



# 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

## Sweet Hasmadah

וְשִׂמְחָתְךָ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ. (דברים כו, יא)

**You shall be happy with all the goodness that *Hashem* your G-d gave you. (*Devarim* 26:11)**

There is a fundamental point here regarding the goodness of Torah. The *Ohr Hachayim* comments:

"You shall be happy with all the goodness"  
– If people would sense the sweetness and pleasure of the Torah's goodness, they would run after it like they were crazy, and a world's full of gold and silver would be like nothing to them.<sup>1</sup>

The Chazon Ish wrote something similar, in a letter:

The "marriage match" between wisdom and the person cannot be attained without longing and appetite. The words of Torah are beloved – and the power of love opens the mind and the heart to swallow wisdom, understanding and knowledge. "They said about R. Yochanan, "If a man would give all

<sup>1</sup> *Ohr Hachayim* commentary on *Devarim* 26:11.

This week's edition is in memory and  
לעילוי נשמת האשה החשובה  
מרת אסתר דויזא בת ר' אברהם יחיאל ע"ה  
ט"ז אלול, upon her yahrtzeit,

Dedicated by her grandchildren, Mr. and Mrs. Mordechai Deutsch, Toronto,  
friends and supporters of the Kollel  
ימלא ה' כל משאלות ליבם לטובה, אכ"ר



the wealth of his house for the love”<sup>2</sup> with which R. Yochanan loved the Torah, “he would be despised.”<sup>3</sup><sup>4</sup><sup>5</sup>

The Chazon Ish is saying that if a person loves Torah, he will constantly learn it, and it will also become engraved upon his heart.

It is written:

בְּחֶקְתִּיךָ אֶשְׂתַּעֲשֶׂע לֹא אֶשְׁכַּח דְּבָרְךָ – I will take pleasure in Your laws; I will not forget Your words.<sup>6</sup>

The Radak explains this *pasuk* to mean that “when I look into words of Torah, I take pleasure in them, and that is why I don’t forget them; because they are my joy and delight.”

The Radak added that the opposite is true, as well. If a person finds learning hard and heavy, in the end he won’t be able to learn.

Why was the Vilna Gaon able to learn with such great *hasmadah*, for so many hours on end, while we get tired out after half an hour of learning a *daf Gemara*? It’s because the Torah is not sweet to us like it was to the Vilna Gaon. So we find the learning hard, and it tires us out. The only way to solve the problem is to get to the place where learning is sweet and enjoyable.

Anyone can pick up a newspaper or a book of stories about *tzaddikim* and just read and read without break, not even noticing that half the night passed by, and it is already 2:30 AM. Similarly,

anyone can walk around all day with a candy in his mouth and not get tired out from it.

But with the Torah it is different. In the beginning it is bitter, and in the end it is sweet. *Emunah* in *Hashem*, and internally recognizing that Torah learning is attachment to *Hashem*, engendered in the hearts of the Gedolim of the generations a strong desire for Torah and a tremendous sweetness in every word of Torah they learned. This sweetness enabled them to learn with such great *hasmadah*.

But how does a person get to this sweetness and pleasure in Torah learning?

נֶפֶשׁ שֶׁבָּעָה תְּבוּס נֶפֶת וְנֶפֶשׁ רָעָבָה כָּל מֵר  
מֵתוּק – A sated soul will trample the sweetest of things, and to a hungry soul, everything bitter is sweet.<sup>7</sup>

The *Vilna Gaon* explains as follows:

When a person doesn’t have desire for Torah study, he doesn’t taste its sweetness, and then he “will trample the sweetest of things.” But when a person’s soul is hungry, when it desires and longs to be engaged in Torah learning, even “everything bitter is sweet,” because he worked very hard in it and pained himself over it.<sup>8</sup>

Putting effort into Torah learning brings the learner to a tremendous longing for Torah, to the point that even bitter things taste sweet to him. The pleasantness he experiences becomes a wondrous tool to increase his *hasmadah* in learning.

A certain *chacham* told me about a family member of his who sits down to learn with great *hasmadah*

2 Shir Hashirim 8:7.

3 Shir Hashirim *ibid*.

4 Vayikra Rabbah 30:1.

5 Igros Chazon Ish 3:1.

6 Tehillim 119:16.

7 Mishlei 27:7.

8 Mishlei *ibid*, commentary of the Vilna Gaon.

## לְעִירְוֵי נִשְׁמָה

מוֹהַ"ד מוֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַמְּבֹרָךְ זצ"ל

וּמוֹהַ"ד בְּרוּךְ זָאב בֶּן נִפְתָּלִי קִרְאוֹס זצ"ל

נִדְבַת נִבְדִּיהֶם ~ עֲטַרֵת זִקְנִים בְּנֵי נְשִׁמָּה וְהַפָּאֶרֶת בְּנֵי אֲבוֹתָם

after the Friday night meal, until morning. When asked how he is able to do this, he answered that at first it is hard, but afterwards it becomes easier, and the learning is sweet and pleasurable. The *hasmadah* brings pleasure, and the pleasure brings more *hasmadah*, and so they feed each other infinitely.

Constancy in Torah learning engenders enjoyment in the learning, and this is the tool that brings a person to desire more and more learning and more and more *hasmadah*.

I knew someone who was a *tzaddik* and great *talmid chacham*. Once he needed to travel to speak with a *baal bayis* about a certain matter, but did not find him at home. So he went to the local *beis midrash* and learned until morning.

There are people who learn all night until morning, but it is because they planned it out in advance. He had no plans to learn all night. For him it was a natural reaction. It was the obvious thing to

do considering the situation he found himself in.

Sometimes a person is away from home and doesn't find a place to sleep. So he goes here, looks there, goes into the *beis midrash* and tries to lie down on a bench, and when the bench is too hard, he tries putting a coat on it, and so forth. Also the *talmid chacham* in the above story needed to sleep, but when he could, he went to sleep, and when he didn't find a bed, he sat and learned until morning!

These are matters that need to be acquired. It could be that learning all night is a very lofty thing, but for someone who gets accustomed to being immersed in learning, and to thinking in learning, and not to waste time, he will gradually grow more and more attached to Torah, and will thus feel its pleasantness in a most wondrous way. As the *Tanna* says:

There is no love like love of Torah.<sup>9</sup> ●

9 *Avos d'Rabbi Nasan* 28:1.



## The Joy of Avodas Hashem

תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב. (דברים כח, מז)

**Since you did not serve Hashem your G-d with joy and gladness of heart. (*Devarim* 28:47)**

*Simchah* is one of the foundations of *avodas Hashem*, as it says:

Serve Hashem with joy.<sup>1</sup>

We need to arouse joy within ourselves when we serve Hashem. But besides the fact that *simchah* is a principle and a *halachah* in *avodas Hashem*, it is even more a sign of *avodas Hashem*. If a person is standing in *Tefilah* or some other service of Hashem, and he is not in a state of joy, this is a sign that he is not truly engaging in *avodah* at all. He does not

know Who is Hashem, and what it means to serve Him. If he would know the simplest meaning of Hashem's Name, and the goodness and compassion inherent in this, it would actually be impossible for him not to fill with joy.

If you see a person walk down the street and pick up a purse that you know is full of gold coins, but his expression does not change and he shows no joy, this is a clear sign that he does not know the purse's contents. So it is with *Tefilah*. When a person stands before Hashem, he will naturally and necessarily become filled with great joy. *Chazal* say:

1 *Tehillim* 100:2.

When you stand and pray, your heart should be joyful, for you are serving the exalted G-d.<sup>2</sup>

If a person is not joyful, it must be that he does not know the meaning of standing in prayer, or is not paying attention to it. It thus is not *avodah*. We cannot say he is engaged in *avodah* and is worshipping his Master if he doesn't know Who the Creator is and what it means to serve Him. *Avodah* is not a practical *mitzvah* such as *lulav*, where a person at least has the *lulav* in his hand. If a person is not excited in his *avodah*, he is not actually worshipping his Master.

*Simchah* is not something the soul does or something that happens to the soul. It is an essential quality of the soul when there is nothing to cast a shadow over it and divert it from its natural state. The soul comes from upper worlds that are nothing but bestowal of goodness, perfection and delighting in *kedushah*. The whole character of those worlds is joy.

The proof is that when *Chazal* speak about the *avodah* of the angels and of all the host of heaven, they mention only *shirah*. And the song of the heavenly beings is not like that of a person who

sings and arouses within himself emotions of song as he overcomes his regular emotions. Rather, song and joy is the essential nature of an angel. His whole being is *shirah* and *simchah* in *Hashem*.

And so it is with human beings. The human soul, when it is in its natural state, which is to be close to *Hashem* and attached to Him, reverts to its essential character and is overflowing with joy.

When we think about *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and fulfill *shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid*, this is actual connection and attachment to *Hashem*. So writes the Rambam,<sup>3</sup> that at such a time, a person is with *Hashem*, and *Hashem* is with him. Early Torah sources say that the place where a person's thoughts are, that is where the person himself is, at that moment.

So when a person is *davening* and is thinking about *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and speaking to Him and addressing Him directly, at that moment he is actually leaving this lowly world and is truly with *Hashem*. He joins in with the song of the angels and all the celestial bodies, who, due to their fundamental *deveikus* to *Hashem*, are nothing but *simchah* and *shirah* and *ta'anug*. ●

<sup>2</sup> Midrash Shocher Tov 100, cited in Mesilas Yesharim 19.

<sup>3</sup> Moreh Nevuchim 3:51.

## PARSHA TOPIC



## The Avodah of Elul and the Avodah of Tishri

### Elul is external, Tishri is internal

Everything in the world has an external and an internal aspect to it. There is the body, the visible edifice. And there is the soul, which gives life to the body and is the purpose for which the body was created.

Also *Hashem's* way of running the world has these two parts. There is the external aspect, the visible

ways of Providence. And there is the internal aspect, the soul of the world, the fact that *Hashem* grants it life at every single moment.

Accordingly, *Hashem's* Name divides into two: *Yud Hei*, and *Vav Hei*. The *Yud Hei*, which is the first half of *Hashem's* Name, represents the internal aspect of *Hashem's* Providence. There is no way for this internal aspect to become marred or damaged. It is written:



כִּי יָד עַל כִּסֵּי יְיָ – For the Hand is on the Throne of *Yud Hei*...<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Amalek and all that he did, the *Yud Hei* remains intact. However, as Rashi explains there, the Divine Throne is not intact, and neither is *Hashem's* Name. Amalek damaged the *Vav Hei* – the external, visible aspect of *Hashem's* Providence.

But nothing can touch the *Yud Hei*, the soul and life force of the whole world. (There is a verse that alludes to this idea: “All her pursuers (רודפיה) overtook her (השיגוה) between the straights.”<sup>2</sup> This is interpreted as follows: רודפ-יה, the “pursuers” of *Hashem's* Name, those who seek to damage it, can only השיג-ו-יה. They can only “overtake her” in the ו-יה. But they cannot touch the י-יה.)

In addition to the division into two parts, each part has its own depth and thus further divides into two. In *Hashem's* internal Providence, in the *Yud Hei*, there are the same two aspects. The *Yud* is the internal, and the *Hei* is the external.

The same is true with *Hashem's* external Providence. *Vav Hei*, too, has these two aspects. The *Vav* is the internal, and the *Hei* is the external.

This is so with every person as well. Every person has an internal aspect, his *yiras Shamayim*, which stops him from sin. And he has an external aspect, which is his actual practice of *mitzvos*.

The *Yud* thus represents the internal of the internal. This is the *yiras Shamayim*, the internal aspect of the soul, which prevents a person from sinning. It always remains intact. And the *Hei* represents the external performance of *mitzvos*, which is not always full and intact.

## Months and Permutations

There are twelve permutations of *Hashem's* Name. They correspond to the twelve months of the year.<sup>3</sup> Each month has a permutation corresponding

to the nature of that month. (Many *siddurim* list these twelve permutations in conjunction with the *Rosh Chodesh Mussaf* prayer.)

The permutation for Elul is *Hei Hei Vav Yud*.

Here we find that the first half, which represents the soul, is *Hei Hei*. While the second half, which represents the external edifice, is *Vav Yud*.

As we explained, the primary denotation of the letter *Hei* (according to the usual order of *Yud Hei Vav Hei*) is the external aspect, the edifice. This is true both in the soul (i.e., the first half of the Name) and in the body (i.e., the second half of the Name).

But when it comes to the month of Elul, the two letters *Hei* are used to denote the inner, soul part. In other words, they come to denote fullness and intactness. This signifies that in the month of Elul, we switch around the way we do things: all our *mitzvah* acts need to be performed in a full and intact way. We must not involve ourselves with nonsense, not waste time, not read the newspaper. Rather we need to *daven*, learn Torah, etc.

The same is true with the letters *Vav Yud*. The primary denotation of *Yud* is more internal than that of *Vav*. The *Yud* represents *Hashem's chesed* upon us, while the *Vav*, which is more external, represents *yiras Shamayim* in deeds. But in the month of Elul, these letters switch positions. The *Yud* is outside, and the *Vav* is inside.

Usually, a person is more beautiful inside than he appears externally. But in Elul, this is not so. In this month, things are reversed: the external *avodah*, the *mitzvah* acts, become “internal”. I.e., they become full and intact. Whereas the internal *avodah*, the *kavanah*, becomes “external”, for in Elul we have not yet reached the internal aspect of the deeds we perform.

This is because Elul is a month of preparation. In this month we work just on the outer aspect of our deeds, on the edifice. Only in the month of Tishri do we begin to make the inner changes. Elul is a month of *avodah*, so we work on the external. Tishri, on the other hand, is a month of *siyata d'Shmaya*, so then we work on the inner aspect of our deeds.

The permutation for Tishri is *Vav Hei Yud Hei*.

<sup>1</sup> Shemos 17:16.

<sup>2</sup> Eichah 1:3.

<sup>3</sup> Tikkunei Zohar 9b.

Here, the two parts the Name are placed in reverse order, for the usual order is *Yud Hei Vav Hei*. This signifies that in Tishri, it is not our *avodah* that does it, it is *Hashem's*. On Rosh Hashanah, the *shofar* does the job. In *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, it is a time of *דרשו* *ה' בהמצאו* — “Seek out *Hashem* when He is to be found.”<sup>4</sup> [I.e., *Hashem* draws Himself close to us.] On Yom Kippur, “The day itself effects atonement.”<sup>5</sup> On Sukkos, the *sukkah* embraces us. On Shemini Atzeres, *Hashem* gives us a kiss, so to speak.

## Working and Toiling in Elul

The days of Elul are days of *avodah*. These are the days when *Moshe Rabbeinu* worked and toiled to learn the Torah, before he received it all as a gift.<sup>6</sup> In order to receive gifts in the month of Tishri, we need to work and toil. If we don't open up our mouths, we won't receive gifts.

This *avodah* is one of fullness and intactness. In Elul there is no such thing as sitting around and speaking *lashon hara*, no such thing as reading the newspaper. These things don't belong to the month of Elul. In this month, the inner *Hei* needs to be full and intact, as well as the outer *Hei*. We need complete *yiras Shamayim* on both levels.

Actually, we perform deeds in the framework of *avodas Elul* that are above our *madreigah*. For if in this month we perform only deeds that are at our level, this isn't Elul!

Elul's most poignant point is expressed in the following verse:

וצדקה תהיה לנו כי נשמור לעשות את כל  
It – המצוה הזאת לפני ה' אלוֹקֵינוּ כִּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֵּנוּ

<sup>4</sup> *Yeshayahu* 55:6.

<sup>5</sup> See *Yoma* 85b.

<sup>6</sup> *Shemos Rabbah* 47:7.

will be a merit for us if we are careful to perform this entire commandment before *Hashem* our G-d as He commanded us.<sup>7</sup>

The Midrash explains:

This may be compared to a king who had a jewel and deposited it with his friend for safekeeping. The king said to him, “Please keep your mind on it and guard it well. Because if it gets lost, you won't have the wherewithal to pay me for it, and as for me, I do not have another jewel like it. Thus, you will have wronged both me and you....

So said Moshe to the Jewish people: “If you keep the Torah, you are acting charitably not just toward yourselves, but rather, toward Me [i.e., *Hashem*] as well as to yourselves.” What is the source? It says, “It will be charity to us”<sup>8</sup> – to Me and to you. And when will it be so? “If we are careful to perform this entire commandment.”<sup>9</sup>

In other words, though we shake in fear of *yom hadin*, *Chazal* tell us that *Hashem* is worried too, so to speak. Our children are also His children. And He cares more than we do about our children, our *parnassah* and *siyata d'Shamaya*, our Torah learning – about everything. There could be such a person who says, “It doesn't matter to me, it's okay if I won't have a lot of money. At least I will have enough to survive.” It matters to *Hashem*, though. He wants that “we are careful to perform this entire commandment,” so that it will be good for us! ●

<sup>7</sup> *Devarim* 6:25.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Devarim Rabbah* 8:5.