

## Parshat Yitro: Shabbat Shalom

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

Parshat Yitro records our experience at *Sinai* and the giving of the Ten Commandments. The fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath Day to sanctify it... And Hashem blessed the *Shabbat* Day and sanctified it" This is repeated in *Parshat Vaetchanan* with a change from "Remember..." to "Safeguard the *Shabbat* Day..." Our commentators note that remembering the Sabbath connotes the positive *mitzvot* related to *Shabbat*, while safeguarding the *Sabbath* refers to refraining from the activities prohibited.

The question remains: How are we to remember *Shabbat* which also implies that we remember it every day. Rashi explains that Shammai said that when one finds something special, one should set it aside for *Shabbat*. Hillel notes that our very language remembers *Shabbat* daily. We speak of the First Day [for *Shabbat*], the Second Day, etc. We further understand, based on the use of the word *zachor*/remember, writes the *Sefas Emes*, that Hashem gave us the *Torah* on *Shabbat* itself.

What is the connection between *Shabbat* and the *Torah*? Further, why do we greet each other with *Shabbat* shalom? What, in fact, is the connection between *Shabbat* and *shalom*? The *Netivot Shalom* explains, *shalom* is not just the absence of conflict but the integration of all the elements of creation

into one unified whole. *Shabbat* was the unifying factor that proclaimed Hashem as the Creator over the world. When there is unity and common purpose, the wholeness of *shalom* is achieved. At the end of each day of creation, every plant, animal, and human being was a complete but separate entity, writes the *Sifsei Chaim*. However, with the "creation" of *Shabbat*, all of creation became interconnected. Therefore, on *Shabbat* we say "...All acknowledge, all praise... all proclaim the glory of God."

In *Kiddush* we say, "*Yom Hashishi Vayeculu Hashamayim...*" the acronym for the four-lettered name of God Who put His imprint on the world when He sealed creation with *Shabbat*. *Shabbat* brought a special satisfaction to Hashem that would be actualized later through *Bnei Yisroel's* accepting the *Torah*, writes the *Sefas Emes*. *Shabbat* and *Sinai* are forever linked as the foundation of the world. True rest is the tranquility of spirit one achieves by disconnecting from the mundane and reconnecting with one's Source. The first commandment in *Parshat Yitro* invokes the creation of the world, while the second iteration in *Parshat Vaetchanan* invokes the exodus, for one is truly free not when released from physical bondage, but rather when one connects his immortal soul to his Creator through *Shabbat* observance.

Indeed, we can infuse our entire week with

that sense of completeness by viewing everything through the lens of *Shabbat*, by how we elevate the material by designating it for our enhanced *Shabbat* enjoyment. The main attribute of sovereignty is *shalom*, integrity and completeness, for when there is a sense of completeness, true peace is achieved. One of the Names through which we understand Hashem is *Shalom*, the attribute that encompasses all the other attributes. When we wish each other *Shabbat Shalom*, we thereby elevate everything to God's Sovereignty and to wholeness and peace.

Man is comprised of two fused separate entities, the body and soul. However, Rav Rothberg reminds us that we have the ability to elevate the physical to achieve spiritual status. *Shabbat* is a bridge to this integration. Likewise, the *Torah* given to us on *Shabbat*, is meant to connect the two worlds. In this manner, we know that although we work, our sustenance is actually dependent on God. Therefore, even when I am working, I remember the *Shabbat* and when it arrives, my perspective is that all my work has been completed. On *Shabbat* we see things from the double perspective. Just as we received a double portion of manna and as we brought two sacrificial lambs, so do we have the double language of *zachor* and *shamor* and the double perspectives of the physical and spiritual world coalescing as one.

## Impediments to Closeness with Hashem

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

Mishlei, Chapter 6, examine the *middot* that distance a person from Hashem. A Jew was placed on this earth to cleave to Hashem by mirroring His attributes. When man dies, his body disintegrates but the soul lives on via its relationship with Hashem. The opposite of attachment which is the essence of love is detachment or hatred. On a spiritual level, hatred is a form of distancing. There are seven categories of people who Hashem hates, because by their nature the choices they made, distanced them from Hashem.

"Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood." The first category are

arrogant people. Hashem says, "I and he cannot dwell in one domain." All the benefits of this world are a gift from One Source. What blocks us from being grateful and joyful is self-worship. The second category is a person who lies. There is lying out of self-aggrandizement and there's defensive lying. What is the problem with a lie if you aren't hurting anyone? Hashem is the one who creates reality. When you lie, you create an alternative reality that you prefer, which in a sense, distances you from Hashem. The third category is all forms of physical violence. Chazal say that a person who slaps another person is as though he slapped the face of the *Shechina*. If you can

be physically violent towards someone it means you've lost sight of his divine image. Arrogance corresponds to thought, lying corresponds to speech and bloodshed corresponds to action.

"A heart that thinks thoughts of violence; feet that hasten to run to evil." The fourth and fifth category are people who think sinful thoughts and run to do evil. Someone who harbors negative thoughts but does nothing wrong, can't be prosecuted by humans but has still inflicted self-damage because he's distanced himself from Hashem. And the harm is severe because his inner life is who he is. The

Continued on page 2



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Continues from page 1

Maharal says we give birth to ourselves continually because we are constantly making choices which begin with our thoughts. There are two kinds of alacrity. The first is where you don't want to be where you are and you're in a hurry to get out and the second is where you are in a hurry to get in. When a person is in a hurry to do evil, sometimes it's an escape mechanism and sometimes it's a love of evil which feeds on negative ambitions. When the yetzer hara is in control of a person to the

point where they are enthusiastic about evil and about what conceals Hashem, then they are by definition distant from Him.

"One who speaks lies with false testimony and incites quarrels among brothers." The sixth category is a false witness who not only lies, but causes people to be judged erroneously. The pasuk says that someone who speaks falsely and thereby ruins a person's reputation is hated by Hashem. The seventh category is

someone who causes quarrels between brothers. When I studied in Bnei Brak at Rav Wolf's Seminary, Rav Wolf used to tell us that our job isn't to ignore the differences amongst the various groups in the frum world; our job is to find what's positive and what we can learn from everyone and integrate that into our lives. Don't learn what isn't, learn what is. Then you will find peace within yourself, and it will carry over to how you speak.

## Tehillim 8 - What is the Human Being A Little Less than the Angels

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

If you look carefully at this *mizmor*, the time of day described is night as evidenced by the verse, "When I see the heavens...the moon and stars..." Imagine David Hamelech lying on a knoll of grass looking at up at the dark heavens, awed by the myriad of stars and the vast endless space. We can understand a bit about what Avraham saw when Hashem told him to look up at the sky and see if he could count the stars.

David Hamelech begins with a cry of utter awe, "...How mighty is Your name in all the earth, for which You should bestow Your majesty upon the heavens." Adir indicates strength. Redak argues that the heavens show a force greater than what can be discerned on earth. The stars and the motion of the planets affect what will happen down below leading astrologers to mistakenly believe that the earth is subjugated to the heavens. Malbim disagrees and says the heavens up above are completely silent and the beauty apparent - the sense that Hashem created it all, is emanating from the earth. "When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers..." My fingers can't move on their own, it's my divine soul that's powering it. The essence of who I am is not my body, not even my actions, those are the work of my fingers that you can see. But it's the soul that is really

me that no one can see. Similarly, the forces of nature seem like separate entities when in fact they are being powered by one force- Hashem.

"What is man that You should remember him, and the son of man that You should be mindful of him?" On the one hand, I'm limited in my grasp and on the other hand I can imagine things I cannot see and I can create things from something, because I was created in the image of Hashem. I was given intellect, the power of empathy and the supremacy to rule. "Yet You have made him slightly less than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and majesty." *Kavod* means honor and it refers to a person's essence, as in when a *person* says, "I give you my word of honor." Hadar is beauty that can be seen by the eye. It's the glow on the outside reflecting the divine soul.

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have established strength because of Your adversaries, in order to put an end to enemy and avenger." In the still of the night, David Hamelech hears the cries of babies calling for their mothers. In that moment of frailty, he envisions something that Rav Hirsh describes as follows. When a baby is born a pure soul enters the world crying out and yearning to know Hashem. The enemy are those who

believes that man is nothing but an advanced monkey lacking any essential value and therefore can be crushed at whim. We as adults are no different than the baby completely dependent on Hashem, as we cry out to him. Rav Feivel Meltzer suggests that this verse is an apology by man trying to understand Hashem, knowing he's really not very different than a baby compared to Hashem's awesome infinity. And he cries out against those who try to argue that there is nothing more to man than what the eye can see. According to the Midrash, this *mizmor* is a song about the essential value of every human being.

"You give him dominion over the work of Your hands; You have placed everything beneath his feet. you appointed him ruler over the works of your hand." Hashem gave Adam and Chava dominion over all the creatures. He was adjured to watch over this world like a benevolent king and he learned from the fish to build boats and from the birds to fashion planes, because since time immemorial it was man's dream to fly and he can. When Hashem brought the *Torah* down, he drew heaven down to earth. The *Torah* allows us to lift ourselves up from the earth and rise and aspire ever higher.