

BRIT SHALOM, SHABBAT SHALOM

by Shlomo Katz

Parshas Pinchas

Brit Shalom, Shabbat Shalom

R' Aryeh Finkel shlita (rosh yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva in Modi'in Illit, Israel) writes: Shabbat is referred to as "Shabbat shalom" and the angels that we welcome on Friday night are called "Malachei ha'shalom." In the Friday night prayers, we refer to Hashem as the "One who spreads a tent of shalom." "Shalom," often translated "peace," really refers to perfection and to the harmony associated with a state of perfection. "Shalom" exists in the World-to-Come. Shabbat, say our Sages, is a microcosm of the World-to-Come; therefore, Shabbat also is associated with shalom.

In our parashah, we find a description of the Korban Mussaf that was brought on Shabbat and each holiday. R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (Ramban; 1194-1270) asks: Why is there a chatat / sin offering brought on each holiday, but none on Shabbat? He answers: "Knesset Yisrael is the match for Shabbat, and everything is in a state of shalom, and a person of understanding will understand." R' Finkel explains: Yisrael is the match for Shabbat because Shabbat bears testimony to Hashem's creation of the world, and Yisrael is the one that testifies. Together, they strengthen emunah / faith, and, as a result of the closeness to Hashem which follows, all sins are forgiven. There is shalom / perfection and harmony; thus, no chatat is required on Shabbat.

At the beginning of our parashah, Pinchas is blessed with the "covenant of shalom." Pinchas became Eliyahu Hanavi and lives forever. This, too, is a manifestation of shalom / perfection that leads to eternity. (Yavo Shiloh)

"Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon Hakohen, turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael, when he zealously avenged Me *among them,* so I did not consume Bnei Yisrael in My vengeance. Therefore, say, 'Behold! I give him My covenant of peace'." (25:11-12)

R' Zvi Yehuda Kook z"l (rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Yerushalayim) observes: Why did Pinchas merit Hashem's covenant of peace? Because his zealotry was motivated by a feeling of

being "among them," by a love for the Jewish People of which he was part. (Pe'amim)

"The daughters of Tzelofchad approached . . ." (27:1)

The Aramaic translation and commentary Targum Yonatan ben Uziel states: "When the daughters of Tzelofchad heard that the land would be divided among males only, they prayed for mercy from the Master of the world."

What was the purpose of this prayer? asks R' Aryeh Leib Zunz z"l (Poland; 1768-1833). If they were entitled to a share in the Land, they would receive it without prayer. If they were not entitled, how would prayer help? He explains:

Rashi z"l writes (in his commentary to Bereishit 1:1) that the Torah begins with an account of Creation to teach that Eretz Yisrael belongs to the Creator and He can give it to whatever nation He pleases. It was with this idea in mind that the daughters of Tzelofchad prayed: "Master of the world! Eretz Yisrael is Yours and You can give a share to whomever You wish." (Kometz Ha'minchah)

"He [Moshe] leaned his hands upon him [Yehoshua] . . ." (27:23)

Rashi z"l comments: "He made of him a full and heaping container."

R' Chaim Kanievsky shlita (Bnei Brak, Israel) explains Rashi's comment based on a discussion that the Dubno Maggid z"l (see facing page) writes that he had with the Vilna Gaon z"l (1720-1797). The Maggid asked the Gaon, "How can a tzaddik cause his own fear of Heaven to positively influence those around him?"

The Gaon answered, "If you surround a large container with many small containers and you pour into the large container until it overflows, the small containers will be filled as well. But, if the large container is not filled, it will not overflow into the smaller containers." [Until here from the Dubno Maggid]

R' Kanievsky continues: We read (Kohelet 11:3), "If the clouds are filled they will pour down rain on the earth," and the midrash comments: "This refers to Torah scholars." This is the same lesson that the Vilna Gaon taught the Dubno Maggid. Likewise, this is what Rashi means when he writes that Moshe made Yehoshua "a full and heaping container"--he instilled in Yehoshua the ability to absorb Torah and fear of Heaven to the point that he could "overflow" and influence the nation. (Ta'ama D'kra)

"The eighth day shall be an atzeret / day of gathering for you . . ." (29:35)

R' Avraham Weinberg z"l (first Slonimer Rebbe; died 1883) comments: The word "atzeret" can mean "holding back." When Sukkot is over and Shemini Atzeret comes, a Jew returns to his home. "Hold yourself back!" the Torah proclaims. Restrain yourself from pursuing excessive pleasures which are, in the words of our verse, "for you" [even though you may have missed those pleasures while you were living in the sukkah]. (Torat Avot)

"The eighth day shall be a day of gathering for you; you shall not do any laborious work. You shall offer an olah-offering, a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to Hashem--one bull, one ram, seven lambs within their first year, unblemished." (29:35-36)

Why is the offering brought on Shemini Atzeret so much smaller than the offering brought on Sukkot (as described in our parashah)? The Gemara (Sukkah 55b) explains: "This may be compared to a king who told his servants, 'Make a large feast for me.' Then, on the last day, he told his close friend, 'Make a small meal for me'." During the seven days of Sukkot, 70 bulls (the "large feast") were offered paralleling the 70 nations of the world (the "servants"), while the offering of Shemini Atzeret (the "small meal") celebrates Hashem's special relationship with the Jewish People (the "close friend").

This requires explanation, however. Is it not a disgrace to Bnei Yisrael that Hashem seems to want less from them than He wants from the gentiles?

R' Yaakov Kranz z"l (1740-1804; the Dubno Maggid) explains with a parable: A man went on a trip, leaving behind a wife, their children, and her children from a previous marriage. Upon returning, he brought presents for each of the children--large presents for his step-children and small presents for his own children. Someone asked, "Do you love your children less than your step-children?"

He answered, "No! My children will be happy to see me whether or not I bring presents. My step-children, on the other hand, have no special joy from seeing me, so I have to bring them large presents."

Similarly, says the Dubno Maggid, Hashem rejoices with the Jewish People whether or not they offer sacrifices to Him. That is not the same relationship He has with the 70 nations of the world; therefore, cultivating that relationship requires larger offerings. (Mishlei Yaakov)

Letters from Our Sages

This letter was written by R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler z"l (1892-1953), rabbi in London, rosh kollel in Gateshead, England, and finally mashgiach ruchani in the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. Many of his teachings are collected in the mussar classic Michtav M'Eliyahu (translated into English as "Strive for Truth"). His wife, the subject of this letter, was a granddaughter of R' Simcha Zissel Ziv z"l, known as the Alter of Kelm, one of the leading students of R' Yisrael Salanter z"l. R' Dessler's son, to whom the letter was written, lived in Cleveland, Ohio.

Motza'ei Shabbat Chanukah 5712 [1951], Bnei Brak

My son, the beloved of my soul, and the life-force of my spirit, R' Nachum Ze'ev, may his light shine, and my gentle daughter-in-law, Miriam, may she live, and my beloved grand-children, may Hashem be with you!

I am forced to write to you. It is difficult; almost impossible, but there is no choice. Hashem has given and Hashem has taken away, may the name of Hashem be blessed [Iyov 1:21]. This is the situation.

Today I finished sitting shiva. Thank G-d, I am strong and I am doing well. I hope you, too, are doing well. My dear children, we must strengthen ourselves. That is Hashem's will. The Holy One is just and His judgments are just. We no longer merited that mother a"h should live among us. The last of the great people of Kelm has left us, the last of those holy souls whose root was from the traits of truth, modest ways, kindness, and sharing the burdens of others.

As you know, the operation was simple, and the medical care outstanding. Before we decided how to go about the surgery, we received a telegram from Mrs. Sasson [of London], may she live, inviting both of us to convalesce at her home for two months and offering to send round-trip air tickets. I said to her [my wife] a"h that this is very timely and maybe we should both fly to London, have the surgery there and rest at the home of the Sasson family. Then she reminded me what I said last year: If the decree is to live, the surgery will succeed here also; if G-d forbid not, then we certainly must be in Eretz Yisrael. . .

[At the funeral,] I pleaded with the Ponovezher Rav [R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman z"l (1886-1969)] to guard his health and ride in a taxi . . . but it did no good; he walked the entire way with everyone. Hashem showed us a miracle in that there was no rain. As long as the funeral went on, the sun shone. Even so, as soon as we left the gate of the cemetery, the rain resumed. . . (Sefer Ha'zikaron L'ba'al Michtav M'Eliyahu I p.333)

The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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