

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

כג' שבט תשפ"א  
February 5, 2021

פרשת יתרו  
9<sup>th</sup> year, edition 372

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## Venerable Visitors

One who defends the Torah of a gadol that precedes him may merit to greet him in the future. We see this in the gemara<sup>1</sup> where Rava said, “when I die, R’ Oshaya will come out to greet me because I interpreted the Mishna in accordance with him.”

The Sefer Chassidim,<sup>2</sup> authored by R’ Yehuda Hachassid (1150-1217), writes that when a tzadik who explained the words of another tzadik, like an amora who explained the words of a tanna, dies, the tanna comes forth to greet him with a happy countenance and walks with him and asks the malachim to be lenient on him. He greets him before Hashem to speak good about him.

The Shach<sup>3</sup> (1621-1662) wrote that he is certain that when his time comes to leave this world that the tannaim will greet him because he defended their positions.

In the sefer Magid Masharim<sup>4</sup> it says that because R’ Yosef Karo (1488-1575) explained the Rambam (1135-1204) and the Tur (c. 1269-c. 1343), they are a good advocate for him before Hashem and they will come out to greet his neshama when it is time for him to leave This World.

<sup>1</sup> Baba Kamma 111b.

<sup>2</sup> 559.

<sup>3</sup> Choshen Mishpat 91.

<sup>4</sup> Vayakhel, s.v. “כי הרמב"ם.”

R’ Yehoshua Heschel Charif<sup>5</sup> (1593-1648) authored a sefer called Maginei Shlomo. This sefer defends Rashi (1040-1105) from the questions of Tosafos. It is therefore called מגיני שלמה, because he protected (מגן means a shield) Rashi, whose name was Shlomo (R’ Shlomo Yitzchaki). In the Hakdama it says that Rashi appeared to the author in his lifetime with great simcha and said “you are praiseworthy in This World and all is well with you in the Next World because you saved me from the mighty lions that are the Baalei Tosafos. I’m coming to greet you to the Next World with all my students.” This is what occurred as about a half-hour before R’ Yehoshua Heschel Charif passed away, there were gedolim from Krakow at his bedside. R’ Yehoshua said in front of them, “clear a space because Rashi and his holy entourage have come and he has greeted me joyously to show me the way of life since I have always been at his right side to resolve the questions posed by Tosafos on his commentary.”

Similarly we find with the passing of R’ Shlomo Heiman<sup>6</sup> (1892-1945). Just prior to death, his students who were with him related his last words: “Great guests are coming. Prepare two chairs—one for R’ Akiva Eiger<sup>7</sup> (1761-1837) and the other for R’ Chaim Ozer Grodzensky (1863-1940).”

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## Payday

We are commanded to pay a worker on the day he does his job.<sup>8</sup> In fact, if the Arizal didn’t have money to pay his worker on the day he worked he would borrow money in order to pay the employee.

The Chofetz Chaim would pay his wagon driver only at the end of the ride, when he reached his destination, because only then was he obligated and able to fulfill תתן שכרו, on that day shall you pay his hire.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> He also authored פני יהושע and was a rav in Lvov and Krakow.

<sup>6</sup> At age 12, he went to the yeshiva of Kaminetz to study under R’ Baruch Ber Leibowitz. After his marriage, R’ Baruch Ber asked him to give shiurim in the Kaminetz yeshiva. During World War One, R’ Shlomo was briefly drafted into the Russian army. He served on the front lines of the war, yet still managed to review the entire Mesachta Kesubos in the trenches. After the First World War, R’ Shlomo gave gemara shiurim in the yeshiva in Baranovitch, headed by R’ Elchanan Wasserman. In 1927, at the request of R’ Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, R’ Shlomo became the Rosh Yeshiva of the Ramailles Yeshiva, a position he held for 8 years. In 1935, R’ Shlomo was invited by R’ Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz to lead Mesivta Torah V’daas in the United States. With the approval of R’ Chaim Ozer, R’ Shlomo accepted this position. Due to this, he was spared the horrors of the Holocaust. Although R’ Shlomo did not leave any biological children, his legacy lives on in the wealth of Torah that he taught his students.

<sup>7</sup> At times, his students would suggest an answer to a question of R’ Akiva Eiger. R’ Shlomo Heiman therefore would give a shiur just to understand R’ Akiva Eiger’s question because answering his question showed they never really understood it. This is similar to the story of the person who came to the Satmar Rebbe for a haskama on his sefer which answered all of R’ Akiva Eiger’s questions except for three. The Satmar Rebbe told him, “the three you didn’t answer are the only ones you really understood.”

<sup>8</sup> See Vayikra 19:13 and Devarim 24:15.

<sup>9</sup> Devarim 24:15.

R' Sternbuch<sup>10</sup> writes that the same would apply if one is riding in a taxi where the driver is Jewish. He is only obligated to pay at the end of the ride, and then he fulfills ביימו תתן שכרו. There was a tzadik in Yerushalayim a few years back who before paying the taxi driver would say aloud, “behold, I am now fulfilling תתן שכרו.”

The Ben Ish Chai<sup>11</sup> (1835-1909) was asked the following: Reuven hired someone for work on Thursday night. On Friday the worker came to him for the money, to which Reuven told him that he will send the money to his house in a short while as he was just too busy at the moment. Reuven was traveling to a different city for Shabbos where he made an early Shabbos. After davening Maariv on Shabbos, he remembered that he didn't pay the worker. Since there was still time until it would get dark, he would be able not to transgress ביימו תתן שכרו. If he would ride on a horse, he could reach the city in 20 minutes while it is still light and pay the worker and then he could stay in his house for Shabbos. Is he allowed to do this since he already accepted Shabbos? The Ben Ish Chai answered that concerning the money, Reuven doesn't need to transgress the prohibition of Muktzah. This is because he can tell the worker to come to his house and tell him to take the money or he can tell someone in his family that didn't accept Shabbos yet to give the money to the worker. Regarding the prohibitions of riding on an animal and Techum Shabbos, that he is allowed to transgress because he is in this village while the worker is in the city (unless, of course, he can send the money with someone else).<sup>12</sup>

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#### ConNECKtor

We need to internalize that which we know and become one with our knowledge as in והשבת אל לבבך, take to your heart.<sup>13</sup> This is hinted to in תוכו כבורו,<sup>14</sup> one's insides should be like his outsides, meaning to be sincere in spirituality. The inner letters of תוכו (כו) have a Gematria of 26, the same as יהוה-וה, representing spirituality. Likewise, the external letters of כבורו are כו. We need to integrate the spirituality we know internally<sup>15</sup> and externally.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Teshuvos V'hanhagos 1:899:10.

<sup>11</sup> שו"ת תורה לשמה, Orach Chaim, 117.

<sup>12</sup> If possible, he should do Hataras Nedarim on his acceptance of early Shabbos.

<sup>13</sup> Devarim 4:39. The analogy is given of one placing another in charge of his house because he is going away. He gives a list of what to do daily: feed the fish, water the garden and so on. A week later when he returns, he finds that his house is a wreck. The caretaker tells him that he read the list daily! Of course that is insufficient as that which is on the list must be done! Likewise, learning Halacha, ideas about Shabbos, Yom Tov and so on is inadequate as we must implement it.

<sup>14</sup> Brachos 28a.

<sup>15</sup> We find the words הוא היה אומר (“He would say...”) many times in Pirkei Avos. Another explanation is that he first embodied that teaching (הוא היה) and only then did he say it (אומר).

<sup>16</sup> It happened that R' Yonasan Eibshitz (1690-1764) was in a random town for Yom Kippur where he observed someone davening with Kavana saying from the Yom Kippur Tefila, איני כדאי, I was unworthy and עפר אני, I am dirt. He was so impressed that he even deferred a seat in the front of the Shul so he could sit near this person. When they were reading the Torah, this man received the 5<sup>th</sup> Aliya—Chamishi. He expressed his dismay to the Gabbai since he didn't receive Shishi (see Mishna Brura 282:18). By Neila this man once again said איני כדאי and עפר אני with special Kavana. R' Yonasan Eibshitz was shocked at this contradiction in this man's behavior and inquired about this. The man responded that to Hashem I am dirt but not to this Gabbai!

This is also alluded to in the hidden and revealed letters of the word סיני (which represents spirituality as the Torah was given there). The hidden letters—יוד, נ, יוד—have an identical numerical value to the outer letters. ס has a Gematria of 60, the same as מ,ג,ד is 10, the same as ג,ו,י.<sup>17</sup>

It once happened that while R' Simcha Bunim (1765-1827) was in bed, he wanted to smell some snuff tobacco. However, the case of tobacco was in the other room. He then made the analysis that “if I get up and go to the other room for the tobacco, I will be giving in to my desires. On the other hand, if I do not go, it could stem from laziness.” He decided to walk to the other room. He approached the tobacco and without touching it he returned to his room.

Moshe attained this on the ultimate level. The letters of the word הערף, the nemesis of Moshe rearranged spell פרעה, the back of the neck. The neck separates the לב and מה, mind and heart. This symbolizes one who doesn't internalize what he knows. Moshe, on the other hand, was the opposite. The Midrash relates that when Paroh sought to kill Moshe, Moshe's neck became a pillar of marble.<sup>18</sup> On a deeper level this means that Moshe's לב and מה can't be separated.<sup>19</sup> This is the level that Moshe was on.

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#### From Dire to Dedication

In appreciation of miracles that saved their lives, there were those that dedicated their lives to Hashem and His Torah. One case of this is R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, also known as the Ben Ish Chai (1832-1909). At the age of seven, he fell into a deep pit in the courtyard of his home while playing with his sister. He was eventually saved by a miracle. In gratitude to Hashem, he decided to devote his life to the study of Torah.

Another story that demonstrates the same point is with R' Yaakov Gesundheit<sup>20</sup> (1815-1878). At the age of 18, he fell ill with a life-threatening illness, but was later healed. To show his appreciation for the miracle, he accepted upon himself to publish his chidushim. The next year, he began to write Tiferes Yaakov on Choshen Mishpat, which he published four years later. In 1858, his students published Tiferes Yaakov on Masechta Gittin, an amazing work on the entire masechta, not missing even one Tosafos without a comment or a chidush. He also published other volumes of Tiferes Yaakov on Masechta Chullin and others.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received Semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of the Sefer, Fascinating Insights: Torah Perspectives on Unique Topics. His writings inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in a suburb of Yerushalayim where he studies, writes, and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

<sup>17</sup> Why do we use the term בן תורה, son of Torah and not לומד תורה, one who studies Torah? לומד תורה means that one learns Torah, which only applies to the time you are learning. The term בן תורה applies all the time, as a son is a son to his father all the time. בן תורה means even when the person is not learning as everything he does is a reflection of the Torah. Additionally, a son has features like his father and therefore you can recognize the father because his son looks like him. This is what a בן תורה is, as you can see from his behavior that he is a reflection of the Torah.

<sup>18</sup> Shemos 18:4.

<sup>19</sup> When one does this, he can fulfill כימי שמים על הארץ (Devarim 11:21): to have שמים (spiritual) days in this world (ארץ).

<sup>20</sup> The son of a wealthy merchant, he grew up in the Warsaw suburb of Praga. When he was 16, he began delivering his shiurim daily. R' Yaakov did not want to benefit from his Torah learning, preferring to support himself by other means, even though many leading kehillos offered him the post of Rav. It was only after the petirah of R' Dov Berish Meislis, Rav of Warsaw, that he acquiesced, replacing him as Rav of Warsaw. He also led a yeshiva for 42 years.