

Gemara (Shabbas 12a): **הנכנס לבקר את החולה, אומר שבת היא מלזעוק: "one who goes to visit a sick person (on Shabbas), should say to him, "Although we are prevented from crying out on your behalf on Shabbas, recovery is coming soon."** This teaches us that Shabbas is a good omen for refuah. This is suggested by the following Mishnah (Berachos 38a): **"כל האוכלין אוכל אדם לרפואה בשבת"—a person may eat all foods for therapeutic reasons on Shabbas.** Here is how the Tiferes Shlomo interprets this statement: **פירוש, מכל המאכלים—שהאדם אוכל בשבת יכול להשיג רפואה, כי שורש הרפואה נעשה בשבת קודש—** all foods that one consumes on Shabbas, possess the ability to heal; for the source of healing originates from Shabbas Kodesh. So, when the passuk states: **"רק שבתו יתן"—only for his sitting idle** (the time that he is incapacitated and unable to work) **shall he pay**, it employs the word **"שבתו"**—which alludes to Shabbas. Thus, the passuk implies that in the merit of observing and delighting in the Shabbas appropriately: **ורפא—**he will surely be healed. This is the gist of the Tiferes Shlomo's explanation.

Notwithstanding, let us examine the deeper connection between Shabbas Kodesh and impending refuah. Additionally, we will scrutinize the statement of Chazal: **שבת היא מלזעוק ורפואה—קרובה לבוא—although it is not appropriate to cry out on Shabbas; nevertheless, healing is coming in short order.** This suggests that the reason the person will be healed soon is specifically because it is prohibited to cry out on Shabbas. Furthermore, why did they mention that is prohibited to "cry out" on Shabbas? In point of fact, it is not even permissible to pray on behalf of a sick person on Shabbas (except for someone who is in critical condition and in extreme danger).

As a Consequence of the Sin of Adam HaRishon the Name Havaya Was Altered the Letters "Yud" and "Vav" Vanished Leaving Only the Two "Heis"

I had a wonderful idea! I believe that we can explain the matter based on a teaching in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 19): **"חובא דאדם גרם דאסתלק י"ו מן יקו"ק ואשתאר ה"ה"—the sin of Adam (HaRishon) caused the (two letters) "yud-vav" to vanish from the name Havaya, and only the (letters) "hei-hei" remained.** Along these lines, it also teaches (Tikun 69): **אדם—**since Adam's sin impacted the letters **"yud-vav"** of the name **Havaya**, they became an expression of pain and suffering, **"vav-yud"** (like "oy vey").

Let us elaborate on this idea in a way that will appeal to everyone. Elsewhere in the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 9b), we learn that the name הו"ה—the Tetragrammaton—is alluded to by the first letters of the four words (Tehillim 96, 11): **י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ—the heavens will be glad, and the earth will rejoice.** To explain the matter, let us introduce what the Noam Elimelech writes in parshas Yisro and what the brilliant author of the Ben Ish Chai, zy"a, writes in his sefer Ben Yehoyada (Berachos 51a). They both state that the letters ה"ה of the name **Havaya** are associated with Olam HaBa, whereas the letters ו"ו are associated with Olam HaZeh.

This explains magnificently why the name **Havaya** is alluded to by the first letters of the words **י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ**. The two letters ה"ה allude to Olam HaBa, which is spiritual and heavenly; hence, they are associated with the two words **י'שמחו ה'שמים** reflecting the joy in the heavens. On the other hand, the two letters ו"ו alluding to Olam HaZeh, life on earth, are associated with the two words **ו'תגל ה'ארץ** reflecting the joy on earth. When the four letters of the Tetragrammaton are united fully, the letter **"yud"** illuminates the first **"hei"** in the heavens, and the letter **"vav"** illuminates the second **"hei"** down on earth. Thus, the entire name **Havaya** is illuminated and the words of the passuk become a reality: **י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ**—there is joy both in the heavens and on earth. On account of the joy in the heavens, HKB"ח bestows abundant good to the inhabitants on earth.

As a consequence of the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," Adam HaRishon caused the letters **"yud"** and **"vav"** to disassociate from the two **"heis"** of **Havaya**. As a result, the **"yud"** of **י'שמחו ה'שמים** and the **"vav"** of **ו'תגל ה'ארץ** became absent. This allowed "midas hadin" to prevail in the heavens and on earth—in Olam HaBa and Olam HaZeh. Since there was no joy in heaven, there also was not joy down on earth, because HKB"ח did not deliver the abundant good of heaven to earth. This is the situation depicted by the passuk (Devarim 11, 17): **ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן—**and He will restrain the heavens and there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce.

We can now comprehend the teaching of the Tikunei Zohar. As a consequence of the sin of Adam HaRishon, the letters **"yud"** and **"vav"** vanished from the name **Havaya**—which are associated with the words **י'שמחו** and **ו'תגל**. This left the first **"hei"** and the second **"hei"**—**ה'שמים** and **ה'ארץ**—alone without illumination. Since the letters **"yud"** and **"vav"** are associated with "rachamim," this made the heavens and the earth vulnerable to "midas hadin." Therefore, the **"yud"** and **"vav"**

were rearranged to form the interjection וי (‘oy vey,’ woe is me) reflecting the pain and suffering associated with the reign of ‘midas hadin’ in the heavens and on earth.

With this understanding, we can comprehend the exposition in the Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 216a) regarding the periods of galus. It is written (Ruth 1, 19): **“ותלכנה שתיהם”**—**the two of them went**; this alludes to the **“two heis”** that leave during times of galus, because they lack the positive influence of the letters **“yud”** and **“vav.”** As explained, this is due to the sin of Adam HaRishon.

Death in Olam HaZeh and Death in Olam HaBa

We will now introduce the fascinating, sacred comments of the Gra from Vilna, zy”a, in the sefer Beiurei HaGra on the allegories of Maseches Berachos. We will present his interpretation of the following esoteric dialogue in the Gemara (Berachos 31a):

“אמר ליה רבנן לרב המנונא זוטי בהלולא דמר בריה דרבינא, לישרי לן מר, אמר להו, ווי לן דמיתנן, ווי לן דמיתנן, אמרי ליה אגן מה נעני בתרך, אמר להו הי תורה והי מצוה דמגנו עלן.”

The Rabbis said to Rav Hamnuna Zuti at the wedding feast of Mar the son of Ravina, “Let the master sing for us.” He said to them, “Woe (vav-yud) to us that we are destined to die! Woe (vav-yud) to us that we are destined to die!” They said to him, “How are we to respond after you?” He answered them, “Where is the Torah that we have studied and where are the mitzvos that we have performed that can protect us (Rashi: from the fate and judgment of Gehinnom)?”

In my humble opinion, we can understand the Gra’s interpretation in keeping with what we learned from the Tikunei Zohar. As a consequence of the ‘cheit Eitz HaDa’as,’ the letters **“yud”** and **“vav”** vanished from the Tetragrammaton **Havaya**. They were rearranged to form the interjection וי—an expression of grief and distress. Now, with regards to the ‘cheit Eitz HaDa’as,’ it says (Bereishis 2, 17): **“כי ביום אכלך ממנו”**—**for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die**. Note, that in the Hebrew, death is mentioned twice; this alludes to two distinct deaths—death in this life and death in the afterlife, i.e., punishment in Gehinnom. Now, engaging in Torah-study saves a person from death in Olam HaZeh, as it is written (Mishlei 3, 16): **“אורך ימים בימינה”**—**length of days is at its right**; and it is also written (ibid. 3, 16): **“עץ חיים היא למחזיקים”**

“בה—it is a tree of life for those who cling to it! Furthermore, in the merit of performing mitzvos, we are spared the death of Gehinnom in Olam HaBa.

Based on this understanding, the Gra enlightens us and enables us to comprehend the enigmatic conversation of our sages. The Rabbis asked Rabbi Hamnuna to sing a song to uplift them and inspire them to better serve Hashem. He responded: **“Woe (וי) to us that we are destined to die! Woe (וי) to us that we are destined to die!”** He was alluding to the two deaths—death in Olam HaZeh and death in Olam HaBa—that were decreed upon Adam HaRishon and all creatures as a consequence of the ‘cheit Eitz HaDa’as.’ Hence, Rav Hamnuna repeated the interjection וי twice: **“וי לן דמיתנן, ווי לן דמיתנן”**—alluding to the two letters **“yud”** and **“vav”** that abandoned the two **“heis”** due to that fateful, calamitous sin.

Notwithstanding, Rav Hamnuna gave them a wonderful suggestion. To ameliorate the ‘din’ of the letters ה”ה and to spare themselves the misfortune of those two deaths: **“Where is the Torah that we have studied and where are the mitzvos that we have performed that can protect us?”** Torah-study will sweeten the effects of the final **“hei”** of **Havaya** by reuniting it with the letter **“vav”**; that would save them from death in Olam HaZeh. The performance of mitzvos will sweeten the effects of the first **“hei”** by reuniting it with the letter **“yud”**; that would save them from death of Gehinnom in Olam HaBa. This is the gist of his sacred remarks.

It should be apparent that this coincides magnificently with what we have discussed. When the **“yud”** and **“vav”** of **Havaya** vanished, the **“yud”** of **“ישמחו ה’שמים”** and the **“vav”** of **“ותגל ה’ארץ”** also vanished. This left the two **“heis”** of **“ה’שמים”** and **“ה’ארץ”** devoid of joy and happiness. After all, they were subject to the deaths of Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa. Nevertheless, as explained, through Torah-study and the performance of mitzvos, it is possible to restore the **“yud”** and **“vav”** to their proper positions and thereby exert a positive influence on the two **“heis”**—protection from the two types of death.

The Reward is Commensurate with the Exertion

It gives me immense pleasure to apply what we have learned to interpret the conclusion of Maseches Avos (the last Mishnah of Chapter 5). [Chapter 6 of Avos is a Baraisa.] Rabeinu HaKadosh opted to conclude the Maseches with a teaching from a Tanna who is only mentioned once in all of the Mishnayos: **“בן”**

הא הא אומר לפום צערא אגרא—Ben Hei Hei says: The reward is in proportion to the exertion. The Tosafos Yom Tov interprets the name **Ben Hei Hei** in two ways: Either he died young and was, therefore, called only by his father's name, like Ben Zoma. Or, as he brings down in the name of the Midrash Shmuel, he was the son of converts; so, in order to hide the fact from the informants that he had converted (who would have reported him to the authorities who would have had him killed), he was given a name by dint of allusion. In other words, he was a descendant of Avraham and Sarah, who were the original converts. They both had a **"hei"** added to their names; **"אברהם"** became **"שרה"**, and **"שרי"** became **"אברהם"**.

In keeping with our current discussion, we can suggest another interpretation. Rabeinu HaKadosh deliberately chose to conclude Maseches Avos with a teaching from the holy Tanna named **Ben Hei Hei**, to inform us that this Tanna spent his entire life reuniting the letters of the name **Havaya**. Through his studies and mitzvos, he restored the **"yud"** and **"vav"** that had vanished as a result of the **"cheit Eitz HaDa'as"**. Therefore, he was called **Ben Hei Hei**, because he engaged in activities that had a positive influence on the two **"heis"** of the name **Havaya**.

Therefore, it was only necessary for him to teach us one vital principle in all of Torah she'b'al peh: **"The reward is in proportion to the exertion."** The more a person exerts himself and inconveniences himself in the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvos, the more he is able to sweeten the nature of the two **"heis"**. As Rav Hamnuna said to the other sages: **"Where is the Torah that we have studied and where are the mitzvos that we have performed that can protect us?"** In the merit, of conveying this valuable lesson to all of Yisrael, he was called **Ben Hei Hei**.

The Word וינח Can Be Interpreted as נח וי

Following this line of reasoning, we will now proceed to explain why Shabbas Kodesh portends a **"refuah sheleimah"**—a complete recovery. As we learned above, one who visits a sick person on Shabbas should say to him: **"Although we are prevented from crying out on your behalf on Shabbas, recovery is coming soon."** We will begin by introducing an explanation from the great Rabbi Yaakov Yosef HaKohen—the author of the sefer Toldos Yaakov Yosef—in his introduction to the highly regarded sefer Ben Porat Yosef. He addresses the Gemara (Beitzah 16a):

"אמר ריש לקיש, נשמה יתירה ניתנה בו באדם ערב שבת, במוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה. Reish Lakish said: An additional neshamah is placed in a person on erev Shabbas (as Shabbas begins); it is taken from him at the conclusion of Shabbas. As it is states (Shemos 31, 17): "He ceased and rested," which is interpreted to mean: "Once one has completed the Shabbas, woe, he has lost the soul." In other words, after a person has rested on Shabbas, when it departs, he says: **"Woe (vav-yud), the soul is lost!"**

He explains the matter as follows: While it is true that during six weekdays, the letters **"yud"** and **"vav"** are not present to have a beneficial influence on the two **"heis"**; however, since Shabbas Kodesh is a semblance of Olam HaBa, a minor tikun occurs. The letters **"yud"** and **"vav"** that vanished as a result of the **"cheit Eitz HaDa'as"** return to complete the four letters of the Tetragrammaton **Havaya**. This is alluded to by the statement: **"Once one has completed the Shabbas, woe— וי -he has lost the soul."** For, on motzaei-Shabbas, when the **"neshamah-yeteirah"** departs, the letters **"yud"** and **"vav"** vanish once again and take on the permutation of וי.

In this manner, he explains what HKB"H alluded to in the Aseres HaDibros in relation to the mitzvah of Shabbas (ibid. 20, 11): **"וינח ביום השביעי"—He rested on the seventh day.** He breaks down the word וינח into וינח, meaning that the two letters **"vav"** and **"yud"** had a respite from their defective state on the seventh day and were able once again to have a brief positive influence on the two **"heis."** This then is the implication of the passuk (ibid. 16, 29): **"ראו כי הוי' נתן לכם את השבת"**—know that HKB"H restores the name **Havaya** to its complete, intact form on Shabbas. This is his wonderful insight.

This explains very nicely the continuation of the text of the Aseres HaDibros: **"וינח ביום השביעי על כן ברך הוי' את יום השבת ויקדשהו"—and He rested on the seventh day; therefore, Hashem blessed the Shabbas day and sanctified it.** Since the letters וי had a temporary reprieve on the day of Shabbas, and they were reunited with the two **"heis"**; **therefore, the name Havaya** (complete with all four of its letters) **blessed the Shabbas day and sanctified it.**

We can now begin to comprehend Chazal's profound lesson. They instructed us to say to the sick person: **"Although we are prevented from crying out on your behalf on Shabbas, recovery is coming soon."** As we know, all illness

and infirmity are rooted in the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” which brought death to the world. Therefore, during the week, it is permissible to pray on behalf of a sick person and to exclaim וי (woe is me!), lamenting the absence of the letters “yud” and “vav” from the name **Havaya** and their transformation to the interjection וי, causing death and illness in the world. On Shabbas, however, they return to their proper places, in keeping with the interpretation of ויניח—the letters “vav” and “yud” **had a respite on the seventh day**. Therefore, it is prohibited to cry out וי and pray for the sick person on Shabbas. But it is specifically because **“recovery from the illness is on its way”**—because this situation constitutes a tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” which is the cause of death and illness.

We now have cause to rejoice. For, this illuminates for us the allusion in the passuk in our parsha regarding someone who is bed-ridden due to his injury: **“רק שבתו יתן ורפא ירפא”—he is compensated for the days that he is incapacitated, and he shall heal**. According to the Tiferes Shlomo, the words **רק שבתו יתן** mean that he should observe and delight in the Shabbas; in that merit, **“ורפא ירפא”—he will be healed**. In keeping with this discussion, this means that in the merit of observing the Shabbas and the benefits accrued from the return of the letters “yud” and “vav” to their proper places, the sick person will recover from his illness.

Incredibly, this is also alluded to by words **“ורפא ירפא”**, whose first letters are a “vav” and a “yud.” In other words, in the merit of Shabbas Kodesh, the letters וי will be healed. Although they were transformed to this permutation due to the disappearance of the letters “yud” and “vav” from the name **Havaya**; nevertheless, on Shabbas, since these two letters are restored to their proper places, there is a wonderful segulah for refuah. We can now propose the following interpretation of the exposition of the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael: **We learn from the words “ורפוא ירפא” that permission has been given to the physician to heal**. This teaches us that in the merit of studying Torah and performing mitzvos, in particular the mitzvah of Shabbas-observance, every Jew has been given the capacity to be a physician to cure his own illness.

The MAchaszis HaShekel Is a Tikun for the Letters וי that Vanished Again with the Cheit HaEigel

Continuing on this sacred journey, we will now explain the connection with the “mAchaszis hashekel.” We will begin with

the pertinent pesukim related to this mitzvah at the beginning of parshas Ki Sisa (ibid. 30, 11):

וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם, ונתנו איש כופר נפשו לה' בפקוד אותם ולא יהיה בהם נגף בפקוד אותם, זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל בשקל הקודש עשרים גרה השקל מחצית השקל תרומה. **Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: “When you will take a census of Bnei Yisrael according to their counts, every man shall give Hashem an atonement for his soul when counting them, and there will be no plague among them when counting them. This is what they shall give—everyone who passes among the counted—half of the shekel, by the holy shekel, the shekel is twenty geirah, half of the shekel as a portion to Hashem.”**

In the Midrash Tanchuma (Ki Sisa 10), our blessed sages teach us the reason that HKB”H commanded every Jew to donate a “mAchaszis hashekel.” It was to atone for the “cheit ha'eigel.” They present two ways in which the tikun for the “cheit ha'eigel” is alluded to by the “mAchaszis hashekel”: **מחצית השקל**; על שחטאו בשש שעות בחצי היום, יתנו מחצית השקל שהוא ששה גרמיסין. רבי יוחנן אמר, על שעברו על עשרת הדברות, לפיכך יתן כל אחד ואחד עשרה גרה. **“This they shall give . . . half a shekel.” Because they had sinned at the sixth hour, which is the middle of the day, they shall give half a shekel, which is six grammata. Rabbi Yochanan said: Because they had violated the Aseres HaDibros. Therefore, each and every one had to give ten geirah, which equals a half (shekel).**

It appears that we can better comprehend Rabbi Yochanan’s meaning, if we refer to the following Gemara (Makkos 24a): **אנכי “Anochi” and “lo yihyeh lecha”**—ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמענום (the first two dibrot), **we heard directly from the mouth of the Almighty**. This implies that the first two dibros are actually the basis and source of all of the ten commandments. So, when Yisrael sinned by making the “eigel,” which was an act of “avodah-zarah,” it was tantamount to transgressing the entire Aseres HaDibros. Now, we have a fundamental principle that when there is a dispute among Torah-scholars: **אלו ואלו דברי “אלקים חיים”—both are the words of the living G-d**, i.e., they both are consistent with and represent divine truth. Hence, we will explain how both explanations regarding the “mAchaszis hashekel” are true.

Now, we are taught that at Matan Torah, the death decree imposed on creation was repealed; however, when Yisrael

subsequently sinned with the “eigel,” it was reinstated. Here is the pertinent passage from the Gemara (A.Z. 5a): **“לא קיבלו ישראל את התורה, אלא כדי שלא יהא מלאך המות שולט בהן, שנאמר אני אמרתי אלהים.”** **Yisrael only received the Torah, so that the Malach Hamaves would not prevail over them, as it is stated (Tehillim 82, 6): “I said, ‘You are divine, sons of the Most High are you all.’” However, you have corrupted your deeds (with the “cheit ha’eigel”) and therefore (ibid.): “Like men you shall die.”**

This implies that at the time of Matan Torah, when the death penalty was repealed, the two letters “**yud**” and “**vav**” returned to exert their positive influence on the two “**heis**.” Concomitantly, the two deaths—in Olam HaZeh and in Olam HaBa—were annulled. This was the situation prior to the sin of Adam HaRishon. As a consequence of the “cheit ha’eigel,” however, the letters “**yud**” and “**vav**” vanished once again causing the decree of death to be reinstated.

To atone for this, HKB”H commanded the donation of the “mAchaszis hashekel.” According to the first opinion in the Midrash, this alludes to the fact that Yisrael sinned at the sixth hour of the day, which is midday. As it is written (Shemos 32, 1): **“וירא העם כי בושש משה”**—**the people saw that Moshe was delayed (בושש) in returning.** They expound in the Gemara (Shabbas 89a): **“אל תקרי בושש אלא באו שש”**—**do not read the word as “vo-shesh”—meaning delayed—but rather as “va-oo sheish”—meaning that six hours of the day had passed.** Thus, they damaged the “**vav**” (having a numerical value of six) of the name **Havaya**, causing it to vanish. Therefore, they were

commanded to donate a half-shekel corresponding to the half of the day that had passed. Similarly, a “mAchaszis hashekel” equals six grammata, to remedy the letter “**vav**,” whose numerical value is six.

Then, Rabbi Yochanan completes the picture: The “mAchaszis hashekel,” which is ten geirah, alludes to the fact that the “cheit ha’eigel” damaged the Ten Commandments. Thus, they caused the “**yud**” (having a numerical value of ten) of the name **Havaya** to vanish. Once both the “**yud**” and “**vav**” vanished—as they did as a consequence of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as”—the death decree on creation was reinstated. This explains why we were commanded to bring a “mAchaszis hashekel,” because it alludes to the two missing letters—its six grammata to the “**vav**” and its ten geirah to the “**yud**.” Hence, it constituted an appropriate atonement for the “cheit ha’eigel” that caused the letters “**yud**” and “**vav**” to vanish again. This then is the allusion inherent in the passuk: **“מהצית השקל תרומה להוי”ה**—the “mAchaszis hashekel” returns the missing letters to complete the name **Havaya**.

This explains magnificently the rationale for Chazal’s institution to read the passage pertaining to the mitzvah of “mAchaszis hashekel” on the Shabbas that we bless the month of Adar. As explained above, on Shabbas Kodesh, the letters “**yud**” and “**vav**” are restored; this is alluded to by the word **“וינח”** in the passuk **“וינח ביום השביעי”**, which can be interpreted as **“וינח”**. Therefore, Shabbas is the appropriate time to read about the “mAchaszis hashekel” to complete the name **Havaya**, and thereby hasten the arrival of the complete geulah—swiftly, in our times! Amen.

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