

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

LISTEN, O HEAVENS!


by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

This week we read the penultimate parsha, Haazinu, which contains Moshe's speech to the Jewish people on the day of his passing. It begins, "Listen O heavens, for I will speak! Let the earth hear the words of my mouth!" (Deut.32:1).

The Zohar recounts: "It was taught that at the moment when Moshe said, 'Listen O heavens, for I will speak!' -- the entire world was shocked.

"A voice said 'Moshe, Moshe! Why are you creating a tumult throughout the world? You are merely a human, and due to you the entire world shakes!'

"He responded, 'I will call forth the name of Hashem,' (Deut.32:3) and then the entire world was quieted and heeded his call."

When we connect to the Torah (which the Zohar says is entirely the names of Hashem), we rise above Heaven and Earth. 

Just שו"ת Me A Question

Q: Why do Mizrachim and Sefardim use female verbs for Hashem while Ashkenazim use male?

A: Hashem is beyond gender.

Different aspects of Hashem are described as masculine or feminine.



Q: Why don't we wear tefillin on Shabbos and Yom Tov? Additionally, why are they muktzah?

A: Regarding Tefillin, the Torah says, "And they will be a sign for you" (Shemos 13:9). This verse comes to exclude us from wearing them on Shabbos and Yom Tov, since they themselves are referred to as a sign, as it says, "For it is a sign between you and Me" (ibid. 31:13).

We don't need to wear 2 signs at once (you don't wear two wedding rings..), so therefore we don't wear tefillin on Shabbos or Yom Tov, since on those days we already have a sign, i.e., the day itself (Shulchan Aruch HaRav 31:1).

On a deeper level, the spiritual energy of Shabbos is different than that of the week. It is explained in Chassidus that during the weekdays, our avodah (spiritual service) remains in a transcendent manner. That is, whatever our Torah, Tefillah and Mitzvos accomplish remains a bit "beyond" our self. It's kind of like buying fish for Shabbos on Thursday -- but it's in the fridge, not yet edible. It says in the gemora that "one who toils on Erev Shabbos will eat on Shabbos." So too, in a spiritual sense, we must first do the spiritual avodah of the weekday in order to achieve the spiritual elevation of Shabbos.

On Shabbos, we internalize this transcendent energy. Like a regular weekday, Tefillin also harness a "beyond / transcendent" energy.

This is why they protrude from above our head -- their energy is not (yet) internalized. Thus, wearing Tefillin is a "spiritual contradiction" to Shabbos (Rebbe Rashab, Sefer HaMaamorim 5666 p.32 & 129).

Regarding the 2nd part of your question about why tefillin are muktzeh, since we don't wear them on Shabbos, they are therefore muktzeh.

To explain a bit more, the general concept of muktzeh (lit. "set aside"), is that anything that is not used or does not have a function on Shabbos becomes muktzeh (we are only allowed to move it in certain conditions). So since we don't wear tefillin on Shabbos, they don't have a use and are therefore muktzeh (Shulchan Aruch HaRav 308:19).

Q: On Shabbos at mincha we read a part of next week's Torah portion. Why isn't that considered preparing something for after Shabbos?

A: There is a halacha that one is not allowed to do something on Shabbos (or Yom Tov) to prepare for after Shabbos (or YT).

Yet what does it mean to prepare for after Shabbos?

One example would be to wash dishes (in a permissible manner on Shabbos) when they are not needed on Shabbos, just so they will be clean for after Shabbos.

Yet when something has a value in-and-of-itself at that time, then it is not considered preparing for after Shabbos (even if, indeed, there is a benefit for after Shabbos). *continued -->*


Heaven & Earth

by: Tzipah Wertheimer

Both Moshe Rabbeinu & Isaiah the prophet address the people at different times invoking the Heavens & the Earth. Moshe was the greatest prophet to ever live. He sat atop Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights; his face glowed with such holiness that he actually wore a veil so that the Jews could approach him without fear.

Isaiah was more connected to the physical world, just like all the other prophets. Since the prophets felt the limitations of the physical world, they were driven to tear off their clothes in an attempt to totally separate from physicality while prophesying.

Moshe did not have this issue as his entire being was one with G-d. He mentions the Heavens first in his public address. Isaiah was more worldly than spiritual and that is why he mentioned the Earth before the Heavens in his rebuke generations later.

These two paradigms are meant to balance each other out. The person who lives in the world of ideas and higher order thinking must make sure to ground themselves at times. The one who lives in the 'here and now' must make sure to step back and recognize that there is more to the picture of life than meets the eye. Perhaps one individual in a single lifetime visits both perspectives in their time. 



Me שו"ת Just A Question

Continued from front

Thus, reading the Torah on Mincha at Shabbos (when we read the first aliyah of the following week's parsha) is not considered preparing for after Shabbos, because it has value at that time.

Another example would be this past Pesach, when Erev Pesach was on Shabbos. Many wanted to take a nice juicy Shabbos nap in order to be wide-awake for the Seder. Isn't this preparing for after Shabbos? As explained above, it's not a problem, because taking a nap has an independent value on Shabbos itself.

That being said, one should not explicitly state, "I am napping so I will be able to stay awake late at the Seder after Shabbos," or "I am learning Torah now [on Shabbos] so that I will be prepared for something after Shabbos."

(Shemiras Shabbos KeHilchasa 28:77) 

HAYOM YOM

12 Tishrei

We are assured by covenant that any wide-ranging effort and labor pursued wisely and with friendship is never fruitless.

Chassidic Story

(continued from last week)

The desperate father waited outside the home of the poritz for the Bishop with a reputation for being kind. He eagerly awaited the return of his son who had been kidnapped by the poritz.

The poritz welcomed the bishop and told him that he had kidnapped the Jewish boy to secure a place in Heaven.


The Bishop began to laugh and said, "do you really believe that? Just sprinkling a bit of water of the head of a Jewish boy, won't turn him into a good Christian. Watch, take the boy out of the castle and he'll run to the first Jewish man he sees as if it were his own father."

The poritz hardly believed what he was hearing but agreed to the plan. They took the boy into the street and sure enough as soon as the boy saw his father he tore away from the poritz screaming, "tatty, tatty..."

The poritz was about to run after the boy but the Bishop held him back. The father decided to leave the city with his son immediately. On his way out of town he passed a large procession of luxurious carriages.... and exact copy of the bishop's party.

When the bishop "returned" to the home of the poritz he was asked, "did you forget anything?"

"You idiot," the Bishop barked, "I didn't forget anything I am late because my carriage broke down...no bring me the child..."

Meanwhile the father went to thank the daughter of the Bsht. "You caused my father much trouble in Heaven," she said happily, "one must watch their child like the apple of their eye. You can't rely on miracles. 

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