



## “I will provide your rains in their time”

# The Brilliant Insight of the Kedushas Levi and Rabbi Bunem Concerning the Difference between “עוברי דרכים” and “הולכי דרכים”

On the upcoming, auspicious Shabbas Kodesh, we will read the parshiyos of Behar and Bechukosai. HKB”H promises all those who dedicate themselves to the study of Torah to abide by and fulfill its precepts that rains will fall at the proper times and the earth will produce an abundance of food. Here is the pertinent text at the beginning of parshas Bechukosai (Vayikra 26, 3):

”אם בחוקותי תלכו ואת מצוותי תשמרו ועשיתם אותם, ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם ונתנה הארץ יכולה ועץ השדה יתן פריו, והשיג לכם דיש את בציר ובציר ישיג את זרע ואכלתם לחמכם לשובע וישבתם לבטח בארצכם, ונתתי שלום בארץ ושכבתם ואין מחריד.”

**If you will follow My decrees and observe My mitzvos and perform them; then I will provide your rains in their time, and the land will yield its produce and the tree of the field will bear its fruit. Threshing will overtake vintage for you, and the vintage will last until the sowing; you will eat bread to satiety, and you will dwell securely in your land. I will provide peace in the land, and you will lie down with none to frighten you . . .**

Rashi comments based on the Toras Kohanim: **“If you will follow My decrees”**: One might think that this is a reference to the fulfillment of mitzvos. When it says, **“and you will observe My mitzvos and perform them,”** the fulfillment of mitzvos has already been stated in the passuk. What then is meant by the phrase **“if you will follow My decrees”**? That you should labor in the study of Torah. **“And observe**

**My mitzvos” signifies that you should labor in the study of Torah in order to observe and to fulfill that which you learn . . . “And I will provide your rains in their time” means at times when it is not customary for people to go out, such as Shabbas nights.**

We will begin our discussion with the sacred words of the Yitav Lev (Vayishlach); he explains these pesukim based on a wonderful introduction he brings down in the name of the great Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, zy”a, the author of the Kedushas Levi. The latter addresses the following passage in the Gemara (Ta’anis 24b):

”רבי חנינא בן דוסא הוה קא אזיל באורחא, אתא מיטרא, אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם כל העולם כולו בנחת וחנינא בצער, פסק מיטרא, כי מטא לביתיה אמר לפניו, רבונו של עולם כל העולם כולו בצער וחנינא בנחת, אתא מיטרא.

אמר רב יוסף מאי אהניא ליה צלותא דכהן גדול לגבי רבי חנינא בן דוסא, דתנן היה מתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון, מאי מצלי... יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו, שתהא השנה הזו גשומה... ואל יכנס לפניך תפלת עוברי דרכים.”

**Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa was once traveling along a road when the rains came. He said to Him, “Master of the Universe, the entire world is comfortable (they are indoors and happy that it is raining), but Chanina is suffering.” The rain ceased. When he arrived at his home, he said to Him, “Master of the Universe, the entire world is in distress (because the rain stopped), and Chanina is comfortable.” The rain resumed. Rav Yosef said (concerning the power**

of Rabbi Chanina): **Of what benefit was the prayer of the Kohen Gadol vis-a-vis Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa? As we learned in a Mishnah: The Kohen Gadol would pray a short prayer in the outer chamber. The Gemara asks: What would he pray?... “May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d, that this year shall be rainy... and may the prayer of travelers (to pause the rain) not be permitted to come before You.”**

Rashi explains that after the Kohen Gadol emerged from the Kodesh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur, he would offer a short tefilah. One of the issues he requested was that Hashem not listen to the tefilos of travelers requesting that He hold back the rain. Yet, we see that the tefilah of Rabbi Chanina overrode the tefilah of the Kohen Gadol; HKB”H paused the rain on his account.

Clearly, this requires further explanation. Indeed, how did Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa have the power to override the brief tefilah of the Kohen Gadol on the holiest day of the year? Here is the marvelous explanation the Yitav Lev presents in the name of the esteemed Rabbi of Berdichev, zy”a:

**There are two categories (of travelers): (1) The first is referred to as “עוברי דרכים”—namely, their only goal is to go and reach their desired destination; such a person hurries until he arrives at his destination. (2) The second is referred to as “הולכי דרכים”—such a person realizes that wherever he goes is controlled by Hashem, so that he will rectify some holy “nitzotz” there related to his neshamah, and that is the true purpose for his going (on that path). It is just that Hashem, the Blessed One, gave him a reason to go to his desired destination, so that he would pass through certain places along the way.**

**In this manner, they (the Ohr Meir and the Heichal Berachah) interpreted the passuk (Tehillim 37, 23): “For, it is by Hashem that a man’s footsteps are given direction; yet, he (man) will favor his (own) way,” for his own purpose. Understand. Thus, the Kohen Gadol prayed that the tefilah of “עוברי דרכים”—someone who is merely going along the way—should not be addressed. Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, in contrast, was in the category of “הולכי דרכים”; he most certainly did not deserve to suffer along his way; hence, the rains halted.**

It is worth noting that in the sefer Kol Mivaser, he presents several Ma’amarei Simchah (67) in the name of Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson, ztz”l. He relates an incident involving Rabbi Bunem of Peshischa, zy”a. Rabbi Bunem was once walking outside the city accompanied by his “talmid,” the great Rabbi of Kotzk, zy”a. Pouring rain began to fall; Rabbi Bunem prayed for the rain to stop. His “talmid” pointed out that the Gemara teaches that on Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol prayed: **“ואל יכנס לפניך תפלת עוברי דרכים”**.

Rabbi Bunem explained to him that there is a difference between **“עוברי דרכים”** and **“הולכי דרכים”**. The former are merely passing from place to place; their only goal is to arrive at a desired destination. If they could fly, they would avoid the entire journey and just arrive at their destination. The tefilah of the Kohen Gadol applied to these travelers—namely, **“עוברי דרכים”**. In contrast, the latter are interested in the journey and path itself; every step of the way is important to them; the prayer of the Kohen Gadol was not addressed to them. We, Rabbi Bunem informed his “talmid,” fall into the category of **“הולכי דרכים”**. As such, it is appropriate for us to pray for the pouring rain to stop.

## **“Yaakov went on his way” as a “הולכי דרכים”**

Based on this, the Yitav Lev interprets the words of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (ibid. 119, 1): **“אשרי תמימי דרך—praiseworthy are those whose way is wholesome, who walk with the Torah of Hashem.** David HaMelech is praising those who perform wholesome service along the way; in other words, they occupy themselves with the precepts of Hashem’s Torah while they are walking. As such, they are considered **“הולכי דרכים”** and not just **“עוברי דרכים”**. Their entire path has a purpose.

In this manner, he interprets Eisav’s remark to Yaakov (Bereishis 33, 12): **“וַיֹּאמֶר נִסְעָה וּנְלַכְהָ וְאֵלֶיךָ לֵנָדָב”—he said, “Travel on and let us go; I will proceed alongside you.”** Earlier, the Torah states explicitly (ibid. 32, 2): **“וַיַּעֲקֹב הֵלֵךְ—Yaakov went on his way, and malachim of G-d encountered him.** He asserts that the Torah is teaching us that Yaakov was not merely an **“עובר”** **“הולכי”**, but, on the contrary, he fell into the category of **“הולכי”**.

"הלך דרכים. Hence, the passuk states specifically that Yaakov "לדרכו"; and the passuk concludes: **"and malachim of G-d encountered him"**—referring to the sparks of kedushah that he encountered along the way to be rectified by him.

Seeing that his brother was on this elite level, Eisav wanted to emulate Yaakov. Hence, he suggested that they travel together— "נלכה"—as "הולכי דרכים". To which Yaakov responded (ibid. 33, 14): **"יעבר נא אדוני לפני עבדו"**—**let my lord go ahead of his servant**. He pointed out that Eisav's sole desire was to reach his destination without rectifying anything along the way. As such, he fell into the category of "עוברי דרכים". I, on the other hand: **"אתנהלה לאטי"**—**will make my way at my slow pace**—as a "הולכי דרכים"; **"לרגל המלאכה אשר לפני"**—**according to the gait of the work that is before me**—to gather and collect all the sparks of kedushah along the way; **"עד אשר אבוא אל אדוני"**—**until I come to my lord at Seir**. According to Rashi, Yaakov was hinting to Eisav that he would, indeed, come to Seir in the times of the Mashiach, as it states (Ovadiah 1, 21): **"ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון לשפוט את הר עשו"**—**and saviors will arise upon Har Tziyon to mete out justice to Har Eisav.**

Based on this, the Yitav Lev says that this is the message conveyed by the passuk in our parsha: **"אם בחוקותי תלכו ואת מצוותי תשמרו"** and Rashi's comment: **You should labor in the study of Torah in order to observe and to fulfill that which you learn**. The Torah is emphasizing the importance of dealing with Torah matters that we encounter along whatever path we are on. This is the implication of the term "תלכו"—that we should be "הולכי דרכים" rather than "עוברי דרכים".

If we accomplish this feat, the Torah assures us: **"ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם"**—as Rashi explains, the rains will come **at times when it is not customary for people to go out, such as Shabbas nights**. Thus, they will truly be treated like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa—i.e., the rains will be held back while they are out and about and will only fall on Shabbas nights when they are indoors. Since they will be categorized as "הולכי דרכים"—fulfilling the precepts of the Torah and rectifying sparks of kedushah while they are outside moving about on their various paths, the tefilah of the Kohen Gadol—**"ואל יכנס לפניך תפלת עוברי דרכים"**—was not directed toward them. This concludes his sacred insight.

## Rabbi Yossi's Great Fear

With this understanding, it gives me great pleasure to explain the specific language employed in the following Gemara (Berachos 3a):

"אמר רבי יוסי פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך ונכנסתי לחורבה אחת מחורבות ירושלים להתפלל, בא אליהו זכור לטוב ושומר לי על הפתח עד שסיימתי תפילתי, לאחר שסיימתי תפילתי אמר לי שלום עליך רבי, ואמרתי לו שלום עליך רבי ומורי, ואמר לי בני מפני מה נכנסת לחורבה זו, אמרתי לו להתפלל, ואמר לי היה לך להתפלל בדרך, ואמרתי לו מתיירא הייתי שמא יפסיקו בי עוברי דרכים, ואמר לי היה לך להתפלל תפלה קצרה."

**Rabbi Yossi said: I was once traveling on the road, and I entered one of the ruins of Yerushalayim to pray. Eliyahu, who is remembered for good, came and waited for me at the entrance until I finished my tefilah. After I finished my tefilah (and exited the ruin), he said to me, "Greetings to you, my teacher." And I answered him, "Greetings to you, my teacher, my mentor." Then he said to me, "My son, why did you enter this ruin?" I answered him, "To pray." Then he said to me, "You should have prayed on the road." So, I said to him, "I was afraid that I might be interrupted by passersby (עוברי דרכים)." And he said to me, "You should have recited the abridged tefilah."**

In keeping with this discussion, we can suggest that Rabbi Yossi deliberately said: **"פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך"**—employing the term "מהלך"—rather than: **"פעם אחת הייתי עובר בדרך"**—employing the term "עובר". He was emphasizing that he was not in the category of "עוברי דרכים", those who are merely passing by with the sole purpose of reaching their desired destination. Rather, he was in the category of "הולכי דרכים", with the purpose of rectifying sparks of kedushah along the way that were waiting there for a tikun from his unique kedushah.

This then is what he implied to Eliyahu HaNavi: **"מתיירא"** His concern was related specifically to "עוברי דרכים", since their only concern is to reach their destination as soon as possible. As such, they would not have the patience to wait for someone wanting to stop to pray along the way. He was not concerned about "הולכי דרכים", since they would not be inclined to interrupt his tefilah. After all, his tefilah would also help them clarify sparks of kedushah along the way.

## Rain Is a Form of Divine Light that Helps Clarify Sparks of Kedushah

We learned from the Kedushas Levi and Rabbi Bunem that the prayer of the Kohen Gadol—that HKB”H should not entertain a prayer to halt the rain—only applied to עוברי דרכים but not הולכי דרכים like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. I would like to expand on their sacred insight.

Let us begin with a fascinating concept regarding rainfall which our master, the Arizal, teaches in Likutei Torah in relation to the passuk (Tehillim 84, 7): “עוברי בעמק הבכא”—those who pass through the Valley of Weeping. The Gaon Chida, ztz”l, presents this teaching in Dvash L’Fee (9, 5); there, he also explains why the Torah establishes that the reward for studying Torah and performing mitzvos is rainfall. He relies on the following Gemara (Ta’anis 8b): “אמר רבי יוחנן גדול יום הגשמים כיום קיבוץ גלויות, שנאמר שובה ה' את שביתנו כאפיקים בנגב, ואין.” Rabbi Yochanan said: A day of rainfall is as great as the day of the ingathering of the exiles, for it is said (Tehillim 126, 4): “Hashem, return our exiles like ‘afikim’ in the desert.” And “afikim” refers exclusively to rain, as it is said (ibid. 18, 16): “Then the ‘afikim’ (origins) of the water appeared.” The Arizal explains for us the connection between rainfall and the ingathering of exiles. Here is a translation of the pertinent passages:

Since Adam HaRishon sinned, the good and bad remained intermingled, and sparks of kedushah fell into the klipah. The performance of mitzvos and even death are all for the sake of these clarifications. Once the clarification process is completed, Mashiach will come. This is the purpose of the rain falling from above and causing plant-life to sprout forth. What causes the plant-life to emerge from the earth? It is the sparks of kedushah that are admixed within the klipah and are coming out.

Here is how the clarification works: A heavenly (divine) light descends from the kedushah above in the rain. Then the sparks of kedushah located in the depths of the klipos ascend to greet the descending light; they cling together, ascend, and are clarified. The rain is a divine light descending from above; they are male waters; correspondingly, the sparks ascending to greet them are female waters.

This is the meaning of the teaching (Yerushalmi Ta’anis 1, 3): “There is no drop that falls from above that several drops do not ascend from below toward it,” because these sparks, which are from the realm of kedushah, are bound in iron chains in the depths of the klipos. They desire and long to ascend to their source. They are unable to do so until they are assisted by the forces above. Then they ascend with gusto two drops for each one.

Seeing as all the benefits that await us depend on this clarification, since our righteous Mashiach will come when it is completed, and the clarification depends on the rain; therefore, there is no greater punishment mentioned in the Torah than the withholding of rain. And regarding the greatest reward, it is written (Devarim 11, 14): “Then I shall provide the rain of your land”—since the coming of the Mashiach hinges on the rain. This is the deeper meaning of the statement: “A day of rainfall is as great as the day of the ingathering of the exiles.” But what is the connection between the two? It is because the ingathering of the exiles itself is an ingathering of all these sparks that are in galus. Hence, “a day of rainfall is as great as...,” because it itself is the ingathering of exiles.

## The Vegetation in the Ground Cannot Free Itself

Let us elaborate. We know that the sin of Adam HaRishon partaking of the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa caused the admixture of good and bad throughout creation—the holy sparks with the klipos. It is man’s mission in this world to clarify the good from the bad and elevate the holy sparks from the klipos. The sparks of kedushah themselves are captive within the klipos; they cannot go free without help from above. It is analogous to the reality of (Berachos 5b): “אין חבוש מתיר עצמו מבית האסורים”—a prisoner does not release himself from confinement.

The wisest of all men alludes to this as follows (Koheles 4, 1): “ושבתי אני ואראה את כל העשוקים אשר נעשים תחת השמש והנה:—I returned and contemplated all the acts of oppression that are committed beneath the sun: Behold! Tears of the oppressed with none to comfort them. We can interpret this as referring to the sparks of kedushah that are confined within the klipos and shed tears like a stream hoping to be released from their captors and

to return to the realm of kedushah. Therefore, they require assistance from above to release them from the Valley of Tears. It is analogous to someone drowning in the sea; he needs someone outside above the water to extend him a hand to help him out of the water.

Thus the Arizal teaches us that dirt of the earth is like the klipos that are compared to dirt; the vegetation that comes out of the ground and is edible is like the sparks of kedushah that are emerging from their captivity. However, the plant-life cannot emerge from the klipos without help from above. Therefore, HKB”H brings rain down from above, which is a heavenly light encloded within the drops of rain. This enables the sparks of kedushah—the plant-life—concealed and confined in the depths of the earth to reveal themselves and emerge from the klipos.

It is also well-known that the purpose of Yisrael descending into the various galuyos is to gather in the sparks of kedushah scattered throughout the world and to elevate them back up to their holy source. As Chazal taught (Pesachim 87b): **“לא הגלה”**—**HKB”H only exiled Yisrael among the nations in order to add converts “geirim” to their numbers.** In Sha’ar HaPesukim (Shemos), the Arizal explains that **“גרים”** refers to the sparks of kedushah that were concealed and confined within the klipos and were released. For this reason, Yisrael were exiled among the nations to gather in these **“geirim.”** This explains very nicely the Arizal’s interpretation of Rabbi Yochanan’s statement: **“גדול יום הגשמים כיום קיבוץ גלויות”**. Since the rain is an extraordinary light descending from above to help the sparks of kedushah emerge from the dirt of the klipos, the day of rain is indeed like the day of the ingathering of exiles—referring to the sparks of kedushah throughout the galuyos.

### **The Rationale for Reciting “מוריד הגשם” in the Berachah of “Techiyas HaMeisim”**

Based on what we have learned from the Arizal, we can understand why our blessed sages, Members of the Great Assembly, instituted that we mention **“מוריד הגשם”** in Shemoneh Esrei in the berachah of **“מחיה המתים”**. The source for this is found in the Mishnah (Berachos 33a): **“מזכירין”**—**גבורות גשמים בתחיית המתים** (during the winter months)

**we mention the powers of rain during the berachah of “Techiyas HaMeisim.”** The Gemara analyzes this practice (ibid.): **“מאי טעמא, אמר רב יוסף, מתוך ששקולה כתחיית המתים, לפיכך”**—**“מאי טעמא, אמר רב יוסף, מתוך ששקולה כתחיית המתים, לפיכך”**—**what is the reason for this? Rav Yosef said: Because rain is tantamount to “Techiyas HaMeisim” (the resurrection of the dead); therefore, they placed it in “Techiyas HaMeisim.”** It behooves us to consider the association of rainfall with **“Techiyas HaMeisim.”**

We will begin by focusing on the formula of the berachah: **“מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים”**—**and He revives the dead with abundant mercy.** Then the berachah concludes with the words: **“מחיה המתים”**—**Who revives the dead.** Curiously, this berachah is formulated in the present tense instead of the future tense. This is because HKB”H rescues many sparks of kedushah mired in the klipos—which is tantamount to death—on a daily basis; this is analogous to **“Techiyas HaMeisim.”** In the words of Chazal (ibid. 18b): **“רשעים בחייהן”**—**רשעים בחייהן—reshaim are considered dead even during their lifetimes.** Similarly, as long as the sparks of kedushah are trapped and mired in the klipos, they are considered to be dead. Hence, when HKB”H extracts them from their confinement, it is a form of **“Techiyas HaMeisim.”** This prompted our sages to institute the formula of the berachah in the present tense: **“מחיה המתים”**.

This explains very nicely why Chazal established the mention of the powers of rain in this berachah. For, as the Arizal explained, rainfall embodies a heavenly light with which HKB”H assists the sparks of kedushah—the vegetation trapped within the depths of the earth—to emerge from that darkness into the light. This is truly a form of **“Techiyas HaMeisim”**; for the sparks of kedushah trapped within the klipos resemble the dead, and they are being resurrected and revived by the rain.

We also recite in the formula of this berachah: **“ומקיים אמונתו”**—**ומקיים אמונתו—and He keeps His faith with those who sleep in the dust.** In the siddur of the Arizal, he asserts that **“those who sleep in the dust”** refers to the sparks of kedushah mired in the klipos. Based on what we have learned, this is related to the utterance of **“מוריד הגשם”**. For, by means of the rain, HKB”H helps **“those who sleep in the dust”**—the sparks of kedushah—to wake up, come back to life, and emerge from the ground.

## The Tefilah of the Kohen Gadol on Yom HaKippurim

Based on this incredible insight from the Arizal, we can now better appreciate the significance of the tefilah of the Kohen Gadol on the holiest, most spiritual day of the year. He prayed for the Almighty to dismiss the tefilah of those travelling on the roads to halt the rain. For, as we have interpreted the passuk: "מה' מצעדי גבר כוננו ודרכו יחפץ"—the ideal is for a person travelling on the roads not to merely pass by on the way to his destination but to elevate the sparks of kedushah that are encountered along the way. In fact, he should acknowledge that HKB"H arranged for him to specifically choose that path, because sparks of kedushah are located there that he specifically is meant to elevate. This then is the meaning of the conclusion of the passuk: "ודרכו יחפץ"—the reason this person is inclined to choose this path specifically is because it is "דרכו"—the path related to the source of his neshamah, where the sparks he is supposed to clarify are located.

Therefore, it was specifically on Yom HaKippurim, the day to make amends and rectify iniquities, that the Kohen Gadol offered this tefilah concerning "עוברי דרכים". As we have learned, the intended purpose of travelling the roads is to clarify the sparks of kedushah located along the way. This process requires divine assistance in the form of rainfall. So, it is improper for those travelers to pray for that incredible,

heavenly light to be withheld, which would prevent the sparks of kedushah along the way from being clarified.

Thus, we have achieved a better understanding and shed light on the remarks of the Kedushas Levi and Rabbi Bunem. They taught that the tefilah of the Kohen Gadol: "ואל יכנס לפניך" "עוברי דרכים"—was only directed to "עוברי דרכים" but not to "הולכי דרכים" like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. The former do not intend to rectify anything along the way. The latter, on the other hand, deserve to have the rain paused on their behalf temporarily until they reach home safely.

In conclusion, the purpose of rainfall is to help clarify sparks of kedushah concealed and trapped along the roads. Therefore, with regards to travelers classified as "עוברי דרכים"—whose sole concern is to reach their desired destination and do not bother to rectify anything along the way—it is certainly inappropriate to honor their tefilah to hold back the rain. After all, rain embodies an incredible, heavenly light that rectifies sparks of kedushah on the road that these travelers choose to ignore. In contrast, those travelers classified as "הולכי דרכים"—like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who intend to rectify sparks of kedushah waiting for them along the way—it is definitely appropriate to pause the rain while they are on the road, since they themselves are fulfilling the sacred function of the rain by elevating the sparks of kedushah they encounter on the road.

Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of אחינו בני ישראל

Yoselovsky Family - לעילוי נשמת  
his father Reb Shabsy  
Ben Yitzchok Isaac ע"ה

Family Madeb - לעילוי נשמת  
their dear mother  
Lea bat Virgini ע"ה

Arthur & Randi Luxenberg לזכות  
of their wonderful parents, children and grandchildren  
לעילוי נשמת His Father ר' יצחק יהודה בן ר' אברהם ע"ה

To receive the mamarim by email: [mamarim@shvileipinchas.com](mailto:mamarim@shvileipinchas.com)