
A Jewish

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

by Zelig

Zelig Sharfstein & Sholom Rosenblum



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A STORY

Three years ago, 10 year old Zelig met his big 'Yeshiva Bochur' friend Sholom, and that was the beginning of an incredible journey.

Thanks to My Shliach's program Ach Sheli, young Chabad kids around the world are paired with Yeshiva friends to learn once a week. Zelig & Sholom were paired up and began learning via zoom weekly. The two hit it off & Zelig was thrilled to meet Sholom in New York a few months later. They continued learning & renewing their Chavruta match each year.

One Shabbat day, as Zelig shared what he had learned that week at the Shabbat table, he had an idea. What if he typed up the little Torah thoughts each week and shared them with family? We all loved it! And so each week Sholom would guide Zelig in writing these thoughts up on his own. We would then send them on whatsapp to family & Alumni.

Today we've compiled the best of those 'Thoughts', based on the teachings of the **Lubavitcher Rebbe**, for you, Zelig's friends to enjoy throughout the year!

Thank you Sholom for your incredible dedication and the insight you have shared with Zelig all these years. May you be showered with much blessing & Torah wisdom!

Thank you to our family members who pitched in to do a little editing & make this book a reality. Thank you Bubby Nomi Freeman, Aunt Chaya Dubinsky & Uncle Mendel Adelman.

Rabbi Shlomie & Shifra Sharfstein
27 Nissan 5784 - May 2024

NOACH

Every story in the Torah has messages and lessons for us, so what is the lesson in the story of Noach?

One important thing we learn, is that even if everyone is doing something, it does not mean we have to do it too!

In the story of Noach, everyone was doing wrong: stealing, worshiping idols, engaging in forbidden relationships and many other things.

Noach did not join in and partake in those bad things! And that was good not only for him but for his whole family and eventually for the whole world. When G-d destroyed the world with a flood, Noach's family was saved and humanity survived.

Lesson: The same applies to all of us. When we do good, we benefit, all our surroundings benefit, the entire world benefits! All the good we do accumulates, and brings the ultimate good: the coming of Moshiach, may it be right now!

NOACH 2

In this week's parsha, Parshas Noach, Noach sent out a raven to see if the world was dry after the flood waters went down. But the raven did not check if the world was dry and instead circled the Ark.

After 7 days, Noach brought the raven back in. He waited another 7 days and sent out a dove. But the dove also could not find land. Another 7 days later, he brought the dove back in as well. He waited (you guessed) another 7 days and sent the dove back out. 7 days later, the dove came back with an olive branch.

He waited yet another 7 days and re-sent the dove to search for land. This time, the dove did not come back. That showed Noach that the earth was dry.

Question:

Why did Noach check if the earth is dry? Later on, the verses make clear that he only exited the Ark when Hashem told him to. If he anyways was going to wait until Hashem said before going out, why send the birds? Just wait for the command!

Story:

When the Ruzhiner Rebbe was a little kid, he asked his father for an apple. His father did not want to give him an apple and refused. So what did he do? He had a brilliant idea. He said the bracha with Hashem's name. His father was forced to give him the apple so he would not have said Hashem's name in vain.

Answer: The same is true of Noach. He did everything within his power to show Hashem that that he was ready to leave. Noach knew that if he did his part and showed Hashem he was ready to leave, Hashem would do his part and tell Noach to get off the Ark.

Lesson: The same applies to us now. Even though it's up to Hashem to bring Moshiach, we can't just and do nothing and wait. We have to do Torah and mitzvos to show Hashem that we are ready for moshiach. When we make it crystal clear to Hashem that we want moshiach now, that itself will make Hashem bring moshiach now!

TOLDOS

The name of this week's parsha is Parshas Toldos. The first words of the Parsha are **ואלה תולדות יצחק** which means: These are the children of Yitzchak. And a previous Parsha also starts with **ואלה תולדות** but then has **נח** after that because it is Parshas Noach.

Question: The Rebbe asks why is Parshas Noach called Noach it should be called Toldos, and Parshas Toldos should be called Yitzchak?

Answer: The Rebbe explains that the naming of the parsha is not just a word from the beginning of the parsha rather there is a reason why they are all called their names. And in our case there is a special reason to the order of why the first time these words appear we use the person's name and only afterwards we use Toldos. First and foremost the Torah stresses the specialness of a Yid / Jew himself and that even the body of a yid is holy. And afterwards comes Toldos which are children and spiritually that means the Torah and Mitzvos of a yid. Because a yid is so special and hashem chose him, he is able to keep them.

Lesson: The lesson for us is that when we see another Jew we love them and we care for everything they need not just for the ruchniyus / spiritual things like teaching them Jewish things but also we take care of their physical needs money/food/clothing....

And no matter who they are cause every yid was handpicked by hashem himself.

AND MAY THAT BRING MOSHIACH NOW!!!!

VAYEITZEH

In the story of the famous dream, where Yaakov sees a ladder going up to Heaven, the Pasuk says: **וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא** - And He (Yaakov) slept in that place - which means that he only slept there but he did not lie down to sleep during the 20 years that he lived in Lavan's house.

The Medrash asks, what was Yaakov doing during those 20 years at Lavans house?

The Medrash explains that during his time at Lavan's house, Yaakov was busy saying the 15 chapters of Tehillim that start with the words "Shir Hamaalos".

Question:

Why does the Medrash ask what Yaakov was doing? We know clearly from the text, that he was busy taking care of Lavan's sheep!

Answer:

Yes, Yaakov was shepherding Lavan's sheep; but what he was *really* doing was working hard elevating the hidden Kedusha (sparks of holiness) in Lavan's house! That's why he had so much mesiras nefesh, (personal sacrifice) to stay there, even though it was far from an ideal place for him.

Now we can understand the Medrash.

The next question is, how did Yaakov Avinu have the strength, not only to remain unaffected by such a negative environment, but to elevate everything around him to Kedusha (holiness)?

The explanation is that by saying the chapter of Tehillim “Shir Hamaalos Esa Einai El Heharim Meain Yavo Ezry” (“I lift my eyes to the mountains, from where will my help come?”) - Yaakov recognized that it’s not because of his own strength that he succeeded, rather “Ezry Meim Hashem” (“My help comes from G-d”) - we get all the help and strength we need from Hashem!

Yaakov also made accessible to the world the awareness that “Oseh Shamayim Va’aretz” - Hashem is the One who made and runs this world.

Lesson: When we do something to elevate the world (mitzvos), we have to remember that it isn't our own strength but the strength that Hashem gives us that provides us the ability to do it and if Hashem wouldn't give us the ability, we would not be able to do anything.

In practical terms: when we wake up in the morning we should daven (talk to G-d) and have a set time to learn Torah. Then, not only learn Torah at that time, but all around the clock, here and there, open a book of Torah and look inside it as much as possible!

VAYIGASH

Yosef told his brothers that he would give them the land of Goshen to settle in. So Yaakov sent Yehudah one of his sons, to go ahead of their family and establish a yeshiva in Goshen.

Question: Why did Yaakov send Yehudah ahead? Why couldn't he rely on Yosef who was already in Mitzrayim; he would surely care for their needs and establish a Yeshiva?

Answer: All the other Shevatim were shepherds and working in the field far away from the rest of the world but Yosef was a second in command to Pharaoh and was running the whole Mitzrayim. The other Shevatim had a hard time being around lots of people; they would get distracted and leave their ways. But Yosef which had a greater Neshama was able to integrate in a massive non Jewish city and still be able to learn torah the same as they did.

So therefore when Yaakov wanted to establish a Yeshiva for the Shevatim, he sent Yehudah to do so because if he would have sent Yosef to it wouldn't have been solely learning. That would've been fine for Yosef, as he was able to handle it. But the other brothers wouldn't have been able to learn like that. So he sent Yehudah so it would be a yeshiva without any other distractions.

Lesson: The lesson for us is that when we learn torah we should not have any other things on our mind, only think about torah because everything else is secondary! And when Moshiach comes those other things won't even be interesting we will only think about Hashem and his Torah!!

VAYIGASH

towards the end of this parsha, Yosef tells his brothers, that he's about to die, and G-d will eventually rescue / redeem them from Egypt. He tells them that when someone will come and use the words פקד יפקד, that is the secret code, it means they will soon be freed and leave Egypt.

In the previous Parsha, (Vayigash) we saw how Yosef's family, the Jewish people, came down to Egypt because of Yosef.

Question:

Why are he move into Egypt and the liberation and exodus from Egypt so connected to Yosef?

Answer:

Yosef was different than his brothers. he was able to go down to Egypt and stay connected to hashem! why? Because Yosef was connected to hashem in a way that is beyond nature. This is why Yosef was able to give strength to his brothers and the entire Jewish people so they would be able to rescue and liberate all the spiritual sparks that were hidden in Egypt.

Lesson:

The lesson for us is that we have rebbe as our spiritual guide, our own Yosef! The Rebbe, with his teachings, empowers us to stay strong and elevate the world around us, preparing it for the coming of Moshiach now!

SHEMOS

In this parsha, Hashem, G-d, asks Moshe to go back to Egypt and save the Jewish People from their slavery to Pharaoh.

Moshe responds: שלח נא ביד תשלח

According to the Medrash this means “send the one you will eventually send” which is Moshiach. We see from these words that Moshiach could have replaced Moshe, showing that there is a special connection between Moshe and Moshiach.

QUESTION:

What is the special connection between Moshe and Moshiach?

ANSWER:

In order to bring Moshiach we need to learn Torah and do Mitzvos. We got our first opportunity to do that when Moshe brought us the Torah from HaShem at Matan Torah/ the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

LESSON:

The lesson for us is that through adding more Torah and Mitzvos in our life we bring geulah (redemption; a utopic state of World peace, universal good health and spiritual revelation) to our personal life and we bring Moshiach now!!

VA'ERA

In this week's parsha, Moshe relates to the exhausted Jews in Egypt that Hashem promised to bring them out of slavery. His message contained 4 terms of redemption: "redeem", "free", "save", and "take them" from Egypt. These 4 words represent the 4 geulahs/redemptions from the exiles/galus. The fourth word, "and I will take you", represents the final redemption from the exile we're in now.

These words were written while the Jews were still in exile in Egypt. So, even when we were still in that exile, Hashem promised that we would be redeemed from the exile we are currently in. The process of our redemption began even then. The Frierdiker Rebbe said that from the moment we left Egypt, we are moving towards Moshiach.

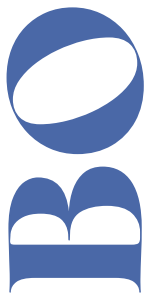
We know that when Hashem promises us something good, nothing can change that. He will make it happen. It is inevitable. If we were promised redemption from this exile, we can be sure it will happen. We know that Hashem has already begun the process of bringing about the positive promise of redemption.

Lesson: We need to know that the redemption is already happening. Hashem is right now working on taking us out of exile. That gives us extra strength to push on and not be distracted by all the worldly things. With that strength, we can work together and bring Moshiach now.

In this week's parsha, parshas Bo, it talks about the Korban Pesach, the Passover Offering. In Egypt, Hashem told the Jews to take a sheep into their house and watch it for four days. Four days later, they were to slaughter it on the day before they left Egypt.

Question: Why did the Jews need to take the sheep 4 days early? They could have just waited until the day before the Exodus and take the sheep then. They could have slaughtered it on that same day. Why did they need four days to watch it?

Answer: The Midrash says that the Jews kept it in their house so the Egyptians would ask what they were planning to do with the sheep. The Jews would be forced to tell the Egyptians of their plans to slaughter them.



That was a dangerous thing to do. The Egyptians worshiped sheep and would not take kindly to the plans to slaughter them. Yet, the Jewish People took the sheep for four days and bravely told their neighbors their plans. They had self-sacrifice, Mesiras Nefesh, to follow the commands of G-d. It was in the merit of that Mesiras Nefesh, that Hashem took them out of Egypt.

Lesson: Although we don't live in Egypt, we all have our own personal Egyptian exile inside of us. Just as the redemption from Egypt was due to their Mesiras Nefesh of not being afraid to do what Hashem told them to do, even in the face of the anger of others, so too now Moshiach is coming in merit of our pride and self-sacrifice for our religion.

BESHAALACH

There are two wars in this week's parsha. They are:

- 1) Pharaoh attacking the Yidden on the way out of Mitzrayim.
- 2) Amalek attacks the Yidden and tries to stop them from getting to Har Sinai and receiving the Torah.

During the war with the Mitzriyim Hashem said, "Keep going and I will fight for you." But with Amalek, Bnei Yisrael had to make an army and fight for themselves.

Question:

Why is it that at the war with the Mitzriyim the Yidden didn't need to fight and instead Hashem fought for them, but by the war with Amalek they had to fight for themselves?

Answer:

One war was stopping the yidden from having an easy physical life, and the other war was stopping them from getting the Torah at Har Sinai. When it came to the war with Amalek, which was stopping the Yidden from getting the Torah, the Yidden did whatever it took to get the Torah, even making an army to fight Amalek.

From where did they have the strength to fight this war? From Moshe Rabbeinu—from being anshei (people of) Moshe, and from Moshe Rabbeinu holding up his hands at the top of the mountain.

Lesson:

Whenever the Yetzer Hara tries to stop us from learning Torah and doing Mitzvos, we have to fight back and remember that our strength is through being connected with the Rebbe. And the Rebbe gives us all the kochos we need to fight our Yetzer Hara and to bring Moshiach now.

When the Torah introduces the Ten Commandments, it says: “And Hashem spoke all of these words, to say.”

Question:

The phrase “to say” is common in the Torah. It usually is said by Hashem to Moshe, and it means that he is supposed to say it to the Jewish people. Here though, it doesn’t seem to fit. All the Jews were at the Giving of the Torah. So, who were they supposed to say it to if everyone already heard?

Answer:

The phrase “to say” here means that Hashem is telling the Jews that they should bring the Ten Commandments into the concept of “speech”. The Mishnah says that the world was created by Hashem’s ten utterances. So, “speech” represents the physical world.

To bring the Ten Commandments into “speech” means that a Jew should not observe Torah and mitzvos as separate from everything else in their life. We should not have a “spiritual” part of our lives and a “physical” part of our lives. Rather, a Jew’s whole life should be permeated with Torah and mitzvos. Every part of his life should be according to Torah’s lessons. When a Jew makes all parts of their life, even eating and sleeping, into part of the commands of Hashem, that fulfills the purpose of making this world a house for Hashem- bringing about the coming of moshiach now!

YISRO

MISHPATIM

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Mishpatim, we talk about the prohibition of eating milk & meat: לא תבשל גדי בחלב אמו - do not cook a tender young animal in its mother's milk. The prohibition not to eat any meat in any milk is learned from later verses.

Question: Why does the Torah tell us about not eating milk and meat in this way?

Answer: The answer is that the Torah is telling us the base of the prohibition, which is that a person cannot mix meat and milk because it's cruel to eat a baby animal cooked in its mother's milk.

Lesson: The Torah is teaching us how careful and sensitive we have to be even to animals. How much more so to a fellow human being, and even more so to a fellow Jew, because every other Jew is part of the chosen people. And through adding in Ahavas Yisroel we will bring Moshiach now!

MISHEPATIM 2

This week's parsha discusses many mitzvos and laws. One of the laws is the law of Shor Tam and Shor Muad. A Shor Tam is an ox that gored one or two times, and for that the owner has to pay only half of the damage. A Shor Muad is an ox that gored at least 3 times and the owner would have to pay for the full cost of the damages. The Rambam rules that if an animal became a Shor Muad by one owner and then changed owners the ox goes back to being a Shor Tam.

Question

Why does the ox revert back to Shor Tam when changing owners? Why should it matter who the owner is if the ox itself is still a dangerous animal because it gored 3 times?!

Answer

It's not fair to charge the second owner if he wasn't properly warned to properly watch over the ox so that it shouldn't gore. Only after it gored 3 times and the owner is warned each time then they could charge him the full amount for the damages.

Lesson

We each have an animal within us (a Shor - Ox) - the Yetzer Hara. True, we don't necessarily have the capability to change our Yetzer Hara or totally get rid of it like a Tzadik can, but what we **can** do is transfer the ownership of our inner animal to Hashem - a new owner. By keeping ourselves busy all the time with Torah and Mitzvas and making sure that everything we do, even our physical needs, are for Hashem, we get another chance to start again and gain control of the animal within us, our Yetzer Hara, and bring Moshiach now!

TERUMAH

The beginning of this week's Parsha talks about the donations that the Jewish people gave to the Mishkan. And the Torah mentions the word Teruma 3 times.

Rashi explains that the Torah is talking about 3 different Terumas / donations;

1. The first one was for the sockets holding up the beams for the Mishkan and for that Teruma the Jewish people each gave half a shekel.
2. The second Teruma was for the daily Korbanos and for that the Jewish people also each paid a half a shekel.
3. The third Teruma was to gather all of the supplies needed to build the rest of the Mishkan. And for this Teruma they were able to give any amount of supplies they wanted.

Question

Why for the first two Terumos were they only allowed to give a half shekel and for the third one they were able to give as much as they wanted?

Answer

For the Korbanos it makes sense to only bring half a shekel, as the Torah says "Lechaper Al Nafshoseichem", the daily Korban atones for the sin of the golden calf. But why for the sockets did they have to give only half a shekel, no more and no less?

Every Jew must make within himself a Mikdash (special place) for hashem. Like we learn from the Pasuk "Ve'asu Li Mikdash V'shachanti Bsocham" and the Midrash learns from the word Bsocham "Besoch Kol Echad V'echad" that each and every person has to make a Mikdash within themselves.

Every part of the physical Mishkan is reflected in the personal Mishkan of every individual Jew. The sockets of the Mishkan which were the foundation that held up the beams represent Kabolas Ol (recognizing Hashem) which is the foundation of our relationship with hashem. And this basic recognition is the **same** for every single Jew.

But the rest of the Mishkan represents our individual understanding and connection to hashem which is different for every person depending on their level.

So for the Adonim - sockets - every yid gave the same, but for the rest of the Mishkan every Jew gave a different amount. And may we be Zoche to build our own personal Beis Hamikdash and also build the third and final Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim!

THEZAVAH

In this week's parsha, Hashem told Moshe to gather Aharon and his sons to bring them closer to him and make them Kohanim. Rashi explains that Moshe was meant to do this after he finishes building the Mishkan.

Question:

Why does Rashi say that Moshe should do what Hashem told him after building the Mishkan? Why can't he do it right away?

Answer:

One of the special things about Moshe was that he was able to go all the way up Har Sinai and all the other people were not. Moshe was the middleman who allowed other people to connect to Hashem. Without Moshe first creating the bridge, the people could not get the Torah and hear the commandments from Hashem. The same is true of the Mishkan. The Mishkan is so holy. It is where Hashem revealed Himself. In order for the Cohanim to be able to enter there, Moshe needed to pave the way first. So, by making them Cohanim only after he finishes building the Mishkan, he allowed the Cohanim to be able to enter. As it says in the passuk "you should draw Aharon your brother close to you together with his sons".

Lesson:

There is a Moshe in each generation. In each generation, there are righteous people who act as middlemen, allowing us to find paths to come closer to Hashem. If we want to "enter the Mishkan" and become as holy as possible, we need to connect with the holy people around us. Just like the Cohanim came close to Moshe to get the ability to serve in the Mishkan on behalf of all of the Yidden, when we connect to the Rebbe, that will allow us to become leaders and help all Jewish People.

VAYAKHEL

In parshas Vayakhel, Moshe gathered all the Jews and told them the instructions and details for building the Mishkan, a mobile House of Worship they would use in the desert.

This took place after Moshe came down from Mount Sinai, bringing the second set of tablets, the Luchos. Rashi says that Moshe did not gather all the Jews the day he came down from Har Sinai, which was Yom Kippur, rather he gathered them the next day.

Question:

Why did Moshe wait until the next day? Why didn't he tell them about this mitzvah that day, which was Yom Kippur?

Answer:

On Yom Kippur, right after Moshe came down from Mount Sinai, all the people were learning Torah because Moshe had just brought the second set of Luchos and told them a bunch of mitzvos that Hashem had just taught him on Mount Sinai.

Moshe only got around to discussing the building of the Mishkan the next day.

Lesson:

The lesson for us is that in order to be able to make our lives and the world into a Mishkan, a residence for Hashem, we need to first learn Torah.

Torah sets us on the right path. Only then are we able to use everything in the world for good. And by making a Mishkan in ourselves and the world we will bring Moshiach now!

VAYAKHEH PEKUDEH

Intro: A few weeks ago, we spent two entire parshiyos, Terumah and Tetzaveh, learning about all the details of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). Yet, in this week's parshios we talk about how the Jews built the mishkan. We go through all the details of the mishkan again, even though the torah already discussed it at length earlier.

Question: Every letter in the Torah is exact and has a purpose. So how is it possible that the torah repeats the whole thing in detail again?

Answer: When the torah talked about the mishkan in the earlier parshiyos, that was a conversation about the mishkan between Hashem and Moshe while Moshe was on Mt. Sinai. It was a prophecy given to a person who was half in heaven.

But in this week's parsha it goes through how the people actually built the Mishkan out of physical materials such as gold, silver, copper. It was not merely a spiritual conversation. It was practical and physical.

So, which of the two descriptions of the Mishkan say that it would be Hashem's home where His presence would be? You guessed it! That idea only appears in our parsha, where the regular Jews are building a physical Mishkan.

Lesson: There are a lot holier people than us out there. But we can't belittle the impact of our physical actions. It is the physical actions that actually change the world, making a home for Hashem and bringing Moshiach.

PEKUDEI

The Midrash says that entire Book of Shemos (Exodus) talks about how the Jews left the darkness of exile and then went into light and freedom.

Question:

Why does the Midrash say that the whole Book of Shemos talks about the Jews leaving Egypt? The beginning talks about the slavery. It describes the suffering and how they cried out. It isn't all about freedom. It has slavery as well.

Answer:

Even the beginning which talks about the slavery is part of the redemption. The whole purpose of the exile is to allow us to dig deeper and find more power in ourselves. It is a "descent for the sake of ascent". It allows us to reach higher than we would without it. So, even the exile is part of the process of redemption.

Lesson:

The lesson for us is that any situation we find ourselves in, we must look for the good in it. We must know that there is a reason why this is happening. Even if it is difficult, that can allow us to reach higher than we would without that challenge. And especially in these last moments of galus (exile), we need to remember that every moment we spend here is to bring the best geula (redemption), right now!!!

METZORA (& PESACH)

Strange white rashes on skin... that's what we call tzaraat. In Parshas Metzora we learn about Tzaraas and how it is a sign from Hashem that we need to do teshuvah for the mistake we made. Tzaraas was mainly caused by speaking Lashon Hara, speaking badly or harmfully about another person.

Question:

Timing is everything in Judaism. This year Parshas Metzora is read in the month of Nissan on the shabbos before Pesach, known as the great Shabbos, Shabbos Hagadol. What is the connection between Tzaraas and Pesach? If the timing coincides there must be a connection.

Answer:

There's a beautiful Midrash that says that in the merit of the Jewish peoples Emunah, their belief, they were freed from Mitzrayim, Egypt. A Jewish person's knowledge that there is a G-d is not based simply on the need for there to be a creator of this universe.

That conclusion is an important one but not necessary for the Jew. A Jewish person with a neshama, a soul, can feel at his core that he is a part of Hashem & that Hashem is giving him life at every moment. When a Jew sees a natural or miraculous occurrence, the gut reaction is not to explain it scientifically rather he first recognizes that Hashem is involved in this moment and in every moment of life to fill it with meaning. In the merit of that special Emunah, belief, the Jewish people were freed from Mitzrayim.

If that's so then those same Jews who saw Tzaraas on their skin didn't think that it was just a natural condition, rather it was a sign from Hashem to fix their ways and do teshuvah. They also recognized that if this was coming from Hashem it must be for the good. Sometimes when tzaraas suddenly appeared on the walls of houses, the Jewish people would break down that wall and find money and treasures that had been hidden and lost inside.

Lesson:

The lesson for us is that we need to recognize that everything that happens is from Hashem and if its from Hashem it will surely be good. Even if something isn't working the way we want it to work we should know that it is a sign from Hashem to strengthen our emunah our faith and trust in Hashem. And in the merit of that Emunah we will merit the Geulah now!

ACHAREI- KEDOSHIM

The two Parshiyot of Acharei Mos and Kedoshim are usually read together. The thematic connection between the two is obvious. Both of the parshios talk about Kedusha/holiness. Parshas Acharei starts off by talking about the holiest person, in the holiest place, at the holiest time. It talks about Aharon (Kohen Gadol, High Priest) in the Kodosh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies) on Yom Kippur. And in Parshas Kedoshim, it starts off with the mitzvah of being holy.

Question: What do these two parshiyot teach us about holiness?

Answer: Acharei mos means after the death of Aharon's sons. They passed away after entering the Mishkan at the wrong time. They reached such a high level of kedusha and connection with Hashem that their souls couldn't stay in their physical bodies any longer. "They came close to Hashem and they died."

So Acharei, after the death, is telling us that there isn't truly an end to holiness. It isn't as if there is a limited amount of holiness and spiritual connection to G-d that we can have. Even "after the death", there is still more room for growth. There is always "after", more and more holy.

From where does a Jew have strength and capability to always climb higher? Here comes Parshas Kedoshim and teaches that "Kedoshim tihiyu ki kodosh ani"- "You shall be holy because I am holy". Our holiness comes from Hashem's holiness. Since Hashem's kedusha is unlimited, and we have a neshama-soul which is a part of Hashem, we too can tap into that infinite holiness. Our holiness also has no limit.

TLesson: Every Jew, no matter who, could always be holy. No matter where, no matter when, and no matter who, there is always more and more holiness that we can gain through Torah and Mitzvos. No one should think "I can't go any higher" or "I am too low to be holy at all". Every Jew has a neshama which is a part of Hashem. We are connected to infinite holiness, and we will merit to have the holiest times with the coming of Moshiach now!!!!!!!!!!

EMOR

Rabbi Yeshaya Halevi Horowitz, known as the Shalah, writes that the Parshiyos are connected with the holidays they fall out around. This week's parsha's connection to the time of year is very clear. This Parsha talks about the mitzvah of counting Sefiras Haomer, and it falls out in the Omer period. The mitzvah of Sefiras HaOmer is to count each day between the holidays of Passover and Shavuos.

In the Alter Rebbe's siddur, Sefiras Haomer is the last thing. The Alter Rebbe's siddur is very precise, and everything in it, from the notes, to the order, is intentional.

Question: Why is it that Sefiras HaOmer is the last thing in the siddur?

Answer: Sefiras Haomer is a prayer where it is obvious that just saying the words without understanding them isn't enough. It's not enough to just repeat what everyone else is saying. You need to know what day you're counting in order to fulfill the Mitzvah. Intention and understanding the words you are saying are essential to fulfill the mitzvah.

This is not only true of Sefiras HaOmer. It is true of prayer as a whole. Prayer is not only about saying the words. We also must have Kavonah - intention. We need to know what we're saying. We are meant to talk to Hashem.

This is why the Alter Rebbe put Sefiras Haomer at the end of the Siddur, because it teaches us what Davening is all about. It is not about making sounds. It is about talking to Hashem.

Lesson: The lesson for us is that we should add in our Kavona in prayer. We should pay closer attention to the words we are saying and what they mean. Through that, may we merit to finish counting Sefiras HaOmer and celebrate shavuot in Yerushalayim with Moshiach in the 3rd Beis Hamikdash!!

BAMIDBAR

Jewish people love numbers. This Parsha is a taste of that as we're drawn into a story of the Jewish people being counted. The counting was done by Moshe, Aharon and the 12 leaders of the 12 Tribes.

Question: Why was the counting done by the most respected and most important leaders of the Jewish people? Moshe is known as Rabeinu, our leader, Aharon hakohen was the kohen gadol (high priest) and the 12 Leaders of the tribes were the greatest of all leaders.

Answer: Every yid has a neshama, a soul that is as a literal part of Hashem, we call that a *חלק אלוק ממעל ממש*. When the first human was created, hashem blew into Adams nostrils a breath of life, that breath was a soul. A deep breath comes from deep inside a person & hashems breath was spiritually the same, coming from a very deep place, the source of all souls within G-d. Because every Jew is a part of Hashem each of us is truly special. Counting of something so special couldn't simply be done, it needed the proper respect. Moshe, Aharon and the Nesiim, the leaders knew exactly how to have the proper respect for every Jew and so they had to be the ones counting.

Lesson: The lesson to us is that we need to have the proper respect for every yid/Jew because every yid is a part of hashem. Anything we do for another yid should be done in the best way possible. And when moshiach will come we will be able to see hashem in everything and the neshama in every yid will shine clearly for all to see. May it be NOW!!!!!!!!!!

NESHAMA

In this week's Parsha it talks about a situation where a wife acts not right. The passuk uses the words "ki sisteh," which literally means that she "went off," because she went off the right way. But there is another understanding of the word: that it comes from the word "shtus," meaning to act silly. So from this passuk we learn that a person only does an aveira out of acting silly and not being himself.

Question:

Why do we learn this specifically from this passuk in this story? As we know, everything in the Torah is exact.

Answer:

The pesukim say that the man takes his wife to the Beis Hamikdash and in the Beis Hamikdash, the kohen takes the writing of this passuk and scratches it into a cup with a bunch of other things. And then the woman drinks what is in the cup. If the woman was guilty, she passes away. But if she was innocent, then she survives, and gets a blessing to have healthy children.

Even though the wife acted in a silly way that led her husband to suspect her, she can still come to the Beis Hamikdash, be proven innocent, and get Hashem's bracha. So too, even after a Yid chas v'shalom acted silly and did an aveirah against Hashem's will, he still has a neshama and he remains connected to Hashem. And it is never a lost case chas v'shalom.

Lesson:

Especially now in the days right before Moshiach we should live in a Moshiach way by bringing our neshama to find strength through anything in our life so we are prepared for the coming of Moshiach instantly!!

BEHA'ALOSCHA

The beginning of the parsha talks about Aharon Hakohen lighting the Menorah.

Even though in the last moments of galus we don't have the physical Beis Hamikdash and the menorah, it's lessons are eternal until the third Beis Hamikdash will be built, may it be now.

The lesson of lighting the menorah is that we should light the candle in everyone's neshama.

Amongst the dinim (laws) of lighting the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash there are the following three:

1. Yisraelim can light the Menorah.
2. Only Kohanim can set up the Menorah.
3. The Menorah can only be lit in the kodesh or the heichal.

Lesson:

There is one lesson for each of the 3 laws:

1. Every Jew, no matter who, can light another Jew's candle—their neshama.
2. Only the nasi (leader), who is just like a kohen because his whole life is devoted to Hashem, can tell every Jew how to light their candle and to light other people's candles.
3. You have to go out and not just think all about yourself but go and search for other Jews to light their neshamos. Just like the menorah has to be in the holiest place it could be in, so too we only complete our task and mission of our neshama when we do the most we can possibly do.

SHLICH

This week's parsha starts off by talking about the meraglim—spies who the Jews sent into Eretz Yisroel (Israel). The spies were sent there to see the strength of the inhabitants of Israel so they'll know their weaknesses and the best way to wage war on the land. When the meraglim came back, they said a bunch of lies and bad things about the land, and that it is impossible to conquer it.

QUESTION: How could it be that the tzaddikim (righteous men) Moshe chose made such a bad mistake?

ANSWER: Moshe asked them how they could naturally conquer Israel. But instead of just bringing back the information of how to conquer the land they added that it's impossible. The one thing they forgot when they went was that they were shluchim (messengers) of Moshe so there was no reason to be afraid, but they were. So they came to the conclusion that it was impossible to conquer the nations of the land.

LESSON: The lesson for us is that we are all shluchim in our own special way. And "שְׁלוּחוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם כְּמוֹתוֹ," every shliach (messenger) is like his mishalayach (sender). Our mishalayach is the rebbe and through using all the kochos (strengths) that we have, we will have Moshiach in Yerushalayim now!!!

ROSH HASHANAH

This year, as you all know, the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls out on a shabbos. So we do not blow the Shofar on the first day of Rosh Hashanah (Shabbos). The reason that we do not blow the shofar on Shabbos is because someone might carry a shofar outside.

Chassidus asks, just because a few uncaredful people might carry a shofar outside, why does the whole world need to not blow shofar on shabbos which is such a special mitzvah that crowns Hashem? The answer is, because Shabbos itself brings out the fact that Hashem is king over the whole world, so it accomplishes what shofar would have accomplished.

Question: Hashem wants us to crown Him as king. How can Shabbos be a replacement for us?

Answer: There 2 ways to crown Hashem as king: 1) By blowing the shofar, and 2) by being like nothing in His presence, showing that He is a king and we're in awe of His greatness. On Shabbos, that's what we do. We are in to much awe to do anything, we can't even blow the shofar.

And when Moshiach comes we will be able to blow the shofar on Shabbos because there will be a proper beis din to make sure nobody carries.

SUKKOS

We Jewish people are really into names. Most of our Yomim Tovim don't have just one name, they have lots! Sukkos has 3 names and each one tells us something about this special Yom Tov.

The first name is Sukkos, because of the mitzvah to live in a Sukkah, then there is Chag Ha'asif, The Holiday of Harvest, because this is the time of year to bring in the crops, and then there's the name the Mishna calls it, which is simply "Chag" — this is THE holiday!

So here's the question the Rebbe asks, Why is the main name of Sukkos about a Sukkah? Why not give it a name after the other main mitzvah which is daled minim (shaking the Lulav & Esrog)? How about calling this Yom Tov Chag Hadaled Minim!

Here's the idea: The mitzvah of Sukkos, living in a Sukkah, starts right when the actual Yom Tov starts. The daled minim are only used the next morning after Sukkos begins. We get up in the morning, shake the lulav and then we're done with that Mitzvah for the rest of the day! The sukkah, on the other hand, is a mitzvah for the whole day. The sukkah is therefore the main mitzvah of sukkos; We eat in it, we live in it, and practically everything we do is in the Sukkah. Even more so, even when we're out of the sukkah we still feel connected to it because it's our home where we live.

Here's the big life lesson: Just like with the Sukkah, where we live it everywhere we go, so too everything we do in life, not just davening and learning, but eating, sleeping, and playing sports, we should do it all for Hashem. This will make the whole world a Dira Bitachtonim and bring Moshiach now!!

SIMCHAS TORAH

On Simchas Torah we celebrate that we've completed reading and learning the entire Torah. We dance around the Bimah holding the Torah, which is rolled up and covered.

Question:

The Rebbe asks: why do we dance with the Torah rolled up? Really we should celebrate with it open, we should read from it and learn it!

Answer:

On Simchas Torah we connect with the essence / core of the Torah itself, which is much greater than we could ever understand.

Through all the dancing and celebrating we become deeply connected to the Torah, re energized and empowered to read it and learn from it for the entire incoming year. Until moshiach comes and reveals to us the greatest secrets of the Torah! May it be right now!!

CHOF CHESHVAN

When a special day comes around, I like to think about what happened on that day and what it means to me. Today is the 20th day of Cheshvan, Chof cheshvan and it's the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, the 5th Chabad Rebbe.

Story: The Rebbe Rashab once went to his grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek crying and asked, 'Why did Avraham, the first Jew, get to see Hashem? Why can't I see Hashem?'

The Tzemach Tzedek explained: 'Avraham put his own ego aside and did something incredibly challenging just because Hashem asked him to. At 99 years old he had a bris Milah, circumcision. And therefore he had the zechus (privilege) to see Hashem.'

Lesson: The lesson we learn from this story is that we all need to be so pained not only from physical discomfort but from the fact that we don't see Hashem. The Rebbe Rashab cried as a young boy because of this.

The Tzemach Tzedek tells us that we can all connect and live with Hashem more revealed in our lives. When we make a decision that the many distractions of this world won't get in the way of what Hashem tells us to do, we make that happen. Not only that but by focusing on what's truly important in life we will uncover the shechinah of hashem, G-d's presence here in this world and bring Moshiach now!!

YUD TES KISLEV

Yud Tes Kislev is a day when the gezeira (decree) went away and Hafatzas Hamaayanos (teaching Chassidus) went to a whole new level. And we are able until today to learn and spread Chassidus.

Story 1

Once, in the times of the Magid of Mezritch, Reb Pinchas Koritzer and the Alter Rebbe were walking together in the street and they saw a page of Chassidus lying on the floor. Reb Pinchas got very upset and said, "What is this doing on the floor? A disrespect to Chassidus!"

The Alter Rebbe told him a mashal (parable):

There once was a king who had an only son.

His son for whatever reason got really sick suddenly and the king had all of the doctors he could find come and try to help, but nothing was helping. One day, one doctor said to the king that he had come up with a medicine that would work but for that medicine they would need a special type of gem.

The king quickly said, "Where is it? Do you know?" The doctor said yes. So the king asked, "Where is it? I will get it!" The doctor said, "No need to, it's right here." "Where?" said the king. The doctor said, "It's one of the special gems in your crown and without that gem we can't make the medicine." The king quickly said, "Take it." The doctor said, "Even if only a tiny bit goes into the prince's mouth he will heal."

In the same way, Hashem was able to bring down a lot of Chassidus just so that at least a tiny bit we can grasp. Later the Magid asked the Alter Rebbe what happened. The Alter Rebbe told the whole story and at the end, the Magid said that through that mashul he took off the gezeirah of spreading Chassidus.

Story 2

When the alter rebbe was in jail, the Baal Shem Tov and the Mezritcher Maggid came to visit him. While they were there, The Alter Rebbe asked, “Why was I arrested?” The Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid answered, “Because you are spreading too much Chassidus.” The Alter Rebbe asked, “Should I stop spreading so much?” They answered, “No, in fact, you should continue and spread even more than you were doing before.”

Question

If the alter rebbe was the one who took off the gezeirah of spreading Chassidus, why was he having doubts about stopping?

Answer

The reason for not spreading pnimiyus haTorah—Chassidus—is not because there is a problem with pnimiyus Hatorah chas v'shalom, rather it is because most people won't be able to fully understand it.

And in later generations, we HAVE to learn Chassidus, and for that, there are two reasons and two ways of learning Chassidus befitting each reason:

The first reason is, even though learning pnimiyus haTorah could be a bit of a problem, now, because of how bad galus became, and the low level that the neshamos reached we NEED to learn Chassidus to arouse and awaken the neshama. That's what the Baal Shem Tov started and the Magid and his talmidim continued.

But there's another reason: We have to prepare for the times of Moshiach and one of the main ways of preparing for Moshiach is by learning Chassidus. And that is what the Alter Rebbe started!

And that's why the way of learning Chassidus of the Baal Shem Tov and his talmidim is very short and unexplained. Why? Just enough to awaken the neshama. But to prepare for Moshiach, Chassidus needs to be explained in an easy-to-understand way. Which is what the Alter Rebbe started.

And now that the gezaira was taken off, it is an obligation to teach and spread Chassidus as much as possible, especially Chassidus Chabad.

And for that, we will be zoche with the coming of Moshiach now, like Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov, **לכשיפוצו...קאתי מר**.

CHANUKAH

The Rambam, in his section about the laws of Chanukah, says that if Shabbos falls out on Chanukah and a person only has enough money to either buy shabbos candles or chanukah candles, They should get Shabbos candles. The Shabbos candles take precedence over the Chanukah candles.

The reason for this is because shabbos candles are lit to “make peace in the home, so that no one will trip on rocks or stones, and so they can eat their meal with light.” The obligation to light Chanukah candles is secondary to the obligation to make peace.

The Rebbe notes that this law is out of place. It really should be in the laws of Shabbos, not the laws of Chanukah. Why did the Rambam put it in the laws of Chanukah instead?

The Rebbe explains that the Rambam is hinting that when a person chooses to light Shabbos candles instead of Chanukah candles, they aren’t “pushing off” the mitzvah of Chanukah candles. They are actually fulfilling it by lighting Shabbos candles.

The entire purpose of the Torah is to bring peace to the world. All of the mitzvos are for that goal. So, if you only have enough money for one set of candles, and you bring peace into the home by lighting Shabbos candles, that accomplishes the goal of Chanukah candles by bringing peace into the world, which is also the purpose of Chanukah candles.

The lesson for us is that making peace takes precedence. The purpose of the Torah is to bring peace to the world. So, we need to make sure that we are doing mitzvos in a way that accomplishes that. And when we take actions to bring peace to the world, we are fulfilling the Torah.

CHANUKAH 2

The Chanuka story is a wild one & it's best summed up in the lines we read in the Al Hanisim prayer:

“You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah.”

There's so much packed into those words! I'd sum it up by noting that in total 5 types of people will be delivered into the hands of 5 types of people.

Question: Chanuka is all about a battle we fought to overcome our enemies, why mention here a bunch of spiritual things? It makes sense to say the weak won the strong and the many won the few. But adding in the impure and the wicked and sinners into the hands of the spiritual ones, that doesn't seem to fit with the storyline here! Those are spiritual factors and Al Hanisim is talking about a war.

Answer: It turns out there are two stories going on in the Al Hanisim, both hinted to in different words. When it says 'the weak won the mighty' or when we say 'the few won the many'. it's talking about the Jewish battle against the Greeks. That's the battle we're all familiar with. But when we talk about the 'impure into the hands of the pure' or when we mention 'the sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah' then we're talking about a purely spiritual divide and that one was different. This was about Jews who had left the Jewish ways and joined the Greek culture. They had turned their backs on their own people and their connection with Hashem. Our description here is therefore a much more spiritual one.

We end the Al Hinisim by celebrating our victory and recognizing that it was Hashem at our side who gave us that victory. True many Jews left their Jewish ways, but look at how many brave Maccabee's stuck to being Jewish even though it was so difficult! The Jews who won that inner spiritual battle had Hashem on their side! That power from above is what gave us the strength to win.

Lesson: Many times we view the Jewish struggle with the world as a purely physical war, a battle of might & wit. The truth is though that there is always a deeper battle going on, it's the one within the Jewish people. The first one between ourselves, a test to see if we as a people will get along. And the second one inside ourselves, a test to see if we remain committed to our connection with Hashem. At all times, the truth remains the same, our strongest strength is learning Hashem's Torah and doing Mitzvos. No matter what our people endure and how much modern times change us, Torah is eternal and it is still our strongest strength. With that inner strength and commitment we will bring Moshiach now!!

YUD SHEVAT

Yud Shvat is a special day for Jews around the world today. The Friediker rebbe (previous Chabad Rebbe) who led the Jewish people to thrive out of the ashes of the holocaust, passed away.

A year later, the Rebbe finally agreed to become the next Chabad rebbe. The Friediker Rebbe left us with a very powerful teaching, a maamer about a beautiful garden. Each year on Yud Shevat the Rebbe would explain in depth another part of that teaching. The words quoted from Shir Hashirim are 'באתי לגני', which means "I came to my garden...".

The Rebbe explain the Hashem refers to this world as his garden, his beloved space to find comfort in. Many people look around and might think that this world is not such a great place, there's a lot that makes our world look like a wild jungle. But that is only for those who see the outside only, if you look on the inside you will see how this world is really hashems beautiful garden.

QUESTION:

When a person comes to the Jewish people and says, 'I want to join you, help me convert!' we tell them that the Jewish nation goes through a lot of suffering. 'Why would you want to join a people who suffer so much?'

How does all that suffering fit with what we are saying that if you look on the inside, this world is hashem's beautiful garden?

ANSWER: The world can be viewed from 2 perspectives, the outside superficial view or the deeper inside view. Each of us is capable of understanding that this world is a special place, because a Jew is able to understand the power of a Mitzvah. Every Mitzvah we do makes a difference and gives us and the world around us an everlasting connection to Hashem.

That's why every physical comfort and pleasure is not worth anything compared to being able to connect to Hashem in His world. Most people though only see the physical things that happen to us and have a hard time appreciating the deeper side of things. That's why we tell someone who wants to convert that so many bad things are happening to us. To a person who values a life of truth that would be like like telling someone who made billions of dollars that he lost one. It's all a matter of perspective.

The world can be a jungle or a beautiful garden, what do you want to see? By focusing less on the physical and doing more torah and mitzvos we will bring Moshiach now!

PURIM

When we read the verse בלילה ההוא ("That night"), in the Megillah, which is talking about how in the middle of the night Achashverosh could not sleep.... the reader raises his voice. The reason given is that this is the main part of the miracle.

QUESTION:

Why is this the main part of the miracle? It really should have one of the other parts of the story ie; when Esther tells Achashverosh that Haman is trying to kill her people.

ANSWER:

The Midrash says that when the Megillah says that the king couldn't sleep it was also referring to Hashem. It wasn't that until that moment, Hashem was totally "sleeping" and ignoring the Jews. Rather, Hashem's protection over the Jews wasn't fully revealed. And that was because the Jews were spiritually sleeping.

Only after Mordechai put on sackcloth and ashes and all the Jews fasted and prayed did they spiritually awaken, which "woke up" Hashem's protection of the Jewish People. Hashem saw all the Jews had mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice) for their religion. Not even one had the thought to convert to save their lives. When Hashem saw that, He also "woke up" and saved the Jews!

LESSON:

The lesson for us is that the depths of our Neshama (soul) is always awake; it just needs to be revealed and brought out in order to be seen. When we bring out the essence of our Neshamas, that will awaken Hashem's protection and bring redemption and salvation to the entire world!!

PESACH

The Haggadah says that the Torah talks about 4 different types of people who come to the seder. Those people are the Chacham (wise person), Rasha (evil person), Tam (simpleton) and She'eino Yodea Lishol (one who can't even ask).

Question:

Why are they listed in this order? Seemingly it should start with Chacham and end with the Rasha. And even more so, why do we even invite the Rasha to the seder in the first place?

Answer:

The Gemara says אף אל פי שחטא ישראל הוא - even though he sinned he is still a Jew. Every Jew, no matter who, has a neshama, it's just that by some it could be covered up and hidden.

That's what the Haggadah is coming to teach us by putting the Chacham next to the Rasha. It shows that just like the Chacham has a Neshama, the Rasha does too, even though he does a lot of sins. And he is also connected to Hashem no less than the other sons.

It says that the Jewish nation is compared to the Torah because the Torah has hundreds of thousands of letters and if even just one letter is missing the whole thing is pasul (not usable). And the same is with us Jews, if even just one of us are missing, the whole nation is incomplete. So by making sure that even the Rasha is by the Seder, all Jews are united and complete.

Additionally, the Haggadah's lesson to the Chacham is that he should see it as his obligation to help and teach the Rasha. And that's not all, the Rebbe introduces a fifth son which is the son who doesn't even come to the Seder because he doesn't even know about it. It's up to us to bring him to the Seder and to teach him about Hashem and about Torah and Mitzvos.

And through the unity of all the Jews we will have Moshiach speedily in our days and when Moshiach comes which will be this Pesach we will merit to celebrate Pesach with the Korban Pesach in the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim!

SEFIRAS HAOMER (& BAR MITZVAH)

Every day between Pesach and Shavuos we count Sefirat Ha'Omer. Jewish tradition says that if someone misses a day of counting sefiras haomer they can no longer say a Bracha when counting for the remainder the Omer. This is because once you've missed a day you can no longer count the next day with everyone else. For example, if you missed day 2 you can't say the next day is day 3 if you personally didn't have a day 2.

Question: What if someone has their Bar Mitzvah during the Omer, would the counting before their Bar Mitzvah count or would it not count because it wasn't yet a Mitzvah for them? And instead he'd have to start "counting" from the middle without a bracha.

Answer: Even before his Bar Mitzvah there is the Mitzvah D'raban (Rabbinic Mitzvah) of Chinuch (education and training). And that Rabbinic Mitzvah makes the days 'count' enough for him to be able to continue after that he becomes Bar Mitzvah, even with a Bracha!

Similarly, if moshiach comes during the Omer. Because some people say that counting Sefirah now is only a Rabbinic Mitzvah and in the times of Moshiach when we will again have the Beis Hamikdash the mitzvah of counting Sefirah will be Biblical again. But still we will continue counting with a bracha!

Lesson: Even though our Torah and Mitzvos will be on a much greater level in the times of Moshiach we still shouldn't underestimate the power of Torah and Mitzvos nowadays, especially considering the fact that it is these Mitzvahs that will bring Moshiach!

LAG B'OMER

Lag Baomer is one of the most mystical and fascinating dates on the Jewish calendar. Lag in the Hebrew is ל"ג, which is the number 33. It is the 33rd day of counting between Passover and Shavuot, a time called the 'Omer'. This special day is marked by celebrations and public rejoicing.

Question:

Why is Lag Baomer a special day?

Answer:

Lag Baomer commemorates the passing of a very great scholar and leader of the Jewish people, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. He lived during Roman times and was a student of the famed Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Shimon spent years hiding from the Romans who threatened to kill him. His life was always spent in Torah learning. The year in hiding found him in a cave with his son eating Carob & studying the mystical secrets of Torah. It was there that he wrote the 'Zohar'.

Lag Baomer is the day Rabbi Shimon passed away and united with Hashem. For a great and holy person that moment of reconnection with Hashem lifts up all the Torah learning they did to greater heights. The bond is an incredible one of unity & so for Rabbi Shimon it is a very special day.

The Rebbe teaches, that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was on such a great level even his friends didn't know he was so great. They simply didn't understand what he was saying because it was beyond their understanding.

And yet what was the last thing Rabbi Shimon did? His lifelong passion, he gathered his students and shared with them the secrets of the Torah. Secrets so deep they had never before been taught. Secrets so deep, the house filled with a holy light. Even though he was on such a great level he made sure to share his Torah wisdom with all of us, even though we didn't understand it all.

Lesson:

In the same way Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai shared his torah and joy with us we should do the same & share the secrets of the torah & chassidus with others, especially with kids. And by doing this we will help bring moshiach now!

SHAVUOS I

Three things happened on Shavuot:

1. We got the Torah.
2. David Hamelech passed away.
3. The Baal Shem Tov passed away.

Question: Everything is in divine providence and not just a coincidence, so what's the connection between these 3 things?

Answer: All three are connected to 3 steps in the same goal which is to connect this world with Hashem and make him a home in this world.

1. At Matan Torah, Hashem made himself available in this world.
2. Then, Dovid Hamelech built the Beis Hamikdash which is the completion of using things in this physical world for Hashem by making a house for Hashem with physical stuff.
3. The final goal will be reached when Moshiach comes and the kedusha coming down from Hashem will truly permeate the world. The preparation for that is learning Chassidus and that's what the baal shem tov started.

Lesson: The lesson to us is that now in the last moments of golus, right before Moshiach comes, we should learn and spread as much Chassidus as we can so that we and our surroundings will be as ready as possible to greet Moshiach now.

SHAVUOS 2

On Shavuot we celebrate that we received the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Question:

The Talmud says that our Forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov had the Torah and passed it down from generation to generation. So if before Matan Torah the Jewish people already had the torah, what was so special about matan Torah?

ANSWER:

Before we received the Torah at Har Sinai there was a 'decree' from heaven that spirituality can't come down into physical things and that physical things can't go up and become spiritual things.

At Matan Torah it all changed. Because the whole reason Hashem created this world was so that we could make a Dira Bitachtonim (a home for Hashem here on earth) and that decree it got in the way of making a Dira Bitachtonim.

So after Hashem took away that decree at Matan Torah, now we can connect physical things with spiritual things by doing Mitzvahs with physical objects. Now holiness can come down into this world in a way that it permeates this world.

And hashem gave us the strength and ability to this when He Himself came down to us on Har Sinai

Lesson:

This repeats itself every year when we celebrate Matan Torah. Each year Hashem reveals himself to us and gives us all the strength to build a Dira Bitachtonim and bring Moshiach NOW!!!

BIRTHDAY (& CHAI ELUL)

Chai Elul, the 18th of Elul, is the birthday of the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov. It is also the day the Baal Shem Tov revealed himself to the public as a holy figure. Convinced by his teacher, Achia HaShiloni, the Baal Shem Tov chose the 18th of Elul to become a spiritual leader. What special lesson can we learn from the birthdays of the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov? What can we learn from the ideas of birthdays as a whole?

Question: What is so special about birthdays? At first glance, it doesn't seem like a happy day. A birthday is a time when you forgot all the Torah you learnt when you were inside your mother's stomach. You left the warm womb where everything was provided for into a cold world. Why make it a happy day? As you can see, when the baby is born, the baby is usually crying and sad; rarely smiling and definitely not laughing.

Answer: In the mother's stomach, a baby does have everything they need. They are even taught the whole Torah. But they are just a part of their mother. The birth is when they get their own body and can do their own things. It is when they become their own person. Then, they can learn Torah on their own and serve Hashem on their own.

That is what we are celebrating. That we can work on our own to learn Torah and do what Hashem wants of us.

Lesson: We need to remember that we are here for a reason. Hashem gives each of us a mission in this world that no one else can take care of. And that is a reason to celebrate!

Mazal Tov!

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Thank you for joining us!

