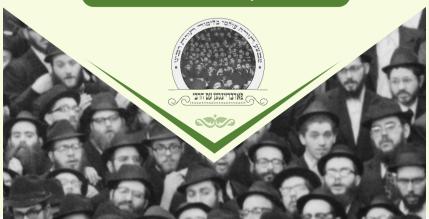


Farbrengen with Rebbe

התוועדות חמשה עשר בשבט תשמ"א



קיצורי השיחות נועדים להקל על התלמידים שיי לעקוב אחר השיחה, ופשוט שהוא כולל רק חלק מהענינים המדוברים, בדרך אפשר וללא אחריות כלל וכלל, ושגיאות מי יבין.



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Tel: (718) 771-9674

Email: vaadhatmimim@gmail.com

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במסגרת הפרוייקט 'התוועדות חודשית עם הרבי', ולקראת חמשה עשר בשבט, הננו מוציאים לאור הנחות. וסיכומים על השיחות מהתוועדות חמשה עשר בשבט תשמ"א.

הקובץ נדפס בזאת יחד עם הוידיאו החדש מהתוועדות זו, שיוצאת לאור לראשונה על ידי חברת JEM, כחלק מסדרת "פארברענגען עם הרבי" שיוצאת בשנים האחרונות, ומזכה את אלפי תלמידי התמימים ואנ"ש בכל רחבי תבל, להשתתף ב"פארברענגען עם הרבי" בבחינת "יהא רואה בעל השמועה כאילו עומד כנגדו".

כמנהגנו, נערכו בקלטת זו כל השיחות ממהלך ההתוועדות עם תרגום מילולי ע"ג המסך.

התרגום המופיע על גבי המסך, נערך בצורה מילולית באידיש, בלה"ק, באנגלית, בצרפתית, בספרדית, וברוסית – מתוך השתדלות להיצמד ככל האפשר ל"לשון הרב", למעט מקרים בודדים בהם נעשה תרגום עניני יותר. להבנת העניו לאשורו.

קובץ זה יוצא לאור כדי לשמש כעזר וכסיוע להכנת תוכן ההתוועדות מראש, ובו 'הנחה' מכל ההתוועדות: א) בתרגום לאנגלית – ע"י חברי המערכת ועל אחריותם בלבד. ב) בקובץ נפרד, תמליל באידיש של דברי כ"ק אדמו"ר בהתוועדות. ג) בקובץ נפרד, בלשון-הקודש – תורגם ונערך ע"י חברי המערכת ועל אחריותם בלבד.

לתועלת הלומדים הבאנו בזה גם 'קיצורים וסיכומים' מכל שיחות הפארברענגען וכמה שאלות לחזרה אחרי כל שיחה.

לפני שיחה ו', בה הרבי מבאר שאלות שהתעוררו על הנאמר בהתוועדויות קודמות, נוסף תימצות של נקודת שיחות אלו להקלת לימוד השיחה ולתועלת הרבים.

ויה"ר אשר בזכות ה'קאָך' בלימוד תורת רבינו, ובפרט באופן ש"רואה בעיניו ממש את המשלח, נשיא דורנו, שנותן לפניו היום שליחות זו", נזכה במהרה לקיום היעוד ד"תורה חדשה מאתי תצא", ונזכה לחזות באור פני מלך חיים, ולהשתתף בגשמיות ובמוחש בעוד פארברענגען עם הרבי, בביאת משיח צדקנו בקרוב ממש.

ועד תלמידי התמימים העולמי

ג' שבט ה'תשע"ז



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Not saying tachnun is a very special advantage

14 Min

On the 15th of Shevat, just like every holiday, Tachnun is not recited (on the 15th of Shevat we don't recite tachnun starting from mincha the day before). This is a great advantage; during the rest of the year, the effect of tachnun is dependent on the persons recital. On the days that tachnun is not recited, however, the effect is accomplished by G-d himself - on his level.

Puzzling custom of 15th of Shevat

10 Min

One of the customs of this holiday, is to make a blessing and eat fruit. This brings up the obvious question: This holiday celebrates the day the sap is renewed. So why, then, is the custom to eat a fruit - something which comes only many months later, after much hard work?

The very important lesson this custom is trying to bring out

| 11 Min

This meaningful custom teaches us the importance of recognizing the potential that every creation contains. Right when the sap renews itself, we remind ourselves through eating the finished product - a fruit - of what the sap can lead to. When one thinks about how much hard work is demanded, one could be lead to despair, but through eating the fruit, we see the potential and we are encouraged that it can be done.

The lesson for day-to-day life

120 Min

When a person wakes up, still lying in bed, he has to know that he contains tremendous potential that has to be utilized. Through utilizing his talents in serving G-d, he can reach ultimate heights, even though it may take hard work. By being shown the fruit, he is taught that it can be obtained, by using his full potential. This lesson applies to every opportunity that a person encounters – it contains tremendous potential that must be channeled properly.



This gathering marks the fifteenth of Shevat which begins tonight.

The fact that the holiday begins at night - not the following morning - is evident based on the *minhag* which the Alter Rebbe writes in his Siddur, in regards to omitting *tachanun* during the Mincha of the afternoon prior. Before certain holidays, *tachanun* is recited, because the primary celebration and commemoration begins only in the morning. But the fifteenth of Shevat, in many ways, begins at night, and therefore *tachanun* is omitted during the Mincha beforehand.

Although we daven Mincha before the holiday has begun, nevertheless, at Mincha time, preparations for the holiday have started, and because of these preparations, we already begin to omit *tachanun*. We have often discussed that omitting *tachanun* is obviously an asset and an advantage, which we do on an auspicious day.

This immediately begs the question: The point of *tachanun* is to ask for forgiveness and "to be more desirable before God, than before we sinned," as Maimonides writes. What therefore, is the advantage in *not* confessing, and *not* asking God's forgiveness?

From this custom itself we can therefore infer, that the holiness of the day, its auspiciousness and its effect, replaces and has the same effect as *tachanun*.

In fact, a holiday has an advantage: The effect achieved by reciting *tachanun*, depends on the quality of one's prayer, what the intentions are, how detailed the confession is, etc. In other words, the effect is measured by the limits of the powers of his soul.

But the effect which comes because of an auspicious day, because of a holy day, is set by God.

Just like the holiness of Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh, similarly, the holiness of other holidays including the 15th of Shevat, is measured by God's capacities, ... בעין יפה נותן, בעין יפה this is also the case in all similar holidays.

Now, each one of these special days or holidays surely has something unique. So the 15th of Shevat is somehow different from all the other holidays.

Since the holiday is celebrated by all, its uniqueness must be such that it is simple and it is understood by all. Now, the fifteenth of Shevat is when we celebrate the new year for trees.

What Makes It A New Year?

The focal point of the world is the Holy Land, "Which God's eyes are upon from the beginning of the year through its end." Even trees -the trees of the entire world depend on the Holy Land. In the words of the Talmud: "The world drinks from the leftovers of the Land of Israel;" even the trees revolve around the trees of the Holy Land.

Now, in the Holy Land, the nature of the trees is that on this day the sap begins to flow; the moisture and vitality in the trees renews itself for the new year, in a *noticeable* way.

(The start of the renewal – similar to the start of everything in the world – was during Tishrei, on Sukkot, when we also highlight trees, the "four species" and "hoshaanot," etc. But this renewal becomes evident now, when the sap begins to flow through the trees, when the trees begin to show moisture and vitality, which the tree receives from the soil. After the interruption of the fall and the winter, a new year of life now begins for the trees.

And after some time, – if it is a tree suitable to bear fruit - the sap which began to flow on the fifteenth of Shevat will produce fruit over the next few months - during their appropriate seasons.)

Why Celebrate by Eating Fruit?

There's a key question about the customs of this day: We celebrate the day because the sap begins to flow through the trees. How do we mark the celebration? By eating the fruits of a tree. But by its very nature, this tree will take a very long time to grow, and to commemorate this day we eat fruits fruits in general, and especially the seven species of the Land of Israel.

So today's celebration seems self-contradictory: If this is the day when the sap begins to flow through the trees, then certainly the fruits could not have grown yet, for fruit require a long time to grow. And one *cannot* even eat fruit that is unripe.

This custom, then, requires an explanation, and along with it as the Baal Shem Tov famously taught, we must also understand its lesson to us; and in addition to the general lesson of the holiday, we must also take a specific lesson from this fact: that the day sap *begins* to flow is commemorated specifically by eating fruit.

(For when we celebrate it through words of Torah, it relates generally to trees, for man is compared to a tree. But it doesn't commemorate specifically the sap's renewal, in its simplest sense, as a physical occurrence; as we said, oddly, the sap is commemorated by eating fruit, as is customary among Jewish men and women.)

The Explanation

Now, there are a number of reasons for this custom, as in everything in Torah.

Rashi explains the verse "My word is like fire, like a hammer that shatters a rock" that each concept in Torah is "shattered" and can be explained in many different ways - meaning that on one thing in Torah there can be many different explanations.

One of the explanations is:

We are thereby demonstrating - even to ourselves - the importance and the advantage and the greatness that we each have, in potential.

True, at this moment it is merely potential. But the point is that we will *care* for the tree and perform all of the required chores, which require hard work.

(In the case of fruit, as opposed to grain, much greater investment is required; it may even require *seventy years* of effort before one sees the fruit of his labor.)

Now, a person may think: "First I'll need to invest effort, time and sweat. It'll pull me away from other things, for it must be done with devotion and I am expected to do so with honesty and devotion. So I must invest my entire being.

This thought can be overwhelming, and a person can be frightened away when he comprehends the magnitude of his task: "I must first plant a seed. Now, to obtain a proper seed, I must invest time and money. One seed is not sufficient; many seeds must be planted, and only some will blossom." Then he must be attentive to the

needs of the field; weed unwanted substances from it, and provide the proper nutrients. It must be protected from animals and birds, to ensure that they don't consume the seeds or damage the tree. The overwhelming effort required is described in the Talmud and is obvious to all.

So, the message of this holiday is that although the sap has only begun to flow, you must see this potential. And in order help you do everything you can to make this possibility into a reality you are shown a fruit. If you will invest the proper effort, this tree, or a similar tree, will produce similar fruit, (upon which you recite a blessing, and thank God for the wonderful creation, as God is worthy of praise for each and every fruit, especially the fruit of the Holy Land.)

This is an extraordinary concept: The Land of Israel is "the land which God's eyes are upon from the beginning of the year until its end." Could there be any greater praise?

But yet there is a superior praise: That it is the land of "wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey."

So when the fifteenth of Shevat arrives, and you must reach a resolution, and decide on a plan of action regarding the trees; if you will simply see the tree, and take note only of its external appearance – and only see that the sap has begun to flow, you will find many obstacles hindering your goal.

First, only sap is flowing; then, so many days, weeks and months must pass. In the meantime, the tree will need to weather winds and rain, all sorts of obstacles. The birds and the animals will come, and will want to nab the seeds which you sowed or planted in the ground. And when, finally, the tree begins to show fruit, the animals will grab the fruit for themselves, and won't allow it to ripen.

At that point new obligations come into effect: Since you have become a vessel for God's blessing, you must use the fruit to fulfill *mitzvot*, separating tithes, whether *terumah* or *maaser*, by Biblical law, or by Rabbinic law which are "more dear than Biblical laws." Meanwhile, you must invest days and nights, and you must pray that the rains should fall in its proper time, and not at the inopportune times; there should be good winds and good dew, etc. Only then, after your protracted effort, will you be able to see the fruits of your labor.

Look at Potential

This holiday tells us: Look, behold this fruit. And you are about to recite a blessing to the Creator of the world. Now, this blessing

which you recite upon the command of the Torah of Truth reveals the true reality of each thing. Here too, the blessing reveals the reality of the 15th of Shevat: that this tree has the full potential to reach its ultimate state.

How can one achieve his full potential? By beginning to work while there is *only* potential. And only then, with God's blessings, through toiling and working the land, ultimately, "you will be sated with bread."

On this holiday we recognize our potential. It doesn't require a deep reflection, and no one need explain to you what might become of your toil; there's a fruit sitting on the table before you.

The Significance of a Bracha

And you're told, "Here it is, now recite a blessing and praise God!" The Zohar offers different explanations for the blessing recited over fruit, but the most simple meaning is that we bless God; and we do so over one single fruit, stating that He is "Sovereign over the world;" that He is the Creator and Ruler over the entire universe. What is the significance of this statement? Why is it so important?

The answer: As you are about to derive pleasure from a fruit, Torah states that you must remind yourself about God; that He is *your* God, and that He is the Ruler of the universe, which includes all the spiritual worlds. And yet He is also "the Creator of the fruit of the tree": That within this enormous universe, God also focused on a single fruit on a tree. He focused and cared about the potential of a small, tiny fruit.

Motivation

And this is the lesson in our service of God. When a Jew wakes up in the morning, before he is in an appropriate state for prayer and he may not yet utter the name of God, he recites "Modeh Ani" and he reminds himself, that he lies before the King of kings. This thought motivates him to immediately rise from his bed, to begin his service of God, which grows "from strength to strength."

He starts off small - in a state of impurity, and then he continues to the rest of his day: first in the synagogue, then to the study hall, and then to his business dealings.

Now, you might object, especially with the input of your "wily inclination": "I have just awakened, and I'd like to remain in bed just a bit longer." It's only the beginning of the day. Why must I arise

so swiftly early in the morning – "Yes," you might say, "As I proceed with my day I will first pray and ask God for His blessings of wisdom, and then I will study the pertinent topics in Torah, "And then" – the person thinks – "God will surely answer my prayers and grant me wisdom and at that point I will recognize that I must go about doing my mission enthusiastically.

But immediately upon awakening? Why so early in the morning? How can I be expected to think about God at that moment; and for my entire *being* to be affected by this thought, and so much so, that this body which just woke up must perform as enthusiastically as it possibly can!"

The Code of Jewish Law and the Siddur state that the reason that we contemplate God's presence is in order to combat these very feelings.

Here is the lesson: Right as you wake up from your sleep, you must recognize God's presence, and realize that God is there with you. And you must know that in order to reveal God's presence to the entire world, you must toil and work. No one else can assist you in your mission; it is yours alone This realization gives you the vigor for the work of the entire coming day, beginning from the moment you wake up, even *before* reciting Modeh Ani, by recognizing God's presence.

Learn from the Tree

And this is the lesson the fifteenth of Shevat. A person is compared to a tree. The nature of the tree is a parallel of how the human being works. So that when you seek to fulfill your mission, you can observe the tree and learn how your growth ought to be.

Therefore we are told, learn a lesson from the tree. The fruit that you are eating today exists because on the fifteenth of Shevat last year, or two years ago, or, in the case of an Esrog, three years ago, or for a palm tree, seventy years ago, someone worked energetically to bring the potential into reality, knowing full-well that he would enjoy the fruit only 70 years later, or as in the Talmud's story of Choni Hama'agal, someone else would eventually enjoy them.

You can see this with your own eyes, and this is not an exception to the rule – these are not special trees, these are ingrained in the rules of nature.

Torah teaches that a person, who is compared to the tree of the field, must learn this lesson from the physical and material world, and it is relevant every single day, as your day begins.

That immediately upon awakening you must know that your entire day is ahead of you; and "every day has its particular purpose."

And in order for the purpose of this day to be achieved, at the very beginning, in the morning, all the necessary potential has been given to you, and you've been given the privilege, the energy and God's blessings to develop the potential into reality, joyfully and gladly.

(And to do so with "God's blessing, which brings wealth":

God will provide not only your basic necessities - symbolized by wheat and barley - but also the other five fruits, which represent life's extra delights.

As explained at length in many places, and Chassidus quotes the Tur:

We bless God for providing us with our basic necessities, but we also ask Him, "to refresh the soul of every living being":

'Refresh' implies pleasure, wealth beyond necessities.

This is emphasized on the fifteenth of Shevat when we eat fruit, symbolizing extra luxuries.

For the custom is to celebrate the day not by eating wheat and barley baked as bread, but by partaking in specific ones of the seven species with which the Land of Israel is blessed – fruits, which are enjoyable and "refresh the soul of every being," symbolizing extra pleasure.)

Each individual should reflect upon the personal lesson that he should derive from the fifteenth of Shevat, and the lesson should not remain in the realm of intellect. It should also impact your emotions, and most importantly, you should act upon them.

And while the fifteenth of Shevat occurs only once a year, its lesson is relevant every single day, when a person wakes up from his sleep. Just as the tree "wakes up" from its winter hiatus, followed by all the seasons: first spring, then summer, the "period of Tammuz" with its bright, blazing sun, representing God's revealed splendor.

And through this may we reveal God's true splendor, with the ultimate redemption when "the sun will be revealed" and it will heal all *tzaddikim*, – meaning, every Jew, for "all of your nation is *tzaddikim*." And may we be healed, in these last days of exile, from the "illnesses" which have attached themselves to us during this exile, a and from the illness of our Evil Inclination and even from the minutest illnesses.

Strive to Grow

In bringing out this point how we can never be satisfied and how we have to use out our full potential, the Rebbes cite, from the writings of the Arizal, that the numerical value of "Choli-illness" is 49, referring to one who has attained the 49 Levels of Understanding, but not the fiftieth.

This person may think he is not lacking, saying, "Even Moses – of the fifty levels, he only attained forty-nine during his lifetime!" The Arizal explains, and the Rebbe Rashab and the Previous Rebbe expound upon his answer, that "choli" equals 49, for a Jew must be "lovesick." While he may have attained forty-nine levels, this achievement must actually *intensify* his desire, "When will I attain the fiftieth level?"

The lesson for every person is obvious: Whether it is first thing in the morning, the middle of the day, in middle of the night, the beginning of the night – whenever; and you notice something in your surroundings whether it is a creation, or another Jewish person, or even when you take a look at yourself, you must know that "man was created to toil."

The fact that you were shown this fruit, that you saw another Jew, or that you noticed yourself, is not in order for you to be impressed with the beauty of creation. It came into your life in order to help you serve God, for you have no other purpose in this world.

The Previous Rebbe writes in the discourse of Yud Shevat, "No person knows the length of his life," so we must not procrastinate. Not so much for fear of death; but because every moment has its own mission. Just as "every day has its particular purpose," so too, each hour has its own purpose, and within each hour every single moment has its own purpose. So how can you delay it for a moment later?

The next moment will have its own task, and you will need to fulfill its special mission. Especially since we don't know God's plan, and

it is possible that your task is to influence this Jew right now, but a moment later, God will send him to be influenced by another, for "God has many messengers."

Now, just as this message pertains to the entire day, it also relates to particular opportunities within a day. Every moment carries marvelous potential, and you have the full capacity to reveal this marvelous potential, and bring it to fruition. That your life, your surroundings and every single experience should all become an expression of God's presence.

And when numerous similar experiences occur, God's presence becomes revealed and widespread "and all mankind will recognize it" to the point that they see it clearly.

Tanya explains that this has already occurred once at the Giving of the Torah, which is described in this week's Torah portion; this is the week of the Giving of the Torah.

This gives us additional strength to live with this message, and "living" does not mean to sleep or nap. True life is to utilize one's capacities to their fullest.

So this unique lesson relates to the Torah portion of Yisro, which describes the Giving of the Torah. At that time, our Sages teach us, it impacted the entire world: "An ox did not low, a bird did not chirp," and from all corners of the earth, a voice emanated "I am the Lord your God Who took you out of Egypt." It was heard by the oxen, the birds, the inanimate objects, the vegetation, animals and humans throughout the entire world.

What did they hear? They heard about God, and about the Jew, and how the Jew had been in a "lowly pit," but that God had already taken him out of Egypt. This means that God was completely permeated throughout the entire world, using everything to its fullest and true potential.

May it be God's will that we bring to fruition everything that is currently in thought or speech, – everything that is "potential" compared to its ultimate purpose – that it be fulfilled in action. May it be with gladness and joy, and God responds in kind, by granting extra luxuries, as well. May we greet Moshiach with true spiritual wealth, which brings true material wealth as well.

May it be speedily in our times.



| 1. | What happens on the 15th of Shevat, that it's called the new year for trees? |
|----|--|
| | |
| 2. | Fruit grows for a lengthy period after its initial planting, so why do we eat fruit in connection with the 15th of Shevat? |
| 3. | What lesson do we learn to our day to day life in our avodas hashem, by eating fruit on the 15th of Shevat? |
| | |



There is depth behind every action which a person does, and how much more so, regarding an action of G-d

In continuation to the first sicha, the Mitteler Rebbe explains that even a tiny action of the hand, contains the infinite depth of his nefesh, starting from Pnimius Taanug.

So too, every creation of Hashem carries infinite depth and value

Lesson learned from the the Ten Commandments regarding the importance of building a family

When G-d gave the Torah he said "I am Hashem your G-d", meaning G-d personally spoke to every single person. This was while Moshe, Aharon and the entire Jewish Nation were in attendance. This includes the child who will be born in nine

months. From here we learn the value of every single child that is born

The 15th of Shevat teaches us a lesson in educating children

When a child is born, he contains tremendous potential. It is up to the parents to invest the proper effort in their child's education, so that when he grows up, his fullest potential will be brought out.

Another lesson from the Ten Commandments about the importance of building a family

All Jewish children, throughout all the generations, are the guarantors of the Torah. The continuation and preservation of the Torah is dependent on your child, who has not yet been born.

What if, despite these lessons, you still don't understand

Jews, right from the onset, have said "We will do and then we will listen", meaning we will do first, and try to understand later. Here, too, even though you don't fully understand all of the reasons, that shouldn't stop you from building the largest family possible.

Final lesson, teaching us what a Jew can achieve if he just relies on G-d

In Mitzraim, G-d made a miracle: when the Jews entered the homes of the Egyptians, they were guided by G-d to exactly where they needed to go; each person immediately finding his sparks - that he needed to refine. This teaches us that if, for whatever reason, a Jew finds himself in the depths of darkness, if he relies on G-d, he will be guided by His light.



There is a series of events behind every action which a person does

We spoke earlier about the birth of fruit, which occurs after the sap begins to flow through the trees, and how this minor occurrence carries the tree's full potential.

Similarly every day, when we awaken with the proper attitude, we recite "Modeh Ani," wash our hands before getting out of bed, and then recite the morning blessings, etc. These actions hold vast energy and potential and they give us strength for the entire day, to go about doing the ten actions listed by Maimonides – eating, drinking, etc.in an appropriate manner.

, Now, similarly, every deed, every action undertaken by a human being, carries within it vast energy and depth. Meaning, like we have explained before, that there is first the potential, which through the proper work, it can be brought out to actuality.

The Mitteler Rebbe explains in the discourses of Rosh Hashanah that when a person performs any action, the entire composition of his soul is engaged in that deed. It begins from his innermost desire, until it affects the movement of his hand.

He discusses there how the Maggid of Mezritch was able to discern the character of the craftsman by analyzing his handiwork.

(Others do not have this capability, because they are less perceptive. But nevertheless, the handiwork carries the full depth of their soul and their personality is visible in their work. And not only is it present, but it is very pronounced. The Maggid was able to determine that the craftsman was blind in one eye. The difference is merely in the observer; the handiwork is the same, and if the observer is keen, he is capable of discerning the nature of the craftsman.

This is certainly the case in regards to the Craftsman of the universe. God's presence is evident in His creation – not only in the spiritual worlds, but even in our physical and mundane world. The "hand" of the Creator can be seen even in this lowest world, as the Alter Rebbe writes on the passage "You created them all with wisdom": The highest spiritual spheres and the lowest, even our most mundane world, God lowers Himself equally into each of them.)

Lesson learned from the the Ten Commandments regarding the importance of building a family

Now, we mentioned earlier this week's Torah portion, we can learn from it an additional, very important lesson :

During the Giving of the Torah, From the four sides of the earth and from above and below, God's voice declared, "I am, the Lord, your God." why is He your God? *Because* "He took you out of Egypt," Whose God did He become? every Jew.

Now, a person might come and say: "There are, thank God, a vast amount of Jews in the world. What value is there if one more child is born, one more Jew?"

But then we are told: "Listen here! You must make another Jew." And in order to have another Jewish adult he or she must begin as a baby boy or girl.

One might ask:

"Why the commotion?

Moshiach is coming soon, for 'We want Moshiach now!' And all "end-times" have passed, so clearly, he's on his way.

So why, all of the sudden, are we raising a clamor that you - man or woman - must do your part and allow God to give you a child - whether a boy or a girl, or twin boys or girls, or a boy and a girl - and when the subsequent children should come... And this is a blessing not only for this individual husband and wife, but a blessing for the entire Jewish nation and a blessing for the entire world. They ask, "What's the big deal...?"

This is not one of the super- rational commandments. "Be fruitful and multiply" is a rational commandment, and there are explanations for it. This week's Torah portion offers a clear explanation:

As soon as a child is born, God's declaration at Sinai was to *this baby*.

And all the souls of all generations were present, including the child who will be born nine months from now.

God addressed this baby's soul - in singular form:

"I am the Lord your God, Who took you out of the Land of Egypt."

Not only did God say it for the baby to hear, He also inscribed it in Torah – in the Ten Commandments, no less, in the very first Commandment; and in the very beginning of the first Commandment! And God made His declaration known; that five thousand seven hundred forty one years after Creation when this baby boy or girl will be born nine months from now, someone will walk by and see this newborn infant lying in the cradle, and it will strike him:

Here is a child to whom God Himself declared, "I am the Lord *your* God who took you out of Egypt"! All the Supernal Angels were there... Moses and Aaron, the Seventy Elders, and all 600,000 Jewish souls stood by... They, along with the oxen and birds, etc.

- heard how God addressed this tiny infant whose soul would be born into this world in the year 5741, nine months from now.

This is not a mystery of the Kabbalah.

It doesn't require great genius nor proficiency in the entire Talmud, or even half the Talmud... You don't require rabbinical ordination or even a *yeshivah* education.

(All you need to know is this verse - even just the translation, if one hasn't yet mastered the Holy Tongue.

If one is seeking an accurate translation, he must be informed that some translations imply, incorrectly, that God addressed the Jewish people collectively.

Due to the lack of precision of the English language and the word "you" is used for both singular and plural...

It is important that he know the more accurate English translation:

"Thou" - which addresses a single individual.

And similarly in other languages.)

Anyone can communicate this – you needn't be a master of metaphor like the Dubno Maggid; you needn't be a great orator, waving your arms, prancing around, hopping from one foot to the other, and adding all kinds of dramatic effect to drive your point home.

You can state it simply, from the words of the verse itself. Torah makes it their privilege to fulfill this Mitzvah; to bring down this Jewish soul which so long ago heard God declare, "I am the Lord your God Who brought you out of Egypt" – allowing the child to hear it again now, as a living person.

(Although the child is still an infant, and several years will pass before the child is educated, and learns the meaning of these words, but the soul *perceives* it immediately upon birth.

In addition to the fact that the child was taught the entire Torah in the mother's womb. At that time, the soul and body were not completely connected. The ultimate connection between soul and body, when the child is viewed as an independent entity, occurs when the child is born into this physical, mundane, world.)

The 15th of Shevat teaches us a lesson in educating children

And here we have the delightful lesson from the fifteenth of Shevat:

When this seed, the child, is born, he carries the full potential of a human being, the achievements of an entire lifetime.

And the child's educators are given the opportunity – earlier on, primarily the mother, and later on, also the father – that together, their toil to educate their child should succeed, so that their son or their daughter achieve their full potential which is buried within them potential with which they were born.

And then, as we stated about the 15th of Shevat, which we mark with delightful treats - not only the basic necessities, but ones which "refresh the soul of every living being."

(Here, as well, a child is the true delight of a father and mother, the grandmother and grandfather, brothers and sisters, the delight of the Jewish people, and even the delight of God himself.

As the Baal Shem Tov taught, God's relationship with every Jew - no matter his personal state - is, "You are a land of desire to Me.")

Now, in order that we truly appreciate the *nachas*, God does not grant this gift for free. He wants us to feel that we invested at least some small effort. But we must rely on God to decide how difficult that investment must be.

But God assures us, that "He Who provides life will provide bread," in addition to the merit of bringing Moshiach "now," a moment earlier.

Another lesson from the Ten Commandments about the importance of building a family

This idea of the importance of every single child, we find also stressed in another part of this weeks parsha.

Before God spoke the Ten Commandments to every Jew throughout all generations, He first requested that the Jews provide guarantors.

And He rejected all of their proposed guarantors, until they promised "our children will be our guarantors!" Now, a father or mother study the Torah portion, and learn that God told each one personally "I am the Lord your God who took you out of Egypt," and as the Haggadah and Mishnah and Tanya state, "Every single day one must view himself as if he left Egypt."

You left Egypt this very day.

So our Sages relate to the parent: "Why did this all occur? How did your soul merit to hear God's own voice?

It was because your children were among those guarantors who made it happen, and God relied upon them, and gave the entire Torah to Moses, Aaron, the Seventy Elders, and the entire nation for all generations."

This soul which will be born nine months from now, was also present at Mount Sinai. When they said "our children will be our guarantors," they meant the children of all generations. This was obviously the intent.

Why did God accept the guarantee of children?

The straightforward explanation: God wished that Torah be eternal, not only for those who were standing at Sinai.

Now, the Torah becomes eternal when fathers and mothers educate their children to follow Torah's ways, to study it and fulfill its commandments; and then those children, likewise, educate their own children for all eternity.

And then Torah becomes eternal for mankind.

It was therefore imperative that this child which will be born nine months from now – his guarantee was needed, and he was offered as a guarantor, amongst the other guarantors that enabled the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses, Aaron, the Seventy Elders, and to the father and mother of this child to be born in nine months.

What if, despite these lessons, you still don't understand

Now, if for whatever strange reason, a mother or father finds these concepts hard to comprehend, they should know that this already occurred in the past:

After all of the open miracles that the Jewish people saw, they did not rely on their own intellect. First they said "We will do," and then "We will listen." They would also attempt to understand, but only after the deed. But action must precede understanding.

May we speedily merit to learn Torah from Moshiach who will arrive "when the 'storehouse of souls' is emptied," when they will all enter physical bodies. For this to occur, the third partner, God himself, must await the desire and the good choice of the parents – he made himself reliant upon them. May the decision be with joy, happiness and prosperity.

Final lesson, teaching us what a Jew can achieve if he just relies on G-d

And may it be that even one who is compelled to deal with this lowly world, and must operate within it – when the Egyptians were enveloped in intense darkness, the Jews were illuminated with true light, to the point that they were able to perceive within the gold and silver belonging to the Egyptians, which spark of holiness was his to elevate.

This itself was a most wondrous miracle.

How did the Jew know which gold and silver vessels contained the sparks which *he* must elevate?

It wasn't a collective task, for all Jews to elevate together. It was a miraculous miracle that every Jew was led to his sparks which he has to elevate. Each Jew was directed by Divine Providence, and each Jew encountered the appropriate room, saw the exact corner in which his destined gold and silver lay, with which he later fulfilled his obligation to elevate Egypt.

Now, a question:

"God does not do miracles for naught."

If God miraculously showed the Jews the location of the valuables, it was so that the Jews would request them and receive them from the Egyptian to elevate their sparks of holiness.

The reason is given that this emphasizes what a Jew can achieve:

Even while a Jew was inside the home of an Egyptian, at a moment when the Egyptian was enveloped in thick darkness, and the gold and silver still *belonged* to the Egyptian And within the darkness, the Jew perceived this spark of holiness, whether it was endowed in the gold or the silver, and pinpointed its exact location in the home of the Egyptian.

Nowadays to, when we rely fully on God, with a true and simple faith, we are illuminated with the true light.

Then, even if, for whatever reason, we must temporarily enter "the home of the Egyptian," and deal with his "possessions," we are guided by the Torah of Light... So in addition to the merit fulfilling God's commandments, and in addition to your reward in the world to come, you benefit in this material world, as well.

May we go out of exile "with an outstretched hand," "When you leave Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain," as related in *Yisro*, this week's Torah portion, with joy and gladness of heart.

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L'chaim.



| If Moshiach is coming very soon, why is building a bigger family necessary? |
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| If it's so important, why did Hashem make it so costly? |
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| Who did Hashem choose as his guarantors at Matan Torah? |
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| How do we learn from that to build a bigger family? |
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Explaining why a pregnant woman cannot be a shushvin - escort at a wedding

A preanant woman cannot serve as a shushvin. We also find regarding Kaparos that a pregnant woman has to take three chickens. Thus we can relate these two customs to each other: that she is considered to be two people, with the gender of the second unknown (hence three person chickens) And since the shushvinin escorts - at a wedding may only be two people, a man and a woman, therefore a pregnant woman cannot take part, because she is considered to be more than one person.

This also serves as an explanation for why a pregnant woman cannot be a kvatteren by a bris

By a bris, the kvatters may only be two people, a man and a woman. Since a pregnant woman is considered to be two people, she cannot take part.

Why shushvinin - wedding escorts - can only be a man and a women

The reason brought in Chassidus is because we compare a wedding to Matan Torah. Just like bu Matan Torah. G-d had two shushvinin. and Aharon Moshe representing the male shushvin and Aharon representing the female shushvin, so too, in regards to a wedding we may only have two shushvinin, a man and a woman. The reason brought in nigleh is that the reason for the shushvinin is that since the bride and groom are approaching each other on their own, we appoint a good friend, someone who has throuah experience been the themselves, to help lead them. The only person that the bride can relate to in this matter is a woman and the only person that a groom can relate to in this matter is a man.

By a bris also, why must it be just a man and a woman

The reason brought in chassidus is that a bris is the level of Yesod. Shushvin too, is compared to

Yesod, and therefore we must include kvaterin. The reason brought in nigleh is that a bris is the union of gashmius and ruchnius. This is likened to a wedding – a union of two separate things. Therefore just like by a wedding we have escorts, so too at a bris

What if, despite these lessons, you still don't understand

Jews, right from the onset, have said "We will do and then we will listen", meaning we will do first, and try to understand later. Here, too, even though you don't fully

understand all of the reasons, that shouldn't stop you from building the largest family possible.

Final lesson, teaching us what a Jew can achieve if he just relies on G-d

In Mitzraim, G-d made a miracle: when the Jews entered the homes of the Egyptians, they were guided by G-d to exactly where they needed to go; each person immediately finding his sparks - that he needed to refine. This teaches us that if, for whatever reason, a Jew finds himself in the depths of darkness, if he relies on G-d, he will be guided by His light.



Explaining why a pregnant woman cannot be a shushvin - escort at a wedding

We spoke earlier about the Giving of the Torah, which is in this week's Torah portion.

The Alter Rebbe taught, transmitted by the Rebbe, my father-inlaw, that we must live with the Torah portion of the week.

In several sources, the Giving of the Torah is regarded as the marriage between God and the Jewish people. This entire Song of Songs speaks of the relationship between God and the Jewish people who "wed" at the Giving of the Torah. This is explained at length in many teachings of our Sages, and there are even several practical customs based on this idea. One of these customs is the concept of "marriage ushers."

At the Giving of the Torah there were two ushers, Moses and Aaron. The Talmud discusses this, as does the Zohar and others. I don't know if this was intentional, but everything happens by Divine providence.

In one of the Halachic journals published for this past Shabbos, which blesses the days of the following week, there was a discussion about these ushers, and the custom that a pregnant woman not serve as an usher. The journal quotes many Rabbinic sources who try to find a satisfactory reason for this custom. They cite sources, exact chapters, with a whole discussion back-and-forth.

And they conclude – and this too is quoted from earlier sources – that it is merely a custom, however, it must be upheld, as the Rashba writes, a custom of Jewish grandmothers, cannot be abolished, even by the greatest Sages.

The Rashba refers to true Torah sages, and the custom is based only on elderly women. Yet, it outweighs all of the questions, theories, and explanations brought by the Sages. The Rashba rules as a Halachic authority, a ruling which has been accepted as Jewish Law, that we must continue the custom.

Nevertheless, one must always attempt, when a matter is left unresolved, to find some sort of explanation.

(We have discussed in the past that this is not merely a suggestion, but an *obligation* in the Laws of Torah study: When one does not understand something, he must toil to the best of his capabilities, until he is able to find some sort of explanation.

However, there is a clear ruling in the Laws of Torah Study that in all matters of Judaism we must do everything we possibly can to fulfill it, even without understanding.

After doing it, one must toil to understand it - though not, Heaven forbid, as a condition to fulfilling it).

Explaining why a pregnant woman cannot be a shushvin - escort at a wedding

A possible explanation requires an introduction: The custom is that the *shushvinin* - escorts - by a wedding should specifically be a man and a woman. This is similar to another custom which is brought as an example for this one, and the Munkatcher Rebbe maintains that they share the same reasoning: At a circumcision there is a *kvatter*, a man who ushers the baby to the circumcision, and a *kvatteren*, a woman who does the same. And there, too, it must be a man and a woman. And there is much discussion about both cases, for in both, a pregnant woman should not serve as an usher.

Why not?

In no other areas of Torah and *mitzvot* is she excluded. On the contrary, she has an advantage as a pregnant woman, since, as discussed earlier at length, she had the merit to draw a soul down to this world, and to fulfill the *mitzvah*, and all of the other great merits discussed earlier.

A possible explanation for the custom: We see that wherever the custom is to not allow the participation of a pregnant woman, there is also the specific requirement that there be both a man and a woman.

Now, the Alter Rebbe rules in his Siddur - based on the writings of the Arizal, as brought down in Jewish law, and has become the custom amongst all Jews - that on the Eve of Yom Kippur, there is the custom to perform *Kapparos*: A rooster is taken for a man, and a hen is taken for a woman or a girl, and a pregnant woman takes three chickens - a hen for herself, and then an additional two, a rooster and a hen. She carries a fetus, and we do not yet know whether it is male or female; so in addition to taking a hen for herself, she takes another hen, and a rooster, for her child.

We learn from this that a pregnant woman is not considered one person, but, in certain ways, as three.

Now, even two women cannot be ushers. And here there is a possibility that there are three, and one of them is a male, and then there will no longer be two ushers. There must be specifically two – a male and female.

The same is true with regard to ushers at a circumcision: The custom, a Torah custom, mandates that there be only one man and one woman, so a pregnant woman cannot be included, for then there will be three ushers.

It has nothing to do with dangers, Heaven forbid, or the evil eye, as some have said. I don't intend, Heaven forbid, to disregard explanations of great Jewish leaders and Torah authorities. But using the simple logic of one custom – that a pregnant woman takes three birds for *Kapparos* – we can explain this custom.

All that remains is to discover *why* it must be so, that the ushers must be one man and one woman.

(Or, as customary, two couples, one ushering the groom and one the bride, it is still one man and one woman, *not* one man and two women nor one woman and two men - there is no such custom.)

And even where it is customary for others to join the procession, the official ushers are one man and woman, and therefore a pregnant woman cannot participate. What is the reason for this? Because it reflects the marriage of the Jewish people to God. "When a man and woman are deserving, God dwells amongst them."

Every couple which marries according to Jewish law is compared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the first wedding, and it is also compared to Mount Sinai, the original union between God and the Jewish People. The Midrash relates that at the Giving of the Torah there were specifically two marriage ushers, Moses and Aaron. The Zohar explains: "Moses escorted the groom, God, and Aaron escorted the bride, the Jewish People."

Now, although this might imply that the ushers should be two men, the Alter Rebbe discusses this at length in Torah Ohr, in the portion of *Tetzaveh* and in the supplementary discourses there. The Alter Rebbe explains that Aaron's service was to "raise up the flames of the Menorah" – to elevate the people toward God. He kindled all seven branches of the Menorah, which represents all types of Jews. The task of Moses was teaching Torah to the people drawing Godliness downward to the people.

Therefore, with Moses drawing on "masculine" Divine force, and Aaron drawing on "feminine" Divine force, both roles were represented at Sinai.

In simpler words, so that no one will be frightened that they'll have to explain the reason in Chassidic terminology... The Alter Rebbe gives another simple reason, which is logical and based on human nature:

What purpose do the wedding ushers serve? When exactly do we require them? Only right before the wedding ceremony; thereafter their job is done, after they've ushered the bride to the groom, and the groom to the bride.

The Alter Rebbe explains the reason: The young couple may feel uncomfortable, and they may hesitate to approach one-another.

The ushers are the bride's and groom's good friends. Sometimes one needs a good friend to encourage him, to give him strength, to take him by the hand and lead him. This helps them overcome their shyness or anxieties, and helps them proceed with the wedding.

This custom, then, simply follows human nature: Who can empathize with the bride, give her courage, and lead her by the hand? A fellow woman.

She was once a bride before her own wedding. As a close friend, or her mother, her older sister, etc. who is married, she can encourage, support, and bring her joy.

The Alter Rebbe explains that the purpose of the ushers, especially Aaron, is to cause joy. Whereas if her usher were a man, he would be of no use. Such is human nature. The same is with the groom.

(Of course, there is also the issue of modesty, for both the groom and the bride. Modesty requires that the bride's usher be a woman and the groom's should be a man.)

But it also follows human nature: Who better to empathize with the groom than someone who was once a groom himself, and experienced the same emotions?

If the groom will be assured by a woman, even his own mother, it does not resonate the same way, for a woman's feelings and insecurities are not the same as a man's.

(This is not in conflict with the varying customs as to whether the groom should be escorted by his parents and the bride by hers, or if the groom should be escorted by both fathers and the bride by both mothers.

According to all opinions, under the Chupah itself - where the main aspect of marriage takes place - stand the groom and the bride, each accompanied by their parents - two fathers and two mothers, or two men and two women.)

(This interpretation doesn't require Chassidic or Kabbalistic terminology - not that one should be ashamed to use them; quite the contrary - however, this is a response to the claim argued since the Alter Rebbe's time - that he should prove his teachings from the Talmud.

He taught that the verse "beyond the heavens" refers to complete prayer, which transcends the heavens, and "until the heavens," refers to incomplete prayers, which do not.

His opponents asked him for his source, and he cited the Zohar. They were not satisfied. "We're amongst rabbis and Halachic authorities, you must present a source in the revealed part of Torah."

So he quoted the Talmud: "One verse says 'until the heavens' and another says 'beyond the heavens,' referring to those who serve God for His sake, and those who do not."

The same is true in our case: When we are told about the Alter Rebbe's conduct, it is not simply a nice anecdote; we must learn a lesson.

There is no doubt that everything in the revealed part of Torah can be found also in its soul, the inner dimension of Torah. Similarly, everything that is stated in the soul, in the inner dimension, is certainly found in the revealed parts of Torah too. But in some instances the relation is clear, and easy to discover, while in other instances one must invest effort to understand.

One is assured, however, that "if you toil you will achieve.")

This is also the straightforward explanation for why ushers are needed at a wedding altogether, though the couple will live out the rest of their lives together, without ushers constantly attending to them. Because at the very beginning, when their marriage is just starting, they may be bashful. They need someone to encourage them, strengthen them, and even to cheer them up. By human nature, the bride will appreciate encouragement that comes from a woman, who had the same experience.

This is also the reason that, customarily, the usher is a married person and not a girl or boy who are still single. He or she has been through this experience, and they have the ability to reassure them with the right words, etc., and bring them joy at this time.

This is the reason a pregnant woman may not be an usher. Not, Heaven forbid, that she is inadequate; on the contrary, she has an advantage. But for an usher, an additional male cannot be involved, it must be one woman alone. Especially in the case of a marriage, when there must be only one man and not Heaven forbid two, even a very close friend.

By a bris also, why must it be just a man and a woman

Now, however, we need to explain the other case – the custom for a baby to have ushers at his circumcision.

To start with the Kabbalistic meaning: Kabbalah states that an usher represents *Yesod*. This is brought down in Koheles Yaakov from the Arizal's writings, and in several places in Zohar, etc. The *mitzvah* of circumcision is also related to *Yesod*, hence the custom to include ushers. And at a circumcision, we apply the guidelines of ushers at a wedding. As we mentioned earlier, the Halachic authorities considered both to be the same concept with the same reasoning.

How do we explain this in simple words, in Talmudic language? Circumcision creates an everlasting union, a covenant with God in the Jew's flesh.

So here is the connection: First, the goal of a wedding is to create an eternal covenant, like the wedding between God and the Jewish people. This relates to a circumcision, as the Talmud explains: How do we know on which limb to perform the circumcision? Where there is the differentiation between a male and a female.

A circumcision must be "in your flesh," and it is an eternal covenant with God, similar to the wedding between God and the Jewish people. God intended that the Jews "be fruitful and multiply," and "fill the earth and conquer it" through making the world a dwelling place for God.

Therefore we seek ushers at a circumcision, and we insist that there be one *kvatter* and one *kvatteren*, and that it is specifically a man and a woman. Thus, a pregnant woman does not qualify, since she is more than one person, she includes herself plus another male or female.

There is an additional relation between a circumcision and a wedding: The Giving of the Torah allowed holiness to descend and the physical to ascend – for physical and spiritual to unite and "become one flesh." This was achieved only at the Giving of the Torah, with one exception: It was accomplished previously, by Abraham, to whom God gave the *mitzvah* of circumcision and to his descendants ever after.

Maimonides explains in his commentary on Mishna that we don't circumcise our children because God commanded Abraham, rather because God commanded Moses at Sinai, but nevertheless it is called "the Covenant of Abraham," and "it was set as a law for Isaac," etc., as we recite in the blessings of circumcision.

What did Abraham achieve though circumcision that he could not accomplish with the other *mitzvot* he fulfilled? Only the commandment of circumcision created a bond between "flesh," the physical world, and the holiness of the *mitzvah*, such that a human body became a sacred object.

Therefore, when Abraham's servant wanted to take an oath which must be declared over a sacred object, and the only sacred object was his circumcision.

(He couldn't worry about modesty; there was no other option.)

This is the underlying connection between circumcision and marriage: Circumcision itself creates a "marriage," a union between the physical and spiritual, creating a "sacred object" that contains the holiness of a Mitzvah such as the leather of Tefillin or the wool of Tzitzit, etc. Therefore, just as a marriage has ushers, so does a circumcision, with the same spiritual elements represented by a man and a woman.

As a result, the Divine Presence rests amongst them an "eternal covenant in your flesh," the eternal covenant between every Jew and God, including women.

(The Talmud explains that women are "as though circumcised." In fact, females enjoy an advantage over males, for they are considered "as though they are circumcised." They have the complete spiritual elevation of circumcision. A male is circumcised by a human being, and while this has the advantage of a *mitzvah*

performed physically by a human being, and a *mitzvah* is in his actual body unlike the woman, who has the spiritual elevation alone. From the spiritual perspective, however, a woman also has the higher perfection than the male.)

May it be God's will as we stand in the Torah portion of *Yisro* – the Talmud relates |in Tractate *Yevamot* that this week was the culmination of the Jewish people's circumcision. Most of the Jews were circumcised in Egypt, but that was only the start of a process which culminated with immersion, followed by the Giving of the Torah, which occurs in this week's Torah Portion. Additionally, children born later were circumcised in the desert.

This paved the way for the Giving of the Torah, which was the marriage between God and the Jewish People, which surpasses even that which *yesod* achieves. The holy books explain that *yesod* ushers in peace between husband and wife, as the Talmud states, "it ushers peace into the home."

May these concepts be expressed literally, in all areas of Torah and its *mitzvot*, and in our commitment to "do before we understand," beginning with those topics that were dear to the Previous Rebbe for which he promised and gave strength and blessings for success. He declared that we must each do our part, and then each and every one of us will receive blessing and success, beginning with success in fulfilling our mission.

First and foremost with the Mitzvah Campaigns: Ahavat Yisrael, Jewish Education, Torah, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Charity, the Jewish Book Campaign, Lighting Shabbos Candles, Kosher Food and Drink, and Family Purity.

And the greatest campaign of all: From the betrothal that took place at the Giving of the Torah, and the marriage that followed immediately, may we proceed directly to the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

That will be the ultimate and complete marriage, and Moses and Aaron will be with us, with the resurrection of the dead, with them at our lead.

May it be speedily in our days.

L'chaim



| Why can't a pregnant woman lead a chosson or kalla to the chupa? |
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| In general, what's the point of having of having שושבינין for the chosson or kalla? |
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| According to what you wrote, how does that explain why you need a kvater and kvaterin by a bris? |
| |
| |



The children should sing "We want Moshiach now"

Since it is past their bedtime and we have nothing to engage them with, therefore they should sing this song.



We discussed the role of our children as our guarantors.

It is now close to midnight, and the children – as tonight is not Passover, and we do not engage them with sweets and the Four Questions etc. – it's past their bedtime.

They must take advantage and sing "We want Moshiach now!" joyfully and happily.

And then, joyfully and happily, may we proceed to greet Moshiach right now, so promptly that even the Englishman will agree that it is precisely now!



Members of Tzvios Hashem, including girls, have to go and draft other children.

The result of the upcoming rally has to be to constantly increase in good deeds This includes draftina additional members to Tzivos Hashem. This work applies to women as well, since this is a special holy battle. The war is fought through the study of Torah, which is the antidote to anything negative. We find also that women are mentioned first regarding the giving of the Torah. Furthermore, the education of todau's youth is entrusted to the hands of the women.

If Moshiach is coming now, why must we busy ourselves with building yeshivos?

We find a comparison to this in the journey of the Jews in the desert.

Even though they stopped in one place for a very short amount of time, they still set up the Mishkan with all of its specifics. So too, now, even though Moshiach is coming now, we have to busy ourselves with all actions connected with G-dliness.

We have been in Exile for so long, why must we try to bring it a moment sooner?

The fact that G-d, myriads of His angels, and all the souls throughout the generations will have to wait a moment longer, is the greatest travesty. Even for tzaddikim, who were higher than the whole Churban, the 9th of Av was surely a day of mourning. So they, too, are waiting to be redeemed from Exile a moment earlier.



Members of Tzvios Hashem, including girls, have to go and draft other children.

Tomorrow, there will surely be a rally.

As we discussed at the previous children's rally, a rally should be arranged on the Fifteenth of Shevat, [so that the participants will] make good resolutions in their service of God, to intensify all of their current activities.

And just as it is vital for a child to constantly grow, may they also go "from strength to strength" and take on good resolutions. The main point is to increase in good deeds, each and every child in their own lives.

God will certainly provide His blessings measure for measure; moreover, His blessings surpass our measures. May he deliver blessing and success to each participant, for good physical health, and spiritually as well, with success in all areas of Judaism, in the study of Torah and fulfillment of *mitzvot*, including to "Love your fellow as yourself."

The boys should influence, recruit and draft all their friends into Tzivos Hashem, where they will climb from one rank to the next, as discussed on previous occasions.

The same goes for the girls in their activities in Tzivos Hashem, beginning with lighting candles before Shabbos and festivals – a *mitzvah* specifically entrusted to Jewish women. [Their activities should also include] Torah study, as the Alter Rebbe expounds in the Laws of Torah Study, at the end of Chapter One – he outlines

a woman's obligation to study Torah - and they should teach it to others, as well, as well as drafting other girls in Tzivos Hashem.

(Although, according to Torah, an army is not a place for women, only for men; but the law is different regarding a battle of survival – and the battle against the evil inclination is a battle of survival – in which case, "even a bride leaves her wedding," to participate in the battle.)

The key to victory is discussed in this week's Torah portion, as the Sages state regarding the Giving of the Torah: "I created the evil inclination; I created Torah as the antidote."

(The Talmud explains on the verse: "Is My word not like fire; like a hammer that shatters rock?" "If the Evil Inclination encounters you, drag him into the study hall, and even if he is strong like iron, he will melt away." This is our weapon against the evil inclination.)

And at the Giving of the Torah, not only were the women equal to the men, even more so: God gave the Torah on condition (- to prevent a recurrence of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge -) that Moses speak to the women first, "Speak to the House of Jacob" and only thereafter to the men.

This isn't meant, God forbid, to detract from the boys' honor... But we must understand the truth of every matter, including this matter as well.

The main point is that the girls must know the great merit they have, not only for themselves and their friends, but that they also pave the way for the boys to accomplish their task, just as they did by the Giving of the Torah.

Additionally, at the Giving of the Torah, all children - boys and girls - were the guarantors, and this is what ensures that Torah remains for eternity, here in the lowest physical and mundane world - this is accomplished by the children while they are still young.

Especially during this Hakhel year, which emphasizes the participation of even very young children, when "men, women, and children" gather together, "to hear, and observe all the words of the Torah." This includes the prohibitions, the regular commandments, and also the time-bound commandments which relate to women as well.

Now, as mentioned above, the Alter Rebbe in his Laws of Torah Study speaks about the sections of Torah that women must study.

In our generation we also see, that there are many Jewish women and girls whose primary mission in life is to educate and guide Jewish children, including the boys, in the study of Torah and fulfillment of *mitzvot*. Especially when it comes to young children, both boys and girls, for the most part, their education is entrusted to Jewish women and girls, not men and boys.

Whether it's the correct approach or not, it is the reality... They are preparing "God's Legions," the children, to greet Moshiach.

As noted earlier, this relates to the Torah portion of this week.

The Connection to 15 Shevat

It also relates to the fifteenth of Shevat, for "man is compared to a tree." Now, fruit of a tree is desired, which is why we eat fruit on this day.

How are fruit "born"? Through the "marriage" and union of "male" energy, and "female" energy, as explained in the works which explain nature, and expounded upon in Chassidus and Kabbalah, and even in *nigleh*.

The Midrash relates that there was a palm tree in Babylon, and a palm tree in Israel, but no fruits were "born" until they were grafted together. As we explained earlier, this is a purely natural phenomenon, as God set it nature.

This point is also related to tomorrow's rally.

It will certainly be a beautiful event, with many participants, men and women, and most importantly, many boys and girls - many in quantity, as well as in quality.

And it will help motivate each of them to become a "fruit-bearing tree"; every boy and every girl should recruit to Tzivos Hashem all of his or her friends, who, for whatever reason, are not yet enlisted in Tzivos Hashem.

It is a battle of survival against the Evil Inclination within, in which boys and girls are equal – and, actually, the girls were commanded first.

May this be the fitting preparation – just as the women were first at the Giving of the Torah, they were also first in contributing to the Tabernacle in the desert, which was the precursor to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

And just as "God's Legions" went out together from the Egyptian exile in their day, so will it be with the exodus from the present exile.

If Moshiach is coming now, why must we busy ourselves with building yeshivos?

There is a well-known explanation which my father-in-law, the Rebbe gave, upon being asked: On one hand he campaigns "immediate repentance will bring immediate redemption; he says that by "immediate" he means literally, very soon. And on the other hand, he busies himself with plans to build Yeshivos and buildings, and to educate children – plans which require many years to complete if they are to be completed in exile – while Moshiach is about to come?

The Rebbe replied that there is a precedent for this. The Torah says numerous times that when the Jews were traveling in the desert they carried the Tabernacle with them.

When moving from one encampment to another, they had to dismantle the Tabernacle, and later erect it again in their new encampment after their journey.

The Torah explicitly states that there was a certain encampment where, as Rashi writes, they remained encamped for 18 years - eighteen consecutive years at the same location.

This would quite justify all the energy expended erecting the Tabernacle.

But the Torah tells of other encampments where they would arrive in the morning and depart that very night, or arrive at night and leave the next morning, or "a day and a night, and then they journeyed."

We see that for one night, or for one twenty- four hour period, they erected the Tabernacle "the Sanctuary," from beginning to end, with all its precise details, in the very same way they erected it where they stayed for eighteen years, in the desert of Kadesh.

The same applies to our situation:

Moshiach is, in fact, coming "now," nevertheless a Jew has to proceed through every moment that yet remains of the exile with full enthusiasm, at his fullest capacity, and on the broadest scale.

We are given the powers to operate in such a manner, to inspire men, women and children. Every boy must reach all the boys he can reach, and every girl – all the girls she can reach.

And this will hasten the "now," which can arrive a second earlier, a moment sooner. By working at full capacity the "now" will come a moment sooner.

We have been in Exile for so long, why must we try to bring it a moment sooner?

A child may ask, "We've been in exile for nineteen hundred years, how significant can a moment be, that it should disrupt my sleep, my playing, enjoying kosher candy, and the like?"

We explain to the child that God is in exile together with you. God is the "King of all Kings, the Holy One blessed be He," and He has "millions who serve Him and billions who stand before Him."

So when God is in exile, with Him in exile are "millions and billions of angels!" Then, when we explain to the child what these numbers would amount to in pennies, it will become clear that even the treasurer in Washington, the President's treasurer, does not have as many millions and billions of pennies, as God has angels.

And all these angels are in exile! So every second is not just one second - it is a second of "exile for the Divine Presence," and it is one second for each angel, amounting to millions of seconds for those angels "who serve Him," and billions of seconds for those angels who "stand before Him."

This, in addition to his own father and mother and brother and sister, or her father and mother and her brother and sister.

Furthermore, we make the child aware, that as long as he or she is still in exile, all the souls of all the Jews of all past generations are now in exile.

It would be inaccurate to say that the Jews who lived at the time of the Temple are not affected by the present exile. This is inconsistent with the Torah of Truth. The Torah of Truth says that when "we were distanced from our land" and when "we were exiled from our country" there was a concealment of Godliness in all of creation, including the spiritual worlds.

(This does not contradict the idea, published in the name of Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, that Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai transcended the realm of exile, for it is nevertheless clear that on Tisha B'Av, Rabbi Shimon conducted himself according to the laws of Tisha B'Av.

He traveled to Rome to nullify edicts of the evil Roman Empire; he had to go into hiding in an uncommon way even for exile, – an exile within an exile – at first for twelve years in a cave, and then a thirteenth year in the cave, which is described as "the suffering of the cave," a true exile.)

Even God himself:

"When the Jews were exiled, the Divine Presence went with them," "I, God, am with them in distress." It is "I" who is "with them in distress."

("I" surpasses the Divine names of "Elokim" and "Havayeh" "I" indicates God Himself who cannot be alluded to by any name.)

So it is clear that Moshiach's coming even a single moment sooner equals an extremely long time quantitatively and even more so, qualitatively.

The Simple Faith of Children

In truth, a child will not ask this question. It is adults that require this explanation. As we've explained, when someone has mature intellect, his intellect can overshadow his simple faith, conceal his readiness for self-sacrifice, and he therefore may have doubts: first he may have doubts that seem valid, but those allow other invalid ideas to enter his mind.

This is not the place to discuss how children have an advantage over their parents; they may begin rethinking their obligation to honor their parents. For children to "do before they listen," they are better off without this discussion.

They should have faith in in their parents, and imagine their father is likened to "our Father in heaven," and their mother is likened to "the people of Israel," and they are the children, which their parents merited to bear with God's blessing.

This is the general idea, and it should be explained to them in English, and in each place in its own language – "like a hammer that shatters rock."

And the main thing:

That "even if he is like iron, he will melt away, if he is like a rock, he will explode." And God forbid to suspect that a Jew has an inclination hard as a rock or iron. We are physically so weak, that our inclinations are inevitably weakened. We must only ensure that he does not raise his head.

In fact, he is no head; he is the tail of the "first snake."

It is just that - so that we have free will - the evil inclination seems to be intellectually competent while, in reality, he is "the foolish king."

And the main point is action:

May the children accomplish this all, and much more, and proceed to greet Moshiach now, with joy and happiness.

L'chaim.



| ۱. | How can a young girl be part of 121vos Hashem? |
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| | |
| 2. | If Moshiach is coming any second, what's the point of building Yeshivos? |
| | |
| | |
| 3. | How do we explain to a child that it's a major concern that we're in golus? |
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Part 1

Question: Story of the Mon, in Chamishi or Shishi?

In the Yud Shevat farbrengen the Rebbe spoke about the daily portion of Chumash; the fifth aliyah of Beshalach. The Rebbe then said that the double portion of Mon given on Friday is discussed in the aliyah of Shishi

Since the farbrengen, someone asked in the Kovetz Haaros that the unique process of Friday's Mon is already mentioned in Chamishi and not first discussed in Shishi. The Rebbe begins by clarifying:

Answer: The Yidden received the Mon on Friday

11 Min

On Yud Shevat the Rebbe was discussing the Mon as it fell for the Yidden, which happens in Shishi. True, Hashem already described Friday's double portion in Chamishi, however the Yidden only experienced this in Shishi.

In addition, despite Moshe relating Hashem's message promptly (as he did with every message of Hashem), he did not tell the Yidden about the double portion until Friday. Only once the Yidden found the double portion and asked Moshe, he completed telling them Hashem's instructions for Friday. Thus, the Yidden only heard of the double portion on Friday as recorded in Shishi.

(The sequence of the Pesukim are as follows:

In Chamishi Hashem tells Moshe that He will provide the Mon and how it will be given on Friday. After that Moshe relates Hashem's promise of Mon to the Yidden. In Shishi we learn of the actual delivery of the Mon, the events of Friday, and where Moshe tells them the specific directives for Friday.)

Part 2

Question: Tof is mentioned earlier in Torah

In Beshalach we learn how Miriam sung about the miracle of Krias Yam

Suf with a tof in her hands. Rashi explains: tof is a musical instrument.

The Rebbe explained in the farbrengen of Beshalach, the need for Rashi to explain what a tof is, because it's the first time the instrument tof appears in Torah.

Chassidim pointed out in the Kovetz, that Tof is mentioned earlier, when Lavan says, "I would have accompanied you with a tof and a fiddle."

Answer: A different type of drum

8 Min

A drum is generally used to set a rhythm, not to produce music. In the story of Lavan, the tof is being used as usual – to accompany a procession; an army marches to the sound of drums – so it is self-understood and Rashi makes no comment. But here, a tof is being used for singing, which a child may not easily understand, so Rashi must explain that a drum can be used to direct the pace of a song as well.

Part 3

Continuing a prior analysis

As a general rule, Rashi comes to explain the simple meaning of the Pasuk. At times, due to a remaining difficulty Rashi will quote a second deeper explanation - drasha. Twice, (in Vaera and Vayishlach) after bringing a deeper explanation Rashi asserts that the drasha does not fit with the pesukim, preferring the simple explanation. However Rashi concludes that Torah can interpreted in countless waus bringing the pasuk that compares Torah to a rock that can be split into many pieces and to a fire that has many sparks.

The Rebbe discusses the differences in these nearly identical Rashi's.

The differences:

A. In Vayishlach Rashi only quotes the second half of the pasuk as opposed to Vaera where he brings it in full.

B. In Vayishlach he says Torah splits into many 'reasons'. In Vaera; Torah splits into many 'sparks'.

The Explanation

4 Min

Sparks are identical; one can't differentiate one spark from another. Reasonings, by definition, differ from each other.

In Va'eira, both explanations are like 'sparks' - both are equally the basic meaning of the verse, as the Rebbe explained. They only differ in that one can be read into the words, and the other is a necessary explanation of the simple meaning. Therefore here Rashi brings the first half of the pasuk that compares the Torah to fire.

In Vayishlach on the other hand, the explanations are very different; one is a drasha, and one is the simple meaning. Therefore they're compared to a rock - no two fragments are the same - two different 'reasons'. Accordingly, the first half of the pasuk comparing Torah to fire has no relevance here.



Before we conclude:

Questions were asked on previous farbrengens.

Part 1

Question: Story of the Mon, in Chamishi or Shishi?

One question was: I said during the Yud Shvat fabrengen on Thursday, that the double portion of Manna which fell each Friday in the desert, is described in the Torah portion of Friday.

There were those who commented, that this is inaccurate: In fact, God instructs Moses about the Manna in the Thursday Torah portion, so the Manna is mentioned in *both* portions?

Answer: The Yidden received the Mon on friday

The explanation is simple: I was discussing the Manna as it fell for the Jews, and that, in fact, occurs in the Friday portion.

Additionally: When God gave Moses a message for the Jews, he obviously relayed it promptly. That being the case, had the Torah not specified in the Friday portion that Moses relayed the message, it would be obvious nonetheless, for God instructed him to do so. But here Torah implies that he acted differently, in a stunning departure from the norm.

Rashi writes in his commentary after God spoke to Moses about the Manna, as described in length in Thursday's Torah portion, Moses relayed the message to the Jews, as described in Friday's portion. But then Torah adds, that the message about *double* Manna for Shabbos was omitted from Moses' address. He remained silent until Friday, as the Friday portion describes, and on that day, the Torah relates, the Jews realized that double portions of Manna had fallen. They came to Moses with the obvious question, and he explained to them, that God said that on Friday a double portion of Manna will fall.

In other words: Not only did Moses not transmit that part of the message; additionally, Torah actually *emphasizes* that he omitted it, that he didn't relay it to the Jews along with the rest of the message. He kept it to himself. When was it revealed to the Jewish people; when did they learn about it? All this only occurs in the Friday portion.

Part 2

Question: Tof is mentioned earlier in Torah

There was another question: Miriam danced with *tufim* at the splitting of the sea, and we discussed this at length at the Shabbos farbrengen. Rashi explains *tufim* as "a type of instrument."

I asked, why must Rashi explain this? I answered, that this is the first time *tof* appears in Torah, although other instruments were already mentioned in the first portion, in *Bereshit*. There were comments that *tof is* mentioned earlier in Torah: In *Vayetzei*, when Laban accused Jacob of deceiving him, he said "I would have accompanied you with a *tof* and a fiddle."

This also leads to several additional questions: Rashi doesn't explain the meaning of Laban's tof. If a child in Rashi's era doesn't recognize the word tof, Rashi should have translated it the first time Torah mentioned it. Yet Rashi doesn't explain it the first time; rather, he translates it the second time it is mentioned? From this we learn, that the term tof only requires an explanation when it is mentioned here, in this past Torah portion, Beshalach, of this past week. And therefore Rashi explains tof in Beshalach, and not the tof in Vayetzei.

Answer: A different type of drum

In *Vayetzei*, a child does not question the verse; he knows what a *tof* is – a drum. And where he has no question, Rashi does not need to answer. The question only arises here, when we learn that Miriam wanted to sing to God, and "She took the drum and sang," and all the woman followed suit, "with drums and dancing."

Now, in the story of Laban and Jacob, Laban said that it is customary - and that he would have done so - that when you accompany your own children and belongings, as they go on their way, you do so joyfully, and he would have done so "with drums and fiddles."

A child knows what a drum is, and he understands the passage perfectly, so Rashi does not need to explain it. But in the portion of *Beshalach*, the child will question: The verse states that Miriam took a drum in order to sing. The child knows that a drum is not an instrument of song.

A fiddle, for example, is an instrument which produces a song, a tune, music etc., as do many other instruments. A drum, on the other hand, as anyone can see, does not produce a tune. There is no such drum; a drum does not produce songs or tunes, or music altogether. Rather, when arranging a dance, it needs a specific beat, with appropriate choreography, one step ahead, one step back, etc.

A child notices, even in Rashi's days, that when an army brigade marches down the street, how do they march in an organized form? A drummer marches in their lead, and according to his beat they know to speed up or slow down, to stop or to run, etc.

But when "Miriam sang," what use did she have for a drum? Rashi therefore explains: When Laban mentions a drum, it is clear: They were journeying from Haran to the Holy Land, and he would accompany them with a drum and a fiddle, just as a child sees on the street. The fiddle plays a tune, and the drummer plays a beat, directing them: go slower, go faster be more energetic, run, etcetera.

But in *Beshalach*, there was no dancing yet; first Miriam took a drum, and then what did she do? She sang! The child asks: Then why didn't Moses take a drum when he sang several verses earlier? But this is no question for the young child. One does not use a drum to sing.

Rashi therefore innovates, that a drum - in addition to leading a march, is also a kind of instrument; one can produce music by beating a drum. So when Miriam wanted to sing, she used a drum as well. The drum wasn't to lead a march - she didn't march anywhere, nor does Torah say that she danced. The drum was to

assist her music and her song; it was the instrument which led the pace of her song; directing it to be slower, faster, happier or less so, etc.

Three points are now clarified:

- 1, Why Rashi, when citing the verse, quotes the words "drums and dancing." [-because Rashi is explaining the drums in the context of dancing]
- 2, Because Laban used drums for *marching*, Rashi didn't need to explain it.
- 3, Specifically quoting the words "drums and dancing," Rashi explains that all women brought drums out of Egypt; as opposed to the Midrash, which says that only "righteous women" owned drums, not all the women; and a few additional points.

Part 3

Continuing a prior analysis

Picking up another prior analysis:

We discussed Rashi's choice of words. When he quotes the verse "like a hammer that shatters a rock" in *Vayishlach* he does not cite the beginning of the verse, and in *Va'era* he does: "My words are like fire."

Difference between "reasonings" and "sparks"

Additionally, in *Vayishlach* he writes "Torah divides into many *reasonings*," and in *Va'era* he writes "Torah divides into many *sparks*." There is a vast difference between "reasonings" and "sparks."

If you ask a child - or an adult, for that matter - "Can you distinguish between flying sparks; is there a difference between one spark and another? He will tell you that he is incapable of doing so. He only sees that one spark flies in one direction, and another, in the other direction. He cannot distinguish the differences in sizes of sparks. But if you were to ask him to distinguish between various "reasonings" - by its very definition, "reasonings" in plural form implies that they differ from one another; otherwise, we would use

singular form. "Reasonings" shows that there are differences between them.

In Va'eira, both are equal 'sparks' - both are the basic meaning of the verse

And this is why Rashi modifies the wording. In the verse in *Va'era*, both interpretations are the straight- forward meaning of the verse. From our prior studies it is obvious that God is rebuking Moses here: "Your forefathers did not ask for My name." However, the reading of the verse implies the other explanation "I did not fulfill My promise to your forefathers." So both interpretations are the basic meaning of the verse. The only difference is that one spark, one interpretation, is obvious in words of the verse, and the other – God's protest to Moses – is valid all the same, it's an equal "spark," but is written in the Midrash.

In Vayishlach, the explanations are very different

However, in *Vayishlach*, the interpretations do not only differ in source. They differ in their relation to the simple meaning of the verse. One of them fits the verse as a homiletic (*derush*) interpretation, and the other is the straightforward interpretation. Therefore, Rashi compares it to a rock: When one smashes a rock, no two fragments are the same. Every single fragment of the rock is different, and any child can point out the difference: One is larger, one is smaller, one is square while the other round, one is pointy and another is not. Sparks are just the opposite.

Therefore, when Rashi discusses interpretations that are equal in their relevance and meaning, he says "They divide into many *sparks.*" He cannot say "reasonings," for they have equal meaning. The interpretation that teaches about God's protest and the interpretation culled from the words, are both equal, so Rashi calls them "sparks."

Why Rashi mentions, "My words are like fire" in Va'eira

But sparks don't randomly emit from a rock, and therefore Rashi precedes this with "My words are like fire."

But in *Vayishlach*, Rashi discusses interpretations of different approaches, they aren't the same "size," they're actually quite different, and are characterized as such. Therefore, the mention of

fire doesn't apply. On the contrary: If they are "like fire," there ought to be sparks, equal in relevance and meaning.

May we merit the fulfillment of this verse, as when Moshiach will come, the Talmud says, "like a hammer that shatters a rock," the Torah will be translated into seventy languages. The Talmud also states that Torah is "like a hammer," for it smashes the Evil Inclination, until it is totally destroyed, and "I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth." These will both occur in the end of days, when, with the coming of Moshiach, God will bring all of the nations "to serve Him as one." How will they know how to serve Him? Because Torah will be translated into seventy languages. May it be speedily, and may it occur *now*, in a physical, tangible way, with joy and happiness.

L'chaim.

Sing the introductory *niggun*, and then the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*.

Since tomorrow's children's rally is a continuation of the Farbrengen, take some of these fruits for the rally... Are any of your assistants here? How many did you take, three?

Those who need to recite an After-Blessing will surely do so.



| 1. | When did Moshe tell the Yidden about the Mon and when did he tell them how the Mon will work on Friday? |
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| | |
| 2. | Why is it unclear to a "ben chamesh lemikra" the connection of drums to the shir of Miriyam? |
| | |
| | |
| 3. | What is the difference between two sparks and two parts of a rock? |
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