



Shalom Zachar

Did you ever wonder why we have a shalom zachar on Shabbos (See Yoreh Deah, 265:12. The title shalom zachar is derived from the gemara (Nida 31b) that states *ba zachar l'olam ba shalom b'olam*.)?

One idea of Shabbos is to elevate physicality. That is to say, we take the physicality and we raise it towards kedusha. This takes expression with the nice clothing we wear and the special delicacies that we consume on Shabbos. This concept is expressed in the gemara that tells us that on Shabbos *ba'anan nami lachem*, physical pleasures are also required (Pesachim 68b).

According to a 1914 Chassidish publication, R' Pinchas Koritzer (1726–1791) explained that on the Sabbath, Jews can spiritually elevate even lowly things. Thus, even such humble foods as *gala* (calves'-foot jelly, also known as *ptcha*), onions, and kasha are transformed into Sabbath "delicacies." Even animal tails become a crown l – in the form of a *shtreimel*.

In light of this we can understand why it is referred to as *Shabbos Kodesh* since through Shabbos we make even the physicality kodesh. We can also now grasp the words we sing on Shabbos, *kodesh he lachem* (In the zemer Baruch Keil Elyon. See Shemos 31:14. The simple meaning is, "Shabbos is holy to you."), as we make the *lachem*, physicality, kodesh, holy.

Yaakov symbolizes this idea. He is one who elevates physicality to kedusha as it says *kedosh Yaakov* (Yeshaya 29:23. The first three brachos of Shemoneh Esrei correspond to the three *avos*. Consequently, Yaakov matches up with *attah kadosh*). Here are some places where we see this.

1) Yaakov is more involved in the physical world as he worked twenty years for Lavan (Breishis 31:41), married four wives and had twelve sons. Additionally, the Torah highlights that he returned for something materially small, the *pachim ketanim*, the small jugs (Breishis 32:25, Rashi).

2) The idea of Yaakov representing elevating that which is permitted to us is illustrated in that Maariv, which he instituted, is a *reshus*, optional. That is to say, Yaakov elevates that which is a *reshus*, permitted.

3) The three-pronged phrase of *b'chal levavcha u'vchal nafshecha u'vchal meodecha* corresponds to the three *avos* (Devarim 6:5). While *b'chal levavcha* matches up with Avraham and *b'chal*

nafshecha corresponds to Yitzchak, *b'chal meodecha* lines up with Yaakov. *b'chal levavcha*, with all your heart, parallels Avraham who was completely dedicated to Hashem. *B'chal nafshecha*, with all your soul, matches up with Yitzchak who was ready to give up his life at the akeida. *B'chal meodecha* correlates with Yaakov as is depicted in him returning for the small jugs. The term *meodecha* is related to the word *midah*, measure (Brachos 54a), since we elevate that which is permitted to us when we act with it in the right measure (for example, eating and sleeping in the right amount).

4) The name Yaakov is rooted in the word *eikev*, as it says, *v'yado ochezes ba'akeiv Esav vayikra shmo Yaakov*, his hand grasping on to the heel of Esav so he called his name Yaakov (Breishis 25:26). *Eikev* symbolizes the seemingly small insignificant things (See Devarim 7:12, Rashi), as Yaakov elevates even that. As a result, *eikev* is an acronym for *kadeish atzmecha b'muttar*, sanctify that which is permitted (Nesivos Shalom, Vayechi, s.v. *kivan*, See Yevamos 20a for the phrasing *kadeish atzmecha b'muttar*).

Based on what we said, it comes as no surprise that chazal connect Yaakov to Shabbos as the gemara derives from (Yeshaya 58:14) *az tisanag al Hashem v'hirkavticha al ba'masai aretz v'ha'achalticha nachalas Yaakov avicha* (If you proclaim Shabbos 'a delight'...then you shall be granted pleasure with Hashem, and I shall mount you astride the heights of the world; and I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Yaakov) that *kol ha'me'aneig es ha'Shabbos nosnin lo nachalah bli metzarim*, (Shabbos 118a-b) whoever delights in Shabbos is granted a boundless heritage. Furthermore, it is measure for measure, because since he elevates that which is a *reshus*, he receives a boundless heritage.

In light of this we can grasp why we have a shalom zachar on Shabbos. Once the child has emerged from the mother's womb into this physical world, and the Torah he learned was removed from him, we console him by celebrating with physical food, channeling it toward Hashem. This shows the child that the physical can be channeled to holiness. The shalom zachar represents this idea of elevating the physical, and therefore it is most fitting for it to take place on Shabbos.

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