

Vayahkel | 27 Adar 1 - 3 Adar 2 | March 7 - 13



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Inside:

The Work of Shabbos

by Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Solitude

Rabbi YY: Stop Trying to Make Your Child "Fit in"

and more...



RABBI YY JACOBSON
will be in town for Shabbos

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbaim

Ephrayim Yurowitz
Tzvi Blech



This week we Bentch Rosh Chodesh Adar Bais.
The moled will be Sunday Morning 13 minutes and 6 Chalakim after 10.
Rosh Chodesh is Sunday and Monday.

Shabbos Zmanim

2024 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 12:30pm-3:30pm

5:37pm Candle lighting	5:47pm Mincha in tent א	5:47pm Chabad Mincha	5:55pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

5:37am <small>Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑</small>	8:00am <small>Shachris 2 18 main</small>	9:15am <small>Shachris 3 Tent א</small>	10:00am <small>Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑</small>	10:00am <small>Shachris 5 18 main</small>
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2:00pm Pirchei	5:35pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	5:56pm Shkiya	6:36pm Maariv 1	6:41pm Maariv 2
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Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
7:15 pm – 9:45pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim

Zmanim for the week of Mar 10 - Mar 16

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	7:16am	9:30am	10:11am	11:09am	1:06pm	5:44pm	6:58pm
Monday	7:14am	9:29am	10:10am	11:08am	1:06pm	5:45pm	6:59pm
Tuesday	7:13am	9:28am	10:09am	11:08am	1:06pm	5:46pm	7:00pm
Wednesday	7:11am	9:27am	10:08am	11:07am	1:05pm	5:47pm	7:01pm
Thursday	7:09am	9:26am	10:07am	11:06am	1:05pm	5:48pm	7:02pm
Friday	7:08am	9:25am	10:06am	11:05am	1:05pm	5:48pm	7:03pm
Shabbos	7:06am	9:24am	10:05am	11:05am	1:05pm	5:49pm	7:04pm

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People of Action

"Every Man and Woman whose heart motivated them to bring for any of the work that Hashem had commanded to make through Moshe, the children of Israel brought a free willing offering to Hashem" chapter 35-verse 29.

The wording is redundant in the verse as it says every man and woman brought with a motivated heart, and then the children of Israel willingly gave? Wouldn't it make more sense to say all of Bnei Israel made many contributions with a full heart?

Rav Yonatan Eibishitz shares with us what took place behind the scenes. The *Eirav Rav* came to Moshe to bring gifts for the *Mishkan*. Bnei Yisroel were very upset with them because they made the golden calf that separated the nation from Hashem. The building of the *Mishkan* was now a way to rectify that mistake. The *Eirev Rav* came with a lot of money and wanted to buy their way back into the nation. The Jewish people were so burnt from the whole mishap of the golden calf, that they wanted to just stay away from these people, they are bad news. They felt that things go wrong when they are involved. However, now that they offered all this money, with a full heart, it would be wrong not to accept it as the *Mishkan* would lose out. So what do they do?

Rav Yonatan explained that whatever money was needed, Bnei Yisrael took note and contributed without the participation of the *Eirav Rav*. Now the wording of the *pasuk* makes sense; every man and woman, which was the *Eirav Rav*, had real motivation to bring to the house of Hashem. But the children of Israel did not let that happen; they paid for it.

This is a lesson illustrating the correct way to right a wrong. Many times people in a community may have reason to complain as they perceive things done, as wrong. They may protest to their friends and grumble to others in disappointment. Some make demonstrations and chant their message, and scream their views to express their dissatisfaction. What are we really willing to do about our complaints? Are we willing to stick our hands into our pocket and pay, to make something right? If one protests or objects but is not willing to do something, it carries no weight at all. The Torah is teaching that actions speak louder than words; if you want to be heard, you need to get involved.

I know that in our community, we are people of action, and as we forge ahead with building and creating programs and projects, I have great appreciation to all our men and women of action. May we see lots of success.

Shabbat Shalom



Shabbos in Rome

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

Last week *hashgacha* had it that I would spend the weekend of Purim Kattan in none other than the city of Rome. Initially I was quite apprehensive especially after making a few videos based on the inspirational words of Rav Hutner z"l in his powerful Sefer *Pachad Yitchok*. Rav Hutner dives deep into the essence of Amalek which is Edom which the Roman Empire represents and hence I was thinking how can I celebrate Purim Katan which is the story of victory of the Jews over Haman which is the Arch representative of Amalek- Edom. Baruch Hashem as is always the case just sometimes we dont see it so clearly Hashem is leading our life every second and the weekend actually turned into a very emotionally and spiritual experience.

The catalyst was actually the visit that I took to the famous Arch of Titus which is referred to as the gate of victory of Titus 2000 years ago and his return with much significance gold and silver from the Bais Hamikdash and many Jewish slaves.

A very interesting not historically is the famous coliseum that houses around 50000 people was actually build by many of the half *shekel* that were supposed to be used in the *Bais Hamikdash* and instead were used to build a structure that would house terrible tragedies in humane treatment of human life and blood bath of animal and people.

I was actually thinking what is the lesson here and it dawned on me that the second *Bais Hamikdash* as we know from the Gemara in *Yoma* was destroyed because of baseless hatred and the *Shekalim* themselves actually represented the exact opposite. As the Alshich says about the half *shekel* it represented the lack of completeness without each other. As the *Ksav Sofer* explains in Parshas Teruma, the *shekalim* in the Bais Hamikdash were used for *Korban Tamid* which represent all the Jewish people as one unit and since Klal Yisrael were lacking in connectivity and unity the monies ended up being used for the exact opposite disconnection and total separation.

The main inspiration came to Friday night as I pondered my experience on Thursday of the Arch of Titus. What hit me loud and clear is the truthfulness of our Torah and *mitzvos*. What exactly hit me?

The answer is based on the third *Maamar* of Rav Hutner Z"l that discuss the idea that on Shavuot we celebrate the giving of the Torah. We as a nation received a special light of Torah and it was implanted in our hearts. Purim is a time where we tapped deep into our hearts and rediscovered with love for Hashem the that light within us.

I began to think How many of us whether we grew up frum or not from many times feel distant and closed from the reality and clarity of Judaism. To really know that 3340 years ago Hashem revealed himself and gave our great-great grandparents the Torah requires real introspection. In this case we can actually outsource. If we think about the fact that here you have billions of Romans and Christians screaming loudly yes there was Jewish nation who had an amazing Bais Hamikdash because otherwise why would the Romans be so busy and proud with the Jewish spoils of war and yes once you're already acknowledging Jewish history 2200 years back well its only few hundred years to the first Bais Hamikdash and then 480 to *Matan Torah* where Hashem announced to the world that the Jewish people will be the priestly nation who will light up the world for others.

May we see the rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdash very soon and in the meantime appreciate more and more the golden light of Heritage that every Yid owns.

Stop Trying to Make Your Child "Fit in"



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Parents and educators must be attuned to what their children and students need today, based on who they are at this very moment. Do not try to create a child who will make you look good and make you proud in your own social and religious circles. Do not try to force your child to "look good," so that everything appears normal. Your goal is to allow your children to discover their own depth, their own soul, their own beauty, their own purpose, their own creativity, and their own connection to G-d. You want to make your children believe that they are more powerful than all of their trauma; that they may have "chains," but their soul and willpower are more potent than all the chains that life conferred upon them.

How do you give youngsters that sense of power? By loving them infinitely and unconditionally. By making them feel and understand how valuable and powerful they are, and how much G-d believes in them, even if they do not believe in themselves. How awesome and perfect they are in the core of their being, which nobody can ever take away. No illness, no molester, no traumatic experience, can ever rob them from their wholesome, perfect, sacred, confident, joyful, holy and Divine core. There is a sacred unshakable purity and sense of wellness in each of us that nothing can tarnish and destroy. We need to show our children they do not need to fear their own challenges, because we do not fear them. They can talk about them, they can look at them, and they can share them with us. We love them unconditionally and we believe that a "*chelek Eloka mimaal*" – a "fragment of G-d," as the mystics define the soul – can overcome trauma, abuse, mental illness, and addiction.

Never allow your children's choices to become a personal affront to yourself, and never sever the relationship. Keep the bonds as strong as ever. Talk to experts who will help you – but experts who believe that a soul is "a part of G-d," and that every Jew is holy forever, and that – as Elijah the Prophet says (in the *Midrash Tanna D'vei Eliyahu*, chapter 14) – the Jew comes before Torah. You break the Tablets to save a Jew!

This is not because Torah is secondary. To the contrary, the Jewish soul is one with Torah. "*Yisrael, Orais, v'Kudeshah Brich Hu Kula Chad*," the Jewish people, Torah and G-d are all bound up in a singular oneness. By breaking the *luchos* (the tablets) and embracing a soul, you are allowing the *neshamah* to ultimately discover the Torah etched within her very core.

Stop trying to make your child "fit in" at all costs, even at the cost of his/her miserable future and dignity. Do not worry about what your relatives will say at the next family *simcha*. Think about one thing and one thing only: What do I need to do to allow my child to flourish, to discover his or her infinite dignity, to feel wanted, loved, cherished, and accomplished?

Talk and Listen – Constantly

We must constantly talk to our kids and listen to them.

We must talk to them about the dangers of abuse of all forms, and always, always communicate with them, watch them, listen to them, be attentive to their state of mind, and build unshakable bonds of trust with them.

More than anything, do not make them feel like outcasts, losers, disappointments. Believe in them, so that they can believe in themselves. See them as fragments of G-d, as particles of holiness, as rays of infinity.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs) | After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

UFARATZTA



Rebbe's Advice

About your questions, it is not worthwhile leaving your job now, as long as you don't have a *parnasa* as secure as this one prepared.

I am not in favor at all of selling your house for many reasons.

==== Igros Kodesh V30 P46.

SHALOM BAYIS

Shalom Bayis problems?

For your sake (and for the sake of your children), take care of it sooner than later.

Please call/text **Rabbi Yosef Shurin MSW** at (845) 596-7294.

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We have seen that there are 2 basic reasons for the *mitzvah* of *mishloach manos*: to provide food for the *seuda*, or to add to friendship. One *nafka minah* is if the receiver says “no thank you.” If the reason is to add to friendship, he fulfilled the *mitzvah*, but if the reason is to provide food for the *seuda*, he did not.

1) If Receiver Does Not Know Who Sent It

The Ksav Sofer points out another difference between the two reasons – in a case where the recipient is unaware of who sent the gift. This is quite common, as Purim finds everyone coming and going throughout the day. What happens if someone comes home and finds a *mishloach manos* by his door without a name on it. Once again this should depend on the reasons.

If the reason for giving *mishloach manos* is to provide food for the meal, the purpose has been accomplished, as he has received the food. However, if the reason for giving *mishloach manos* is to add to feelings of closeness and unity, since the person does not know who sent it, this feeling will not be there, and the *mitzvah* was not fulfilled.

The Mishne Halachos extends this to a similar case. What happens if the recipient was drunk when he received the *mishloach manos*, and was unaware of who sent the *mishloach manos*? Once again, if the reason is to provide food for the meal, the purpose has been accomplished, since he has food to eat. However, if the reason is to add to the closeness and unity, since the recipient is unaware of who sent it, this feeling of closeness and unity will not be created, and the *mitzvah* was not fulfilled.

2) Does It Make a Difference Who the Receiver Is?

The *Biur Halacha* quotes the *Chayei Adam* who rules – based on a Yerushalmi and the Ritva – that the type of *mishloach manos* a person sends should depend on the position and status of the recipient. If the recipient is a wealthy man and expects a more prestigious gift, a small and insignificant *mishloach manos* will not suffice. But, as the *Biur Halacha* points out, the other *poskim* do not mention this and seemingly disagree. He concludes that since there is a *machlokes*, one should try to be careful to send the appropriate *mishloach manos*.

What is the basis for this *machlokes*? Once again, this may depend on the aforementioned reasons. If the reason is to provide food for the meal, the purpose has

been accomplished, regardless of who the recipient is. However, if the reason is to add to closeness and unity, since he does not appreciate what you gave, this feeling will not be there, and the *mitzvah* was not fulfilled.

Summary

There are 2 basic reasons for the *mitzvah* of *mishloach manos*: to provide food for the *seuda*, or to add to the friendship. A possible *nafka minah* will be if the receiver does not know who sent it, and if a person has to give a prestigious person a more elaborate *mishloach manos*. If the reason is to provide food for the *seuda*, he has done so, but if the reason is to add to friendship, he has not fulfilled the *mitzvah*.

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara
- Currently: פרק ערבי פסחים, מסכת פסחים
- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
- Currently: הלכות שבת

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

- Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45pm
- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm

- ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR | 8:15-9:00pm Thursday Nights

ADDITIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS:

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A New Setting

Zichru Toras Moshe

One of the main supporters of the town of Brisk lost all his wealth. He had been one of the town's philanthropists for a long time; at any time of need, whether it was an individual in need or the *tzibbur*, he'd been there. The townspeople were therefore wondering why Hashem took away his money if he had been doing such good with it.

R' Chaim Brisker conveyed an inspiring analogy: "Did you ever analyze a school? If you look, you'll see that at first schoolchildren study one subject, and then they review it until they excel in it, master it, and take a test. What happens from there on? They then start a new subject.

"Isn't this unfair?" questioned R' Chaim. "They just studied for the subject, and now they start anew as if they know nothing. Why is this so?"

"The answer is: They just showed their excellence in one area, and now it's time for them to master another one and show excellence in that.

"The same is true in life. Hashem puts people through different situations so they can excel in different areas. He puts people in one situation and then takes from it and places them in another one so they can excel in the next one as well. This is what happened to this wealthy man. He surpassed the challenge of wealth, and now Hashem brought him to a new subject—the chapter of 'poverty.' Hashem wants to see him excel in it too. It doesn't mean that Hashem was unhappy with what he was doing; rather He wanted him to serve Him through new circumstances, and that's the reason for the sudden variation." (*Shimusho shel Torah*)

This equally applies to other circumstances that we are faced with. At times, we find ourselves being able to serve Hashem easier, and sometimes harder; sometimes it is a challenge with *nachas*, and sometimes it can be with friends. This time it's hard to serve Hashem because someone offended us, and the other time it's because we simply woke up late... All these are circumstances set up from Hashem so that we can serve Him under different conditions. He wants to see how we'll do in the new setting.

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29th of ADAR ALEPH



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Kiddusha Rabbah

"ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לד', כל העושה בו מלאכה יומת" 35:2

"On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death." The *posuk* says that the seventh day shall be holy for us. The *posuk* continues and says that it should be a day of "שבת שבתון" for Hashem. What is the meaning of "שבת שבתון"?

"שמרתם את השבת כי קדש הוא לכם מחללה מות יומת... כל העושה" – "You shall observe the Shabbos for it is holy to you; its desecrators shall be put to death... whoever does work on the Shabbos day shall be put to death." When the *posuk* says "מחללה מות יומת", it refers to one who desecrates Shabbos at night. "ביום השבת מות יומת" refers specifically to Shabbos day. It is only at night that one can desecrate Shabbos for the *Kedusha* is not so great. However, by Shabbos day, the *Kedusha* is so great that one does not have the power to desecrate Shabbos. One who sins Shabbos by day shall be killed, but he cannot desecrate Shabbos. (עץ הדעת טוב)

The reason that Shabbos observance is fundamental is that it bears testimony that Hashem is the Creator of the world. Shabbos 10b – Hashem told Moshe that He has a gift for Klal Yisroel in His treasury, and that gift is Shabbos. Shabbos is the gift which Hashem, the allegorical groom, gave to His

bride, *Klal Yisroel*. If the bride returns the gifts to the groom, the message is clear that the bride does not want the *shidduch*. One who desecrates Shabbos is in effect telling Hashem that he does not want the *shidduch*; he does not want the connection with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. Therefore, Shabbos observance is equivalent to all the *mitzvos* of the Torah, (חפץ חיים)

"I have always wondered why *kiddush* on the day of Shabbos, which was preceded by *kiddush* of the night, is called '*kiddusha rabbah*', a great *kiddush*. The reason usually given is that the words "קידושא רבא" is a *lashon* "סגי נהור" – "a fine language" – meaning that it is really not a "great *Kiddush*" but a low level of *kiddush*. This does not seem to be correct, that we would call something by a name which is the opposite of what it really is. The Zohar says that the *kedusha* of Shabbos day is greater than at night. We call the *kiddush* by day *kiddusha rabbah* – because the *kedusha* of Shabbos day is great." (שו"ת חתן סופר)

There are two levels of *kedusha* on Shabbos, the *kedusha* at night, and the *kedusha* of the day. "וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש" – Shabbos must be *kodosh* to us. We must have the feeling and desire to have *kedushas* Shabbos. We have the opportunity to infuse Shabbos with *kedusha* at night. "שבת שבתון לד'" – Once Shabbos day comes, the *kedusha* is one of "שבת שבתון לד'", and we can no longer infuse Shabbos with *kedusha*. We must prepare for Shabbos and work on our words and actions so that we can in fact infuse Shabbos with more *kedusha*.

May we be *zoche* to observe Shabbos properly.

Relinquishing the Need to Control

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



ויעש בצלאל את-הארן, עצי שטים: אמתים וחצי ארכן, ואמה וחצי רחבו, ואמה וחצי קמתו.

devoted spouses, parents and friends- respectful and admiring of one another.

The Aron (ark) which held the Luchos, the Ten Commandments, received by Moshe from Heaven, was specifically designed by Hashem to teach us an important life lesson.

As the *baalei mussar* tell us. change the world by changing yourself first.

All of the arks measurements, up and down- its breadth and girth were to be half measures. $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$. But why?

A teacher wanted to impart this lesson to his class. He drew a line on the board in front of his classroom.

The answer given by our commentaries should speak to the soul of every one of us – we are simply not complete without the ones we love.

"How can I make this line smaller without touching or changing it?" After many attempts, the class fell silent, unable to answer.

Dysfunction rears its ugly head, taking a toll on relationships everywhere. There are families and spouses that live each day in quiet misery and our community is by no means exempt. The urge to control and negate the feelings of those who depend on us for survival seems to have passed through the generations like a genetic mutation.

Approaching the board, the teacher drew a parallel line, five times the size of the original one, underneath it.

We live healthiest when we respect and appreciate each other. Each and every one of us is a feeling, thinking human being who was meant to thrive and grow in a warm, accepting and caring environment.

It was evident to everyone that the original line was now small.

He said to the students, "You see, the previous line has now become smaller in relation to the new line, and I have not touched it at all, indicating that we must focus on bettering ourselves instead of trying to hurt others."

When we think too much of ourselves, the temptation to belittle others can be difficult to overcome.

Working on ourselves will help our relationships with those special others in our lives.

The rewards are immeasurable. A life lived with respect, understanding and personal growth brings us a deep sense of happiness. The closer we bond together the greater this happiness grows.

The Torah was kept in an ark measured in half steps to show us that to truly absorb the word of Hashem we must never think of ourselves as perfect or immutable, but rather as humble and

Good Shabbos!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

THE WORK OF SHABBOS

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg



“For six days, work shall be done, and the seventh day shall be sacred for you” (35:2). The Talmud Yerushalmi (35:2) notes that the letter ו at the beginning of the phrase וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ indicates that this pasuk could be read, ‘work should be done for six days, and also on the seventh. Of course, *melacha* is forbidden on Shabbos. But this reading of the pasuk serves as the source for Beis Hillel’s ruling that one’s utensils may continue working on Shabbos. Thus, for example, we can have an urn keeping our water hot, and an air conditioner cooling the home, throughout Shabbos. Although we are forbidden from working, our utensils may continue working. (Beis Shammai disagrees, and requires that one’s utensils rest on Shabbos.) This is the concept that work may be done on Shabbos by one’s possessions.

Rav Yosef Sorotzkin, in *Meged Yosef*, adds further insight into the implication of the letter ו in this *pasuk*, and the notion that work is to be done even on Shabbos. He explains that Shabbos, like the weekdays, is a time for work – but a different kind of work. The “rest” of Shabbos is not defined by the absence of activity; it is not about lying in bed the entire day. The “rest” that we are to experience on Shabbos is actually

work – the work of *ruchniyus*, involving ourselves in spiritual pursuits.

Rav Sorotzkin draws two proofs to this perspective. First, he points to the fact that Adam Ha’rishon experienced his first Shabbos shortly after he was created. He came into existence on Friday, and right away, he was given Shabbos. He did not work for six days to deserve a day of rest; his day of rest came right after he was created. This proves that Shabbos is also a day of work, and not a day of cessation from work. Secondly, Rashi, commenting on the *pasuk* “God completed His work on the seventh day” (Bereishis 2:2) “What was the world missing? Rest. When Shabbos came, rest came.” Rashi writes clearly that the rest of Shabbos is a new creation. It is not simply the absence of activity; it is a kind of work. Properly observing Shabbos takes work. It means running a Shabbos table, with meaningful conversations, *zemiros*, and *divrei Torah*. It means making time for learning. It means investing effort in our relationships. We should not be approaching Shabbos as a day off, as a time to sleep. Shabbos is a day when we are to do the kind of work that we do not always have the opportunity to do amid the pressures of the weekdays.



The Redemption of Our Solitude

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt”l

At the beginning of this week’s *parsha*, Moshe performs a *tikkun*, repairing a past mistake, namely the sin of the Golden Calf. The Torah signals this by using almost the same word at the beginning of both episodes. The word used eventually became a key word in Jewish spirituality: *k-h-l*, meaning “**to gather together**”. From this root we get the words *kahal* and *kehillah*, meaning “community.” The importance of this word continues to this day. In fact, recent scientific research confirms the extraordinary power of communities and social networks to shape our lives.

The episode of the Golden Calf began with these words:

“When the people saw that Moshe was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered themselves [*vayikahef*] around Aharon” (*Shemot* 32:1).

At the beginning of this *parsha*, having won God’s forgiveness and brought down a second set of Tablets, Moshe begins the work of redirecting the people:

“Moshe assembled [*vayak’hel*] the entire Israelite congregation” (*Shemot* 35:1).

They had sinned as a community. Now they were about to be reconstituted as a community. Jewish spirituality is first and foremost a communal spirituality.

Notice what Moshe does next. He directs their attention to the two great centers of community in Judaism, one in space, the other in time. The one in time is Shabbat. The one in space was the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle, that led eventually to the Temple and then to the synagogue. These are where the *kehillah* lives most powerfully: **on Shabbat** when we lay aside our private devices and desires and come together as a community; **and in the synagogue**, where our community

has its home.

Judaism attaches immense significance to the individual. We are taught that every life is like a universe. Each one of us, though we are all in God’s image, is different, therefore unique and irreplaceable. Yet the first time the words “not good” appear in the Torah are in the verse, “It is not good for man to be alone” (*Bereishit* 2:18). This is significant. It indicates how much of Judaism is about the shape and structure of our togetherness. **We value the individual, but we do not endorse individualism. Ours is a religion of community.** This is why our holiest prayers can only be said in the presence of a *minyan*, the minimum definition of a community. **When we pray, we do so as a community.** Hence, to atone for the sin the Israelites committed as a community, Moshe sought to consecrate community in time and place.

This is arguably one of the most important functions of religion in a secular age, namely, keeping community alive. **Most of us need community. We are social animals.** Evolutionary biologists have suggested recently that the huge increase in brain size represented by *Homo sapiens* was specifically to allow us to form greater social networks. It is the human capacity to co-operate in large teams – rather than the power of reason – that makes us different from other animals. As the Torah says, it is not good to be alone.

By placing community at the heart of the religious life and by giving it a home in space and time – in the synagogue and in Shabbat – Moshe was showing us community’s potential to do good, just as the episode of the Golden Calf had shown its power for bad. **We should always strive to remember that Jewish spirituality is not about solitude. It is, for the most part, profoundly communal. Hence my definition of Jewish faith: the redemption of our solitude.**



Make 'Em Laugh, Make 'Em Cry

Ohr Sameach ohr.edu

...And the seventh day will be to you holy, a Shabbat of Shabbatot to G-d..." (35:2) Anyone who has ever prayed really well — even once in his life — is never the same again. Even if we can never again achieve that sublime contact, a spiritual postcard will forever hang in our souls to remind us of that view.

The "Aggada" — the sections of the *Talmud* that conceal the deeper secrets of the Torah — relates that the students of Rabbi Akiva once found him crying on Shabbat. He said, "I am having pleasure."

Because of his intense connection to G-d, tears welled and fell from his eyes. The *Zohar Chadash* says that he wept greatly when saying the Song of Songs, for he perceived how high those words reached.

Our Sages talk of the time before the coming of *Mashiach* as the "Ikvata d'Mashicha" — the word *ikvata* is related to the word "eikev", meaning "heel." The Jewish People are compared to the body of a man. We are the generation of the heel, the lowest part of the body. The heel is the least sensitive part of the body, and our generation is perhaps notable for its lack of sensitivity. In a way, this is a blessing, for if we really understood how low we are, we would be totally broken.

The heel is the least sensitive part of the body; you can stick a pin in the heel and barely feel it, but it is extremely sensitive to being tickled. Our generation is so insensitive, but virtually anything can send us off into paroxysms of laughter.

And if we don't laugh on cue, the studio FX man is standing by ready to dub in some "canned" laughter. Laughter is de rigeur.

Much, if not most, discourse, even of matters of state and finance and medicine and the like are carried on in the media amidst palpably forced laughter.

In *Shir Hama'alot* (Psalms 126:2) we say, "Then will our mouths be filled with laughter."

Only when *Mashiach* comes will we experience true laughter, the laughter that comes from the revelation of happiness beyond our wildest dreams. That is what it will be like.

There was once a Jewish girl, a stand-up comedienne in LA, who used to say in the middle of her act, "Comedy is dead. What you're laughing at is ridicule." She was wrong. Comedy isn't dead — but it's very fast asleep. Only "then will our mouths be filled with laughter". But in the meantime, the true feeling of being connected to G-d can bring tears of joy to our eyes.

Just so you should know...



Heavy Load

Torah Tavlin

There was once a young man who was invited, with a bunch of his friends, to go mountain climbing. He had never tried it before and although he was scared to death, he bravely went along with the group to a tremendous granite cliff. In spite of his fear, he put on the gear, took a hold of the rope, and started up the face of the rock. After a short while, he reached a ledge where he stopped to take a breather. As he was hanging on there, the safety rope snapped against his eye and knocked out one of his contact lenses. Well, here he was on a rock ledge, with hundreds of feet below him and hundreds of feet above him. Of course, he looked and looked, hoping it had landed on the ledge, but it just wasn't there. Now, slightly panicky, his sight blurry, he was anxious and desperate to get to the top and mouthed a silent prayer Heavenward to help him to find his lens.

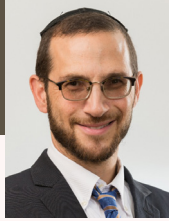
Eventually, he reached the top, where a friend examined his eye and his clothing for the lens, but there was no contact lens to be found. He sat down, despondent, waiting for the rest of the climbing party to make it up the face of the cliff. He looked out across range after range of mountains, and being a sincerely religious person, he thought, "Lord, You can see all these mountains. You know every stone and leaf, and You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me."

Finally, they walked down the trail to the bottom. At the bottom, there was a new party of climbers getting ready to start up the face of the cliff. One of them was adjusting his gear by the side of the rock cliff and suddenly shouted out, "Hey, you guys! Come here, you have to see this." As a number of people gathered around, they saw a startling sight: An ant was moving slowly across the face of the rock, carrying a contact lens that was double its size! All the climbers came over to look, including the grateful young man, and they all stood around marveling and joking about this amazing sight.

Later, he told over the story to his Rebbe and he agreed. "Sometimes we don't understand why Hashem causes us to carry a heavy load. Just like the ant undoubtedly had no idea what it was carrying - it wasn't food and he would have no use for it. But if we went along with the attitude that, 'I don't necessarily understand why it is I do what I do, but if Hashem wants me to carry this burden then I will,' we'll see that in the end it'll all work out for the best. Hashem doesn't always call the qualified, He qualifies the called!"

Dual Aspect of Shabbos

Rabbi Shalom Rosner



Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to Hashem. (Shemos 35:2).

As we are instructed to build the Mishkan we are reminded of the sanctity of Shabbos. Chazal derive from this juxtaposition that the 39 *melachos* performed in the Mishkan are prohibited on Shabbos.

We celebrate Shabbos as a day of rest every week on the seventh day. Is this day of rest related to the hard work of the previous week, or is it to gain strength for the following week (after all, one can recite *havdala* until Tuesday, so Shabbos has a connection to the following week)?

It may seem like an esoteric distinction, but it actually has an impact on a *halachic* discussion that appears in the Talmud. A question is raised in *Messeches Shabbos* 69: if an individual is traveling through the desert and loses track of what day of the week it is, when does he observe Shabbos?

According to Rav Huna, that individual is to immediately count six days and the seventh day he is to observe the Shabbos. Chiya bar Rav argues that such an individual would immediately observe the Shabbos and then count six days until the next Shabbos.

The *Shem M'shmuel* explains the difference in opinions (citing his father the *Avne Nezer*). Shabbat has two aspects. One that relates to the completion of creation, and another that relates to gathering strength for the future.

Rav Huna subscribes to the view that believes that Shabbos reflects the completion of creation and is a day to rest from the hard work conducted throughout the previous week. Therefore, an individual who lost count of the days of the week should count six days and then "earn" a Shabbos.

Rav Chiya bar Rav believes that the first Shabbos was observed the day after man was created, and so it is the first day that one should observe when lost in the desert. After Adam Harishon transgressed, he was able to rest on Shabbos and regain his strength and ability to persevere and rebuild for the following week.

These two aspects of Shabbos are reflected in the *luchos* as well. In *Parshas Yisro*, when Shabbos is described in the first *luchos*, it is related to the six days of creation. In *Parshas Vaeschanan*, when Shabbos is described in the second *luchos*, Shabbos relates to *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*. *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* can be viewed in a similar fashion to Adam's initial transgression. In Egypt, as a people, we sunk to the 39 levels of *tumah* (impurity). *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* and later *Matan Torah*, reinvigorated us spiritually to be able to proceed, as the Shabbos provided strength for Adam Harishon to continue.

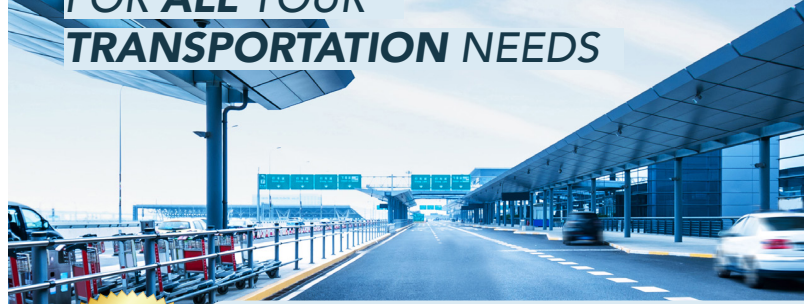
As we celebrate Shabbos, we should bear in mind this dual aspect of Shabbos. One the one hand, reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of this past week and utilize the day to be able to recharge our physical and spiritual being so that we can garner the strength to succeed at all our tasks in the upcoming week.

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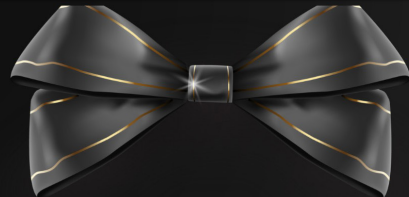
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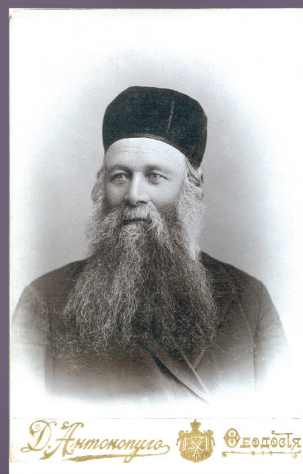
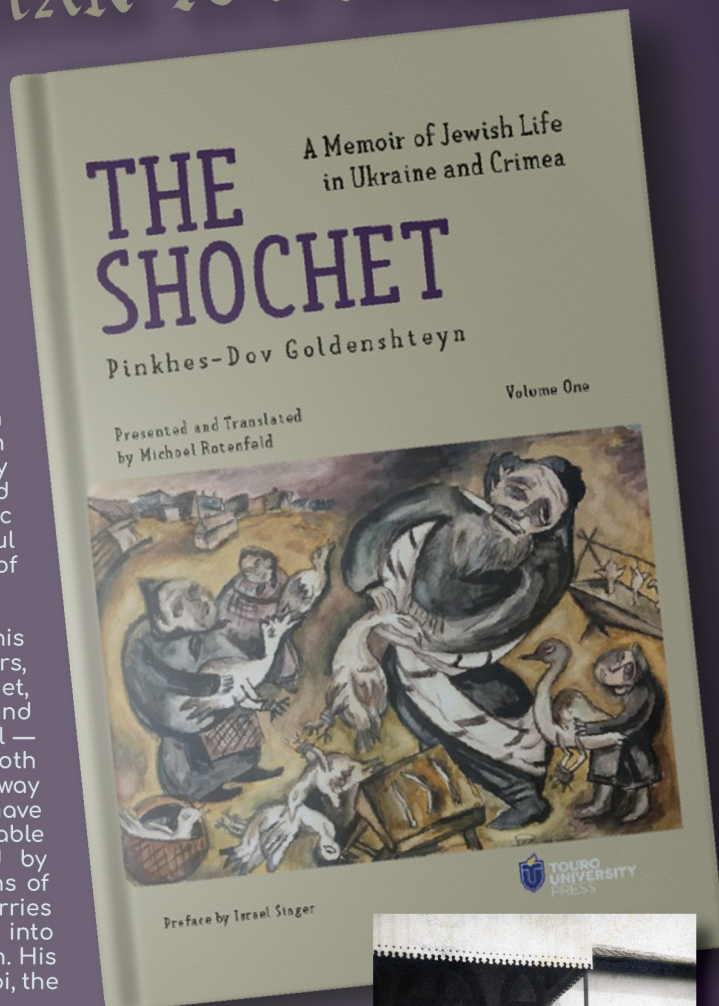


LIFE IN THE SHETTEL WAS HARDER THAN YOU THINK

We don't have to wonder what life was like in the shtetl or rely on stories we heard as children. While Orthodox Jews did not traditionally write memoirs in past generations, Pinkhes Dov Goldenshteyn (1848-1930), a talmid chacham and a shochet, tells us in raw detail about his life as a poor orphan in Ukraine without nostalgia or white-washing. Goldenshteyn wrote his Yiddish memoirs to strengthen the belief in Hashem and hashgacha pratis of his children and grandchildren in America and elsewhere, some of whom were wavering in their religious commitment. With the translation of those memoirs into English, a new generation can also feel that wave of complete faith while also seeing the difficulty of life in nineteenth century Ukraine. Many Jews then were entrenched in poverty, scared of forced enlistment in the Czarist army and surrounded by family and community who struggled to survive on a daily basis. Despite all these basic challenges, the hard life was full of faith, love, plentiful moments of shared joy and the profound feeling of Hashem's presence throughout life.

In this first of two volumes, which traces the years from his orphanhood, when he was raised by his doting sisters, through his maturation into a Torah scholar and shochet, Goldenshteyn endures tremendous hunger, suffering and humiliation. Readers see what life was like in the shtetl — the cold, the hunger, the difficulty of travel. They see both good and bad marriages, family members who give away their last piece of bread to a loved one and others who have more but refuse to help, the hierarchy of suitable candidates for shidduchim, the corruption caused by desire for money and honor. Despite these hard truths of life, Goldenshteyn's story uplifts readers. His faith carries him through his difficult time. His struggles bring him into personal contact with the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch. His search for parnassah brings him to where the town rabbi, the Malbim, receives him with honor. His quest for a bracha and advice leads wealthy laymen to give him the unusual role of a minor celebrity for carrying a cherished esrog to the Lyever Rebbe. His faith and his personal integrity ensure that his life is filled with blessings even if he chronically lacked food and money.

The story of Pinkhes Dov Goldenshteyn's life is enhanced by his literary skill. He writes like a professional storyteller, leading readers in suspense and dropping bits of foreshadowing until we turn every page hoping to learn the next twist in his eventful life. Ultimately, the reader sees how the different pieces of his life fit together like a puzzle, as if a plan was always there waiting for Goldenshteyn to walk into it. Hashem is the true protagonist of this story of life in the nineteenth century shtetl. The rich often lose their wealth. Social status comes and goes. Strength of character, loyalty, honesty, piety and generosity last longer than the vanities of this world. As we read about Goldenshteyn's tumultuous life, we learn about one person's unvarnished experiences in the legendary shtetl of a world that no longer exists.



A 1922 photograph of Pinkhes-Dov Goldenshteyn, standing in the foreground with his white beard parted in the middle. Standing on the first step is Rabbi Yisroel Aba Tsitron, the rabbi of Petakh-Tikva and the son-in-law of the Rogatshover Gaon.

The Shochet: A Memoir of Jewish Life in Ukraine and Crimea
by Pinkhes-Dov Goldenshteyn. Presented and translated by Michael Rotenfeld.
Published by Touro University Press.
Available for purchase on Amazon

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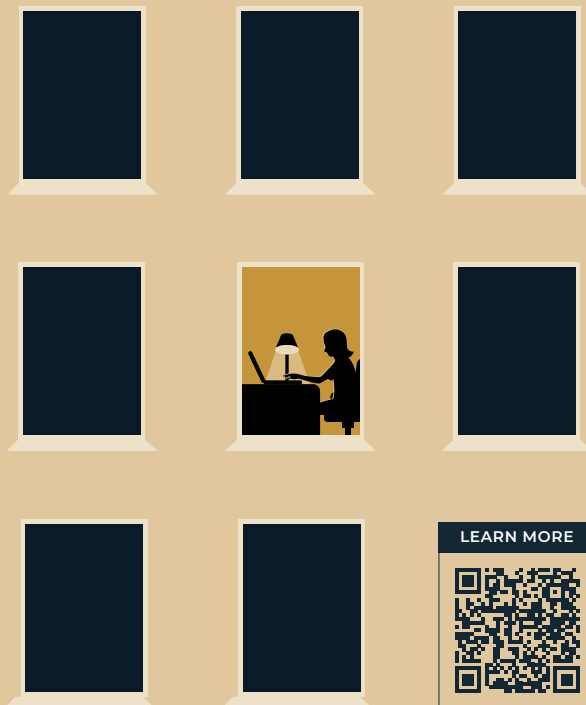
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JOKES

Career Change

Abe Horowitz had been a salesman in the garment district all his life, but was getting tired of the constant battles with customers. So he decided to give up his job and become a policeman.

Several months later, a friend asked Abe how he liked his new role.

"Well," Abe replied, "the pay is terrible, the hours are too long, and I've gained 10 pounds because of all of these donuts, but the one thing I love is that the customer is always wrong."

Customer service

If you understand English, press 1. If you do not understand English, press 2.

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In the West

One morning Brezhnev (the Soviet communist leader) looked out the Kremlin window and saw the sun. "Sun," he said, "Who is the best man in all the world." "You are! You are!" said the sun.

At noon, Brezhnev again looked out the Kremlin window, saw the sun, and asked "Who is the best man in all the world." "You are! You are!" said the sun.

At sunset, Brezhnev again looked out the Kremlin window, saw the sun and asked again, "Who is the best man in all the world."

"Well, it sure isn't you," said the sun, "you see, I'm in the West now and you can't catch me."

Who's Listening?

"How is married life?" David asks his old buddy Abe.

"It's quite simple," Abe responds. "When we got engaged, I did most of the talking and she did most of the listening. Later, when we married, she began doing all of the talking and I began doing all of the listening. Now, ten years later, we both do all of the talking and the neighbors do all of the listening."

At the Dentist

Ethel and Herman Epstein interrupted their vacation to go to the dentist. "I want a tooth pulled, and I don't want any pain-

numbing shot because I'm in a big hurry," Ethel said. "Just extract the tooth as quickly as possible, and we'll be on our way."

The dentist was quite impressed. "You're certainly a courageous woman," he said. "Which tooth is it?"

Ethel turned to her husband Herman and said, "Show him your tooth, dear."

VP

A man's bragging about his promotion to vice president of his company got so out of hand even his wife was annoyed. "Look, being a vice president isn't that special," she said. "They even have a vice president of peas at the supermarket!" Not believing her for one second, the man called the supermarket and demanded, "Get me the vice president of peas!" The clerk replied, "Fresh, canned, or frozen?"

Pleats

Shoshana loved the dress that she bought for a bargain. It fit perfectly, and the skirt was a swirl of intricate pleats. She wore it confidently to an simcha and glowed when a woman exclaimed, "Oh, how stunning!" Shoshana was grinning from ear to ear, until she added cheerfully, "Hang on to it, honey. Pleats will come back someday."

Nursing Math

A friend took her son to the doctor's office after he sprained his finger. The nurse applied a splint, only to be told she'd put it on the wrong finger.

"I'm very sorry," she said. "That's OK," my friend's son said. "You were only off by one digit."

Stop and Go

Q: When do you go at red and stop at green?

A: When you're eating a watermelon.



HA HA

The best measure of a man's honesty isn't his income tax return. It's the zero adjust on his bathroom scale.

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