remains with only half a *neshama*. Our life's mission is to become complete again by doing *teshuva* and reconnecting with Hashem. The **only** way to achieve this is by talking to Hashem constantly.

Complete with Others

Another thing *Parshas Shekalim* teaches us is to live in harmony with others. A person alone is only half; he becomes whole when he stands together with others in unity.

Haman told Achashveirosh *lashon hara* about the *klal Yisroel* - (*Esther 3:8*) ישנו עם אחד מפוזר ומפחד - they are in constant conflict with each other, and the outcome of this declaration was the terrible decree of annihilation. The discord among the Yidden was what brought *tzaros* upon them. To rectify this, Esther told Mordechai to gather them **together** - with *achdus*. Their new state of unity brought them to a level of completion and brought about the *yeshuah*.

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A Yid is only whole when he lives in peace with others - **especially** with his family. *Shalom bayis* is so important, both for a person's *ruchniyus* and for his *gashmiyus*. Without *shalom bayis*, he is incomplete; his mind is confused and scattered and he cannot live a meaningful life. A person must do whatever he can to maintain *shalom* in his home. Only by living in harmony with his wife and children can he lead a happy and fulfilling life.

When listening to *Parshas Shekalim*, daven to Hashem to help you become a complete person in all these aspects: to be close to Hashem, to do proper *teshuvah*, to be *b'achdus* with all other Yidden and to have *shalom bayis*.

A True Tzaddik

Parshas Shekalim also hints at the importance of connecting to a *tzaddik* that can bring you close to Hashem.

When Hashem gave Moshe Rabbeinu the command to count the Yidden with the *machatzis hashekel*, he said *כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל* - count the Yidden. These words can also mean to **lift up** the Yidden. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu was the *tzaddik* of his generation who brought the Yidden to lofty levels in *avodas Hashem*, so too, every generation has *tzaddikim* who can to elevate their followers



and bring them close to Hashem.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:111*) that there are two types of leaders. One kind of leader is the *roshei teivos* of the *passuk* *כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל*; **בני ישראל**; this *rebi* elevates his followers by encouraging them to live with Hashem and follow the Torah. The other kind of leader doesn't help his followers at all. He is referred to in the *passuk* (*Shmuel 1 2:9*) *רשעים בחשך ידמו*: the wicked (i.e. his followers) remain in darkness. He doesn't change them for the better; they remain wicked and remain in darkness.

When reading *Parshas Shekalim* and hearing the words *את ראש בני ישראל*, daven for a connection to the kind of *rebi* who will lift you up and teach you how to serve Hashem.

Segulos in Parshas Shekalim

In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *shekalim* were used to purchase the *korban tamid*. We don't have the *Beis Hamikdash* or *korban tamid* anymore; instead, we have specific *tefillos* we daven each day. The reading of *Parshas Shekalim* is an opportune time to ask that our *tefillos* throughout the year should be accepted.

This is also a time to daven for all the things we learned from *Parshas Shekalim*. Let's daven that our "*shekalim*" - *tzedakah* - should be given to the right places. Let's daven for help to become complete with ourselves, with Hashem and with each other (especially with our families). Let's also daven for a con-



home and pleaded with his father, "Please give me something warm for Grandfather!"

The miser was unmoved and responded, "Go to the attic and find something there. All the clothes there are old; I don't need them anyway."

The boy went up to the attic found an old and torn coat, full of holes and covered in dust. Furious with the injustice, he took the tattered coat and tore it in two.

When he finally emerged from the attic with only half the coat, his father asked, "What is the meaning of this? Why did you cut the coat in half?"

The son responded, "I'm putting away the other half for you. When you will be old like Grandfather, I will also kick you out of my home. When winter comes and you're freezing, I will send you the other half of the coat."

The wealthy miser realized his mistake, begged his father for forgiveness and invited him back into his home.

After reading this story, it is obvious how you should conduct yourself with your father, even though he is bad-tempered and blames you for everything. *Chazal* say, *מעשה אבות סימן לבנים* - The way you behave toward your parents is the way your children will behave toward you. You must continue to show him respect and demonstrate to your wife and children how a Yid behaves toward his parents. By respecting and honoring your father you will be *zoche* to many blessings.

Keep sending me your questions and I will continue to guide you on the path that Mohorosh paved for us: the *derech* of our Rebbe who teaches us how we can merit a life of *Gan Eden* on this world.

DO I HAVE TO KEEP GOING TO MY FATHER FOR SHABBOS?



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlit"a*,

Thank you so much for all the *shiurim* and *chizuk*! They enhance my life so much. I especially enjoy the *shiurim* that are given upstate in the summer; I look forward to them all year.

My father recently came to me for Shabbos, and I devoted much effort so that it should be pleasant for all. However, things didn't quite work out as I had expected. My father was very irritable the entire time and kept getting annoyed with my children. As hard as I tried to make the *seudos* enjoyable, he still found reasons to be upset.

My father expects us to come to him for Shabbos quite often. It's the same story each time: the atmosphere is tense and he is short-tempered. Of course, it's always my fault; whatever I do is never good enough for him. Do I have to keep going to him for Shabbos? Why should my wife and children be subjected to this?

Thank you for everything.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

I am so happy to hear that you derive *chizuk* from the *eitzos* of the Rebbe. Any person who gets a taste of the Rebbe's *hischazkus* is transformed; his davening and learning improves, he begins to yearn for a connection to Hashem and his entire life changes for the better.

Regarding your question: the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'em* is not an easy *mitzvah* to fulfill, yet the reward for it is enormous. Additionally, a person who honors his parents will have children who will respect him and honor him, and a person who does not honor his parents will have children who will behave with *chutzpah* toward him.



The Ben Ish Chai zt"l relates a poignant story on this topic:

An arrogant millionaire had an elderly, impoverished father. The wealthy man was also a big miser and had little sympathy for his less-fortunate father. Instead of helping him or giving him food and lodging, the millionaire threw his father out on the street to fend for himself.

One frigid day in middle of the winter, the miser's son came upon his grandfather sitting outside with the city's beggars, cold and hungry. Seeing his grandson, the poor man called out to him and begged for a warm coat so that he wouldn't freeze to death. The boy hurried

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