

Kindert Torah

T"01

Parashas Lech Lecha

Shir Shel Yom

What day is today, Abba?"

"Today is 'yom rishon bi'Shabbos' (first day of Shabbos), Avi."

"I am glad that you said that, Abba. I always wondered why we refer to the days

of the week by number, and not by names. In addition, the terminology, 'bi'Shabbos' is intriguing. Why do we not say, 'yom rishon bi'shavua' (first day of the week)?"

"That is an excellent question, Avi! The Ramban, in his monumental commentary on the Torah answers your query by citing the verse, 'Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it' (Shemos 20:8). 'Remember' is a positive mitzvah (one of the 613), commanding us to recall the Shabbos day, to sanctify it, and not forget it. We keep Shabbos in mind always, every day, neither forgetting it nor exchanging it for another day. Shabbos is a recollection of *maase Bereshis* (the creation of the world). One who recalls it will always know that the world has a Creator, and that He commanded us to keep Shabbos as a sign between us. This is a foundation of *emunah*. Therefore, our Sages¹ say that Shabbos is weighed against all the mitzvos in the Torah, for with Shabbos we testify on all the foundations of *emunah*, *hashgacha*, and *nevuah*. The Ramban then cites the Mechilta, 'Do not count the days as others count them, rather count them for the name (or sake of) Shabbos.' The nations of the world give each day a name by itself. Yisrael counts all of the days for the name of Shabbos – the first (day of) Shabbos, the second (day of) Shabbos.' In this way we fulfill the mitzvah of remembering it every day."

"That is phenomenal, Abba! Is it related to the 'shir shel yom' (song of the day) that the Leviim sang in the Beis HaMikdash?"

It surely is, Avi. Part of the service of the Leviim in the Beis HaMikdash was to sing a song appropriate to the day of the week. When we recite that song at the end of the Shacharis service, it is like building a new *mizbeach* (altar) and offering up *korbonos* upon it.² It reminds us of the *churban*. We should be con-

cerned about it, and request from the Almighty, 'Return the crown to its old status! Renew our days as before! Then we will offer up before You our obligatory *korbonos*.'"³

"Speedily in our days, Abba. Can you please explain to me how each *shir* is appropriate to its day of the week?"

"With pleasure Avi. It is all laid out in the Gemora and Rashi.⁴ The six days of Shabbos refer to the six days of creation. On the first day they said, "Hashem's is the earth and its fullness." On the first day of creation Hashem was the sole Power – even the angels had not yet been created. He took possession of heaven and earth for Himself in order to give it to man. Yet he remained the sole Master of the world. On the second day they said, "Great is Hashem and much praised." for on the second day of creation He made a separation between the upper and lower worlds. He arose (so to speak) to make His dwelling in the upper world. He established His ruled over both worlds. On the third day they said, "G-d stands in the Divine assembly." He caused the dry land to become visible and fit for habitation. His chosen congregation (Klal Yisrael) would dwell on this dry land and conduct their society according to (Torah) laws and judges. On the fourth day they said, "O G-d of vengeance, Hashem; O G-d of vengeance, appear!" On this day, the sun and moon were created. The Almighty will take vengeance upon those who worship these heavenly bodies. On the fifth day they said, "Sing joyously to the G-d of our might; call out to the G-d of Yaakov." The fifth day saw the creation of the birds and the fish. These creatures bring joy to the world. When people observe the vast variety of species – each unique with its colors and forms – they are awed by Hashem's creativity and are inspired to sing joyously to Him. It is worthwhile, Avi, to note verse fourteen. 'If only My people would heed Me, If Israel would walk in My ways. I would immediately subdue their enemies, and

turn My hand against their tormentors.' On the sixth day they said, "Hashem is King, He has clothed Himself in majesty." On this day, the creation was completed, and He

reigned over all His creatures. Man, who is capable of understanding the greatness of the Creator, was created. He is fit to sing, 'Hashem is King, He has clothed Himself in majesty.'"

"I am in awe of Hashem and His creation, Abba. I want to sing his praises every day."

"You may Avi, by saying the 'shir shel yom' with awesome *kavannah* (intention). May your *tefillah* help to build the *mizbeach*, where we can offer up *korbonos* and renew our days as before."

Kinderlach . . .

When you say the 'shir shel yom' every morning, you accomplish great things. Firstly, you fulfill a positive mitzvah *di'oraysa* (according to the Ramban) of remembering Shabbos every day. This strengthens your *emunah* in Hashem, *hashgacha*, and *nevuah*. Secondly, you sing the very same song that the Leviim sang in the Beis HaMikdash. Understanding the connection between the 'shir' and the day renews your awareness of *maase Bereshis* – Hashem's awesome masterpiece of creation. You also recall the *churban*, and long for the rebuilding of the *mizbeach*, when *korbonos* can be offered again. Your prayer is itself considered a *korbon!* May we soon hear the Leviim singing the *shir* every day in the Beis HaMikdash!

Go To Yourself

"Lech lecha" (Bereshis 12:1). The word "lech" means go. Hashem commanded Avraham Avinu to leave his native land. The *meforshim* explain why the word "lecha" was inserted here. The Noam Elimelech translates "*lech lecha*" to mean "go to yourself". How can a person go to himself? He is always with himself. The Torah is referring to your deeper self. Who you really are. A person has many *middos* (character traits). They can be used for the good, to serve Hashem, or the opposite. We have been given free will to choose how to use our *middos*. When we use them for good, we purify ourselves. Hashem rewards us by opening up the wells of wisdom and understanding to us. This is the explanation of "go to yourself". Always look at your true, pure self. Keep yourself on the straight path, not allowing the bad *middos* to filter in.

Kinderlach . . .

Every Jew was born with a beautiful pure *neshama* (soul). It is our job to keep it pure. Just like a new clean white shirt. No one wants to see it get dirty. No one wants to see their soul become soiled with bad *middos*. Keep your souls clean, *kinderlach*. Look deep inside to the real, pure you. "*Lech lecha*."

¹ Chullin 5a

² Iyun Tefillah cites Mesectas Sofrim

³ Shaar HaRachamim cites Seder HaYom

⁴ Rosh Hashanah 31a and Tomid 33b