

SHABBAT SPIRITUALLY NOURISHES THE ENTIRE WEEK

(BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

The Path To Follow

VAYAKHEL

PEKUDEI

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GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

The Story of a Book

In his book *HaMeorot HaGedolim*, Rabbi Chaim Ephraim Zaitchik states that after a sermon given by the gaon Rabbi Israel Salanter Zatzal, the Chafetz Chaim was inspired to write a book on the proper use of the tongue. In his sermon Rabbi Israel said, "If only there was a man who would write a book of Halachot concerning the guarding of the tongue!" When the Chafetz Chaim published his book, Rabbi Israel sent a special envoy to purchase it for him, and thereafter he always carried the Chafetz Chaim's book in his tefillin bag. After the Chafetz Chaim published his book, Rabbi Israel told him that it was worth the effort even if it only made a single Jew sigh for having spoken Lashon Harah.

This year we read Parshiot Vayakhel and Pekudei together, and at the beginning of the former we find the mitzvah of Shabbat, as Moses gave it to the Children of Israel: "On six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you" (Exodus 35:2). Then at the end of Parsha Pekudei, after all the work of building the Sanctuary and its vessels, we find the wish of the Children of Israel being fulfilled, one that was constantly on their minds as they worked: "The glory of the L-RD filled the Sanctuary" (ibid. 40:34). In examining this more closely, we see that the mitzvah of Shabbat and the construction of the Sanctuary are directly related. The Gemara recounts a discussion between Hillel and Shammai on whether we should say, as early as Sunday, "This is for Shabbat," or if it is better to say, "Blessed be the L-RD day by day" (Beitzah 16a). In other words, should we prepare ourselves for the holy Sabbath as early as Sunday, or should each day in itself be a reason for joy, with Friday being the time to prepare for Shabbat? It is certain that whoever is endowed with Divine wisdom should constantly have Shabbat in mind. A person must constantly prepare himself in view of Shabbat, for the Sages have said that the days of the week receive their blessing from Shabbat, which extends its holiness to all the days of the week so that they, too, can be holy.

Yet how can we truly prepare for Shabbat? The evil inclination constantly tries to surround and entice us. It attempts to make us offend with our mouths, and it pushes us to commit sins and transgressions. Therefore how can we make it to Shabbat? With what expression will we welcome Shabbat, which is likened to the King's wife? How can we have a foretaste of the World to Come on Shabbat?

Regarding this subject the verse tells us, "On six days work may be done," meaning that in all the work that a person undertakes, he must remember that the weekdays are a preparation for the holy Sabbath. We must infuse this idea in our minds, the realization that Shabbat will soon be here. In fact we say this every Friday night by reciting, "And the Children of Israel shall observe (veshameru) the Sabbath...." This not only means that we must not desecrate Shabbat, for as we know the word *shemira* ("to observe") also means "wait," as we see in Parsha Vayeishev with regards to Jacob: "His father shamar [kept] the matter [in mind]" (Genesis 37:11). Here Rashi explains that Jacob waited to see what would happen. The verse in question therefore means that we must constantly wait and hope for the arrival of Shabbat. If the Holy One, blessed be He, has given us a foretaste of Gan Eden, why would we not want to taste its delights? It is not without reason that each day during Shacharit we recite, just before the Song of the Day, "This is the [first, second, etc.] day of Shabbat," not "This is [Sunday, Monday, etc.]" In fact we must want to remember Shabbat each day; we must want and decide for ourselves, each day, that we will prepare for the holy Sabbath. If we do this, the days of the week will take on another dimension, for we will constantly be living with the feeling of Shabbat, and our entire lives will take on a new aspect.

Before all else, however, Jews must be completely united. Hence we see in this week's parsha that Moses assembled all the Children of Israel without exception and gave them the mitzvah of observing Shabbat. It is therefore obvious that only through unity can Jews have a true taste of the holy Sabbath – a foretaste of the World to Come – given that it is only through unity that each person can remind the other of the mitzvah of Shabbat and help him experience the day's sanctity. Since we are on the subject of Shabbat and our anticipation of it, we must realize that it is also a very important mitzvah to properly prepare ourselves for this day, even in the material realm. We find this idea in the Gemara concerning the Tannaim and Amoraim who made material preparations for Shabbat. We read of Rabba, who salted his fish, and Rav Safra, who personally roasted his food, even though others could have done it for them (Kiddushin 41a).

That being the case, if these great Tannaim and Amoraim were able to prepare themselves meals for the sake of Shabbat, what can we say? What answer can we give? It is obvious that we must also do the same. Furthermore, it is a Halachah to prepare for Shabbat. In fact some tzaddikim have said that by the merit of our material preparations for Shabbat, we can also achieve spiritual preparedness and elevate ourselves ever higher on this holy day. This is because material preparations for Shabbat lead to spiritual elevation.

The greatness of Shabbat is such that the gaon Rabbi Chaim of Chernovitz Zatzal (the author of *Be'er Mayim Chaim* and *Sidduro Shel Shabbat*) was actually a head taller on Shabbat than during the week! In fact whenever he entered the Beit Midrash on Shabbat, he had to bend down in order to get through the door without banging his head! Such a drastic change is not limited to him, for everyone can reach this level if he truly loves Shabbat.

In reflecting upon these things, we understand that this is precisely the connection between the beginning of Parsha Vayakhel and the end of Parah Pekudei. At the end of the latter it is written, "The glory of the L-RD filled the Sanctuary" (Exodus 40:34), which teaches that it is precisely in the home of a Jew who does all these things – who truly yearns for Shabbat and seeks to greet it in purity and cleanliness – that the Shechinah will dwell. "The glory of the L-RD filled the Sanctuary" means that the Shechinah will fill the home of this Jew because the Holy One, blessed be He, also wants to dwell in his home.

Above all, it is particularly appropriate on this Shabbat to point that out, for this Shabbat is called Shabbat HaChodesh. What exactly is Shabbat HaChodesh? It is a *hitchadshut* (renewal) in the service of Hashem after the purification of Shabbat Parah. True, a renewal of the moon occurs on every Rosh Chodesh, and we the Jewish people are called upon to renew ourselves like it. Therefore on every Shabbat, at the beginning of the following week, everyone can be renewed and once again take the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven upon themselves. This Shabbat is thus particularly suitable for renewal, not only for the days of the week, but for all the days of the year. Let us honor Shabbat, for in this way it will be like observing all the mitzvot.

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

The Contribution of the Tribal Leaders

It is written, “The leaders brought the Shoham stones and the stones for the settings” (Exodus 35:27).

Rashi asks why the leaders were the first to contribute for the inauguration of the Altar, since for the work of the Sanctuary they were not the first contributors. He explains that the leaders said, “Let the community donate what they will donate, and what is missing we will give.” Since the leaders were lazy at first, the letter yud is missing from the word *vehanissim*.

The gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik expressed surprise at this, since the tribal leaders had planned on not giving at first. Their plan was for a completely unselfish purpose, namely to contribute whatever would be missing!

The gaon replied, “Scripture is teaching us that when we have to perform a mitzvah, all the calculations in the world should be secondary. Since it was a mitzvah to donate for the Sanctuary, there was no justification in them evading responsibility and not bringing a donation immediately.”

Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky proposed another explanation: “True, the tribal leaders were well aware of what was needed for the Sanctuary, but that was not their job. A person’s role is not to rectify the world and make up for what is lacking. A person must better himself, for which the main requirement is zeal in the performance of mitzvot. As the Sages teach, ‘If a mitzvah comes to you, don’t pass it up’ [Mechilta].” Even when the Children of Israel received the order to build the Sanctuary, the goal of each person was not the construction itself, for Hashem did not need any help in that regard. It was simply a way for an individual to better himself by contributing. Since the tribal leaders demonstrated laziness in performing this mitzvah, they failed. The Chafetz Chaim said, “If a letter is missing in *vehanissim* because leaders act incorrectly, then an even greater degree of good will certainly result when they act correctly.” In fact in the account of the Altar’s inauguration in Parsha Nasso, the Torah gives a lengthy description of the offerings of the tribal leaders, devoting a separate paragraph for each one. It does not group them together in the account, even though their offerings were identical. This teaches us just how much Hashem cherishes a mitzvah that is eagerly done with the entire community, without any feelings of superiority, and devoid of jealousy and competition. When the tribal leaders were not eager to join the community in giving their offerings, a letter was removed from their name. However when they eagerly came with their offerings, the Torah devoted a special section to describe them. Not only was nothing missing from their name in the latter case, but each one’s offering was even given a completely separate description.

A Jew Belongs to Hashem on Shabbat

It is written, “On six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for the L-RD (Exodus 35:2).

The Maggid of Dubno said that for many years a merchant would travel from village to village trying to sell his wares. After a few years in which his business prospered, he was overtaken by a longing to return home. He yearned to know what had happened to his family, his friends, and everyone who went to synagogue. He lived with this feeling of nostalgia for a long time, yet he had no way of knowing what had become of those he knew. One day someone came to him and asked for some *tzeddakah*. To his astonishment, this person happened to be a childhood friend from his hometown! “How are you?” the merchant exclaimed. “What are you doing here?” The man replied, “I’m collecting *tzeddakah*.” The merchant invited his old friend in and gladly offered him something to drink. “Tell

me what’s happening back home,” he said. His friend, however, hesitated: “I really don’t have time for this. I’ve got to be collecting *tzeddakah* now.” The merchant did not let this long awaited moment pass. “How much money do you collect a day?” he asked his friend. “About two or three rubles,” he replied. “Well then, I’ll give you exactly the same amount if you just sit here and tell me everything that’s happened back home!” Agreeing to the offer, his friend sat down to enjoy a good meal. After eating his fill, he began to recount the events that had transpired back home, from the time the merchant had left until the present day. After about two hours, while still in the middle of his account, the man began to grow tired and wanted to rest. “What?” asked the merchant in surprise. “You can rest tomorrow, on your own time! I’ve paid you to tell me about everything that’s happened back home!” The moral of the story is clear. Hashem wants the Jewish people to work during the week in order to earn a living, but when Shabbat arrives Hashem tells us not to work any more, but to study His Torah, sing songs of Shabbat, and so on. Nevertheless people want to relax. To this Hashem says, “You can relax on your own time! You have six days for that. Today is a Sabbath for Me; it is My day. I gave it to you in order to study Torah.” Here it would be good to recall the words of the Ben Ish Hai in commenting on Parsha Shemot: “The Kabbalists have written that deeds which spring from Torah study on Shabbat are a thousand times greater than those which result from Torah study during the weekday.” This means that an hour of Torah study on Shabbat is greater than a thousand hours of Torah study during the week.

Generosity of the Heart

It is written, “Moses said to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel, saying: ‘This is the word that the L-RD has commanded, saying: ‘Take from yourselves an offering for the L-RD; everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, the L-RD’s offering: Gold, silver, and copper’ ” (Exodus 35:4-5).

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin Zatzal said, “ ‘Take from yourselves an offering,’ that each person among the Jewish people should collect it. Who shall he take it from? Each person from himself! Perfect generosity of the heart is required here, and if the collectors of *tzeddakah* have to actually go and collect money, this cannot constitute perfect generosity.” The Pardes Yosef adds that a man is put to the test when things are difficult for him. Whether he can overcome or not is determined under such conditions, for what would it prove if things were easy for him?

“I Can’t Give You Money And Honor!”

It is written, “Take from yourselves an offering for the L-RD; everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, the L-RD’s offering: Gold, silver, and copper” (Exodus 35:5).

How can we know the intentions of a giver, whether his motives are for the sake of Heaven, or due to social pressure because everyone else is giving? The answer is revealed by the way that he conducts himself. A generous person gives on his own initiative, without being asked. There are some people who run after collectors of *tzeddakah*, and there are those whom collectors of *tzeddakah* have to run after! Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin Zatzal once told a wealthy man who refused to give him a donation, or even allow him into his home, “I’m leaving. However you should realize that I’m not pregnant!” The wealthy man began murmuring to himself: “What does he mean – ‘I’m not pregnant’? Perhaps he’s uttering a curse against me!” Thus with his hands trembling, the man gave a donation as Rabbi Meir Shapira explained what he meant: “When I come to a home where people show me respect, yet only give a small donation, I say *kaparrah* [too bad] for the money, since the important thing is that they respect Torah here. When I come to a home where I’m not even allowed to enter – yet they give a good donation – I say *kaparrah* [too bad] for honor, since the important thing is that they gave to the yeshiva here. In your case, however, it was *kaparrah* for both

things – kaparot – both for the donation and honor. Now as we know, only a pregnant woman brings two kaparot on Yom Kippur!”

Everyone According to Their Interests

It is written, “These are the accounts of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of Testimony, which were counted by the order of Moses” (Exodus 38: 21).

The Midrash states: “Moses overheard certain Israelites scoffing behind his back, for it says, ‘And it came to pass when Moses entered the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the Tent, and He spoke with Moses’ [Exodus 33:9]. ‘And they looked after Moses’ [v.8]. What did they say? Rabbi Yochanan said: ‘Blessed be the woman who gave him birth, for what does she see of him, given that he is always speaking with G-d and always completely given over to His service?’ This is what is meant by, ‘And they looked after Moses.’ Rabbi Chama stated: What they used to say was, ‘See the back of the neck of this son of Amram.’ To this his friend would retort, ‘What? Do you expect a man in charge of the construction of the Sanctuary not to be rich?’ When Moses heard this, he said, ‘I vow that as you live, as soon as the Sanctuary is completed I will give you an account of everything.’ [As soon as the work was finished] he said to them, ‘Come, and I will give you a complete account.’ This is why it says, ‘These are the accounts of the Sanctuary’” (Shemot Rabba 51:6). How was it possible that people were actually saying that Moses our teacher was a thief? After all, we aren’t dealing with fools here. Actually, we learn an important principle from this, which is that a person sees the world in light of his own interests.

A devious fellow once said to the Brisker Rav: “On the verse, ‘You shall look upon it and remember all the commandments of the L-RD’ [Numbers 15:39], the Sages have said that the techelet [blue] is like the sea, the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory. Thus when a man looks at the tzitzit, he will think of the Master of the universe.” This fellow, for whom such relationships did not make sense, asked for an explanation of the Sages’ words. The Brisker Rav replied, “The Sages have said that it is forbidden to look at the colorful garment of a woman in order to prevent sinful thoughts. Does this seem logical to you?” The man said that it did. The Brisker Rav then told him, “Your mind is therefore functioning properly, and the problem is not a lack of concentration, but rather what your mind is focusing on. If you had been filled with a fear of Heaven, you would have also understood the relationship between the techelet and the Throne of Glory.”

Overview of the Parsha

In Parsha Vayakhel, after they had been forgiven for the sin of the golden calf, the Children of Israel received the order to solidify their relationship with Hashem by means of the Sanctuary in which He resides. Moses brought Israel the commandment to build the Sanctuary, first telling them that they must not work or light a fire on Shabbat. As for the construction itself, donations for the Sanctuary were to be brought to those engaged in the work.

In Parsha Pekudei, the Torah resumes the account of the Sanctuary. Everything is recorded, including the names of those responsible for the work, the amount of raw material used, the making of the priestly garments, and the completion of the work. The Sanctuary was then brought to Moses, who assembled it. This parsha and the book of Exodus end with the verse, “Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting, for the cloud rested upon it.” This means that everything was ready for the Shechinah to rest upon the Sanctuary. Moses had not yet been called into the Tent by Hashem, however, for that event would be described at the start of the book of Leviticus

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

Eighteen Times

It is written, “As the L-RD had commanded Moses” (Exodus 39:1).

In Parshiot Vayakhel and Pekudei, we find a description of what Hashem had commanded in Parshiot Terumah and Tetzaveh. Yet here it is stated that Moses ordered and that the Children of Israel carried it out “as the L-RD had commanded Moses.” Commenting on Exodus 39:1, the Baal HaTurim notes that this phrase occurs 18 times in our parsha. Naturally this is surprising, for couldn’t the Torah have just said that Moses transmitted all of Hashem’s orders to the Children of Israel, and that they did everything as ordered? We find an explanation to this in the Ramban’s statement concerning the offerings of the tribal leaders for the dedication of the Altar (Ramban on Numbers 7:3). All the tribal leaders brought the same thing, yet the Torah recounts each one’s offering – twelve in all – almost verbatim! Citing the Midrash, the Ramban explains that although all the offerings were the same, each of the tribal leaders had different and sacred intentions in bringing them. Hence each of them merited a separate description. Besides the details given for each offering, the Torah also recounts the total amount of offerings brought. The Ramban explains that since they all demonstrated fervor in bringing their offerings as a single man, the Torah again described them together. Thus we see the importance of intention, which justified the recounting of their offerings a second time. Now they had received the commandment, “Let them take for Me an offering” (Exodus 25:2), which Rashi explains as meaning: “For the sake of My Name.” The same applies to the commandment, “Let them make a Sanctuary for Me” (v.8), for their intentions had to be completely pure with regards to their donations for the Sanctuary and its construction. Since Moses and the Children of Israel had intentions that were completely and perfectly selfless, it was fitting and necessary for each of their words and deeds to be described individually. The Beit Halevi gives another explanation, namely that the construction of the Sanctuary atoned for the sin of the golden calf. According to him, the essence of this sin lay in the fact that the Children of Israel wanted to serve Hashem as they thought best, and by taking actions that they had not been commanded to take. This is why it states, regarding everything they did for the construction of the Sanctuary, “As the L-RD commanded.” Although Betzalel knew how to arrange the letters by which the heavens and earth were created, and although he understood the allusions and secrets of the work, nevertheless his complete and sole intention was to carry out Hashem’s will as it had been expressed. This is what atoned for the sin of the golden calf.

EISHET CHAYIL

The Wife of Manoah

Our Sages say that the name of Samson’s mother was Tzalfonit, for she was an emanation (ne’etzelet) of Eve, the pina (“corner[stone]”) of the world. Because she was a righteous woman, the wife of Manoah merited to speak with an angel. Hashem’s angel appeared to her while she was in the fields, announcing that she would give birth to Samson. The angel also said that Hashem would bless her so that her child would be a Nazir, consecrated to G-d. She therefore had to immediately abstain from drinking wine or liquor, as well as to avoid eating anything impure, things that were liable to have a detrimental effect on her righteous son’s soul. The angel also announced that the child would eventually save Israel from the Philistines. Thus the wife of Manoah merited having a son, Samson, who judged Israel for 20 years. Why was he called Samson? The name evokes the word shemesh (“sun”), for just as the sun comes out of its sheath to burn the wicked and heal the righteous, so too was Samson’s strength not fully demonstrated when he was a Nazir. Yet when he revealed himself, he punished the Philistines with the full force of his strength.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

The Power of Habit

It is written, “He that enters by way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate” (Ezekiel 46:9).

This verse explains that during the festivals, as people came to the Temple, an individual who arrived by the north gate to worship would have to leave by the south gate, and likewise one who arrived by the south gate would have to leave by the north gate. People were not to leave by the gate through which they entered, but rather by the opposite gate. As for the tribal leaders, they entered by way of the Ulam and left in the same way. The Chasid Ya'avetz (one of the greatest rabbis to be exiled during the Spanish Inquisition, dying in the year 5267 [1507 CE]) explained the reason for this in his commentary on Perkei Avot 1: 4: “The Holy One, blessed be He, was concerned that a visitor should not see the same gate twice, lest in his eyes it becomes equal to the gate of his own house, and lest the walls of the Temple become equal to his own walls.” This applies to a coarse individual, a person whose appreciation of things stems solely from his impressions, not his intellect. Hence he would be astounded upon first seeing a gate, but this would diminish upon seeing it again. As for the tribal leaders – elevated individuals whose appreciation of things stemmed from thoughtful reflection, not impression – the more they passed by the same gate, the more their appreciation and love for it grew. Hence they would leave through the same gate by which they entered. The reason for this lies in the power of habit, which is engraved in the human soul. When a person experiences a spiritual awakening, he will initially perform mitzvot with great enthusiasm (an important element that adds to the mitzvot). However with the passing of time, this enthusiasm will slowly diminish, which is why we must be careful not to let this fire die out, but to ensure that it burns as at first.

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

Rabbi Yosef Shaul Nathanson of Lvov – The Author of Shoel U'Meishiv

The gaon Rabbi Yosef Shaul Nathanson Zatzal was among the great figures of his generation and one of the outstanding Poskim of the last centuries. He could fully explain the Halachah with his great insight, and people from every corner of the globe came to see him for G-d's word, meaning the Halachah. In his youth he studied with his father the gaon Rabbi Aryeh Leibush (the author of Sefer Beit E-L), and following his marriage to the daughter of the gaon Rabbi Aharon Halevi Ettinger, he went to study with his brother-in-law Rabbi Mordechai Ettinger Zatzal. The two brothers-in-law studied together for a long time, and they both wrote a number of well-known books, works such as Magen Giborim (on the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim), Me'irat Enayim (on the Halachot of Treifot), Ma'ase Alfaz (on the Rif), Ner Ma'aravi (on the Jerusalem Talmud), and many others. However Rabbi Yosef Shaul is best known for his great work Shoel U'Meishiv, a book of responsa covering all areas of Torah. It also became the name by which he was known. After the death of his uncle Rabbi Yaakov Meshulam Orenstein (the author of Yeshuot Yaakov), Rabbi Yosef Shaul was appointed as the Av Beit Din of Lvov. Although he accepted the position, he refused to take a salary because he was very wealthy. He gave his approbation for the book Sidrei Taharot by Rabbi Gershon Chanoch, the Rebbe of Rozhin, saying that not in 300 years had the likes of such a book been published. Rabbi Yosef Shaul Nathanson left this world on Adar 17, 5635, having had no children. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed.

A MATTER OF EDUCATION

Educators, Be Careful About the Order of Your Words

It is written, “Moses assembled.... Six days shall work be done.... Take from among yourselves an offering” (Exodus 35:1-5).

Rashi cites the Sages in stating, “He first admonished them concerning Shabbat before commanding them about the work of the Sanctuary, saying, in effect, that it does not supercede Shabbat.” The gaon Rabbi David Povarski Zatzal explained why Moses first gave the warning to the people regarding Shabbat before mentioning the work of the Sanctuary. It would seem logical for Moses to have first informed the people about the concept of the Sanctuary and the mitzvah to build it, since he had summoned them for that purpose. Moses should have then added the second condition, which is that the Sanctuary could only be built on the regular days of the week, not on Shabbat, as per Hashem's orders. The commandment to build the Sanctuary first appears in Parshiot Terumah and Tetzaveh, and only then, after all the instructions of Parsha Ki Tisa, does the commandment concerning Shabbat appear. This apparent anomaly can be explained, Rabbi David Povarski said, by the fact that if the people had first been told to build the Sanctuary – without a prior warning regarding Shabbat – it would have entered their minds that they could build the Sanctuary even on Shabbat. Moses wanted to avoid a situation in which they might think, even for a brief moment, that such a thing was permissible. True, if that had been the case, the commandment concerning Shabbat's preeminence would have made it clear that the Sanctuary was not to be built on Shabbat. In that case, however, there would have been a short time in which the Children of Israel would have believed that it was acceptable to be lenient with respect to observing Shabbat. This is why Moses issued a warning first, contrary to the theoretical order in which Hashem had given His instructions to him. The same applies to all that concerns the education we give to students, especially children, who still have impressionable minds. As soon as any thought whatsoever of leniency comes to mind (even if only for a brief instant) it poses a great risk, for we cannot predict how it will develop or what may emerge from the smallest thought of leniency.

A TRUE STORY

A Star From France

It is written, “The L-RD has called by name Betzalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur” (Exodus 35:30).

The Midrash asks why the Torah mentions Hur in this verse, since in general only the name of a person's father is given when describing him. The Midrash explains: “When Israel was about to serve idols, [Hur] jeopardized his life on G-d's behalf and would not allow them to do so, with the result being that they killed him. ... G-d assured him, ‘By your life, I shall give all your children that will descend from you a great name in the world,’ as it says: ‘See, the L-RD has called by name Betzalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur’ ” (Shemot Rabba 48:3). Sefer HaDorot recounts that Rabbi Yitzchak, the father of Rashi, owned a precious gem that was extremely valuable. Upon hearing of this, the non-Jews in town wanted to purchase it from him for their house of prayer. Although they offered him a great deal of money, Rabbi Yitzchak refused to sell it to them. What did the non-Jews do? They tricked him into getting on a boat with them, and when the boat went out to sea they tried to take his precious gem by force. Seeing that there was no escape, he threw the gem into the sea, yet Hashem saved him from their hands. At that point his disciples heard a Heavenly voice saying in his Beit Midrash, “A son will be born to you, Yitzchak, one who will enlighten the eyes of all Israel.” Thus a son was born to him, a boy he named Shlomo, after his own father. This child grew up and became known as Rashi.