

# Chayus

## A Shabbos Stimulus

### THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל

Hakhel

### *An Everlasting Education*

*"Gather the people—men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn and fear... And their children who do not know, shall hear and learn to fear your G-d all the days..."* (Devarim 31:12-13).

“**A**nd their children who do not know,” relates to the “children” mentioned in the previous verse regarding the Mitzvah of *Hakhel*. Here the Torah explains that although children are too young to understand what they would hear at the *Hakhel* gathering, they should nevertheless “hear and learn to fear your G-d,” i.e., one must train them in fearing G-d from an early age.

This explains why Torah changes its wording in these two verses. Whereas in verse 12 it says they would “learn **and** (as a result) fear,” in verse 13 it says “learn **to** fear.” Because when the young are merely present at *Hakhel* it inspires fear of G-d.

The statement “all the days” teaches, that when fear of G-d is instilled in children at an early age it will last them all their lives.

*Ohr HaChayim*

סיפור חסידי

Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber

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### *The 3 a.m. Audience*

*You shall be clean before G-d, and before Israel* (Matos 32:22)

Rabbi Z.M. Steinmetz (Hebrew poet Zvi Yair) told:

A family crisis had arisen in the home of one of my relatives, a not-so-distant cousin who lived in South America. Their daughter had met and fallen in love with a young man and the two wished to marry. But the young woman’s parents were vehemently opposed to the match since the young man came from a non-religious background and did not lead a Torah-observant life. Although the young man declared his willingness to begin to observe the laws and customs of Torah, the entire family, extended family, and circle of friends were united against the young woman’s choice.

The young woman grew increasingly bitter over the fact that all those dear to her had closed ranks against her. She felt that her entire world had conspired to deprive her of her happiness. The situation

continued to worsen, as both daughter and parents became more and more enraged over the betrayal by the other. Finally, they struck a deal: the case would be brought to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Although the family did not count themselves among the Rebbe's chassidim, both the young woman and her parents held the Rebbe in high regard and felt they could trust him. Both parties agreed to do as he advised. As the 'Lubavitcher' in the family, I was asked to accompany the young woman to her audience with the Rebbe.

In those years, the Rebbe would receive people three nights a week, beginning in the late evening and continuing through the night. Often, the final visitor would depart at dawn.

We entered the Rebbe's room close to 3 a.m. First, the Rebbe and the young woman conducted a brief search for a common language: they tried Yiddish, Hebrew, English, and French, and finally settled on German. As the young woman told her story, I could hear the frustration in her voice: "I don't understand what they want of me," she said. "My friend has promised to lead a Torah-true life. I know that he is sincere. Why is everyone so set against us?"

"He may be sincere," said the Rebbe, "but of what value is his declaration if he does not know what he is committing himself to? You know, according to the law, a signed blank check is worthless, even if the holder fills it in for a single cent - one cannot legally obligate oneself without knowing what the obligation consists of. Living one's life in accordance with the Torah's precepts is a most demanding challenge for anyone, but it is even more difficult for someone who has not been raised this way."

"But he is willing to learn," said the young woman.

"Learning alone is not enough," replied the Rebbe. "One may study and accept Torah with the best of intentions, but applying it to day-to-day life is quite another matter. This is what I suggest: let your friend live with a Torah-observant family for several months. Let him study, but let him also experience firsthand what such a commitment entails on a day in, day out basis, from the Modeh Ani prayer upon opening one's eyes in the morning to the reading of the Sh'mah before going to sleep. If he still declares his desire to lead a Torah-true life, I give my wholehearted blessing to your life together."

The young woman left the Rebbe's room with a lightened and joyful heart, and I remained to discuss several personal matters with the Rebbe. But the Rebbe immediately told me to call her back in, explaining: "I do not want her to think that we are discussing her behind her back."

It was three o'clock in the morning, and the Rebbe had seen dozens of people in the course of the night. Yet he was sufficiently attuned to her feelings to discern her sense of alienation and abandonment and to pick up on her notion of a 'conspiracy' against her. So although the issue had been resolved to her satisfaction, and although she would not, in any case, understand the Yiddish in which we spoke, he refused to talk to me without her being present in the room.

### *Transforming Your Attitude*

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*"And they traveled from Marah and arrived in Eilim. And in Eilim there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there" (Masei 33:9).*

**T**he physical world is an admixture of good and evil. If we are careful in our feelings and actions, we can distill the good from the material—otherwise, the evil within materialism will rise to the surface and consume us. As the spies observed after scouting the land of Israel, "it is a land that consumes its in-

habitants” (Bamidbar 13:32)—those who dwell consistently in the physical world (i.e., “inhabitants” of the “land”), content to enjoy materialism without using it to connect with G-d, are invariably consumed by it.

Indeed, G-d created both man and the world only so that a Jew elevate the sparks within the physical. Shirking this sacred duty is akin to leaving our families in order to make business deals abroad and then never returning home with the profits—there could be nothing more foolish.

With this introduction, we can now understand the mystical intent of the verses describing the Israelites’ journey from Marah to Eilim. Recall that while Eilim was a lush land with twelve springs, Marah contained only impotable water: “And they were unable to drink the waters from Marah, because they were bitter” (Shemos 15:23). Bitter waters represent materialism in which good is not apparent. Had they been worthy, the Israelites would have been able to filter the good from the physical and “drink” from the supernal kindness hidden therein. Unfortunately “they”—the Israelites—“were bitter”—unworthy, so the material world remained bitter and impotable. But then the Israelites traveled to Eilim, which contains the same letters as G-d’s name (א-ל-י-מ), can be rearranged to spell א-ל-י-מ, signifying their intent to unite with G-d and become worthy. And there, in Eilim, the material world gave forth its bounty.

Par. 152

## גאולה Geulah

Yalkut Moshiaich uGeulah al HaTorah  
Translated by Yaakov Paley

*“Be strong! Be strong! We will be strengthened!”*

On this coming Shabbos, we will conclude the reading of the Book of Bamidbar, and the entire congregation will cry out, *chazak chazak ve-nischazeik*, “Be strong! Be strong! We will be strengthened!” This is especially relevant to the current season, when our efforts to transform exile and mourning into the joy of the final redemption are most acute. The redemption will bring us the third Holy Temple that will hold the force of a *chazakah*, a matter thrice-repeated that thereby attains a state of permanency in Jewish law. Our proclamation therefore includes three expressions of *chazakah*.

Our first *chazak* corresponds to the first Temple that was strong spiritually, but since this superimposed spirituality was not well integrated with the physical world, it departed. Our second *chazak* alludes to the second Temple that was robust materially but sorely lacking spiritually, and it therefore fell apart in a more severe manner, giving rise to the longest and darkest exile. Our third *chazak*—“We will be strengthened!”—is the third Temple that will be robust both spiritually and physically to the utmost degree. Spirit and matter will merge perfectly, and it will therefore last for eternity.

The Rebbe

## לקוטי שיחות A Sicha

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org  
Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

*A “Descent” For A Great Ascent*

**The Context:** The *parshiyos* of *Matos* and *Masei* are always read during the Three Weeks of mourning for the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, they allude to the general theme of this time—the descent into exile, and the possibility of redemption.

**The Explanation:** The tribes of Israel are referred to by two names: *Shevatim* and *Matos*. The word *shevet* also means a branch of a tree that retains some moisture; the word *matah* also means a wooden staff that is dry and hardened, for it retains no moisture from the tree it grew from.

When the Jewish people are called by the name *shevatim*, it alludes to the fact that they retain their “moisture,” their tangible connection with their Divine source. When they are referred to as *matos* it alludes to their detachment from their Divine source. This is true of the soul when it descends into this world, and of the Jewish people when they descend into exile.

The purpose of this “hardening” and spiritual decay, however, is to lead to the second parshah, *Masei*, which means journeys. By experiencing descent and spiritual hardship, we are able to reach deep within our souls to propel ourselves even higher, “journeying” on to places we could not have reached previously.

Alternatively, the descent and ascent are alluded to in each parshah’s name individually:

**Matos:** The hardness and insensitivity of the soul as a result of its descent into a body actually lead to a positive “hardness.” The soul is forced to steel itself

in its confrontation with the body’s resistance. It has to draw upon reserves of stoicism and strength, its own spiritual “hardness,” to fulfill its desires and its responsibilities. By doing so, the essential, obdurate source of the soul is revealed within the person. Thus, the negative hardness of the soul in exile is transformed into the radiant hardness of the soul’s essence.

**Masei:** The “journeys” of the parshah can allude to the downward journey from heaven to earth, or from the Land of Israel into exile. The purpose of these negative travels is to bring to the positive implication of journeying, the trek back to redemption.

This is the overall theme of the Three Weeks. Although it is a time of mourning the descent into exile, it is also simply a prelude to the revelation of the essential durability of the soul (*matos*) and the ultimate journey to redemption (*masei*).

*Likkutei Sichos Vol 18, p. 378ff.*

## מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Matos-Mas’ei, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 119 Second Half
Tanya*	Igeres Hateshuvah Chapter 7. עמ' צט- פרק י. והנה... עד עמ' 198 - כוונע.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Negative Mitzvah #357
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Ahavah, – Hilchos Sefer Torah Chapter 7
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Nashim – Hilchos Yibum Vachalitza Chapters 6 – 8

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