

# CHAYUS

## A Shabbos Stimulus

### THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ע"ה And Tzvi Daniel ben ע"ה David Ainsworth ש"י  
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

Erev Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 5782 – November 5, 2021

ערב שבת פרשת תולדות, ראש חודש כסלו, ה'תשפ"ב

כתר שם טוב

## PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Keter Shem Tov

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### Be Great at What You Do!

The Gemara states that “a great matter” refers to *ma'asei merkavah* (the mystical teachings associated with the divine chariot), “a small matter” refers to the (halachic) disputes of Abaye and Rava.

How can we consider the disputes of Abaye and Rava a “small matter,” when their debates cover the main body of Torah law that we received at Sinai?!

Rather, we can understand this teaching as referring to a person's intentions in his Torah study. He may be driven to master the intricate debates, and acquire broad knowledge and analytical skills, for intellectual pleasure. In that case, his approach to Torah study is similar to the study of other non-Torah subjects.

Alternatively, his focus and desire may be to attach himself to G-d, to be a *merkavah*, a chariot, to G-d. In order to achieve this, he must fulfill the *mitzvos* and study the Torah.

If his focus is the pleasure of intellectual stimulation, all of his Torah learning is nothing but a small matter, barely significant at all. But if his drive is to attach himself to G-d, then his study is a great matter indeed!

**Focus:** When you learn Torah, attach yourself to G-d—attach yourself to Greatness and you will be great.

גאולה

## GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah

Translated by Yaakov Paley

### A Good Shabbos Meal

Our Sages state (Shabbos 118a) that the merit of the Shabbos meals saves from *chevlei Moshiach*, the birth pangs of the Redemption.

Shabbos is a testimonial to the fact, that G-d created the world and all its contents instantly and without effort, and that He brought man to the holy

day of Shabbos with everything prepared for him, right after his creation. Therefore, through observing Shabbos we merit an instant and effortless arrival of the Redemption, without birth pangs.

*Bach al HaTur*

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## A Holy Offering

### The Context:

A famine descended upon the Land of Israel. Yitzchak intended to temporarily find refuge in Egypt, as his father, Avraham, had done before him. However, G-d told Yitzchak, “Do not descend to Egypt; dwell in the land that I shall tell you” (*Bereishis* 26:2).

### The Rationale:

Why did G-d not allow Yitzchak to leave Israel for Egypt? The *Midrash* explains: “You (Yitzchak) are like a blemish-free offering. Just as an offering having this level of sanctity, becomes disqualified if it leaves the walls of the Temple Courtyard, so, too, you will become disqualified if you leave the Land of Israel” (*Bereishis Rabbah* 64:3).

Rashi says this somewhat differently: “G-d said to him, ‘Do not descend to Egypt, for you are a blemish-free offering, and territory outside the Land of Israel is not worthy of you.’” (*Rashi on Bereishis* 26:2)

Though both explanations seem identical, a closer reading reveals that the *Midrash’s* explanation focuses on the holiness of the Land of Israel — the “offering/Yitzchak” is so sacred that it cannot leave the “Temple Courtyard / Land of Israel.” Rashi’s explanation, however, is focused on the lands outside of Israel being unworthy, he does not mention the sacredness of Israel itself.

It would seem that there is a fundamental difference of perspective between the *Midrash* and Rashi regarding the status of the Land of Israel, that produced this nuanced dispute concerning the reason for Yitzchak needing to remain in Israel. What is the origin of these divergent approaches?

### The Explanation:

When the forefathers performed physical *mitzvos* prior to the Giving of the Torah, although they were able to achieve some level of personal enlightenment, they could not affect or transform the material object with which their *mitzvos* were performed. There was a fundamental divide between the spiritual and the material.

Similarly, whatever level of attachment existed between the forefathers and the Land of Israel, it

was not an attachment that imbued the Land itself with sanctity. Sanctity would only be able to enter the material world after the Giving of the Torah, when G-d gave the Jewish people the innovative ability to fuse spirit and matter.

Sanctity of the Land, then, was not the point of disagreement between the *Midrash* and Rashi. Ownership of it, however, was.

When G-d first promised the Land of Israel to Avraham in ‘Covenant Between the Parts,’ He said, “To your descendants I have given this Land” (*Bereishis* 15:18). Commenting on the past tense (“I have given”), the *Midrash* says, “G-d’s utterance is a deed.” Rashi comments, “A statement of G-d is considered **as if it had been performed.**” The distinction is obvious: the *Midrash* maintains that the Land of Israel already belonged to the Avraham’s descendants, while Rashi maintains that it was only “as if” it was theirs.

The laws concerning the removal of sacrificial meat from certain boundaries are not, in essence, due to the relative *sanctity* of those locations. Rather, there is a *designated* “natural place” where each type of meat belongs, and meat becomes disqualified “once it leaves its designated place” (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Ma’aseh Hakorbanos* 11:6).

Once the Land of Israel belonged to Avraham’s family, and G-d had commanded Yitzchak to be offered as a blemish-free offering in this land, Israel became Yitzchak’s “natural, designated place” from where he could no longer leave. It was not the holiness of the land per se, but the fact that the land’s identity was inseparable from Yitzchak, and that made it “his place”.

Rashi, however, maintains that there was no concrete change in the relationship between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. They had “theoretical” ownership, but not practical ownership. Therefore, Israel was not yet a place that was designated for Yitzchak.

Rashi previously explained, however, that Avraham preferred the Land of Israel over other lands because people there had come to recognize G-d as Creator to a greater extent than the populations of other lands. That was why Avraham had

not allowed Yitzchak to marry a woman from, and settle in, any other land aside from Israel (*Rashi to Bereishis 24:7*). Rashi applied the same reasoning in this context: “territory outside the Land of Israel is **not worthy of you.**”

### A Deeper Look:

The *Midrashic* method of interpretation seeks to uncover the deeper strata of the Torah’s text. Therefore, it envisions G-d’s speech as having pro-

found power, conferring ownership of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people without their tangible participation.

Rashi, however, explains the plain meaning of the text. In the “literal” world, G-d’s speech only creates potential ownership. For the people to actually possess the Land they must engage in the real-world work of conquering and settling it.

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סיפור חסידי

## ONCE UPON A CHASID

By Yanki Tauber

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### *And the children struggled within her* (Bereishis 25:22)

Whenever Rivkah would pass the doorways of Torah study at the academy of Shem and Ever, Jacob would push and wiggle to get out; and when she passed a house of idol-worship, Esau would struggle to emerge... (Rashi’s commentary)

It was a hot July day during the summer of 1866. The children of Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch, five-year-old Sholom DovBer and his brother Zalman Aharon, had just come home from cheder and were playing in the garden which adjoined their home.

In the garden stood a trellis overgrown with vines and greenery which offered protection from the heat of the sun. It was set up as a study, with a place for books etc., and Rabbi Shmuel would sit there on the hot summer days.

The children were debating the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew. Zalman Aharon, the elder by a year and four months, argued that the Jews are a “wise and understanding people” who could, and do, study lots of Torah, both its ‘revealed part’ and its mystical secrets, and pray with devotion and ‘d’vaikus’, attachment to G-d.

Said the young Sholom DovBer: But this is true only of those Jews who learn and pray. What of Jews who are unable to study and who do not pray with d’vaikus? What is their specialness over a non-Jew?

Zalman Aharon did not know what to reply.

The children’s sister, Devorah Leah, ran to tell their father of their argument. Rabbi Shmuel called them to the trellis, and sent the young Sholom DovBer to summon Ben-Zion, a servant in the Rebbe’s home.

Ben-Zion was a simple Jew who read Hebrew with many mispronunciations and barely under-

stood the easy words of the prayers. Every day he would recite the entire book of Psalms, pray with the congregation, and make sure to be present in the synagogue when Ein Yaakov was studied.

When the servant arrived, the Rebbe asked him: “Ben-Zion, did you eat?”

Ben-Zion: “Yes”.

The Rebbe: “Did you eat well?”

Ben-Zion: “What’s well? Thank G-d, I was sated.”

The Rebbe: “And why do you eat?”

Ben-Zion: “So that I may live”

The Rebbe: “But why live?”

Ben-Zion: “To be a Jew and do what G-d wants.”

The servant sighed.

The Rebbe: “You may go. Send me Ivan the coachman.”

Ivan was a gentile who had grown up among Jews from early childhood and spoke a perfect Yiddish.

When the coachman arrived, the Rebbe asked him: “Did you eat today?”

“Yes”.

“Did you eat well?”

“Yes”

“And why do you eat?”

“So that I may live”

“But why live?”

“To take a swig of vodka and have a bite to eat,” replied the coachman.

“You may go,” said the Rebbe.

*Prepare for me delicacies, such as I love* (Bereishis 27:4)

There are two kinds of gratification before G-d: one, from the complete annihilation of evil by the righteous; the second, when evil is subdued while it is still at its strongest and most powerful, through the efforts of the ordinary man.

This is the deeper significance of the verse, “Prepare for me delicacies, such as I love.” The Almighty is speaking to the community of Israel, telling them that there are two kinds of gratification—delicacies, in the plural—which He seeks from them. The analogy is to earthly food, in which there likewise exist two kinds of relishes: sweet and luscious foods, and tart and sour foods which have been spiced and garnished so that they are made into delicacies which gratify the soul. (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

One day, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov said to his disciples:

“In a nearby village lives a Reb Dovid, a simple Jew who ekes out a scant living by the toil of his hands. But despite his poverty, Reb Dovid was determined to acquire a top-quality etrog (citron) for the Sukkos festival, in order to observe the mitzvah of lulav and etrog in the optimum manner. All year he scraped and saved, denying himself his most essential needs. He then made the long, wearisome trip to the city, and returned with an etrog which the richest man in town could not match.

“Reb Dovid’s wife was furious. With barely a crust of bread to put on the table, her husband

goes and spends a small fortune on an etrog! In her rage and frustration she grabbed the etrog and bit off its tip, making it invalid for use on the festival.

“Reb Dovid held his peace. He saw the incident as a sign that he is unworthy of such a magnificent etrog. How presumptuous of me, he thought, to believe that a simple Jew such as myself could aspire to such an etrog . . .

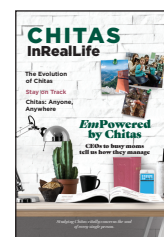
“Never, since the day that Abraham bound Isaac upon the altar,” the Baal Shem Tov concluded his story, “has a man withstood a test with such integrity as Reb Dovid displayed in refusing to be angered.”

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

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