

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

Shemittah

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר:

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וְשָׁבַתָּה הָאָרֶץ
שְׁבֵת לָהּ: (ויקרא כה, א-ב)

Hashem spoke to Moshe at Mount Sinai, saying: Speak to the people of Yisrael and say to them: When you come into the land that I am giving you, the land shall rest as a Sabbatical year for Hashem. (Vayikra 25:1-2)

Why is *Shemittah* mentioned in connection to Mt. Sinai? All the *mitzvos* were spoken at Mt. Sinai! It teaches that just as the general rules and the details of *Shemittah* were spoken at Sinai, so the general rules and the details of all the *mitzvos* were spoken at Mt. Sinai. (Rashi)

We received all the detailed *halachos* of all the *mitzvos* from Hashem at *Har Sinai*, as learned from the *mitzvah* of *Shemittah*, as Rashi explains. This, on a simple level, is what the Torah is teaching us when it mentions *Shemittah* in connection to *Har Sinai*.

The comparison of all the *mitzvos* to the *mitzvah* of *Shemittah* teaches us another message as well. *Shemittah* is a very special *mitzvah*. It is unique among the *mitzvos* of the Torah, as will be explained.

When the Jewish people dwelled in *Eretz Yisrael*

in ancient times they were supported mainly by agriculture. The Torah often states that if we keep the *mitzvos* we will be granted rain and produce of the field, as it says:

וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנָתְנָה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָהּ וְעַץ הַשָּׁדֶה
יִתֵּן פְּרִיָו – I will grant your rains in their time, and the land will give forth its produce, and the trees of the field will give forth their fruit.¹

¹ Vayikra 26:4.

The Jewish people did not make their income from gold mines or factories. They lived off the fine fields and vineyards of *Eretz Yisrael*.

When *Shabbos* comes and a person ceases his work, this expresses how he places himself in *Hashem's* hands. It shows that his life and his livelihood are from *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. However, resting one day a week doesn't totally disrupt a person's method of earning a living. He can work six days, take a day off, and pick up on Sunday morning.

This doesn't work with *Shemitah*. One needs to let all the fields lay fallow for an entire year. Naturally speaking, this would be disastrous for a person's source of income. The details of the *mitzvah* even entail leaving the fields open for anyone to walk through. Not only that, but the money that one loaned out can't be collected after *Shemitah*.

All these details of the *mitzvah* express a tremendous connection to *Hashem*. They show how a person gives himself over totally into the hands of *Hashem* and His Torah.

And this reflects on all the *mitzvos* of the Torah, which are compared to the *mitzvah* of *Shemitah*.

Let's say you would ask someone, "Why didn't you come yesterday to the *shiur*?" He answers, "Listen, I had an important meeting with someone in Manhattan." If you ask him, "Why did you rush out of *shul* this morning before *davening* was over?" He answers, "I got up late and was in a hurry because I had business to attend to." And so forth. There is no lack of examples to show how many people place *mitzvos* as second priority and their *parnassah* as first priority.

This is why the Torah connects all the *mitzvos* to *Shemitah*. All the details of the *Shemitah* year express connection to *Hashem* and giving ourselves over totally to Him, and that's how it should be with all the *mitzvos*. We need to realize that they are *Hashem's* commandments, and He is the One Who supports us. Our *parnassah* comes from Him so we should prioritize His *mitzvos* over our work and business.

Regarding *Shemitah* it says:

If you will say, "What will we eat in the seventh year, if we don't plant and don't harvest our produce?" I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year.²

Contrary to what one might have thought, keeping the *mitzvah* of *Shemitah* will bring us more blessing than will all the *mitzvos* of the Torah. If we place our work and business in the hands of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, He Himself will take care of us and make sure our households are plentifully blessed.

This applies to us nowadays as well. A person might feel his business meetings take priority over his *shiurei Torah*, or might generally find it difficult to set aside time for Torah learning and other *mitzvos*. He is concerned it will hurt his *parnassah*. However, by consistently and obstinately dedicating times to learning, *davening* and other *mitzvos*, he shows that he places his *parnassah* in the hands of *Hashem*.

About him the Torah says, "I will command My blessing for you," and he will see great *siyata d'Shemaya* in everything he does. ●

2 Vayikra 25:20-21.

לעילוי נשמות

מוה"ד משה בן אליעזר המבורג זצ"ל

ומוה"ד ברוך זאב בן נפתלי קראוס זצ"ל

נדבת נכדיהם ~ עשרת הקנים בני בנים והפארת בנים אבותם

Go Ask

וְכִי יִמּוֹךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהִחֲזַקְתָּ בוֹ. (ויקרא כה, לה)

If your brother becomes impoverished and he falters with you, you shall hold him up.
(*Vayikra* 25:34)

This *pasuk* speaks about the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*. The Rambam writes:

We must be more careful with the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* than with all the positive *mitzvos*, because giving *tzedakah* is a sign of a *tzaddik*, a sign of *Avraham Avinu's* descendants.... Anyone who shows mercy, mercy will be shown to him, as it says, ונתן לך רחמים ורחמך והרבך – “He will give you mercy and have mercy on you and increase you^{1,2}”

Chazal say that if a person gives *tzedakah*, he merits increased wealth. *Hashem* blesses his endeavors. And *David Hamelech* says in *Tehillim*:

אֲשֶׁרִי מִשְׁכִּיל אֶל דָּל בְּיוֹם רָעָה יִמְלֹטְהוּ ה':
ה' יִשְׁמְרֵהוּ וַיַּחֲיֵהוּ וְאֲשֶׁר בְּאָרֶץ וְאֵל תִּתְּנֶהוּ בְּנַפְשׁ אִיבֵיו:
ה' יִסְעֲדֵנּוּ עַל עֵרֶשׂ דָּוִי כָּל מִשְׁכָּבוֹ הִפְכָת בְּחַלְוֵי:

Fortunate is he who gives thought to the needy; on a bad day, *Hashem* will rescue him. *Hashem* will protect him and grant him life, and he will be fortunate on earth, and You will not give him over to the desire of his enemies. *Hashem* will support him on the bed of illness. You will overturn the sickbed of his illness.³

If a person is experiencing a “bad day,” even if he is very sick and likely to die, in the merit of the *tzedakah* that he always gave, *Hashem* will turn around his sickness and he will live.

But if we look carefully at the *pasuk* we will see that it is not enough to just have mercy on the needy.

We need to “give thought to the needy” – מְשַׁכִּיל אֶל דָּל. The *Dubner Maggid* explains what this means:

There are two kinds of benefactors who have mercy on the poor. The first waits for the poor person to come to him and tell him about his difficulties and ask for help. Then he shows mercy on him and gives him a generous donation. The second kind “gives thought to the needy.” He takes the initiative to go and ask the poor person how he is faring and whether he has everything he needs, and what help could be offered to him.

The difference between these two types of benefactors emerges when the poor person falls ill and can't go to knock on the doors of the wealthy, or if the pauper is the sort of person who is too embarrassed to request help. The first benefactor only helps when he is asked, and since the poor person can't come to ask he might perish in his troubles. But the second benefactor, the one who “gives thought to the needy,” will inquire about the poor person's welfare, find out where he is, and pay a visit to him and attend to his needs.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu responds to these two types of benefactors according to their own behavior. One *pasuk* says יקראני ואענהו – “He will call out to Me and I will answer him.⁴ Another *pasuk* says והיה טרם יקראו ואני אענהו – “Before they call out, I will answer.”⁵

What's the difference between the two?

Sometimes a time of trouble comes to the world, and the Heavenly gates of prayer are closed, and *tefilos* are not being answered. Or a person could suddenly fall very ill or get in an accident and be unable to

1 *Devarim* 13:18.

2 *Mishneh Torah, Matnos Aniyim* 1:1-2.

3 *Tehillim* 41:2-4.

4 *Bid* 91:15.

5 *Yeshayahu* 65:24.

daven. The first *pasuk* says that first “he will call out to Me,” and then “I will answer him.” If the person can’t get a *tefilah* through to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, he is in trouble. This *pasuk* applies to the benefactor who waits until the poor person comes to him and asks for assistance.

But if the benefactor’s practice is not to wait for the poor person to come knocking on his door, he

rather “gives thought to the needy” and goes to see how he is doing, then the second *pasuk* applies to him. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will come to his assistance even before he prays for it. “Before they call out, I will answer.”

If we show that extra care for the needy and inquire after their needs, then *midah k’neged midah*, *Hashem* will help us in every situation. ●

PARSHAH TOPIC

Bitachon: Questions and Answers

וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מָה נֹאכֵל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת הֵן לֹא נִזְרַע וְלֹא נֶאֱסַף אֶת תְּבוּאֵתֵינוּ: (ויקרא כה, כ)

If you will say, “What will we eat in the seventh year, if we don’t plant and don’t harvest our produce?” (*Vayikra 25:34*)

Leave It to Hashem

The question asked in this *pasuk* is one that people ask in all sorts of life situations. For instance, “How can I sit and learn, live on a *kollel* stipend and marry off the children?” Let’s talk about this.

The root of the matter is we need to strengthen our trust, our *bitachon*, in *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. This entails placing everything in *Hashem*’s hands. We need to recognize that everything is in Heaven’s hands and *Hashem* can do things on His own. He is not dependent on what we do.

When a person is traveling by plane and he feels that the plane is wobbling in the air, he relies on the pilot that he knows how to operate an aircraft. The pilot doesn’t need help from the passengers to fly the plane.

When a person marries off his first daughter and he is worried about what will be when it’s time for the second daughter to marry, this shows he doesn’t have enough trust in the One Who helped

him marry off the first one.

If *Eliyahu Hanavi* would be his uncle, and would send him a nice, big check, he would not be worried. The *avodah* of *emunah* is to keep in mind that his Father in Heaven married off his first daughter, and He can marry off the second daughter, too. This is the *avodah* of *emunah*, and this is where *bitachon* comes from. *Bitachon* is knowing that *Hashem* is not dependent on us in order to help us.

We need to work on recognizing that the reality of our life is not something fixed and ironclad and unchanging. As far as human abilities are concerned, sometimes a person has exhausted all options and is now at a dead end. This is where *bitachon* comes in. He needs to recognize that for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, there are no dead ends and no limitations. He can change situations and create new options.

Troubles and Trust

The Brisker Rov has a delightfully innovative

explanation of true *bitachon*.

We can grasp the point based on the following.

Ostensibly, our attitude toward Rosh Hashanah is self-contradictory, and this is expressed also in the *halachos* of the day. On the one hand, we are in fear of the Divine judgment:

Said R. Abahu: The ministering angels said before *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, “Master of the World, why doesn’t the Jewish people sing a song before You on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?” He answered them, “When the King is sitting on the throne of judgment, and the books of the living and the books of the dead are open before Him, how could the Jewish people sing a song?”¹

This is why we don’t recite *Hallel* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We are in dread of the judgment.

On the other hand, we are joyous on Rosh Hashanah:

[In preparation for Rosh Hashanah] we bathe and take haircuts, in accordance with the Midrash: “Said R. Simon: It is written, ‘What nation is great like this...?’² R. Chanina and R. Yehoshua say: What nation is like this nation, which knows the ways of its G-d? Normally, when a person is being judged, he wears black and enwraps himself in black and lets his beard grow and doesn’t cut his fingernails, because he doesn’t know how his judgment will come out.

But Yisrael is not like this. They wear white and enwrap themselves in white and trim their beards and cut their fingernails, and they eat and drink and are joyous on Rosh Hashanah, because they know that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will

make a miracle for them.³

This makes it sound like we don’t have anything to worry about because *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will make sure we receive a good judgment. But we just finished saying that we are in dread of the judgment!

The Brisker Rov resolves this contradiction by citing a wondrous *piyut* called *Keser Malchus*, composed by R. Shlomo ibn Gabirol:

אם תפקוד עווני – “If You remember my iniquity.” If You, *Hashem*, will open the Book of Remembrance and find my sins there, where can I escape to? אברחה ממך – “From You, to You shall I flee.” I have somewhere to run. I can run to You! ואתכסה מחמתך – “And I will be sheltered from Your wrath.” If *chas v’shalom* You decide to pour out Your wrath upon me, I have a way to be sheltered. How? בצלך – “In Your shade.” By taking refuge in *Hashem*.

These are wonderful words.

The Rambam expresses a similar thought regarding Rosh Hashanah:

ומברח מנוס אליו – Escaping, fleeing to Him.⁴

When a person is in danger, the only way he can save himself is “in Your shade,” by taking refuge in *Hashem*. However, a person will flee to *Hashem* only if he senses that he is in danger. If he is not afraid, he won’t flee, and thus won’t come to *Hashem*. In such a case, there is no hope for him. Both elements are needed. When a person understands he is in danger and he is afraid, this causes *bitachon* because he runs to *Hashem* for protection.

This explains our attitude to Rosh Hashanah. We don’t recite *Hallel* because we are afraid, and

1 *Rosh Hashanah* 32b.

2 *Devarim* 4:7.

3 *Tur, Orach Chayim* 681.

4 Rambam’s Commentary on the *Mishnah*, *Rosh Hashanah* 4:7.

for this very reason we bathe and take haircuts in preparation, because we have *bitachon* that *Hashem* will make a miracle for us and save us. Our fear engenders our *bitachon*.

Many people think that *bitachon* means not worrying about problems; everything will be okay. They reason like this: the problems may be big, but *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is big, too. He is big enough to take care of the biggest problems, so everything will be okay.

This is a mistake. It is like someone who thinks that by mixing meat and milk, they will cancel each other out and the mixture will become *pareve*. This is obviously not so.

When there is a problem, a serious problem, it needs to be handled seriously. But a person needs to understand that he was given powerful tools to handle problems. The primary tool for this is *tefilah*.

Sometimes a person has various issues of health, *parnassah*, and so forth. If he understands that he has serious problems on his hands he will turn to *Hashem*, and *Hashem* will help him. This is *bitachon*. Fear of *Hashem* leads to trust in *Hashem*.

Bitachon is recognizing the seriousness of the problem and turning to *Hashem* for help. Someone who hears an air-raid siren and it doesn't make his heart jump is in trouble, because if he isn't afraid, he won't *daven*, he won't cry out. If so, what will save him? Fear brings us to turn to *Hashem* from the depths of our hearts, and this is what saves us.

This is the Brisker Rov's wonderful insight into the meaning of *bitachon*. And I heard from his son, R. Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, that the Brisker Rov practiced this in real life. Whenever the family was in a dangerous situation, he would not let them forget about it for a moment. He would repeatedly say, "They are coming to kill us!" He emphasized it to them, because as soon as people forget about the calamity, they no longer pray to *Hashem*—and then they truly are in danger.

If a person's business is in trouble, he needs to

realize that *Hashem* caused it. It's not for sure at all that "everything will turn out okay." It takes *Hashem's* power to turn the situation around, and this is accomplished by means of *tefilah*.

I Want More

The Gemara recounts a wondrous incident that helps us understand *bitachon*:

R. Elazar ben Pedas was extremely poor. He went to have his blood let, for health reasons. Lacking proper food to eat in order to regain his strength, he ate a head of garlic. He was overcome by weakness and fell asleep. The Sages came to pay him a visit. They saw that while he was asleep, he cried, laughed, and a spark of fire emanated from his forehead.

When he awoke they asked him why he cried and laughed in his sleep. He told them, "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* was sitting with me, and I asked Him, 'How long shall I suffer poverty in this world?' He answered me, 'Elazar, My son, would you like Me to change the whole world around from its very beginning? Perhaps you will be born at a time that has a *mazal* of prosperity.' I said back to Him, 'After all that, is it still just a matter of "perhaps"?'"

"Then I asked Him, 'Do I have the majority of my life in front of me, or have I already lived out most of it?' He answered me, 'You have already lived out most of it.'"

This is why R. Elazar cried in his sleep.

"Then I said to Him, 'If that is so, I don't want You to change around the world.' He replied, 'As a reward for saying, "I don't want," I will give you in *Olam Haba* thirteen rivers full of fine balsam oil, as big as the Euphrates and the Tigris, for your pleasure.'"

This is why R. Elazar laughed in his sleep.

“I said back to Him, ‘Is that all I will receive?’ He replied, ‘But then what will be left for Me to give to your colleagues?’ I said to Him, ‘Am I asking from a man, who doesn’t have more to give?’

“Then *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* gleefully tapped me on the forehead with a finger, and said, ‘Elazar, My son, I have struck you with My arrow!’”

This is why a spark of fire emanated from R. Elazar’s forehead.⁵

Let’s focus on the latter half of the conversation between R. Elazar ben Pedas and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. As reward for accepting his lot, R. Elazar was promised thirteen great rivers flowing with precious balsam oil. This represents spiritual pleasures in *Olam Haba*. But this was not enough for R. Elazar. He wanted more. Why?

R. Elazar’s argument to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* was as follows. If we are speaking of reward in *Olam Haba*, which is a world of eternity and infinity, why should my reward be limited to only thirteen? Give me a boundless reward, as befits *Olam Haba*.

Hashem answered him: If I give everything to you, what will be left for the others?

R. Elazar responded: I am not asking this from a human being. I know that people are limited in what they have to give. I am asking it from You, *Ribono shel Olam*, and Your capabilities are absolutely limitless!

This is a very deep story and it teaches us one of Judaism’s basic principles. What *Hashem* gives you is not dependent on what He gives or does not give those around you. *Hashem*’s capabilities are absolutely limitless.

To explain this principle, we will take an example from real life. A Jew in *Eretz Yisrael* has

twelve children. The oldest is eighteen. He makes a quick calculation: over the course of the next twenty years, I need to marry off all my children. If I divide the expenses fifty-fifty with the in-laws, in order to marry off each child I will need around \$100,000. Multiply that by 12 and it’s over a million dollars. How much do I have so far? In the bank I am in the minus... and in a few months I need to start thinking about *shidduchim*. How am I going to make it??

Now the *midah* of *bitachon* comes along and says: This is a big problem, indeed. But if you turn to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and you *daven* to Him, it will be okay. *Hashem* will help you.

“My problem is,” this Jew thinks to himself, “true, *Hashem* will help me, but what about my neighbor who is not managing with his financial commitments, and what about all the other good Jews who need to marry off their children?”

That thought is a mistake, and this is why:

When a Jew wakes up in the morning, he says, “*Elokai – my G-d*.” In other words, “It’s You and me. Let’s forget about the world for a moment. If You, *Hashem*, will continue to run my life the same way as You have been until now, do I have anything to worry about? *Baruch Hashem*, I made five bar mitzvahs, and I didn’t think I would manage, but *Baruch Hashem* I made it through. I got this far.”

This is good. This is *bitachon*. Then a different thought enters his head: “But, *Ribono shel Olam*, what will be with this person and that person and the other person?”

That is where we get confused. That is the mistake in our thinking.

We learn from the story of R. Elazar ben Pedas that what *Hashem* gives you is not dependent on what He gives or does not give to those around you. *Hashem*’s capabilities are absolutely limitless. This is why we pray, “*Elokai – my G-d*.” It’s between you and Him.

Just ask – He has everything you need! ●

⁵ *Ta’anis* 25a; *Rashi ad loc*.



Kaddish (Part Two)

Names are Back

As we explained before, Hebrew expresses the “front” of *kedushah*, and Aramaic expresses the “back” of *kedushah*. This is important for us to understand because the *Kaddish* prayer is recited in Aramaic. What is the difference between “front” and “back”? As we explained, the “front” of something expresses its essential nature. It’s like looking at a person’s face – we can tell a lot about how he feels and what’s going on inside of him. But the “back” of something only allows us to identify what or who it is. We can identify whether we are looking at Reuven or at Shimon if we see his back, but we can’t tell more than that because it’s a “faceless” view.

What about names?

A person’s name usually expresses his “back” side. His name allows us to distinguish him from other people. We know that he is Reuven, and not Shimon or Levi. It enables us to point and say it is him and not someone else, but we still don’t know about his nature and his ways. His name doesn’t tell us if he is a *tzaddik* or a *rasha*, a big spender or thrifty, whether he has *yiras Shamayim* or not. We won’t know all this until we get to know him personally.

Therefore, even though *Hashem* told *Moshe Rabbeinu* that he may not see *Hashem’s* face, *Hashem* still said to him **וְקָרָאתִי בְשֵׁם ה' לְפָנֶיךָ** – “I will call out with the Name of *Hashem* before you.” *Moshe* cannot see *Hashem’s* “face,” which would express *Hashem’s* essence, but he can perceive *Hashem’s* “back,” *Hashem’s* Name. *Moshe* can identify *Hashem*; he can know that *Hashem* is the One Who does *chesed*.

So explains the Ramban:

The seeing of My face, which you requested, you cannot see. “I will call out

with the Name of *Hashem* before you.” I will call before you the great Name that you cannot see, and I will be gracious through it to the recipient of My graciousness, and I will have mercy through it on the recipient of My mercy. Through this calling, you will know the trait of graciousness and the trait of mercy bestowed by My Name and My goodness.¹

Although we cannot comprehend *Hashem’s* nature, when we call out with His Name, this is the Name by which He bestows graciousness and mercy. The name thus reflects on His nature, but indirectly. Basically, a name is “back,” but it also relates to “front.” [We will discuss *Hashem’s* Name in the context of *Kaddish* a little later.]

So it is with every subject of *kedushah* that we approach. We can approach it from the “front” or the “back.” The “front,” the “face,” is the beauty of the subject, with its breath and depth and details. The “back” is just defining the subject, calling it by “name.” It is like the title, the subject line, without going into details.

Hebrew is *lashon hakodesh* and it is the “front” of *kedushah*. Every letter expresses worlds and reveals the nature of things. This is what interpreting the Torah by means of *gezeirah shavah* is all about. Every word in the Torah, if its letters resemble another word in the Torah, expresses a meaning similar to the other word. Hebrew is the beauty and the shine of the language, its fine face. Aramaic expresses the general idea and the root of the idea, but it doesn’t go into details. This is why the Torah’s hidden teachings, such as the Zohar, were written in Aramaic.

The Language of the Other Side

¹ Ramban’s Commentary on *Shemos* 33:18.

Now let us discuss *Kaddish*.

It says in the Zohar² that matters of *kedushah* recited in Hebrew need a *minyan*, whereas matters of *kedushah* recited in Aramaic do not. One may recite them even alone.

The Zohar then asks why does *Kaddish*, which is in Aramaic, require a *minyan*?

The Zohar answers that *Kaddish* is recited in the language of the *Sitra Achra*, the “Other Side.” In other words, in Aramaic. Therefore, it has the power to break all the forces of the *Sitra Achra*. This causes the *Tefilah* to be heard on High, and *Hashem’s* glory fills the world. Thus it needs a *minyan*.

Hashem created two types of *shlichim*, emissaries who do His Will in the world. Both types are from *Hashem*. The first type is the angels, who speak in Hebrew, in *lashon hakodesh*, and express the beauty of *Hashem’s* Kingship. Every angel is appointed to reveal *Hashem’s* glory in a specific way.

There is no blade of grass below that doesn’t have [an angel] appointed over it above, who hits it and tells it to grow.³

By means of all the angels together, the totality of *Hashem’s* Kingship is expressed in the world, with its royal beauty, with its radiant face.

The second type of *shaliach*, of emissary who does *Hashem’s* Will in the world, is the *Kelipos* and other forces of the *Sitra Achra*. They, too, are from *Hashem*, but they do not bring about a direct revelation of *Hashem’s* glory. They have two purposes.

Their first purpose is to punish people. This causes *Hashem’s* Kingship to be established. It brings people to fear the King, and without this fear, people would swallow each other alive.

Their second purpose is to conceal *Hashem’s* actions in the world, so it won’t be readily apparent that everything is from *Hashem*. This enables people to have free choice. It accords greatness and grandeur to *Hashem’s* Name when people freely choose to do good and serve Him.

2 Terumah 129b.

3 Zohar, Hashmatos 1 251a.

The purpose of everything, including the forces of the *Sitra Achra*, is to reveal *Hashem’s* Oneness in the world. The only difference is that the *Sitra Achra* is called the “back” as regards *kedushah*. *Hashem’s* actions are not readily apparent through it.

By reciting *Kaddish* in Aramaic, we upraise the “back” side inside of us and turn it into the “front” side. We thereby chase all the *kitrugim* away from our *Tefilah*. We remove all the forces and factors that prevent our prayers from ascending to the Heavenly Throne of Glory.

But we still need to explain what it is in *Kaddish* that counteracts the *Sitra Achra*, thus enabling our prayers to ascend.

The Jewish Way of Life

Shlomo Hamelech expressed for us what the Jewish way of life is, what the most important thing is for a Jew, what characterizes his behavior patterns.

אֲרַח חַיִּים לְמַעַלָּה לְמַשְׁכִּיל – “The way of life is above for he who understands.”⁴

The path of life leads up. We need to go up, to uplift ourselves. The reason is given in the second half of the above-quoted *pasuk*:

לְמַעַן סוּר מִשְׂאוֹל מָטָה – “In order to turn away from *she’ol* below.”⁵

The *Vilna Gaon* explains that we need to go up so we won’t fall down. If you aren’t growing, you are falling. Either you go up or you go down.

What defines “growing,” going up?

The Ramchal is quoted in many places as saying that the true definition of greatness and smallness is how much or little a person recognizes the Oneness of *Hashem*.

For instance, when a baby is born and is a day old, we call him “small.” Why is he called “small”? Because he doesn’t stand up on his legs? There are elderly people who can’t stand, or walk, or eat by themselves, and we don’t call them “small.”

4 Mishlei 15:24.

5 Ibid.

The reason a baby is called “small” is because he doesn’t know about anything besides himself. If he is hungry he cries, if something hurts him he cries. His whole world is just himself. This is true “smallness.”

When the baby starts to grow, he sees that there are other things around him, and then he notices that he also has a mother. He is not the only thing in the world. This is a sign that he has grown a little. When he is five, he sees that he has a father and a mother that he needs to listen to. There is something besides him. He is not the center of the world.

When he is eight or nine he realizes that there is also *Hashem*, but his understanding is that *Hashem* gives to Father, and Father gives to Mother, and Mother gives to me. He is still focused on himself. Everyone around him is there to give him what he needs, so he is still “small.”

When he reaches the age of thirteen he is able to understand that *Hashem* is One, and this makes him “big.” He is now Halachically an adult. However, even though he understands that *Hashem* is One, and He gives life, *parnassah* and so forth, he thinks about himself. He thinks: “I” need to live. He sees himself as being in the picture.

So he continues to grow, and the more he understands *Hashem’s* Oneness, [the more he understands that there is nothing other than *Hashem*,] the bigger and greater he becomes. This is a very important principle that we need to remember.

When we *daven*, our prayers are liable to be stained with mud, with *kelipos*, and they can’t get through to *Hashem*, because they were not prayed with a pure awareness and proper understanding of *Hashem*. This is a general problem with our prayers achieving acceptance by Heaven.

Chazal say that *resha’im* see themselves as standing “over” their gods. It says about Pharaoh, עַמְדָּה עַל הַיָּאֵר – “He was standing over the Nile.”⁶ The Nile was a god in Pharaoh’s eyes, so why was he standing “over” it? Because he thinks that god is there to serve him.

6 Bereishis 41:1.

Along the same lines, many people have the attitude that Torah, *tefilah* and *mitzvos* are tools to attain their desires. If you need *parnassah*, if you want to have children, so pray and you will get. If you *daven* properly, *Hashem* will give you. According to this attitude, *Hashem* is here to help me and give to me. Prayers that are prayed with such an attitude are mixed with impure motives. In other words, they have *kelipos* attached to them. *Kelipos* means mixing in motives that are not *l’shem Shamayim*.

Early Torah sources say that *Kaddish* is based on the *pasuk* וְהִתְגַּדַּלְתִּי וְהִתְקַדַּשְׁתִּי – “I will be magnified and sanctified.”⁷ This verse is speaking of the war of Gog and Magog [which will result in the whole world recognizing *Hashem’s* Kingship].

The content of the *Kaddish* prayer is all about *Hashem’s* Name and Throne becoming complete, which signifies His Kingship becoming recognized by all living beings. יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵיָהּ רַבָּא. We pray that His Name should become “great,” should become properly complete, with all its letters. This means universal recognition that *Hashem* is King.

When we recite *Kaddish* we are declaring that everything we just prayed for was [not for our own needs and desires but] for the purpose of יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵיָהּ רַבָּא, that *Hashem’s* Name should become great and sanctified, and this is what raises our prayers from earth to Heaven.

Kaddish expresses that we are not concerned with our own name, but with *Hashem’s* Name. It shows that we are not the center of the world, that we are not seeking wealth and happiness and other good things for our own sake. We are rather seeking that *Hashem’s* Name should be magnified and that He should rule the world: וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ. His Kingship is the center of the world, not us.

What does it mean, practically speaking, that His Kingship is the center of the world?

Let’s discuss how a person ordinarily goes about determining what is true, what the reality is. He thinks to himself: I am a very smart person. I listen to all the various opinions, consider them, and then I

7 Yechezkel 38:23.

express my own opinion, which is the one I consider correct. I decide. Yes, your opinion is important, too. I am not an arrogant person. I listen to your opinion. But the bottom line is whatever I see as the reality, that's the reality.

This is smallness. For a baby, all of reality is what he sees. A big person, a great person, is someone for whom reality is what *Hashem* says. Torah is reality. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is the center of the world and

that determines the reality.

Our *avodah* is to grow, to uplift ourselves. To recognize and express that *Hashem* is the One and Only and He is the center of the world. Since *kelipos* attach themselves even to our prayers, since we mix in our wishes, desires and foolishness even when we are speaking to *Hashem*, this is why we conclude every section of the *Tefilah* with *יתגדל ויתקדש שמייה רבא*. ●

STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF RAV SHIMSHON PINCUS ZT"l

Gates of Tears

A woman from Ofakim once approached Rav Shimshon and expressed her deep frustrations that every year on Yom Kippur, while her husband stands as an angel in *shul*, absorbed in holiness and purity, she is stuck at home caring for a host of little ones who keep her so busy that she barely finds the time to *daven* a proper *Neilah*! Instead, she is busy preparing a bottle, breaking up a fight, or changing a diaper, without a moment's respite.

Rav Shimshon's reply surprised her. "Yes, the men are in *shul*, their thoughts focused on *teshuvah* and achieving closeness to *Hashem Yisbarach*, and their *tefilos*, indeed, ascend to *Shamayim*. Yet it is possible that the gates are closed to them, and their *tefilos* are rejected. However, when a woman stands at home with a baby in one arm and her *machzor* in the other, struggling to eke out several words of *tefilah*, and then finally bursts into sobs from a broken, frustrated heart, her tears soar heavenward, surpassing all other *tefilos*, as 'the gates of tears are never locked.'"

Closeness and Belonging

The Rebbetzin always inserted personal requests

into the designated parts of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Thus, aside from the tears shed to express her closeness and belonging to *Hashem*, she would also weep copiously for herself, her husband, and her children.

Whenever one of her children fell ill, or worse yet, behaved improperly, the Rebbetzin's tears and *tefilos* revealed all. On those days, she didn't want to go away from her *siddur* until she felt that all her tears and prayers were spent.

With her natural affinity for *tefilah*, the Rebbetzin's entreaties were not limited to the designated times of *Shacharis*, *Minchah*, *Maariv* or even specific hours that she devoted to reciting *Tehillim*, but they filled her entire day. When she sent her sons off to *cheder* in the morning, she'd whisper a heartfelt *tefilah* that they should succeed in their learning and have *cheshek* to learn; and when she cooked supper she *davened* that the food should be tasty for the kids and give them the energy to learn.

Most inspiring of all were the exalted *tefilos* that she offered on *Erev Shabbos* during the auspicious time of candlelighting. Though she could only stand opposite the candles for a short time, the brief spate

of tears that flowed from her eyes added a special aura to the glowing flames of the *Shabbos licht*.

Women who sat beside her on the bench in *shul* described the Rebbetzin as “a master of tears.” She didn’t just weep during the *Yamim Noraim*, but on a “regular *Shabbos*,” as well. As her children grew older, she started coming to *shul* every week, and she was always among the first to arrive and the last to leave. Even during the years when she had only small children at home, she still made it a point to come to *shul* for *Krias Hatorah* and *Mussaf*. She *davened Shacharis* in the privacy of her home, but those with keen ears could detect the sound of her lilting *tefilos* recited word for word.

Morning, Afternoon, and Night

The Rebbetzin davened *Shacharis*, *Minchah*, and *Maariv* on a daily basis, slowly, pleasantly, and always dressed in a dignified manner. She rose early so she could *daven* a lengthy *Shacharis* from beginning to end before the children awoke and the house transformed into its typical morning clamor.

A teacher in the Rebbetzin’s high school attests that she once needed important information in the morning, but despite repeated attempts, was unable to reach the Rebbetzin. Every time she called, someone would answer, “Mommy is still *davening*.”

She recited *Minchah* at the very first *zman*, rather than procrastinate throughout the day until she “had time to *daven*.” The Rebbetzin never voluntarily pushed off the sweet privilege of communicating with *Hashem* or sufficed with “snatching a quick *Minchah*” several minutes before sunset.

There were times when she occasionally went to sleep before *davening Maariv*, explaining that it was improper to speak before the King when she was so exhausted. However, on those nights, she would rise before *alos hashachar*, get dressed, and *daven Maariv*.

Her example clearly demonstrated that a Jew doesn’t just *daven* because he is obligated to do so, but because there is no greater pleasure or privilege than standing before *Hashem Yisbarach!*

Eis Ratzon

The women in *shul* were riveted by the Rebbetzin’s expressive prayers, inspired by the love and awe that emanated from her *tefilos*. In her later years, when she already had teenage children at home, she also tried to come to *shul* for *Minchah* on *Shabbos* and fast days. *Pesichas ha’aron* before *Krias Hatorah*, she explained, is a fortuitous *eis ratzon*, an auspicious hour when the gates of *Shamayim* open wide to accept *tefilos*. Why forfeit the opportunity to *daven* for our needs, our children’s *limud Torah* and *yiras Shamayim*?

All the Berachos

Rav Shimshon likewise emphasized the significance of *tefilah* during an *eis ratzon* and what a shame it is to miss out on it. The greatest *eis ratzon*, he averred, is during *Birkas Kohanim*, when all *sha’arei Shamayim* open wide.

Expounding upon the *berachah* itself, he expressed that more than we require the blessing of ‘*Yevarechecha Hashem v’yishmirecha*,’ which refers to *Hashem* granting us wealth and safeguarding us from harm and sin, we require ‘*Ya’er Hashem Panav...v’yasem lecha shalom*’ — *Hashem* showing us a kind and radiant countenance, and the gift of peace, which is the vessel for all *berachos*. Illustrating this point, he recounted that he knew a man who was in a very difficult situation. “For a long time,” Rav Shimshon recounted, “I concentrated all my energies and intentions during *Birkas Kohanim* to entreat for salvation for this man, and *Hashem* miraculously answered me!” ●

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