

# 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

## Emotional Judgment

בְּצֶדֶק תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתְךָ. (ויקרא יט, טו)

**You shall judge your fellow justly. (Vayikra 19:15)**

This *pasuk* speaks of the *mitzvah* of לכה זכות, דן לכף זכות, viewing every person favorably. *Igeres Haramban* goes even further and says that a person should consider all those around him to be better than him. This outlook is hard to grasp. Does it mean a person should delude himself?

R. Yisrael Salanter explained that this *mitzvah* is not about how we view others intellectually. It is about how we view others emotionally, similar to how a person views himself.

What does this mean?

A person knows himself. He knows his weak areas, his *aveiros* and his improper thoughts. If he would know that his fellow has all these negative qualities, he would distance himself from him and consider him a thoroughly evil person. However, even though he has all these negative qualities

himself, he does not see himself as a *rasha*. He has an excuse for every one of his lackings and an explanation for each one of his sins.

For instance, a person who learns Torah most of the time feels confident that he is a true *masmid*. Although he speaks idle talk here and there, he doesn't attribute importance to those moments. But when his *masmid* friend starts talking for a moment, he immediately strikes him off the "masmid" list.

Or he sees his fellow wrapped up in *tefilah*, swaying with special movements, and looks at him critically, saying to himself, "O come on, is that how you stand before a king?" He doesn't remember that yesterday when he had a sick family member, he looked exactly the same when he was praying, and considered it totally fine and correct.

It's all because "a person is his own relative"<sup>1</sup> and loves himself. His emotions overpower his intellect and explain away every fault he may have. (This phenomenon is actually one of *Hashem's* kindnesses, because otherwise a person would constantly be miserable over his true state, and would not be able to live with himself.)

The forgiving eye we have for ourselves is how we should look upon others. We should have love and emotion for them, rather than cold, intellectual judgement.

Sometimes a person falls into a fight with another, and instead of taking it to heart and making up with him, he consoles himself that the other guy is a bum and no good, the other guy is at fault. With this excuse he can spend his whole life in fights with people. But when his time will come,

*Hashem* is likely show him that the other guy is not a bum and not a *rasha* after all. On the contrary, *Hashem* might say to him: I am holding **you** to an accounting.

A person brought before the Heavenly tribunal for getting angry at his fellow might try to claim that his fellow is a wild animal. And *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* might answer him: Why do you say he is a wild animal? I consider him a *tzaddik gamur*.

We don't know what is in the mind of the other guy or understand why he behaves the way he does. Let's say you see that Reuven or Shimon or Yehudah hardly learns Torah, and doesn't *daven* properly either. But you don't know why. This is why everything happening in the world is not pertinent to you. It's not your job to judge. The only thing in the world that is pertinent to you is your own self, because you know yourself. The only person you should be evaluating is you. ●

1 *Yevamos* 25b.



## Holier Than Thou?

קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. (ויקרא יט, ב)

**You shall be holy because I, *Hashem* your G-d, am holy. (*Vayikra* 19:2)**

The *parshah* begins with the *mitzvah* to be holy. What does it take to be holy, and thereby fulfill this *mitzvah*? Our Rabbis taught that we

should not make do with just avoiding known *aveiros* such as forbidden foods and forbidden gender relationships and other such prohibitions.



Rather, we are commanded to go beyond that, and sanctify ourselves even in permitted matters.

We need to live a life of *kedushah* as befits the Chosen People, as befits *Hashem's* beloved children. *Hashem* wants to be proud of how we live our lives. That means separating ourselves and abstaining even from things that are technically permitted, and living a life of *kedushah*.

In fact, the Torah says even more than this. It says, קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם – “You shall be holy **because I, Hashem your G-d, am holy.**” Here the Torah compares our holiness to *Hashem's* holiness.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* said: Since you were sanctified to My Name before I created the world, you shall be holy like I am holy.<sup>1</sup>

Even before the world was created, the sanctity of the Jewish people was destined to be. But what does this add to the *mitzvah* of קדושים תהיו? Why is this the basis of the *mitzvah*?

The *Dubner Maggid* explains it by way of allegory. A rich man lived in a little village where there were only simple people. He had an only daughter, and decided to seek out a bridegroom for her who was a great *talmid chacham*. He traveled a long way until he came to a leading *yeshivah*, and the *rosh yeshivah* there picked out the top *talmid* for him. The rich man put out a fortune for this brilliant and dedicated young man who learned day and night.

After the marriage, the rich man noticed that his new son-in-law became lazy about his learning. He only learned an hour or two a day. The rich man was perturbed by this and said to him, “Why is it, my son, that you are not a *masmid* like you were before?”

The young man replied, “Just ask the *shamash* of the *beis midrash* if there is anyone in the whole village who opens a *sefer* even once a month. Even if I am lazier about my learning than I was before, I still have a lot more Torah erudition than you will find in all the villagers here!”

The rich man said, “But you know that I didn't take you as son-in-law because you were the best of the villagers. I met you when you were in a leading *yeshivah*, among *talmidei chachamim*, and you were the top *talmid* there. That's why I am not satisfied that you are just the best Torah learner in this little village. I want you to dedicate yourself to your learning like back in the *yeshivah*, because that is where I picked you out. That is where I took you from.”

This explains the *mitzvah* of קדושים תהיו. A person might be tempted to consider himself “holy” as compared the average person, especially in our generation in which moral standards are so low and denial of *Hashem* is so prevalent. Thus the Torah tells us not to apply relative standards. We were sanctified to *Hashem's* Name before the world was even created, before this lowly generation came into existence. We are called upon to be holy like *Hashem* is holy. His sanctity is not relative, as compared to someone less than Him. His *kedushah* is inherent. This is how we, too, should be.

In our lowly generation a person is liable to allow himself all sorts of things that every Jew would have detested in former times, saying to himself that in modern society, his lifestyle would still be considered a holy one. This is a mistake. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* asks every Jew in every generation to be inherently and absolutely holy. Just as *Hashem's kedushah* doesn't change from generation to generation, so the *kedushah* of the Jewish people should retain its original beauty for all time. ●

<sup>1</sup> *Tanchuma, Kedoshim 2.*



וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ. (ויקרא יט, יח)

**You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Vayikra 19:18)**

### Loving Others is Part of Tefilah

The Arizal is quoted as follows:

Before a person recites his order of prayer in *shul*, from *Parshas Ha'akeidah* and on, he needs to accept upon himself to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ* – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” He should have in mind to love each member of the Jewish people as he loves himself, because by means of this, his prayer will ascend, included in all the prayers of the Jewish people, and will thus be able to rise to Heaven and bear fruit.

Here we see that fulfilling the *mitzvah* of loving others, before *davening*, is not just a good idea. It is an essential part of *tefilah* itself. “Because by means of this, his prayer will ascend, included in all the prayers of the Jewish people.”

How did love for other Jews get to be an essential part of *tefilah*? What’s the connection? The simple explanation is based on the following. The Rambam writes:

*Teshuvah* is such great virtue! Yesterday this person was separated from *Hashem*, G-d of Yisrael, as it says, *עֹנֵי תִיכֶם הָיוּ* – “Your sins separated between you and your G-d.” He cried out to *Hashem* and was not answered, as it says, *גַּם כִּי תִרְבוּ תִפְלֵה* – “Even if you pray a lot...” He did *mitzvos* and they were ripped up in front of him, as it says, *מִי בִקֵּשׁ* – “Who asked this of you, to trample My courtyards?” And today

he is attached to the *Shechinah*.”

This tells us something important about *tefilah*. A person could pray but not be answered. On the contrary, his *mitzvah* was ripped up in front of him. In truth, every prayer will ascend, but this doesn’t necessarily happen right away. One’s prayer could be detained somewhere until its time comes to rise to Heaven: *וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ*.

We should not take it for granted that our prayers will ascend to the Divine Throne of Glory, and if they get detained on their way up, that’s not a good thing. However, the Arizal offered us an awesome and amazing *eitzah* for our prayers to ascend to Heaven. This means of uplifting our prayers can be understood in several different ways.

One way is as follows: it is similar to the power of *davening* with the *tzibbur*. The *Gemara* says that prayer recited in public bears the promise of *הֵן אֵלֹהִים הֵן אֵלֹהִים* – “The mighty G-d will not reject it.”<sup>1</sup> When we *daven* with the *tzibbur*, the prayer of the whole congregation together is one complete entity, and *Hashem* will never reject such a prayer. As Rashi explains, “In public, their prayer is heard, even though not everyone’s heart is fully in it.”

The Arizal’s innovation was to apply this principle even if one’s prayer was not actually recited with the congregation. If one is connected to the *tzibbur* by loving all fellow Jews, and especially if he is involved with them by teaching them Torah, he thereby acquires connection to *Hashem*. This wields a tremendous power to cause his prayer to be accepted.

Another way to understand it is along the lines of *midah k’neged midah*. If you love (others), you

<sup>1</sup> *Iyov* 36: 5; *Taanis* 8a.

are loved (by *Hashem*). If there is a single person in the world that you have something against, this is very damaging to your soul. It affects your very relationship with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

If you have something against a certain Jew, you have something against *Hashem's* only child, so to speak, because every Jew is like *Hashem's* only child. This is not good, because if you have a problem with someone's beloved only child, you have a problem with the father, too. It is very hard for a parent to maintain a good relationship with someone who hates his beloved only child.

### It All Boils Down to Faith

Now we will take it to a deeper level.

The *mitzvos* of *tefilah* and of loving one's neighbor have a common root, and that is *emunah*. The power of our prayers derives from our *emunah*, from the fact that we pray because we believe in *Hashem* and rely on Him to take care of us. And the litmus test of how firmly we believe that *Hashem* is all-powerful and runs the world is the degree to which we love our neighbor. Proper fulfillment of this *mitzvah* is the greatest proof that we rely on *Hashem* to take care of everything in our lives, and real faith in *Hashem* empowers our prayers to be accepted by Him.

Why is it so hard for us to love our neighbor? We don't need to take everything we have and give it to him. We only need to love him as we love ourselves. That he should have what we have. What's so hard about that?

It all boils down to a lack of faith. For instance, let's say you are walking along and you see in front of you a Jew who doesn't make the impression of being a very nice guy at all. The wretched person in front of you looks like he has no connection to Torah or even to basic good manners. You look at him and ask yourself, "I know it is written that everyone should say, **בשבילי נברא העולם** – 'The world was created for me,' but did *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* really create the whole world just for this guy?!"

However, the truth is that this Jew is *Hashem's* only child, so to speak. It is as if *Hashem* is saying:

Right now, *Avraham Avinu* does not interest Me, nor does Yitzchak or Yaakov or the *Gedolim* of past generations. Only this sweet, lovable Jew interests Me. *Hashem* takes him, so to speak, and gives him a big hug.

It's true that human beings are not capable of behaving in this way, but *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has infinite *chesed*. With infinity, there is no such thing as going too far, so it is quite clear that this is how *Hashem* relates to every Jew – like a father's unending love for his beloved only child.

*Tefilah* depends on loving one's neighbor because someone who doesn't love every Jew is showing a lack of faith in *Hashem's* trait of *chesed*. When a person turns to *Hashem* in prayer and asks Him to take care of all his needs, this comes from a recognition of how much *Hashem* loves every Jew and wants the best for him. Just like *Hashem* loves me and wants to give me everything I need, He loves my neighbor the same. Since *Hashem* bestows infinite *chesed* and loves every Jew, my neighbor must be part of all this, too. Every single Jew is therefore a *zisser yid*, a sweet Jew. Sweet as honey!

If we don't see it that way, this is a sign that we lack *emunah*. Something is amiss in our belief regarding the relationship between *Hashem* and His people Yisrael. This pulls the rug out from under our feet when we come to pray to *Hashem*. On what basis are we asking for our needs?

The way to attain proper love of our neighbor is by strengthening our *emunah*. By thinking about how everything and every event in the world is decreed by *Hashem*. Everything we have, physically and spiritually, is thanks to His unlimited *chesed*. With this awareness, we can ask *Hashem* to show mercy on us, too.

### Seeing the Positive

This idea explains a story from the *Gemara* recounting an incident that happened to R. Elazar son of R. Shimon as he was traveling home from the study house of his rabbi:

R. Elazar came upon a man who was

exceedingly ugly. The man said to him, “*Shalom* to you, rabbi,” and R. Elazar did not greet him in return. He rather said to him, “You worthless man, you are so ugly! Is everyone in your town as ugly as you?”

The man replied, “I don’t know, but go and say to the Craftsman Who made me, ‘The piece You made is so ugly!’”

When R. Elazar realized that he sinned, he got off the donkey and prostrated himself before him and said to him, “I submit to you; forgive me!”

The man responded, “I won’t forgive you until you go to the Craftsman Who made me and say to Him, ‘The piece You made is so ugly’”....

R. Elazar and the people of his town begged the man very much to forgive him, and in the end, he forgave him.<sup>2</sup>

It’s obvious that this story is not to be taken at face value. R. Elazar son of R. Shimon was an exceedingly holy and pious *Tanna*, and it doesn’t make any sense that he would refuse to return a greeting, and instead make a really rude and insulting remark to a total stranger, just because he was ugly. What could possibly bring him to do such a thing?

And after R. Elazar recognized his mistake, the ugly man emphasized to him over and over that he won’t forgive him until he goes to the Craftsman Who made him. This, too, needs explanation. To say it once makes sense. But afterward it would have been enough to just say, “I don’t forgive you!”

All this needs explanation, and the Commentators indeed discuss it.

The following story will help us understand the point *Chazal* were making. (I heard the following story from someone who heard it firsthand.) R. Issar Zalman Meltzer was once sitting in his *sukkah* on *Chol Hamo’ed Sukkos*, and asked R. Dovid Finkel to bring him a pen and paper. R. Dovid asked him, “But it’s *chol hamo’ed*, isn’t it forbidden to write?” R.

Issar Zalman answered, “It’s *pikuach nefesh!*”

After R. Dovid Finkel brought pen and paper, R. Issar Zalman wrote down a *pasuk*. He wrote, עֵינֶיךָ יִשְׂרוּ נִגְדֶךָ לְנֹכַח יְבִיטוּ וְעַפְעָפִיךָ – “Your eyes should look right ahead; your eyes should focus their gaze straight in front of you.”<sup>3</sup>

R. Dovid Finkel asked, “Why is this a matter of life and death?”

R. Issar Zalman answered, “I am sitting here in the *sukkah* and people come to visit me. Since I can recognize a person’s whole character just by looking at him, I immediately notice the shortcomings of each of my visitors. I was sitting and thinking this kind of thoughts about other people, and suddenly I caught myself and realized that it is not right to focus on criticizing others. Rather, ‘Your eyes should focus their gaze straight in front of you.’ [In other words, I should be minding my own business.]”

That’s the story about R. Issar Zalman Meltzer. Now let’s get back to R. Elazar son of R. Shimon.

R. Shimon saw the ugly man with a view that was not just superficial and external. He saw deep into the man’s character and into his very soul. That is why he called him “worthless.” R. Elazar perceived that he was ugly through and through, layer after layer, all the way down to the source of his *neshamah*. The man was not even deserving of the greeting “*Shalom*.” R. Elazar discerned in him not a single beautiful point.

R. Elazar was so shocked by the corrupted state of this man that he asked him, “Is everyone in your town as ugly as you?” In other words, he thought that maybe the man’s location has a negative influence on those who live there.

R. Elazar had good intentions. Out of love for this wretched man, he sought to arouse him to better his ways and save his soul, for his own good in this world and the next. R. Elazar wanted the man to know that even if he does good deeds sometimes, his inner self is ugly, and this needs to be corrected.

The ugly man responded, “I don’t know.” This,

2 *Taanis* 20b.

3 *Mishlei* 4:25.

too, needs to be explained. He should have known if his fellow townsmen are ugly, too.

The ugly man meant that he doesn't know how to look deeply into a person's *neshamah* to determine its ugliness or lack thereof, but if R. Elazar knows how to do that, if R. Elazar is such a lofty person, then he should know that that the *neshamah* is the point of connection and belonging to the Creator. "If my ugliness goes so deep," the man claimed, "then you should go to the Craftsman Who made me and ask Him to clean me up. I won't forgive you until you do so!"

R. Elazar realized that the ugly man was making a profound point. Since the *neshamah* is the point of connection and relationship with *Hakadosh*

*Baruch Hu*, this ugly man, who was a Jew, was surely connected to *Hashem* in the root of his soul no less than R. Elazar himself was. If so, he can't really be so ugly after all.

R. Elazar apparently suffered from a subtle spiritual imperfection that caused him to see only the man's ugliness and not his good side. That is why he said, "I submit to you; forgive me!" Rashi explains that R. Elazar was admitting that he had said more than he should have.

This is a lesson for us: the *mitzvah* of loving our neighbor requires us to look specifically at the positive points that definitely exist in every single Jew, since every Jew is connected to *Hashem* and belongs to Him. ●

## TEFILAH TOPIC

## Kaddish

### The Uplifting Kaddish

*Kaddish* is an exalted prayer and is a דבר שבקדושה; it is in the category of holy matters that may be recited only with a *minyan*.

What does the world stand on? On *Kedushah d'sidra* [i.e., the *kedushah* of *Uva l'Tzion*] and on the *Yehei shmei rabba* [i.e., *Kaddish*] recited after *Aggadab*.<sup>1</sup>

*Kaddish* is such a sublime prayer that we recite it after every section of the *Tefilah* – between the morning blessings and *Pesukei d'Zimra*, between *Pesukei d'Zimra* and the blessings of *Krias Shema*, between *Tachanun* and *Kedushah d'sidra*, between *Kedushah d'sidra* and *Shir shel Yom*, and so forth.

Early Torah sources say that *Kaddish* lifts up each section of the *Tefilah* that we just recited. *Kaddish* takes it up to the world above the world associated with the section just recited. *Kaddish* thus relates to both the section of *Tefilah* just completed and to the

section about to start.

It also says in early Torah sources that *Kaddish Shalem* subdues the *kelipos* so they won't latch onto the *Tefilah*.

The nature and purpose of *Kaddish* is indeed lofty. We will discuss a certain point made by early Torah sources that can help us grasp the significance of *Kaddish* on our level so we can develop some appreciation for this awesome *Tefilah*.

### The Angel's Envy

*Kaddish* is recited in Aramaic, not in Hebrew, and this brings out an interesting point. The *Rishonim* say<sup>2</sup> it is because the ministering angels don't understand Aramaic, therefore we recite it in Aramaic so they won't envy us.

What does it mean that the angels have "envy"?

There are two types of envy. Simple envy is when

1 *Sotah* 49a.

2 See *Tosafos, Berachos* 3a; *Avudraham*.

one person wants what another has. When one sees that his friend has something he doesn't, he feels lacking, and he, too, wants to have it or have something like it.

There is a different type of envy that is aroused when one sees that his friend has something that doesn't befit him, something inappropriate to his level. For instance, he sees a very poor person driving a very fancy car. Or he sees a thoroughly ignorant person wearing a frock and a Hamburg hat and becoming a *rosh yeshivah*. This kind of thing arouses envy.

There is a fundamental difference between these two types of envy. The first type is aroused only when the envier doesn't yet have the desired object or position. Not so with the second type. When a person sees another holding something inappropriate to him, he will feel envy even if he has the same thing himself, and even if he has something greater than it. When he sees someone bereft of Torah knowledge flaunting himself as a *rosh yeshivah*, he feels envy, even if he studied Torah his whole life and legitimately became a leading scholar and *rosh yeshivah* himself.

This is why the angels are envious when they hear us reciting *Kaddish*. They see it as a big *chutzpah* on our part to say *Yisgadal v'yiskadash....* Thus we say it in Aramaic, so they won't understand what we are saying.

They don't envy us because we have something they lack. They are on the level appropriate to *Kaddish*, and in fact they are on an even higher level than that. What bothers them is that we consider ourselves to be on that level.

What is the level of *Kaddish*, and why don't the angels understand Aramaic, as it says in the *Gemara*?<sup>3</sup>

## The Back Side of Kedushah

First let us understand the nature of the Aramaic language.

It says in the *Gemara*<sup>4</sup> that the Aramaic language

was given at Sinai. Similarly, we find Aramaic words in the Torah: *יָגַר שְׁהִדוּתָא*.<sup>5</sup> Also the books of Daniel and Nechemiah are written mostly in Aramaic. And regarding the *mitzvah* of reciting the weekly Torah portion twice in Hebrew and once in translation, the *Rishonim* say<sup>6</sup> that is preferable for the translation to be the Aramaic one, because it was given at Sinai.

Why were two languages – Hebrew and Aramaic – given at Sinai?

Early Torah sources say that Aramaic is the back side of Hebrew. In other words, the language sanctified by Sinai has a front and a back. The front is Hebrew and the back is Aramaic.

What does “front” and “back” mean, in terms of a language? And what is the relationship between that which is called “front” and that which is called “back”?

It says in the *Gemara*<sup>7</sup> that the first human being was created with a front side and a back side, as it says, *אחור וקדם צרתני* – “You formed me back and front.”<sup>8</sup> Early Torah sources say that man is a miniature world. Every spiritual building has the form of front and back, as that is the basic form of *Hashem's* creation.

## A Back is Faceless

The following allegory brings out the point. When a person is looking for his friend Reuven, there is a big difference between seeing Reuven from the front and seeing him from the back. If he sees Reuven from the back, all he can know is that the person standing before him is Reuven. But if he sees Reuven from the front, he sees his face. He not only knows that it is Reuven, he also can see whether Reuven is happy or sad, upset or pleased, tired or alert, etc.

The frontal view of a person shows his face. And a person's face shows what is going on inside him. The more skilled the viewer is, the more he can know

3 *Sotah* 33a.

4 *Megilah* 9a.

5 *Bereishis* 31:47.

6 See *Beis Yosef* 285.

7 *Erwin* 18a.

8 *Tehillim* 139:5.

about the person he is viewing, by studying his face. But looking at someone from behind doesn't tell us about his personality and inner feelings. He can be identified, and that's all. If he performs a certain act, we will know to whom that act should be attributed, but we won't be able to define the nature of the one who did it.

*Moshe Rabbeinu* was told:

You will see Me from behind, but you will not see My face.<sup>9</sup>

A human being cannot see *Hashem* from the front, he cannot see *Hashem's* "face," because

<sup>9</sup> *Shemos* 33:23.

*Hashem's* nature is above our ability to comprehend. It is not something we can define.<sup>10</sup>

We can only see *Hashem* "from behind," i.e., we can associate *Hashem's* actions to Him. The whole world is from Him and run by Him.

Hebrew is like viewing *kedushah* from the front. Every letter represents worlds and reveals the nature of things. Aramaic is like viewing it from behind. It doesn't reveal the nature of things. Things that need to be hidden, the secrets of the Torah, such as the Zohar, are written in Aramaic. ●

*To be continued*

<sup>10</sup> See *Seforno* ad loc.

## STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF RAV SHIMSHON PINCUS ZT"l



## Tefilah

### All-In-One

Rav Shimshon didn't recite his *berachos* and *tefilos*, but expressed them, delivering them from a place deep within his heart and infusing every word with fiery emotion that attested to a unique attachment and understanding of *tefilah*.

One *Rosh Chodesh*, Rav Shimshon noticed a distinguished *avreich* from his community glancing at a *sefer* between two paragraphs of *Hallel*. After *davening* concluded, the Rav approached him in angst and whispered, "I'm sorry to say this, but you ruined my *Hallel!* How could you look at a *sefer* in the middle of *Hallel*? Don't you have a beautiful family, children that you need to thank *Hashem* for?!"

The man responded with a complacent shrug. "What's the problem? It was between paragraphs." Rav Shimshon, for his part, couldn't fathom the man's indifference. "Between two paragraphs?!"

*Hallel* is one perfect unit! It's all one *Hallel!*"

It goes without saying that Rav Shimshon, who was so pained at the sight of another Jew exhibiting disregard of *Hallel* and beseeched him to focus properly on *tefilah*, went to great lengths to honor and take advantage of every moment of *tefilah* to its fullest. He lived his belief that every *Kaddish* and every passage of *davening* possess unique and extraordinary powers that generate miracles in the upper and lower spheres that no other section of *davening* can achieve. Guided by this conviction, he took great care to preserve the structure of *davening* from beginning to end — and as he exclaimed, "If *davening* doesn't start with *Yishtabach*, then it certainly doesn't end with *Uva le'Tzion!*"

One morning, the *minyán* in which Rav Shimshon was *davening* moved to a larger hall in the *shul* right before *Yishtabach*, however the Rav, who was utterly engrossed in his *tefilah*, didn't notice until

the *minyan* had already begun 'Yotzer ohr.' Loath to miss a single *Kaddish* or *Borechu*, he waited in the smaller room for a half-hour until another *minyan* formed that he was able to join for the remainder of *davening*.

Similarly, during the period shortly after his marriage when he lived in Yerushalayim, he occasionally *davened* in the *shteiblach*, but did not follow the *minyan's* hasty pace. If a *chazzan* led a quick *davening*, Rav Shimshon would simply recite *Pesukei d'Zimra* with one *chazzan* and join another *minyan* before "Yotzer ohr." If necessary, he would change to a third *minyan* for *Shemoneh Esrei* and a fourth for *chazaras hashatz!*

In his stirring *sichos* on *tefilah*, he often lamented people's tendency to dispense with the last passages of *davening*. He once reminisced sadly to his children, "When I used to *daven* in *shteiblach*, I would sometimes notice the place gradually emptying during *Ashrei* and *Uva L'tzion*. Often, by the time I finished *Pitum HaKetores*, I had to piece together a *minyan* for *Kaddish*..."

In middle of a *derashah* that he delivered at his son's bar mitzvah, he turned to the fresh *bachur* and rendered a personal appeal, "I want to ask something of you now, and I request that you guard this request closely for the rest of your life: Please never take off your *tefillin* before the last *Kaddish!*"

Rav Shimshon once congenially approached an American tourist in the *Meah Shearim shteiblach* after noticing that the man had skipped a significant portion of *davening*.

"My friend, I want to tell you something important," he said, smiling. "*Davening* isn't a cup of Turkish coffee that we sip from, and stop drinking before we reach the dregs at the bottom. A cup of such coffee isn't meant to be completely finished, but *davening* isn't the mud at the bottom of your coffee mug!"

## Tefilah B'tzibbur

The *Shulchan Aruch* (100:9) states that one is obligated to *daven* with a *minyan*. Only one who is an *anuss* may *daven* alone; however, even he should *daven* at an hour that the congregation has gathered to pray.

"At your age," Rav Shimshon once reproached a *talmid* who occasionally *davened* alone in his room, "I was afraid to stand before *Hashem* on my own." His tone made it clear that he couldn't fathom how the *bachur* would dare to *daven* without a *minyan*.

One late night, Rav Shimshon had already driven a considerable distance from Bnei Brak to Ofakim when the young passenger whom he'd taken along for the ride suddenly slapped himself on the forehead and cried, "Oh, no! I don't believe it! I forgot to *daven Maariv!* It's late, but I guess I'll *daven* in Ofakim."

Rav Shimshon appeared distraught. "By the time we get back to Ofakim, it'll be too late to get a *minyan*..." After a moment's pause, he added, "You know what? Let's go back to Bnei Brak. I'll take you to Itzkowitz." Before the young man could even muster a reply, he'd already made a U-turn and was en route back to Bnei Brak to find a *minyan* for his passenger.

To his consternation, his passenger didn't share his enthusiasm about the opportunity to *daven* with a *minyan* and demurred, explaining that traveling was hard on his stomach and he couldn't bear the thought of adding another two hours to the already-long drive.

Without a word, Rav Shimshon turned around again, resuming the original drive. With this brief detour, he demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice two precious hours just to ensure that his passenger wouldn't miss *tefilah b'tzibbur!* ●

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