

ב"ה

צדקת רבי מאיר בעל הנס
Colel Chabad
Caring for Israel's needy since 1788



לעילוי נשמת משה בן דוד

IN MEMORY OF MOSHE BEN DOVID
MOSHE



משנה
בשמה For

MISHNA For NESHAMA



Mem

is the thirteenth letter of the aleph-bet and has a numerical value of 'forty'. The word mem stands for mayim, which means water. A human being cannot survive without water.

Torah, the most vital element in our spiritual lives, is referred to as water, as it states: "Water refers to Torah." Just as a human being cannot survive without water, a Jew cannot survive without Torah. By studying the mishnayot in this booklet, you will receive spiritual sustenance.

ברכות ג:א

מי שְׁמֵתוֹ מְטַל לְפָנָיו פְּטוּר מִקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, וּמִן הַתְּפִלָּה, וּמִן הַתְּפִלִּין. נוֹשְׂאֵי הַמָּטָה וְחַלּוּפֵיהֶן וְחַלּוּפֵי חַלּוּפֵיהֶן, אֶת שְׁלֹפְנֵי הַמָּטָה, וְאֶת שְׁלֹאֲחַר הַמָּטָה: אֶת שְׁלֹמְטָה צָרָךְ בָּהֶן פְּטוּרִין, וְאֶת שְׂאִין לַמָּטָה צָרָךְ בָּהֶן חַיְבִין. אֵלּוּ וְאֵלּוּ פְּטוּרִין מִן הַתְּפִלָּה

Berachot 3:1

One whose deceased relative is not yet buried is exempt from reading the Shema and the Amida prayer, and from the mitzvah to wear tefillin, until the deceased has been buried. Concerning the pallbearers and their replacements and the replacements of their replacements, those located before the coffin who have not yet carried the deceased and those located after the coffin: Those who are needed to carry the coffin are exempt from reciting Shema; while those who are not needed to carry the coffin, are obligated to recite Shema. However, both are exempt from reciting the Amida prayer.

Insights

Caring for the dead is referred to as Chesed Shel Emmes – genuine kindness. When our forefather Yaacov was on his death bed, he instructed his son Yoseph to ensure that he would be transported from Egypt and buried in Israel. Yaacov said to Yoseph, "If you fulfill my request, you will have performed an act of kindness and truth."

It is called genuine kindness because when you do a favor for a living person, in the back of your mind, there is always the thought that perhaps the recipient of my favor will repay me later. However, when doing something for the deceased there is no expectation of ever receiving anything in return.

Why do we observe "kavod ha-met", respect for the dead?

When a person passes away, the neshama (the soul) still feels a connection to its body and stays near it until the burial. During this time period, the soul is aware of how its body is being treated and derives comfort knowing that its body is being given the ultimate respect.

Another reason is the very core of existence and why G-d created the universe.

G-d wanted a home in the physical world. According to the Chassidic masters, this is why the soul descended from heaven and partnered with its physical body. Only the combined effort of body and soul can reveal G-d's presence in this material world. Therefore, when the soul returns home to its Maker, we must offer the greatest level of respect to the soul's worldly partner.

It is worth mentioning that even after the burial, a part of the soul resides permanently at the gravesite. This explains why we visit our loved ones at the cemetery. We are not just visiting a slab of marble and lifeless remains, but rather, part of the eternal spirit of our beloved departed relative.



Hay

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ברכות ט,א

הַרוּאָה מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּעְשׂוּ בוֹ נִסִּים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אוֹמֵר
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Berachot 9,1

One who sees a place where miracles occurred on Israel's behalf recites: "Blessed... Who performed miracles for our forefathers in this place." When in a place where idolatry was eradicated, one recites: "Blessed... Who eradicated idolatry from our land."

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What is the secret of Jewish survival? Throughout our history we have lived through pogroms, the crusades, the inquisition, and the holocaust, and somehow, we have survived. And not only have we survived, but we have also flourished.

There is only one explanation we can offer, and that is Divine intervention. Our existence is truly miraculous.

In truth, our very beginning was miraculous. The first Jew to be born was Yitzchak, the son of Abraham and Sarah. Both were of an age where they could no longer bear children. G-d performed a miracle and they were blessed with the first Jewish child. From that moment on, our survival has been nothing short of miraculous.

A great Rabbi who lived in the middle-ages wrote: Every time I wake up in the morning and see myself in the mirror, I am witnessing a miracle far greater than the splitting of the sea. I see a Jew who has lived through the destruction of Two Temples. I

see a Jew who has been dispersed to the four corners of the globe and has been exiled for over 1500 years. I see a Jew who has lived through the crusades, the inquisition, and the pogroms.

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שבת כא,א

בִּוִּטֵל אָדָם אֶת בְּנוֹ וְהֶאָבֵן בְּיָדוֹ, וְכִלְכָּלָהּ וְהֶאָבֵן
 בְּתוֹכָהּ. וּמִטְּלִיָּהּ וְהֶאָבֵן תְּרוּמָה טְמֵאָה עִם הַטְּהוֹרָה וְעִם
 הַחֲלִין. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר: אֶף מֵעֲלִין אֶת הַמְּדַמֵּעַ
 בְּאַחַד וּמֵאָה.

Shabbat 21:1

On Shabbos, one may take his son into the house, even though there is a stone, which is muktzeh (cannot be moved), in the child's hand. And it is permissible to take a basket with a stone inside on Shabbat. And one may move ritually impure teruma (food designated for the Cohen), which may not be eaten and is muktzeh (cannot be moved), with ritually pure teruma, as well as with non-sacred produce. Rabbi Yehuda says: One may even lift a measure of teruma that was nullified from a mixture of one hundred measures of non-sacred produce and one measure of teruma.

Insights

There are thirty-nine categories of work prohibited on Shabbat by Torah Law. Many have the misconception that Jewish law prohibits labor on the Shabbat and, therefore, they don't understand why we cannot turn on a light that takes no effort. Or driving a car to the synagogue, which takes less effort than walking.

The mistake lies in the inaccurate translation of one word in the Torah. When the Torah discusses the prohibition of not working on Shabbat, it does not use the word 'avodah' which is translated as work or labor. Instead, it uses the word 'melacha' which means a creative activity that demonstrates man's mastery over nature. By refraining from such actions, we acknowledge that G-d is the ultimate Creator and Master.

The Sages also enacted edicts whose purpose are to preserve the spirit of Shabbat as a day of rest and holiness. One such law is called muktzeh - certain objects must be set aside and not moved on Shabbat.

Some reasons for this law are: Since it is forbidden to work on Shabbat, one might utilize the free time to rearrange the items in their home and carry them from one place to another, in contrast to the spirit of Shabbat as a day of rest.

The Sages restricted the handling of items whose primary function is for an activity forbidden on Shabbat. Writing on the Shabbat is one of the thirty-nine Torah prohibitions. If we were permitted to hold a pen, inadvertently we may come to write with it. To safeguard this law, the Sages decreed that handling a pen is prohibited.



Nun

is the fourteenth letter of the aleph-bet and has a numerical value of 'fifty'. Nun means 'fish' in Aramaic, the language of the Talmud. When we stand by the sea and look down, all we see is water. Yet, we know beneath the surface there are thousands of different species of fish, coral, and vegetation. The fact that we can't see it does not negate its existence. Similarly, there is a spiritual world where the soul of the departed resides. Our inability to see it does not mean that it doesn't exist.



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