



# NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM  
THE TEACHINGS OF **RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l**

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה.   
MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM  
FROM THE PARSHAH

## Careful Money

ואַבְרָהָם זָקֵן. (בראשית כד, א)

**Avraham was elderly. (*Bereishis* 24:1)**

**What was [stamped] on the coin of *Avraham Avinu*? An elderly man and woman on one side; a young man and woman on the other side. (*Bava Kama* 97b)**

What was the meaning of the images stamped on *Avraham Avinu's* coin?

Simply speaking, *Avraham Avinu* was a king, and it is the way of kings to put out currency bearing the icon of the king. Avraham's currency bore on one side the image of an elderly man and woman, who were Avraham and Sarah, and on the other side, a young man and woman, who were Yitzchak and Rivkah. They were the royal personages.

Besides the simple meaning, we could say Avraham wished to teach the people a lesson about *kosher* money. *Avraham Avinu's*

outstanding trait was *chesed*. The Torah recounts the amazing *chesed* he did with his angelic guests. On the other hand, Yitzchak's outstanding trait was *yiras Shamayim*, as the verse says, *Pachad Yitzchak*.<sup>1</sup>

The message on the front of the coin was that money is given to us so we may do *chesed* and *tzedakah* with it, as represented by Avraham and Sarah, the paragons of *chesed*. But this is only half the message. The back side of the coin showed Yitzchak and Rivkah, who represent

<sup>1</sup> *Bereishis* 31:42.

*yiras Shamayim*. This teaches that we need to make sure our money is free of theft and other sins. Only then, when it is a *kosher* coin, is it the currency of *Avraham Avinu*.

Some people don't know this. They think that if they give nice donations to the *shul* and other good causes, then it is not so terrible if their business dealings are less than 100% clean and pure. And it is forgivable if they forget to pay some little debts, or neglect to pay them on time. *Avraham Avinu* came to teach us that this is not so. A coin is *kosher* only when it bears the stamp of *Yitzchak Avinu* on it. When it is marked by *yiras Shamayim*.

This lesson is pertinent to everyone, including those who spend most of their time in the *beis midrash*. The *Vilna Gaon* said that a Torah learner will not see success in his learning if there is even one nail stuck into his home that is not his according to the *dinim* of the Torah. This is something to think about.

There is an amazing story from the days of R. Chaim Volozhiner. One of the *bachurim* in the *yeshivah* fell ill, and thus traveled home, and on the way, he stopped to stay overnight at an inn. In the morning, the *bachur* realized that he lacks seven pennies from the amount the innkeeper had set as his fee. The innkeeper said he will rely on him to take care of this small debt when he gets a chance. And when the *bachur* got home, he gave his friend seven pennies with which to

finish up the bill. However, the friend forgot to give the money to the innkeeper.

After a short time, the sick *bachur* passed away. One night, when R. Chaim Volozhiner was walking down the aisles in the *yeshivah* after midnight, he saw with his own eyes the deceased *bachur* walking up to him. R. Chaim said *shalom* to him, and asked him, "How did your Heavenly judgment go?" The deceased *bachur* replied that when he came before the *beis din shel maalah*, he was found free of all sin and misdoing, and the sentence was issued that he may enter *Gan Eden*. But when he came to the gates of *Gan Eden*, the *Satan* was standing at the gate and did not let him come in, due to his sin of theft, as he owed the innkeeper seven pennies. It made no difference whether he was guilty of negligence or not, because after all was said and done, he didn't pay his debt. He owed the money, and that's it.

The Heavenly court thus decided that he will be given permission to appear in the world as a living person and ask his *Rav* to take care of the debt, so he will come to rest. R. Chaim Volozhiner instructed the forgetful friend to pay up, and since then, the *bachur* did not appear again.

This is quite a lesson about kosher money. Even if it involves just a small amount, and even if we have good excuses, a debt is a debt. It must be paid. ●

## לעילוי נשמת

מוה"ד משה בן אליעזר המבורג ז"ל

ומוה"ד ברוך זאב בן נפתלי קראוס ז"ל

נדבת נכדיהם ~ עטרת זקנים בני בנים והפארת בני אבותם

# How to Run a Home

וַיְבִאֶהָ יִצְחָק הָאֵלֶּהָ שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ. (בראשית כד, סד)

**Yitzchak brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother. (*Bereishis* 24:67)**

**Rivkah became like Sarah his mother. As long as Sarah was alive, there was a lamp burning from *Erev Shabbos* to *Erev Shabbos*, and there was a blessing in the dough, and there was a cloud over the tent. When she died, they ceased, and when Rivkah came, they returned. (*Rashi*)**

The simple meaning of this is Rivkah was a *tzadekes*, and kept up the ways of *Sarah Imeinu*, so these three wondrous things returned to the tent.

But what do these three things signify?

They represent the three basic principles of running a Jewish home. These are things that every housewife needs to practice in her home at all times.

The first is “A lamp burning from *Erev Shabbos* to *Erev Shabbos*.” This signifies that *shalom bayis* reigns supreme not only on *Shabbos*, when the whole family gathers and is happy with one another and forgets about all the mundane troubles and aggravations. Also on weekdays, when people work hard, and every little thing that goes against one’s wishes and expectations is liable to get on the nerves and cause tension in the home, *shalom bayis* rules. In the homes of *tzaddikim*, the “lamp” of peace and tranquility burns and spreads its light not just on *Shabbos* but all week long, until the next *Shabbos*.

“A blessing in the dough.” What does this signify? *Chazal* say:

All of a person’s sustenance is allotted to him between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, except for *Shabbos* expenses and *Yom Tov* expenses and expenses of teaching Torah to his children. If he spends less [for these things], he is allotted less, and if he spends more, he is allotted more.<sup>1</sup>

We may spend extra when it comes to the special expenses that go for *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* and teaching Torah to our children. But other expenses come out of a fixed budget that was set between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and this is where we need “a blessing in the dough.” In other words, a small expenditure should last us a long time. We shouldn’t throw away money on luxuries, because sometimes it brings us to big and unnecessary debts that destroy the peace of mind we need for *avodas Hashem*. We should rather buy only what the home truly needs. This brings great blessing and happiness to the home.

“A cloud over the tent” represents *tzniyus*. It is as if a cloud is covering the home and concealing it from the eyes of others. This has several aspects. Simply speaking, it is a matter of *כל כבודו בת מלך פנימה*. The most honorable place for a woman is inside her own home. It also entails not telling others outside the home about one’s domestic matters. And it surely means that when we are talking inside the home, we should try to make sure our voices are not heard outside the home.

If we do these three things, it will bring us great *siyata d’Shamaya*. The lamp burning from *Shabbos* to *Shabbos* – peace and togetherness in our home. A blessing in the dough – abundant *parnassah*. A cloud over the tent – *Shechinah* and *kedushah* and *taharah*. May they always be with us, *amen*. ●

<sup>1</sup> *Beitzah* 16a.

הַקְרָה נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם. (בראשית כד, יב)

**Make it happen before me today. (*Bereishis* 24:12)**

## Hashgachah and Chance

Eliezer, Avraham's faithful servant, arrives at the well in Aram Naharayim, in search of a wife for Yitzchak. That is his mission. He prays to *Hashem* הַקְרָה נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם. The word הַקְרָה comes from the same root as מקרה, "chance." He asks *Hashem* that Yitzchak's wife-to-be should chance before him.

This calls for explanation. Why did he ask for success to come in the form of a chance occurrence?

We find a similar thing written about Rus, when she went to gather gleanings from a field:

וַיִּקַּר מִקְרָהּ הַחֵלֶקֶת הַשְּׂדֵה לְבִעוֹ – She chanced upon the field of Boaz.<sup>1</sup>

This is awfully strange. Why does the *pasuk* say it was a chance occurrence? On the contrary, the whole future of *Melech Hamashiach*, who was her descendant, depended on her coming to the field of Boaz, her future husband.

What's more, it says in the *Gemara* that Rus is called "the mother of the [Davidic] dynasty."<sup>2</sup> This implies that just as the Jewish people could descend only from the four *Imahos*, so the dynasty of *Beis David* and *Mashiach* could descend only from Rus. So when *Hashem* brought Rus to glean in that particular field, resulting in her marriage to Boaz, how could this be considered a "chance occurrence"?

This brings us to the crux of the issue: what is the difference between *Hashgachah* and chance?

Let's say a tree leaf falls and lands in a certain place. This could be viewed as *Hashgachah* or as chance. *Hashgachah* means that Heaven declared

that this leaf will fall in that particular place. The declaration traveled from world to world and from angel to angel, as there are many different levels of angels, until it came to the angel close to our world, and he directed the leaf to its intended location.

When it is not *Hashgachah*, when it takes place by chance, it means that there was no Heavenly declaration regarding the event. No angel or prophet knows that such and such needs to happen, neither was it revealed to anyone in a dream. Instead, the occurrence is governed by nature. It is a result of the forces of natural law. But what is nature, really? *Hashem* brings everything into being. He created nature and controls nature. Thus, a chance occurrence is something that comes directly from the hand of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* Himself, with no angel or heavenly being in between.

When is it necessary for something to take place by "chance," in this sense? When is even a miracle not good enough to do the job?

When the *Satan* might interfere. Let's say a Heavenly decree would resound through the upper worlds, saying, "Rus is to come to the field of Boaz." Since this will result in *David Hamelech* and in *Melech Hamashiach*, the *Satan* will not be very happy about it at all. He will immediately come along and argue against such an event taking place. He will make *kitrugim* and do everything he can to stop it. But when the event happens by "chance," by the hidden hand of *Hashem* acting via the ways of nature as determined way back at the time of Creation, then the *Satan* has nothing to say. He can't argue against the laws of nature and he can't stop them. The event thus circumvents the normal process because it is performed by *Hashem* Himself.

<sup>1</sup> Rus 2:3.

<sup>2</sup> Bava Basra 91b.

## Speed is of the Essence

This explains why hurrying and immediacy is mentioned so many times in the story of Eliezer at the well. “The servant **ran** toward her.” “She **hurried** and poured out her jug into the trough and **ran** again to the well to draw.” And so forth.

This need for rushing is explained by the *Brisker Rov*. He noted that Eliezer said, “Make it happen before me **today**.” The sign he requested from Heaven was for it to happen that same day. And this didn’t leave a lot of time, because Eliezer arrived at the well towards evening. Thus the whole event had to take place in a very short period of time, so they needed to hurry at every stage.

This raises a question: why did it all need to happen before the end of that very day? What would be so terrible if they wait until tomorrow?

The answer is as we explained above. If they would wait for a day, some *kitrug* would come up and prevent it from happening. That’s why Eliezer hurried and Rivkah hurried and everything was done as fast as possible. And that’s why Eliezer asked for Heaven’s help to come in the way of *mikreh*, of a chance occurrence. Because if he would pray a regular prayer for *Hashem’s* regular help, then an angel would go to bring his *tefilah* before *Hashem*, and that takes time.

Michael takes one, and Gavriel takes two.<sup>3</sup>

This means that each angel takes a certain amount of time to get from heaven to earth. (It takes Gavriel twice as long as it takes Michael.) And after the angel gets here, he then needs to bring Rivkah to Eliezer. So if Eliezer would wait for an angel to do it, the *Satan’s* opposition could arise in the meantime, and stop it from happening. Thus Eliezer asked for a “chance occurrence.” In other words, he prayed that Rivkah should happen to be there already, at just the right time.

וַיְהִי הוּא טָרַם כְּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רִבְקָה יֹצֵאת –  
Before he finished speaking, Rivkah was

already going out.<sup>4</sup>

Rivkah happened to go out to the well at just that moment, before Eliezer even finished his *tefilah*, so when he finished praying he saw her standing there immediately. When *Hashem* Himself does something, it doesn’t take any time at all.

## Eliezer Did Not Do As Told

This explains why Eliezer did not follow his instructions exactly. Avraham instructed him:

הוּא יִשְׁלַח מַלְאָכוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ. – He will send  
His angel before you.<sup>5</sup>

Avraham told Eliezer that *Hashem* will send an angel. But Eliezer asked *Hashem* to do it Himself. This is because Eliezer was a faithful servant, but also a wise one. He realized that more was needed. Avraham assumed an act of an angel would be sufficient, but Eliezer prayed for a “chance occurrence,” meaning that *Hashem* will do it Himself.

There is another amazing point here. Eliezer was Avraham’s *shaliach* to go and fulfill for him his obligation to marry off his son. The father’s obligation is to help make the *shidduch*. But we see from the story that Eliezer actually betrothed Rivkah to Yitzchak, so Eliezer must have been the *shaliach* also of Yitzchak. Otherwise, Eliezer would have been Halachically unauthorized to perform *kiddushin* on behalf of Yitzchak. So Yitzchak, too, must have been involved in Eliezer’s mission.

Avraham indeed said that *Hashem* will send an angel. But Yitzchak apparently instructed Eliezer not to employ angels; rather, the bride should be chosen by *Hashem* Himself. Because it was the way of Yitzchak to be totally attached to *Hashem* Himself, due to his special trait of *yiras Shamayim*. He wanted his *shidduch* to come directly from *Hashem*.

When Eliezer recounted the event at the well to Lavan, he did not tell him that he prayed, “Make it

3 *Berachos* 4b.

4 *Bereishis* 24:15.

5 *Ibid* 24:7.

happen before me.” He rather told him:

וַאֲבֵא הַיּוֹם אֶל הָעֵינַן וַאֲמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲדֹנָי  
אֲבָרְהָם אִם יִשְׁךָ נָא מִצְלִיחַ דְּרַכִּי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי  
הֵלַךְ עָלָיָה – I came today to the well, and  
I said to *Hashem*, the G-d of my master  
Avraham, “If you will now grant success to  
my mission that I am going on.”<sup>6</sup>

Eliezer explained it that way to Lavan because otherwise Lavan wouldn't understand what he is talking about. Only *tzaddikim* know what a “chance occurrence” really is. The nations of the world think it means the opposite. They think it is something that happens on its own, without *Hashem's* intervention. So Eliezer told Lavan that Avraham had said that *Hashem* will send an angel, and that's all he told him.

## Yitzchak's Favorite Food

It says later on in the Torah:

וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל בְּנוֹ מַה זֶה מְהֵרָתְ לָמֵצָא  
בְּנֵי וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי הִקְרָה ה' אֱלֹקֵיךָ לְפָנָי  
– Yitzchak said [to Yaakov], “How did you find so fast,  
my son?” He answered, “Because *Hashem*  
your G-d caused it to chance before me.”<sup>7</sup>

Here we see a whole *pasuk* dedicated to the fact that the hunted meat was brought to Yitzchak very fast. Why was this so important to Yitzchak, and why does the Torah emphasize it?

Simply speaking, it was because Yitzchak, who assumed that the person standing before him was Eisav, was concerned that the roasted meat about to be served to him might be *gezel*. He suspected that Eisav didn't really go out to the wilds to hunt, but rather grabbed the first animal he came upon, even though it belonged to someone.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* 24:42.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* 37:20.

But in light of what we explained above, we could say that [since Yitzchak had a suspicion that the person standing in front of him might actually be Yaakov,] Yitzchak was thus concerned that the “hunter” might have performed a miracle, and an angel brought him the animal. However, Yitzchak, who was the paragon of *yiras Shamayim* and total connection to *Hashem*, would eat only food that came directly from *Hashem*.

Yaakov thus assured Yitzchak that the animal came to him by chance, and said, “*Hashem* your G-d caused it to chance before me.” He was saying that he came upon the animal by a totally natural occurrence, which means it was an act of *Hashem* Himself. This is what he meant by, “*Hashem* your G-d caused it to chance before me.”

This answer prompted Yitzchak's next question:

הֲאֵתָהּ זֶה בְּנֵי עֵשָׂו אִם לֹא – Are you my  
son Eisav or not?<sup>8</sup>

Rashi explains that Yitzchak's suspicions were raised because Eisav did not usually mention *Hashem*, whereas the person standing in front of him just said, “*Hashem* your G-d caused it to chance before me.”

As we explained, the idea that “chance” events are directly from *Hashem* is exactly the opposite of how Eisav and the nations of the world look things. They consider the phrases “*Hashem* your G-d” and “chance before me” to be utterly contradictory. If it is chance, it isn't from *Hashem*, and if it is from *Hashem*, it is not by chance. That's how they think.

So when Yaakov assured Yitzchak that it was straight from *Hashem* because it chanced before him, this brought Yitzchak to ask, “Are you my son Eisav or not?” Only Yaakov could have said such a thing. ●

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid* 27:21.