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A WELLSPRING OF CHIZUK

שליטי"א
Rav of Pardes HaTorah
Shiurim of Rabbi Yissocher Yehuda Berko



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פרשת פנחס

Don't Be Afraid of People

We often feel the desire to transform ourselves for the better. We want to begin learning, to *daven* with true *kavana*, to guard our eyes, and to refrain from talking *lashon hara*. We want our *Shabbos* to be elevated, feeling that *neshama yeseirah* and closeness to the Ribbono Shel Olam.

However, there's something blocking us: the concern over what others might say. We worry about being observed and judged, fearing how others will perceive us or if they will find our changes strange.

In essence, two major challenges arise when a person seeks change. First is the personal sacrifice required to fight one's internal *yetzer hara*, which is manageable. The second, according to the Vilna Gaon in *Mishlei*, is far more difficult: battling the external *yetzer* - the pressure from other people.

The Alter of Kelm, in *Kisvei Hasaba Part II*, notes that although we have an entire *Masechta* and over a hundred sections of *Hilchos Shabbos*, very little is explicitly written in the Torah. The thirty-nine *melachos* are derived simply because the construction of the Mishkan is mentioned next to the *shmiras Shabbos*. All the *halachos* are built from the connection of these two ideas.

In contrast, in Parshas Pinchas, where Pinchas acted with *mesiras nefesh* against Zimri and Cozbi, the Torah elaborates the account in full detail; it describes exactly what Pinchas did and what his reward was.

Why does the Torah go into such detail?

The Alter of Kelm explains that having the strength to act without fearing public opinion is the ultimate requirement for change and overcoming the *yetzer hara*. While we need internal strength, we need even more power to face external pressures.

That's why the Torah elaborates so extensively on the story of Pinchas: so that we can derive *chizuk* of how to act. Do not be afraid of what people might think; go forward, and with Hashem's help, you will succeed.



Shabbos Ma' ein Olam Haba

THOSE WHO OBSERVE SHABBOS GET REWARDED: A TASTE OF OLAM HABA

מעין עולם הבא יום שבת מנוחה - Shabbos is a semblance of Olam Haba. The source of this zemer is a statement of Chazal in *Maseches Berachos* where Chazal tell us that the Ribbono Shel Olam, in His infinite kindness, said, "I want to give you a taste of Olam Haba every week. Once a week, I want you to experience a piece of Gan Eden."

Shabbos is one-sixtieth of Gan Eden. The *Gemara* continues, explaining that if you want to know what the *Manna* tasted like - how sweet it was - take a spoonful of honey; yet you should recognize that this sweetness is just a fraction, one-sixtieth, of what the *Manna* was like. The same principle applies to *Shabbos Kodesh*.

The Bnei Yissaschar, in his *Ma'amrei Shabbos*, points out a well-known *Chazal* in *Maseches Kiddushin*, namely שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא עליך - ליכא - the reward for mitzvos is not given in this world. Where will we receive our reward? In the next world.

As the *Gemara* says in *Avodah Zarah*, היום לעשותם - today, in *Olam Hazeh*, is the time to perform the mitzvos, ומחר לקבל שכרם - and tomorrow, in *Olam Haba*, is the time to receive reward.

While it's true that the Torah explicitly promises reward and peace of mind for those that heed the *mitzvos* and conduct themselves properly - the rain will fall in its proper time, the crops will grow, and there will be a *bracha* in everything - the Ramban in *Parshas Bechukosai* explains that this is not the ultimate *schar*. The true *schar* is in the next world.

Yet, the Bnei Yissaschar notes that when it comes to *Shabbos Kodesh*, we see something different. Regarding *Shabbos*, Chazal famously teach in *Masechta Shabbos* that if one is *shomer Shabbos* and enhances the *Shabbos*, he merits wealth in this world. There are numerous *Chazals* in the *Gemara* regarding the extraordinary *gashmius'dig* rewards granted for those who observe *Shabbos*.

Furthermore, the Bnei Yissaschar notes that these rewards aren't limited to physical, materialistic prosperity; we're also gifted with *ruchnius*. We receive a taste of *Olam Haba* here and now. This is what we sing every week: מעין עולם הבא יום שבת מנוחה

ONEG SHABBOS BY DRAWING DOWN THE THREE COMPONENTS OF GAN EDEN

The Ba'er Mayim Chaim in his *sefer*, *Siduro Shel Shabbos*, provides a deep explanation

regarding *oneg Shabbos*. Traditionally, according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, this *oneg*, and delight involves physical enjoyment through fine food. On *Shabbos*, one must eat grander meals than throughout the week. The *halacha* is that even if those who can't afford luxuries should make every effort to save throughout the week to ensure *Shabbos* is honored with something special. This refers to the physical pleasure of eating delicious food.

However, the Ba'er Mayim Chaim emphasizes a spiritual dimension of *Oneg Shabbos*. He points out that the word 'oneg' 'ענג' is composed of the letters *Ayin*, *Nun*, and *Gimmel*. He relates this to the description of *Gan Eden* in the *posuk* from *Bereishis*: ונהר יוצא מעדן להשקות את הגן - a river flows out of *Eden* to water the *Gan* – the garden.

There are three elements identified in this *posuk*, which are *Eden* עדן, *Nahar* (river) נהר, and *Gan* (garden) גן. The first letters of these three words – *Ayin*, *Nun*, and *Gimmel* – spell the word *oneg* – ענג.

The *Siduro Shel Shabbos* explains that Hashem wants us to honor the *Shabbos* table and have an *Oneg Shabbos* not just with physical delicacies, but by elevating our *neshamas*. He wants us to connect with our *neshama* and reach a higher spiritual level. The goal is to merit a taste of *Olam Haba* on *Shabbos* by drawing the three spiritual components of *Gan Eden* into our world.

The *Tola'as Yaakov*, written by a prominent *Mekubal*, explains that these three aspects of *Gan Eden* descend during the three *Shabbos* meals. During the Friday night meal, one connects to the *Gan* גן. The meal on *Shabbos* morning connects us to the *Nahar* נהר. Finally, during *shalosh seudos*, we can reach the level of *Eden* עדן.

CAN WE ALL FEEL OLAM HABA ON SHABBOS?

It's true that *Shabbos* food is certainly superior to weekday food and it definitely has a taste of *Gan Eden*. As the *Gemara* recounts

regarding Reb Yehuda HaNasi and Antoninus the Emperor who was so moved by the unique taste of *Shabbos* food. Rebbi explained to him that the taste of *Shabbos* food is only truly accessible to a *Yiddishe neshama*, so eventually Antoninus converted.

So *Shabbos* food is definitely elevated and special, but can we actually feel *Olam Haba*? Even our spiritual experience of *Shabbos* is elevated. Our *davening*, singing, and learning are all on a higher level. But honestly, is our experience deep enough to truly perceive the three parts of *Gan Eden*?

IF YOU FEEL ASHAMED FOR NOT BEING ON A HIGH LEVEL ON SHABBOS, YOU WILL EVENTUALLY MERIT TO FEEL CONNECTED

There's a story of Reb Reuven Leib, a *chassid* of the *Beis Aharon* of *Karlin* which illustrates this point. During one of his first visits to his *Rebbe* on *Shabbos*, the *Beis Aharon* quoted Reb Baruch of *Mezhibuzh*, stating that *Shabbos* is a semblance of *Olam Haba*. He explained that a person can use *Shabbos* as a "thermometer" to measure their portion in *Olam Haba* by simply observing how spiritual they become when *Shabbos Kodesh* arrives.

If you feel elevated – truly sensing the sanctity of *Shabbos*, experiencing a profound bond with Hashem during *davening*, and filling your festive meals with *divrei Torah* and *zemiros* – then your portion in *Olam Haba* will be magnificent.

On the contrary, if *Shabbos* arrives and you feel spiritually parched or out of sync, take it as a sign that internal growth is necessary, for this mirrors the quality of your portion in *Gan Eden*.

Upon hearing this, Reb Reuven Leib felt a knot in his stomach. Losing his appetite, he stepped outside, contemplating seeking

chizuk from the Rebbe but feeling too intimidated to do so. He opted instead to visit the Rebbe's son. Despite his youth, he was renowned for guiding the *chassidim* and serving as a mentor even during the lifetime of his father. (Sadly, he passed away in his early years.)

Reb Reuven Leib sought out the younger Rebbe, who often spoke at length with the *chassidim*. At that time, the Rebbe was occupied with a group of wagon drivers – simple, uneducated men. Not wishing to interrupt, Reb Reuven Leib waited for him outside.

As the Rebbe finished, before Reb Reuven Leib could speak a word of his distress, the Rebbe remarked through *Ruach Hakodesh*, "Although, although..."

He then explained, "The holy Reb Shloimele Karliner taught that the letters of the word 'Shabbos' ש'ב'ו'ת can be reordered to spell 'ב'ש'ת - 'shame.' One who feels humbled and ashamed before *Shabbos* will receive *Siyata D'shmaya* to eventually merit a genuine connection to the day."

By saying "Although, although," he was advising that despite what you heard from my father, do not be despondent or broken. Even if you feel inadequate when it comes to *Shabbos*, you will eventually merit to experience its true beauty.

This message resonates with everyone. We all carry that inner yearning; and we're all ashamed for not reaching that high level on *Shabbos*. We find ourselves davening: פתח ורצון להם נועם ורצון so that we can be truly connected to *Shabbos Kodesh*.



BOOST OF INSPIRATION

Tefillah

When a person gets ready to *daven*, seeking a *yeshuah*, sometimes a doubt can arise in his mind; his thoughts and feelings go back and forth, questioning, "Am I worthy to *daven*? Will the Ribbono Shel Olam answer my *tefillas*, or not?"

Then comes the inner voices and feelings saying, "I know who I am; a person knows exactly where he stands," leading him to wonder, "Why should the Ribbono Shel Olam

even answer my *tefillas*?"

The question then is, how can we enter into *tefillah* with confidence that we are worthy of a positive answer?

There is a major *machlokes* between the Rambam and Ramban regarding whether *tefillah* is a *de'oraisa* or a *de'rabbanan*. The Rambam *paskens* in *Hilchos Tefillah* that שמוצות תפילה היא מדאורייתא - *davening* is

a *mitzvah de'oraisa*.

The Ramban, on the other hand, argues that *davening* is a *de'rabbanan*, but he explains that even if one holds that *tefillah* is generally *de'rabbanan*, when a person is in need, it becomes a *de'oraisa*.

The Satmar Rebbe, in *Divrei Yoel*, notes that nowadays, there's no practical *machlokes* between the Rambam and Ramban, because which person today doesn't have a list of requests to ask Hashem for?

Therefore, all *Rishonim* agree that *tefillah* is a *de'oraisa* - not just three times a day, but every minute and hour of the day.

So, how do we enter *tefillah* feeling that the Ribbono Shel Olam is waiting to hear our *tefillas* and truly wants to answer them?

The Bezhaner Rav, known for his famous *sefer Maharsha'm* on Parshas Toldos, quotes the *Sefer Divrei Shlomo* (he was the Lutzk Maggid, a *talmid* of the famous Mezeritcher Maggid) who said, "I observed that when my Rebbe wanted to bring about a *yeshuah*, he first thanked Hashem for the past."

He thanked Hashem for previous miracles and for the goodness the Ribbono Shel Olam had already bestowed upon him; and through that, he drew down further *brachos* and ensured that Hashem would grant another *yeshua* now.

The Maharsham says this is a *segulah*; if you want your *tefillas* to be answered, thank Hashem for what you already have. Especially if you experienced specific miracles or felt you were answered in a special way from Heaven, thank Hashem for it; speak to Him and acknowledge the fact that He answered you.

You can also thank Hashem for walking on your own two feet, for your eyes, your mind, and your heart. Thank Him for being born with a *Yiddishe neshama*. There's always what to thank for.

He quotes the *posuk*, **ושאבתם מים בששון** - **ממעיני הישועה** - I will draw down מים -

water - which represents *chesed*, **בששון** - meaning with happiness, resulting in a *yeshua*.

From where will I draw this water? From where will I draw this *yeshua*? He says, **ממעני הישועה** - we will take it from those rivers and wells of *yeshuah* that already exist.

What does this mean? Start thanking Hashem for previous miracles and for the goodness He grants you day to day, hour to hour, and even second to second.

If you thank Hashem, you will be able to draw down a new *yeshua* **ממעני הישועה** - from the previous wells. And that is how we enter *tefillah* knowing that He will most definitely listen to our requests.





DEEP INSIGHTS

The Secret of Our Younger Years

THE FIRST DAY OF A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IS STIMULATING

In the youthful years, taking on *kabbalos*, and resolving to do better feels as though the gates of Heaven swing wide open. We feel welcomed, as if being invited in to feel the wonderful sensation of doing what's right. This inspiration lasted for a week or a month, but then it somehow vanished.

Suddenly, we found ourselves struggling to achieve what had felt so simple. We encounter unexpected, numerous obstacles which prevent our progress. As if walls had specially been erected to block our path. What occurred?

Reb Tzadok Hakohen cites the Baal Shem Tov, who remarked, *"I long for those early days when I davened with such a geshmak; I'm envious of the time I began my Avodas Hashem, which was so filled with light."*

The Baal Shem Tov then quoted the Rokeach who wrote in his introduction אין חוזק בתחילתו - *nothing compares to the initial stage of serving Hashem. The first day we donned tefillin was filled with such fervor. The day we started learning Gemara, or entered school was incredible. Nothing can match that first day.*

This is the way the world works; it's an established process. Initially, there was an immense *Siyata Dishmaya*. You get a lot of assistance at the start, but eventually, the help is withdrawn. Why does that happen?

A FREE SAMPLE JUST TO GET THE TASTE

The Komarno Rebbe, in his sefer *Otzar HaChaim* on Parshas Naso, shares a powerful *maschal* from the Baal Shem Tov.

A merchant once opened a shop selling delicacies. A customer entered, looked around, and prepared to leave. The owner quickly called him over. "Do you realize the quality of food I sell? These items are truly heavenly."

And then the owner offered free samples, and as the customer tasted them, his eyes lit up; he had never experienced such flavors. He immediately ordered a pound. The owner then offered a second sample, which left the customer overwhelmed with joy, prompting him to order two pounds.

As the order grew, the owner asked for payment. The customer was confused, saying, "You told me it was free."

But the Meor Einayim explains that this perspective is wrong. The *posuk* continues, כִּי לֹא מִחִכְמָה — for it was not out of wisdom. The incredible inspiration you felt in your youth was not actually yours; it was "sho'alto," - it was borrowed. *Shamayim* has lent it to you. They gave you a taste so you would know how good it is, but now you must pay for what you wish to acquire.

Things might have gone dark, but that darkness is not a sign of failure. When a

shopkeeper asks for payment, he isn't saying something is wrong with the customer or that they're unworthy; he's simply saying the free sample is over.

When those moments of inspiration are removed, it isn't a rejection. It's a message that it's time to pay. If you're willing to pay the price of effort, you will, with Hashem's help, merit the incredible light of Shabbos, the joy of learning and davening.



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