

# FRIDAY NIGHT ANGELS

*by Rabbi Binyomin Adler*

In this week's parashah we find a fascinating idea contained in the episode where Eliezer embarks on a mission to find a wife for his master, Avraham's son Yitzchak. Upon arriving at the home of Lavan, the father of Rivka, it is said (Bereishis 24:31) *vayomer bo beruch HaShem lamah saamod bachutz vianochi pinisi habayis umakom lagemalim*, He said, "Come, O blessed of HaShem! Why should you stand outside when I have cleared the house, and place for the camels?" The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 60:7) states that when Lavan told Eliezer, "come, O blessed of Hashem," Eliezer departed from the status of being cursed and became blessed. Eliezer merited this promotion to being blessed because he had served Avraham faithfully.

## The blessing of the wicked

What is amazing about this idea is that Lavan, who was a very wicked man, was the vehicle for such a great blessing. Yet, we should not be surprised by this, as later on in history, we find that Balaam, the archenemy of the Jewish People, sought to curse the Jewish People. HaShem did not let Balaam curse the Jewish People. Rather, HaShem coerced Balaam to bless the Jewish People. What is so phenomenal about this is that according to the Gemara and the Medrash, Balaam was either a son of Lavan or, according to some opinions, Balaam was Lavan himself. Thus, we see that the wicked are deprived of cursing the righteous and are required to bless them. The bad angel transforms to being a good angel to bless Yaakov Furthermore, the Shelah (Vayishlach Torah Ohr) writes that the angel of Esav was disguised in a physical form so that he could battle with Yaakov. When Yaakov was victorious over the angel, the bad side of the angel was covered over and he was transformed into a good angel. Once he was transformed to being good he was forced to answer Amen and bless Yaakov and concede the blessings that Yitzchak had proffered on Yaakov. Why the wicked must bless the Jewish People

The Gemara (Shabbos 119b) states that two angels, one good and one bad, escort a person home on Friday night. When the person arrives home and finds his lamp burning, the table set and his bed made, the good angel declares, "may it be HaShem's will that it should be this way the next Shabbos as well." The bad angel is then forced to answer "Amen" against his will. The Ohr HaChaim (Bamidbar 23:24) and Rabbeinu Bachye (Ibid verse 10) write that Balaam was akin to the bad angel, and thus Balaam was forced to bless the Jewish People against his will. Thus, the idea that the wicked must bless us is not merely an anomaly. Rather, the blessing of the wicked is a function of our existence.

## The Shabbos connection

Why is it that specifically on Friday night the good angel and the bad angel escort us home and determine whether we are deserving of blessing or, Heaven forbid, the opposite? It would appear that the reason for this is because the entire week we struggle with foreign influences and the forces of evil. It is well known that prior to one's death the Evil Inclination makes one last powerful attempt to discourage a Jew from believing in HaShem. Similarly, with the onset of Shabbos the forces of evil make one last attempt to dissuade a Jew from testifying through Shabbos that HaShem created the world in six days. When the bad angel sees that the Jew has prepared properly for Shabbos, he has no choice but to concede defeat and then the Jew is given the opportunity to delight in the Holy Shabbos. HaShem should allow us to be cognizant of this weekly struggle and to do our utmost in preparing for Shabbos. When we prepare properly for Shabbos, HaShem will certainly allow the good angel to be victorious and this will facilitate our proper observance of Shabbos every week. Shabbos in the Zemiros Menuchah Visimchah Composed by an unknown author named Moshe Shabbos: A day of contentment, joy and light

Menuchah visimcha ohr layehduim, contentment and gladness and light - for the Jews. The composer commences this popular zemer with these inspiring words that highlight the Holy Shabbos. Shabbos is a day of contentment, when we rest from the physical struggles of the week and we are completely engaged in spiritual pursuits. Shabbos is a day of joy, because there is no greater joy than being able to serve HaShem without obstacles. Additionally, Shabbos is a day of light, because when we are separated from the weekday and from the nations of the world, it is akin to what occurred by the plague of darkness that afflicted the Egyptians. Regarding that plague it is said (Shemos 10:23) *lo rau ish es achiv vilo kamu ish mitachtav shiloshes yamim ulichol binei Yisroel hayah ohr bimoshvosam*, no man could see his brother nor could anyone rise from his place for a three-day period; but for all the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.

Shabbos in Tefillah Sanctifying HaShem's Name through Shabbos

Shimcha HaShem Elokeinu ysikadash, May your Name, Hashem our G-d, be sanctified. We are familiar with the concept of Kiddush HaShem, sanctifying HaShem's Name. The Zohar states that Shabbos is referred to as shalom, peace, and this is one of the Names of HaShem. Thus, here we are declaring that through Shabbos, HaShem's Name, shalom, will be sanctified. Shabbos Story

I received this story from a reader who heard it at the Parenting Expo hosted by Priority 1. Dr. Pelcovitz related the following incident:

Dr. Pelcovitz is familiar with an older Chassidic woman who is a widow with many children. This woman educates her children to perform various acts of kindness

It happened one day that the family of this widow heard of a blind woman who had moved into the building across the street. This blind woman was over sixty years old and had no family or friends to look after her. The widow struck up a relationship with the blind woman and one day the widow told her nine year old daughter, who was on the shy side, that her project is to read aloud to the blind

woman twice a week.

The child did as her mother instructed her, and after a few months of the blind woman and the girl getting acquainted, the blind woman told the girl, "I want you to know that in two years I will be able to see!"

The girl was taken aback by this statement. "What do you mean?" she asked the blind woman.

"Well," responded the blind woman, "I have been blind since birth, but the doctors informed me that my blindness was correctable. Unfortunately, until recently I could not afford the surgery. Soon, however, I will turn sixty five years old and I will collect Social Security, and then I will be able to save enough money to have the surgery performed."

The girl did not respond to the woman's declaration and she did not even mention the conversation to her mother.

The next day, this little shy girl who usually mumbled more than she talked, went from class to class mumbling, "I am collecting for a blind woman who requires surgery."

The following day the girl returned to the blind woman and she announced, "Mrs. Schwartz, Mrs. Schwartz, I have the money!"

The girl then proceeded to take the blind woman to a religious ophthalmologist whose practice was around the corner. "I have eighty-three dollars for this blind woman who requires surgery so that she can see!" the girl exclaimed to the doctor. The doctor took the crumpled up envelope and smiled as he counted the eighty-three single dollar bills which he then placed in his pocket.

The doctor then proceeded to examine the woman and upon completing the examination, he looked at her and proclaimed, "Mrs. Schwartz, there is no reason for you to remain blind. I can take care of your condition."

The doctor then scheduled Mrs. Schwartz for surgery and for the subsequent rehab which would allow her to learn how to see. The surgery was a success and Mrs. Schwartz regained her eyesight.

After some time, Mrs. Schwartz returned to her apartment. When Mrs. Schwartz went to the shy little girl's mother to thank her for what her daughter had done, the widow was shocked, as the daughter had not disclosed her generous deed.

The girl's mother was overjoyed at the good news, but she also felt that she had a debt to pay the doctor. The widow went to the doctor's office and waited to see him. When the doctor let her in, the widow said, "I cannot thank you enough for what you did for this blind woman. How often does it happen that someone can help restore another person's eyesight? I promise you that I will pay you back for this kindness that you have performed. It may take me ten or fifteen years, but I promise you that I will pay you back."

The doctor smiled at the widow and said, "Please do not be concerned." The doctor then reached into his pocket and pulled out the crumpled up envelope that contained the eighty-three dollar bills inside. "Whenever I am having a tough day," the doctor said, "I reach into this pocket and I feel those eighty-three dollar bills and that restores my faith in people. That is all I need."

Rav Meir Shapiro's Mother Cries, "Meirel, Meirel"

The Gaon Rav Meir Shapiro, zt"l, the Rav of Lublin, once told a childhood story about his mother. "When I was a boy, my family was forced to move several times from house to house. We also moved from city to city. The constant moving did not disturb my mother's equilibrium; only one thing would bother her - my bittul Torah!" "On one occasion, as we were again preparing to move, my mother had an idea. She contacted the melamed of the town to which we were moving, and arranged that he would meet me by the gate of the city. He would then be able to learn with me immediately when we arrived at the town." "When we finally reached our destination, we searched and searched, but the melamed was not there. My mother sat down next to the wagon and cried for a long time. I tried to calm her down by saying, âMommy, Mommy, why are you crying, I'll learn tomorrow!" "My mother answered, âMeirel, Meirel, You don't yet know how to appreciate the meaning of bittul Torah of one day!" (Chaim Sheyeish Bahem) [Reprinted with permission from Revach.net]

Shabbos in Navi Shmuel I Chapter 17

Wishing Good Shabbos vanquishes our enemies

In this chapter we learn of the famous battle between Goliath (Goliath) and Dovid, where young Dovid slung a stone at Goliath and killed him. The details of this incident are sensational and the reader is encouraged to read the entire chapter in detail. There is one theme, however, that must be understood from this chapter. Dovid declared to the Philistine, "(Shmuel I 17:45) you come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin - but I come to you with the Name of HaShem, Master of Legions, the G-d of the battalions of Israel, that you have ridiculed." The nations of the world rely on their might to be victorious, whereas the Jewish People utter the Name of HaShem and defeat their enemies. As we have mentioned previously, Shabbos is the Name of HaShem, and by wishing each other Good Shabbos, we are in a sense defeating our enemies. Every action that we perform for the sake of the Holy Shabbos allows us to vanquish the evil forces, the foreign influences and our enemies in the outside world.

Shabbos in Agadah

Going from Shabbos into the week and Shabbos is the blessing for all six days of the week

In the prayer of Lecho Dodi we recite the words likras Shabbos lichu vineilcha, to welcome the Shabbos, come let us go. The Lev Simcha writes that this means that we ascend higher and higher. Alternatively, the Lev Simcha writes, we are declaring that we should continue for the following

week, as the Zohar states that the six days of the week are blessed through the Shabbos. Regarding spiritual matters, it is clear that all upper and lower blessings are dependent on Shabbos. The reason for this is because Shabbos is the source of all blessings. This explains the blessing that HaShem bestowed upon Avraham, as it is said (Bereishis 24:10) vaHaShem beirach es Avraham bakol, and HaShem had blessed Avraham with everything. The Sfas Emes explains that the words vaHaShem beirach allude to the idea that HaShem blessed with Shabbos, as all the blessings are dependent upon Shabbos.

## Shabbos in Halacha

### Removing a pot from a blech by mistake

If one mistakenly removed the wrong pot from the blech, he is allowed to return it to that spot, even if he had it set it down with the intention of not returning it. An example of this would be if on Friday night one assumed that the cholent pot was the soup pot, and upon removing the pot from the blech, he set it down with the intention of not returning it. In such a situation he is allowed to return the pot to the blech. This ruling, however, only applies if the food is completely cooked and is still warm.

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