



NEFESH SHIMSHON

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

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

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

A Moment Alone

וְכָל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בְּבָאוּ לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ עַד צֵאתוֹ. (ויקרא טז, יז)

No man shall be in the Ohel Moed when he enters to atone in the holy place, until he leaves. (*Vayikra* 16:17)

On *Shabbos* evening, when we come home from *shul*, we recite *Shalom Aleichem*. בואכם ... שלום עליכם. We greet the angels, ask them to bless us, and at the end we

recite *Tzeis'chem l'shalom*, requesting of the angels to leave. This is surprising. Why do we ask the angels to leave, saying to them שלום? Why not let them stay; are they bothering us?

This week's publication is dedicated to
our dear and esteemed friend who puts
his whole heart into assisting our endeavors,
R' Yisrael Katz shlita and his family, from Texas.

In honor of his upcoming simcha,
the marriage of his daughter,
we offer our heartfelt tefilah for the young couple:

יה"ד שיעלה הזיווג יפה ויבנו בית נאמן בישראל

May the parents have much Jewish nachas
from them, in health and
constant simcha.



The *Chofetz Chaim* was asked this question, and he answered that we are saying *Shalom Aleichem* to the angels of *Shabbos* who are coming, and *Tzeis'chem l'shalom* to the weekday angels, who are leaving. This is reminiscent of Yaakov's Ladder, on which the angels who protected Yaakov when he was in *chutz la'aretz* ascended, because they were leaving Yaakov as he entered *Eretz Yisrael*, and the angels of *Eretz Yisrael* descended, in order to protect Yaakov inside *Eretz Yisrael*.

There is room to offer an additional answer. Let us consider the presence of angels, *malachim*, in *Beis Hamikdash*. Were there *malachim* there?

In *Beis Hamikdash*, when a *kohen* would perform the regular *avodah*, there was no prohibition for other people to be there at the time. But when the *Kohen Gadol* entered the *Kodesh Kodoshim* to perform the special *avodah* of Yom Kippur, the Torah commands וְכָל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד בָּבֹאוּ לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ עַד צֵאתוֹ – no other person may be there until he comes out. The *Midrash* explains what is included in this:

Not even those about whom it is written וְדָמוֹת פְּנֵיהֶם פְּנֵי אָדָם, “The likeness of their face is like the face of a person” [are allowed to be there].¹

Not only ordinary human beings but even the

angels were forbidden to be present when the *Kohen Gadol* performed his special *avodah*.

What was the reason for this?

When the *Kohen Gadol* entered the *Kodesh Kodoshim* it was a moment of privacy. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and His people *Yisrael* were alone together. This was a time of *yichud* and connection and deep relationship that required total privacy. So even the angels, despite their awesome greatness and holiness, needed to leave.

When we leave *shul* on *Shabbos* evening, angels escort us home, where we find a *Shabbos* table that is set and ready. We stand up and say *Shalom Aleichem* to the angels. We greet them and ask them to bless us.

And then we say to them צֵאתְכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם. We are saying to them, so to speak: My honored angels, we are about to recite *Kiddush* and hold a *Shabbos* meal, which is called סְעוּדַת דְּעִתִּיקָא קַדִּישָׁא, “The banquet of the Holy Ancient One.” It is *Hashem's seudah*. At this *seudah*, no one else may be present. וְכָל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד. So I respectfully ask of you to please leave now, because this is a moment of *yichud* between *Hashem* and His people *Yisrael*, and at such a time, even angels are not allowed to be there. ●

¹ Vayikra Rabbah 21:12.

לְעִירְלֵי נִשְׁמֹת

מִוֹדֵ"ד מֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַמְּבֹרָג זצ"ל

וּמִוֹדֵ"ד בְּרוּךְ זָאב בֶּן נִפְתָּלִי קִרְאוֹס זצ"ל

נִדְבַת נִבְדִּיהֶם ~ עֲטֹרַת זִקְנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְהַפָּאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם

Tolerance?

הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטָא: (ויקרא יט, יז)

You shall surely reprove your fellow man, and you shall not bear a sin because of him.
(*Vayikra* 17:17)

The Torah obligates us to reprove those who transgress its *mitzvos* and to make every effort to prevent them from continuing on their unfortunate path. And if we fail to do so, we bear sin because of them.

How far does this obligation go? Maybe we need to go out and confront those who deny the truth of Torah, and fight fiercely with all our strength to bring them back to the right way?

This approach is definitely not for us. One reason is that our own awareness of the truth of Torah is not strong enough. We are not totally convinced we even have the right to go up to a Jew who desecrates *Shabbos* and demand from him to keep *Shabbos* or else.

We ourselves have been influenced by the “Live and let live” philosophy of modern secular society. The doctrine that people have the right to choose their own way of life has penetrated our hearts and cooled the fire of *kedushah* within us to fight for the honor of *Hashem’s* Name. How can we go to war without a clear awareness that we are right?

And what should we reply when we encounter the “Live and let live” philosophy?

The answer is as simple as can be. Every morning, in *birchos hashachar*, we say בִּי נִשְׁמָה שְׁנֵתָת – “My G-d, the soul that You placed within me is pure.” And how is the soul so pure? אַתָּה יָצַרְתָּה – because *Hashem* is the One who created it and formed it. The *neshamah* belongs to *Hashem*. He just deposited it with us for a certain number of years to be in our body, on condition that we protect it and take proper care of it.

It is thus totally clear that no Jew in the world has a right to desecrate *Shabbos*. It is absolutely obvious that someone who breaks *Shabbos* is failing to protect his *neshamah*. He is violating the terms of the contract between him and the One Who created

his body and placed his soul within him. He is mistreating *Hashem’s neshamah*. The world belongs to *Hashem* and all His creations must honor His laws and ordinances.

Chazal express this idea as follows:

Anyone who takes enjoyment from this world without first reciting a blessing is considered like he is robbing *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and the Jewish people.¹

We cannot escape this simple fact. If a Jew eats without a *berachah* it is like taking bread from the supermarket without paying. By the same token, breathing air without keeping *Shabbos* is just like stealing something from the store.

We must remind ourselves again and again of the simple fact that our soul belongs to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, and a Jew who does not live a Torah life is nothing but a robber.

Logic dictates that it is our basic human right to fight against *Shabbos* desecration and other *aveiros* with all the means at our disposal.

But, as we mentioned above, we are influenced by the modern secular outlook, according to which everyone has the right to his own belief system. When we hear people say, “You don’t have to live according to my beliefs, and I don’t have to live according to yours,” it cools down our *emunah*, as if there is a certain place where the Torah is just our personal beliefs. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

As long as we suffer from this shortcoming – as long as we don’t see the truth of Torah as a simple, self-evident fact, and all Jews are obligated to live accordingly – we are not battle-fit. We are not ready to give *tochachah* and go to war over it. ●

¹ *Berachos* 35b.

אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הִבְדַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים. (ויקרא כ, כד)

I am Hashem your G-d Who has separated you from the nations. (Vayikra 20:24)

We Like It Here

There is a tough problem I want to speak about. It is a very important and basic point.

Once, a *yeshivah* boy I knew came from *Eretz Yisrael* to learn for a short period in a *yeshivah* in America. This boy sat and learned. He was not a *batlan*. But during *bein hazemanim*, when the *yeshivah* was not in session, he planned to visit a few interesting places around America — of course, only decent places — such as Capitol Hill, Niagara Falls, etc. and some other places that any tourist cannot miss. I was not very happy about his plans.

Regarding this, I sent him a letter in which I wrote a *vort* that in my humble opinion is really wonderful, and well worth reading and fulfilling. If only I could shout it out in the streets of America. When I close my eyes, I imagine myself repeating it before a vast audience.

This is what I wrote:

If we take a look at the Hebrew language we see something interesting. There are words with masculine gender, *lashon zachar*, and words with feminine gender, *lashon nekeivah*, and many times we don't know why this word is masculine and that word is feminine. We don't see the logic to it. But there is one.

For instance, the word "*Shabbos*." Usually, *Shabbos* is feminine, like a bride. (There is one place where *Shabbos* is mentioned in the masculine: in the *Shacharis* prayers of *Shabbos* morning, where we say "*V'yanuchu vo*." But usually, *Shabbos* is a feminine word.)

Why is it feminine?

The answer is simple. There is also a word

neshamah, which is feminine. This is because the male is always the bestower, and the female is the receiver. At first glance, it might seem that *neshamah* should therefore be in the masculine gender, since the soul bestows life upon us. Without a *neshamah*, we would not be alive. A person is only alive for as long as his soul is within him. But the truth is that our *neshamah* is not the bestower. It just reflects what Hashem bestows. It receives the life-force from Hashem, and thereby enables us to be alive.

The same is true with *Shabbos*. It is indeed so that *Yom Tov* could be described as a bestower, but the *kedushah* of *Shabbos* is as strong as it is, stronger than that of *Yom Tov*, because it comes only from Hashem. It receives from Hashem in order to give to us. This is why *Shabbos* is rendered in the feminine gender.

But I want to focus on a different word: *eretz*, meaning "land" or "earth," which is always in the feminine form. A person's homeland is referred to in the feminine. Whenever the Torah mentions *Eretz Yisrael*, *Tzion* or *Yerushalayim*, they are always feminine. In English we have the expression "Mother Earth." We don't say "Father Earth." And in former times, one's country was called "Mother."

There is a very simple reason for this. The flow of plenty descends from above. The heavens are thus masculine, since they bestow, whereas the earth receives, so it is feminine. The earth receives and then gives to her children. So to speak, the earth is our "mother," and we are her "children."

This is the simple reason why in Hebrew and in many other languages, the land and the country are always referred to in the feminine.

Now we come to a very interesting point. *Chazal* say:

There are three things that are pleasing: a place is pleasing in the eyes of its inhabitants, a wife is pleasing in the eyes of her husband, and a purchase is pleasing in the eyes of its purchaser.¹

When *Chazal* say, “A place is pleasing in the eyes of its inhabitants,” they are telling us that the location where a person lives finds special grace in his eyes. People come to like where they live. And so it is with everything. A person naturally thinks that *his* family is the best, and that *his* occupation is the best. The fact that people think this way is a gift from Heaven.

But there is a drawback to it, too. This sense of “pleasing” is one of the most dangerous forces in the world.

The *Gemara* lists the seven names of Hell.² Then it asks why the most obvious name, “*Gehinnom*,” was omitted. The *Gemara* answers that Hell is called “*Gehinnom*” because it is deep like the valley (*gei*) of Hinom. And it is called “Hinom” since everyone descends to it because of worthless (*chinam*) matters. Rashi explains that “worthless matters” refers to licentious relationships.

In other words, most of the people who end up in *Gehinnom* are there because of the desire for licentious relationships. This is a desire that is essentially “worthless,” i.e., without benefit. And this desire arises when something is pleasing in a person’s eyes.

If a woman is pleasing in the eyes of a man, he will be drawn after her even if she is a non-Jew, and even if she is up to no good. His parents will say to him, “What are you doing to yourself? You are ruining your life with this woman!” And he answers, “No, she is a very pleasing woman. I like her.” Why? For completely “worthless” reasons. This sense of “pleasing” is a powerful force that *Hashem* created.

The same problem exists regarding the country

a person lives in. “A place is pleasing in the eyes of its inhabitants.” The above-cited *Gemara* gives an example of this:

The people of the town said to Elisha, “הִנֵּה נָא, מוֹשָׁב הָעִיר טוֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲדֹנִי רָאָה – Behold, living in this town is good, as my master can see...”³ Since the water there is bad, and the land there does not produce well, as it says, וְהָאֶרֶץ מְשַׁכֶּלֶת,⁴ what is good about it? Said R. Chanin: “A place is pleasing in the eyes of its inhabitants.”⁵

Because they lived in that town, they loved it. People naturally love their country.

I must tell you something about this country — the United States of America. It is what is called in Yiddish “*a goyishe vayb*” — a non-Jewish wife! This is not our land. It is not for us.

I know I am speaking harshly, and I can say these words only because I, too, was born and raised here in the United States. I live with this reality, and I too feel it within me: we love this foreign land. We are connected to it, and everything we see in it looks beautiful in our eyes.

In Toronto, Canada, there is a big monument that everyone is impressed by. But for me, when I come to Toronto, I don’t even glance at it. What is it, after all? Nothing but a big hunk of metal. It doesn’t mean anything to me. You know why? Because Canada isn’t my “mother.”

People say that America is a beautiful country. They can’t even explain what exactly is beautiful about it, but it is pleasing in their eyes. They just love the place, and this is a problem that I think we should take seriously.

Don’t Wait Too Long

There is a true story about a young man, in Europe of old, who decided to take a non-Jewish wife. His parents tried to dissuade him, to no avail. His parents came to the *Rav*, who was a very wise

1 *Sotah* 47a.

2 *Eruvin* 19a.

3 II *Melachim* 2:19.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Sotah*, *Ibid.*

man, and painfully told him about their distressful problem.

The *Rav* called in the young man and said to him, “Do you want to marry her?”

“Yes!” answered the young man in a definitive tone.

“If so,” said the *Rav*, quite unexpectedly, “you should do the following. Hold a party, to which you will invite her family. At the party, make sure there are plenty of bottles of whisky on the tables.”

The young man agreed. He went to work right away on arranging the family party. It was a fancy affair, and the tables were stacked with good food of all types. And, of course, he did not forget the bottles of whisky specially requested by the *Rav*.

The bride-to-be arrived with an entourage of her brothers, cousins and other relatives. They all sat down to enjoy the good food and drink. As expected, they got drunk, at which point they started to get out of control, and began to taunt the groom-to-be: “You dirty Jew...” Like a bunch of rowdy drunken peasants, they proceeded to roundly curse out the Jews. They expressed outwardly what they had been holding inside themselves the whole time.

That was the end of the engagement.

The *Rav* wasn’t able to set up a situation where the young lady herself would get drunk, and thereby reveal to the young man how she really feels about him and people like him, since women are not generally quick to drink a lot of liquor. This is why the *Rav* did it with the brothers and uncles, in order to bring the engagement to a rapid end.

But after a while, when the sense of “pleasing” would wear off, the young man would have found out on his own what he had gotten himself into.

That is the allegory. Now let’s apply it.

As we mentioned above, the word “country” is rendered in the feminine because a country can be

compared to a wife. And *Chazal* say that “A wife is pleasing in the eyes of her husband.”

Yet, America is like the non-Jewish wife in the story above about the young man who wanted to marry a non-Jew. It’s not good for us.

What are we American Jews waiting for? Do we have to wait until various immigrant groups join with the local minorities and start shouting at us, “Dirty Jews!” with blood-thirsty eyes? Will we wake up only then? Isn’t now the time to leave America?

My father-in-law lived in Poland, and he did not know a word of Polish. Learning to speak Polish did not interest him; in fact, it disgusted him. In truth, that is the way it always was. Then came a time when the Jews who lived there suddenly joined in with Polish culture and started to go study in their schools. And it was right then — when the Jews started to love Poland — that Poland threw them out, into the inferno of the Holocaust.

And so it was earlier, in Spain. The Spanish Jews loved their country very much. Spain was a beautiful country, and the Jews wrote poems about its mountains and rivers. Then what happened? The “non-Jewish wife” got drunk and threw them out. The great expulsion of Sephardic Jewry took place. It happened because this “non-Jewish wife” knows the truth: the Jews are not fitting to her; they are not who she is supposed to marry.

Must we wait until the “non-Jewish wife” throws us out of here?

We are so comfortable in America. And there are people who say, “It will never happen again.” Is it really true that it will never happen again? Are we so sure of this?

Nowadays, events are taking place that open our eyes. We see that the world is churning and undergoing great changes. We must wake up before it is too late! ●