

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.

WORD FROM THE EDITOR

שְׁחַיְנוּ וְקִיְמוּ וְהִגִּיעְנוּ לְזִמְנֵהּ הַזֶּה

This week, *Parshas Shoftim*, marks a full year since we started putting out this *Parshah* sheet. We are very happy and grateful to have offered you these teachings of our father, Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l, on a weekly basis. We pray that we should soon merit the coming of *Mashiach Tzidkeinu*, and then our father zt"l himself will write the *divrei Torah* in our *Parshah* sheet.

In summing up the year, we can say that the success, breadth of distribution and degree of demand for the *Parshah* sheet has been far above expectations. It is distributed to thousands of *talmidim* around the world, and the list grows every week, arriving either by email or by a printed edition in certain locations. Everyone enjoys, learns and grows from the Torah teachings of our father zt"l, with his unique *derech* and style, thanks to which his teachings have spread throughout the world, and it is as if he himself is speaking. He will surely be a *Meilitz Yosher* for all who study his Torah teachings.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all who offered your insightful and helpful comments, thanks to which we have improved the publication and also made it more efficient. We would, of course, be happy

to receive comments, ideas and requests regarding the *Parshah* sheet in the hope that we will be able to implement it.

It is fitting at this junction to thank and to offer *ברכות לראש משביר* to our distinguished friend and colleague **R' Yehuda Kaufman Shlita** who took upon himself in a most wondrous way the expenses of editing and putting out the *Parshah* sheet in the *zechus* of his dear sons **ישראל נ"י ויעקב נ"י**. We offer our blessings in the name of all the *talmidim* that he should see from them and from all his offspring great joy and satisfaction and *nachas d'kedushah* and that they should grow to be great in Torah and *yiras Shamayim*, and that he should see great success in all his endeavors, with robust and lasting health, all his days.

We similarly thank **Rabbi and Mrs. Mordechai Deutsch**, from Toronto, who help and assist in every matter of *kedushah* and they assist also in putting out the *Parshah* sheet. We bless them that they should see great *nachas* from all their offspring, with joy and health, and should continue all their *avodas hakodesh* for the sake of *K'lal Yisrael, l'hagdil Torah ul'haadira*. We conclude with a *Tefilah* to the Creator that we may always be able to sanctify the Name of Heaven and bring *nachas ruach* to our Father in Heaven.

With the blessings of Torah,
Yosef Dov Pincus, *Rosh Hakollel*

וְהִיְתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בוּ כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו. (דברים יז, יט)

It shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life. (Devarim 17:19)

The Rambam rules that a Jewish king must write two Torah scrolls:

He leaves one of them in his storehouses, for he is commanded to write it, just like every other Jew is, and the other one shall never leave his presence, except when he enters the toilet or the washroom or another place that is unfit for reading it.

When he goes out to battle, it shall be with him, and when he comes back, it shall be with him. When he sits in judgment, it shall be with him, and when he reclines to eat, it shall be across from him, as it says, “It shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life.”¹

Lest we think this *halachah* doesn't apply to us, we should keep in mind the teaching of *Chazal*:

Rabbis are called kings.²

The Talmudic term רבנן, “Rabbis,” applies to all those who dedicate themselves to Torah study.

Accordingly, we should take our “Torah scroll” with us, or more exactly, the *Gemara* we are learning, the *Masechta* we are connected to, wherever we go. We should not part with it or take our minds off it. “It shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life.”

Wherever we go, our *Gemara* should be in our hand. If we need to go down to the health clinic, or to the grocery store, we should always, always hold the *Gemara* we are learning in our hand – even if we know we won't be able to learn from it. Maybe we will actually have a chance to look inside the book, who knows? In no case should we leave the *Gemara* behind.

A Jew who learns just *Daf Yomi*, but learns the *maseches* to the end, takes the *maseches* with him wherever he goes, and looks in the *Gemara* from time to time. This is the simple fulfillment of the *mitzvah* we recite several times a day: וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' – “You shall love Hashem your G-d.”

If we try to do this, we will see our lives change completely. Our lives will be completely connected to the Torah and to He Who gave us the Torah. ●

1 *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim* 3:1.

2 *Gitin* 62a.

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת

מוֹהַ"ד מוֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַמְּבוֹרָגָד זצ"ל

וּמוֹהַ"ד בְּרוּךְ זָאב בֶּן נִפְתָּלִי קְרָאוּס זצ"ל

נִדְבַת נְכֻדָהּם ~ עֲשֵׂת אֲקָיִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְהַפְּאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם

Leadership

לְבַלְתִּי רוּם לְכָבוֹ מֵאֶחָיו. (דברים יז, כ)

So his heart will not be haughty over his brethren. (*Devarim* 17:20)

The king is commanded not to be proud and haughty over his fellow Jews due to being their king.

There is a good reason for him not to be haughty. He was not granted rulership for his own sake and personal benefit. The *Gemara* tells of two great sages, R. Elazar Chisma and R. Yochanan Gudgeda, whose wisdom was so great that they could calculate how many drops of water are in the sea. Nevertheless, they were so poor that they lacked food and clothing.

Rabban Gamliel wanted to grant positions of leadership to these two sages. He sent messengers to call them but they did not come. Due to their great humility they did not want to take rulership over others. He sent messengers again, and they came. He then said to them:

Do you think I am granting you rulership? I am granting you servitude, as it says, “They spoke to him, saying, ‘If today you will be a servant to this people!’”²

The purpose of being a king is to serve and benefit *Hashem’s* children. The greatest merit and honor a person can attain is to be a servant of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu’s* beloved children. This is the true meaning of kingship.

However, since human beings tend to perceive certain things backwards, the Torah specially commands a king not to be haughty over his fellow Jews. For the same reason, *Chazal* enacted³ a special requirement for the nation’s leaders to

bow more than everyone else does when they pray. An ordinary Jew bows in *Avos* and in *Modim*. But the *Kohen Gadol* bows at the beginning of every blessing, and the king, once he bows, remains bowed over until the end of the *Amidah*. The greater a person is, the more he needs to humble himself.

This idea is not confined to the lofty positions of *Kohen Gadol* and kingship that used to be. Today, too, there are kings of a sort among the Jewish people. The *Gemara* recounts that a certain sage said to *Chachmei Yisrael*:

Peace be unto you, O Kings, Peace be unto you, O Kings. They said to him: What is your source that rabbis are called kings? He answered them: Because it says, “Through me, [through the Torah,] kings will rule.”⁴

Talmidei chachamim are a type of king. They exercise their kingship by caring for *Hashem’s* beloved children to the best of their ability.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to the Jewish people: I desire you, because even when I bestow greatness upon you, you minimize yourselves before Me. I granted greatness to Avraham, and he said before Me, **ואנכי עפר ואפר** – “I am dust and ashes.” To Moshe and Aharon, and he said, **ונחנו מה** – “What are we?” to David, and he said, **ואנכי תולעת ולא איש** – “I am a worm and not a man.”⁵

1 I *Melachim* 12:7.

2 *Horayos* 10a.

3 *Berachos* 34b.

4 *Mishlei* 8:15.

5 *Chulin* 89a.

This is an awesome teaching of *Chazal*. Here *Hashem* says that He desires us because “even when I bestow greatness upon you, you minimize yourselves before Me,” implying that the main reason why *Hashem* loves the Jewish people is because of their humility despite their greatness. This applies to each

and every Jew. Not just great *talmidei chachamim*, but every Jew who learns Torah and keeps *mitzvos*, should acquire more and more humility as he grows greater and greater in Torah, and then he will be beloved in the eyes of *Hashem* and in the eyes of all the Jewish people. ●



Seven Consolations

אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְנַחֵמְכֶם. (הפטרה)

It is I, it is I, Who consoles you. (*Haftarah*)

The *Haftaros* of these weeks are called *שבעה דנחמתא*, “The Seven of Consolation.” This is because we read seven chapters of *nechamah* from *Sefer Yeshayahu* in these *Haftaros*.

Why seven consolations? The first, because *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* commands the *tzaddikim* to console Jerusalem. The second is the consolation that *Avraham Avinu* offers Jerusalem. The third is that with which *Yitzchak* consoles her. The fourth is that with which *Yaakov* consoles. The fifth is that with which *Moshe Rabbeinu* consoles. The sixth is that Jerusalem asks for other consolations and doesn’t accept the consolations of the *tzaddikim*. The seventh is that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* Himself consoles Zion and Jerusalem, as it says, “It is I, it is I, Who consoles you.”¹

These consolations promise that we will be redeemed from *galus*. For almost two thousand years now, we Jews have been speaking about

Hashem’s promise to His people regarding the *Ge’ulah*. Each day we enunciate our faith that “even if he [the *Mashiach*] tarries, I will still wait for him every day to come.” The Jewish people has been through hard times but always looked forward to *Hashem’s* salvation. And this is one of the questions a person will face when he stands before the Heavenly tribunal: “Did you wait for the *Yeshu’ah*?”² The *Chafetz Chaim* would always urge people in his talks and writings to look forward wholeheartedly and with perfect faith to the coming *Ge’ulah*, so they can answer “Yes” when they are so asked on their day of judgement.

The *Nevi'im* compared the coming *Ge’ulah* to a pregnant woman, as it says:

בְּטָרָם תַּחִיל יִלְדָה – Before she goes into labor, she will give birth.³

With each day, a pregnant woman draws closer to the birth. And with each day that passes, we, too, draw closer to the *Ge’ulah*. Even if it takes a long time, we will wait for it, because it surely will

1 See *Pesikta Rabbasi* 29.

2 *Shabbos* 31a.

3 *Yeshayahu* 66:7.

come.

Even things that *Hashem* promised only by way of oblique allusions came true, so the express promises He made about ultimately revealing His glory will surely be fulfilled as well.

We should not be perplexed by the idea that the Jewish nation, which today is small and internationally persecuted, will suddenly attain prominence in the eyes of the nations of the world. Is there something too hard for *Hashem*?

This is the way *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* always treated us. When was Yitzchak born? When his father Avraham was already a hundred years old, at an age when, naturally speaking, there was no chance he would father a child. What kind of state was Yosef in when he rose to rulership? He was languishing in the dungeon of a foreign country for years and years. Yaakov merited twelve tribes, wealth, and victory over the angel, after he was forced to give Elifaz everything he had, and worked oppressively day and night in service of Lavan.

Similarly, who would have expected, when Moshe was hidden in a floating box and put out to the river, that this crying infant would eventually lead his people out of Egypt and bring the Torah down from heaven? Who could have imagined, when the Hebrews were abject slaves in Egypt, that one night, Pharaoh would get up from bed and cry out, "Arise, go out from among my people!"

These are not random incidents. If we look more closely, we will find hundred and thousands of incidents in which *Hashem* saved Jews in situations that looked impossible.

All this makes it known to everyone on earth that *Hashem* is the Master of the world. He makes

people poor or rich, he places nations high or low, and nothing can stop Him. So we should not let our hopes falter. We can be sure that the Word of *Hashem* will be fulfilled.

But how do we picture the End of Days? Is it something to look forward to, or something fearful?

Someone once asked one of *Gedolei Yisrael* as follows: how can every Jew be required to look forward to the coming of *Mashiach*? We can't know what will happen to every person at that time. Who says that for this individual, the *Ge'ulah* is a good thing? Maybe he will suffer as a result?

The *Gadol* answered that it is indeed true that as far as an individual is concerned, the coming of *Mashiach* might not be good for him. But the Jewish people as a whole definitely needs *Ge'ulah* and *Yeshu'ah*. Since it is good for *K'lal Yisrael*, we must hope and look forward to the coming of *Mashiach*.

We could offer a different answer to this question, by way of parable. Someone has a difficult court trial coming up, and he expects that he will probably be sentenced to a harsh punishment. He is so despairing that he goes to the *mikveh* and decides to leave himself in the water, but at the last moment, he jumps out of the water and yells out, "Life, Life!" because the severity of the punishment he is expecting paled in his eyes in comparison to the loss of life itself.

Galus is like death, and the *Ge'ulah* is like coming back to life. It may be hard, it may hurt, but we are talking about life itself, so we should put out of mind the difficulties entailed. This being so, each individual can also look forward to the coming of *Mashiach*, may it be soon. ●