

בַּעֲדֵי שָׁבֻעֹת

# ***The Way of Emunah***

Collected Thoughts  
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar  
Rosenbaum shlita**


**Shavuos**



# The Way of Emunah

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## **Shavuot**



**Beautiful Footsteps/The Test of the Boundary/The Loftiness of the Day/Nothing to Brag About/Accepting the Torah with Awe/The Radomsker Rebbe's Akdamus/Serving Hashem at all Times/Saying Kriyas Shema with Emunah/A Tefillah for Hashem is Accepted/Renewed Every Day/Every Individual Receives the Torah/A New Man/Hearing Hashem's Voice**

## **Yahrzeit of the Besht Hakadosh Zy"v**

**The Tzadikim's Praise/A Segulah to be Saved from Foreign Thoughts/Arousal from Stories About the Besht/A Segulah for Yeshuos/The Segulah of a Story/Yoshev Tehilos Yisroel/The Letter to his Brother-in-Law/Rectifying Souls/Recognizing His Creator at the Age of Three/All for a Shmek Tabak/Learning Torah from the Arizal**

## Shavuos

### Beautiful Footsteps:

We are currently preparing for the glorious day of Shavuos, when we celebrate the giving of the Torah. Our feelings of anticipation for this momentous day bring to mind the verse (Shir Hashirim 7): “How beautiful are your footsteps.” We hear the “footsteps” of the day approaching and our hearts jump with excitement.

It is related that the Tzvi L'Tzadik of Bluzhev zy”a was one checked by a doctor, who said that his heartbeat was irregular. It was beating faster than normal. When the doctor asked him about it, he said, **“Don’t you know that the day of Matan Torah is drawing near?”**

### The Test of the Boundary:

Before giving the Torah, Hashem commanded Moshe Rabenu (Shemos 19:23): “Set boundaries for the mountain and sanctify it.” Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a explains the concept of setting boundaries by quoting the words of Chazal that before presenting the Torah to Klal Yisroel, Hashem went to every nation and asked them if they wanted it. They asked what was written in it, and he told each nation about a prohibition that would be very difficult for them to keep. This leads us to ask why He didn’t do the same thing to Klal Yisroel. Why didn’t He scare them off by telling them about the hardest commandment for them to uphold?

Rav Bunim answers that, in

fact, Hashem did do this, as the commandment to set boundaries is the hardest thing for a Jew to accept. A Jew's nature is to strive to ascend higher and higher, to understand more and more and to rise above his limits. Thus, Hashem was testing them to see if they would obey Him, even though it went contrary to their nature. In the merit of accepting this commandment, they merited to receive the Torah.

### **The Loftiness of the Day:**

The Chida *zt"l* (Sefer Pnei Dovid) writes: The day is coming when we commemorate how the Jewish people stood before Har Sinai, the mountain that was great in holiness but small in stature, thus representing humility. We stood there in unity, as is stated: "And Yisroel camped

there, opposite the mountain." Through this, our impurity was removed and we merited to receive the Torah. From that day on, we are holy and we have the ability to purify ourselves. This is a holiday when we can acquire humility and unity, as they did in those days at this great and awesome spectacle at Har Sinai, and we can also gain understanding and wisdom in Torah.

One of our teachers of the past, the author of Sefer Hamichtam, writes that there is no doubt that incredible Divine secrets and concept were transmitted to them when they stood by the mountain. This is hinted to in the words: "If we had been brought close before Har Sinai and had not been given the Torah, it would have sufficed."

Therefore, if one arouses

himself during this time of year in the traits of humility and unity and in trying to understand the Torah, there is no doubt that it will be a good time for him and he will merit more than at any other time.

### Nothing to Brag About:

It is related that the Chasam Sofer *zy"ra* had an attendant who was haughty for two reasons: 1. Because he was the *shamash* of the Chasam Sofer. 2. Because he had a very wealthy uncle who was the owner of a bank in Pressburg.

One day, the Chasam Sofer called him over and said, "I don't understand what you have to brag about. If you would know a lot of Torah like I do or if you would be rich like your uncle, I could understand it. But **if your**

**Torah knowledge is like that of your uncle's and your wealth is like mine, what is your *yichus*? What do you have to brag about?"**

### Accepting the Torah with Awe:

While Rav Shlomo Leib of Lentchna *zy"ra* was leading his *tish* on the night of Shavuot, he said in the name of the Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa *zy"ra*, "On the night of Shavuot we don't say Torah because '*derech eretz kodmah l'Torah*', and we will be receiving the Torah tomorrow."

He then added, "If we don't say Torah, what do we do now? We prepare ourselves to receive the Torah with awe, fear, trembling and excitement!"

As he said these words, his entire body began to shake. He was overcome with trembling and was unable to stop shaking until he rested his body on the table. However, even this didn't help, and he continued to tremble. The *chasidim* grew scared. They were worried about his health and they carried him out of the room and laid him down in his bed, where he rested until the trembling stopped and he was able to return to the *tish*.

### **The Radomsker Rebbe's Akdamus:**

When crowds of *chasidim* began flocking to spend time in the holy presence of the Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk *zy"ra*, he still refused to accept a position of authority over them, claiming that he was unworthy of being a

Rebbe.

When Shavuot approached and he saw that many *chasidim* were arriving in town to be with him, he yelled at them and said, "I am not a Rebbe! I don't permit you to be here in my *bais medrash*!"

The next day, he saw that they weren't listening to him and were insistent that he was there Rebbe and that they would stay with him for Shavuot. Therefore, he decided to leave town for Yomtov. He traveled to his Rebbe, Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir *zy"ra*, to spend Shavuot with him.

When he arrived, Rav Yechezkel greeted him and asked, "How could you leave a large group of Jews without a leader? The *pasuk* says (Shemos 19:14) that Moshe went down

from the mountain to the nation. Rashi says: ‘This teaches us that Moshe didn’t turn to be busy with his own business. Rather, he went straight from the mountain to the people...’ What does this mean? What type of business did Moshe have in the desert?

“The answer is that the entire nation prepared tremendously for the revelation of Hashem’s presence and the receiving of the Torah. Of course, Moshe Rabenu, the holiest man alive, needed to engage in the most preparations. Still and all, he wasn’t busy with his own ‘business’. Rather, he was only concerned with the good of the nation and with their spiritual needs. Therefore, I ask you how could you abandon such a large group of Jews to be busy with your own *ruchnius* business?”

The Radmosker replied, “At least Moshe Rabenu was at Har Sinai. Therefore, he didn’t need a lot of preparation and he could act that way. I also want to be by Har Sinai. For me, being with the Rebbe is like being at Har Sinai!”

After hearing these words, Rav Yechezkel didn’t say anything else. The Tiferes Shlomo remained in Kuzhmir for Shavuot and since he was known for his sweet voice, he was honored with the recitation of Akdamus.

The Tiferes Shlomo began reciting Akdamus, accompanied by a choir of 80 men, amongst whom was Rav Shlomo Eliyahu of Volhin zy”a, the son of Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir. They recited the words emotionally until they all began singing out of sheer joy. It got so raucous



that it seemed like the windows and walls were about to break. It was later said, “Whoever didn’t get a taste of Shavuot that year in Kuzhmir has never tasted the taste of Shavuot in his lifetime!”

After davening, Rav Yechezkel was full of fiery emotion as he walked out of the bais medrash. On his way out, he said to his *chasidim*, “Did you see that? Did you ever hear Akdamus like in your life?”

### **Serving Hashem at all Times:**

We recite in Akdamus: “*Avidin lah chativa b’denach v’shakata*. Acclaiming him each morning and evening.” Rav Moshe of Kobrin *zy”a* states that this is meant as a praise of Klal Yisroel, who serve Hashem at all times and in all situations. He translates

the word “*b’denach*” to mean when we are rested and serene and thus able to reach great heights in *ruchnius*. He translates “*v’shakata*” to mean when we are in a dark time, when it is hard for us. At all these times, we serve and praise Hashem.

### **Saying Kriyas Shema with Emunah:**

We also say in Akdamus: “*Ravos’hon d’Yisroel karai b’shmaitah*. Great is Yisroel who proclaims G-d’s Oneness.” The Munkatcher Rov *zy”a* (Sefer Shaar Yissochor) understands this as a reference to our lowly generation. It is known that the Baal Shem Tov and his students *zy”a* stated that the *nisayon* of the final generations will be from the forces of heresy and denial in Hashem. Therefore, it is

considered truly exceptional for a simple Jew to recite Kriyas Shema in such a time, and to thus declare that he believes that Hashem is One. The Munkatcher Rov says that doing so in our times is as great as when holy men of the past reached lofty heights in Torah and mitzvos, and even attained ruach hakodesh.

Accordingly, he translates these words to mean: “The greatness of the Jewish people in our times is when they proclaim Hashem’s Oneness through reciting Kriyas Shema with *emunah*.”

### **A Tefillah for Hashem is Accepted:**

It is further recited in Akdamus: “*Tzvi v’chemed v’ragig d’la’on b’ohraysa. Tzilos’hon b’chein*

*mekabel v’hania b’avsa*. He desires them to toil in the Torah so that their prayer be well accepted.”

The Munkatcher Rov explains that, as is stated in Sefarim Hakedoshim, one’s prayers must be uttered for the sake of Heaven. Even when is davening for his own needs – such as for children or livelihood – he should be focused on praying for the ability to improve his *avodas Hashem*, with no distractions getting in the way. He should think that he is asking for money so that he can be free to better serve Hashem. If one davens like this, his requests must be fulfilled, and no obstructing forces can stand in their way.

With this in mind, he translates the words to mean that Hashem wants us to toil in Torah and, if you we do so, our prayers to

have what we need so that we can learn Torah better will certainly be accepted.

### Renewed Every Day:

The Meor Einayim (Parshas Yisro) quotes the Arizal as saying that each Yomtov evokes the influences of what occurred on that day. For example, Pesach invokes the influences of Yetzias Mitzrayim and it is like we are once again leaving Mitzrayim every year on that day, and Shavuos does the same for Matan Torah.

Thus, every year on Shavuos it is like we are receiving the torah for the first time. How can we feel this? By following the words of Chazal (Tanchum, Parshas Yisro 7): “Every day, it should be in your eyes like as new as on the day it was given.” Every year on

Shavuos, we should treat the Torah as if it is new to us and reaccept it as if it was given today.

### Every Individual Receives the Torah:

The Bais Aharon of Karlin zy”a (Rosh Chodesh Sivan) writes that **everyone – even the lowliest person – can receive the Torah on Shavuos, just like everyone received it at Har Sinai even though the entire nation had just recently been on the 49<sup>th</sup> level of impurity.**

This idea is hinted to in the words (Shemos 19:17): “And they stood at the bottom of the mountain.” This indicates that although they were lowly, they were able to receive the torah. On the contrary, humility is a prerequisite to receiving it and

haughty people cannot get it.

Similarly, the Chasam Sofer asks (Drashos, Shavuos, page 288) why the Torah was given right after the nation left Egypt, when they were not yet worthy to receive such holiness. He answers that **this is meant as a lesson for us that even if one is on a lowly level, he can quickly be raised to great heights.**

In this vein, the Bais Yisroel zy”a (5717) writes that every Jew has a share in the Torah and everyone is uplifted on Shavuos. This is hinted to in the words (Vayikroh 23:17): “From your dwelling places you shall bring the bread for waving.” This indicates that no matter what level one is dwelling on, he has a share in the Yomtov of Shavuos and he can be uplifted on that day.

## Like a New Man:

The Chasam Sofer zy”a (Drashos, page 279) writes that the words (Vayikroh 23:16): “And you shall bring a new *minchah* to Hashem” are a hint that through Sefiras Ha’Omer, one can sanctify and purify himself until he is like a new man on Shavuos. The *pasuk* is saying that one makes himself into “a new Minchah” (the word “Minchah” refers to the soul, see Vayikroh 2:1) through properly receiving the Torah.

## Hearing Hashem’s Voice:

The *pasuk* states (Devarim 5:19): “Hashem spoke these words to your entire assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the opaque darkness, with a great voice, which did not cease.” Rashi explains: “A strong voice that

lasts forever.”

The Kamarna Rov zy”a (Heichal Habracha, Parshas Va’eschonon) explains this to mean that if one sanctifies himself, he can be heard this voice even today, since it lasts forever. Great men like the Arizal and the Besht and

his students did, in fact, hear this voice. As is well known, they merited hearing His voice declaring “*Anochi*”, as well as thunder and lightning and the sound of the shofar, along with all the Divine secrets contained therein.

## Chag Hashavuos – The Yahrzeit of Rabenu Hakadosh Rav Yisroel ben Rav Eliezer Zy”a The Baal Shem tov Hakadosh

### The Tzadikim’s Praise: the Maasah Merkavah!”

There is a *minhag* amongst *chasidim* to relate stories about *tzadikim* on their Yahrzeits. There is a source for this from the Besht Hakadosh, as quoted in Sefer Shivchei HaBesht in the name of the Toldos Yaakov Yosef of Polonoa zy”a. It relates that the Besht said, “**When one speaks in praise of a *tzadik*, it is as if he is immersed in studying**

### A Segulah to be Saved from Foreign Thoughts:

Rav Moshe Midner *zt”l* writes that the Ruzhiner Rebbe zy”a would often relate the following story:

A distinguished *chasid* of the Apta Rov zy”a once told him that he was having problems

with foreign thoughts popping up in his head. The Rebbe told him, “Speak about *tzadikim*... even about me, even about me!”

When the Ruzhiner would relate this story, he would repeat several times, “Even about us, even about us.”

Rav Aharon of Karlin *zy”a* (quoted in Sefer Birchas Aharon) said in the name of the Apta Rov that before the arrival of Moshiach, much heresy would come to the world. He then pointed at an exceptional *chasid* as if to indicate that even the most distinguished people would be ensnared by *apikorsis*. He concluded, **“The way to be saved from this is to gather together and relate stories of *tzadikim*!”**

There actually is a source for this in Chazal. It is stated in

Mechilta (*Parshas Beshalach*: **“One who has *emunah* in the Faithful Shepherd is considered to have *emunah* in the One who created the world.”** This means that if one has *emunah* in *tzadikim*, which is aroused through relating stories of their greatness, he will come to have true *emunah* in Hashem.

### Arousal from Stories About the Besht:

Sefer Otzar Yisroel relates that the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch *zy”a* was only able to speak about the Besht for a few minutes before becoming so overwhelmed and aroused with emotion that his life was at risk.

### A Segulah for Yeshuos:

Additionally, relating stories of *tzadikim* is a *segulah* for salvations. The Dinover Rebbe *zy"ra* (Sefer Agra D'Kallah, Parshas Eikev) writes in the name of "a tradition from those who had *ruach hakodesh*" that when a person is in need of a *yeshua* – for example, if he is in bad health or if he needs to travel overseas – he should say a story about a similar miracle to the one he needs that occurred involving a *tzadik*, and he will merit receiving his salvation.

### The Segulah of a Story:

Sefer Otzar Yisroel relates in the name of the Shomrei Emunim *zy"ra* that the Beer Mayim Chaim *zy"ra* once became very sick. For three days, he was delirious and unaware of his surroundings. Suddenly, he began to sweat

profusely, and he soon recovered.

He later related, "My soul had already ascended to the Upper World. In the Heavens, I saw the holy Baal Shem Tov walking with his students. However, I didn't recognize him. I asked who that was, and I was told that it was the Besht.

"I ran over to him and asked him to bless me with a *refuah sheleimah*. He said, 'What connection do you have with me? How do you know who I am?'"

"I told him, 'Rebbe, Rav Michel of Zlotchov *zy"ra* would say stories about you every week during *shalosh seudos*. One week, it got late and he had already washed his hands for *mayim acharonim*, and I reminded him that he hadn't said a story yet! I'm sure that when

my great Rebbe said stories about you, it gave you pleasure in the World of Truth. In that *zechus*, I asked you to grant me a *refuah!*’

“The Besht said, ‘Yes!’ He placed his hands on my head and I began to sweat and eventually I was completely healed.”

### **Yoshev Tehilos Yisroel:**

The Besht once visited a village where there lived an elderly *talmid chochom* who had not derived any pleasure from this world for over 50 years. All day and all night, he sat and learned Torah in holiness and purity. He fasted all morning and afternoon, and sat wrapped in his *talis* and *tefillin* until the time for Minchah. Only after davening Minchah did he taste a little bread and water.

The Besht approached this gaon in the bais medrash and asked how he was doing and if he had everything he needed. Since the Besht was dressed like a simple villager, the man paid him no attention. The Besht approached him several more times with his questions until the gaon got upset and motioned for him to leave him alone.

The Besht then asked him, “Why don’t you pay Hashem His wages?”

The gaon was baffled by his words as he had no idea what he meant or why a simple villager would say something like that.

The Besht then explained to him, “We survive on the wages that Hashem gives us. That is what we are sustained by. What is Hashem sustained by, so to speak? Dovid Hamelech tells us



the answer. He says (Tehillim 22:4): ‘But You are holy; You await the praises of Yisroel (*yoshev tehilos Yisroel*).’ This means that Hashem, so to speak, is ‘*yoshev*’ (He is sustained by) the praises of Klal Yisroel. The fact that Jews praise Him for their health and livelihood is His ‘wages’.”

### The Letter to his Brother-in-Law:

In his younger days, when the Besht was a hidden *tzadik*, he sent the following letter to his brother-in-law, Rav Gershon of Kitov *zy”a*: “I heard that you were angry with me for not knowing how to learn. I ask you: Is it my fault that I was orphaned at a young age? However, I assure you that I will take a job as a teacher’s assistant so that I can learn a little Torah. I thank

Hashem that I at least know how to write a little. From, your brother-in-law, Yisrolik.”

### Rectifying Souls:

His student, the Magid of Mezeritch *zy”a*, wrote the following in a letter to the Toldos Yaakov Yosef *zy”a*:

I have a *mishmar* every night to learn Mishnayos from after midnight until the morning, during the time when our master and teacher (the Besht) is sleeping. Last night during this time, I heard our holy teacher groan and call to me, ‘Berel, come to me!’

“I ran to him and asked what he needed and he said, ‘Berel, go quickly to my closet and get my new stick. Bring it to me fast!’

“I quickly got it and brought it

to him. He took it from my hands and immediately gave it back to me. He then said, ‘Now give this stick back to the man standing next to me and tell him that the Rebbe doesn’t want any gifts from him because he cannot help him.’ I didn’t see anyone there but I stuck out my hand and repeated what he told me to say. I felt someone taking the stick, even though I couldn’t see him, and it left my hand. My knees began to tremble because I was so scared.

“Our teacher then told me, ‘Berel, come here. Are you afraid? Don’t be scared. This man transgressed the entire Torah. He sent me this stick and then died. For a few months, I have been trying to find a tikkun for him but I have been unsuccessful. He now came back to me again and pressured me to

find his tikkun, so I gave him back his stick. He lived in Polonoa and frequented the home of my Yosele (the Toldos Yaakov Yosef).’

“I saw all of this. I have never seen anything like it since...”

### **Recognizing His Creator at the Age of Three:**

Sefer Otzar Yidroel (Sipurei Tzadikim) relates that on the first 19<sup>th</sup> of Kislev after the Baal Hatanya zy”a was released from prison, he was in a very good mood. A bochur standing by his door looked I and saw that he was wearing his *shreimel* and dancing by himself. The Baal Hatanya then opened the door and said, “There are two opinions in the Medrash. One holds that Avrohom Avinu was three years old when he recognized his

creator and one holds that he was 48. But everyone agrees that our teacher, the Besht zy"va, recognized his creator when he was three!"

### All for a Shmek Tabak:

The following story is related in Sefer Sipurei HaRama:

There was a wealthy man who suddenly lost all his money and became very poor. He traveled to pour out his heart to the Besht, who told him, "You lost your fortune because of a *shmek tabak* (a pinch of snuff)!"

He proceeded to explain that when the man was still wealthy, he once was sitting on his porch drinking a glass of tea when a poor man approached him and asked for *shmek tabak*, which he gave him. A short time later, the

pauper returned and asked for another pinch of snuff, and he gave it to him again. This went on a few times until the wealthy man finally lost his temper and said that he wouldn't give him any more. That caused him to eventually lose all his money.

The Besht concluded, "That poor man's mazal changed and he was given all your wealth. If you can get him to refuse to give you a *shmek tabak*, things will go back to the way they were before."

A little while later, this poor man who had become rich made a wedding for one of his children. There were many poor people there, including this formerly rich man. The *baal simcha* himself was personally serving all his guests. When he came out with the tray of fish for the first course, this man stopped him

and asked him for a *shmek tabak*. The newly rich man put down the tray and gave it to him. The same thing occurred by the second and third courses.

At the end of the meal, the rich man was waling around with a bottle of wine, offering drinks to his guests, and this man again asked for a *shmek tabak*. As he reached for his tobacco box, he dropped the bottle of wine and it broke. Suddenly, the poor man fainted. When he was awakened, the *baal simcha*, who thought he had fainted because of the mess he had caused, told him, “Don’t worry about it. It’s nothing!”

The man then told him the entire story and explained that he was trying to make him angry by constantly asking for a pinch of snuff. He fainted because he realized that he couldn’t do it and all his hope was lost. When

the rich man heard this, he gave him part of his fortune, and the man returned home joyfully.

### Learning Torah from the Arizal:

Sefer Sipurei Maran HaRama also relates that the Toldos Yaakov Yosef *zy”a* would occasionally scream when the Besht was in the middle of saying Torah, “The Ari says differently!”

One *leil* Shabbos, the Arizal revealed himself to the Baal Shem Tov and taught him a piece of Torah. The Besht then woke his student, Rav Zev Kitze *zy”a*, so that he could be a witness that this Torah had been taught to him by the Arizal.

The next day, when the Besht repeated the *devar* Torah, the

Toldos Yaakov Yosef began to yell that Ari says differently. The Besht then had Rav Zev stand up and testify that this *devar* Torah had been heard directly from the Arizal.

Zechuso Yagen Aleinu







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