



NEFESH SHIMSHON

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

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה. MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

Your Efforts Deserve a Double

וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' כִּן עָשׂוּ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה: (לט, מג)

Moshe saw all the work, and behold, they did it, as *Hashem* commanded, so they performed it. And Moshe blessed them. (29:43)

“And Moshe blessed them.” He said to them, “May it be His Will that the *Shechinah* should rest upon the work of your hands. ‘And may the pleasantness of *Hashem* our G-d be upon us...’” (*Rashi*)

After all the work of constructing the *Mishkan* was finally finished, Moshe blessed the people. Simply understood, this was a blessing to them for their efforts in building the *Mishkan*. But the *pasuk* emphasizes that “as *Hashem* commanded, so they performed it.” This was not a

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voluntary act on the part of the people. They were obligated to make the *Mishkan*, and had they been lax in doing so, it would have been a serious sin. But when they did the work well, all according to *Hashem's* command, Moshe showed his pleasure and approval, and blessed them that “the pleasantness of *Hashem*” should rest upon them.

This teaches us an important practical lesson. At home, the wife prepares the house nicely, and sometimes it takes hard work, for instance on *Erev Shabbos*, when a lot of effort goes into preparing various tasty foods and cleaning up the house, with all the toil it entails.

It is common for the husband to think to himself that it's simply her job. That's what she's supposed to do. Due to this attitude, he forgets to smile to her and bless her that *Hashem's* pleasantness should rest upon the work of her hands.

The husband should rather learn from *Moshe Rabbeinu* who blessed the Jewish people that the *Shechinah* should rest among them. This is the most wonderful of all blessings. It includes all the blessings and all the pleasant things.

We see this also in *Parshas Shemini*. After Moshe and Aharon finished offering *korbanos* in the newly erected *Mishkan*, it is written:

Moshe and Aharon came to the Tent of Meeting and went out and blessed the people.¹

Also there, Rashi explains that they blessed the people this same blessing, that the *Shechinah* should rest upon the work of their hands, “And may the

pleasantness of *Hashem* our G-d be upon us...”

So we see that the people were worthy of a blessing twice. Once here, when they made their efforts to construct the *Mishkan*, and a second time in *Parshas Shemini*, when Moshe and Aharon actually made use of the “work of their hands.”

The wife puts her efforts into her work in the “miniature *Beis Hamikdash*” of the Jewish home. This is a form of *avodah*. And the Jewish home is a place where the *Shechinah* and peace dwell when husband and wife act meritoriously.²

She deserves a double blessing and pleasantness and a smile. Once, right away on *Erev Shabbos* when the work is done, and everything is ready for the evening meal. And again at night after the *se'udah*, when the *avodas hakodesh* of the *Shabbos* meal has been completed and all the fine foods were tasted and eaten. At that point, the wife deserves a second blessing.

Chazal say:

Someone who is ungrateful to his friend will eventually become ungrateful to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.³

Showing appreciation to human beings is equated to showing appreciation to *Hashem*. When it comes to *Hashem*, we must bless twice, once before and once after. The same goes with showing appreciation to our fellow human beings. We should bless them twice for what they did, once before we benefit from their efforts and once afterward, as Moshe blessed the Jewish people. ●

1 *Vayikra* 9:23.

2 *Sotah* 17a.

3 *Mishnas R. Eliezer* ch. 7.



לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת

מוֹהַ"ד מוֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַמְּבֹרָךְ זצ"ל

וּמוֹהַ"ד בְּרוּךְ זָאב בֶּן נִפְתָּלִי קִרְאוֹס זצ"ל

נִדְבַת נְבִידֵיהֶם ~ עֶשְׂרֵת יָמִים בְּנֵי וְהַפְּאֶרֶת בְּנֵי אֲבוֹתָם

Just Use Your Dyes

וַיִּקַּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת אַדְנָיו וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת קַרְשָׁיו וַיִּתֵּן אֶת בְּרִיחָיו וַיִּקַּם אֶת עַמֻּדָיו:
(מ, יח)

Moshe erected the *Mishkan*. He placed the sockets and put in the planks and inserted the bolts and stood up the pillars. (40:18)

R. Avin said: This may be compared to a king who had a beautiful image. He said to a member of his household, “Make me one like it.” He responded, “My master the king, how can I possibly make one like it?” The king answered, “You use your dyes, and I will do my part.”

Hakadosh Baruch Hu said similarly to Moshe, “See [the form of the *Mishkan*] and make it.” Moshe responded, “Master of the World, am I G-d?! How can I make like these?” He answered, “According to their shape, with sky-blue dye and scarlet dye and crimson dye. Just as you see above, so shall you make below.... And if you make below like the one above, I will leave the Heavenly entourage behind and bring My Presence among you, below. (*Shemos Rabbah* 35:6)

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* saw what was entailed in constructing the *Mishkan*, he realized it was impossible. Only G-d could make a *Mishkan*. Then *Hashem* told him that he only has to do his part. He only needs to build the *Mishkan* according to the prescribed plan, and *Hashem* will do His part and bring the *Shechinah* to rest in it. This is in fact what happened. Moshe built the *Mishkan* from physical materials and *Hashem* brought down the *Shechinah* to dwell in it.

We can apply the same principle to every area of life.

When we are about to do a *mitzvah* we recite the blessing of *אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו*. We thank *Hashem* for sanctifying us through His *mitzvos*. But why do we call them “His” *mitzvos*? It is our job and obligation to do the *mitzvos*, so we should call them

“our” *mitzvos*.

When we do *mitzvos*, *Hashem* completes our actions and grants them their *kedushah*, their special spiritual qualities, their heavenly power. It is written:

I will call out to the exalted G-d, to the G-d Who finishes for me (גומר עלי).¹

When we do *mitzvos* to the extent we can, when we learn Torah on our level, *Hashem* finishes the act and brings it to completion and absolute perfection. He places great *kedushah* on the *mitzvos* we do. He finishes what we were unable to.

This is the meaning of *אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו*. The *mitzvos* we perform do not receive their value from our actions alone because then they would be lacking and malformed. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* comes and completes what we can't do ourselves. The level of sanctity that our *mitzvos* have is thus according to *Hashem's mitzvos*.

When we recite a blessing before doing a *mitzvah*, we are saying, so to speak, “*Ribono shel Olam*, we did as You commanded, we finished our part. We can't do more than that. Now we ask of you to sanctify us with Your *mitzvos*. You finish whatever is needed so the *mitzvos* we did will have the value and the qualities appropriate to Your *mitzvos*. Give our *mitzvos* what only You can give them.”

And *Hashem* hears our request. He examines our deeds, and if we did all we can, He finishes our *mitzvah* acts and grants them His sublime *kedushah*. ●

¹ Tehillim 57:3.

וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֹתוֹ כִּן עָשָׂה: (מ, טז)

Moshe made it, according to all that Hashem commanded him, so he made it. (40:16)

There is a big question that people ask about the *parshiyos* of *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*. The entire contents of *Vayakhel* seem to be a repetition of what was already stated in *Terumah*, and the contents of *Pekudei*, i.e., the Priestly Garments, were already stated in *Tetzaveh*. Why did the Torah teach again that which was previously taught in sufficient detail?

The following question will lead us to the answer. There is a verse that says:

לֶךְ ה' הַגְדֵּלָה וְהַגְבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת וְהַנְּצַח וְהַהוֹד וְגו' לֶךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָה וְהַמְתַּנְשֵׂא לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ.¹

Chazal say that this verse enumerates the seven ways by which Hashem runs His world, the seven *midos*. The seventh is *הַמְּמַלְכָה*. Why does the verse repeat 'לֶךְ ה' before this last one? Those very same words were already stated at the beginning of the verse.

The answer is that everything has two aspects to it, as will be explained. *Chazal* say about the above-quoted verse:

We see that everything *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created above, He created below.²

Every trait in the world has two stages to it. For instance, the trait of *chesed*, which is called *הַגְדֵּלָה* in the above-quoted verse. If we try to define this trait as it manifests itself in the human soul, we will find that it has two parts.

The first part is the potential of *chesed*. This is the trait in its essential state. It is understanding

and appreciating *chesed*, as well as possessing a true desire to do *chesed*. Every good Jew, if he is asked, "If you had money, what would you do with it?" will not answer, "I would buy a really fancy car." His first answer will always be, "I would do *chesed* with it." This stems from the essential trait of *chesed* that is part of human nature.

The second part of the trait of *chesed* is its practical application. This is the actual ability to perform acts of *chesed*. Once a person has acquired the first part, once he has the potential for *chesed*, once he wants to do *chesed* and understands what it is, he will surely perform acts of *chesed* if he has the ability to do so.

Potential and actual are two different parts. A person could have profound understanding of *chesed*, *gevurah* and all the other traits, but that doesn't necessarily mean he has the ability to bring them to actuality.

Bringing things from potential to actual – that is what the trait of *malchus* is all about. This trait is called *הַמְּמַלְכָה* in the above-quoted verse. A *melech* is not someone who has the necessary talents and qualifications to be a king. It is someone who possesses the power to actually do things.

Chesed is one of the traits by which Hashem runs His world, and also with Hashem there are two parts to it. There is the part of "Hashem desires *chesed*,"³ which is Hashem's Will to bestow unlimited goodness upon His creatures. And then there is the part of actualizing His Will, of performing acts of kindness. This is the aspect of *Melech*. A king is someone who has the ability to do.

Malchus is practical rulership, governing. As

1 I *Divrei Hayamim* 29:11.

2 *Shemos Rabbah* 33:4.

3 *Michah* 7:18.

regards *Hashem's* ways, this means practically implementing His various traits as they are stated in the above-quoted verse. This is the *midah* of *malchus*. Only *malchus* actualizes *Hashem's* ways in the world.

This is why the verse repeats the words *לָךְ ה'* before the *midah* of *malchus*. There are two parts – the potential and the actual – and each is introduced by the words *לָךְ ה'*, which mean, “You, Hashem, have...”

In other words, “You, *Hashem*, have” the potential of *chesed* and *gevurah* etc. And “You, *Hashem*, have” the ability to actualize it all.

Getting back to the original question: the *parshiyos* of *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh* have the command to make the *Mishkan*, the *Menorah*, the Priestly Garments, etc. They say, “You shall make...” These commands to make the *Mishkan* are the potential for the *Mishkan*. They are not the actual *Mishkan*. The *parshiyos* of *Vaykhel* and *Pekudei* are the practical aspect. They are the actual doing, the actual making of the *Mishkan*. Here it says, “And he made...” The *Mishkan* is complete only when it has both parts, the potential and the actual.

It's not just the Mishkan

This is a general rule with everything in the world. There is the “potential” and there is the “actual.”

For instance, let's say someone wants to know how to ride a bike. It's not so deep; you can know what to do in a few minutes. You sit on the seat and rotate the pedals. That's basically all there is to it. Knowing how to drive a car is a little harder but it still doesn't take very long. You have the gears or the transmission, you have the brakes, and that's about it. But all this is true regarding “potential” bike riding or car driving.

Besides this, you have the actual riding or driving, and that's something else altogether.

This is a universal principle. There is a difference between a person who knows theoretically what *hasmadah* is and a person who actually learns Torah constantly. There is a difference between someone

who knows theoretically how to bake a cake and someone who actually bakes the cake. The practical realization of the matter is something else altogether.

In *Kabbalah*, this gap between the potential and the actual is described by the metaphor of the sun and the moon. In our world, the light of the sun is always much greater than the light of the moon. The light of the moon is *pagum*, it is deficient. This represents the gap between the potential and the actual. The potential is always much greater than the actual implementation. Thus we pray in *Kiddush Halevanah* that the light of the moon should return to be like the light of the sun, as it was in the Six Days of Creation.

The sun is the source of the light. The sun's light reflects off the moon, and the moon is the one that has the main influence on the world. When we say that the light of the sun reflects off the moon, it means that practically speaking, the trait of *malchus*, which is associated with the moon, is a mere reflection of the sun's true power. The sun is like a king who is strong and wise but his influence on the kingdom is weakened and does not reflect his true potential.

Every one of us has a lot of potential. We have the desire to learn Torah, we understand that Torah learning requires constancy, and so forth. But all this is our potential.

Kabbalah describes this also in terms of male and female. The male aspect is the source, the potential, from which the actuality flows. We lack nothing in essence, in potential. In theory, we know everything. But the feminine aspect needs to receive it and “give birth” to it, in other words, to bring it into actuality.

We need to take all our good desires and intentions, and all our understanding, all that well-developed theory, and actualize it. To work at being a true *masmid* and *davening* with proper *kavanah* as we know theoretically that we should.

The practical implementation is not the same as knowing intellectually what Torah and *avodah* is all about, and sometimes the potential and the actual are just too far from each other. What we need work on is bridging that gap. ●

The Nefesh Shimshon Kollel Project



KEEPING HIS FIRE ALIVE



Who was Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l? A tzaddik? A gaon? A maggid? He was all those things, depending on his particular mission at that moment. His sons and talmidim, however, know that his distinctive chiddush – what he brought to the world – was the striving to “live Hashem.” Not just to do this mitzvah or connect to that holy idea, but to make Hashem the focus of one’s life, all day, all the time. And what, taught Rav Pincus, is the most effective way to live Hashem? Through the Torah!

Three and a half years ago, Rav Pincus’s sons, Rav Yosef Dov and Rav Shmuel, took it upon themselves to commemorate their father by opening a kollel – a living, breathing “monument” to this giant of a man who eschewed complacency and sought

constantly to rise from level to level. In this spirit, the family has created a unique makom Torah that nurtures bnei Aliyah, through a rigorous learning schedule, together with self-improvement vaadim and the study of Rav Pincus’s sefarim. However, more powerful than any learning schedule is the non-judgmental atmosphere that promotes self-motivation and personal growth.

“Our father was never satisfied with his current level and always demanded more of himself – that was his legacy. This kollel is meant for yungeleit who seek more - more ruchniyus, more striving, more development through Torah. It’s not about excellence as much as it is about nurturing the yungeleit’s desire to achieve, through an investment of effort,” explains Rosh Hakollel Rav Yosef Dov Pincus.

MORE UPDATES NEXT WEEK

When Adar comes our joy increases. (*Taanis* 29a)

The *simchah* of Adar in general, and of Purim in particular, needs to be understood. What about it makes us so happy?

First of all, we need to know that Adar is the last month of the year, because as far as the holidays are concerned, Nisan is the beginning of the year, as it says:

This month [of Nisan] shall be for you the first of the months.¹

We begin the *avodah* of the holidays in Nisan, and steadily progress toward its conclusion and ultimate goal in Adar. Where are we trying to get to? What is the summit of the *avodah* of the yearly cycle of the *Moadim*?

If we don't know where we are going, if we don't prepare properly for Purim, we are likely to fall into the unfortunate pattern of *כל הקדוש מחברו חרב*, *מחברו*, "whatever has more holiness is in a greater state of desolation." The end of the winter learning *zeman* in *yeshivos*, which is in Adar, is liable to turn into a period of slacking off and failure to take advantage of these special days.

Happiness

What makes people happy?

If we look at joyfulness generally, we will see that joy comes from the experience of rejuvenation, of newness. People enjoy new things and find them interesting. To illustrate the point, let's say two *bonei Torah* meet each other, and one asks the other to say a word of Torah, who proceeds to recite the well-known opening verse of the Torah, *בראשית ברא*.

This will elicit disappointment in his listener. Why? Is there something wrong with the *pasuk*?

No, the *pasuk* was recited perfectly. And there is nothing wrong with reciting a *pasuk* from the Torah. The listener was disappointed because he wanted to hear something new. He wanted to hear a *chiddush*. A novel insight arouses more interest than does a verse from the Torah recited as-is.

Also in worldly matters, exceptional and unexpected things arouse interest. When children see a firetruck come down their street they run after it because it is interesting. It's something they don't see every day. Even a little bug, if it looks different than other insects, becomes an object of interest, and can even be valuable.

People enjoy things that are different and interesting because newness is the greatest source of pleasure. The blessing of *shecheyanu* was instituted to express the feeling of pleasure we have from a new fruit, a new garment or a new time.

It is written:

I was His pleasure every day.²

Chazal explain this verse as referring to Torah. *Hashem* takes pleasure in the Torah. We can't understand what this really means, but we do see that *Hashem* has "pleasure" and "joy," so to speak, and it comes from the Torah. The essence of Torah, and especially the *chiddushei Torah* of the Jewish people, bring Him pleasure and joy. "Strength" refers to Torah,³ and it is written:

Strength and joy are in His place.⁴

¹ *Shemos* 12:2.

² *Mishlei* 8:30.

³ *Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim* 682.

⁴ *I Diorei Hayamim* 16:27.

The greatest joy comes from the experience of newness. Even the smallest *chiddush* elicits joy, more than does a verse or teaching of the Gemara that we already know.

The happiness we have from something new, the smile it puts on our face, signifies a profound point.

Everything in the world has a limit. *Hashem* set a limit for the sea how far it can extend.⁵ The laws of nature determine limits and boundaries for every force. For instance, natural law dictates that you can't put something big inside something small.

As opposed to all natural forces, which have limits, there is no limit to newness. Every *chiddush*, by definition, goes beyond what previously existed. This elicits unlimited joy, pleasure and delight, unbound by time and form. This is the greatest *simchah*.

When *Chazal* describe *Hashem* as having joy and pleasure, it is in connection to Torah. Because there is nothing else in the world that has the power of newness, of *chiddush*, like Torah does. The medium used to create heavens and earth, to produce the great *chiddush* of existence emerging from utter nothingness, *וְשֵׁי מֵאֵין*, was the Torah. "*Hashem* looked into the Torah and created the world," as it says in the Zohar. The Torah contains the power of creation and newness.

Torah is characterized especially by *chiddushei Torah*. Every new thought, every new understanding, becomes a new reality. This is true only of Torah. In regard to *chiddushei Torah* it is said:

Every single novel word that a person speaks, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* kisses it and crowns it and builds from it a new world all on its own.⁶

Entire worlds are created from *chiddushei Torah*.

Purim means New

On a deeper level, Purim is all about the power of *chiddush*, of newness. This is where the special *simchah* of this time comes from.

How so?

Prior to the miracle of Purim, the Jewish people fell into all sorts of sins and suffered all sorts of punishments. When they were in Shushan they then sinned by participating in the banquet of Achashverosh. Because they enjoyed themselves at the banquet of this evil king, Heaven declared a terrible decree upon them: "To destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews."⁷

We need to appreciate that *Hashem* signed this decree into effect. He put His stamp on it; the Heavenly Court ruled that the Jewish people may no longer exist. This was not just another failure that brought in its wake another punishment. It was the bitter end.

The fact that they took part in the banquet of Achashverosh, that they were able to enjoy themselves together with those wicked people, was in and of itself a severing of their connection to *kedushah* and to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. They placed their lot together with that of the *resha'im* and consequently it was decreed for the entire Jewish people to be exterminated.

The miracle of Purim was thus an act of *Techiyas Hameisim*. It was like the dead coming back to life. The sin that precipitated the evil decree was not something that could be rectified. There was no way to fix what they broke; they needed to be wiped out. From the Purim miracle on, the Jewish people was a new creation.

The created people shall praise *Hashem*.⁸

This was more than a rejuvenation of the same people. It was a new Jewish people, and thus a new Giving of the Torah. This is the meaning of *קיימו וקיבלו*, of the reacceptance of the Torah that took place at the time of Purim. It was a sweeping, overpowering force of newness. It broke conventional rules; it was something totally new and unexpected.

When the month arrives in which sorrow turned to joy and death turned to life, limitless *simchah* breaks out. When Adar begins and the days of

⁵ See *Iyov* 38:11.

⁶ *Zohar*, as quoted in *Nefesh Hachayim* 4:12.

⁷ *Esther* 7:4.

⁸ *Tehillim* 102:19.

Purim come, the Jewish people experiences the joy of newness, of התחדשות.

In this light we can understand why Purim is the end and goal of the year.

Pesach is the holiday of leaving the impurity of Egypt and of cleansing ourselves from its *avodah zarah* and its influence on us. The counting of *Sefiras Ha'omer* from Pesach to Shavu'os, which is the time of *Matan Torah*, uplifts and sanctifies the Jewish people to become the receivers of the Torah. On Rosh Hashanah we attain fear of Heaven due to the Divine judgement that takes place at that time, on Yom Kippur we are purified of sin, and then we move on and up to the *deveikus* of Sukkos. In the light-deprived days of winter, representing our attraction to what Greece has to offer, and the resulting Hellenization, we kindle the Chanukah lights to illuminate the darkness of *Galus*.

But the spiritual peak of the year comes at its end. This period signifies the sense that we have come to “the end of the road,” that we have sunken into a hopeless, irredeemable state. We feel like it's all over for us. Then comes a special power of renewal that awakens life once again. Even with all the negative factors working against us, despite the damaging influence of the environment, notwithstanding our marked weakness and deterioration, every person – and especially a *ben Torah* – can and should make a new start and recreate himself as a different person. To make a new *Kabbalas Hatorah*. This opportunity to undergo a spiritual *Techiyas Hameisim* is the great *simchah* of Adar and Purim.

Fish

There is an allusion to this in the astrological sign of the month of Adar, which is Pisces, or fish. Fish have a special ability to reproduce and multiply their numbers. At the end of the year, when it seems to a person as if his life is coming to an end, the month of Adar arrives, and in its wake, the power of coming back to life, the power of newness. And newness brings to joy.

The feeling of weariness that leads down to death is replaced by a renewal of Torah. This awakens hope and joy of life and a new existence. It is like being reborn. It is a spiritual *Techiyas Hameisim*.

The *Aron Hakodesh*, which contained the *Luchos Habris*, thus representing the Torah, had three layers. It was plated with gold on the outside and on the inside, but in the middle it was acacia wood. Thus it was essentially made of wood, just that it was plated on both sides with gold. The advantage of wood over gold is that it is a vegetable material, whereas gold is inanimate. Inanimate materials can disintegrate and thus cease to exist. They don't reproduce. But plants, vegetable material, have the ability to grow back. Even if a tree is chopped down low, and appears to be dead, its roots remain in the ground, and a new tree can grow from them.

The holy Torah has this quality of the vegetable kingdom and of fish. It can grow, it can multiply. It has *chiddushei Torah*, it has the joy of reawakening. Thus, Torah is *Hashem's* pleasure and the pleasure of the Jewish people. In Torah, and only in Torah, is enfolded the power of creation, the miracle of being reborn.

Purim and Adar express this quality of renewal and spiritual rebirth. The whole tremendous outbreak of *simchah* at this time of year is the joy of newness.

After all the lofty spiritual qualities of the year's holidays comes Purim. The mitzvah on Purim is to drink wine “until one does not know.” This grants us the awareness that no matter what the situation is, we can renew and refresh ourselves. According to our rational knowledge, it might not seem to be possible, but the mitzvah is “until one does not know.” Indeed, everything can become new again! All the *mitzvos*, Torah learning and prayer, *Emunah*, understanding *Hashem's Hashgachah*, all spiritual attainments. It all can be reborn.

This is the special *avodah* of Purim – to have true joy, the joy of real, live newness. ●

STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF RAV SHIMSHON PINCUS ZT"l



Avoiding Distraction

The common denominator among all challenges in *davening* is forgetting that one is standing before the King of all kings and losing the awareness that one is actually speaking to Him. Whenever one is in a rush or anxious to accomplish something, one's thoughts take over, consuming him and causing him to forget the sweetness of standing before *Hashem* along with the awe and fear that he is obliged to feel at the time. His myriad needs and distractions blind him and clog his heart, and the only solution is thus to remove the personal attachment to that distraction.

In Yeshivas Brisk, dinner was bread, butter, and drinks. The food was placed on a side table and the *bachurim* served themselves. After *davening*, the *bachurim* would make a dash to the dining room to ensure that they wouldn't miss out. The temptation to be first caused many *bachurim* to wrap up their *davening* quickly. One day, however, the *bachur* Shimshon Pincus sensed that the urgency was negatively impacting his *tefilos*. Realizing that fresh bread and butter were floating through his thoughts when he was supposed to be *davening Maariv*, Rav Shimshon determined that he was best off skipping dinner. *Tefillas Maariv*, he reasoned, is a *chiyuv*, whereas eating supper is not, and the sweet taste of *tefilah* far surpasses that of any meal.

Running Away

Allowing a plane to take off without us and skipping supper on a daily basis are exalted levels of *avodas Hashem* that may well be beyond the capacity of the average Jew. Still, averred Rav Shimshon, the

mere recognition that we are standing and conversing before the King is ample reason to push aside all trivial and mundane distractions and essential to a Jew's outlook on life.

He always found it difficult to get used to the fact that many people get antsy as they near the end of *davening*. Certainly, he couldn't make peace with the reality that starting with *Ashrei* after *Chazaras Hashatz*, some people are already ready to make a quick exit, and keep their eyes on the clock.

Rav Shimshon once spied a cluster of *mispallelim* surging toward the door before the end of *davening*. Attempting to catch their attention, he called out urgently, "*Rabbosai*, please wait! We haven't finished talking to the *Ribbono shel Olam* yet!"

One could understand, if not totally condone, the above-mentioned *mispallelim*. We can assume they were in a rush to get their children to school on time, or some other pressing and praiseworthy matter. However, on one of his transatlantic journeys, when he joined a *minyán* on the plane, he noticed that several *mispallelim* seemed anxious to conclude their *tefilah* and return to their seats, and he couldn't relate to their hurry.

Shaking his head in disbelief, he muttered, "Where are they rushing off to now?! They want to jump? Where can anyone be rushing to *on a plane*?!"

Similarly, upon noticing one of his congregants lingering by the door throughout *davening*, Rav Shimshon once remarked tongue in cheek, "Tell me, do you hang around the door in your house too?" Only people who feel that they don't belong will linger next to the door, attesting to their discomfort. ●

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