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ספר דברים

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עקב / Special Topics

PART 1: TO MAKE A CHASUNAH QUICKLY OR NOT?

PART 2: SHABBOS - THE ROOT OF ALL TIKUNIM



FROM THE SHIURIM OF

HARAV YISROEL BROG שליט"א

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We've been talking about the *yesodos* of building a *bayis Yehudi*. One of those *yesodos* is the *shidduch* process. Now, we have to point out that the Chofetz Chaim held that not only should you limit the number of times that you get together and see each other between the engagement and the wedding, but he also held that you should make the *chasunah* as soon as possible. When they asked him regarding a *chasunah* that couldn't take place in its proper time because of reasons beyond their control, he instructed them to be *makdim* the *chasunah* (make it early) rather than delay it. He said, "You have to be *makdim* a *chasunah* as much as possible because the *satan* always seeks how to be *me'akev* a *chasunah*."

People think they are *chachamim*, they think they can determine when the *chasunah* is going to be. They decide when it is convenient for them and when it's not. People say, "I would like to have six months." I would like to have this. I would like to have that. You are not doing anybody a favor, and it leads to *tzaros* from the *satan*. I would like to actually study and investigate how many *shidduchim* have been broken off in the last couple of years in Lakewood. I would like to know if what led to this was the frequent meetings of couples or if a couple actually wanted to make the *chasunah* as soon as possible, but their parents, with their great, deep intelligence, decided they should wait five or six months for a *chasunah*. And the *satan* is always *me'akev*.

DELAYS ARE FRAUGHT WITH DANGER

We have had two examples over here, in this *yeshivah*, two *talmidim* whose parents were *akshanim*, and insisted on a long engagement. Both families wanted a six month delay, and both couples ended up in a divorce. I can't tell you why this happened. There were all kinds of good reasons, but *lema'aseh*, they both ended up in a divorce. The *satan* has all kinds of ways to be *me'akev* *shidduchim*. I told them to get married right away. They wouldn't hear of it. I told them, "This is the *ratzon* Hashem, this is what we do." They said, "Sorry, we don't care what you have to say. We are paying for this wedding, and this is how we do things."

And we can *taka* also see how the *satan* is often *me'akev* the *shidduch* when there is too long of a time between the engagement and the *chasunah*. All of a sudden, you discover *chisronos*. People take out their big magnifying glasses, and problems arise every step of the way. And understandably, I never saw that discovering problems brings a couple closer and more interested in getting married. That's the biggest bluff. The only thing I saw is that you get mess-ups, and it leads to *aveiros*. Therefore, we should definitely try to accept this *eitzah* of the Chofetz Chaim, to be *mishtadel* to make the *chasunah* as soon as possible. That's all.

USING THE DAY OF THE CHUPPAH PROPERLY

Now, another *nekudah* we have to focus on is how we use the time between the engagement and the *chasunah*. And especially the day of the *chuppah* itself. The day of the *chuppah* is a very, very big day; it's a day that determines much of the person's future. And sadly, most people use it *levatalah*.

The Chofetz Chaim himself, on the day of his *chuppah*, sat and learned *mamash* until the time of the *chuppah*. He told one of his family members that they should call him only when everything is *mamash* ready and there is nothing else to do. But of course, we are not on his *madreiga*. You don't necessarily have to do it like the Chofetz Chaim. But we had a couple of *talmidim* with similar stories, though. I remember one *talmid*, *mamash*, who learned *noradik*. I'll never forget, that was a *chasunah* unlike any other. I remember the *simchah* of that *chasunah*. The guy learned a regular first *seder* in Lakewood on the day of his *chasunah*, *mamash*!

Most people, on the day of their *chuppah*, involve themselves with *shtusim* and *havalim*. People spend hours and hours of *mamash* trying to kill time: unpacking their shirts, taking out the pins from their shirts, and setting up their apartment, and so on. A person has to use the day properly because if we're not focused on the day of the wedding, it is definitely going to affect the level of *simchah* of our life going forward.

I remember being in Telshe on the day of my wedding and not knowing what to do. I remember going to the *mikveh* at 11:30 in the morning, and I remember *pashut* no one told me what to do on the day of my wedding, or how to prepare. I *davened*, I said Tehillim. But I wish somebody would have told me this little secret clearly. I knew one thing. I had read somewhere about the Kotzker's *vort*. The Kotzker Rebbe said, "It's a pity such a great day as a day of the *chasunah* is put in the hands of children," meaning, it's up to a young *chassan* and *kallah* to figure out how to behave on this day. Though I did spend some time with my *zaida* (R' Avigdor Miller).

SIMCHAS CHASSAN V'KALLAH

Now, you have to understand that there is another tremendous *mitzvah*, and that is called *simchas chassan vekallah*. The Chofetz Chaim was *makpid* that the *chasunah* should be done publicly, it should be done with music and with a lot of *simchah*. And this was even when it came to *aniyim*. Even though the Chofetz Chaim was a very frugal man, and lived very simply, he said that one should not suffice with a very limited, small affair without people being invited. He said this was not the way, the *minhag* how a *chasunah* was to be held in Klal Yisrael. Of course, he didn't think you should bring in things for *chasunas* that have no *shaychus* with the *simcha shel mitzvah*. When he spoke about a public *chasunah*, he meant the minimum that was accepted at the time. He didn't believe in extras, in luxuries, but it had to be an eventful affair.

Now, it's interesting, the Chofetz Chaim himself tried as much as possible to be *mesameiach chassan vekallah*, and sometimes with amazing means in *pashute* ways. *Lemashal*, a lady from Radin testified that she lived next to the house of the Chofetz Chaim, and she remembers the Chofetz Chaim had the following *minhag*. If there was a *chuppah* that night in Radin, the Chofetz Chaim assumed that that the *chassan vekallah* would walk by his house, so he would put these big candles of *neft*, these lantern lights, on the windowsill facing the street to be *mei'ir* the *derech* for the *chassan vekallah*, and those celebrating the *chasunah*. That was how he was *mishtatef besimchah*.

The Chofetz Chaim partook in *chasunahs* of residents of Radin, not only if they were important *ehrlische yidden*. He participated in the *simchah* of the *chasunah* even when it was the daughter of a person about whom there were rumors that he was a *ganav*! The daughter of someone who made his money from being a *ganav*, through business dealings that were very questionable. He was from the Jewish mafia. The Chofetz Chaim was *makpid* to go out of his house to greet the *chassan vekallah* and be *mechabed* them. And he said, "Nu, *chassan domeh lemelech*." Even though one of his relatives told him, "Nu, a *chassan* is not *mamash a melech*, it's only *domeh lemelech*," the Chofetz Chaim answered and said, "Nu, even *domeh lemelech* is *nisht gornisht*."

So could you imagine, when there was a *simchas chassan vekallah* of a true *ben Torah*, when the Chofetz Chaim participated in this, the *simchah* was *mamash nikar* on his face, and he stood there clapping his hands! And this is what he said: "Ah, *zol de velt herren*, the world should hear how a *ben Torah* in the end gets his *richtige kavod*." He saw a *chasunah* of a *ben Torah* where the *olam* was *mamash varm* as a sign of *kavod hatorah*. Amazing!

YOU ARE NOT INVITED TO A CHASUNA TO EAT

When the Chofetz Chaim would participate personally in the *simchas chassan vekallah*, he had a *minhag* to run a number of steps to greet the *kallah*, *lechvoda!* He would *pashut* get up and go a few steps to greet the *kallah*. One of the *chuppahs* in which he was *mishtatef*, was the *chuppah* of the daughter of R' Yoshe the shoemaker, R' Yoshe Hasandlar. It took place in the *chatzer* of the *beis haknesses* in Radin. So the Chofetz Chaim used that opportunity to teach his *talmidim* a *perek* in *hilchos simchas chassan vekallah*. Listen to what he said. He said, “Chazal teach us (Berachos 6b):

אָמַר רַבִּי חֵלְבוֹ, אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: כָּל הַהֶקְהָלָה מְסַעֲוֶדֶת חֶתָן וְאֵינוֹ מְשֻׁמָּחוּ עוֹבֵר בְּחֻמְשָׁה
קוֹלוֹת, שְׁנֵאמַר: “קוֹל שְׂשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שְׂמִחָה קוֹל חֶתָן וְקוֹל פְּלֵה קוֹל אוֹמְרִים הוֹדוּ אֵת ה' צְבִיבוֹת”

Rabbi Helbo said in the name of Rav Huna: Anyone who benefits from the feast of a groom but does not cause him to rejoice violates the five voices mentioned in this verse, as it is stated: “The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, and the voice of those who say: ‘Give thanks to the Lord of hosts.’”

“What’s so terrible about being *mishtatef* in a *simchah* of a *chassan vekallah* without being *mesameiach* them? And the answer is,” the Chofetz Chaim said, “because when a person is invited to be *mishtatef* in a wedding, he is not being invited to eat and drink. That wasn’t the purpose of the invitation. He was invited because the desire of the couple is that he should be *mesameiach* them with *chamishah kolos*, with *shira*, with *zimra*, *berikudim*, *tupim*, *mecholos*. So if a person is *mishtatef* in the *simchah* without fulfilling the hopes of the guy who invited him, you know what he’s doing? He’s being *goizel*, he’s withholding from them the *chamishah kolos* that they deserve in exchange for the *seudah*.” Incredible!

WHY DID CHOFETZ CHAIM EAT HIS OWN FOOD AT CHASUNOS?

Now, regarding the issue of *neheneh miseudas chassan vekallah*, we have to point out that the Chofetz Chaim used to bring his own *mezonos* to the *chasunah* and make a *brachah* on his own food. And that’s because of a *halachic chashash* that he had. What was his *chashash*? His *chashash* was like this. If the *seudah* is not being conducted the way it should be, whether it’s because it’s too luxurious and there is a *chashash* of *moisros* (extras), or because not all the *tzadim* are willingly paying for it, so it may be a *shaaleh* of *gezeileh*. If so, then there is a problem of *ה' גַּזַּע בְּרַחֲנָא*, “the thief who makes a *berachah*, has blasphemed Hashem” (Tehillim 10:3), because it’s *asur* to be *mevarech* on something that’s not the *ratzon*

THE PERFECT DAY FOR IMPROVEMENT

You see, many people do the opposite. They think: The whole week, I struggle to sit in my seat. Shabbos is the one time I don't have any *lachat*. So enough that I'm hanging around the Beis Hamedrash a little bit, but I can allow myself guilt-free to walk back and forth. *Retzifus*? I'm *ratzuf*. I'm very much *ratzuf* - in walking back and forth, that's what they do. They have a snack, come back, have another snack, a coffee, what's for lunch, what's for snacks, and so on. And then the person thinks that as a result, he'll be able to learn better after Shabbos. He doesn't realize that if he would conduct himself with *retzifus* on Shabbos, it would be that much easier for him to conduct himself with this *kol yemos sheishes yemei hamaaseh*. The Reishis Chochmah says, ולא יהיה קשה לאדם, it won't be hard for him. That statement that everybody says, "Oh, it's so hard." Did you ever say that - it's so hard? The Reishis Chochmah says, if someone does undertake to be a *kadosh*, ולא יהיה קשה לאדם - it won't be hard for a person, לנהוג - to conduct himself in something he couldn't do until now.

Now, just to give a suggestion, he says, what if a guy messed up, a person wasn't able to overcome the challenge *b'sheishes yemei hamaaseh*, the fellow was facing *azah* challenge, ובא שבת והרהור - and then Shabbos came, and he was *meharher b'teshuvah*. בתשובה - and then Shabbos came, and he was *meharher b'teshuvah*. ורצה לעשות כל הקדושות הנהוגות בו, and now he wants to conduct himself with all the *kedushos*. He says, יועיל לו כל הקדושות שנהג בשבת, then all of the *kedushos* that this person did on Shabbos, will now help him. It's going to be easier for him to be *moshech* those *kedushos* from the 'well of Shabbos' to the whole week.

BATTLE ADVANTAGES ON SHABBOS

Now, I'll tell you a specific area where this manifests itself *gefhehrlech* - by *bachurim*, and sometimes also with *yungerleit*. One of the areas of קדושים תהיו is קדושה. Just yesterday, a Rosh Yeshivah called me up, he had a very good *bachur* in his yeshivah, *mamash* a *gevaldige lomeid Torah*, and he *nebach* was *michshal* in a terrible *cheit*. He went home, he had a *gevaldige bein hazmanim*, he learned *b'hasmadah*. Before the *bein hazmanim* was over, he *chapped arein* and he fell - the big *yetzer hara*. And then he fell again. The Rosh Yeshivah asked me what to do. The *bachur* wants to get help. I said, "I am going to tell you one thing to do. Tell him that I guarantee, I am willing to bet any money in the world that the *eitzah* I will give will help him."

Give me a *bachur* who is fighting cats and dogs over *inyanei kedushah*, and you'll see that *chizuk* in *kedushah* on Shabbos *davka*, will help him. This battle is the battle that every single person has to

go through in his life. This is a *milchamah* that every human being, if you have two feet and a brain larger than a pea, you will fight this battle. That's the battle of *taavah*. Most people lose. How badly do they lose? It depends. Why do they lose? Because just as if you gave them a little butter knife, or a bow and arrow, and said, "Go and fight some Iraqis, go and fight some Iranians," do they stand a chance to win? No. You know why? They are not prepared for battle. No one ever told them how to do the battle; most of them weren't even interested in how to do the battle. Many people were unaware that anybody else was going through this battle, so they never understood what the battle was about.

But the *yetzer hara* puts in all his *kochos* to make sure that when it comes to *Shabbos Kodesh*, you mess up. *Shabbos* is the *zman* of *perikas ol*. *Shabbos* is a time when in all *yeshivos*, sadly, it's 'bein *hazmanim*.' But when a person has a mind that is *panui min haTorah*, when your mind is not *liging* in learning, then just like a pile of manure is inviting to flies, that's how inviting you are to *machshavos hayetzer* and to your *taavos*. That's what it is. And once the *yetzer hara* gets a hold of you on *Shabbos*, then you don't want to think about learning, you don't *daven* too hard, so the chances of passing the test are very, very small.

And then, when you come to the week, it becomes even more difficult, because what the Reishis Chochmah is teaching us also works the opposite way. If on *Shabbos*, when you're at the 'wellspring,' you are not going to conduct yourself *b'kedushah* - you don't stand a chance on the weekdays! But if a person is *noheig b'kedushah* on *Shabbos*, it affects his whole week for the good.

I have told this to many *bachurim* over the years. They ask, "How do I deal with this?" I said, "You're *mekabel* to do whatever you can do on *Shabbos*, from the onset of *Shabbos*." First of all, you have to have a *hirhur* of *teshuvah*. Then you go to the *mikvah*, you cleanse yourself from some of your *tumah*. And then you do some *teshuvah* and say, "Hashem, I really want to get a little strength to win this battle, I want to do the battle." Then, you conduct yourself on *Shabbos b'kedushah*. Do you know what you just did? You've just armed yourself.

When I see a *bachur* on *Shabbos* wasting his time, not doing anything on *Shabbos*, the guy 'smells' so bad, the guy has got a sign, a flagpole - 'All the flies please gather around me'. It looks like the fellow is resting on *Shabbos*, *taanug Shabbos*. The one he is *misaneig* with is his *satan*, the *malach hamaves*, his *yetzer*. And then he gets depressed, and the whole week, he walks around saying he can't wake up, he can't learn, it's so *shver*, it's so hard.

So, I told this Rosh Yeshiva, “You want to get this boy to have a good week, next week? I’ll tell you what to do - see if you could get him to have a *hirhur teshuvah* tomorrow on Shabbos. He should start from today, *erev Shabbos*. And make sure, no matter what happens, on Shabbos, he stays clear.” On Shabbos, you stay above it, you stay elevated as much as you can. And, it works like that for every single area of your life once you identify what your area of weakness is.

SHABBOS IS YOUR KEY TO YESHUOS

This Reishis Chochmah is worth gold! This is not *stam* gold! This is such an empowering piece of knowledge! Let’s say I hear of a *bachur* who is involved in *bittul Torah* on Shabbos - he is reading newspapers, he is resting more than he should rest, he stays up late Friday night and wastes his time. You have to realize, you’re not killing Shabbos, you are killing yourself for the rest of the week. You must understand this *klor!*

Rabbosai, have *rachmanos* on yourselves! Now that you know this piece of information, you stand a chance. This is your chance. This is how you get an advantage in every *milchamah* you are going to fight.

BE MISCHAZEK IN DAVENING ON SHABBOS

One of the worst problems people have is with davening. Most people have no appreciation of what it means to *daven*. They don’t know where to start. They’ll give the excuse, “I don’t know what it means. I don’t feel it.” They say it doesn’t do anything for them; it doesn’t speak to them. They say, “How do I know Hashem is listening to me?” All kinds of *shtuyot* I hear from people. My friend, do you know where that starts from? One place - you didn’t *daven* on Shabbos. On Shabbos, most people don’t *daven*. You know why? We don’t talk about *parnassah* on Shabbos, and you don’t talk about trips to Jerusalem - ולירושלים עירך ברחמי תשוב. During the week, you think: I’ll get on a plane, I’ll get a free ride, get a free boat maybe. Everybody has the silly *yetzer hora*, his personal biases on why he likes things. There is no *tefillah* for *refuah sheleimah* on Shabbos. So on Shabbos, the *tefillah* is a bit ‘empty’. But if the guy would spend time saying on Shabbos, “I want to get close to Hashem,” that’s how he elevates himself, a *shtickel kedushah*, on Shabbos. That is *kedushas hatefillah*.

Do you know how much easier it’ll be for you then to *daven* the rest of the week? It won’t be *b’koshi*. ולא יהיה לאדם קשה. If you controlled yourself in some area, if you didn’t transgress, you didn’t cross the line, it won’t be קשה for you. Take it to the bank. There is a ‘bank’ up there. Eventually, you’ll get to *heiche* (higher) *madreigos*,

and even holy things. You could actually eat with an awareness that you're eating for a purpose. You have to think about it. You spend your time on Shabbos actually thanking Hashem, singing *shirah* to Hashem, working on your relationship with Hashem. It will be that much easier during the week - in the *yemos hachol* when you're surrounded by garbage and surrounded by all kinds of *tirchos*, you'll still be able to do it. But if you don't do it on Shabbos, then you don't stand a chance.

WE MUST HAVE SHABBOS TO BE *OMEID B'NISYONOS*

The Chayei Adam (Hilchos Shabbos 1:1) also mentions this concept.² And he says an amazing thing. If somebody is going in the *midbar*, and he doesn't know when it's Shabbos, what would you say he should do? What should you do if you don't know when it's Shabbos? I'll tell you what you should do. Every day you should work just the bare minimum because of *pikuach nefesh*, and no more than that. And you count seven days and on the seventh day you keep Shabbos. You are *mekadesh hashevii*. You make your own seventh day. That's the halachah. Do you know how mind-blowing that is? It's a *peleh*. What's the *pshat*? How do you make *kiddush* then? The Chayei Adam says this is because the *kedushah* of Shabbos flows over to the rest of the week. Shabbos is the center point, the 'well,' and all the days of the week are *yoneik*, they derive their *kedushah* from Shabbos. So this person in the *midbar* can pick any day to say *kiddush* because every day has *קדושת השבת*, some of the *kedushah* of Shabbos! A *peleh*! This is what I would tell a *bachur*. "I will help you. If you would ask me, I will tell you, 'Listen buddy, Shabbos is somewhere, but I don't know where. You make up a *shevii*, that is what makes it, that gives you a center point.'"

Does that create a well from where you could have *hashpaah*?

Zogt de Chayei Adam and the Reishis Chochmah - yes it does! It's a *neyeh din*. There is a *din* that once every seven days, a person needs to take off and he needs to connect with *kedushah*, get himself out of the *yemos hachol*. And that will then carry on, beyond that, it is *mashpia*.

So the *yom haShabbos* is the whole *shoreish* that we have to be *omeid b'nisyonos*, a place in time where we have to be *mesakein* the *cheit* of Adam Harishon. Shabbos is the *shoreish* of all *tikunim*. That's what Shabbos is for us. May Hashem give us *koach*.

² וכן כשמונין מנין הימים יהיו מונין על שם השבת דהיינו יום ראשון בשבת ויום שני בשבת וכן כולם כי קדושת השבת הוא נמשך לכל יום כי הוא המרכז האמצעי שכל ימי השבוע יונקים ממנה יום א' ב' ג' נקראין אחר השבת שהם מקבלים קדושה משבת העבר ויום ד' ה' ו' נקראים קודם שבת כי הם מושפעים ומקבלים קדושה משבת הבאה ולכן ההולך במדבר או שנשבה בין העובדי יודע ומתי הוא שבת מונה ז' ימי' מיום שנתן אל לבו ושכחו ומקדש השביעי בקידוש והבדלה, וכו'.

If the only thing you ever learned here, and the only thing you will ever learn here, is this point, *dayeinu*. And you'll get to sing to Hashem *shiros v'sishbachos* for this one piece of information, because every one of us has got areas where it's very difficult for us.

It may be in the area of *dibbur*. Everyone has *nisyonos* of *dibbur* - *dibburim asurim*, *dibburei lashon horah*, *dibburei motzei shem ra*, *rechilus*, all kinds of garbage, *shekarim*, *stam divrei leitzanus*. Shabbos - that's your chance. Go to the well. About Shabbos it says, חול שלא יהיה דיבורך בשבת כדיבורך בחול (Shabbos 103b), your *dibbur* should be different, *is iz gevaine adrish*, *zol zein andrish* (if your speech is different on Shabbos, it will be different the rest of the week). You'll have *koach* to control yourself.

HOW TO BE MESAKEN WEAKNESSES ON SHABBOS

Everybody knows that לב יודע מרת נפשו - each one of us knows what his area of difficulty is. With *dibbur*, the first thing is a guy goes home and he talks to his wife, and says everything that comes to his mouth. He says everything and anything regarding all the neighbors, and everybody and anybody. The guy thinks, הותרה לו, he has a permit, and he does it again and again. He *pashut* thinks it's like a *chumrah b'almah* not to talk about anything he wants to talk about. But if a person decides to be *mesaken* a weak area on Shabbos, he has to do it with a *tenai*. The *tenai* is that you have to have a *hirhur* of *teshuvah* beforehand. And you have to be *mekabel* upon yourself that, "I want to behave this Shabbos." But if you don't identify the area that you are weak in, the Shabbos itself doesn't work automatically to correct it.

✧ IN SUMMARY ✧

Shabbos is like a 'well' from which we draw spiritual strength that lasts us the whole week. Shabbos helps us overcome the *yetzer hara*, once we strengthen ourselves on Shabbos in any area, such as learning Torah, speaking according to *halachah*, and maintaining higher levels of *kedushah*. The three-point plan is: Identify the area in which we want to improve before Shabbos, decide to do *teshuvah*, and accept upon ourselves to be extra strong on that point on Shabbos. The difficulty of that challenge will be reduced in the week that follows. This week, I will (*bli neder*) spend time on Shabbos saying, "I want to be a *kadosh*," or write it on a bookmark that I will use on Shabbos in my *siddur* to access *kedushas hatefillah* and other types of *kedushah*.

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