

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

PEARLS OF WISDOM  
FROM THE PARSHAH

## Hashem Wants Your Blessings

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׂאֵל מֵעַמּוֹ. (דברים י, יב)

Now, Yisrael, what does *Hashem* your G-d ask of you? (*Devarim* 10:12)

הָקָם עַל – “Established upon”<sup>1</sup> – has the numerical value of 100. This corresponds to the 100 blessings. Because every day, a hundred Jews were dying, so David came and enacted the *mitzvah* of reciting 100 blessings a day. “Now, Yisrael, 'what' does *Hashem* your G-d ask of you?” Read the word מה, “what,” as מאה, “a hundred.” These are the 100 blessings. Once David enacted them, the plague stopped. (*Midrash Tanchuma, Korach* 12)

<sup>1</sup> II Shmuel 23:1.

The *pasuk* of “What does *Hashem* your G-d ask of you?” alludes to the *mitzvah* of reciting 100 *berachos* a day. And in addition to the allusion cited by the *Midrash Tanchuma* above, the *Baal Haturim* finds more allusions to it in the same *pasuk*.

Furthermore, on an earlier *pasuk*, וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים – “And you who cleave to *Hashem* your G-d, you are all alive today,”<sup>2</sup> the *Baal Haturim* writes that the *tagim* on top of the letter

*kuf* in the word הַדְּבָקִים allude to the 100 blessings we need to recite every day.

We see that reciting 100 *berachos* is an important matter that the Torah emphasizes. If we want to know what *Hashem* asks of us, the answer is 100 *berachos*.

Let's understand why.

The main reason why human beings were created in the first place is to attach themselves to *Hashem* and attain closeness to Him. There are countless places in Torah sources where the giving of the Torah is compared to a marriage and a covenant of love.

<sup>2</sup> *Devarim* 4:4.

And we know that in married life, the *shalom bayis* and love depend mainly on proper communication between the couple. It is common to hear spouses say to one another, “I don’t need anything. Just talk to me nicely, that’s all.” Happiness in the home has a lot to do with saying “Good morning” and “Thank you” nicely.

The same applies, so to speak, in our relationship with *Hashem*. “What does *Hashem* your G-d ask of you?” All He asks is that we speak to Him nicely, at all times, which is what 100 *berachos* is all about. It means saying thank you throughout the day. Thank you for my eyes – *Pokeiach ivrim*. When you drink a glass of water, you say thank you – *Shehakol nihyah bidvaro*. This is proper, natural attachment to *Hashem* at all times, throughout the course of life. About this it says וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בְּה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים כְּלַכְּם הַיּוֹם – “And you who cleave to *Hashem* your G-d, you are all alive today.” This verse alludes to 100 *berachos*, as mentioned above.

Now we can understand why *David Hamelech* instituted 100 blessings when he saw a hundred Jews dying daily. It may be compared to two people who love each other very much, but they have grown angry with one another. This type of anger can

reach dangerous proportions. However, if you can get them to at least talk nicely to one another, the intensity of their anger will subside. It is no longer a dangerous situation.

This is what *David Hamelech* did. He said to the Jewish people: Just speak nicely to *Hashem*. That’s all. Say thank you for the bread, say thank you for the water, a hundred times a day.

When they started reciting 100 *berachos*, the Divine anger subsided.

As the Ramban said, כל המקודש מחבירו חרב, “Whatever is more holy is more destroyed.” We could almost say that out of the 620 *mitzvos* – 613 Biblical *mitzvos* and 7 Rabbinic *mitzvos* – there is none that people step on and disregard more than this one. People tend to swallow the words and don’t say them properly.

It is for sure that if a person recites each *berachah* word by word, and even pays a little attention to what he is saying, that the verse חַיִּים כְּלַכְּם הַיּוֹם – “You are all alive today,” will apply to him. It’s just a matter of getting in the habit. Saying *berachos* properly opens for us the gates of blessing. ●

## SPECIAL TOPIC

## Service with Heart

וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לִבְבְּכֶם. (דברים יא, יג)

**Serve Him with all your heart. (*Devarim* 11:13)**

**Service that is in the heart, which is prayer. (*Rashi*)**

### Hashem’s Thoughts

*Tefilah* is one of the three foundations on

which the world stands. It is the soul of our *avodas Hashem* and our connection to Him. Let’s focus on a few important points regarding *Tefilah* that have

### לעילוי נשמות

מוה"ד משה בן אליעזר המבורג זצ"ל  
ומוה"ד ברוך זאב בן נפתלי קראוס זצ"ל

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practical ramifications.

*Hashem* tells us, through *Yeshaya Hanavi*, an important principle:

כִּי לֹא מַחְשְׁבוֹתַי מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם וְלֹא דְרָכֵיכֶם  
דְּרָכַי נֶאֱמָר ה'. כִּי גָבְהוּ שָׁמַיִם מֵאָרֶץ כֵּן גָּבְהוּ  
דְּרָכַי מִדְּרָכֵיכֶם וּמַחְשְׁבוֹתַי מִמַּחְשְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם – My  
thoughts are not your thoughts, and your  
ways are not My ways, said *Hashem*. As the  
heavens are high above the earth, so are  
My ways high above your ways, and My  
thoughts above your thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

This *pasuk* sounds pretty straightforward, but it is actually telling us a really big *chiddush* and a new way of looking at things.

What's the big *chiddush* here?

The human being was created in the image of G-d. He therefore contains within him a lot of good qualities. Let's talk about some qualities that people naturally have.

Every person naturally respects truth and shuns falsehood. Even a thoroughly evil person, even a lowlife who hardly ever said anything true all his life, if he is walking down the street and someone asks him where such-and-such a street is, and he knows where it is, he probably will not point in the opposite direction. Even a lowly person such as himself knows that it isn't nice to do that.

Even if he constantly lies, that's only when he has a reason to do so. For instance, he thinks he stands to gain some money by not telling the truth. But to just lie to someone in the street for no reason at all is not a human trait. Human beings were created in the image of G-d and they naturally respect the truth.

Another natural trait ingrained in people is acting kindly to others. I don't think there is anywhere in the world where someone who falls down in the street will just be left there to die. People will pick him up and call an ambulance or take him to a hospital. This

is a natural thing for human beings to do.

Common sense, the ability to reason things out, is another natural trait that *Hashem* endowed human beings with. However, our common sense is sometimes one of our biggest problems, because we don't always realize that we need to check the *Shulchan Aruch* see what the Torah says is the correct thing to do.

When the issue at hand is the kind of thing you would look up in the *Mishnah Berurah*, like how exactly to put on *tefillin*, we know that we need to learn the *Halachah* and follow it. But when it is a financial matter pertaining to *Choshen Mishpat*, this is where people tend to rely on their own powers of reasoning, and they assume that the *Halachah* is what their logic tells them it should be. It is not always the case.

However, the civil court often rules the same as *beis din*. How is this possible? Where did the lawmakers get it from? The answer is that *Hashem* endowed human beings with common sense, with the faculty of logic and reasoning, and it often leads people to the correct conclusion.

This is why *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* needs to come and warn us: Although you find beauty, greatness and moral integrity within yourselves, you need to know that this innate sense of moral integrity is quite limited. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways." What naturally seems right and true to you might well be the opposite of My way of thinking. And if so, it is the opposite of the truth.

This is an awesomely important fact we need to know. And it affects a lot of areas in life.

## Small is Great

We all appreciate greatness and feel the opposite about smallness. When we see someone tall, smart, rich, handsome, with any desirable quality, we are impressed. Whereas when we see someone short, poor, stupid and ugly, we don't exactly hold him in high regard.

<sup>1</sup> *Yeshayahu* 55:8-9.

Let's say we see a man in his early thirties, dressed in a tailored suit and a well-pressed shirt, holding an expensive briefcase. He looks respectable. He inspires confidence. That's the kind of person that people want to put their money in his hands. But if we see an unkempt man with a ragged appearance hobbling along, we are going to think twice before we place our trust in him.

Each one of us has a natural tendency to want his friends to be great and well-respected people. If a person has a friend who is a leading doctor, a very wealthy man or a famous scholar, he considers it a compliment. This is a natural quality. If I am the friend of the great so-and-so, it reflects positively on me. I am connected to greatness.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has exactly the opposite trait. Who are His "friends," so to speak?

וְאֵל זֶה אֲבִיט אֶל עֲנִי וְנֹכַח רוּחַ – This is who I look to: the impoverished and the broken of spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The poorest and lowest people are the closest to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. It is the way of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* that when He sees someone suffering and beset by troubles, He is there with him. And not just to help him. This is *Hashem's* place.

When the mother of the Chafetz Chayim passed away, the *Chevra Kadisha* was deliberating where to bury her. I don't need to tell you what an outstanding woman the mother of the Chafetz Chayim was.

In that period there was a woman in Rodin, the town of the Chafetz Chayim, a woman who was a very great *tzadekes*. She was devoted to the doing of *chesed* both through her deeds and with her money and possessions. She was very wealthy and generously supported the poor people of the area. As regards her deeds, she would go to help every woman who gave birth. If a woman was experiencing some kind of trouble, she would immediately come to her aid.

She was an exceptional *baalas chesed*, a very great woman. She passed away a few months earlier and was buried in the local cemetery.

The *Chevra Kadisha* came to the Chafetz Chayim and told him that they decided to honor his mother with the merit of being buried next to this great *tzadekes*.

The Chafetz Chayim answered that this woman was indeed a great *tzadekes*, and an impeccable personality, but after all, she was wealthy.

What did she do with her wealth? She poured it into *tzedakah* and *maasim tovim*. She did only good things with it.

But no. The Chafetz Chayim would not hear of it. That's not where his mother will be buried. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* dwells by "the impoverished and the broken of spirit."

This is a significant example of "My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways."

## The Poor Prayer

What does all this have to do with *Tefilah*?

There is an interesting *halachah* stated in the *Gemara*. There were orphans, without father or mother, and a patron, an *apotropos*, was appointed to manage the money that was collected for them. One day the patron was seen walking around dressed in fine clothing, and people complained that the clothing was purchased from the money of the orphans.

The case came to R. Nachman, the famous *dayyan* in the times of the *Gemara*.

R. Nachman ruled that the patron was within his rights to purchase fine clothing from the orphans' funds. He is allowed to do what is necessary in order for him to have a respectable appearance in people's eyes. This is so people will listen to him, so he will command respect. When he walks into the office of a businessman to make a deal with the orphans' money, they will take him seriously and cut a deal with him.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 66:2.

When you go to a doctor or another personality, and you want to make sure you will get proper service and full attention, you put on a fresh shirt and dress respectably. A person with a dignified and respectable appearance is naturally treated differently. He won't be ignored.

It doesn't work that way with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. Who does He listen to? Definitely not to someone who dresses up.

So to who? To a *tzaddik*?

There are three people about whom "tefilah" is written. One is Moshe, one is David, and one is the poor man. תְּפִלָּה – "A *tefilah* of Moshe, the man of G-d."<sup>3</sup> This is a *tefilah* the likes of which is not found with another person. תְּפִלָּה לְדָוִד – "A *tefilah* of David."<sup>4</sup> This is a *tefilah* the likes of which is not found with another king. תְּפִלָּה לְעָנִי – "A *tefilah* of a poor person."<sup>5</sup>

Of these three, which is the most important of all? The "tefilah of a poor person." This *tefilah* precedes Moshe's, it precedes David's and it precedes all the other prayers in the world. Why? Because the poor person is brokenhearted, and it is written קָרוֹב ה' לְנִשְׁבָּרִי לֵב – "Hashem is close to the broken of heart."<sup>6</sup> *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* listens to his words and hears them. When the poor person prays,

his *tefilah* opens all the windows of the firmament.<sup>7</sup>

The prayer of *David Hamelech* is the greatest *tefilah* that a king could pray. The king is the soul of the Jewish people, and among all the kings, there is no *tefilah* more beautiful than that of David, who was called "the sweet singer of Yisrael."

The prayer of *Moshe Rabbeinu* is also the most beautiful *tefilah* a human being could pray. *Chazal* say that when *Moshe Rabbeinu* prayed to be allowed to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, and *Hashem* did not wish to grant his request, *Hashem* told the angels to go as fast as they can to close the gates of Heaven before Moshe's prayer comes in. His prayer was like *Hashem's* ineffable Name. It was like a sword that slashes through all the firmaments to reach the *Kisei Hakavod*. That's how powerful Moshe's *tefilah* was.

But the *tefilah* above all others is "A *tefilah* of a poor person." David prays, Moshe prays, and *Hashem* says, so to speak: Put all the *tefilos* of the *tzaddikim* on the side. There is a poor person with a broken heart who is *davening* right now, and I want to hear his *tefilah*. That's what interests Me.

This is hard for us to understand. Moshe and David get sidelined just because a poor person is *davening*? Does that make sense?

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways."

The most powerful *tefilah* of all is not when you stand there with greatness and importance and even *tzidkus* and ask for what you deserve. With *Hashem* it works exactly the opposite. The smallest person is the greatest. ●

3 *Tehillim* 90:1.

4 *Ibid* 17:1.

5 *Ibid* 102:1.

6 *Ibid* 34:19.

7 *Zohar, Parshas Balak* 195.