

# Chayus

## A Shabbos Stimulus

### THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

## הקהל

### Hakhel

#### Bringing Truth to Life

The depth of [the Hakhel] experience is indicated in the Rambam's definition of Hakhel's purpose. He writes, "The Scripture established it with the sole intention of strengthening the true religion (*das ha'emes*)."

This unusual expression is not intended to praise Judaism for being the only legitimate religion as much as it provides deeper meaning into Hakhel's function. Emes, usually translated as truth, denotes substantive authenticity which is experienced with full conviction and realness. Hakhel's success is that it uncovers the inner soul and cultivates the most powerful experience of Jewish identity. The Jew is empowered with an indisputable sense of clarity in their connection to G-d, commitment to Torah and mitzvos, and in inspiring the next generation. It is not only Judaism's religious structure which is strengthened by Hakhel, but it is also its truth and realness which are brought to life.

See *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 1, p. 231ff.  
 Excerpt from *Hakhel: The Inside Story*. Published By SIE

## סיפור חסידי

### Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber

Published by Kehot Publication Society

#### Whipping Into Shape

*When you will see the donkey of your enemy collapsed under its load, you may wish to refrain from assisting him; nevertheless, you should help him* (Mishpotim 23:5)

Once, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (later to found the Chabad Chassidic movement) was preparing to leave Mezeritch after a prolonged stay with his Rebbe, Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch. Rabbi DovBer's son, the famed Rabbi Avraham 'the Angel', came along to see him off. As the coach was about to set off, Rabbi Schneur Zalman heard Rabbi Avraham say to the coachman: "Whip the horses, so that they should cease to be horses!" (Another version goes: "Whip the horses, so that they should know that they are horses!")

For Rabbi Schneur Zalman, this remark opened a new vista in man's service of G-d. He decided to remain in Mezeritch a while longer...

Explained the Lubavitcher Rebbe:

The inner meaning of Rabbi Avraham's remark can be best understood in light of Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov's famous interpretation of the verse: "When you will see the donkey [chamor] of your enemy collapsed under its load, you may wish to refrain from assisting him; nevertheless, you should help him."

'Chamor,' Hebrew for 'donkey' is related to the word Chomer, which means 'the material'—a reference

to the physical body and its mundane drives and needs. Thus, taught the Baal Shem Tov, this verse also describes a Jew's attitude toward the body and physicality:

"When you will see the 'chamor' of your enemy..."—Initially, you will see your material self as your enemy. In the early stages of a person's struggle to refine his self and character, the physical obstructs and hinders his spiritual growth—the soul and the body are enemies.

"...collapsed under its load..."—Under such 'hostile' conditions, the Torah and its precepts are a burden to the body, despite the fact that Torah was given to man specifically to refine and elevate the physical. Not recognizing what is for its own benefit, the body resists the 'load.'

Thus, one's first inclination may be "to refrain from assisting him," to negate the material. Says the Torah, "nevertheless, you should help him"—cure the 'donkey' of its asininity, refine and develop its tremendous potential. First, make it aware "that he's a horse," bring it to recognize the coarseness of its undeveloped state. Then, "whip the horse so that he should cease to be a horse," directing its energies and resources to positive and G-dly ends.

לקוטי שיחות

A Sicha

By: [ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org](http://ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org)

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

## Helping A Donkey

**The Verse:** *"If you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden would you refrain from helping him? You shall surely help along with him" (Mishpotim 23:5).*

**The Rashi:** Rashi offers two interpretations. The simple explanation is that the verse is asking and answering a rhetorical question. [As reflected in the above translation of the verse.]

Then Rashi offers a Midrashic interpretation:

*"If you see..., you may refrain." [Meaning that] sometimes you may refrain [from helping someone], and sometimes you must help. In what circumstances may one refrain? An elder who finds it beneath his dignity [to unload a donkey], you may refrain; or if the animal belongs to a gentile and the burden belongs to a Jewish person, you may refrain.*

**The Questions:** The Mechilta, which is the source of Rashi's second interpretation, offers an additional scenario where one can refrain from helping the animal—if the animal is in a cemetery, a Kohen need not enter the cemetery, thus contracting impurity, to help the animal with its burden. The Mechilta does not, however, mention the scenario of an elder who finds it beneath his dignity to help. That scenario is mentioned by the Talmud in the context of a lost article—an elder need not return a lost article if the process is beneath his dignity.

1) Why does Rashi omit the Mechilta's scenario of a Kohen in the cemetery?

2) Why does Rashi include the scenario mentioned by the Talmud in a different context?

3) Why does Rashi need to cite examples of cases where one may refrain from helping the animal? Rashi is not a legal code, it would seemingly be sufficient to explain the implication of the verse itself—that there are circumstances where one can refrain—without offering examples?

**The Explanation:** Rashi cites the Midrashic interpretation not as a second and separate interpretation of the verse, but as he oft time does, as an elaboration and explanation of the straightforward explanation.

According to the simple reading, the verse asks a rhetorical question, "If you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden would you refrain from helping him?" and answers, "You shall surely help." But why does the verse need to address the reader's reluctance to perform the mitzvah? In the previous verse, a similar scenario is laid out: "If you come upon your enemy's... stray donkey, you shall surely return it to him." Even though one might be reluctant to return his enemy's lost objects, still, the verse does not ask rhetorically, "would you refrain from returning it?" but rather simply concludes with the command to return the stray animal. Why, then, does the Torah find it necessary to reassert the command in this verse?

To answer this, Rashi offers two scenarios from the Midrash where a person is exempt from helping the animal with its load: 1) an elderly person who either finds it beneath his dignity (or is too weak to help). This exemption articulates that if it is too physically demanding, or beneath his dignity, the person can avoid the mitzvah. 2) an animal belonging to a gentile. This exemption reveals that the reason for the command is not to relieve the animal from pain or stress—if it was, the identity of the owner would be irrelevant.

It is because of these specific exemptions, which provide a lot of room for a potential helper to recuse himself from the mitzvah, that the Torah must address the reader's reluctance to perform the mitzvah and stress the mandate to help the animal. This is also why Rashi omits the scenario of a Kohen in a cemetery, since it does not provide any additional rationale as to why a person should recuse himself from helping.

This worry that a person might not want to help, is primarily in a case of helping an animal with its burden, which is a physically taxing activity. This is not the case regarding lost objects or animals, which entails little physical effort, and therefore a person won't mind helping.

**The Deeper Dimension:** The Baal Shem Tov famously interpreted this verse as a metaphor for

the imperative to serve G-d with and through the body. "You enemy's donkey" is the body which you cannot abandon, rather, "you shall surely help him." This, however, applies to a person who is aligned with G-d's will and expectations. When a person errs and falls from the intended path, then they must sometimes "refrain" from helping the "animal." These scenarios are:

- 1) "If the animal belongs to a gentile and the burden belongs to a Jewish person." Through sin, the body is placed in the possession of "non-Jewish" forces, yet the soul remains one with G-d and is still filled with mitzvos, "the burden" which it carries "belongs to a Jew." In this case, one can fast—"refrain" from the body—to aid in the process of repentance.
- 2) An elderly person alludes to one who has acquired wisdom, who is enveloped in spiritual pursuits, and therefore has neglected the work of refining the body itself. This person may also fast so as to weaken his body and the grip of material desires,

All this fasting, however, only applied in previous generations. In our generation, we can accomplish the same objectives of weakening the "non-Jewish" forces, through charity and joy.

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 21, p.125ff*

### *Freedom in the "Seventh" (Year)*

*"If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years, and in the seventh he shall go out to freedom without charge" (Mishpotim 21:2).*

The Jewish people are subjugated by the nations during exile. They will go free into redemption "in the seventh," meaning, in the merit of their Torah, regarding which it is stated, "She has hewn her seven pillars" (Mishlei 9:1).

They will be redeemed by Moshiaich, who is described with seven titles, as it is stated, "And he called his name: Pele (Wonder), Yo'eitz (Counselor), Keil (G-d), Gibor (Mighty), Avi-Ad (Eternal Father), Sar-Shalom (Prince of Peace)" (Yeshayah 9:5).

And in the merit of their prayers, regarding which it is stated, "Seven times a day I praise You" (Tehillim 119:164). They will go free without charge, as it is stated, "For so said G-d: You were sold for nothing and you will not be redeemed for money" (Yeshayah 52:3).

### *Time for spiritual delights*

The Talmud states: “One may not marry a woman during the festivals... because we do not mix the joy [of the festival] with the joy [of a wedding ceremony]” (Moed Katan 8b).

The Hebrew word for “festival” (מועד) also means “time.” We can therefore understand this Talmudic dictum as a warning against mixing two different kinds of joy in our daily lives—our “time” in this world. We mustn’t waste our time chasing the joys of the body. With what limited time (מועד) we have, we must focus solely on pursuing the spiritual joys of the service of G-d—and not make the mistake of mixing good and evil; watering down the deep spiritual joy of the religious experience with the shallow joy and silliness of physical pleasures.

On a deeper, more kabbalistic level, the unity of man and woman in marriage corresponds to the unity of the soul and the body. Since “man” corresponds to the soul and spiritual joy, only men are commanded to appear before G-d during the festivals: “Three times each year [during the three festivals], all of your males shall appear before the Master, the L-rd, the G-d of Israel” (Mishpatim 34:23). By this G-d means that all of us, men and women alike, must forgo all “feminine” physical delights in this מועד in favor of “masculine” spiritual delights.

Although this message applies every day, as explained above, the warning against mixing physical and spiritual joy is particularly important during the festivals of Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos. For although these are times of great spiritual joy, they are also times of considerable spiritual peril, per the Talmudic dictum (Kiddushin 81a): “the festival is the weak point of the year.” During the festivals, in particular, greater caution against delighting in physical pleasures is warranted.

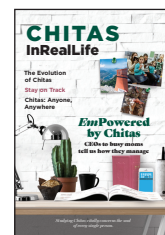
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### מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

### Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

| Book                      | Section  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Chumash – Rashi*          | Mishpotim, 7th Aliyah                                      |
| Tehillim*                 | Chapters 120 – 134   |
| Tanya*                    | Likutei Amarim Chapter 28. עמ' 70 - ממש עמו.               |
| Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos* | Positive Mitzvah #245                                      |
| Rambam – One Chapter*     | Sefer Shoftim – Hilchos Sanhedrin, Chapter 18              |
| Rambam – Three Chapters** | Sefer Kinyan – Hilchos Zechiyah U'Matanah Chapters 10 – 12 |

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