

## Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim Yisro 5773

(From the archives)

### Shabbos in the Parasha

In this week's parashah it is said (Shemos 18:1) *vayishma Yisro chohein Midyan chosein Moshe es kol asher asa Elokim liMoshe uliYisroel amo ki hotzi HaShem es Yisroel mimitzrayim*, Yisro, the minister of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard everything that G-d did to Moshe and to Israel, His people – that HaShem had taken Israel out of Egypt. The literal translation of the word *vayishma* is and he heard. Rashi quotes the Gemara (Zevachim 116a) that states that Yisro heard about the defeat of Amalek in battle and about the splitting of the Sea, and therefore he came. It is said (Shmuel I 15:4) *vayeshama Shaul es haam*, Shaul had all the people summoned. Thus, the word *shama* can also connote gathering. What is the association between hearing and gathering? In the simple sense, when one listens to someone else's summons, he is essentially gathering his hearing faculties and concentrating on what the other person has to say. In a deeper sense, however, the idea of gathering is that one is taking leave of what he has previously been engaged in and he is now embarking on something new. Yisro, according to the Medrash (Mechilta Yisro 1), had sought out and worshipped every single idol that existed in his time. Yet, Yisro ultimately forsook all the idols and religions and entered

himself under the wings of the Divine Presence, i.e. he converted to Judaism. Yisro was able to leave everything that he believed in behind him and embrace HaShem and His Torah. Thus, *vayishma Yisro*, Yisro did more than hear. Yisro left what he had been accustomed to and he embarked on a new career. This is the lesson of this week's parashah. Too often we are stuck in the daily grind of religious observance, without any battle with Amalek or splitting of the Sea to pull us out. Nonetheless, we all battle the Evil Inclination, who Amalek represents, and we all struggle to earn a livelihood, which the Gemara (Pesachim 118a) compares to being as difficult as the splitting of the Sea. When HaShem allows us to witness victory over the Evil Inclination and to be cognizant of the Divine Providence in the area of sustenance, then we are forsaking the pagans of our time and we are embracing HaShem and His Torah similar to Yisro in his time. There is another aspect to Yisro and his new path in life. It is said (Shemos 18:10) *vayichad Yisro*, Yisro rejoiced. It is insufficient to stir from complacency and still be worried and depressed about what life will bring. One must rejoice in his great fortune of being able to serve the King of Kings. Who was gracious enough to grant us life and bestow upon us the opportunity of studying Torah and performing mitzvos. Furthermore,

HaShem gave us the Holy Shabbos, when one does not have to be concerned for the Evil Inclination, as all harsh judgments depart with the onset of Shabbos. One is also prohibited from engaging in labor on Shabbos, and this knowledge alone should allow us to realize that it is not our efforts that sustain our existence. Rather, it is HaShem and His Holy Torah and His Holy Shabbos that allow us to exist. Let us all take up the clarion call of Yisro by gathering our strength to hear the voice of HaShem that will lead us to greater service of HaShem and His Holy Torah.

## Shabbos in the Zemiros

### Eishes Chayil

Composed by Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei

וַיִּמְזַח שָׂדֵהָ, וַתִּקְחָהּ מִפְּרֵי כַפְיָהּ, נֹטַע (נֹטְעָה) כָּרֶם,  
*she envisions a field and buys it; from the fruit of her handiwork she plants a vineyard.* The word וַיִּמְזַח is defined as she envisions. Shabbos is referred to in the prayer of Lecho Dodi as סוּף מְעֵשָׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תְּחִלָּה, *last in deed, but first in thought.* Thus, we can interpret this verse to be referring to Shabbos, which Hashem first envisioned as the culmination of the six days of the workweek. Shabbos is referred to as תְּפֹתֵינִי קְדִישֵׁינִי □□ *the Field of Sacred Apples*, so this verse can mean that HaShem envisioned the field, i.e. Shabbos, prior to creating the world, and after one works during the week, he can plant a vineyard from the fruits of his

handiwork, i.e. the blessing of Shabbos allows him to reap the rewards of his labor.

## Shabbos in Tefillah

### Constantly praising HaShem in Shul

*Vichulam poschim es pihem bikdushah uvitaharh bishirah uvizimrah*, and they all open their mouth in holiness and purity, in song and hymn. This passage is clearly a strong reproof to all those who arrive in shul to pray and yet do not engage themselves entirely in praising HaShem. We have the opportunity when we enter into Shul three times daily to praise the King of all kings, the Master of the world, Who controls everything that we do and say. Surely we should show our utmost gratitude and use our mouths to praise Him with holiness and purity, in song and hymn.

## Shabbos Stories

### Talking money and talking Torah

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky writes: The Ponovezer Rav, Rabbi Yosef Kahanamen, of blessed memory, was renowned for his efforts in rebuilding Torah from the ashes of the Holocaust. He established the jewel in the crown of the Torah city of Bnei Brak by building the Ponovez Yeshiva and its myriad affiliate institutions. He built a Yeshiva for pre-teens, another for young men, and still a third for married scholars. He built the Batei Avos, a huge housing complex with hundreds of subsidized apartments for needy families. He built schools for orphaned boys and girls in

Bnei Brak, Ashdod, and numerous cities across the State of Israel.

Often, he would visit wealthy patrons in the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Europe, and appealed to them to contribute monies for the Ponovezer Institutions.

The story is told, perhaps apocryphally, that one particular donor once confronted him in jest.

“Why is it, Rabbi Kahanamen,” he wondered, “that all the other Rabbis and Roshei Yeshiva who visit me never mention money? All they talk about is Torah and mitzvos. But you come here and cut right to the chase. You don’t talk about Torah or mitzvos. Your appeal, however, is, direct and to the point. You come here and say that you need one hundred thousand dollars to finish a girl’s school in Ashdod. Why don’t you also give me a speech about Torah, mitzvos, and Jewish continuity?”

Rabbi Kahanamen did not draw back. He took the man’s hand and looked him in the eye. Then he told him a profound statement. “You know me well. Many fund raisers talk, ‘Torah, Torah, Torah,’ but they mean money, money, money. I talk money, but I mean Torah, Torah, Torah.” ([www.Torah.org](http://www.Torah.org))

### **What Is Scarier Than The Russian Army?**

Reb Yechezkel Levenstein, a Kelmer and a student of the Chofetz Chaim, was the Mashgiach of the Mirrer Yeshivah during their flight from the Nazis through Siberia to Shanghai. Shortly before the war began, the Jews were

apprehensive and uncertain about the times ahead. Furthermore, there was great uncertainty about which enemy was the worse of two evils, the Germans or the Russians. A palpable sense of doom was felt everywhere. The yeshivah students had already heard ominous rumors about the vicious behavior of the Russians, and their hatred of everything religious.

R' Levenstein gave a shmues shortly before Rosh Hashanah of 1939, which was also shortly before the official beginning of World War II. R' Chatzkel was aware that he was facing a beis hamedrash filled with bnei Torah with great fear in their hearts, but he was not pleased with the source of the fear. He said, "It is not because of the Russians that you need to fear. It is only the Yom HaDin that you need to fear." The absolute conviction in R' Chatzkel's voice helped instill emunah and bitachon in the heart of each person present, and fortified them for the difficult times ahead. (Reb Chatzkel)

### **Spared From The Fire**

One day, a fire began on the street where the home of the Chofetz Chaim was located. The fire was spreading quickly, and all the houses in its path were in danger of being burned down. All of the houses' residents began frantically gathering their most valuable possessions, and prepared to vacate their houses. The Chofetz Chaim, who was already an elderly man, sat in his chair amidst the turmoil, deep in thought. His family was puzzled by his behavior, but

the Chofetz Chaim continued to sit and think with an anxious expression on his face, ignoring the tumult around him.

Fifteen minutes passed, and the Chofetz Chaim suddenly breathed a sigh of relief. He quickly arose from his chair, and walked toward the corner of his house, where a high shelf was situated. He stood on a chair to reach it, and took down a small watch. He then gathered his other possessions, and joined his family in vacating the house.

When his family questioned him, he clarified the reason for his mysterious behavior. "A yeshivah bochur had asked me to keep his watch in my house. Baruch Hashem, I found it; there's a specific mitzvah to guard anything given to one for safekeeping."

His family and students were astounded at his answer. During a time of crisis, when most people react with fear and panic, the Chofetz Chaim's first instinct was to save a yeshivah bochur's watch! (Stories My Grandfather Told Me) ([www.revach.net](http://www.revach.net))

## **Shabbos in Navi**

### Shmuel I Chapter 25

#### **On Shabbos Hashem's Name is known throughout the world**

In this chapter we learn how Dovid sent messengers to Naval requesting that he show Dovid's attendants favor and that Naval should give whatever he could to Dovid and his servants. Naval rejected Dovid's offer and ridiculed Dovid,

whereby Dovid set out to kill Naval. Avigayil, the wife of Dovid, sent food to Dovid and beseeched Dovid not to kill Naval. Dovid acquiesced to Avigayil's request and Naval ended up dying. Dovid then took Avigayil for a wife. The Gemara (Megillah 14b) states that Dovid felt that Naval was deserving of death, whereas Avigayil countered that Shaul was still alive and Dovid's name had not yet been publicized in the world. In a similar vein, throughout the week we are not always cognizant of HaShem's kingship, as we struggle with the forces of evil who attempt to make us forget about HaShem's existence, Heaven forbid. With the arrival of Shabbos, however, all harsh judgments depart and we are fortunate to recognize HaShem as our King.

## **Shabbos in Agadah**

### **Shabbos is pure and cannot be tarnished**

It is said (Shemos 31:13) *ach es Shabsosai tishmoru*, however, you must observe My Shabbos. Rashi writes (Bamidbar 31:22) that the word *ach* teaches us that before performing *hagalah*, ritual immersion, of golden vessels, one has to remove the *chaludah*, the tarnish that is found on the vessel. The Pinei Menachem quotes his father, the Imrei Emes, who cites the Sfas Emes (Ki Sisa 5631) who writes that Shabbos is clean and holy and no blemish can penetrate the Shabbos. Shabbos is a vehicle for repentance, and repentance

can elevate a person to even a higher place than where the righteous stand.

## **Shabbos in Halacha**

### **Limitation of Hatmanah, Insulating**

The prohibition to insulate food applies only to wrapping or enclosing a container entirely, i.e. on top and on all sides. If a substantial portion of the container is left exposed it is not deemed to be insulated. We will elaborate later on this rule.

## **Shabbos Challenge Question**

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Last week we posed the question: why was it necessary to have two commandments regarding Shabbos, one of *zachor*, to remember Shabbos, and one of *shamor*, to safeguard the Shabbos? The Dubno Maggid explains that the two commandments have equal importance because each commandment applies to different people. The commandment to remember Shabbos refers to the requirement that one honor the Shabbos with food and drink and fine clothing. The commandment to safeguard Shabbos was said regarding the prohibition not to work or discuss business matters. A poor person can easily safeguard the day as he has no financial interests. To remember the day, however, may prove difficult as he must be frugal with his resources. A wealthy person, however, has it easy regarding the commandment of remembering Shabbos, as he can readily

provide his family with delicacies and fine clothing in honor of Shabbos. Regarding the commandment of safeguarding Shabbos, however, the wealthy man will find it difficult to observe, as he is always focused on his financial interests. Hashem therefore uttered the mitzvah of *zachor* and *shamor* simultaneously to demonstrate that the requirements of the day apply equally to the poor man and to the wealthy man.

This week's question is, why do we not recite the verses that are said regarding the Shabbos Mussaf offering for the haftarah on Shabbos? If you have a possible answer, please email me at [ShabbosTaamHachaim@gmail.com](mailto:ShabbosTaamHachaim@gmail.com) and your answer will be posted in next week's edition of Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim.

## **Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim Yisro 5773**

Is sponsored in memory of the Kotzker Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk zt"l.

Born in Goray, near Lublin, Poland, Rav Menachem Mendel received a thorough Torah education from his father, R' Leibush Morgenstern, a zealous opponent of Chasidus.

After his marriage at 14, his father introduced him to the world of Chasidus. Thereafter, he became an ardent follower of the Chozeh of Lublin and Rav Simcha

Bunim of Pshis'cha, whom he eventually succeeded at age 40.

Rav Menachem Mendel was a new type of chassid. If the Baal Shem Tov embodied chessed, Reb Mendel represented din. While the Baal Shem sought to reach all the people, Reb Mendel knew that what he sought could only be attained by the elite. The Baal Shem lifted the people up, Rav Mendel rebuked them for their inadequacies and always demanded more. Reb Leibel Eiger was entranced by Kotzk, to the despair of his father, Rav Shlomo. Reb Mendel and Reb Mordechai Yosef of Ishbitz had been close friends and disciples of Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshischa. After Reb Bunim's passing, Reb Mendel became Rebbe.

"There is nothing as whole as a broken heart" is one of the many sayings of the Kotzker Rebbe. He further told his students, "I want you not to sin not because it's forbidden, but because you have no time to sin."

During his last 20 years, he left his room only rarely to speak with his students or family members; he received his food - a daily portion of bread and soup - through a hole in the door. He is said to have uttered, upon his death, "Death is actually no big deal; it's just like walking from one room to a better one."

Various Chassidic groups trace their roots to the Kotzker Rebbe, including Ger, founded by his brother-in-law and talmid Rav Yitzchok Meir, the Chidushei HaRim; Sochatchov, founded by his son-in-law, the Avnei Nezer; Amshinov; and

the talmidim of his grandson, Ra Yisroel of Pilov.

Some of the Kotzker's sayings: "If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you. But if I am I because you are you and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you!"

"All that is thought should not be said, all that is said should not be written, all that is written should not be published, and all that is published should not be read."

"Where is G-d to be found? In the place where He is given entry."

"You don't love fish. If you loved the fish, you would not have killed it and cooked it on a fire."

"Just as it is the way of an ape to imitate humans, so too, a person, when he has become old, imitates himself, and does what was his manner previously." In other words, most of us, at some point in life, either consciously or not, become satisfied with who we are and what we've become. As such, we cease to strive toward attaining greater spiritual heights. We are content to live out our remaining days as a mere imitation of ourselves!

נפטר כ"ב שבט, זכר צדיק לברכה, זכותו יגן עלינו  
ועל כל ישראל לטובה

## **Daf Yomi Schedule at Maor Torah Center**

Monday-Friday 6:00 AM followed by  
Shacharis at 6:55 AM.

Sunday following Shacharis of 7:30 AM

Shabbos morning 8:00 AM followed by  
Shacharis at 9:00 AM

Shabbos afternoon 45 minutes before  
Mincha

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Have a wonderful Shabbos

Prepared by Rabbi Binyomin Adler.

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