



MESIBOS SHEL SHABBOS

WITH RABBI MORDECHAI Z. HECHT

ANGELS ON SHABBOS: I • מלאכי השרת, ושלום •

The Angels note how Shabbos atones:

“Rav Hisda said that Mar Ukva said: One who prays on Shabbat evening and recites vaychulu, the two ministering angels who accompany the person at all times place their hands on his head and say to him: “And your iniquity has passed, and your sin has been atoned” (Isaiah 6:7). It was taught in a baraisa: Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda says: Two ministering angels accompany a person on Shabbat evening from the synagogue to his home, one good angel and one evil angel. And when he reaches his home and finds a lamp burning and a table set and his bed made, the good angel says: May it be Your will that it shall be like this for another Shabbat. And the evil angel answers against his will: Amen. And if the person’s home is not prepared for Shabbat in that manner, the evil angel says: May it be Your will that it shall be so for another Shabbat, and the good angel answers against his will: Amen. (Bavli, Tractate Shabbos 119b)

Before we even arrive at home & recite the traditional Sholom Aleichem prayer, the angels are accompanying us. It is these angels that walk us home and to whom we say: Tzayschem L’Sholom - farewell, but we are not saying good bye to them now, rather we are noting now how soon they will leave, when Shabbos is over, so, stay with us and bless us more now, to compensate for when you go. (Tiferes HaShabbos)

The Angels recognize Shabbos brings good fortune

“It is stated in the Zohar (Parshas Emor, 94a) that when Israel first lauds the Holy One Blessed is He with songs of praise in their synagogues and study halls and afterwards come home to arrange their houses and tables in honor of Shabbos and Yom Tov, the angels proclaim, “Fortunate is the people whose lot is thus!” (Tehillim 144:15). (Kav Hayashar 86)

Apparently, we spontaneously in return praise and welcome the Angels with Sholom Aleichem. The question is where does the atonement and fortune come in? Perhaps here lies a profound lesson hidden amongst the words of the Talmud, which states as follows: *“Apropos the Sage...: Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Nahmani, the disseminator of Reish Lakish, interpreted a verse homiletically: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Trust not in a*

companion, do not put your confidence in an intimate friend” (Micah 7:5)? If the evil inclination says to you: Sin, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will forgive, do not trust it, since it is stated: “Trust not in a companion [rei’a].” And rei’a is referring to none other than the evil [ra] inclination, as it is stated: “For the inclination of the heart of man is evil [ra]” (Genesis 8:21). (Talmud Chagiga 16a)

The Gemora then continues and says:

“And “intimate friend” is referring to none other than the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “You are the intimate friend of my youth” (Jeremiah 3:4). Lest you say: Since I am acting in private, who will testify against me? The stones of the house and the beams of the house of each person testify against him, as it is stated: “For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it” (Habakkuk 2:11).

And the Sages say: A person’s soul shall itself testify against him, as it is stated: “Guard the doors of your mouth from she who lies in your bosom” (Micah 7:5). What thing lies in a person’s bosom? You must say it is his soul. Rabbi Zerika said: The two ministering angels who accompany him, i.e., each individual, they testify against him, as it is stated: “For He will command his angels over you, to guard you in all your ways” (Psalms 91:11). And the Sages say: A person’s limbs testify against him, as it is stated: “Therefore you are My witnesses, says the Lord, and I am God” (Isaiah 43:12), which indicates that each individual becomes his own witness and testifies against himself on the Day of Judgment.

Angels to the Rescue

Perhaps now we can say that these two angels will come and testify that since we lit Shabbos candles, celebrated Shabbos, avoided falling on the virtual, and proverbial “wood & stones”, the whole reason why we light Shabbos candles (See Mishna Berurah 263,2, Magen Avraham, Mordechai), and will defend us in Heaven and have us judged favorably in the eyes of G-d.

Actionable lesson: Now go light Shabbos candles, and sing Sholom Aleichem with a whole new appreciation.