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PROJECT

והגדת לבנך
Keeping Their Torah Alive.

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The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.
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Rav Avraham Chamoi's Beis Hakapores

EREV YOM KIPPUR:

1. One should give *tzedakah* on Erev Yom Kippur and it is דבר גדול ונורא. In its merit one can receive a favorable judgment. Additionally, on Erev Yom Kippur the poor people especially need money in order to be able to have food. (*Erev Yom Kippur os* 7)
2. One is ***obligated*** to make himself available to the person who wronged him, allowing the perpetrator the opportunity to be able to ask for forgiveness.
   [This idea is sourced by many to the Sfas Emes (*Yoma* 87b). interestingly, the Sfas Emes does not use the word "obligated (חייב)" but uses the word קפידה which can be interpreted as "particular" which seems to imply that it is a meritorious or a stringency upon the wronged person to make himself available but not an obligation.]
3. This obligation applies even regarding a prominent individual is wronged by someone of lesser stature.
4. Even though, of course, one can forgive the perpetrator from afar without approaching the perpetrator, he should still make himself available as it will help with his personal humility. (*Dinei Piyus os* 8)
   [Many explain that the reason for the wronged person to go to the perpetrator is for the perpetrator to ask forgiveness and thereby give the opportunity for the perpetrator to work on his humility too, however, Rav Chamoi is explaining that the victim will gain humility when searching out the perpetrator.]
5. The custom of asking everyone for forgiveness on Erev Yom Kippur is because one of the ways to successfully fulfill the *mitzvah* of repentance is to perform as many of the 613 mitzvos as possible. An easy way to accomplish this is through unity and becoming one with our friends. Unity permits one to earn credit for the mitzvos that his "new part of him" (friend) has performed. Through unity one enters Yom Kippur as having fulfilled many of the 613 mitzvos. (*Os* 14).
   [Rav Chamoi actually adds that, "A person should fulfill ***all*** of the 613 mitzvos," not just as many of the 613 mitzvos as possible.]

HASHKAVOS (SIMILAR TO OUR YIZKOR):

6. The *minhag* of Salonika was that before Kol Nidrei they would recite the names of all those Rabbanim who had passed away from all over the globe from the year 1775, as well all of the people buried in Salonika from 1775. This would take a couple of hours and force them to rush through the Kol Nidrei and Maariv. They would repeat this before Musaf, and rush through Musaf.
   [Rav Chamoi writes that he was opposed to this custom and approached the leaders of Salonika to stop it.] (*Os* 4)
7. The *minhag* of Salonika was that they would not cite Hashkavos for anyone who passed away [and was buried] in Eretz Yisrael. This is because the souls of the deceased arrive to where the Hashkavos are being recited, and they do not want the soul to leave Eretz Yisrael. (*Os* 9)

KOL NIDREI

8. The *mitzvos* sold for Kol Nidrei should be sold on the preceding Shabbos, in order for Kol Nidrei to begin on time. (*Micheeras Hamitzvos os* 1)
9. Minhag Ostreich was that all bids were binding (like a Chinese auction). (*Os* 3)
10. The one who purchases the *zechus* to hold the Sefer Torah during Kol Nidrei would receive the first available *aliya* – meaning the first if no *kohein* was there, or *shlishi* when applicable. (*Haolim Lsefer Torah os* 11)

ר' אברהם חמוי

Rav Avraham Chamoi (9 Kislev 1838-1886) was born in Aleppo, Syria. His exact date of death is unknown. His father was a noted talmid chacham, and his mother came from a rabbinical family. He traveled from Aleppo to learn with R' Chaim Palagi for three years, who later wrote him an impressive haskamah. On April 12, 1864, he married. Around a year later, his wife and child tragically passed away, both on the same day, which he believed was due to his own sins. Seeking forgiveness, he went into exile and began publishing sefarim. He visited Italy, France, Morocco, Iraq, India, Yemen, and North Africa. One historian documents his travels to over 20 countries in Europe. Around 1865,he spent a few years in Yerushalayim learning from great Mekubalim. In addition, Rav Chamoi practiced medicine, using practical home remedies he encountered during his travels, and information he gained from the many libraries he searched. He became an expert in these remedies and assisted many Jews and non-Jews with mental issues. At one point, he purchased a grass believed to be the דודאי ראובן, helpful for childless people but was hesitant to use because it had some dangerous side effects. Rav Chamoi wrote over sixty sefarim but published only 15 (one in Spanish and one translated into Ladino). His sefarim cover a wide variety of styles, Halachah, Kabbalah, including segulos, kemaiyos, practical kabbalah, and remedies. This was unique, as until his sefarim, most such materials remained unpublished. R' Chaim Palagi instructed him not to publish some of the material he discovered, fearing it would fall into the wrong hands. Rav Chamoi was curious about science, history, and geography, including the origins of Jews in each place he visited. He published extensively in newspapers in multiple languages he had mastered. Known for his charismatic personality and oratory skills, his Torah knowledge impressed many Gedolim and his medical expertise impressed the masses. During a visit to Baghdad, there was an attempt to appoint him as a Rav, and thousands signed a petition for this. (Based on the research of Dov Cohen and Nissim Chamoi.)

SEFER TORAH

11. Minhag Chalab (Syria) is that one whose wife is in the last month of pregnancy should receive *pesichah* in the hopes that Hashem would have mercy on her for a safe delivery. (*Micheeras Hamitzvos os* 9)
12. One who had recently given birth to a boy should buy the *zechus* of carrying the Sefer Torah because the children were given as the guarantors from the parents to keep the Torah. (*Micheeras Hamitzvos os* 10)

THE FIRST ALIYA

On Yom Kippur we read from Acharei Mos which recalls the death of Aharon's two sons. Rav Chamoi discusses the importance of crying before reading from the Torah. The Shatz and the one who received the first *aliya* (usually a *kohein*) would begin crying aloud. There he mentions the numerous incredible *segulah* power created with those tears. There was a custom in Syria for everyone to say a special *piyut* of 8 stanzas right before the *kohein* makes the *bracha* for his *aliya* and to say it while sobbing. The first *passuk* was also read aloud in this manner before reading the rest of the Torah in the normal manner.

[Rav Chaim Palagi (*Muad Lichol Chai* 19:66) discusses these customs but states that the first ***two*** *pessukim* were read aloud in this manner before reading the rest of the Torah in the normal manner.]

THE LATE KOHEIN

Rav Avraham relates a fascinating story that occurred during Yom Kippur of 1880. The *kohein* of the shul (seems like there was only one) came late for davening. How late was the (only) *kohein*? He missed Birkas Kohanim. Because of this, the *gabbai* assumed that there was no *kohein* available for the first *aliya* and he called up an ordinary *yisrael.*

As soon as the *yisrael* finished citing the *bracha rishonah* for the *aliya* the *kohein* walked in ran up and cited the *bracha* as well. The question became who's *aliyah* was it (it is unclear if their custom was that the person called up actually read from the Torah and therefore the question was who should read from the Torah the first *aliya* or if the question was who should recite the *bracha achrona* the *aliyah*).

Rav Avraham ruled in favor of the *kohein.* He cites the disagreement between the Pri Chadash and the Maamar Mordechai concerning the situation when there was a *kohein* in shul and a *yisrael* was mistakenly called up and completed the entire *aliyah* with the *bracha achrona* whether the *yisrael's aliya* counts toward the seven people who are required to read on an ordinary Shabbos.

Rav Avraham explains that everyone would agree that in this situation the *kohein* should continue, because here the *aliyah* process with the *yisrael* did not fully begin. (*Haolim Lsefer Torah os* 10)

[From the story we can learn some impressive lessons. Can you imagine that the *kohein* was not embarrassed to be so late; no one gave him *mussar* (for being unable to have Birkas Kohanim during Shacharis); and they were not going to (take revenge and) ask him to remain outside for the *aliya* to be able to give the *aliya* to one who was present the entire davening!]

Book of Merits

During the Aseres Yimey Tehsuvah till the final moments of Nieelah we add the tefillah of Avinu Malkeinu. Some of the requests are stated aloud by the entire congregation. Our father, our King inscribe us in the book of good life. Certainly, it makes sense that during the days of judgment we want to be inscribed not just to live but to have a good life. After requesting redemption and salvation; sustenance and support; we then ask: Our Father Our King inscribe us in the Book of Merits.

Rav Daniel Movshovitz of Kelm asks: At the first glance, "book of merits," should be based on what mitzvos we actually performed. We are not audacious enough to ask that we be inscribed in a Book of Merits if we did not actually perform those meritorious acts. Can we ask Hashem to lie? On the flip side, if we actually performed mitzvos worthy of being in the Book of Merits then why do we even have to request to be inscribed in it, it should be automatic that everything is recorded! This is a foundation of our belief that all our actions are recorded and to have consequences and therefore there is no reason to request to be inscribed in it. What is the meaning of this request or a better question might be: What is this Book of Merits?

There are two answers quoted in Rav

REB DANIEL

Daniel's name (some understand the second being an addition to the first).

The first is that it is enough to have a desire to be in the Book of Merits to actually be inscribed in the Book of Merits. This is inspirational, it means that even if someone is unworthy of being placed in such a book the fact that he desires and davens to be in there is enough of a merit to be inscribed in the Book of Merits.

He elaborates that this is the basic foundation of what davening is about. One could ask regarding davening: How do we stand before the one who created the entire world and have the audacity to ask for all types of gifts? Are we arrogant to believe we are worthy of these requests? The answer is that when we daven, we're not asking based off our own merits, which are unworthy of anything we ask for, the fact that we're requesting from Hashem proves that we know He's in control of everything, which is what He truly desires. Recognizing that He is in control earns us the right to ask for anything –which He can provide.

Rav Daniel (also) explains based on the Gemara (*Shabbos* 32a) that everything that happens is the result of a Divine decree, and that Hashem brings good through the righteous and punishment through the guilty. Based on this rule, Rav Daniel explains that the Book of Merits to which we refer in this request represents the book of people who find favor in Hashem's eyes and whom He will use as His agents for the performance of mitzvos. In essence, we are asking to be given the opportunity to be in the correct position to be able to fulfill as many mitzvos as possible.

We can learn from this to appreciate the numerous opportunities we already have to fulfill mitzvos. Helping other people; respecting parents; giving tzedakah; and the six constant mitzvos are available if we just seize the moment.

ר׳ דניאל מובשוביץ

R' Daniel Movshovitz, Hy"d (1880-Av 1941),was the son of R' Moshe Gershon, who was a Rav. R' Daniel learned under the Alter of Slabodka, who had been a chavrusa of his father. He also learned with R' Aharon Kotler. He learned in Kelm under Rav Nochum Zev Ziv, who was the son of the Alter of Kelm. After Rav Nochum Zev Ziv passed away, R' Daniel married his daughter. R' Dessler and R' Gershon Maidinek married his wife's sisters. R' Daniel and his wife were childless. In June of 1941, Nazi forces entered Kelm and R' Daniel and R' Gershon were murdered together with their families, students, and communities, and buried in a mass grave in the fields of the Grozhebiski farm.

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ZERA EMES PROJECT UPDATE

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTNER IN THE NEXT ZERA EMES SEFER

We are thrilled to share that the next volume in the Zera Emes Series is entering its final stages. This new sefer, iy"H, will explore the mitzvos of Pru Urvu and marriage, a known segulah to fulfill these mitzvos, and will be a companion to the Fisher Family Legacy Haggadah.

Gmar Chasimah Tova!