

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* ט"ו
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

Erev Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, 5782 – December 10, 2021

ערב שבת פרשת ויגש, ו' טבת, ה'תשפ"ב

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Keter Shem Tov

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The Effect of Holy Thoughts

There are always worlds hovering over a person. According to the nature of a person's *machshavah*, thoughts, so are the nature of these worlds. If his thoughts are in matters of holiness and spirituality, then holy worlds stand over him. If his thoughts are in impure matters, then impure worlds are suspended over him.

Depending on the nature of his thoughts and these worlds, so is the nature of the creatures that pass before him at that time. If they are impure, unclean creatures pass before him. If they are holy, clean creatures pass before him. There are three possibilities: holy, unholy, and in-between.

Beyond all this is one who is bound to the supernal world of *seichel*, intellect. That is something to which no creature can relate. Our Sages therefore state that when Yonasan ben Uzzi'el sat and studied, any bird that flew above him was immediately incinerated. And they also state, that no fly was ever seen at the table of the prophet Elishah.

Nothing at all could pass before them, for they were attached to an overwhelming realm of holiness. Our Sages therefore state that by observing this phenomenon with Elishah, a lady from Shumen knew that he was a holy man, for his thoughts must always be holy.

סיפור חסידי

ONCE UPON A CHASID

By Yanki Tauber

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Inseparable Souls

His soul is bound with his soul (44:30)

In 1798, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was imprisoned by the czarist government on charges fabricated against him and the chassidic movement.

When he was brought before his interrogators, the first question they asked him was: "Are you of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov's people?" Rabbi Schneur Zalman later related that he knew that if he answered "no," he would be immediately released; nevertheless, he refused to disassociate himself from the Baal Shem Tov.

His 52 days of imprisonment in the Peter-Paul fortress in Petersburg were the most agonizing days of his life. He was forced to explain the basic tenets of Judaism and chassidism to the coarse Cossack minds of

his questioners. He wept when he was asked "What is a Jew?", "What is G-d?", "What is the relationship of a Jew to G-d? Of G-d to a Jew?"—to hear these questions issuing from their vulgar mouths tore his heart to shreds.

One question in particular caused him great pain. It was Rabbi Schneur Zalman's custom to interject the expression "af" in his prayers, as did the Baal Shem Tov. His enemies misconstrued this to mean that he was beseeching the Almighty to pour His wrath ('af' in Hebrew) upon the czar and his government. To explain to the Russian officials the Baal Shem Tov's customs and his lofty reflections during prayer was torture to Rabbi Schneur Zalman's soul.

Here too, Rabbi Schneur Zalman could have satisfied their queries with all sorts of answers. But his connection with the Baal Shem Tov, whom he called

his ‘grandfather in spirit’, was so dear to him that he refused to disclaim it in even the slightest detail, even if only for appearances sake.

A Chassidic Kiss

Joseph harnessed his chariot and rode to Goshen toward his father; he showed himself to him, fell upon his neck, and wept... (46:29)

But Jacob did not embrace Joseph and did not kiss him; our sages tell us that he was reading the ‘Sh’mah’.

Rashi’s commentary

Jacob knew that never in his life would his love be aroused as it was at that moment, the moment of reunion with his most beloved son after 22 years of anguish and loss. So he chose to utilize this tremendous welling of emotion to serve His Creator, channeling it to fuel his love for G-d.

Chassidic saying

In 1892, Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch presented his twelve-year-old son, Yosef Yitzchok, with the manuscript of a ma’amar (a discourse of chassidic teachings) entitled Moh Rabu Ma’asechah¹ and said: “This is a chassidic kiss. In time I will explain.” Four years later, he related the following incident to him:

The year was 1884. Late one night, Rabbi Sholom DovBer was studying with Rabbi Jacob Mordechai Bezolov. Rabbi Sholom DovBer’s family then lived in two rooms: one served as the bedroom, the other, as Rabbi Sholom DovBer’s study. In this room also stood the cot of his only child, the four-year-old Yosef Yitzchok.

1. lit. “How great are Your works...”

Little Yosef Yitzchok was an extremely beautiful child with a delicate and radiant face. Rabbi Jacob Mordechai, enthralled by the sleeping child, commented that the radiance of the child’s countenance must reflect an inner purity of mind.

Rabbi Sholom DovBer was moved by a strong desire to kiss his son. But at that very moment he thought of the gold and silver that were used to beautify the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, transforming physical substances into something holy and spiritual. He decided to direct his overwhelming feelings of love for his son into a more spiritual gift: he would give his son a ma’amar instead of a kiss. He sat down and wrote ‘Moh Rabu Maasechah.’

לקוטי שיחות

A SICHA

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The Strongest Tribes

The Verse:

After Yaakov and his family migrated to Egypt to avoid the famine, Yosef introduced part of his family to Pharaoh. “And from part of his brothers he took five men and stood them before Pharaoh” (*Bereishis* 47:2).

The Rashi:

And from part of his brothers—From the least among them in terms of strength—those who did not look mighty—for were Pharaoh to view them as mighty, he would make warriors of them. They were the following: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yissachar, and Binyamin—those whose names Moshe

did not repeat when he blessed them [at the end of his life]. But the names of the mighty ones, Moshe repeated, for example: “And this to Yehudah... Listen, Hashem, to Yehudah’s voice” (*Devarim* 33:7); “Of Gad he said, Blessed is He who broadens Gad” (*Ibid.*, 33:20); “Of Naphtali he said: Naphtali...” (*Ibid.*, 33:23); “Of Dan he said: “Dan ...” (*Ibid.*, 33:22); and similarly with regard to Zevulun, and with regard to Asher. This is the version of *Bereishis Rabbah*, the *aggadah* of the Land of Israel.

But in our *Babylonian Talmud* we have found that those whose names Moshe repeated were the weak ones, and it was they whom Yosef brought before Pharaoh. And as for Yehudah whose name

was repeated, his name was not repeated because of his weakness [for he was strong]. Rather, there is another reason for the matter, as stated in *Bava Kama*. In a *Beraisa* in *Sifrei* in *VeZos HaBerachah*, we have learned as in our *Talmud*.

The Questions:

Rashi presents two opposing views as to who were the stronger brothers without resolving the dispute, implying that both are plausible interpretations of the simple meaning of the text.

When Rashi comments on Moshe's blessings in *VeZos HaBerachah*, however, he asserts simply that those whose names Moshe repeated were the weak ones and they were the brothers who Yosef presented to Pharaoh (*Devarim* 33:18). And in *parshas Matos*, Rashi also states simply that Gad was one of the strong brothers (*Bamidbar* 32:17).

Why, in this context, is Rashi unsure of the correct interpretation?

Resolving Gad:

In *parshas Matos*, Moshe was asking the tribe of Gad to lead the offensive across the Jordan river in the quest to conquer the land of Cannan. In that context, Gad is clearly understood to be a physically powerful tribe. In our *parshah*, however, there is no indication of which brothers were strong or weak. Rashi, therefore, cites both options. These interpretations do not contradict each other, because in our *parshah*, the Torah discusses the brothers themselves, and in *Matos*, the Torah discusses the descendants of the brothers. It is possible that Gad himself was weak, yet his tribe was strong.

Resolving Devarim:

Our verse is the first instance where the eleven brothers are divided into two groups of five and six. The Torah does not specify the five brothers brought before Pharaoh, so there must be some other place where this division is clarified. The only other place where five brothers are grouped together is in Moshe's blessings in *VeZos HaBerachah*. There, Moshe repeated six names, leaving five unrepeated. The simplest explanation, therefore, which Rashi cites in our verse as the first, primary interpretation, is that those five brothers were the same five brothers who were presented to Pharaoh. They were the "weak ones," chosen so as to avoid Pharaoh's attention.

The first interpretation is difficult, however, because it views Shimon and Levi as being weak, while the episode of their violent excursion in Shechem following Dinah's abduction implies that they were strong. Rashi, therefore, cites the second interpretation that the six brothers whose names Moshe repeated were the weak ones, leaving Shimon and Levi among the strong ones.

In the end, however, this is not the simplest explanation, for the grouping in *Devarim* is not the same grouping of five as the grouping in our verse—Rashi is forced to explain why Yehudah is part of this grouping if he was strong. Shimon and Levi's inclusion in the weak group despite their violent revenge in Shechem can be explained as the heroic intervention of eldest brothers despite their natural weakness, and the post-circumcision fatigue of the men of Shechem certainly also made this easier as well.

In *Devarim*, however, only one interpretation fits into the simple reading: If Moshe blessed the brothers, then the repetition of names would have been an added blessing, infusing them with additional strength to compensate for their natural weakness. If the names of the strong ones were repeated, however, it would not be as a blessing, but as recognition of their superiority—a mark of endearment and prestige. The simple reading of Moshe's blessings as 'blessings', would imply that he repeated the names of the weak brothers as part of his blessing.

The Sources:

Rashi cites the source of each interpretation because it provides context and background for the divergent approaches.

The first interpretation—that the names Moshe repeated in his blessings were the strong ones—is found in "*Bereishis Rabbah*, the *aggadah* of the Land of Israel." The *Jerusalem Talmud* prefers a concise interpretive approach that avoids exhaustive dialectical back and forth. The *aggadah* of the Land of Israel, therefore, interpretes Moshe's blessing as succinctly as possible: the repetition of the names was not part of the blessing, but a new statement emphasizing the respectability of those tribes.

The second interpretation—that the names Moshe repeated in his blessings were the weak

ones—is found in “a *Beraisa* in *Sifrei* in *VeZos HaBerachah*, which we have learned as in our *Talmud*.” The *Babylonian Talmud* relentlessly pursues the ultimate resolution to a problem even if doing so requires a deep, exhaustive dialectical back-and-forth. Therefore, “our *Talmud*” sees the repeti-

tion of the names as part of Moshe’s blessing—a more sound, literal interpretation—even if this meant his blessing was longer than it could have been (as the *Jerusalem Talmud’s aggadah* explains).

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גאולה ✨
GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by **Yaakov Paley**

The Shema Yisroel... Hashem Echad of Redemption

When Yaakov and Yosef were reunited, Yosef kissed his father and cried on his shoulders, but Yaakov did not react. Rashi explains that Yaakov was reciting the *shema*. Why did Yaakov choose that moment to recite the *shema*? When he saw Yosef in all his strength and glory, he also saw into the future, that Yosef’s descendants would battle and eventfully eradicate Esav and Amalek.

When that happens, the concealment of G-dliness will end and the complete Redemption will begin. As a result, the words of the *shema* spontaneously burst from Yaakov’s lips, heralding the era in which *Hashem Echad u’Shemo Echad*, G-d will be One and His Name will be One!

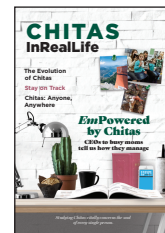
Shem MiShmuel

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת ✨

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