

*MeOros Ohev Yisroel*  
*Illuminating Insights of the Apta Rav*  
*Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel*



*A Collection of Teachings, Stories and Parables of the Rebbe Avraham Yehoshuah  
Heschel of Apta - Mezibuz on Shabbos & the Holidays*



*Illustration 1: The Translator at the Ohel of the Holy Baal Shem Tov praying at the Ohev Yisroel 5770*

### **How the Ohev Yisroel Became a Talmid of the Noam Elimelech**

In the city of Zavanitz there were smugglers who would smuggle goods without paying the levied taxes and there was rampant desecration of the Shabbos. The Apta Rav, Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel was greatly upset by their behavior and sharply rebuked them.

Rav Shmelka, the son of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov wished to travel and visit the Apter however since he hailed from Zavanitz he was worried that the Apter would ask him from where he was from and upon hearing that he was from Zavanitz he would not let him even cross his threshold!

His friends advised him to completely ignore any questions about where he was from and simply to introduce himself as Rav Moshe Leib Sassover's son. And so it was that when the shamash asked him who he was he told him the son of the Sassover. When the Apter heard this he ran over to Reb Shmelka and greeted him warmly shaking his hand with both hands, he lit candles in his honor, donned finer clothes in his honor and seated him in a special chair reserved for honored guests shrugging off all protests saying "Why, but you are my rebbe's son!"

While Rav Shmelka was thus seated the Apter Rav told him, "let me tell you a story about when I was the Rabbi of Kolbesov. I was back then a young man, an avrech and I lived in the house set aside for the Rav. Now this house was very large and my small family occupied only one wing. The winters were freezing and my salary was barely enough to feed us and certainly not enough to squander on heating such a large home. So though it was furnished we lived in only one wing.

I sat and learned lishma, sincerely for the sake of heaven and I had plenty of free time since it was a small city with few affairs that needed my attention or intervention. I often studied together with my son and as we were immersed in our studies lishma nothing disturbed us. We were not chassidim, and since our primary avodah was Torah study we even looked upon their ways with disdain and counted ourselves as misnagdim or opponents to chassidus.

One day two anonymous travelers passed by and knocked at my window and asked if I had room for lodgers and guests. Why, yes I answered, the entire second wing is at your disposal. They unloaded their luggage and made themselves at home. I noticed that they seemed like holy individuals and whatever conversations they had among themselves always sounded lofty and that they spoke about things pertaining to Avodas Hashem, yet I was too busy with my studies to take their "idle chatter," seriously. I thought that my derech and path was correct and shrugged them off.

They were my guests for some three days and on the third day as they prepared to continue on their way they came to take their customary leave of me. One of them began to engage me in conversation and to tell me some story. I was greatly troubled since they were detracting from my learning and from my sincere Torah study, yet it would have been rude and ill mannered for me to just interrupt him and so I listened politely as I could. When he finished the first story he began to tell me another one! At this point my hair stood on end as I was so disturbed at this waste of my precious time. When he finished the other guest began to tell me a tale as well and the pain I felt was death itself! Finally they finished the third story and left on their way.

Some three months passed and I found that I understood the meaning of the first story and that I had needed it. Some three more months passed and I found that I understood the need I had for the second story, and three months later for the third story. I was shocked to see how they were able to understand what I would need and what would befall me over the course of this entire year, I understood that this must be through ruach hakodesh and I hoped that Hashem would merit me another opportunity to reunite with these two holy individuals. Two years later I looked up out the window and I saw them both travelling in their carriage past my window. I could not miss such an opportunity! I ran outside to catch them and draw their attention. I was in such a rush I did not dress myself in my coat or my spudek (the fur hat worn by important personages such as the town Rabbi) and I ran in my shirt after their coach chasing it across town. When I finally caught up with them near the inn I asked them in between catching my breath as to their destination. "We are headed to Lizhensk, to the Rebbe Reb Elimelech," they explained. "Can I join you?," I asked. They agreed on the condition that I go to the market while they prayed and get some provisions for the journey such as some rolls, bagels and butter. I completely forgot myself, town rabbi or not and in just my shirt I went and bought the bread and the butter. When I returned they had finished their prayers and told me to hurry and get ready. I quickly ran home, got dressed and grabbed my tallis and tefillin and jumped on their carriage. "We are taking you to the Rebbe Elimelech," they explained, "since we can tell that your soul's root is bound to his." And so they did. The Rebbe Elimelech became my mentor and I became a disciple. Those two holy tzadikim were your father, Rav Moshe Leib Sassover and Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.

Afterwards Rav Moshe Leib would say often that he should get shidduch gelt – a broker's fee for making the match between the Apter and the Rebbe Elimelech. To this the Berditchever responded, "and I should get double your fee since I also brought the Rebbe Reb Elimelech and the Rebbe Reb Zisha to the Maggid of Mezritch!"

(Kisvei Rav Yoshe #11 p116; Devarim Areivim II #2 p53-54)

## **Parashas Yisro**

### **We Will Do and We Will Hear**

**“And Moshe took the words of the people back to Hashem.” (19:8)**

Study the Ohr HaChaim who explains that Moshe did not return an answer back to Hashem from Bnei Yisroel, because Hashem does not need answers, He knows man's heart. Rather the reason why Moshe told over the words of the people back to Hashem was to make them more beloved before Him. He retold of how they said we will do even before, we will hear.

Another thing we can say is that when Moshe payed attention to the reply that they had said we will do before we will hear it was a wonder, that no human being could have grasped this concept, only a G-dly power as the Midrash relates (Shabbos 88a; Yalkut Shimoni Shemos 277) [that Hashem asked] “Who revealed this secret which only the ministering angels use to my children.” As it says Tehillim (103:20) “Bless Hashem, His angels of strength and might, who do His will and listen . . .” First they act and do His will and afterwards listen. Bnei Yisroel down here below had these things in mind, and Moshe understood that these were not their own words, and that a Divine spirit spoke within them, with His word on their tongues (based on Shmuel II 23:2). The Shechinah itself was speaking from the throats of each and every one of Bnei Yisroel replying We will do and we will here.

This is why it says “And Moshe took the words of the people back to Hashem,” it means that he took what was said back to Hashem by recognizing the source of these words as being from Hashem. It means that Hashem Himself answered this and He had willed for them to say we will do before we will hear.

## **Parashas Ki Sissa**

### **Waiting, Anticipating and Preparing for Shabbos**

**“And Hashem said to Moshe you should speak, safeguard my Shabbosos because they are a sign between us, to know that I am Hashem your sanctifier.” (31:12-13)**

Our sages (Shabbos 10b; Beitza 16a) derived from here that whoever gives a gift to his friend must tell him so. The Holy One told Bnei Yisroel. “I have a great gift stored away in My treasury and her name is Shabbos.” Surely Shabbos is a great gift, the light and sanctity which comes down from above into people’s hearts, and the holy spirit of sanctity and a renewed intellect and vitality which comes from the supernal world known as Aravos from which vitality and delights emerge since it houses the stores of life. (Chagiga 12b)

Truly a person should wait in anticipation for the gift of Shabbos all week long, waiting for the sanctity and vitality which is coming to him and surely this requires great preparation all six days of the week for Shabbos. And just as he prepares himself so will his grasp of Shabbos be, as the verse tells us (prev. 16:5) “and they prepared that which they brought,” teaching us that a person must exert himself during the week and prepare so that he will have Shabbos. “Whoever exerts himself on Friday will eat on Shabbos and whoever does not from where will he eat?” (Avodah Zara 3a) And although a person may prepare himself it is still a great gift, because even if a person will prepare himself in many different ways, he is nonetheless unworthy of the great holiness and abundance bestowed to him by Hashem on the Shabbos day, as much as he prepares it is still a free gift. However he must prepare himself to have a vessel ready to accept it and the strength and energy needed to do so.

There are two components to the observance of Shabbos, and they are Zachor – remembering and Shamor – safeguarding. Zachor – remembering is the masculine aspect known as duchrah (the active giver) and Shamor – safeguarding is the feminine aspect known as nukva (the passive receiver) (Zohar I 28b). This means that a person who observes Shabbos in order to give Hashem pleasure and delight, that binds his soul up to the highest supernal place by observing Shabbos and he can serve Hashem with an expanded consciousness and send shefa and blessings above to all the worlds, he is the aspect of Zachor (the masculine active giver).

Then there are people who serve for their own benefit. And our sages say (Shabbos 118b) even if a person worships idols like the generation of Enosh if he observes Shabbos he is absolved and forgiven,” the reason is that when a person sins he separates himself from the source of life and blemishes his soul (Tikkunei Zohar Tikkun 70) however when the sanctity of Shabbos arrives then the Holy One shines into all the hidden worlds a great luminous light and this illuminates a person’s soul and then the soul can return to its source.

This is the great gift since by observing Shabbos according to all its laws then he is forgiven for all of his sins. So whoever has this in mind when he is observing Shabbos, this too is a good intention. However there is an incorrect way as well, if a person were to have in mind when he is performing the mitzvos of Hashem in order to be rewarded even if that reward is something spiritual, nonetheless that is an aspect of the nukva (the feminine receiver) who desires to take and receive from Hashem, and the primary way for a person to serve Hashem should be to give and send forth shefa through his actions as it says (Tehillim 68:35) “Give power to G-d,” (Zohar II 32b; Eicha Rabbah 1:33)

This is why the verse says “Ach - However safeguard my Shabboses,” because words like Ach and Rak are used to exclude (Rashi ad loc here on 31:13). This refers to the lower level since they are called miyut in Hebrew which means small. The least level is to at least safeguard my Shabbos on the level of

Shamor. Because it is a sign, to know that I Hashem am sanctifying you,” that through the sanctity of Shabbos I remove all forms of affliction from you and enlighten your soul and forgive your sins. And whoever can rise up to the level of the male (the active giver ) is surely good.

### **The Tzadik’s Shabbos Guards Over All Bnei Yisroel**

Or we can say that the verse hints to us another matter, that if all of Bnei Yisroel could observe Shabbos how great that would be! However although many of us, heaven forbid do not fulfill it properly the verse promises us that through the righteous ones in every generation who do observe Shabbos properly they give the Creator great pleasure and delight. A Tzadik is called Shabbos as is known (Zohar II 94b). This is why the verse has the word Ach which means even those who minimally keep and observe Shabbos (Ach is a miyut as was explained above) they safeguard my Shabboses, through the tzadik who is called shabbos, all of bnei yisroel are seen as observing the Shabbos and they will be safeguarded from all harm. And the merit of the righteous tzadikim who properly observe the shabbos shall save the remnant of yisrael (yeshaya 31:5). “For it is a sign between You and me,” the tzadik is also called an os or a sign (Zohar I Hashmatos 266a) since he is like a sign or an imprint between Knesses yisroel and the Creator.

“To know that I am Hashem who sanctifies you,” this signifies that through the Tzadik Hashem’s sanctity is renowned, and made known. This is because the tzadik draws knowledge into the world and he tells of the sanctity of G-d to other people. Through the sign of the tzadik all the Jewish people are guarded from all harm and he uplifts them, he uplifts Hashem over them as if they all observed Shabbos properly.

### **A Taste of Olam HaBah**

Another explanation is that the Holy One wishes to merit Bnei Yisroel with the coming world of Olam haBah, this is why he gave them the Torah and its commandments (Makos 23b). And the Holy One wishes to allow Bnei Yisroel a taste of the reward in that spiritual place known as Olam HaBah. Therefore in order for them to taste it He gave them the Shabbos day since it is a spiritual day an example of the next world of Olam HaBah (Berachos 57b). On Shabbos everyone can recognize spiritual delights.

However since we know that “there is no reward for mitzvos in this world,” (Kiddushin 39b) how can He give them pleasure and delight on Shabbos? Therefore Hashem gave them Shabbos as a gift. (Rather than a reward which they deserve to be paid.) And it is true that there is no reward for the mitzvos themselves in this world. However Hashem can give a gift even in this lowly world, to allow those who do His will and observe the Shabbos a taste of the delight and pleasure of the next world – Olam HaBah.

This is why the verse says “Ach – However observe my Shabboses,” by observing Shabbos you will taste a spiritual delight, and this will serve as a sign for you regarding your future reward in the next world of Olam haBah. This is why the verse says, “because it is a sign, that I Hashem sanctify you” that by observing Shabbos you will come to know that I Hashem am the one who eternally sanctifies you for the future eternal world, to that day which is totally Shabbos forever (Mishna Tamid 7:4; Gemarra Rosh haShannah 31a)

This what Hashem commanded Moshe to announce to Bnei Yisroel that this is the great gift which they will receive on Shabbos, not the mitzvah, since Moshe had already announced all of the mitzvos to

them. However here He made known to them the advantage which they would gain by observing this mitzvah, it would allow them to understand the reward waiting for them, that without Shabbos it would be impossible for them to understand it in this world, since it cannot be revealed in this world (Beitza 16a).

However this was not the case regarding Moshe who was able to taste this in his lifetime and see his reward in this world. This is not the reward for Shabbos, because Shabbos is itself the reward as our sages said (Avos 4:2) the reward for a mitzvah is the mitzvah itself. This is the pleasure and delight of observing Shabbos which is itself the reward. However Hashem did not announce this reward to the nations (Beitza 16a), He did not give them this gift which Bnei Yisroel receive on Shabbos and no stranger can mix in their joy and happiness. (Mishlei 14:10)

**And to explain what we recite during the prayers on Shabbos (Birkas Yotzer Shacharis on Shabbos):**

**“There is no comparison to You, there is nothing except for You, there is nothing without You, for Who is like You?, There is no comparison to You, Hashem Our King in this world; and there will be nothing other than You Our King in the life of the Coming World; there will be nothing without You our Redeemer, in the days of Moshiach and there will be none like you at the Resurrection of the Dead.”**

If a person serves Hashem to be rewarded this is not terrible as the sages derived (Shabbos 63a) “long days on the right,” (Mishlei 3:16) to those who do the right thing, “and on the left wealth, honor and glory,” so this form of service for reward is the left hand path. However it is not the primary way to serve, the primary form of Divine service is that the servant should not want anything for himself and not ask for anyone but for Hashem and this itself will be his reward the very fact that he is serving Hashem.<sup>1</sup>

This why we say “there is no comparison to You, Hashem our G-d, in this world,” it means that I do not wish to have any delight or pleasure on this world. And if you say, I will serve Hashem so that I shall merit a portion in the next world which is a spiritual form of pleasure and delight, this too is not considered avoda lishma, it lacks sincere intentions. However there in the world of souls some ask for spiritual rewards. But even there in the world of truth, there are tzadikim who do not ask for anything more than G-dly wisdom.

As our sages say (Berachos 64a) “Tzadikim have no peace in this world and not in the next world,” this is why we say “there is no comparison to You, Hashem our G-d, in this world, and there will be nothing other than You, our King in the life of the Coming World,” even there I want nothing more than Your G-dly truth. And if you say, I shall serve Hashem for the days of Moshiach, when Hashem will remove the darkness from our nation and the light and enlightenment will increase and people will achieve high levels and their physical body will become pure and refined – this too is not the primary way to serve. We do not ask for “the Days of Moshiach,” either “except for You alone,” compared to You everything else is worthless. And not only the days of Moshiach, but even the pleasure which people will receive at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead is also incomparable, in fact no pleasure and delight can compare to the desire for G-dliness. Only to serve You and to be Your servant sincerely for Your sake without any desire for reward or self advantage.

## Parashas VaYakhel

### WHAT WAS LEFT OVER FOR THE TZADDIKIM

**The work had been enough for all the work to do it — and there was extra.**

**(Shemos 36:7)**

It seems like a contradiction to say that the work was “enough” and at the same time “there was extra.” If there was enough, then there wasn’t anything extra. See the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim at length [who also asks this question].<sup>1</sup>

Hashem is also known by the Name Kel Shakkai. Kel means “power,” as in the verse “He took away the mighty [לִיָּאֵל] of the land” (Yechezkel 17:13).<sup>6</sup> Shakkai connotes giving, from the word shadayim [which supply milk]. Therefore HaKadosh Baruch Hu is known as the All-Powerful One who overcomes His own ability to give, as our Sages teach, “He said to His world ‘Dai! Enough!’” (Chagigah 12a). Because anything that comes from the Infinite Ein Sof can expand and grow without any bounds. And therefore, since Hashem created the worlds, they wished to expand and grow without bounds and HaKadosh Baruch Hu had to say, “Dai! Enough!” He had to arrange a specific order in the worlds based on His supernal understanding of what His creations needed, and then He said “Dai! Enough!” In this way He used His attribute of might. He caused a constriction within creation by constrict His own power [so that the worlds He created and to which He gave life would not continue expanding].

This is how Hashem must conduct His world — based on the strength of the receivers and not based on His infinite and boundless strength. At this time [and in this world] the Jewish people are not capable of receiving His great goodness nor His exacting punishments.

The work and labor of the Mishkan was a reflection of the creation of heaven and earth.<sup>8</sup> It was organized and constructed according to the dictates of the G-dly intellect, with the same combinations of holy letters and divine Names with which heaven and earth were created. Thus our Sages teach that Betzalel [whom Hashem placed in charge of building the Mishkan] knew how to combine the letters with which heaven and earth were created (Berachos 55a). In other words, Hashem placed in the hearts [of the builders of the Mishkan] wisdom, insight, and understanding.<sup>9</sup> And Hashem gave this same power to the righteous Tzaddikim in every generation — when a Tzaddikim studies Torah and creates new interpretations in the course of his learning, he is in essence creating a new heaven and earth (Zohar I:4b). And so when doing the work of Mishkan, they directed their thoughts toward the divine wisdom through ruach hakodesh and made unifications and used holy combinations [of letters and divine Names]. This is how they formed all the vessels of the Mishkan and the rest of the work related to it.

If they had wanted to, they could have broadened their intellect so that there would be no end, since the spirit of Hashem had alighted upon them. However, it was necessary to place a boundary on it, however they left over some of the work for the Tzaddikim in future, who would study the work of the Mishkan when they studied the Torah. Each Tzaddik, according to the level of his intellect, would recognize the wisdom hidden in the formation of each vessel and each part of the Mishkan, and he would spiritually unify it with the upper worlds. Just as Hashem left a latent power in creation itself, placing boundaries on His creations and leaving over the ability to expand the creation for the Tzaddikim so that they themselves could create novel things, so it was in the work of the Mishkan. This is the meaning of our verse, “The work was enough,” meaning they place boundaries on the work. “To do it” — that is, to rectify it<sup>10</sup> and unify it using the supernal intellect with which they could concentrate on each thing [that they made from the Mishkan] according to the level of their intellect. However, “there was extra” — the surplus was left over for the righteous Tzaddikim and sages in each

generation. Then, in future generations, when they studied the order of the work of the Mishkan, they could add their own knowledge to its construction according to how much their intellect could grasp.<sup>11</sup>

1. The Ohr HaChaim says, “ ‘Enough’ is the opposite of ‘extra.’ If it is enough, then there is nothing extra, and if there is extra, it is not just enough. There is no room to say that not this and also this were both present, since both refer to the same type and the same aspect, and we have no way to divide one type into two types, since one of these contradicts the other. Also it would not have to say enough at all, rather the verse could have said “And the work had been extra for all the work.” And further the entire verse is superfluous since above it says “The people are bringing more than enough for the labor of the work.” Obviously they could not have said this until they counted, so then why was it even necessary to add that “the work had been enough etc.”? Perhaps this verse demonstrates Hashem's great love for the Jewish people, since they brought a surplus more than was needed therefore Hashem honored them for their hard work and allowed whatever was brought to be used in building the Mishkan. Therefore the verse should be read as “All the work which Hashem commanded to be brought for the labor of the Mishkan was enough to be used for and all the work went into the building of Mishkan even though there was extra. Meaning that even though there was more than necessary, there was nothing left over, even though in reality there was a surplus, as it says there was extra, however there occurred a miracle and there was nothing left over.” [I don't think it's necessary to quote the entire Ohr HaChaim here. It doesn't seem to clarify the vort of the Kedushas Levi. I think this can be left out.]

### **The Writings that were Left Over from the Tzaddik**

Rav Meshulam Zisha of Zinkov, grandson of the Apta Rav, related a story he had heard from his father Rav Yitzchak Meir of Zinkov regarding Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. Once the Berditchever was visiting the Apta Rav in Kolbosov, and he asked to see some of the Apta Rav's writings on the parashah. The Apta Rav happily lent them to Rav Levi Yitzchak. Rav Levi Yitzchak was so immersed in his avodas Hashem that he completely forgot to return the writings to the Apta Rav. After Rav Levi Yitzchak passed on, these writings were found among his own writings, and the publishers thought that these belonged to Rav Levi Yitzchak as well, and they published them mistakenly in his name.

## Parashas Pekudei

**“These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the tabernacle of testimony which were reckoned at Moshe's request.” (38:21)**

Our sages taught in Ta'anis (8b) that blessings do not rest on things that are measured and weighed. However here regarding the labor and work of the Mishkan which was all done according to exacting reckonings and specific measurements, even so blessing rested in it. As it says in Shir HaShirim (7:5) “Your eyes are like the pools of Cheshbon.”

The root of the evil eye comes from the same source as Bila'am's power, that wherever he gazed there was a blight.<sup>1</sup> This is because when that wicked individual would gaze upon something he separated and detached it from its root source up above, from the source of life since he was aflame in desire for that and it was important in his eyes, however he did not see the power of Hashem which was found in that object.

However regarding the offspring of the Jewish people it says in Shir HaShirim (7:5) “Your eyes are like the pools of Cheshbon,” even something that has measure and is counted (Cheshbon is a place but it also means a reckoning or measurements). Even regarding such things, their gaze is not harmful since each object which a Jew sees, he recognizes the power of the Creator that is in it. Since he attaches that object to its supernal root source, then with this gaze he is able to draw down blessings and shefa from the upper source to this object. This is the meaning of “Your eyes are like the pools,” the eyes become as pools and wellsprings of shefa, even to an object that is counted and reckoned - “Cheshbon.”

This then is the meaning of “These are the reckonings of the Mishkan,” in the Mishkan everything was counted and reckoned several times to be exact in the number, nonetheless there was blessing and the Divine presence of the Shechina rested there. All the more so here the counting and reckoning was for a Divine purpose.<sup>2</sup> This is why it is written in the verse that it was reckoned “at Moshe's request,” since this counting came out of Moshe's mouth who was attached cleaving in dveikus and supernal sanctity, then it even added blessings.

### Notes:

1. See Zohar I 68b “What is written regarding Bilaam? “The words of a man with an open eye.” (Bamidbar 24:15) He had an evil eye and everywhere he would gaze he would draw down a spirit of destruction. This is the manner in which he wished to gaze upon Israel, since he would destroy wherever his eyes would gaze.” See also Ramban's commentary to Bamidbar 22:35.
2. See Zohar II 225:1 “Rav Yitzchak asked Rabbi Shimon, since we know that blessings do not rest on an object that has been counted and reckoned, why was everything in the mishkan counted and reckoned? It has been said that in any place where sanctity rests, then if the counting is also done for a holy purpose, then blessings continually rest there and do not depart. From where is this known? From Ma'aser tithes. Since it is counted for a holy purpose, it is blessed, all the more so regarding the mishkan. However any other thing that does not come from the side of holiness, if they are counted or reckoned blessings do not rest there. Since the other side, known as the evil eye can have control over it. And since the evil eye can control it, blessings do not reside there.”

## **Parashas Zachor – Ohev Yisroel Defeating the Amalek Within Us All**

**“Remember what Amalek did to you when you were tired and worn out and did not fear G-d.”  
(Devarim 25:17-18)**

Not only are Bnei Yisroel the seed of Yaakov commanded to wipe out Amalek, the seed of Esav, but each and every Jew must wipe out the evil portion within himself hidden within his own heart which is known as his own personal Amalek. For so long as the seed of Amalek remains in the world then since man is a microcosm of the world and he is called an Olam Katan - a small miniature world within himself then there exists within his own world an Amalek, a power of evil as well. And this mini Amalek awakens time and time again to push man to sin, and this is why the Torah reminds us about him.

The power of Bnei Yisroel and the seed of Yaakov is in their mouths, [as in the verse] “the voice is the voice of Yaakov,” this emerges through Torah study and prayer. And when a person has this power and his heart is continuously aflame to serve Hashem then no evil can control him. However if he does not utilize this power [and is reticent in Torah study and prayer] then immediately “they travelled from Refidim,” [as Rashi explains] Rafu Yadeyhim min haTorah – their weakened their hand’s grasp on the study of Torah. And then immediately it follows that “Amalek came,” the evil immediately takes hold of him. However when a person at least grasps hold of the attribute of fear, to fear Hashem, and to fear any transgression of His commandments then he at least saves himself from sin.

This is why the verse says that “you were tired and worn out,” it alludes to the lack of the power of the seed of Israel, since they weakened their grasp from serving Hashem. And “they did not fear G-d,” [and this they lacked as well].

You should always remind yourself of this so that Amalek should not be able to cause you to stumble. This is why the verse says “Mecho Emche – I will erase and blot out Amalek,” erase and wipe the root of evil [symbolized by Amalek] out of your heart and subdue and subjugate him to do good. This is as it says (Shemos 17:11) And it was as Moshe raised his hand that Yisroel were winning and when he lowered his hands then Amalek were winning,” this refers to his power which is called his hand, when you uplift and strengthen your power then Bnei Yisroel emerge victorious. However if you put your hands down, and heaven forbid you do not utilize this power [of the mouth through Torah study and prayer] then [Amalek can win].

## **OHEV YISROEL/Toras Emes**

**What does the wicked son ask? What is all this work to you? To you and not for him, and since he excluded himself from the general public he has denied the principle belief in Hashem, and you should knock out his teeth. (Haggadah)**

At first glance this makes no sense, for asking what is all this work we call him wicked?! However the root of the matter is as follows: The statement of our sages is known (Berachos 17b) “The entire world is nourished through my son Chanina and my son Chanina can make due with a measure of carobs from one week to the next.” I shall copy for you what the Midrash Talpiyos writes (entry for Gideon) this is what it says: “The editor says from here we can see the the value and worth of a tzadik before Hashem. Hashem gave over the world and placed it in his charge and subjugated it to do and fulfill his will. The reason is because the world was created for the sake of tzadik and everything else was created to connect to him and attach to him as our sages said (berachos 6b) therefore the Holy One gave over the entire world to him and placed it in his hands and subjugated it beneath him to fulfill whatever he decrees. If the nations of the world would know this they would crown the tzadik each down with a golden crown and fulfill all his needs since they are simply giving him from his own. They would be like servants serving the king with his collected taxes and tributes since whatever a slave acquires is acquired by his master (lit. to who does the slave belong and to who do his so called belongings

belong?) (Megillah 16a). We find that everything is the tzadik's and was created for him, and the Holy One gave it all to him as a gift. Whatever the simpletons and ignoramuses eat and drink as they separate themselves from the tzadik is considered stolen property that they stole from him. This is because if it was in use for the tzadik by being attached to him then it would not be stolen from him since they would be acting as servants to serve the tzadik [and to take care of his needs] and servants who serve their master are allowed to eat and drink from their master's food." This is the end of the quote.

You see here that if a person believed and it was clear in his heart that the tzadik Hashem on behalf of all those who are needy among Bnei Yisroel, then even if he himself cannot serve Hashem properly he should attach himself to the tzadik and give him to benefit from your property and belongings since you yourself are in fact nourished through the tzadik.

However there are wicked people in this world who say in their hearts, what do we care about the tzadik's righteousness and his avodah?! If he serves Hashem, only he himself benefits from that and only he has an advantage, however such a person is a denier of the foundations of faith in Creation since the entire purpose of the entire Creation and all of the worlds is really for the tzadik and the entire world was only created solely for his benefit and to serve him and everything is as branches and garments needed for the tzadik, and since this wicked person distances himself from the tzadik he is a denier and scoffer. And by so saying his wickedness is revealed since he denies something which is fundamental to Hashem.

This is why it says [in the Haggadah] what does the wicked son say? It means that we can recognize the wicked son based on what he says since he asks 'what is this avodah and service of G-d to you?' And the author of the Haggadah explains "to you and not to him," he sees the service of the tzadikim as something that pertains to them alone but not to him, since his avodah has no benefit at all to mankind and not himself among them either. 'And therefore because he excluded himself from the general public,' and this itself singles him out and demonstrates that he has denied a fundamental principle which is the root of all of creation itself, the belief that everything in the world was created for the tzadik.

This is why it says "and you should break his teeth," this is because it is actually forbidden for a tzadik to take pride in himself and to say in his heart that his actions shield and protect the entire world and that he nourishes all of the creations [through his avodah Hashem nourishes them]. This is because to a tzadik all his actions are miniscule and insignificant in his eyes compared with Hashem's great kindness which He does for us. Therefore at this specific time for this specific reason the strap has been permitted [for use to hit the wicked] to break that wicked man's teeth. And therefore the Tanna gave the tzadik a permit to pride himself before this wicked son. This is why the language used is "veAf atah – and you as well," you the tzadik who normally should not hold largely of yourself, and you should normally not say in heart that your actions give merit to all of Klal Yisroel and that they are all nourished in your merit and that the entire world was only created for your sake. However against this wicked son he is permitted to take pride in himself and praise himself and to answer him, 'for this reason G-d this for me and took me out of Egypt,' since the entire redemption from Egypt, the Exodus with all its miracles were only for my sake [says the tzadik]. And all the work and effort that Hashem exerted Himself in creating all of the worlds and all the redemptions and miracles and His strong hand which He did for us was all for my sake [says the tzadik]. But not for you [to the wicked] "and if he had been there he would not have been redeemed," and in my merit you were redeemed. (See Ohev Yisroel Toras Emes)

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