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VAYISHLACH

5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Singing About Angels!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



When does Shabbat really kick in for you?

Is it when you first light the match for those wonderful surreal Shabbat candles, or when singing Lecha Dodi to a chorus?

For the family as a whole, it seems to be implanted at the Shabbat table, just before Kidush, when the entire family is joined around the dinner table chanting Shalom Aleichem to the angels.

Whilst some people have the custom to totally omit this song, others view it as precious to their Shabbat experience.

Shalom Aleichem is an interesting song and there are several variations. But where can we find the epicentre to such a custom?

The Gemara Shabbat (119) writes that a person is accompanied by two angels as he walks home from the synagogue on Friday night – a good angel to his right and a hostile angel to his left. If the house is neat and properly arranged for Shabbat, then the kind angel declares, "May it be His will that it should be this way next week, as well." The hostile angel is then compelled to respond, "Amen." If,

however, the house is disorderly and not prepared for Shabbat, then the hostile angel proclaims, "May it be His will that it should be this way next week, as well," and the good angel has no choice but to answer, "Amen."



Thus, on Shabbat, as we are returning home from the synagogue accompanied by angels, we invite them into our homes.

A further reason suggested by the Sages emanates from a second Gemara in Shabbat 52a:

There was a couple that would always get into a fight Friday nights. Rav Meir took it upon himself to sit with them every Friday night, three weeks in a row, and he saw to it that they learned to avoid their

usual arguments. The Gemara says that immediately after the third week, a voice was heard, the voice of the Satan, saying, "Woe to me! Rav Meir has evicted me from my dwelling!" The Sages derive that Erev Shabbat is a time where the Satan wishes to make us crumble. It is working extra hard and therefore once Shabbat has entered and peace is around, we welcome the angels of peace. However, there are those that question the lyrics to this powerful song.

Imagine you invite someone to your house. As he enters the door, you tell him: "Welcome to my house; have a seat." Just a few seconds later, you tell him go in peace!

He only just got there and you are seemingly kicking him out.

Similarly, Rabbi Yakov Emden questions the custom to invite the angels (Shalom Aleichem and Boachem Leshalom) and then ask them to leave (Tsetchem).

Why are we asking them to leave if we have just invited them to our house?

One of the answers to this fascinating question lies in the Parasha.

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Yakov returns after 20 years, 14 years work for his wives and six years working to earn his wealth. Eisav, his arch enemy escorted with 400 army generals, has set out to meet and destroy him.

Yakov sends a message to Eisav – “Im Lavan Garti” – I have sojourned with Lavan – one of the most unethical people in the generation, a cheat and hustler. Nevertheless says Yakov, I have kept all the Taryag – 613 Mitsvot. I have not become weak in serving G-d.

Rashi comments that Yakov sent Malachim – means that he sent real angels!

Wow! When we want to send something and make sure it gets there we use DHL. Yakov, on the other hand, used real angels! They were at his command.

Where did he get these angels from?

The Shelah explains that at the end of last week's Parasha, Yakov-on his journey back to Eretz Yisrael-was greeted by angels. In fact, the Pasuk states that he called the place Machanayim – **two** camps.

Many years earlier when leaving Eretz Yisrael, Yakov dreamt of angels going up and down a ladder. Rashi explained that the angels of Eretz Yisrael were leaving Yakov and the new angels of Chutz La'aretz (outside Israel) were accompanying him on his new journey.

Everyone has accompanying angels. Yet, there are two sets of angels: those that accompany us in Israel and those that accompany us outside. Of course, the ones in Israel are of higher spirituality.

At that time, Yakov was shown the ladder with the angels symbolising the change of guard.

Now, upon his return to Eretz Yisrael, Yakov was greeted by *both* camps of angels. They were both there at the changing point. Those that had accompanied him in Chutz La'aretz accompanied him and stayed a while with those that were now going to accompany him in Eretz Yisrael.

We can now understand the deeper meaning of Shalom Aleichem. Shabbat is a special day. It is a meeting point between the end of

the week and the beginning of a new week.

It warrants new special angels. It is at that time that there is a change of the guard. The new set of angels will be with us for the entire week to come. The old set will now be leaving us. It is at that stage that we sing Shalom Aleichem welcoming in the new set, whilst keeping the old set around, until eventually sending the off the old set with Tsetchem Leshalom.

How special is our Shabbat that we have been blessed to recognise these guardian angels!

All angels of course are sent from G-d.

Ki Malachav Yetsave Lach Lishmarcha Bechol Derachecha – He will charge His angels for you, to protect you in all your ways.

Let us cherish the moment and enjoy Shabbat with the understanding that we are surrounded by G-d's special emissaries.

Shabbat Shalom!

Parasha Insights

Rabbi Moshe Garson

When Yaakov saw Eisav, he prepared himself in three areas -as Rashi explains -gift tributes, prayer and war.

The Midrash Talpiyot (authored by Rabbi Eliyahu haKohen from Izmir, Turkey d.1729) quotes from a handwritten document that the three areas were to reflect the three divisions of Am Yisrael. These are the Cohanim, Leviyim and Yisre'elim who would descend from him and who would receive the Torah and through whose merit he would find salvation from Eisav. This same document suggests another idea that the three preparations reflect the three Temples that will be built in the future and where Hashem will reveal His holiness to His people.

The gifts symbolise the First Temple where gifts were received from many nations. The prayers reflect the Second Temple which was

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rebuilt through the merit of Ezra's prayers. Finally, the preparations

for war were a precursor of the Third Temple which will be built, *bimhera beyamenu*, after the wars of Gog and Magog, as prophesied by Zecharia haNavi.

It is a common theme through the lives of Yitschak and Yaakov that they emulated wherever possible the actions of Avraham and thereby generate success in his merit. Rabbi Eliyahu z"l suggests that Yaakov also followed Avraham's example in the three areas of preparation.

When Avraham Avino received gifts from Pharaoh, Rashi

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explained "lemaan yitav li baavurech" - "in order that it will be good for me by receiving these gifts". Surely, Avraham did not want gifts for himself. After all, Chazal already explained that Avraham hated gifts - *tsone matanot yichye*. They go on to explain that receiving gifts prepared the way for his descendants to receive gifts, too, when leaving Mitsrayim in the future. *Maase avot, siman labanim* - the actions of the fathers are a sign for their children. The Yalkut says that Hashem instructed Avraham to go to Egypt to prepare the way for his descendants - *hatken lahem et*

haderech. Chazal further add that part of the presents he received were the names of impurity which he eventually gifted to *bene hapi-lagshim* in order to rid Yitschak of their evil influences. Avraham also applied himself to pray on behalf of Sedom who were evil. Similarly, he prayed at the Akeidat Yitchak that the ashes of the mizbeach will be a merit to his descendants in time of tsarot. So, Yaakov prayed and generated the merits of Avraham's prayers now that Yisrael was confronting the dangers of Eisav. Finally, we see that Avraham went to war against the five kings, who

were idol worshippers, in order to "remove the thorns from the vine". Similarly, Yaakov called upon Avraham's merit by preparing for war against an enemy that represented the reprehensible part of society and Divine worship. Not all the fighters with Eisav were reshaim gemurim. Similarly, Avraham tried to save those of minimal zechuyot in Sedom. Yaakov's preparation for war included a concern that he may kill someone who could have been deactivated by just wounding and not killing outright. This frightened him. His prayer was for a just war.

The Vilna Gaon grew up to be the greatest Talmud Chacham in the world. He explained many difficult things in the Torah that no one had ever been able to explain before. The people of Vilna loved and respected their Rabbi, the Vilna Gaon. He wanted to move to Eretz Yisrael because Eretz Yisrael was the home of the Jewish people. One day he finally decided to go. He packed his bags and got on the ship to begin the long trip to Eretz Yisrael. Suddenly, a gigantic storm came.

The ship was tossed under the water and could not go on. The ship came back to the port and the Vilna Gaon got off and went back to Vilna. He understood that Hashem had sent the storm to tell him to stay in Vilna and help the people there. As the Vilna Gaon did more and more Mitzvot and learned more and more Torah, the Kedusha of being close to Hashem started to show in his face.

One time, some bad men grabbed a Jewish boy and they

Our Chachamim



were going to hurt him. Wearing his tallit and Tefilin, the Vilna Gaon went to save the boy. When he came to where the bad men were, he said, "Let him go." When the bad men looked at the Vilna Gaon and saw the Kedusha that was on him as he wore his tallit and Tefilin. They got so scared that they ran away and never came back.

Halachot Of Shemita

Rabbi Dov Levy



Definition of Shemita produce

You said last week that produce only has Shemita holiness if it grows a certain amount during the Shemita year. Does that mean I don't need to worry about Shemita for a while, especially in England?

Based on the definitions we mentioned last week, fruit is more likely to be a problem in a few

months whereas vegetables from Israel will be problematic right now.

You need to clarify the Halachic status of each type of fruit, veg etc as anything could possibly have Shemita holiness already.

Until when do I have to worry about Shemita produce?

Potentially fruit can be Shemita produce well into next (Jewish) year, based on the definitions we mentioned last week.

Is it ok to treat with Shemita holiness any Israeli Produce I bought, just in case?

Yes, but you must also bear in mind that if it isn't really Shemita (i.e. it is halachically considered produce of the 6th or 8th year) then it will have laws of Terumah and Maaser etc applicable to it. In many cases you will have to treat it with Shemita holiness and take Terumah etc. Terumah and Maaser doesn't apply to Shemita produce.

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1. What sort of messengers did Yaakov send to Esav?

32:4 - Angels.

2. Why was Yaakov both "afraid" and "distressed?"

32:8 - He was afraid he would be killed. He was distressed that he would have to kill.

3. In what three ways did Yaakov prepare for his encounter with Esav?

32:9 - He sent gifts, he prayed, and he prepared for war.

4. Where did Dina hide and why?

32:23 - Yaakov hid her in a chest so that Esav wouldn't see her and want to marry her.

5. After helping his family across the river, Yaakov remained alone on the other side. Why?

32:25 - He went back to get some small containers he had forgotten.



6. What was the angel forced to do before Yaakov agreed to release him?

32:27 - Admit that the blessings given by Yitzchak rightfully belong to Yaakov.

7. What was it that healed Yaakov's leg?

32:32 - The shining of the sun.

8. Why did Esav embrace Yaakov?

33:4 - His pity was aroused when he saw Yaakov bowing to him so many times.

9. Why did Yosef stand between Esav and Rachel?

33:7 - To stop Esav from gazing at her.

10. Give an exact translation of the word *nisa* in verse 33:12.

33:12 - It means "travel". It does not mean "we will travel." This is because the letter nun is part of the word and does not mean we as it sometimes does.

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