



The Weekly Parsha Shiur of Maran, Rosh HaYeshiva, the righteous Kabbalist,

Our Rabbi Benayahu Yissachar Shmueli Shlit"a

An excerpt for Parsha of Ki Tavo 5786 (2026)

The Germans Were Afraid to Enter

It is told about a certain Jew named Rabbi Pesach Weinstock, who passed away not long ago in Antwerp at the age of one hundred, and during his lifetime he recounted his rescue story several times:

In World War II he was a child, and his parents and all their family fled from place to place, and thus they lived for four years fleeing from place to place in great mortal danger and fighting for their lives with all their strength, until ultimately, they found themselves in Lyon in Southern France.

But in France a great tragedy befell them: their son Pesach fell ill with tuberculosis. In those days it was a dangerous, highly contagious disease, and treatment was in absolute isolation, without any contact with the outside world.

Any person in such a situation would be crushed, after years of fleeing for life amidst mortal danger ending up empty-handed. But when Pesach heard of his illness, he answered and said: "Master of the Universe, for four years I labored and tried with all my strength, but if I see that your will is otherwise and you wish to take my soul, I hereby accept your decree with love! And I bless over the bad just as I bless over the good." And so, he separated with pain from all his family members and was hospitalized in a hospital for contagious diseases.

And behold, not much time passed and Southern France was also conquered by the Germans. Pesach and the rest of the patients heard the heavy bombardments well, but they did not know what was occurring outside...

A long time passed, Pesach recovered, and by the grace of Heaven was released from the hospital. When he went out, the terrible horror became clear to him: all his family members were killed! Along with millions of Jews, and only he, sick with tuberculosis, remained the sole survivor of the family!

The cursed Nazis did everything to destroy any trace of a Jew, but to one place they did not reach: the hospital for contagious diseases... They were afraid to catch [it]... and therefore did not touch bad-looking patients! The illness of tuberculosis, which seemed a terrible strike from Heaven, with all the pain and loneliness, turned out to be a salvation for generations; in its merit he lived over a hundred years and established a glorious family! And every day of his life he was grateful and praising the Holy One, blessed be He!

A person cannot know what is good. There is only one thing that is absolute good: "And you shall rejoice in all the good, there is no good but Torah." "For I have given you good teaching, do not forsake my Torah." The cup of salvations. One must give thanks to the Holy One, blessed be He.

Our teacher Chakam Ben-Zion used to say: I do not understand how it is possible to forget in prayer *Ya'aleh V'Yavo*, how it is possible to forget to give thanks and praise the Holy One, blessed be He, in prayer, and in Grace After Meals. A person sees that he has the merit to speak with the Name, May He Be Blessed, to pray; it is written in Maran that one must direct the meaning of the words in his lips, and direct that the Shechinah is opposite him, and remove all thoughts. Then the Rav tells us: "Never did an error in prayer happen to me." For how is it possible to stand before the King of kings of kings and err? Thus said Chakam Ben-Zion.

Fulfilling the Obligation of the Curses...

One must know that now we are already very close: twenty days left until the great and awesome Day of Judgment. The Gemara says at the end of Tractate Megillah: "It was taught, Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Ezra instituted for Israel that they would read the section of the curses in the Torat Kohanim [Leviticus] before Atzeret [Shavuot], and the section of the curses in Mishneh Torah [Deuteronomy, in Parashat Ki Tavo] before Rosh Hashanah." And the Gemara asks, "What is the reason?" And it answers: "Abaye said, and some say Resh Lakish: so that the year and its curses will end"—that they fixed reading the curses before Rosh Hashanah so that the curses would end, and a new year without curses would begin.

And Tosafot say there that indeed we read the curses before Rosh Hashanah, but there is an intervening Shabbat break between the Shabbat on which they read the curses and Rosh Hashanah, because Ezra wanted that on the Shabbat adjacent to Rosh Hashanah, Israel would not read curses, but rather would finish the year in tranquility and sweetness.

And one must know what our Rabbis said, that if a person incurred, Heaven forbid, some curse or some trouble, he can fulfill the curses through "And we will render the bullocks of our lips"—that if he reads the curses, it is as if the curses have already been fulfilled in him, and by this he has already fulfilled his obligation, and the curse will not come upon him.

Banged His Head Against the Wall

The Admor of Klausenburg related that he was in the country of Austria, and he recounts that the Nazis came there and took them to camps. And there was with them in the camp a certain Jew who was banging his head against the wall. The Admor of Klausenburg said to him: "Listen, you are doing what the Nazis want to do; the Nazis want to kill the people of Israel. You are killing yourself! How are you doing what the Nazis want? Stop!" He says to him: "You don't know, come, I will reveal to you," and he relates that he married a certain non-Jewish woman, and how much money he gave her and pampered her, and he says: "I knew that the World to Come doesn't exist [for me], but I said, at least I will have this world."

When the Nazis may their names be blotted out arrived, this non-Jewish woman went and handed him over to the Nazis, telling them that he is a Jew! What a wicked woman. "I considered her one of the good ones, something good. Wicked woman! What do I want to say to the Master of the Universe? Have I lost this world as well as the World to Come?"

The Admor said to him: "You have not lost the World to Come. Now that you cry to the Holy One, blessed be He, the Holy One, blessed be He, rebuked you—rebuked you for your own good. Here is hidden a great treasure. What is the great treasure? That now you regret your actions, returning in complete repentance, and walking in the way of Hashem—and then everything falls into place. You have merited!

Before your body will be in the incinerators, you return in complete repentance, you walk in the way of Hashem. Is there anything better than this? It is good for you that she informed on you, for were it not so, you would have remained like this, without a spark of a Jew; now you leave the abomination, the impurity, and now you are connected to Hashem. Regret, do repentance, 'Hashem is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.' This is hidden love."

What Merit and What a Congregation...

How is it written regarding Eliyahu the Prophet: "And Eliyahu drew near to all the people and said, 'How long do you limp between two opinions? If Hashem is L-rd, follow Him.'" And they did not answer him a word, afterwards it is written, "And the people did not answer, what is happening, so is the matter." And then fire fell from heaven and consumed the burnt offering, and they said, "Hashem, He is L-rd."

It is written in the Yerushalmi that the descent of the fire was in the merit of the congregation, and this requires clarification: What merit of the congregation? Behold, all of them are walking on two opinions—what merit of the congregation? For when did they say "Hashem, He is L-rd"? Only after fire came out from heaven.

Our Rabbis say, we see here a foundation: that even if they only expressed a willingness to examine themselves, a readiness to serve Hashem, that is already an important beginning; in this [merit], fire already descended in their merit from heaven.

See what this is! A person merely says, "Master of the Universe, I am examining the matters, I am examining myself to be a faithful servant of Yours, to abandon all bad ways"—is there a thing better than this? They say to a person, what is your problem? "In your mouth and in your heart to do it." Say with your mouth, "I have sinned, I have committed iniquity, I have transgressed," return in repentance, think about yourself—and in this way you change the entire course, and everything is near.

I Also Dreamt Such a Dream

Known is the story that was with Reb Isaac who saw in a dream that under a certain distant bridge there is a great treasure, that if he takes it, he will be able to become very wealthy from it. And he traveled far away to the place of the bridge that they told him in the dream. And behold, around the bridge there was a large army, and the soldiers see him every day coming and trying to dig from here and from here, until the commander caught him one day and said to him: "You are a spy! What are you doing here?"

And Isaac said to him: "I am not a spy, I will reveal the secret to you, perhaps we will become partners... there is here under the bridge a magnificent treasure, so they told me in a dream, and I simply want to take it." The commander laughed and said to him: "Dreams speak falsehood, after all I also dreamt at night that there is a certain Isaac that under his oven in his home there is a treasure... and does it seem to you that I am going to that Isaac?"

Isaac immediately understood the message, that from Heaven, they sent him so that he would hear that the treasure is at his own home! And indeed, he came

home and dug under the oven, and found the treasure... And we are the exact same thing; the spiritual treasure is already found at our home! Close! And we will receive it when we start to work! Do you understand? The treasure is with you. Repent, the treasure is in your pocket, what are you waiting for??

Performed Kindness with the Poor Man and Met the Satan?

The evil inclination is very cunning, it knows that a person can merit the life of the World to Come, and therefore it works hard on the person to cause him to stumble in every way, with great cunning. When it wants him to commit a transgression, the evil inclination makes it out to be "peanuts" — "it's nothing... what is this..." But after a person committed the transgression, it says to him: How is it possible to repent for such a severe sin? You cannot in the world! And thus, it despairs him, because it wants him to remain in the dirt. So, it is cunning.

The Ben Ish Chai brings a wonderful parable about one who befriended the Angel of Death, and that man said to the Angel of Death that he knows that there is no favoritism, and one day he will have to take him, but he requested from the Angel of Death: "Promise me, that you will not take my soul before I say confession [Viddui]," he said to him: "I agree," and swore to him, and that man was happy, for he said: "Now I will be able to do whatever my heart desires, and when the time comes, he will be obligated to let me say confession."

Performed Kindness with the Poor Man and Met the Satan?

In the end, the time came to pass away. What did the evil inclination do? Disguised itself as some poor, sick man—injured, bruised, bleeding, covered in boils, with blood dripping from his ears, mouth, and eyes—no one had ever seen such a thing... He lay on the road, looking as though his soul was about to depart in a moment. And behold, this man—the friend of the Angel of Death—passed by there and saw this "sick man."

And this sick man says to him: "Please, recite the confession (*Viddui*) with me before I go!" The man says to him: "No problem, repeat after me: 'Please Hashem, Please Hashem, I have sinned, I have committed iniquity, I have transgressed, we have trespassed...'"

As soon as he finished reciting the confession with him, immediately the "sick man" revealed himself to him, pounced on him, and took his soul! For behold, he had promised that he would not take him before he says confession, and behold, he said confession! This is the cunningness of the inclination!

The evil inclination comes with cunningness; it tries and tries. May Hashem help us for the glory of His name. One needs strength against the evil inclination and its tricks.

Wonder Dog!

A story that occurred in the time of Rabbi Sonnenfeld: There was one person, they called him R' Shalom, he used to go every day from house to house, and wake the people up, Reuven Shimon Levi Yehudah, shouting, shouting, get up get up get up for the service of the Creator.

There was a certain *Maskil* [enlightenment follower] there who could not bear him, and was shouting at him: "Go to sleep, fool, what is this get up for the service of the Creator." One day someone poured slops—May Hashem save us—all the dirt, poured [it] all on him. He saw this, he was indeed a strong man. But he said, what is this worth that I should answer him, he went home, showered, took out all the stench, threw away the clothes, changed his clothes, arranged himself, went to the synagogue, today the prayer was something cosmic, the next day he hears that this son of a... had a heart attack... passed away...

He continued to pass at dawn as was his way, but after a few days that he passes to wake up in the morning, and behold, there comes to him a certain black dog, leaps on him, hugs him, licks him, does not leave him, chases after him. Until he arrives at the synagogue and then the dog would go, like this every day. And this one says, I must go to rabbis, to a Rabbinical Court to ask them what is done with this, every day a black dog, what does it have with me?

The Rabbinical Court asked Rabbi Sonnenfeld, already an old man, he said, I want to come to the Rabbinical Court today to handle this matter, and he came. He said: This dog, it is a reincarnation; into it entered the soul of that wicked man who poured the slops on you, and he wants you to forgive him.

And Rabbi Sonnenfeld said: Call his children. They called his children, the Rav said to them: See, your father disturbed and acted like this, he needs a rectification (*tikkun*). What is his rectification? That you take it upon yourselves to give, you have money, wherever they study at midnight who get up to study, give tea, coffee, olive trees for heating the place, so that they will have hot [drinks] to be able to study in peace, whatever they lack bring to them. The children said: "We take it upon ourselves."

And then the Rav said to Rabbi Shalom: Tomorrow morning go to the doggy, catch its ear, tell it that the Rabbinical Court of Rabbi Sonnenfeld made a rectification for it, and his sons will give money and do everything to rectify your soul, go, no need. Everything is forgiven to you. I forgive you. And so, it was. He forgave him and it stopped coming!

This is not lawlessness. The world is not ownerless. A person who does the will of Hashem, everything goes with him. Does not do the will of Hashem — woe and

alas. Not to go after desires and after money. See what a person gets up every morning early, serves Hashem, these who do not know what this virtue is, may Hashem help that we will all walk in His ways.

He Was a Person of Desire

The Torah says "The first of the first-fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of Hashem your L-rd," first of all, you planted trees, and all you want is to enjoy the first fruit? It is not yours! — "Bring to the house of Hashem your L-rd." A firstborn son was born to you? To Hashem your L-rd, no, know that it is not yours, that you will overcome your desire. This is a great thing.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin relates, what is the power of desire and what is its punishment. In the time of Chizkiyahu the King there was a scholar named Shevna the Scribe, and the Gemara says that he would expound before 13 *ribbot* [tens of thousands], every *ribbo* is ten thousand men, one hundred and thirty thousand men! About Chizkiyahu the King it is written that he would expound to 11 *ribbot* "only" 110 thousand, but Shevna had another 20 thousand, 13 *ribbot*, 130 thousand. And when Sancheriv came to fight against Jerusalem, Shevna said to submit To Sancheriv, and Chizkiyahu the King said to him: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said not to submit! Do not lead the people into plunder!" But Shevna did not accept [this], and said: "I say do submit." Shevna the Scribe shot an arrow outside the wall with a letter, and wrote to him: "All the one hundred and thirty thousand who are with me here, we are all coming toward you." And Sancheriv says: "Welcome (*Tfaddal*)."

Shevna reached the gate, and said to Sancheriv's soldiers: "Open the gate for me," they opened for him, but he went out, and all his students came to go out, an angel came and pushed them inside, and closed the gates. Sancheriv says to him: "Where is everyone?" He says: "Here they are here at the gate," they did not see what was going on inside, there were no cameras... And Sancheriv says to him: "What, are you joking?" They waited an hour, two hours, three, four, they didn't come. They grabbed Shevna the Scribe; the Gemara says that they bored into his heels at his feet, threaded iron wires through, tied him to the horses' tails, and galloped in the mountains and made him into pieces.

And the Gemara says about this event: How is this? Why? And the Gemara explains: Shevna was a person of desire!!! Desires! This is what causes a person to go, Heaven forbid, after money! After desires! The eatings, and the wine, and all the nonsense and vanities!

Woe and alas what desire does! And therefore, a person must accustom himself to overcome desires, over the evil inclination. This requires very strong overcoming.

They Searched for Where the Stench Was Coming from and Reached Rabbi Moshe

And one of the important things that a person needs to guard is holiness! Holiness of the eyes and holiness of the thought!

A story that occurred at the Tzrifin base, where a righteous Jew was working, a Hashem-fearing person whom they called R' Moshe Shoshan. And there was a good team of workers there, everyone doing what they needed to do, everything was fine.

One day, they began to bring in women; it started with one female clerk, who was also walking immodestly, May Hashem save us. R' Moshe could not bear this; he turned worlds upside down to cause her attire to be changed, but to no avail.

Among other things, he also turned to the base commander, explained gently, clarified, and tried to convince him that the matter goes against good taste, and moreover that he has personal seniority to say that the matter bothers him greatly as a veteran worker at the base—but all his words fell on deaf ears. The commander and the work manager declared unequivocally: "Rabbi Shoshan, with all due respect that we feel for you, there is nothing to be done; with us there is a principle, called 'democracy,' in which no single person has the power to dictate dress style."

A few days passed, one day, the workers arrive in the morning to work, and smell a bad odor, a stench... "There is a stench here, it is impossible to stand here." They search for where the stench is coming from—at the end they see that it is Moshe's clothes. They tried to speak with Moshe, but he does not answer... The next day same thing. No one can come close, what a stench...

They went to speak with the commander, the commander comes and says to him: "Moshe, Shoshan, what is happening to you?" Rabbi Shoshan said to him: "Listen, you said that this is democracy, how I want to come I come... If she can come foul-smelling like this with perfume, I can come in my perfumes... That's democracy...". In the end, she had no choice and they sent her away. See what wisdom of life to guard oneself in holiness!