

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION
IN MEMORY OF CLARA CHOPP A"H

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AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE
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IN MEMORY OF CLARA CHOPP A"ח

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PARSHAS VAYIGASH

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

BELOVED DIVERSITY OF ISRAEL

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Part I. Beloved Diversity

A Happy Reunion

When we read in this week's sedrah about the reunion of the *shevatim*, so it's quite a heartening story. **וַיִּנָּשֶׁק לְכָל אָחָיו וַיִּבֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם** – Yosef kissed all of his brothers and he cried on their shoulders. They embraced each other, and now the past, the differences, was put behind them. **וְאֶחָיו כֵּן דִּבְּרוּ אִתּוֹ** – And they conversed again like long lost brothers (Bereishis 45:15).

So we would have thought that now they lived, like it says in the storybooks, happily ever after. **וַיּוֹשֶׁב יוֹסֵף אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אָחָיו...בְּמֵיטֵב הָאָרֶץ** – Yosef settled them in the best portion of Mitzrayim together, and from the palace, **וַיִּכְלֹל אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אָחָיו** – he supported them with whatever they needed (*ibid.* 11-12). And so, it was one big happy family.

When Reality Hits

But we know it wasn't so. Maybe it was for some time, but we know that it didn't remain so. Because after all, they were twelve different people, with twelve different natures. זְבוּלֹן לְחוּף יָמִים וְשֶׁבֶן – Zevulun loved the ocean. The Gemara says in Pesachim that Zevulun loved the seashore. That's why he was given the *chof yamim*; because it was a nature of his, to love the sea and everything about it.

Dan, on the other hand, could be he didn't like the ocean much. But he had his own peculiarities. דָּן יָדִין עָמוֹ – Dan had a nature, he never wanted to make a compromise, a *peshara*. He wanted *din*. “Why should we compromise?” he said. “Whoever is right, he should come out on top. That's the best way.”

The Chachomim said there was a man—this was much later on in the days of the Gemara—who always said “דונו דייני! Judge my case.” He didn't want to make any *pesharos*; “יָקוֹב הָדִין אֶת הָהָר,” he said. “Let the judgement ram through a mountain.” So בְּדָקוֹ אֶחָרָיו – they checked his genealogy and they discovered that he came from Dan. It's the nature of Shevet Dan.

A Body of Different Parts

And so, all twelve sons had different ways. And it was no accident. Hakadosh Baruch Hu intentionally made it that way because we have to know that each *shevet* contributes its specific contributions to our people. There were tribes that were more warlike, and there were tribes that were more sedentary. There were tribes that were more hot-headed, more enthusiastic, and others were phlegmatic. Each one had his own *segulos*, his own ways and qualities, very different from the other *shevatim* but all together they contributed and they made it a perfect whole.

It's like a body. You need hands, but you can't be all hands. You need feet too. And therefore you have hands and feet, and you have different organs, and that makes a perfect body. Every *shevet*, every tribe, supplies its own characteristics and together it makes a perfect nation.

Living Separately

And that's why when they left Mitzrayim, Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't make one nation out of them. He didn't say, “Let's all join together and become one people.” No; He said, “I want each *shevet* to be in its own separate area in the Midbar; עַל דָּגְלוֹ – each one under its own flag.”

And when they came into Eretz Canaan it became even more pronounced because they settled in twelve separate territories, spread

out over a big area. In those days people didn't travel much and there wasn't too much communication either—there was no radio and no newspapers—and therefore each family developed its own *minhagim*, attitudes and traditions. The individual natures of the tribes became more distinct.

Speaking Separately

Even their dialects were different. When we look in the Tanach it seems to us they all spoke the same *lashon kodesh* but actually they had different dialects. The families spoke among themselves and very distinct ways of speaking developed. You remember that there were some tribes that had an idiosyncrasy that for a *shin* they said a *sin*. They didn't speak the same *lashon kodesh*. One *shevet* used to say "Good Shabbos" and the other one said, "Good Sabbos." That we know (Shoftim 12:5-6).

You know, where my family comes from there were no *chassidim*. They didn't have them in their districts in Europe. And they couldn't even pronounce the word *chassidim*. They used to say *sechidim*. They couldn't pronounce the word correctly. It's going to be like that when Jews are separated geographically.

And therefore naturally there were differences; differences in thinking, in attitudes, in characteristics. There were all kinds of natures in each tribe and in the course of time they tended to become independent of each other.

Unifying the Differences

And therefore there always was before the eyes of the responsible ones, in the minds of the leaders, there always was a problem to keep the Am Yisroel together. Differences in *minhagim*? Very good! Differences in attitudes? Excellent! But still, we're one nation, twelve brothers from one father, and therefore that was something that remained an important principle: How can you keep this great people together and make them *goy echad ba'aretz*, one nation under G-d?

Now, when Dovid Hamelech made his plans for the Beis Hamikdash, for Yerushalayim and the Mikdash, you have to know that this question was 'top of mind' for him. And therefore, when he prepared all the materials for the Beis Hamikdash, just like he envisioned and planned all the details, he also prepared the *ideals* of that place. And one of the most important, one of the greatest purposes, was this subject—the *achdus* of the Am Yisroel.

A Mizmor of Unification

That's what he was thinking when he composed *kepitel kuf chaf beis* (Tehillim 122). If you look inside there—you might want to, to follow along—you'll see how every word is an important *limud*, a valuable description of this purpose of Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdash. "שְׂמַחְתִּי בְּאוֹמְרִים לִי - בֵּית ה' נִלְדָּה - *I rejoiced when they said to me, "Let's go to the House of Hashem."* That's how Dovid begins.

He is speaking on behalf of the nation because all over Eretz Yisroel the people were waiting for the time to fulfill the mitzvah of being *oleh regel*. Three times every year it's a mitzvah incumbent upon every man; it was a momentous time and they were waiting for it. They had their packs ready and then there came forth the crier of the town and he announced, "בֵּית ה' נִלְדָּה - *"Everyone! Let's go to the House of Hashem."*

All over Eretz Yisroel, in every town and hamlet, this cry resounded and everybody now became full of enthusiasm and they looked forward to going up to Yerushalayim, the city of Hashem. They began on the back roads, the narrow country roads near their villages, and they started walking towards Yerushalayim. It was going to be a long trek, but they didn't notice it much because their heads were in the clouds. They were singing on the way, singing *shirei Dovid avdecha*, and their *neshamos* were soaring *bishmei marom* – in the heavens above.

A Tribal Reunion

And as various groups converged onto the main roads, it was like a river coalescing; first it begins with little trickles that come from a spring, and gradually these trickles converge, and become a bigger stream. That's how it was; from the small towns the people came in little groups and they were singing and they heard behind the hills somebody else was singing, and soon their friends from other towns came into sight. And as they all marched together, the noise now became even louder. More and more people, more and more tribes converged together and finally, there was a big majestic river rolling on towards the sea.

Imagine hundreds and then thousands of men singing together; and they all knew the songs and they all knew the language and they all were sincere and their hearts were devoted to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and slowly they were tramping along the road to Yerushalayim and singing.

And as they converged on the main road leading to Yerushalayim they were meeting all their brothers from different tribes. And so the Reuvenites met the Shimonites again. "Oh, Shimon! How are you? It's been

months.” And Zevulun met up with Gad. “*Shalom alecheim!* My old friend from Gad! How are you? The last time we met was on this same road, going up to the Mikdash.”

Noticing Differences

Now, it doesn't mean it was always easy. Because there's a tendency to notice differences. And so when they camped for Shabbos on the sides of the roads, in villages, so you're standing there with your son and somebody from Ephraim says, “Good Sabbos” so your son snickers: “Hah! Sabbos!”

“Oh no,” you tell your son. “Don't laugh! Ephraim is a holy *shevet*.”

Even the *begadim* were different. They all wore *tzitzis* but they had different *taleisim*. Now if you're from Shevet Yehuda you're accustomed that a *tallis* has to be black and white, but here comes a Jew, with a *tallis*, all green. A green *tallis*? What's this? A nightgown?

Imagine you are a boy from Yehuda. You are a youngster, fourteen, fifteen years old and you see a man coming from Reuven with a green *tallis*. So you might laugh at him.

Chas v'shalom, to laugh at your holy brothers!

“But he wears funny *begadim* and he talks a funny kind of Ivris.” After all everyone in Reuven dressed the same. Everyone in Shimon dressed the same. Also in Yisoschar, all the Yisochars dressed the same. And therefore at home nobody laughed at each other; they were the same family. But now you're all the different *shevatim* coming together. It looks like you're from a different nation! You might want to mimic him and laugh at him.

Chinuch Habanim

But you don't do it because your father warned you always, “When the *shalosh regalim* comes, you're going to meet the Bnei Yisroel, your brothers, and they're very different. But have *derech eretz*! Keep your mouth closed. Respect them. Love them.”

That's what the nation was trained in. They saw different *minhagim* and different *begadim* and other differences but they learned to appreciate it. Sometimes, he had to make a *bracha* on something and this one had different *halachos*; he made a different *bracha*. Very good. He's got his ways; you have your ways. And so they had to learn to tolerate the differences between them—that was one of the purposes of this entire reunion.

And then finally, עֹמְדוֹת הָיוּ רַגְלֵינוּ – *our feet were standing*, בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *in your gates Yerushalayim* (ibid. 2). They were standing in the streets as the others came from other places, from other sides through

different gates, and they converged on the main streets and now they were standing in the streets of Yerushalayim all together.

And therefore let's imagine now we're standing with them; our feet are in Yerushalayim but our heads are in the heavens. We're singing and we're hearing all kinds of *havaras*; these are singing *havarah Ephraimis* and these are singing *havarah Reuvenis*; they're very different. But it's music to our ears and it's music to the ears of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The whole Am Yisroel is singing *shiros v'sishbachos* to Him – who cares what the accent is, because their hearts are all united.

Part II. Beloved Unity

Jerusalem Together

And now Dovid tells us that this *achdus* was one of the great purposes, one of the primary intentions, of Yerushalayim: יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הִבְנוּיָהּ – It's a city that's built for the purpose, בָּעִיר שְׂחוּבָהּ לָהּ יַחְדָּיו – like a city that was put together (*ibid.* 3).

What does it mean 'built up like a city put together'? Because Yerushalayim was built as if everybody had come and had given a share to build the city. The streets of the city were paved from the public money, from the *machatzis hashekel* money. After they had taken the *trumas halishka* to buy *korbanos tzibbur* so what remained was used for the streets of Yerushalayim, for its walls and water channels and all the other public needs (Yerushalmi Shekalim, 4:1)

And so יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לֹא נִתְחַלְקָה לְשִׁבְטִים – it wasn't divided among the *shevatim* (Megillah 26a). All of Eretz Yisroel was divided – here was Asher and here was Gad and here was Reuven; each territory had a tribe that owned it and it was their property – but Yerushalayim was like a communal property. Nobody had any property rights; it belonged to everyone together.

Queer People

That's why if someone squatted in Yerushalayim in a home, he didn't pay any rent. And if a homeowner took in someone from out of town, people who came for *yom tov*, he couldn't charge any rent. The Gemara (*ibid.*) says that you couldn't take any rent in Yerushalayim because it wasn't your property. It didn't belong to any individual.

And when they were *machnis orach*, when they took them into their homes, so the *orchim* were different kinds of people. Maybe you saw

things, unusual things. I was once in a house in Europe, a wealthy house, and the *baalabus* used to sit on the floor. Now, I'm an American—sitting on the floor was queer to me. I kept quiet however; it's the *minhag hamakom*. It was a nice floor, nice and clean, and there's place on the floor to sit. So, keep quiet; that's his custom.

Maybe I did things he didn't like. Could be he was thinking, "This American, a *grobbeh* bochur. He doesn't have any manners, the way he behaves." But he kept quiet. He kept quiet and I kept quiet and each one of us made progress in getting along with different people.

Friends, Together

And that was the story of Yerushalayim. It was built for that purpose. **בְּעִיר שְׁחוּבָהּ לָהּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְּנוּיָה** – *It was a city that was built for the purpose, where everybody, every part of the nation, could be joined together as chaveirim.*

Like we say in Rosh Chodesh bentchen: **כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרִים** – *all of Yisroel, friends.* Because we're praying for the time when once more we'll come together in Yerushalayim and everybody will be *chaveirim*. Like we say **וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנִפּוֹת הָאָרֶץ הָאָרֶץ** – we don't say "Gather us from the four corners of the earth" and finished. No, we add the word *yachad*. **וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד** – *Collect us in a way that we should all get along despite our differences and we should remain together,*

That's a big task! And it's one of the purposes Hakadosh Baruch Hu had in mind when He exiled the Jews from the Old World to America. Because here for the first time in a thousand years you have Syrian Jews living shoulder to shoulder with *Galizianer* Jews; Jews from Poland and Jews from Egypt living on the same block.

Black Jews and Chinese Jews

And so we're learning to live together. We're preparing for Yemos HaMoshiach when we'll all rub shoulders together. You'll be sitting next to a Siberian Jew and you'll have to get along with him despite his mannerisms. You'll be together with a black Jew and you won't be able to reject his company.

A black Jew is also a Jew—a black Jew who keeps the Torah is more Jewish, more beloved to Hashem, than a white Jew named Cohen or Katz who doesn't. You'll be sitting next to a Persian Jew, or a Jew from Cochin China. He looks funny; maybe his eyes are slanty. You'll be sitting next to

Jews from all over the world. And so you have to prepare now; you have to get a new attitude.

Otherwise, they'll all come to Yerushalayim, and immediately there'll be cliques. There'll be a quarter where the Ashkenazim will be by themselves, and another quarter for Sephardim. And don't think the Ashkenazim will be all together. They'll also be fractionalized; there'll be North American Ashkenazim and South American Ashkenazim. And by the Sephardim too; there'll be Syrians of Aleppo and Syrians of Damascus. There'll be Persians and Moroccans, all different groups that'll never amalgamate into one people.

E Pluribus Unum

That's why you have to practice right now. Don't feel that an Orthodox Jew who wears a big black hat and a big beard and doesn't talk English with your accent, that he's a stranger to you. Oh no! Practice now! *Yachad!* Together with everyone.

I'm not talking about *aveiros chas v'shalom*. It means his mannerisms, his dress; get along with everyone. And although each person has a different complexion—some are swarthy, some are light skinned—and their *minhagim* are different too; even the way they read *lashon kodesh* is so different that they cannot communicate. But the time will come when we must come together and therefore be together with him now. And once we are *muchshar l'kabel taharah*, once we're accustomed to living with Jews and loving *frum* Jews, then we're ready for Moshiach.

That's why we say **חִבְרִים כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל**. We hope it will come again that day when we'll all come together, all friends, and we'll all be the same nation together. And so we'll prepare now as much as possible and then Moshiach will come and he'll have the power to cause all of us to join together as one great nation. He'll finish the great miracle of joining us together, that we should remain together forever.

Now this miracle was accomplished by Dovid. Dovid had foreseen this and it was his plan that among the many holy purposes of Yerushalayim was that it would be the bond that keeps together all the *shivtei Hashem*. That was one of the great purposes that Dovid had in mind: **יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְנוּיָה** – *Yerushalayim was built, כְּעִיר שְׂחוּבָה לָהּ יַחְדָּו* – *to be a city that brought everyone together. They came into a city that united them as one. עִיר שְׂהִיָּא* – *It was a city that made all of Yisroel into comrades* (Yerushalmi Chagigah 3:6).

United in What?

Now, it's important we should realize that included in this great plan of *לְהַיָּחֵד אֶת כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל* was the ideal of *what* it is that keeps us together. And that's what Dovid said in the beginning of the *kepitel*: *בֵּית ה' נִלְךָ* – We're all travelling together on the road towards the Beis Hamikdash; we're all walking on a path towards Hashem.

You know, unity, *achdus*, togetherness, means to be unified around *something*. Otherwise, it's nothing; it's just empty words. And for the Am Yisroel, it's that we're the Am Hashem. Nothing else! The fact that we have One Hashem and He gave us one Torah, that's the pivot that the nation turns on, and that's going to be the strongest force in maintaining the unity of the nation.

That's why when Yosef's brothers came to him after the father passed away, and they were concerned maybe now that the father is gone so Yosef might begin thinking of what happened to him once and maybe a desire for revenge will stir in him. So they came to him and they threw themselves at his feet and this is what they said: *"Forgive please the sin of עֲבֵרֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ* – *the servants of the G-d of your father.*" Forgive the iniquity done by us, *the ones who serve the same Hashem.*

Because they understood that this is the strongest bond between brothers—it's the G-d of our fathers that keeps us together. It could be we hurt each other once, we weren't careful enough, but no matter we are bound together with the chains of serving Hashem.

Irreligious Unglued

It's only when Jews forget Hashem and they're no longer tied by that bond, then they can forget they're brothers. And that's what happened only a few years ago. Stephen Wise, the mis-leader of American Jewry, and his cohorts forgot that they had Jewish brothers in Europe and they allowed them to be destroyed by the Hitler crematoria when there was still time to save millions.

It was Stephen Wise and the reform Jews, the rich Jews in America, who prevailed upon President Roosevelt to desist from any efforts to help the European Jews. They said, "Let's put all our efforts now into the war and help the Allies so that after the war when we want to declare a Jewish state we'll have something to bargain with at the table, at the treaty table. We'll be able to say that we sacrificed Jewish blood." The fact that there won't be anybody to bargain for—in the crematoria bargaining didn't help them—that didn't bother them. Because it wasn't their blood anyhow.

But the Gedolei Yisroel, they were ones with ‘all the Jews’ because Hashem Elokei Yisroel united them with all the Jews of Europe. And that’s why it was the Gedolei Yisroel who were concerned and made the *Vaad Hatzalah* and they rescued many Jews with their poor little funds. Had they had more money, had Wise and his cohorts cared to help, they would have rescued millions. There’s a big story to tell but whatever the details are—if you want to hear more about it, read *Perfidy*; you’ll find the story told there—it could only happen such a thing when the one thing that unifies you is no more.

Tribes of Hashem

But that was the purpose of Dovid, that Yerushalayim should unite them; that the Jewish nation should come together there and serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the Beis Hamikdash. That’s what he said, **שָׁם עָלוּ שְׁבֵטִים** – there, to Yerushalayim, all the tribes went up (*ibid.* 4). But not just the *shevatim*; no, they were the **שְׁבֵטִים שְׁבֵטֵי יְהוָה** – When they went up everybody knew he was going up as part of the *shivtei Kah*, the tribes of Hashem. They weren’t merely tribes like Indian tribes or African tribes. Every one was a tribe of Hashem. Reuven felt he was ‘Reuven of Hashem’. And Shimon was ‘Shimon of Hashem’. Every tribe understood they were dedicated and given over entirely to the service of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

It’s like if we would say today, if all the physicians would say, “We’re physicians of Hashem,” and all the grocers would say, “We’re the grocers of Hashem.” We’re not professionals in this field or workers in this field; all of us are dedicated only to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

And therefore the *shivtei Kah* when they came to Yerushalayim, they demonstrated that’s the purpose of the Beis Hamikdash. They all came **לְהוֹדוֹת לְשֵׁם ה'** – to raise up the Name of Hashem (*ibid.*) because that’s the most important thing that connected them.

Features of Achdus

There were other features there. Some people had questions in *dinei torah* to ask in the Sanhedrin. They had *kashas* on *sugyos* and they saved all these things up for three times a year to come to Yerushalayim. **כִּי נִשְׁמָה לְשֵׁם ה' יָשְׁבוּ בְּסֵאוֹת לְמִשְׁפָּט** – In Yerushalayim was established the throne of Torah justice (*ibid.* 5). We possessed thrones of justice in Yerushalayim – the Sanhedrin; the seventy elders sat in the *lishkas hagazis* and they were the last word in interpreting Torah. If there was any question and it couldn’t be settled by the local *beis din*, finally they ascended to Yerushalayim and they asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Because that’s what the Sanhedrin was.

The Sanhedrin was the representative of Hakadosh Baruch Hu to limit any schisms.

And he adds, כְּסִאוֹת לְבֵית דָּוִד – *the thrones of the house of Dovid* (ibid. 5). Because what was the function of a Jewish *melech* in the days of old? He was the arm that enforced the Torah. That's why they were next to each other, כְּסִאוֹת לְמִשְׁפָּט and כְּסִאוֹת לְבֵית דָּוִד. Here were the Sanhedrin of the sages of the Am Yisroel and over there were the palaces of the family of Dovid who made sure to enforce the Torah.

That was Yerushalayim; it was the place dedicated to upholding the Torah of Hakadosh Baruch Hu among the people, which united the nation.

Part III. Loving Unity

My Heart in Jerusalem

Now, all that is not enough. Because if there's a city intended for the great ideal of *chaveirim kol Yisroel*, we have to know how to best utilize that opportunity. And so Dovid goes on and says like this: שְׁאַלְוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *inquire of the welfare of Yerushalayim* (ibid. 6)."

What does that mean, to ask about Yerushalayim's wellbeing? Dovid is telling us that every Jew should feel a personal affection for the great institutions of his nation. He shouldn't stand on the side like a cold and calm spectator. "Over there is Yerushalayim and there is the Mikdash. There's the *lishkas hagazis* and the *kisa'os l'beis Dovid*." No. He should feel a warmth in his heart— "It's my place too." Everyone should feel that Yerushalayim is his personal concern because he loves the city of *avodas Hashem*.

And we would be remiss if we think that this ideal applies only to the Yerushalayim of old. Dovid is exhorting us even today that this should be one of the important practices of our nation. Imagine a Jew comes to Yerushalayim and he looks upon Meah Shearim where *frum* Jews are, but not like a sight-seer, like a tourist; no, his heart is there. Like Rav Yehudah Halevi said in one of his songs, לִבִּי בְּמִצְרָה – *my heart is in Eretz Yisroel*. Every Jew should feel that. Not because of Eretz Yisroel today. Not because he's a nationalist, a Zionist. No, that's nothing. His heart is in Yerushalayim, where the Shechina is; where the *avdei Hashem* are.

And therefore, if we want to be united, one nation around Hashem, we have to get busy always speaking with affection about all of our

Yerushalayims—all of the places where the Shechina rests. That's what it means **שְׁאֵלוֹ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם**. Because his heart is there and therefore he cares that everyone should be well, that everyone should be *b'shalom*.

The Local Jerusalem

And therefore, to ask about Yerushalayim, to be attached to it and to seek out its peace, means right now. It means Williamsburg. It means Flatbush and Boro Park. If you ever are fortunate to come into Boro Park, you have to know you're coming into an *ir hakodesh*. It's a great pity people don't appreciate Boro Park. It's crammed with *frum* Jews. Jewish mothers, Jewish children. Every block, *frum* children everywhere. It's crammed also with *talmidei chachamim*, with *tzaddikim*. They are quiet people, their names are not in newspapers but almost every street you have great people, some are very big *talmidei chachamim*.

And so, as soon as you alight from the bus, your heart should start warming up. Forget about your coldness, your aloofness; feel connected to the people. They're different from you? No, that's nothing. It's all superficialities—you're all together *avdei Hashem*. You're one people.

It's something to practice because if you don't practice in Boro Park, you won't do it when you get to Yerushalayim. Don't think that one day when we all come back to Yerushalayim that you'll fulfill *yachad*. If when you come to Boro Park today, you look around and the first thing you see is faults, then you're going to criticize Yerushalayim in the days of Moshiach too. And you won't remain long. They'll hustle you out. They'll say, "Get back to New York! Go back to Brownsville among the gentiles if you're so happy over there."

Moshiach in Williamsburg and 770

And so you have to prepare now for Moshiach. We have to love Williamsburg! As you drive through Williamsburg, you have to fulfill that. "I love these people," you say. Our hearts are in Williamsburg, with the *frum* Jews who are living a traditional Jewish life and raising big families. They speak Yiddish! And the *tzniyus*! There's no television sets there!

Or if you are ever *zocheh* to be in Crown Heights, take the time to feel a warmth in your heart. Our hearts are in Crown Heights, in 770 Eastern Parkway. Our hearts are in Lakewood. Our hearts, our affection, are with all those *tzaddikim*, all the people who live a *Yiddishe*, a real Torah true life. Wherever *frum* Jews live, all the places where *frum* Jews and *bnei Torah* congregate, that's where our hearts are. Our hearts are with the people who are walking in the paths of their forefathers.

Loving Other Shevatim

And not only your type. If they're *shomer mitzvos*, if they try to keep the *mitzvos*, then even though they don't do exactly everything the way you do it, and even though they wear different kinds of yarmulkes—he wears a knitted yarmulke or something else, a beanie—or they follow maybe a different *rebbe*, or a different set of political objectives, nevertheless, we don't lose sight of the fact that fundamentally we're one people—we're all serving the same Hashem. That unifies us.

He eats kosher, he sends his children to yeshiva and not public school, he's a *shomer Shabbos*, he has *mezuzos* on his doors, so in your heart you should feel a warmth, an affection, for him.

All the different *shevatim* came together in Yerushalayim because that's how we have to feel always. Our hearts are in all places where *frum* Jews live. In Baltimore. In Mexico. In Los Angeles. And therefore we seek the welfare of *frum* Jews everywhere.

A Heart Full of Blessings

Now, when your heart is there, when you genuinely are **שְׁאַלְו שְׁלוֹם** – seeking the peace of your fellow Jews, so you'll bless them too. **יְשַׁלְו יְשָׁלְיוּ** – All those who have an affection for the place of *avodas Hashem*, they should all be well.

And that's why Dovid said that so when you come up to Yerushalayim don't be wrapped up in yourself and think merely of discharging your obligation, the various *mitzvahs* you have to do. Because among all the things you have to do, you should also remember to leave over your blessings in Yerushalayim.

And right away he practiced what he preached. **יְהִי שְׁלוֹם בְּחִילָךְ** – “May there be peace in your walls,” he said, **שְׁלֹוה בְּאַרְמֹנֹתֶיךָ** – “and tranquility upon your palaces.” Dovid is blessing the whole city. Not only the *makom hamikdash* and not only the *batei kneisiyos* and *batei medrash*. He means the homes too. The big homes, the little ones, all of the *frum* homes. “There should be peace in those homes,” he said. “He shouldn't fight with his wife. He shouldn't fight with his landlord. His breakfast should be digested well.”

Blessing the Nation

Oh! Now that's the way to be one with the nation. To bless them all. I remember a scene which I witnessed in a certain yeshiva. It was Yom Kippur after Neilah, a *yeshivashe* Yom Kippur, a glorious Yom Kippur. And

on motzei Yom Kippur when they blew the *shofar*, the whole congregation burst out singing “*yevarech es beis Yisroel*” and they didn’t stop. They were all worn out because when you *daven* *Neilah* in the yeshiva it’s enough to knock you out even if you hadn’t fasted. And here it was after twenty five hours of fasting. But with their last *kochos*, the whole congregation was shouting “*yevarech es beis Yisroel*”.

Not *yevareich es bnei hayeshiva*; not *yevareich es Boro Park* or *es Yerushalayim*. No **יְבָרַךְ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל** – may Hashem bless the entire *Beis Yisroel*. We’re all one nation serving Hashem. And the tears were flowing from their eyes, tears of happiness and love for the *Beis Yisroel*.

And that’s what we have to experience, even now when we see *frum* Jews, when we see a Jewish congregation in Boro Park, when you see Lubavitcher Jews marching, when you see Satmarer Jews standing on the street corners or busy shopping *erev Shabbos*, we have to overflow with love for them and say **יְהִי שְׁלוֹם בְּחֵילֶךָ שְׁלוֹהַּ בְּאַרְמוֹנְתֶיךָ**. We have to say blessings on them.

The Torah Institutions

And that’s a model, for the behavior towards all places of Torah too. **שְׁאַל שְׁלוֹם** – Inquire of the peace of these places of Torah and bless them. A Jew has to not only be loyal to the Torah, to keep the Torah but his heart has to be in it. He has to be enthusiastic about it, we must love the places of Torah.

And so, here’s a man who comes to Lakewood. He needs a little vacation so he goes to a hotel in Lakewood. But he doesn’t bother to visit the yeshiva. That means his heart is in the dining room of the hotel. Oy vey! It matters very much where your heart is! Our hearts have to be with the learners. Because they’re learning our Torah! It’s ours! We’re all one around the *Toras Hashem*.

And so our hearts are in the yeshiva in Lakewood. Our hearts are in the *Mirrer Yeshivah* where people, young men, old men, are sitting all day long and late at night too and they’re laboring on Torah. **שְׁאַל !** We want them all to succeed!

Of course you should leave over from your cash too. Because it could be the administrator in the office won’t appreciate your blessings much; he’ll want you to leave over something more substantial. But *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* considers your blessings more important than your money because that shows where your heart is.

You know, a person can sometimes coldly give a thousand dollars; he has discharged his obligation and he's *patur*. But a man who stands by the side and he looks at four, five hundred young men from all over the world who are laboring in Torah and his heart swells with love, sometimes he even weeps from happiness. It happens; he even weeps from happiness.

Weeping from Achdus

And so when you come to Ponevezeh and you stand there and your heart is filled with pride — so many different boys, all devoted to Hashem's Torah. It's an **עדות לְיִשְׂרָאֵל** – *a testament to the unity of the Am Yisroel* (*ibid.* 4). And you'll sing with happiness and you say, **לְמַעַן אָחִי וְרַעִי אֲדַבְּרָה נָא שְׁלוֹם** – *For the sake of my brothers and friends—who's more of a brother and friend than those who are learning Torah?—I speak words of peace for you* (*ibid* 8). If your heart is there, you might even weep.

When I was a boy I lived in a gentile neighborhood and one day I took an adventure downtown to the Jewish neighborhood and I saw Jews. I saw a multitude of Jews, crowds of Jews, and I was weeping with happiness! Now, I was too young to understand, but I felt it. I was emotional about it.

And so we should train ourselves in that. There are people who don't think about it at all. They pass by the yeshiva, they see it day by day and to them it's remote, it's a distant place. No, your heart has to be there. You should feel that you love that place. A place where people are learning Torah that's where the Shechina is; the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu hovers there and you should love it. And even when a *talmid chacham* passes in the street you shouldn't feel that that man is a stranger—you should feel it's a close relative of yours. It's like a son; you love him with all your heart. Love the men of Torah! You have to make the effort to acquire the attitude that the *frum* communities, the places where *frum* Jews gather, the *yeshivos*, they are our beloved places.

One Nation Under G-d

And now Dovid finishes up, and he says, he reminds us about what we began with. All of our affection for each other, all of our *achdus* and togetherness, our seeking each other's peace and our blessings for one another, it's all **לְמַעַן בֵּית ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ** – *for the sake of the House of Hashem*. With all of our differences—all of our peculiarities and idiosyncrasies and attitudes and our various ways and *minhagim*, our ways of speech and dress— we're all united around the House of Hashem.

And for the sake of that, אֶבְרָכְךָ טוֹב לְךָ – *I seek your good, O' Yerushalayim.* Because that's the great ideal I'm looking forward to—a nation that's unified around Yerushalayim; not only in its place but in its ideals of *avodas Hashem*!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

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Let's Get Practical

Love a Different Jew Today

This week, I will practice what we see in the *parsha*: the *shevatim* coming together despite different natures, accents, and ways. Each day, I will *bli neder*, choose one Jew who is different from me — in background, *minhagim*, or appearance — and remind myself:

“He is my brother, another *shevet* of Hashem.”

Then I will give him a quick, silent *brachah*, just as Klal Yisrael learned to appreciate each other when they gathered in Yerushalayim. By doing this once a day, I will train myself to see the beauty in the “twelve tribes,” and take a real step toward the *achdus* that Dovid HaMelech teaches us to strive for.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

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ABOUT THE CODE

When you learn a gemara, in order to follow the flow of the sugya, you must know where each step begins, and what type of step it is. This code helps you focus on each step of the gemara.

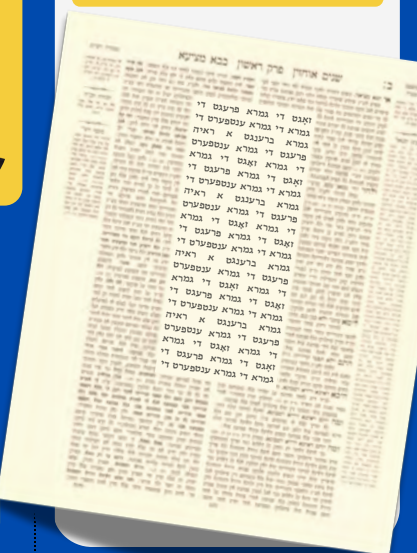
HOW TO USE IT

- 1) Identify what the first word of each step is.
- 2) Identify what type of step it is – **Q**uestion, **A**nswer, **S**tatement, **P**roof (**D**ichuy).
- 3) Number each step of the sugya (starting again by each sugya).

ב' מצא פירות מפורזין וכמה א"ר יצחק קב

Step #	Type Of Step	(at end Of Step)	(Comment/Action/Step Implication)
Number	Letter	Word	Comment or Summary of Step
1	S	IC3N	
2	Q	7N3I	
3	A	7NIC	

What makes a step? As long as the **מקשן** or **תרצן** are still addressing their point, it is part of the step.



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Shabbos Inspired

לע"נ שרה נטשה בת דבורה שהין · דינה ברכה בת שרה נטשה · דבורה מזל בת שרה נטשה

It Boils Down to Emunah

Shabbos doesn't just signify Hashem's creation of the world. If we wanted to mark the act of Creation, we wouldn't stop working! On the contrary, we would perform various types of *melachah* to commemorate Hashem's work of Creation.

Shabbos signifies *chiddush ha-olam*, the fact that the world is an entity which came into existence. That is how it is explained in Torah sources. The world wasn't just "there"; it didn't always exist. Furthermore, *chiddush ha-olam* means the world is constantly coming into existence anew every moment. Hashem is constantly creating it out of utter nothingness. What does this mean? The world has no true existence. The world is based on utter nothingness, and at every moment it must be recreated out of the utter nothingness that is its essential reality. This is the basic meaning of Shabbos.

If so, why is there a world at all? Why does the floor feel so hard if it doesn't really exist? The answer is very simple. The world's true reality is Hashem's will. Hashem wills it to exist, so it does. It is nothing more than an expression of Hashem's will, and there is no reality other than Hashem's will. Hashem wants the floor to feel hard, so it does. That's all.

It is fitting for *b'nei Torah* to work on this kind of *emunah*. This is the *emunah* of "A tzaddik lives his faith." It is the *emunah* of "Walk modestly with your God!" It means bringing Hashem into the privacy of our own selves, so to speak – to live with Hashem. It means to say "*Baruch Atah*." and feel we are actually talking to Someone! It means to walk down the street, see something and pray, praise, thank, sing... simply to live with Hashem.

The special time for developing this kind of *emunah* is Shabbos. Shabbos is a Name of Hashem. This is the time when we are most capable of understanding the true nature of the world, of perceiving the reality of "*The whole earth is full of His glory*."

This affects the way we prepare for Shabbos, too. When a *ben Torah* is standing in the kitchen getting something ready for Shabbos, he should understand why, and in Whose honor, he's doing it. Who is the "Guest" coming to his home tonight?

It is recounted that when R' Baruch Ber Leibowitz, zt"l, the *Birkas Shmuel*, bought himself a hat, he asked those around him, "Does the hat look right on me? Could I wear it to meet R' Chaim Ozer?" In other words, his whole reason for buying the hat and wearing it was so he could meet R' Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, the *gadol hador*.

When a *ben Torah* puts on his hat, or helps clean the house for Shabbos, in whose honor is he doing it? In honor of the Creator of the Universe! If the Chofetz Chaim or the Chazon Ish came to us for Shabbos, wouldn't we want to make sure everything was tiptop and as beautiful as possible? Would we leave cleaning the candlesticks for next Shabbos? Our Shabbos guest is the *Ribbono shel Olam* Himself. This is what Shabbos is all about!

Le'iluy Nishmas
רבקה בת אברהם צבי

Adapted by R' Y. Levy from Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim
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QUESTION

Chazal say that we shouldn't try to appease someone when he is still angry. What is the reason for that? And does that mean that absolutely

ANSWER

Question: It says **אל תרצה את חברך בשעת כעסו** – When somebody is in middle of his rage, don't try to argue with him (Avos 4:18). Be silent and wait until the paroxysm passes by. And then you're able to talk gently to him.

Now we'll follow the advice of Shlomo Hamelech in Mishlei who says, **מענה** **רך ישיב חמה** – a soft answer turns away wrath (Mishlei 15:1). So in case when you come home and your wife falls upon you with an attack, "Why did you come so late? All day long, I've been driven to madness because of the children and now you come so late?!", so instead of retorting quickly, take your time. It'll pass by in another two minutes. Two minutes, it'll pass by.

Then you can answer softly, "I was held up at the office, I couldn't come so quickly." **מענה רך** – answer softly. How important that is to dealing with everybody.

I always tell you, it's the difference between the janitor of the bank and the vice president of the bank. If you remonstrate with the janitor of the bank, he answers angrily. That's why he's a janitor. If you have an argument with the vice president, he answers you softly and gently. That's why he's a vice president.

And so, do not try to appease your fellowman to conciliate him when he's in midst of his wrath. You're only pouring oil on the fire. Wait a moment or two. Sometimes wait an hour. Sometimes you wait a day. And when he cools off, then you're able to come and talk words, calm words of reason, and win him over.
(February 1989)

Life Questions?

Cybersecurity Questions?

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