

A Message from the Kalever Rebbe for Simchas Torah 5770

Moshe Rabbenu's Parting Message

The great leader and teacher of the Jewish people, Moshe Rabbenu, knew he was about to be removed from this world, taken from his precious flock. Over the course of forty years, with the help of Hashem, he had redeemed the Jews from the shackles of Egyptian slavery; he had taught the Jewish people Hashem's holy Torah; he cared for them as a father cares for his children; he prayed for them in good times and bad and he forged them into a holy nation worthy of entering the promised land, Eretz Yisrael.



And now he stood there knowing that he must impart to them his final message and bestow upon them his final blessing. The last portion of the Torah begins thus:

“V’Zos ha’Bracha Asher Berach Moshe Ish Haelokim Es Bnei Yisrael Lifnei Moso.”

“And this is the blessing that Moshe, the man of G-d, bestowed upon the Children of Israel before his death.”

An obvious question arises: It is axiomatic that the Torah was written with utmost brevity and contains no extraneous words. That being the case, why wasn't this verse written more concisely as, *“And Moshe, the man of G-d, blessed the Children of Israel before his death”*? Why the need for the preamble, *“V’zos Ha’Bracha”* – *“And this is the blessing”*? What allusion is contained therein?

We can explain this homiletically. In his parting message to his people, Moshe Rabbenu wanted to instill in our hearts and minds the **three foundations of Jewish living**, which would guide and sustain us throughout the long and turbulent history he foresaw for us. Indeed, these foundation stones were set down by our Creator in accordance with His divine will and are the keys to successful living in this world, even when they seem to contradict human logic and the laws of nature.

The first foundation is the holy Shabbos, the seventh day of the week, upon which Hashem rested, so to speak, from His work of creating the cosmos and everything contained in it. Hashem blessed Shabbos and sanctified it. In the Zohar it is written that Shabbos is the source of all blessings for all of man's creative endeavors.

You should never think that you will lose an opportunity for profit by observing Shabbos. Quite the

contrary: Shabbos protects us for it attests to Hashem's providence over all of creation, and to His special relationship with the Jewish people. We are to spend generously to honor the Shabbos, for the Gemorah tells us that all of man's earnings for the year are determined on Rosh Hashana, except for his expenditures on behalf of Shabbos and the Jewish holidays. The more he spends for these holy days, the more he will be compensated. Included in this blessing are any profits seemingly forfeited by keeping Shabbos. They will surely be made up, manifold, in some other venture. Keep Shabbos and Shabbos will keep you.

The second foundation is "*Emes*," truth, honesty and the highest levels of integrity in all our interactions, and particularly in monetary matters. Our sages taught us that "*Chosamo Shel Hakadosh Boruch Hu Emes*," -- *Hashem's seal is truth*.

How often do we witness the folly of people who believe that they can benefit financially, or otherwise, from unscrupulous and dishonest modes of conduct? Clearly, this runs counter to Hashem's will and in the end no good can result from it. Man cannot confound Hashem's plans—He has endless ways of redressing ill-gotten gains, whether by orchestrating financial setbacks in business or, worse, visiting debilitating sickness upon dishonest individuals, which drain their resources for expensive medical care.

In the divine scheme, truth will always prevail and is the path to true blessing.

The third foundation is the study of Hashem's holy Torah. Immerse yourself in its sustaining, life-giving waters, for "Her paths are the paths of sweetness."

Hashem promises that for one who studies Torah, "It is your life and length of days," "It will be good for you all your days," and "Long life is at its right hand and in its left hand wealth and honor."

Torah is Hashem's special instruction book to the Jewish people for happy and successful lives.

These three foundations are alluded to in the concise and pithy word that begins Moshe's final blessings. **V'ZOS** is an acronym consisting of the Hebrew letters: **Zayin** (which means seven), representing **Shabbos**, the seventh day of the week; **Aleph** the first letter of the word **Emes – Truth**; and **Tof** the first letter of the word **Torah**. With his last breaths, Moshe Rabbenu declared to us that these three foundations are the blessing for all goodness in life. "**V'Zos Ha'Bracha**." Any Jew who follows this path will merit becoming an "**Ish Haelokim Lifnei Moso**"—He will be drawn close to Hashem and be saved from spiritual death.

As we rejoice on *Simchas Torah* with the completion of the Torah reading cycle and the initiation of the new cycle, let us seize this opportunity of "**V'ZOS Ha'Bracha**" and "**Bereishis**" to dedicate ourselves to living our lives filled with the blessings of Shabbos, *Emes* and Torah. Amen.