

Our *Parashah* devotes several verses to the praises of *Eretz Yisrael*. We read (8:7-10), "For Hashem, your *Elokim*, is bringing you to a good Land--a Land with streams of water, of springs and underground water coming forth in valley and mountain; a Land of wheat, barley, grape, fig, and pomegranate; a Land of oil-olives and date-honey; a Land where you will eat bread without poverty--you will lack nothing there; a Land whose stones are iron and from whose mountains you will mine copper. You will eat and you will be satisfied, and bless Hashem, your *Elokim*, for the good Land that He gave you."

R' Yitzchak Arieli z"l (1896-1974; *Mashgiach* of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav; author of *Enayim La'mishpat*) writes: *Eretz Yisrael* is the natural place for, and the place that gives life to, the Jewish soul. There, one can shed his "garments" that are stained by the "idolatry"--i.e., the foreign ideas and beliefs--he picked up in the diaspora. And there, one can don garments of holiness--i.e., he can develop holier character traits and perform holier deeds.

As noted, our *Parashah* says, "You will lack nothing there." The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 36b) comments: "Even pepper." The *Gemara* does not mean that the verse is praising the Land for the availability of spices there, though that is also true. Rather, the *Gemara* means that *Eretz Yisrael* has the ability to "flavor" and elevate a person's spirituality--his Torah study and *Mitzvah* performance--as well. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha'geulah* p.70)

Shabbat

R' Shraga Feivish Hager z"l (1958-2024; *Kosover Rebbe*) writes: It is remarkable that the singing or recitation of the poem *Shalom Aleichem* on Friday night has spread throughout the Jewish world despite the fact that the identity of its author is completely unknown. [R' Ahron Lopiansky *shlita* (*Rosh Hayeshiva* of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington-Tiferet Gedaliah in Silver Spring, Maryland) writes in *Siddur Aliyot Eliyahu* that the earliest known publication of *Shalom Aleichem* was roughly 785 years ago.] R' Hager continues: The fact that *Shalom Aleichem* has been accepted almost universally reinforces what is written in the *Tikkunei Zohar*--that the "light" of *Shabbat* is similar to the "light" of the *Bet Hamikdash*. Just as Jews of all types united as one in the *Bet Hamikdash* to serve their Father in Heaven, so this light of unity appears on *Shabbat*. This foreshadows, as well, *Olam Ha'ba*, when all will unite to do His will with a full heart. R' Hager adds: "May Hashem bless His nation with *Shalom*."

The final stanza of *Shalom Aleichem* begins with the words: "May you depart in peace." Why do we send away the holy angels who accompanied us as we welcomed the *Shabbat* Queen? asks R' Hager.

He explains: We are taught that the spiritual level of a Jew on *Shabbat* is far higher than that of an angel. We send these angels away before we recite *Kiddush* so that they will not be humiliated when they see how we are much loftier than they are. Moreover, *Shabbat* is a time of "intimacy," so-to-speak, between Hashem and the Jewish People. At such a time, outsiders have no business being present. Therefore, we send the angels away before we recite *Kiddush*. This is alluded to in Yaakov Avinu's famous dream, R' Hager adds. In that dream, Yaakov first saw angels going up and down a ladder. Then, however, Hashem appeared as if He were standing over Yaakov and, says a *Midrash*, all of the angels vanished.

(*Malka Kadisha* p.131)

Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-775-9623

Send e-mail to: TheTorahSpring@gmail.com

Back issues at: www.TheTorahSpring.org

Donations to Hamaayan are tax deductible.

Donate online: <https://www.paypal.com/US/fundraiser/charity/1234402>



Sponsored by

Mrs. Faith Ginsburg

in memory of her father-in-law Maurice Ginsburg

(*Yisroel Moshe ben Yosef a"h*)

“It will be if you listen to My commandments that I command you today, to love Hashem, your Elokim, and to serve Him with all your hearts and with all your souls--then I will provide rain for your Land in its proper time, the early and the late rains, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil. I shall provide grass in your field for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.” (11:13-15)

R' Eliyahu E. Dessler z"l (1892-1953; head of the Gateshead, England Kollel and *Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak) writes: The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 39b) teaches, “There is no reward for *Mitzvot* in this world.” Rather, we will be rewarded for our *Mitzvot* when we reach *Olam Ha'ba* / the World-to-Come. Indeed, writes R' Dessler, the reward for a single *Mitzvah* is so great that it exceeds all of the pleasures one could experience in this world.

R' Dessler continues: We learn in *Pirkei Avot* (4:2), “One *Mitzvah* draws another *Mitzvah* in its wake.” This is the reward we receive in this world--that each *Mitzvah* we perform increases our holiness such that we are drawn to perform more *Mitzvot*. But, as noted, the primary reward for *Mitzvot* will be given in *Olam Ha'ba*.

This creates a difficulty, however, R' Dessler notes. Specifically, how are we to understand our verses, which seem to state expressly that if we obey *Hashem's* commandments, He will give us physical rewards: rain when we need it, abundant crops, well-fed cattle, etc.!

This question is answered by R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) in *Hilchot Teshuvah* (ch.9), writes R' Dessler. *Rambam* explains that verses such as ours are not promising physical rewards. Rather, the Torah is promising that “if we observe the Torah with joy and in good spirits, and we immerse ourselves in the Torah's wisdom at all times, then *Hashem* will remove from us all obstacles to further *Mitzvah* observance and Torah study--for example, war and disease. Instead, He will shower us with good things that strengthen our ability to observe and study the Torah--for example, abundant food and wealth. If we need not spend our days chasing our physical needs, we will be free to study Torah and engage in *Mitzvot* so that we earn life in *Olam Ha'ba*.” In other words, our verses are not promising reward; they are promising that *Hashem* will create optimal conditions in which to serve Him, so that we can earn more reward.

There is a wondrous lesson here, adds R' Dessler. We learn from here that all the goodness we have in this world was not given to us to be a source of physical pleasure. Rather, it was given to us to be used as an aid to creating additional holiness. (*Michtav M'Eliyahu* I p.5)

“Va'avadtem / You will be swiftly banished from the good Land that Hashem gives you.” (11:17)

R' Zvi Yisrael Thau *shlita* (founder of Yeshivat Har Ha'mor in Yerushalayim) writes: The word “*Va'avadtem*” (from the root אָבַד) could be translated as “You shall die” (see *Michah* 7:2). It is true that Jews, as individuals, continue to live even in exile, but the soul of the nation cannot live when it is banished from *Eretz Yisrael*. As R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*) writes: The Jewish nation in exile is like a person barely alive. (*Ve'shavta Ha'aretz* p.104)

“Man does not live by bread alone; rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of Hashem does man live.” (8:3)

R' Yitzchak Luria z"l (“*Arizal*”; 1534-1572) teaches: When a person eats, he must have in mind that he is extracting the sparks of holiness from the food, not eating for his physical pleasure. Thus our verse says: “Man”--the real person, *i.e.*, his spiritual essence--is not sustained by physical food. Rather, he is sustained by the holiness within the food--that which “emanates from the mouth of *Hashem*,” *i.e.*, *Hashem's* utterances that created the food and also sustained it until this moment. This lesson is alluded to as well in the verse (*Mishlei* 13:25), “A *Tzaddik* eats to satisfy his soul”--*i.e.*, his soul, not his body.

Related to this, continues *Arizal*, our Sages are instructing us to elevate eating to a spiritual experience when they say (*Pirkei Avot* ch.3), “If there is a meal at which no words of Torah are recited, it is as if the diners have consumed sacrifices to idolatry.” (*Sefer Ha'liklutim: Bereishit*)



“Now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your Elokim, ask of you? Only to revere Hashem, your Elokim . . .” (10:12)

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 33b) asks: Is reverence (*Yir'ah*) of *Hashem* a small matter, as the verse seems to imply? The *Gemara* answers: Yes, in relation to (*Le'gabei'*) Moshe it is a small matter. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R' Yitzchak Meir Morgenstern *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Torat Chacham in Yerushalayim) asks: Was Moshe speaking to himself in this verse? No! He was speaking to all of *Bnei Yisrael*! How, then, is the *Gemara's* question answered?

R' Morgenstern explains: The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 22b) derives from a verse (*Devarim* 6:13) that having *Yir'ah* for Torah scholars is part of the *Mitzvah* of *Yir'at Hashem*. At first glance, *Yir'at Hashem* would seem to be extremely difficult, for *Hashem* is invisible and unknowable, which makes it difficult to formulate feelings towards Him. How then can a person develop *Yir'at Hashem*? By having *Yir'ah* for Torah scholars.

R' Morgenstern elaborates: The *Yir'ah* of which we are speaking here is not “fear,” but rather “*Yir'at Ha'romemut*” / awe of *Hashem's* greatness. When one is in awe of a true Torah scholar's accomplishments and feels *Yir'at Ha'romemut* toward that Torah scholar, it enables a person to feel *Yir'at Ha'romemut* toward the One whom that Torah scholar is serving--*Hashem*. That is one reason why they are part of the same *Mitzvah*.

In this light, the *Gemara's* answer can be understood as follows: Is *Yir'at Hashem* a small matter? Yes, *Le'gabei* Moshe / for someone who knew and revered Moshe Rabbeinu, it is a small matter.

(*Bayam Derachecha: Sefirat Ha'omer* p.267)