# TheTorahAnyTimes

## Rabbi Paysach Krohn

The Lyrics of Lecha Dodi

zt"l, but few know the depths of his insights into this great figure.

R' Shlomo Alkabetz was born in Salonika, Greece, in 1500 and passed away in 1576. He rose to prominence as a celebrated kabbalist and scholar. His life intertwined with other luminaries of his time, such as R' Yosef Taitatzak, a renowned rabbi from Greece, and R' Shmuel Uceda, author of the profound work Midrash Shmuel. R' Shlomo met Rav Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch, in Salonika, a city enriched by scholars who had fled Spain's expulsion. Their bond grew strong, and their joint Torah study left an indelible mark on Jewish history.

Eventually, R' Shlomo Alkabetz moved to Eretz Yisrael, with a significant stop in Turkey along the way. By 1535, he settled in Tzfas, where he became close to luminaries like the Arizal and Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, another prominent kabbalist and his brother-in-law. Rabbi Shlomo authored numerous works and, of course, the exquisite Lecha Dodi.

Let us delve into Lecha Dodi.

The refrain we sing so heartily—Lecha dodi likras kallah, p'nei

f the primary prayers we Shabbos nekabelah-is followed by recite every Friday night, eight stanzas. Interestingly, the first Lecha Dodi stands out as a letters of the stanzas spell "Shlomo masterpiece of devotion and long- Halevi," a signature of the author. Yet, ing. Many are familiar with its es- upon closer examination, a striking teemed author, R' Shlomo Alkabetz revelation emerges. While the first two stanzas focus on Shabbos, the remainlife story. Allow me to share some ing six shift their focus. They lament the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and express longing for its restoration. For example, the phrases Mikdash Melech ir melucha and Hisna'ari me'afar kumi call upon Yerushalayim to rise from its

> This thematic shift might seem curious. Why would a Shabbos hymn delve into the destruction of the Temple? The answer lies in the deep connection between Shabbos and the Beis HaMikdash. The Gemara (Shabbos 119b) teaches that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of the desecration of Shabbos. The Midrash (Vayikrah Rabbah 3:1) tells us that conversely, the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash is contingent upon Shabbos being upheld.

> Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, in his Shabbos Malkesa, draws profound parallels between Shabbos and the Beis HaMikdash. The 39 melachos prohibited on Shabbos reflect the creative acts used to construct the Mishkan. On Shabbos, the glow of the Shabbos candles recalls the Menorah in the Temple, while the two loaves of challah at the table evoke the Lechem Hapanim. Some Rebbes even have the custom of putting out twelve loaves of challah, corresponding to the 12 Lechem Ha'Panim. The

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Meir Eliyahu ben Yaakov Dov

Bechor ben Rivkah

Shlomo Zalman ben R' Mordechai Yisroel Tzvi

Esther bat haRav Avraham Halevi zt"l

Moshe Simcha ben Doniel Dov Ber

Miriam bat Yeshayahu

Malka Bracha bat Shimon Chaim

R' Zechariah Shimon ben Yitzchok

#### L'refuah Sheleima

Deena bat Shoshana Chaya Raizel bat Dena Yerachmiel Eliyahu Ben Esther Riva Reuven ben Rochel

Vilna Gaon in fact writes that for the three Shabbos meals, each of which have two loaves, we are to cut them in half, which adds up to 12 loaves. Even the special garments we wear on Shabbos parallel the bigdei kehudah (sacred vestments) of the Kohanim. In the Beis Hamikdash as well, there was singing from the Leviim, mirrored by our singing of Zemiros.

Another fascinating parallel lies in the mizbeach ha'ktores, the incense altar. Some meforshim explain that the incense was specifically designed to create a beautiful aroma in the sacred space, as the fragrant atmosphere was conducive to achieving spiritual greatness. A pleasant scent can elevate the mind and soul, setting the stage for profound connection to Hashem.

Rabbi Shimshon Pincus references the Gemara (Shabbos 33b), which recounts a story of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai encountering an elderly man carrying bundles of fragrant myrtle branches to his home in honor of Shabbos. The man explained that their aroma enhanced the sanctity of the day. This tradition of bringing delightful fragrances into our homes, perhaps through flowers or spices, has become a meaningful way to honor Shabbos, mirroring the incense of the Beit HaMikdash.

R' Shlomo Alkabetz recognized that while Shabbos draws us close to Hashem, its full potential can only be realized with the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. This dual focus in Lecha Dodi—the sanctity of Shabbos and the longing for the Beis Hamikdash and the redemption—is a heartfelt prayer for both.

Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz poignantly weaves this connection into Lecha Dodi. Shabbos, the "sanctuary in time," mirrors the sanctity of the Beis HaMikdash, a physical sanctuary. The six stanzas of lament correspond to the six days of the week, filled with toil and longing for redemption. The culmination, Bo'i b'shalom ateres ba'alah, represents the arrival of Shabbos, the prelude to ge'ulah sheleimah,

the ultimate redemption.

Rabbi Yaakov Feitman recounted how during World War II, in September 1943, a Nazi officer entered a synagogue with grenades, intending to massacre everyone present. At that moment, everyone was turning around and reciting Bo'i B'shalom, the final stanza of Lecha Dodi. Hearing the thunderous singing, the officer panicked, dropped his grenades, and fled. The Nazi offer thought everyone had turned around because he had entered, but far from it. In the merit of Lecha Dodi, all those in the shul were saved. Such is the protective power of Shabbos and its prayers.

As we recite Lecha Dodi, let us approach it with renewed intent, embracing the vision of Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz. His words remind us that Shabbos is not only a day of rest but a taste of the ultimate redemption, when Yerushalayim will be rebuilt, and the Beis HaMikdash restored. May we merit to greet the Shabbos Kallah together with Hashem in a rebuilt Yerushalayim.

### Rabbi Yosef Palacci

Like a Lion

he Shulchan Aruch opens with an inspiring teaching: "Yitgaber ka'ari la'amod baboker—Be strong as a lion to rise in the morning." This isn't just poetic imagery; it's a call to action. A person should wake up with energy, vigor, and excitement, ready to serve Hashem wholeheartedly.

I'll tell you a story. In yeshiva, there was a student who really took this idea literally. One morning, I heard loud roaring coming from the dorms. Naturally, I ran to see what was happening. When I got there, I found one of the guys standing tall, yelling, "You have to wake up like a lion!" It was both entertaining and

thought-provoking. Of course, "roaring" like a lion isn't the point. What it truly means is to wake up with the focus, determination, and enthusiasm of a lion on the hunt, who is unstoppable, undeterred, and driven by purpose.

Think about it. Successful people don't roll out of bed aimlessly. They wake up ready to tackle the day, eager to achieve their goals. As Jews, our "goal" is to serve Hashem with joy and dedication. That's why we're taught to begin each day with Netilat Yadayim, washing our hands. The Kohanim in the Beit Hamikdash would wash their hands before performing the avodah (service). Similarly, when

we wash our hands in the morning, we remind ourselves that everything we do today is an act of service to Hashem. This sets the tone that, "I'm here to fulfill my purpose with devotion and excitement."

This attitude is further emphasized in our first words of the day: "Modeh Ani lefanecha—I thank You, living and eternal King." These simple words are profound. They focus our minds on gratitude and our relationship with Hashem from the very moment we wake up. And, interestingly, studies have shown that taking a moment to transition from sleep to wakefulness—like saying Modeh Ani—helps regulate heart rate and prepares the body for the day ahead. It's both spiritually and physically healthy.

The message is clear. Wake up with

purpose. Even if you don't feel excited, act as if you are. Start strong, because that energy carries through

the day. And remember, life is an opportunity to serve Hashem, to grow, and to make an impact. So,

wake up like a lion, ready to conquer the day.

### Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l

**Putting Back Humpty Dumpty** 

et me share something that left a lasting impression on me. One time, I mentioned Humpty Dumpty in my shiur, and people were a bit puzzled. "What's Rabbi Wallerstein talking about now?" they wondered. Let me explain.

When I was in kindergarten, our teacher taught us the nursery rhyme:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses and all the king's men,

Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

At the time, I raised my hand and asked my teacher, "Why couldn't they put him back together again? What kind of story is this?" I was always thinking outside the box, even as a kid. I thought, surely, they could have fixed him somehow. Isn't that a better message for children? My teacher's response was dismissive: "It's just a rhyme. That's how it's written."

Now, as an adult, I understand the deeper meaning. The brilliance of this rhyme is profound: All the king's horses and all the king's men can't put Humpty Dumpty back together again. Why? Because no one can truly fix you—except you. That's the message. Only Humpty Dumpty can put himself back together. It's a life lesson hidden in a children's rhyme.

This ties beautifully into another phenomenon: the process of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Before the butterfly emerges, it struggles, sometimes for days, as it fights to break free of the chrysalis. This struggle is necessary—it strengthens its wings so it can fly.

Imagine this. The butterfly finally breaks free and perches on the edge of a leaf, 20 feet above the ground. But it doesn't know it has wings. It looks down at its tiny twig-like legs and thinks, How am I supposed to go anywhere? It feels hopeless. It endured so much in the cocoon, and now it wonders if it was all for nothing.

That's when another butterfly flies by and says, "What are you doing just standing there? You've got wings—use them!" The scariest moment for the butterfly is that first leap off the leaf. It's never flown before, and the fear is overwhelming. Yet, that leap is also the most exhilarating moment of its life. In that instant, the butterfly realizes: I'm no longer a caterpillar. I'm the most beautiful insect Hashem created.

This is the journey of growth and transformation. When we're at the bottom, surrounded by negativity—whether it's bad influences, destructive habits, or despair—we can't see what's possible. People around us might dismiss the idea of change, saying, "What's the point? You'll never really feel better." But that's because they're still at the bottom of the tree.

When you realize you have wings, it's terrifying and incredible. It's the moment you understand you're capable of so much more than you thought. This motivates me in the work I do. I know what it feels like to be on the edge of that leaf, unsure of your next step. My mission has always been to show people their potential, to remind them they're superstars with wings ready to take flight.

The Zohar takes this idea even deeper. It says the butterfly is a remaz (hint) for the resurrection of the dead. How can Hashem revive lifeless bones? The Zohar points to the butterfly as proof. A caterpillar turns into a chrysalis, seemingly lifeless, reduced to powder. Yet from that powder emerges a vibrant, living butterfly. Hashem gave this one insect the power of metamorphosis to teach us about techiyat hameitim—the resurrection. Just as the butterfly comes back to life, so will we.

That's the message: embrace your wings. Leap. Fly. And know that the journey is worth it.

## Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

It's Galus

ime to go home. After twenty long years in the house of Lavan, Yaakov was finally

able to return home. While Lavan made the years challenging and difficult, at the same time, Hashem blessed Yaakov with a beautiful

This week's Parsha opens with Yaakov readying himself for the journey home. "Vayishlach Yaakov malachim l'fanav—And Yaakov sent messengers before him."

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Rashi tells us that the malachim were, "malachim mamash—actual angels" (Bereishis 32:4). Yaakov instructs them exactly what to say upon encountering Eisav. "Im Lavan garti, I (Yaakov) stayed with Lavan." Don't think my life was a bed of roses. I was in the house of Lavan. He may be my uncle, my father-in-law, but to me, he is a trickster and a swindler. His word is not a word. Rashi teaches that Yaakov remained a "ger" (from the word "garti"), a stranger in the house of Lavan. A message to Eisav, that he has nothing to be jealous of.

Rashi gives an additional explanation on the word "garti". The gematria, numerical value of garti, is taryag - as in taryag mitzvos, 613 commandments. In fact, the letters of garti – gimmel, reish, tuf, yud, can be arranged to form the word taryag tuf, reish, yud, gimmel. In essence, Yaakov is saying that despite living with the wicked Lavan, I kept all of the mitzvos. Even though life was hard, I made time for Torah. I davened, I learned, I did good deeds. I didn't allow my difficult life to break me, to tear me away from my connection to Hashem. Moreover, Yaakov's message is that in all the years he was in Lavan's house, "lo lamadeti me'ma'asav hora'im, I didn't learn from his evil deeds." Yaakov's strength of character. For two decades, he lived in a world far from truth, honesty and morals. Yet, it never wore off on him. Yaakov remained true to his beliefs and values.

Sefer Bereishis, the Book of our Roots. From each of the avos and imahos, our patriarchs and matriarchs, we learn life lessons. Ma'aseh avos, siman l'bonim, everything that occurred to the patriarchs is a sign for the children. Their lives and our lives are intertwined.

Yaakov teaches us that no matter where one is, no matter the influences one is surrounded by, we must strive to live as Torah Jews. To live our life knowing that we are part of an am kadosh, a holy nation.

One of my most memorable Chanukahs was visiting our young married couple, then living in Eretz Yisroel. There were pop-ups selling sufganiyot on every corner. The streets were infused with the scent of fresh donuts. The stores were decorated with streamers of menorahs and dreidels, and Chanukah music filled the malls. I loved walking the streets of Yerushalayim at night, seeing the outdoor menorahs encased in glass boxes. Our Chanukah trips took us to different batei midrash to watch the rebbes light the menorah. The sight of throngs of chassidim filled with the spirit of Chanukah are memories I will always treasure. Altogether, it was a treat for the senses. Seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting Chanukah. But it touched yet another "sense," the neshama. It was a feast for the soul. My neshama soared.

The week flew by. All too soon, it was time to head home. I left Eretz Yisroel on a spiritual high. As soon as I deplaned, I was reminded that we're in galus. The airport was decorated with twinkling lights and festive trees. Holiday music was playing, just not my holiday. How I ached to be back in Yerushalayim. To really feel Chanukah once again.

The allure of the Greek culture was very strong. Slowly and stealthily, it had a pull that many weren't able to resist. There were those amongst the Jewish people who took on Greek names, dressed in Greek fashion, studied Greek philosophy and art, and went to the Greek gymnasiums.

The world we live in is no different. We are surrounded by outside secular influences. Media bombards us with non-Jewish messages which insidiously seep in. At times,

it is hard to make a line of demarcation between our world and the secular world around us.

I'm reminded of a story about a little girl I know. It was the first snow of the season. Dressed for the cold, the little girl ran outside, diving into the deep snow. With a big smile on her face, she called out "It's X...... mas, it's X......mas" over and over again. This little girl had become a victim of the onslaught of holiday programming, one holiday video too many. Upon first hearing this, my first reaction was a good laugh. But then, the feeling of, it's galus, it's galus hit me hard.

The messengers returned to Yaakov, telling him that Eisav was heading his way with an army of four hundred men. Yaakov turns to Hashem with tefilla. "Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav" (Bereishis 32:12). Why the redundancy? Would it not have been sufficient to say, "Save me from Eisav", or "Save me from my brother"? The Beis HaLevi teaches that Yaakov was afraid of fighting a war on two fronts. Save me from Eisav, Eisav the warrior. But he was also afraid of Eisav, "the brother." The threat of assimilation, of becoming a brother and slowly being influenced by his way of life. Yaakov davened that Hashem be with him if there would be a physical war, and at the same time, he davened for siyata dishmaya, divine assistance to be strong in case of a spiritual war.

The miracle of Chanukah was on both fronts. Yes, the Chashmonaim chased the Greeks out of Eretz Yisroel. They reclaimed the Beis Ha-Mikdash. But even greater was their victory in the battle for the Jewish soul. As we approach Chanukah, let the message of the Chanukah light be with us. A little light illuminates darkness.

## Bring Them Home!

### Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers (Updated: 11 Kislev)

אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור) שמות חיילים פצועים לרפואה שלמה אביתר בן גליה (דוד) אגם בת מירב (ברגר) אביתר מנחם חיים בן זהבה אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי) אברהם מרדכי בן יעל אוהד בן קרן (יהלומי) אהרו בו שרה הנדל אור בן גאולה (לוי) אופק בו אלינור איתן בן רות אדית (הורן) אורי אברהם בן הדסה איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור) אייל אליעזר בן חנה אלון בן עידית (אהל) איתן אשר בן דבורה אליה בן סיגלית (כהו) אלון בן מרים אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי) אלחנן יאיר בן דבורה אלכסנדר סשה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב) אליה בן רוית אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט) אלישע יהודה בן רות אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי) אלעד בן שרית ארבל בת יעל (יהוד) אמיר בן אלה אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו) בנימין בן ריינה אריאל בן שירי (ביבס) בנימין יצחק בן שרה בר אברהם בן גיוליה (קופרשטיין) בר בן נורית גד משה בן שרה (מוזס) גלעד איתי בן אפרת גיא בן מירב (גלבוע דלאל) דוד בן זיוה גלי בן טליה (ברמן) הראל בן חנה דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו) חיים מרדכי בן שרה איטה טל גרשון בן שרה יאיר יונה בן דרורה צפורה מלכה יהודה אהרון בן מרים אסתר יהונתן יאשיהו בן כרמית יהונתן יוסף בן שירה יואל בן אילה יוחאי יהודה בו סיגל חוה ירין אליהו בן סיגל כפיר חיים בן מירה מרים מיכאל בן פריידל מישל בת אנג'ליקה מנחם דוד חי בן מרים משה אהרן בן לאה בילא משה צבי בן עירית מתן בן דבורה נועם אברהם בן עטרה שלומית ניר בן אורנה עדי מנחם בן מורן מירה עודד אפרים בן ויויאן

דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר) דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבוע) זיו בן טליה (ברמן) טל בן ניצה (שוהם קורנגולד) יאיר בן רות אידית (הורן) יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה) יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט) יצחק בן דבורה (עידן) ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס) כפיר בן שירי (ביבס) לירי רבקה בת שירה (אלבג) מקסים בן טלה (הרקין) מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט) מתן בן ירדנה עינב (צנגאוקר) נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן) נעמה בת איילת (לוי) עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ) עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט) עומר בן שלי (שם טוב) עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון) עוז חי בן סמדר עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר) עידן בן טובה עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן) עמיחי בן סיגלית רחל קיתי שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל) עמית יהונתן בן מאיה קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב) רואי בן עופרה רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי) רון בן אבישג רומי בת מירב (גונו) רון בן שרון שגב בן גלית (כלפון) רועי חיים בן מירב שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל) תום שאול בן דניאל שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס) תומר בן צפורה שלמה בן מרסל (מנצור) תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)

## Bring Them Home!

## Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers (Updated: 11 Kislev)

#### INJURED SOLDIERS

Evyatar Menachem Chaim ben Zehava Avraham Mordechai ben Yael Aharon ben Sarah Hendel Ofek ben Elinor Ori Avraham ben Hadassah Eyal Eliezer ben Chana Eitan Asher ben Devora Alon ben Miriam Elchanan Yair ben Devorah Eliva ben Ravit Elisha Yehudah ben Rut Elad ben Sarit Amir ben Ella Binyamin ben Reina Binyamin Yitzchak ben Sarah Bar ben Nurit Gilad Itai ben Efrat David ben Ziva Harel ben Chana Chaim Mordechai ben Sarah Itta Tal Gershon ben Sarah Yair Yonah ben Drora Tzipporah Malka Yehuda Aharon ben Miriam Esther Yehonatan Yoshiyahu ben Carmit Yehonatan Yosef ben Shira Yoel ben Ayala Yochai Yehudah ben Sigal Chava Yarin Eliyahu ben Sigal Kfir Chaim ben Mira Miriam Michael ben Freidel Michelle bat Angelika Menachem David Chai ben Miriam Moshe Aharon ben Leah Beila Moshe Tzi ben Irit Matan ben Devorah Nir ben Orna Noam Avraham ben Atara Shlomit Adi Menachem ben Moran Mira Oded Efraim ben Vivian Oz Chai ben Smadar Idan ben Tova Amichai ben Sigalit Rachel Amit Yehonatan ben Maya Roi ben Ofra Ron ben Avishag Ron ben Sharon Roi Chaim ben Meirav Tom Shaul ben Danielle

Tomer ben Tzipporah

Avinatan ben Ditza Tirtza (Ohr) Evyatar ben Galya (David) Agam bat Meirav (Berger) Ohad ben Esther (Ben-Ami) Ohad ben Keren (Yahalomi) Ohr ben Geula (Levi) Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen) Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor) Alon ben Idit (Ohel) Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen) Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi) Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah (Tropanov) Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut) Emily Tehilla bat Amanda Francis (Damari) Arbel bat Yael (Yehud) Ariel ben Sylvia Monica (Konyo) Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas) Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein) Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Mozes) Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal) Gali ben Talya (Berman) David ben Sylvia Monica (Konyo) Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher) Daniella bat Orli (Gilboa) Ziv ben Talya (Berman) Tal ben Nitza (Shoham-Corngold) Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen) Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana) Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat) Yarden ben Penina (Bibas) Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas) Liri Rivka bat Shira (Elbag) Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin) Matan ben Anat (Angrest) Matan ben Yardena Einav (Tzangauker) Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen) Naama bat Ayelet (Levi) Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz) Omer ben Niva (Venkrat) Omer ben Shelley (Shemtov) Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon) Idan ben Yael (Alexander) Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran) Yitzchak ben Devorah (Idan) Keith Shmuel ben Gladis Chava (Segal) Karina bat Irena (Ariav) Rom ben Tamar Noa (Brasalevsky) Romi bat Meiray (Gonen) Segev ben Galit (Chalfon) Sagi ben Naamit (Chen-Dekel) Shiri bat Margit (Bibas) Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour) Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)