



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM
THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

ישראל בן רחל נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה
MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

Don't get Angry on Shabbos

לֹא תִבְעֵרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: (לה, ג)

Do not kindle fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day. (35:3)

Besides ordinary, physical fire, there is another kind of “fire” that we should not kindle on *Shabbos*, and that is the fire of anger, as *Chazal* say in the *Zohar*.

In truth, anger is something to avoid at all times. *Chazal* emphasize the evils of anger. They say that someone who gets angry is considered as if he is worshipping idols, and all types of *Gehinnom* take hold of him.¹ Anger causes greater damage than all other negative things because an angry person loses his better judgment and his self-control, and is thus liable to do every bad thing.

However, there are times when a person needs to get a little angry. For instance, to offer reproof or to stand up for the truth. Also at home there are times when a person needs to get a little heated up in order to direct the members of household on the right path.

In these situations it is always forbidden for anger

to get the better of him. He should rather do as our Rabbis teach: the anger should be on his face and not in his heart. This may be compared to someone who kindles a fire in order to warm his home. If it is in the proper amount, it is beneficial, and will not burn down the house.

Regarding this, our verse informs us that even “good” anger should not be kindled on *Shabbos*. Because *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* are days of rest and joy. There is no place for anger on them.

Now, a Jew who engages in Torah study has the aspect of *Shabbos kodesh*. This is because *Shabbos* is the main source of *kedushah* in the world, and also Torah study is the source of life; it is the world’s soul. A person who dedicates his life to Torah study thus needs to minimize anger as much as possible and not get heated up even when it seems to be permitted.

However, we can gain even from undesirable

¹ *Nedarim* 32a.

situations. People can be awakened by undesirable occurrences. For instance, there are situations where a person does not have control over himself, and anger comes over him suddenly and against his will. In such a case, anger should serve as a “red light” for him.

Chazal say:

If a person gets angry, we know that his sins are greater than his merits, as it says, “The angry person has many transgressions^{2,3}.”

In other words, anger serves a warning sign to a person that he is in a state of “His sins are greater than his merits.”

This is a very, very dangerous state to be in. The Rambam writes:

Every person has merits and sins. Someone whose merits are greater than his sins is righteous, and

someone whose sins are greater than his merits is wicked.... A person whose sins are greater than his merits immediately dies in his wickedness....⁴

We don't possess enough self-awareness to correctly judge our spiritual state. Even if a person sees himself as busily engaged in *mitzvos*, the Rambam writes:

Heaven weighs [a person's deeds] only according to the evaluation of the G-d of knowledge, and He is the One who knows how to balance merits against sins.⁵

However, if a person finds himself getting angry, this is a sure sign that he is in the state of “His sins are greater than his merits,” and his life is in danger!

When this happens a person needs to quickly do *teshuvah*. And not just for the sin of anger itself but also for his other sins, since he just found out that his sins are greater than his merits. A person can thereby get himself out of danger and merit a good and long life. ●

2 *Mishlei* 29:22.

3 *Nedarim ad loc.*

4 *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:1-2.

5 *Ibid.*

Giving without Limits

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל הַנָּשִׁים כָּל גְּדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וְנָזָם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל כְּלֵי זָהָב. (לה, כב)

The men came with the women. All people of generous hearts brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, private ornaments; all kinds of golden ornaments. (35:22)

It is so wonderful what the Torah tells us about the generosity of the Jewish people for the *Mishkan*.

When the campaign was announced for raising

Mishkan materials, everyone responded right away and brought the most precious things they had. They donated gold, silver and copper, as well as jewels

לְעִירְוֵי נִשְׁמֹת

מִוִּהָרַד מֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַמְּבוֹרָח זצ"ל

וּמִוִּהָרַד בְּרוּךְ זָאב בֶּן נִפְתָּלִי קְרָאוֹס זצ"ל

גְּדֵבַת נִבְדִּיהֶם ~ עֶשְׂרֵת זָקֵנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְהַפָּאָרַת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם

and precious stones of various types. The women even took off their jewelry and brought it in for the *Mishkan*.

The response was so immense that those in charge of receiving the materials came and told Moshe, “The people are bringing too much!” Not only did they already bring more than enough, but they kept on donating more and more, without stop, until Moshe needed to make an announcement that people should please stop donating.

It was like the best possible dream for anyone who ever tried to raise funds for a *shul* or *yeshivah*. Imagine you are trying to get donations for a *mitzvah* cause, and you have to make a public announcement to please stop donating because there is already too much money!

And don't think our forefathers disregarded money. In the beginning of *Parshas Tzav*, *Rashi* explains that the word צַו, with which the *parshah* begins, urges people to do as commanded even when it costs them money. People were always attached to their possessions and always felt it hard to part with them. When *Moshe Rabbeinu* looked for judges to appoint over the people, he didn't have trouble finding candidates who were wealthy (and thus had no need to flatter and favor rich and important litigants) but he did have a hard time finding ones who were dispassionate toward their possessions.¹

Nevertheless, when it came to building the *Mishkan*, the people showed such generosity that after a single announcement, an unending flood of money started pouring in. Also the women, who were quite unwilling to part with their jewelry to make the *Eigel Hazahav*, when it came to building a *Mishkan* for *Hashem* they willingly took off their ornaments and brought them in. The participation was complete and wondrous, the likes of which we don't find elsewhere in the Torah, and we surely don't see it happening around us.

Maybe it was because building the *Mishkan* was

not a *mitzvah* like other *mitzvos*. It says:

They shall make a sanctuary for Me, and
I will dwell within **them**.²

The *Mishkan* caused *Hashem* to dwell among the people themselves. The *Shechinah* came to rest not just in the *Mishkan* but among the Jewish people. This entails love and closeness to *Hashem*. The light of the *Shechinah's* presence is the true and lasting life. Its great illumination contains everything good and pleasant. So when the people heard that they have the opportunity to build a House in which they will be unified with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, they simply poured out their gold and silver to attain this purpose, to the point that they needed to be stopped.

Also today we have ways in which the *Shechinah* comes to rest among us. *Chazal* say:

Husband and wife, if they behave
meritoriously, the *Shechinah* is between
them.³

We can see that most of the quarrels in the home are usually about financial matters. The husband thinks the wife is spending too much, or the wife wants something that the husband doesn't agree to buy. Also with two friends, if they had a joint financial venture that did not turn out satisfactorily, are likely to quarrel. This, too, causes the *Shechinah* to depart.

Let us remember our forefathers. Also they felt an attachment to money and possessions. And despite this, they poured out money like it was water, in order for the *Shechinah* to dwell among them. They didn't think twice. They just gave and gave and gave.

It is worth it for us, too, to give up on a little money, and not quarrel about it, so there will be peace in our home and our surroundings. Then *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will bring His *Shechinah* to rest among us and will hurry the *Geulah Sheleimah*. ●

¹ *Rashi, Shemos* 18:21

² *Shemos* 25:8.

³ *Sotah* 17a.

You are the Mishkan

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם: (כה, ח)

They shall make a Mikdash for Me and I will dwell within them. (25:8)

Above and Below, the same Pattern

Betzalel, the master craftsman in charge of constructing the *Mishkan*, was more than just a skilled artisan. *Hashem* says about him, “I filled him with the spirit of G-d, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge.”¹ After what pattern did he design the *Mishkan*? And what significance does this pattern have?

Sefer Nefesh Hachaim tells us about the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash*:

Included in the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash* were all the forces and all the worlds and all the patterns of *kedushah*. All its houses and chambers and upper rooms and lower rooms and all its sacred utensils were all formed in a way that resembles the shape and likeness of the holy upper worlds and the Divine *Merkavah*.

It was set up by David Hamelech and Shmuel the Seer. Everything was according to the Divine understanding granted to them by *Hashem* regarding how to make the shape of the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash*.²

And what about the location of *Beis Hamikdash*? How was that chosen?

What is the meaning of, “David and Shmuel went and dwelled in... Nayot, in Ramah”?³ What is the connection between Nayot and Ramah [seeing as they are two different places]? It means they dwelled in

Ramah and occupied themselves with the beauty (נוי) of the world.⁴

They looked in the Torah to find the right place to build *Beis Hamikdash* [which is the “beauty of the world”].⁵

So we see that the form of *Beis Hamikdash* reflects the structure of the heavenly worlds above, and that its location was chosen by the great David and Shmuel, who found a hint in the Torah as to its proper place.

Sefer Nefesh Hachaim goes on to say:

This is why it says in Midrash Tanchuma⁶ that *Beis Hamikdash* is equivalent to the Creation of the world, and then enumerates, respectively, all the things that were part of Creation, explaining how they were also in the *Mishkan*.

This is why the Torah says about Betzalel [who constructed the *Mishkan*]: “I filled him with the spirit of G-d, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge.”⁷ With these three things, the worlds were created, as it says, “*Hashem* established the earth with wisdom, He set up the heavens with understanding.”⁸ And this is why *Chazal* said, “Betzalel knew how to combine the letters with which heavens and earth were created.”⁹

1 *Shemos* 34:3.

2 1:4.

3 I *Shmuel* 19:18-19.

4 *Zevachim* 54b.

5 *Rashi ad loc.*

6 Beginning of *Parshas Pekudei*.

7 *Shemos* 34:3.

8 *Mishlei* 3:19.

9 *Berachos* 55a.

Therefore, a person who is a member of the holy people – who includes in himself all the patterns of Creation and the patterns of the Divine *Merkavah*, which is everything that exists – is also in the shape and form of the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash* and its sacred utensils. The various parts and faculties of his body correspond to all this. Thus the Zohar details how the whole *Mishkan* and all its utensils have allusions in the form of the human body, with exact correspondence between the parts.¹⁰

No Better Place for the Shechinah

Hakadosh Baruch Hu created a world. Heavens and earth, trees and stones, and billions of other things. All this has a certain shape and plan to it. The world was designed to serve the purpose for which it was created.

And what is that purpose?

Chazal say as follows:

When *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created the world, He desired to have a dwelling place below, just as He has above.¹¹

Hashem desired to make a home for Himself, a place for the *Shechinah* to dwell in, and that is why He built for Himself two houses, so to speak. One is way up in the heavens. But that one has only secondary preference in His eyes. He prefers the house below, in this world. That is where He desires His *Shechinah* to dwell, and that is the main reason for creating the world.

Later on, we will explain why *Hashem* desired to dwell specifically in this lowly, physical world, but for the time being, it is enough for us to know that this was His Will, and that He created the world with this purpose in mind. The whole world, with all its qualities and details, was planned out to be a

place fitting for the *Shechinah* to dwell in.

Also the upper world, even though it is not *Hashem's* preferred place of dwelling, is built according to the same exact blueprint. This must be so, since it, too, can serve as a dwelling place for *Hashem's* Presence.

Our human eyes don't see the similarity between the upper and lower worlds. But *Chazal* revealed to us a number of points of similarity between them.

To illustrate the idea, let's ask a question: is a tractor and a private car the same machine or not? If you look at a tractor and a private car from the outside, and compare them, they look awfully different.

But "under the hood" they are essentially the same. They both have the same main parts. Both have wheels, both have an engine, both have a gas pedal and brakes, both have passenger seats. However, there are some differences in the details: a private car has small wheels because it drives on paved roads, and a tractor has big, wide wheels so it can drive through dirt and mud. But both types of vehicles share the same basic design because they have the same purpose. They both need to move, to drive from place to place, etc.

It is the same with the upper and lower worlds. Although we see a tremendous difference and distance between the upper and lower worlds, and indeed, the heavens are far, far above the earth, nevertheless they share the same exact purpose. They are places for the *Shechinah* to dwell in. So they both have the same basic design.

And this applies to the *Mishkan* as well. It has the same exact purpose. It is a place for the *Shechinah* to dwell in, as it says, "They shall make a *Mikdash* for Me and I will dwell within them." That's why the upper worlds and the *Mishkan* share the same design.

And the same goes for the shape and form of a Jewish person. Why did *Hashem* create human beings? So He could bring His *Shechinah* to rest within them, as it says:

¹⁰ 1:4.

¹¹ *Tanchuma, Naso* 24.

They are the sanctuary of *Hashem*, the sanctuary of *Hashem*.¹²

And it says, “They shall make a *Mikdash* for Me and I will dwell **within them**,” which implies that the *Shechinah* actually dwells within them, within

12 *Yirmeyahu* 7:4.

Jewish individuals: ושכנתי בתוכם.

The things may not look so similar to us, but that is because we see a superficial aspect that has no essential importance. The underlying shape and form of the upper and lower worlds, the *Mishkan* and the Jewish person is the same. ●

TEFILAH TOPIC

Why do we say Korbanos? (continued)

Korbanos are Forever

When we talk about *Korbanos* there are actually two parts to the subject: the *Korbanos* that were offered in the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and reciting the Torah passages speaking of *Korbanos* as done nowadays. Our recitation of these passages is a sort of “echo” of the *Korbanos* themselves, as it says:

We shall offer bulls through our lips.¹

If we want to understand the role that this part of the *Tefilah* plays, and appreciate its purpose, first we need to look at the *Korbanos*, and understand why they are so important that they make up a great amount of the Torah. Then we can gain some understanding of why we recite these Torah passages as part of the *Tefilah*, why we “offer bulls through our lips.”

There are great differences of opinion among the *Rishonim* as to the meaning of *Korbanos*. The whole idea of bringing animal offerings is a deep matter whose significance is not readily apparent. *Sefer Nefesh Hachayim* says in the name of the Zohar that offering *Korbanos* touches the highest point of all. Of all the *mitzvos*, the one that rectifies the

1 *Hoshea* 14:3.

loftiest place is that of *Korbanos*. So much so that the exalted *madreigah* of offering *Korbanos* could be reached only when the Jewish people lived in the Holy Land with all the *sheleimus* that they had at that time.

As we see, *Korbanos* are a tremendous thing. Although we cannot offer them anymore, since we are not on that spiritual level, *Hashem* did a great kindness by giving us a *Seder Tefilah* that contains the recitation of *Korbanos*. In this way, we “offer bulls through our lips.”

Korbanos were such a great thing that when the *Beis Hamikdash* still existed, they elevated the Jewish people to a state where they could attain *ruach hakodesh*. Even after the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, and we lost our former greatness, and can no longer fulfill all the *mitzvos*, the *Korbanos* are such an awesome thing that even when we don't have them, we still have them, since they are part of our *Seder Tefilah*.

At *Bris Bein Habesarim*, *Hashem* told Avraham:

Take for Me three calves, three goats and three rams, and a turtledove and a young dove.²

2 *Bereishis* 15:9.

This covenant that *Hashem* made with Avraham insured that there will always be *Korbanos*. The very nature of a covenant is that it is everlasting,³ and this covenant was about *Korbanos*. This is because *Korbanos* are such a powerful and essential thing that they must exist at all times, in one form or another; the world cannot go on without *Korbanos*.

Besides reciting the Torah passages of *Korbanos* there is another way we can connect to them. That is by learning the tractates of *Seder Kodoshim*. The Chofetz Chaim worked hard to encourage people to study these *masechtos*.

In ancient times, people would learn the entire Torah. In the period of the *Ge'onim*, someone who knew four *sedarim* was considered a *talmid chacham*, someone who knew five was called a *Rav* and someone who knew all six was called a *Ga'on*. (The word גאון has the *gematriya* of sixty; someone who knows all the sixty *masechtos* of *Shas* is called a *Ga'on*.⁴) But every *talmid chacham* knew four *sedarim*, which are: *Mo'ed*, *Nezikin*, *Nashim* and *Kodoshim*. These *sedarim* treat matters of practical Halachic significance.⁵

From all this we see how terribly important *Korbanos* are. But why are they so? What makes them so crucial?

It's Instead of You

As mentioned earlier, the *Rishonim* had great differences of opinions regarding the significance of *Korbanos*. The Rambam presents a novel approach in *Moreh Nevuchim*.⁶ The Ramban⁷ explains *Korbanos* on the levels of *Remez* and *Sod*.

3 Vilna Gaon's commentary on *Sefer Yetzira* 1:8.

4 *Shem Hagedolim*, "Ga'on."

5 See *Bava Metzia* 114b, *Rashi s.v.* בארבעה.

6 3:46.

7 *Vayikra* 1:9.

This is the Ramban's well-known explanation of *Korbanos* on the level of *Remez*:

The deeds of human beings are composed of thought, speech and action. *Hashem* therefore commanded that when a person sins he should bring a *korban*, lean on it with his hands (corresponding to "action"), verbally confess his sins (corresponding to "speech") and burn in fire its innards and kidneys (which are the organs of thought and physical desire) and the legs (which correspond to a person's hands and feet, which perform his work), and cast the blood on the Altar (corresponding to the person's life blood).

This is so the person will think, as he does all this, that he sinned against G-d with his body and his soul, and it is fitting that his blood should be spilled and his body burnt – if not for the Creator's kindness, that He accepts a replacement from him. The *korban* atones, as its blood is in place of his blood, its life is in place of his life. The chief organs of the *korban* are in place of his chief organs.

And portions of its meat go to sustain the [*kohanim* who are] teachers of the Torah, so they will pray for him. And the *Tamid*, the daily offering, is brought because the public constantly has people who sin.⁸

We will explain what the Ramban meant by all this. But first there are a few points that need to be understood. ●

8 *Ibid*.

STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF RAV SHIMSHON PINCUS ZT"l



I Wanted to Cry

Rav Shimshon's greatness in *tefilah* was not inborn or automatic, but the culmination of a journey fraught with effort, toil, and persistence. Still, the aspirations were there, and from a young age, he experienced the potency and far-reaching effects of earnest *tefilah*.

There are very few firsthand accounts of Rav Shimshon's youth and his extraordinary affinity for prayer, yet one particular testimony regarding the early years of his marriage offers a glimpse into his lofty spirit:

In those days, the young Pincus couple dwelled in *Yerushalayim*, where Rav Shimshon flourished in the *kollel* of *Yeshivas Brisk* where he had learned previously as a *bachur*. While he was not *chassidish*, once every few *Shabbosos*, he made a point of *davening* in the Karlin-Stolin *shul* on Friday night, where the men don *talleisim* on *leil Shabbos*.

Guests entering the Karlin *beis midrash* for the first time are often overwhelmed by the roar of *tefilah* in the *heichal*. *Karliner chassidim* pride themselves on shouting the words of *tefilah* in loud voices. On one side of the *heichal*, one may glimpse a *mispallel* with his hands raised heavenward, supplicating the Master of the World; on the other side, another man may be pounding fervently on an invisible barrier in an effort to breach the barriers of *Shamayim*. Eyes half closed, they direct their gaze toward a hidden spiritual realm, and recite with a great cry, "*Lechu neranena laShem...*"

"What did you like about Karlin that you kept going back?" one of Rav Shimshon's close friends once asked him years later.

"I liked the opportunity to cry," Rav Shimshon replied matter-of-factly. "In Karlin, they wear *talleisim* on Friday night. Everywhere else, I was exposed, and I didn't want people to see me cry and think that I was anything special." Only *Hashem* saw his tears, and lovingly stored each one.

Rav Shimshon divulges in his *sefer She'arim B'Tefilah* that in his latter years he mustered the emotional prowess to conquer his tears. In his youth, however, when his blood still boiled with fervor, he was unable to rein in his emotions. This was what motivated him to attend a *minyán* where no one knew him and he could melt invisibly into the congregation of *tallis-wearers*.

Feeling Closeness

Rav Shimshon chose the paradigm of his *rebbe* as one who felt so close to *Hashem* during *davening* that he refused to forgo the experience for anything in the world.

His *rebbe* was once traveling from Israel to America via Paris. The first leg of the journey was followed by a one-hour stopover in Paris, in the course of which all passengers disembarked and toured the elegant Parisian airport until it was time to board the second flight. Avoiding the distractions and immodesty, Rav Shimshon's *rebbe* found a small, secluded corner where he could prepare himself for *Minchah*.

In the midst of a fervent *Shemoneh Esrei*, boarding was announced, and all passengers flying to New York quickly formed a line and began boarding the plane. Boarding was called a second and third time, until finally the last call was made,

yet the rabbi's seat remained stubbornly vacant. His name was announced repeatedly over the intercom, yet he showed no reaction, absorbed in a lofty world of holiness and purity. Even when someone whispered in his ear that his flight would be taking off in a mere three minutes, it was like he didn't even hear a word.

The minutes passed, and both passengers and crew lost patience. The captain delivered the order to close the doors, and the plane took off, abandoning him mid-journey.

The *tzaddik* never shared the end of his story, how he ultimately reached his destination, and whether he was still able to fulfill the undoubtedly important purpose of his trip, and if he ever recovered his belongings. As a close *talmid*, Rav Shimshon once marshaled the courage to ask, "Rebbi, how did you do it? Staying behind all alone in Paris — I could have done that too. But how did you stay focused on *davening* during those nerve-racking moments? That's something I could never achieve! How were you able to continue *davening* with *kavanah*? Did you really think the plane would wait for you?"

The *tzaddik* did not offer much in the way of an explanation but volunteered one short sentence that summed up his feelings: "It was good for me there." Standing alone in the Parisian airport and conversing with the King of all kings was, for him, a slice of heaven that nothing could supersede.

The following is another personal anecdote that Rav Shimshon once wove into a memorable lecture that he delivered in the United States:

"One of the worst moments in my life occurred

on a winter day several decades ago, when I was traveling on a bus from Tel Aviv to *Yerushalayim*. Sunset that time of year was early, around four-thirty. While on the road, it suddenly occurred to me that I hadn't yet *davened Minchab*. The sky steadily darkened; *shkiah* was fast approaching, and I didn't know what to do. I debated if I should get off the bus, when *Hashem* offered me a way out.

"In those days, the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv bus route included a brief stop in Beit Shemesh to let passengers stretch their legs, so when the bus pulled to a stop and the driver announced, 'Three-minute stop!' I quickly hopped off the bus and started *Shemoneh Esrei*. I was anxious because I had left all my belongings — including my *tefillin* — on the bus.

"As I neared the end of *Shemoneh Esrei* and began '*Shalom rav*,' I heard the rev of the motor. The bus was about to pull out, and I hadn't even started '*Elokai netzor!*' With no choice, I quickly ended my *Minchab* with '*Yibeyu l'ratzon*' and '*Oseh shalom*,' and hightailed it back onto the bus at the very last second, rationalizing that the final passage in *Shemoneh Esrei* is not part of the core *berachos*.

"But listen to me, my friends: Those precious words that I skipped then, the words '*P'sach libi b'Sorasecha*,' are still my bane until this very day. If I'd only had the strength of character to stay put and tell myself, 'This world is nothing; I'm speaking to the *Ribbono shel Olam* now,' I wouldn't have to travel all the way here to America to give you *mussar*, because you'd be coming to me in *Eretz Yisrael*." ●



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