

English

בסייעתא דשמיא

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



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אמרות שמשון

The Protection That the Observance of Shabbos Provides For Us

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׂבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קָדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבְתוֹן לַה' כָּל הָעֲשִׂיָּה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה
יוֹמָת (לה א-ב)

And Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them: ... For a period of six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem...".

Rashi states that this assemblage took place on the day after Yom Kippur, when Moshe descended from the mountain. The commentaries all ask; what was it that made Moshe choose this Mitzvah of Shabbos, out of all the six hundred and thirteen Mitzvos, as the first Mitzvah that he would teach the Jews after coming down from the mountain?

אלמלי שמרו ישראל (ק"ה ע"ב) says The Gemara in Shabbos - שבת ראשונה בהן אומה ולשון - If the Jewish people had only observed the first Shabbos, no race or nation could have assailed them. This idea seems to be contradicted from the Gemara in Avodah Zarah (ה' ע"א) which clearly indicates that 'the nations and races were able to assail them' was a punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf.

We can answer this apparent contradiction by the means of another Gemara in Shabbos (שס) which teaches us that כל המשמר שבת כהלכתו אפילו עובד ע"ז כדור אנוש מוחלין לו - Whoever observes the Shabbos according to its law, even if he worships idols like the generation of Enosh he is forgiven. According to this, we can settle the contradiction as follows. Truthfully speaking, it was as a punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf that the 'worldly nations were able to assail them', as we learn in the Gemara Avodah Zarah. When the Gemara in Shabbos says that the 'assailment of the nations' was a punishment for the sin of desecrating the Shabbos, it only means that had the Jews observed the Shabbos, then their sin of the Golden

Calf would have been forgiven in its merit, and no punishment would have been brought upon them. But because the Jews did desecrate the Shabbos, when it came to the sin of the golden calf they did not have the merit of Shabbos to absolve their sin, and were, therefore, duly punished with 'the nations being able to assail them'.



When the Jews sinned with the Golden Calf, it was such a terrible sin that the Jewish Nation deserved to be wiped out in its entirety. It was Moshe who then took upon himself the burden of ascending to heaven, while fasting for forty days and nights, to cry and plead on behalf of the Jewish Nation. Finally on the fortieth day, which was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Hashem acceded to Moshe's entreaty, and forgave the Jews, at least partially.

After forty long days of being up on the mountain pleading on behalf of the Jews, Moshe finally came down and had a strong message to give over to them, regarding the observance of Shabbos. Had they observed the Shabbos, then despite the terrible sin of the Golden Calf, they would have been forgiven in the merit of Shabbos, and Moshe would not have had to put himself through these forty difficult days in order to gain forgiveness for them. But because they desecrated the Shabbos and consequently did not have its merit, then as a punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf, a full annihilation was decreed upon them. When Moshe finally gained forgiveness for them, it was merely a partial forgiveness, as it only pardoned them from being completely annihilated, yet they were still to be punished by 'the world's nations assailing them'.

When Moshe taught the Jews the Mitzvah of Shabbos as soon as he came down from the mountain, he was alluding to them the following advice. Moshe was telling them that although they didn't have the merit

of Shabbos to prevent their punishment, neither the original one of annihilation nor the ultimate one of 'assailment by the Nations', nevertheless if they would only begin to be more stringent with the observance of the Shabbos, through that virtue they would at least merit to be redeemed from their punishment, 'assailment of the worldly nations', as the Gemara in Shabbos (שס) teaches us that אלמלי משמרין שבת כהלכתה - If the Jewish people would only observe two Shabbosos according to their law, they would be redeemed immediately.

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The job proposal that came by itself

The following is the anecdote that came to us from Mrs. L. T., from Hadera, Israel:

Since I was young, I was very skilled in the art of cooking and pastry. At each family event, I was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the food. Whatever I did in the food field, the resulting dishes were very special. I liked cooking so much that after I got married, the first job I looked for to work was that of a cook. One day, I found a small ad placed in a restaurant that had opened in the area where I lived by which they were looking for cooks for full-day work. I contacted the owner, and, after a short job interview, I was accepted into the position. I was very happy; the working hours were comfortable for me, and the workplace was close to where I lived. But my joy did not last long. The restaurant owner was not recovering the money he had invested, he got into debt and difficulties and was forced to close the business. In this way, I found myself at home again, without a job.

Since I knew I had a good hand in the kitchen, I continued looking for a job in the field of cooking. This time, the search was more difficult. Over the course of long months, I looked for work by all possible means, asking family members and acquaintances, looking at the newspaper's classified section, and even placing advertisements on the street. After a few months of search, I found out that an institution was looking for a cook; I proposed myself as a candidate for the position and after a short time I was accepted.

This job did not last long either. After a short period, a new manager came to administer the institution,

who, among the various resolutions he made, decided to close the kitchen of the place, opting to resort to the services of an external catering agency that offered them a better price.

At this point, I was in crisis. My anguish had no limits. I felt that bad luck was haunting me, and this feeling was very difficult and terrible for me.

By this time, the Zera Shimshon bulletins were starting to be distributed around the area where I lived, and my husband brought home the bulletins from the synagogue. I read in one of them about the promise of the author of the Zera Shimshon, and I thought that perhaps I too could have the merit of receiving the blessing of the Tzaddik. Thus, every week I began to read the Torah words from the bulletin that my husband brought.

After just a few weeks, my brother, who runs a yeshiva, made me a job offer. The cook of the yeshiva that he administered went into retirement and he was looking for a good cook to take her place, so he offered me the position. Obviously, I took the job. The yeshiva that he administers has been established for decades, and, in addition to obtaining a livelihood, cooking for the young people studying in the yeshiva was a spiritual mission for me. I couldn't hope for a better job than this! I had the merit of seeing with my own eyes that the blessing of the Tzaddik was fulfilled in the best way.



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