

RABBI SHIMON GRUEN

TORAH LESSONS for the HOME

{ TERUMAH 5780 }

HOLY CONNECTION

SERVING HASHEM AS HUMANS

In this week's Parshah we read about the *Keruvim*. "And the *Keruvim* shall have their wings spread upwards... with their faces towards each other."

The union between a husband and wife is so exalted and holy, that the representation of it, the *Keruvim*, were placed in the *Kodesh Hakedoshim*, the holiest spot in the *Bais Hamikdash*.

The *Gemara* in *Yuma* (54b) relates that during the *Churban*, when the Gentiles came into the *Kodesh Hakedoshim* and saw the *Keruvim* embracing each other, they were astounded! "How can Jews, who have such powers to bless and to curse, be occupied with such things?!" they wondered.

The nations of the world have trouble wrapping

their brains around this phenomenon. To them, the physical connection is one of lust and self-gratification. They cannot understand how something that to them seems so intensely physical, can have any deeper meaning. They cannot comprehend how we can think of it as G-dly or holy.

The truth is that nowadays, any place can be the holiest place, so long as everything we do, even the simple and mundane, becomes elevated to a higher level. We might think that in order to bring Hashem's Presence into this world we must occupy ourselves with lofty, otherworldly pursuits. That is not so! Hashem has plenty of *malachim* and heavenly servants, who praise him and serve him without any physical limitations. It is us, mere human beings, who have the ability to turn our simple, physical actions into

the divine - thereby inviting Hashem's Presence into our lives and our homes.

DUAL CONNECTION

Some people go by the mistaken belief that it's impossible to behave righteously all day, every day. They rationalize that when it comes to certain areas of their life, they have no choice but to indulge their simple human desires, without regard for their G-dliness. That is a grave error. When you write off one part of your life as disconnected from Hashem, you risk entirely disconnecting!

An even greater problem that stems from this line of thought is when you incorrectly assume that by behaving human, you're committing a sin. So you say to yourself, "Since I'm sinning anyway, I might as well do it all the way." That is not only unfortunate,

but also completely wrong! It is possible and permissible to simultaneously reach your wings to the Heavens, being in tune with your spirituality, while facing your physical needs and desires. One does not diminish the other. When we do seemingly physical actions for the sake of Hashem, it elevates them into a purely spiritual experience.

We should never ascribe to the belief that some things are a “necessary sin” - something we must do, but really shouldn’t. *Chas veshalom!* We can find the way for everything in the *Shulchan Aruch*, and our entire life can be conducted *al pi* Torah and *al pi* Halacha.

INVITING HASHEM IN

Sometimes a person claims to love his wife when in reality he really just loves himself. When you do things purely for the sake of indulgence, there is not much room left for Hashem, and the *Shechinah* is pushed away. However, when you do things for the right reasons, you are actually bringing glory to Hashem’s Name.

Just like the commandment to honor your parents is not a contradiction to honoring Hashem, loving Hashem does not take away from your love of another human being. On the contrary, when there is true

ahavah - true love - between two people, it brings Hashem ever closer to us.

When we are told to construct the Mishkan, Hashem tells us, “*Make for me a holy dwelling and I will dwell amongst you.*” Rashi explains that this also refers to the Jewish home. Now that we unfortunately do not have the Mishkan any longer, we enable Hashem to come and dwell among us when we construct our home on a foundation of holiness and purity.

THE PRIME SOURCE

We do not have to become angels, or even to abstain from any physical pleasures. All we are asked to do is to remain connected to Hashem while we connect to each other, within the framework of a Jewish home. We do not have a Bais Hamikdash anymore, we do not have a Kodosh Hakedoshim, but when we serve Hashem together, as one unit, we have the power to accomplish something as wondrous as bringing Hashem’s Presence into the world.

Purifying yourself should never come at the expense of others. If you want to upgrade your spirituality, you need to do it on your own time and by yourself. What’s more, sometimes you might think

that you want to do something tangible to bring Hashem into your home. “I’ll sit down and learn for an hour.” Or, “I am going to call my lonely friend to chat.” You might not realize, though, that if these actions - beautiful and praiseworthy as they might be - are done at a time when your wife needs you, you are missing the point. Your wife, your marriage, is the prime source of *Hashra’as HaShechina* in your home! Everything else is secondary.

OUR OWN MIKDASH ME’AT

When we conduct ourselves appropriately, the Jewish home becomes a mini Bais Hamikdash, with Hashem’s presence felt and experienced in every one of its corners. Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach ZT”L always straightened his attire and made sure he looked presentable before entering his home. His companions questioned him, “Rebbe! Is the Rebbetzin that particular about your appearance? Will she throw you out if your hat is crooked?”

The Rebbe smiled as he responded, “The Rebbetzin won’t mind at all. But the *Shechinah* dwells in a home where the husband and wife live in harmony and purity. How can I enter the home of

the Shechina looking anything less than picture perfect?”

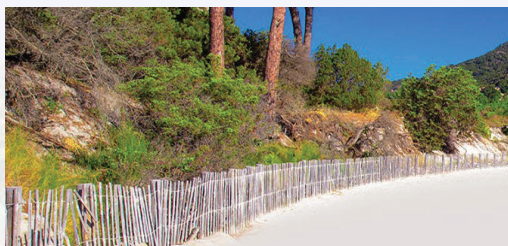
The holiness of the marital connection is so powerful – Hashem’s Presence in your home depends on it!

CHINUCH: TEACHING KIDS TO GET ALONG

We are always busy teaching our children the

right way to live *bein adam l'makom*. Davening, learning, *shmiras* Shabbos, etc. We need to remember to put at least as much effort into teaching them about the importance of getting along with each other. They have to know that when they make an effort to relate nicely with their peers, it helps bring the *Shechina* into their midst. You might have a

child who is not so successful in learning, but he interacts beautifully with his classmates. That child needs to constantly hear from you that he is just as successful as the kid who excels at learning. Make sure to reward good behavior *bein adam l'chaveiro* at least as much as everything else, to help your children realize that this should not be overlooked.



Q&A

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SEND ANY QUESTIONS, ON THIS TOPIC OR ANY TOPIC TO RABBIGRUEN@LEHAIR.ORG



QUESTION:

I am bothered by the way some things are done in my house, but I don't feel comfortable bringing it up. Instead, I grin and bear it. Is that the right thing to do?

ANSWER:

You might think that by avoiding this confrontation you are keeping things safe and not rocking the boat, but there's a reason why you came to talk to me about it. Apparently, it hurts you or bothers you. Burying your misgivings and denying that something is bothering you is never the right way.

Perhaps past experiences have shown you that criticism does not go over well in your home. However, that is still not a reason to keep it all bottled up inside. The key is to communicate in a way that comes across as understanding and empathetic, rather than accusing or confrontational. Tell your wife that you understand that what you're asking of her might be difficult, but it is something you would really appreciate. You can also tell her it doesn't have to be now; it could be at a later date. Maybe she needs to hear that you understand that changes cannot be made overnight, but explain your position to her so that she understands where you're coming from as well. Discuss it with her and be prepared to compromise.

It's also possible that the last time you broached the subject your tone wasn't right, and that's why it didn't go over so well. It might be helpful to seek guidance on how to communicate your message in a non-confrontational way without becoming hurt by the reaction. Proper communication makes life so much less complicated; it is worth the effort.

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