



The Angels' Bracha

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E11)

What is שלום עליכם? Who are these angels? What are we saying to them?

Inviting Peace

The ספרים teach that we say שלום עליכם because peace is the theme of שבת קודש and is central to our yearning for our home and family. Hashem brings peace above (עושה שלום במרומי) by, for example, causing the angels of fire and water to coexist in peace. May He bring that spirit of שבת שלום and cause it to reside among us as well (הוא יעשה שלום עלינו).

Asking for Blessing as we Bless

A second explanation for שלום עליכם relates to our desire to receive blessing just as we bless our children with our whole hearts.

There is a reciprocal relationship between giving ברכות and receiving ברכות. The Torah adds to the Bracha that Kohanim give to Klal Yisrael. When they bless Klal Yisrael, Hashem says ואני אברכם which refers both to the fact that Hashem will bless Klal Yisrael and that Hashem will bless the Kohanim who have given the Bracha. We, too, turn to Hashem via His messengers the angels, to shower us with Bracha just as we are giving Brachos.

All from Hashem

There is yet another aspect of שלום עליכם which adds to its significance on ליל שבת. We are reminding ourselves, before we begin קידוש, that everything in our lives comes from הקב"ה. There

is a danger lest we come to think that what we have or what we have done is somehow the product of our own efforts. We can lose track of the straight line to the Cause of everything.

That is why we refer to the angels. A quality of an angel is that it never loses track of its source and its mission. The angel has no name of its own because it exists only to carry out the Will of הקב"ה. We want to remind ourselves of their singular focus in the hopes that this insight will fill our consciousness as well. A central theme of Shabbos is the reminder that everything is drawn from His Will, and from His Will alone.

Why should we say Goodbye?

After the three explanations above we must wonder why we would bid the angels farewell?

The simplest answer is that the angels will leave at some point, but we do not know when. And so, we bless them now for whenever they go.

Different groups of angels

Another explanation for our bidding the angels farewell is that there is a changing of the angelic guard in our homes. We take leave of the angels that accompany us during the weekdays as we welcome the angels that accompany us through the שבת קודש. This echoes how יעקב אבינו saw the angels of ישראל ארץ leaving him (going up) and the angels of חו"ל joining him (coming down).

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first stanza do
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KI HEIM CHAYEINU

כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Calling them different names

The Belzer Rebbe pointed out that only in the first stanza do we refer to the angels as מלאכי השרת. Thereafter we refer to them in more familiar, direct terms, and then we say goodbye. He explained that there are three ways in which we relate to angels; superior, equal, inferior.

This is alluded to by the three ways that אברהם relates to the angels who come to his tent. First, he sees them as נצבים עליו, they are above him and superior to him. They are perfect beings, and he has not yet thought about how to relate to them. Next, he chooses to greet them. That is an exercise of the capacity that a human being to choose his service of Hashem and that is a capacity that angels do not have. He is now their equal, hence the term לקראתם. Once he begins to serve them, he has not only chosen to serve, but he has also acted on that choice. He is now above them, hence the term והוא עומד עליהם.

When the angels first arrive, we call them מלאכי השרת. When we contemplate fulfilling the great Mitzvah of זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, we drop the great title of honor as we are more their equal. When we are about to fulfil the Mitzvah of זכרהו

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, על היין, giving expression to the fact that we bid them farewell. We do not want to flaunt our superiority over the angels. We rather say goodbye and not generate any jealousy when we act on our choice to do this great Mitzvah.

Absolute privacy

Rav Shor adds another ingredient to the goodbye wishes. Referring back to the great Mitzvos that we are about to perform of זכור את יום השבת לקדשו and זכרהו על היין, Rav Shor teaches that these Mitzvos create a profound ייחוד with הקב"ה. This moment is akin to the כהן גדול entering the קדש יום הכיפורים on קדשים.

That moment is so intimate and precious that the Torah forbids anyone from being present but the כהן גדול and the שכינה הקדושה. Nobody can be present, including the מלאכים – angels may not be there either.

Hence, when we bid farewell to the angels, we should consider the spiritual significance of the coming Kiddush. We are about to engage in a service which is akin to the spiritual high-water mark of יום הכיפורים.

Takeaway: *I will try to pay attention to the spiritual significance of the שלום עליכם that we sing.*