



פרשת ויגש

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Unity and Sanctity

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Part I. Sacred Unity

Yosef's Reveal

Everyone remembers the story of how Yosef Hatzaddik had disguised himself from his brothers as the *mishneh lamelech* of Pharaoh until the time came to reveal to them who he really was. **וְלֹא יָכַל** – He couldn't restrain himself any longer and now he was about to announce to his brothers, **אֲנִי יוֹסֵף** – It's me, your long-lost brother Yosef (Bereishis 45:1-3).

But before he would make himself known to his brothers, he made an announcement: **וַיִּקְרָא** – He called out, "Everyone else, **הוֹצִיאוּ כָל אִישׁ מִעֲלֵי** – He wanted all the foreigners, all the Egyptians, to leave. And now, only now when **וְלֹא עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ** – nobody was standing with him in the palace except for his brothers, **אֶל אָחִיו** – that's when Yosef made himself known to his brothers (ibid.).

Areilim Arois!

Now, that's a question: Why did Yosef insist that nobody should witness this reunion of the brothers?

So Rashi (ibid.) says **לֹא הָיָה יָכוֹל לְסַבֵּל** – Yosef couldn't bear, **שִׂיְהִיוּ מִצְרִים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו** – that the Egyptians should be standing there. Why? Rashi says because he didn't want the Egyptians to see how his brothers would be ashamed or embarrassed when he would say 'Ani Yosef'.

Now Rashi says his reason and it certainly is a true and good reason. But it's a *prat*, it's one detail; there is a more general reason. That by the way is a principle that you have to know when you're learning Rashi and *maamarei Chazal* in general. They don't always say the full *pshat*; they say a *chiddush*, an addition, a detail of the *pshat*. And that's what Rashi's doing here – he's telling us one detail of the *pshat*.

The Plain Pshat

But the *pshat* is said by the *possuk* itself. The *possuk* states Yosef Hatzaddik didn't want any stranger to be present when he was about to be

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reunited with his brothers. That's the plain meaning – where there will be a reunion of brothers, a gentile doesn't belong.

Why not? What's the problem with witnessing the reunion of long-lost brothers, the love between them? I saw that once – it wasn't even a Jewish family – a few Italian brothers were meeting each other after being separated for more than ten years and they were bawling; they were crying like little children. I appreciated that. It was something to see. And so what would have been so bad if the Mitzrim saw some brotherly love among Jews? Maybe they would have learned a thing or two.

And the answer is, it's true, I'm sure the Mitzrim would have benefited; but there was a reason they couldn't remain. And that's because it *wasn't* an Italian reunion – it was a Jewish reunion; a reunion of Jewish brothers, of the *Shivtei Kah*. And therefore it was too holy of an occasion for outsiders, too holy of a place for the gentile to be present.

Place of Holiness

That's a fundamental truth that Hakadosh Baruch Hu taught us about this world: there are times and places where the Shechinah is present to such a degree that it warrants keeping the *goyim* out; some things are just too holy for their presence.

Let's take the Beis Hamikdash for example. A *goy* cannot come into the Mikdash (Keilim 1:8); even where *temei'im* are permitted, a *goy* wasn't allowed. There was a sign hanging outside of the Beis Hamikdash in Latin, "If a non-Jew enters these precincts he'll be put to death." And the *goyim* were very careful because the *beis din shel kohanim* would execute any gentile who was caught in the forbidden precincts! They would take him outside of the *azarah* and put him to death.

And the Roman government approved of that because even they understood that gentiles have no right to come into the Sanctuary. To a superficial extent they understood: What's a *goy* doing in the holy place of the Jews?

We of course understand it more. A *goy* should come into the place of an especial degree of *hashraas*

ha'Shechinah?! If it's a place where the Shechinah comes down then it's something especially for His children. To allow a gentile there would be a sacrilege, a degradation of the importance of that place.

Time of Holiness

Same with the *kedushah* of Shabbos. Now Shabbos is not a place but it's a *chiddush* of the Torah that time can also possess *kedushah*; certain days are more holy than others and Shabbos is the most sacred of all. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ (Bereishis 2:3) means that Hashem imparted a *kedushah* into the time, the day itself.

And there too we know that *goyim* are not allowed. Like it says in the *siddur*, in the Shabbos *tefillah*, בְּמִנוּחָתוֹ לֹא יִשְׁכְּנוּ עַרְלִים – no *goyim* are able to come into our day of rest. It means that Shabbos is off-limits to them; it's too holy for *areilim*, for the uncircumcised.

That's why נִכְרִי שֶׁשָּׁבַת חַיֵּב מִיָּתָה – A gentile is *chayav misah* if he keeps Shabbos (Sanhedrin 58b); it's because he's going where he doesn't belong. It's like walking into a Beis Hamikdash; he's trampling on sacred ground. Shabbos is a special sanctuary only for *am Hashem*, for the holy people, and if you're not from *Am Yisroel* and you walk there anyhow, you're *chayav misah*. It doesn't mean you should go out and shoot him, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu will take care of him.

Saving a Gentile's Life

Once a man, a *goy*, came to me. I was in my office in Chaim Berlin and someone knocked on my door. He's standing there wearing a banjo on his back and he tells me he's contemplating becoming a *ger*. He wants to be Jewish and someone told him he should speak to me.

"I've been keeping Shabbos a long time already," he tells me.

So I said, "Stop! It's dangerous; don't do that! Every Shabbos, switch on the light at least once." Because it's not for them! Just like the Mikdash is a place of the Shechinah, Shabbos is a time of the

Shechinah; it's a sanctuary of time that is too holy for strangers. If you're not from the holy nation then the holy day is not for you.

Holiness of Reconciliation

And we come back to our subject, to Yosef and his brothers. Why did Yosef have to send out the Mitzrim? Because just like the Mikdash and Shabbos are too holy for outsiders – there's too much Shechinah there to allow the presence of *goyim* – when Jews reconcile, that's also a place of *kedushah*. It's a place where the Shechinah comes with an intensity that is not found elsewhere. Jewish reunions are very holy!

Don't think it's easy to reconcile. It means a commitment to be *mevater*, to overlook things; what it means is that you'll have to make yourself into a person who is more *shaleim* in his *middos bein adam lachaveiro*.

Yosef Hatzaddik had been separated from his brothers for very many years. And there had been friction; trouble and recriminations. There was jealousy and rivalry; and now they are coming together again which means *shleimus hamiddos*.

And that's the *kedushah* that was there at that time. The perfection of character is what makes a place holy! At that moment, when Yosef met his brothers again after so many years, it was a time of such *kedushah* that no stranger had a right to be present. It was *mammash* a Beis Hamikdash and therefore *לֹא עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ* – no stranger was permitted to stand there, *בְּהִתְיַדַע יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו* – when Yosef re-joined his brothers (Bereishis 45:1).

Better Than Poetry

It's not just a form of speech, some poetic words, that the *shleimus hamiddos* of *achdus* is holy. No; it's very real, very tangible. The *ichud*, the union of *frum* Jews is so pleasing to Hashem that He chooses to rest His Presence there more than anywhere else. It's so holy that *goyim* can't even be present.

Later, when the Egyptians inquired, "Why did you give this order that we should leave? What was

going on in there when we left?" so Yosef could say "Oh, I'm sorry about that but my brothers might have been embarrassed. I didn't want to put them through that in public." That's the right thing to tell a *goy* – and it's true too. But there's a deeper reason, a much more important reason, and that was the *kedushah* of the reuniting of Yosef and his brothers, the *kedushah* that comes from the perfection of character that is achieved when people are forced to get along.

To be *b'shalom*, *b'achdus*, getting along with others, means learning how to bend and twist your desires to the whims and quirks of your fellow man. It has to be that way, otherwise it's impossible to be together. There's a tremendous perfection of character that comes along with reconciliation.

Kol Nidrei Holiness

That's one of the reasons, by the way, why Yom Kippur, *Kol Nidrei* night, is so holy for the Am Yisroel. Among the other aspects of *kedushah* that it has, there is something special that makes it even more *kadosh*: *Kol Nidrei* night is a time when people have reconciled; they've made up with each other.

Al pi halachah that's what they have to do because *אֵין יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים מְכַפֵּר עַד שְׁיַרְצֶה אֶת הַיָּרֵי* – Yom Kippur won't help you for sins against your fellow Jew unless you appease him first (Yuma 85b). And therefore everyone is careful to reconcile. Every married man before he leaves the house to go to the *beis haknesses* on Yom Kippur night asks his wife to forgive him and she asks him to forgive her. Everyone, every man, every woman, every child tries as much as possible to reconcile with their fellow Jews before Yom Kippur. You do what you can to forget about your *hakpadahs*, to appease and be appeased.

And then they all come together to the *beis haknesses* with the *kedushah* of togetherness and just that alone is why there's a very great *kedushah* on *Kol Nidrei* night. Hashem's chosen people have reconciled!

Born To Break

Now, it could be that we don't appreciate that; we don't understand how important the perfection of character is, what a *kedushah* it is when a person breaks his *middos*. You know, the Gra says in his *sefer Even Shleimah* that the most important function of a Jew is to learn to break his *middos*; *shviras hamiddos*. And if he won't do that, *lamah lo chaim*, what's the purpose of living? You hear that? A remarkable statement! And the Gra wasn't a man who said rash things. He didn't exaggerate. The purpose of life is to break your character traits; breaking your arrogance, your *ga'avah*, breaking your *ka'as*, becoming a patient man, breaking your selfishness, breaking your *machlokes* with other people.

"I want to do it this way." But the other thinks his way is the way. So you give in. You break your will. And even sometimes when you can't but you try to be diplomatic. You bend this way and that way; you twist yourself to get along with everybody. And you're fulfilling your purpose in life because you're perfecting yourself. That's what the Vilna Gaon says.

Now, you can be sure that Yosef Hatzaddik understood that even more than the Vilna Gaon. He understood what it meant to be reunited with his brothers. Not just one brother; all his brothers. And what kind of brothers? The *Shivtei Kah*! And so it was to him like the Beis Hamikdash and Shabbos. That's what it means, the *kedushah* of perfection of character.

Part II. Married Unity

Selfish Marriage

Now you might be surprised to hear this but that's why it's so important to be married. You know, some people think that marriage is for the purpose of building a family but actually that's a separate subject. You have to know that marriage, even without children, is a very important form of perfection.

You'll have a big family *im yirtzeh Hashem* but we're talking now about something even more important than building a family; we're talking about building *yourself*. The greatest achievement of a home – and I use the word 'greatest' *bli guzmah*, without exaggeration – is the *shleimus hamiddos* that you yourself acquire by living together in a house with someone else.

You know, a bachelor can be selfish and stubborn and arrogant and everything else, and he can still think he's the biggest *tzaddik*. Why? Because he never had any conflict with somebody else's will. But then he gets married and suddenly he discovers that not only is *he* an *akshan* with bad *middos* but his wife also is an *akshan*; she's also selfish and a *ba'al ga'avah*.

Sanding Stones

And even if she's the perfect wife, sugar and spice and everything nice, but she has her own ways of thinking. Women are entirely different from men; they have different minds. Even though she's from the Bais Yaakov and he's from the yeshivah, and so to some extent they have interests in common, but it's still not the same. Some women are surprised when they discover that their husbands are men. But that's the plan – she's a woman and he's a man, and they're going to rub against each other.

Now what happens when two stones with rough edges rub against each other for a long time? They are smoothed out. Living with another person means that you are constantly being put on the emery wheel on which diamonds are polished; constantly you must polish your rough edges in order to live under one roof together.

To get along with a woman, to get along with a man – a man is a very troublesome creature and a woman is also a troublesome creature – and when two troublesome people get together and force themselves to get along, they make use of the opportunities, so after a while they become smooth diamonds – their characters are polished.

What's So Good About Marriage?

And that's why when Hakadosh Baruch Hu was contemplating creating the woman, He said, **לֹא טוֹב לְאִישׁ הָיִתׁוּ הָאָדָם לְבָדּוֹ** – It's not good for a man to be alone (Bereishis 2:18). What does it mean 'it's not good'? Some people like it very much to not be bothered with people.

The answer is that a person can't become 'good' if he's not bothered by his fellow man. A man's *middos*, his character doesn't develop when he's alone. He does what he wants; he does as he pleases. Here's a bachelor; he lives by himself. He told me that he has a telephone book and when he eats *milchigs* so he opens up to a page in the book and that's his *milchig* mat. Then if he's going to have chicken for supper, so he turns the page in the telephone book and that's his *fleishig* mat. The next day he turns again. A true story! Next year he'll get a new telephone book and start all over again.

Now, try that with a wife in the house. It won't work; it won't fly. With a woman in the house you have to learn how to behave. It doesn't matter what you want, what you think is better – there's always another opinion here and you have to learn how to yield, how to accommodate yourself to somebody else, to get accustomed to living with somebody else.

For Perfection's Sake!

Let's say she tells you certain things that she wants you to do – she wants you to do this in this and this way, so even though you think you have a better way, obey her anyhow. Give her the feeling of *nachas ruach* that you're following her system of doing things. And her with him; same thing.

Why do you have to have it your way? Bend your will to hers. And even sometimes it may be a little inconvenient to you, nevertheless, give up a little convenience for the sake of gaining the perfection of adjusting, of bending, of self-control and humility.

So the years go by and both of you have to struggle. Constantly you have to grit your teeth. Constantly you have to swallow your anger.

Constantly you have to swallow your hurt. Your words too! You have to swallow your words. It can't be helped!

Again and again, you must be oimed *b'nisayon* and it means that you're changing. Every day you're becoming better and softer and wiser and more patient and more humble. All of your rough edges are being smoothed out. Don't think it's nothing. It's everything! It's the reason why Hashem made it that way; it's the purpose of marriage. That's the *tov* of marriage.

A Special Visitor

And it's such a great achievement when a husband and wife live together with that ideal of *shleimus hamiddos* that **אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵיהֶם** – if they can live together more or less in harmony, **שְׂכִינָה בֵּינֵיהֶם** – Hakadosh Baruch Hu himself is happy to be among them (Sotah 17a).

Isn't that a remarkable statement? We should sit and study those words all our lives! How can it be that the Shechinah should come down between an ordinary Mr. and Mrs.?! Alright, they're *shomrei mitzvos*, but they're not the *gedolei hador*. It's not a Beis Hamikdash. Why should the Shechinah come down?

And the answer is, it is a Beis Hamikdash! A home where *shalom* is practiced, where good character is formed, that makes them *kadosh* and it's such a *shleimus*, such a great achievement, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "Yes, that's where I'm going to be. A place where two people are dedicated to a career of getting along, of constant *shleimus hamiddos*, that's the place of holiness where I'll come in."

Better Late Than Never

And even if somebody didn't start out on the right foot, even though they're married many years, even twenty, thirty years later, they could always make a new beginning. The opportunity for bringing the Shechinah into the home is still open for everyone.

And so it's a good idea to make a decision, starting today, no matter what, each one will try to be gentle and to speak politely. He might get on her nerves – he's so stubborn, so rude – but she bends; she yields and overlooks and ignores. She stifles her desire to respond. If she must say something, she should go to the bathroom and run the water and flush the toilet and say it – only he shouldn't hear. That's a greatness on her part. Every time she bends, her character improves and she becomes more of a *kadosh*.

And he? Same thing. You know women are many times nervous. Women go through certain periods of difficulties. *בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים* – Having children is not easy and managing children, a house of children, sometimes drives women almost crazy. And many times they're nervous and wild and unreasonable. Very good. That's your opportunity to smooth your rough edges.

The Great Accomplishment

And so each one tries as much as possible to stifle their desire to misbehave and to respond to the foolishness of the other. It's not always easy – sometimes you fall – but you get up again. You break your arrogance a little more and you apologize. Again and again, you yield one to the other.

You know what they're accomplishing? Not only are they keeping out of divorce court and guaranteeing that they'll walk their grandchildren down to the *chuppah* together – that's excellent – but even better, they are achieving *shleimus* of character!

Now, once you understand what an opportunity marriage is, so you'll introduce certain *minhagim* that'll help both lubricate the relationship and lubricate the *middos*. You want to ask for something, if you'd always say, "Please," to each other, does it cost money? You always say, "Thank you," to each other.

Not only the first year. Always! Always show appreciation. Always gratitude. *Hakaras hatov* is the foundation of the pure *neshamah*; to train yourself

in the attitude of being grateful, absolutely it's a perfection of the *neshamah*.

Singing Her Praises

Not only politeness and gratitude. As much as possible find ways of giving compliments. Overcome your laziness and your stubbornness, and compliment her for the cooking. After supper tell her how good of a meal she served today. On Shabbos compliment the *challah*. "It tastes so good, so sweet."

When you walk in from the *beis medrash* say, "How nice and clean your house is." Or say, "You're an expert manager – a good *balabuste*." Say something from time to time! Anything! "You're really an *aishes chayil*."

It's not natural? You don't feel like saying it? That's what the Vilna Gaon means when he says that *shviras hamiddos* is the purpose of life; breaking your bad character, breaking your natural inclinations. And so make sure to compliment your wife on her looks. Even when she's an old lady, she still wants to hear how she looks. That's how women are, that's their nature. And don't be stingy; be lavish with your praise. Always say good words about her appearance, as long as you're alive.

Singing His Praises

And wives to their husbands – she has to show appreciation of the husband too. If the husband is *oseik* in Torah, she should praise him. If she sees he makes a *brachah* with *kavanah* she should praise him. "It's a pleasure to hear you make *kiddush*," or "It's a pleasure to hear you say *birkas hamazon*."

From time to time she should compliment him on bringing *parnassah* into the home. It's not easy making a living and she should encourage him with a few words. Anything he does, she should utilize in order to gain *shleimus* for herself because her perfection is the way she deals with her husband.

Now, after a while you'll get more opportunities. Children come along and that's also an opportunity for the *shleimus* of good character. A father and mother have to get along with their children and

each child is different from the next one. And the mother and father sometimes have different ideas about what to do about little Chaim and they have to cooperate with each other.

The Little Beis Hamikdash

They have to do it. They can't help themselves; they're chained together in marriage. And they have sons and daughters. They have to marry them off eventually and then their grandchildren come and then the families all the time are busy making peace with each other. With *mechutanim* you also have to get along.

It's work. But it's the best type of work because it's the great achievement of character. They have perfected themselves with years of toiling, years of restraining themselves, of keeping their tempers, of being patient. And it's so great that the place where it happens becomes a place of holiness – like Shabbos, like the Mikdash, it becomes a place of an especial presence of the Shechinah.

Because of the perfection of character that they both achieve, the area between the four walls of their home, their little humble abode, becomes a place of intense *kedushah* because the Shechinah dwells there with an intensity unmatched anywhere else.

Part III. National Unity

The Great Trumpet

Before we conclude, I'll tell you something else that might surprise you: This *shleimus* that you achieve in your home is what prepares you for *Yemos Hamoshiach*. People always ask that question – what can we do to bring Moshiach, to prepare for that time of *הַמְּחִיזָר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן*, when the Shechinah will return once again to Eretz Yisroel? And if you listen carefully, you'll hear the answer now.

In *Shemoneh Esrei* we say *תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵירוּתֵנוּ*. We're asking Hakadosh Baruch Hu to blow on a 'great trumpet' for our freedom; a 'great trumpet' means that it's for the world. We are asking that He

should make a big announcement so that the nations of the world should hear that the Am Yisroel are now free, that we can go as we wish and nobody can restrain us. It will be a warning to the nations: "Nobody should interfere. My children are going home now."

And then finally will be fulfilled *וְקִבְצֵנוּ יְחָד מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפֹת הָאָרֶץ*. That's what we're looking forward to: 'Collect us together from the four corners of the earth.' A great day in the history of the world! From all corners of the earth we'll come streaming back to Eretz Yisroel.

The Yachad Requirement

Now when you say *וְקִבְצֵנוּ* it means to 'collect us'; we want Hashem to gather us. So it should say *וְקִבְצֵנוּ מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפֹת הָאָרֶץ* – 'Gather us from the four corners of the world.' What's this word *yachad*, together? It's superfluous. If He's going to gather us, then it's going to be "together". How else could it be?

But it's not superfluous; not at all. Because when we talk about the great time of *הַמְּחִיזָר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן*, of the Shechinah coming back with us to Eretz Yisroel, we have to know that *yachad*, that's a requirement. It's only when the Am Yisroel comes together with a real *achdus* that's when Hakadosh Baruch Hu is ready to bring back His Shechinah to Tzion. *Yachad* is not superfluous at all – it's an important condition.

Now, I understand that today this word, *achdus*, togetherness, is bandied around. But it's all wrong; it's not understood. Like some Reform rabbis and Conservative rabbis – and I'm afraid modern orthodox rabbis too – they like to tell their congregations when they come together, "It's togetherness that counts." That's a word that they all like; *achdus*, togetherness. So they're sitting together, the ladies and the men, and they're munching; they're eating together at a synagogue supper – there's no *mechitzah* of course – and they're enjoying themselves. "It's togetherness that counts."

From the Four Corners

No, no. All that is just talk. When we say *yachad*, we're talking about *shleimus hamiddos*. And that has nothing to do with the *achdus* of synagogue dinners. Because when we're gathered together it's going to be *מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ*, *from the four corners of the world*. Jews will come from far eastern countries. They'll come from South Africa. They'll come from Russia and Australia. Maybe from India they'll also come.

There's going to be the Lubavitcher and the Satmerer and the Bobover there; the Poilishe Jews and the Hungarian Jews and German Jews and Litvishe Jews. And then there's Sefardim too. And Sefardim are not all one; there are Sefardim from Syria and Sefardim from Egypt and Sefardim from Teiman and from Persia – all kinds of Sefardim. And they all have their own *minhagim*.

All kinds of yeshivah people too. There's Lakewood, and Chaim Berlin and Mirrer Yeshiva and Telz; all kinds. All kinds of people! Don't think they're all the same – each one has his own ways. In this yeshivah they don't say "בְּרוּךְ ה' לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן" by Maariv and in that yeshivah they do.

Chasunah Arguments

Did you ever see the yeshivos come together at a *chasunah*? There's an argument. They're *davening* Maariv before the *chuppah* so someone goes up to *daven*, to be the *shatz*.

Should he say *בְּרוּךְ ה' לְעוֹלָם* or not?

"I'm a Chaim Berliner, I can't say it."

"But the rest of us are not, you have to say it!"

It's an argument, what should you do?

Now, when Moshiach comes, it will be worked out. Exactly how, it'll be up to the Sanhedrin that's going to be there to make a decision but it will be worked out. What *nussach* will they daven, *nussach Sefard* or *nussach Ashkenaz*? I think there will be a showdown there. The Sanhedrin will say that we should all come back to the original *nussach* but what's the original *nussach*, that's the problem. The

Anshei Knesses Hagedolah made only one *nussach*; they didn't make ten different *nuschaos*.

But one way or another we'll come back to the original *nussach*; everybody will find out that he's making some mistakes and we're going to come back to one *nussach* together. And then *בְּיוֹם הַהוּא* אָחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אָחָד יִהְיֶה ה' – Everyone will call out to the One Hashem, with the same language, the same *nussach* of *tefillah*.

And so *minhagim*, *halachos*, it'll be arranged. It will be worked out satisfactorily. But there's something else, a bigger problem, something that the Sanhedrin won't be able to do for you.

Same Old World

Now pay attention. There's a *machlokes* in the Gemara about what will happen in the time of Moshiach, what it's going to look like. So one opinion is that it's going to be a supernatural existence; not what we are accustomed to today but an entirely different kind of existence.

I won't go into that, however, because the other opinion is what we follow: *עוֹלָם כְּמִנְהַגוֹ נִוְהֵג* – *the world will be the same as today*. It will be a natural existence just like it is right now. You will have to eat to remain alive. You'll have to go to sleep in order to be healthy. You'll marry and have children. You'll have neighbors too. It will be a natural existence; the only difference will be that we will be *pottur* from *shibud malchiyus*. The nations will realize our superiority and we won't be subject to the nations anymore; otherwise it will be like today. That's what the Rambam follows and that's the consensus opinion of the Chachmei HaTorah: *עוֹלָם כְּמִנְהַגוֹ נִוְהֵג* – *the world will continue as is*.

Same Old Problems

And that's not really such good news because when you come together in Yerushalayim with Moshiach you'll be taking along with you all of the things that make trouble for us today.

You know, people will still have cars. And people will have driveways. You want to park your car, your neighbor wants to park his car. It will be a question.

Am I blocking the driveway too much or are you just being too stingy?

There'll be husbands and wives. Women are not going to have the same interests as men just because Moshiach came. Your wife will still talk too much and your husband will be mean sometimes. עולם means that there will be friction sometimes.

There will also be tenants and landlords in the days of Moshiach. You'll have neighbors still. Your neighbor's little boy might break your window with his ball and you'll have to deal with the father. He'll say he's not *chayav* and you'll say yes. And you'll have to get along with him. And there will be bosses and employees and neighbors – all kinds of problems like today.

The Yachad Solution

Now, how is it that we'll be *zocheh* to the Shechinah then? How will we merit that the Presence of Hashem will return with us?

The answer is by means of *yachad*. The unity of our nation, the perfection of character that each individual will achieve in order to get along with everyone, is what will make the Shechinah rest by us in a way not before in our history.

I told you once already that the *sefer Derech Hashem* says that. He's talking there about Mattan Torah and he quotes the *possuk* says וַיִּחַן בְּגֵר הָהָר – Yisroel encamped in front of the mountain. And the *Chachomim* note that *vayichan* is singular – *vayichan* not *vayachanu*; 'he encamped', not 'they encamped' – and they say that it means וַיִּחַן כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד – they were all like one person. And because they were all united like one person, the *Derech Hashem* says, that's why וַיִּירָד ה' עַל הָר סִינִי; that's why they merited that Hashem came down to give them the Torah.

Finally Getting Together

It's a remarkable statement. When the whole *Klal Yisroel* is together – not only physically but they actually get along with each other; they bend their will to each other's idiosyncrasies and quirks

of character – that's what brings the Shechinah down.

And therefore that's going to be a requirement for those great days. Our big job is going to be to become *yachad*. "I'm not interested only in וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יְהוָה מִכָּל קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ, in gathering you from the four corners of the earth " Hashem says. "I want it to be וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יְהוָה. I want you to be gathered together and I'm not going to rest the Shechinah on you unless it's *yachad*."

When we're able to get along with each other despite all of our differences, then we'll have the Shechinah again. For the Shechinah to be with us with the intensity we want for that time in history we're going to need to be *yachad*.

No Miracle Will Help

Now, don't think it's going to happen all of a sudden; it won't happen just by fiat, a command of Hashem, that you'll be *yachad*. In order to be ready for the *geulah* it's necessary for us to practice up right now. We have to rehearse beforehand, because who knows? אֲחֻזָּה לוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂבִיבָא. Every day he might come; it could be tomorrow, so we have to practice up today.

And that's why when we say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יְהוָה" every day in our *tefillos*, He says, "Well, are you ready? As much as you can do, you should do yourselves now. Rehearse for it now because when the time comes and I'll bring you all together, what's going to happen? It'll be עולם כְּמִנְהֵגוֹ and you'll be surprised. I won't give you good character by means of a miracle. And therefore, *b'yachad* is your job to prepare."

It Starts At Home

It doesn't mean just to say words 'Achdus,' 'yachad.' To say "I'm *yachad* with the Jews in Australia or in Tel-Aviv," that's easy to say from your home in Brooklyn. It's good to say but it has nothing to do with the *shleimus hamiddos* that's needed for getting along perfectly with the ones you come in contact with, the ones who get on your nerves.

You have to become accustomed to other people's *natures*; that's the real trick of *yachad* because Hakadosh Baruch Hu made it that way, that no two human beings have the same nature. And therefore, that's an important function of our lives – to be aware of the function of *yachad*!

Brothers have to learn to get along. Daughters-in-laws with their mothers-in-law. *Mechutanim* with each other. Neighbors and landlords and tenants and bosses.

And so if you're looking to prepare for the *geulah* you should understand that it's the perfection of character in getting along with everyone which will make us ready for and worthy of those great days of *hashraas ha'Shechinah*.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Vekabitzeinu Yachad

When Jews get together and reconcile, it creates a moment of sanctity because perfection of character is a *kedushah*. Three times every day we ask Hashem to gather us 'together' [and take us to Eretz Yisroel]. And that's a reminder for us about one of our most important functions in this world: to achieve the perfection of character that '*yachad*' requires. The *yachad* with our spouses, our families, our friends, our neighbors – even with the most difficult ones. This week, every time I say this *brachah* in Shemoneh Esrei, I will *bli neder* stop for thirty seconds and think about how I can best apply this lesson in my own life, in my dealings with all of my fellow Jews.

— This week's booklet is based on tapes: —

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How can a husband keep his wife happy if he cannot afford to buy her expensive things?



And the answer is diamonds don't make anybody happy. It's diamond *words* that matter! If a man makes it a career to be an actor and to always encourage his wife, that's how he'll make his wife happy. When she makes supper, he has to encourage her. Whatever she does, he has to praise her. *קמו בנייה ויאשרוה בעלה ויהללה* – That's what it says in Mishlei when it describes the Woman of Valor. Her husband and her children arise and praise her enthusiastically.

Encouragement – that's what everybody wants. There's nobody in the world who doesn't have a craving for encouragement. And why should a housewife be different? And so, the Jewish wife can be made happy even without any gifts at all.

Of course, if her husband remembers from time to time to buy her small inexpensive gifts, it's proper to do that; but he could always make the house a place of happiness no matter what.

Poor people can be just as happy as rich people. That's a truism that you don't need to hear from me. If a husband and wife live with wisdom and kindness, if they live with a certain affection and self respect, then they can live a happy life that cannot be bought by any money.

TAPE # 536 (January 1985)

Toras Avigdor : Unity and Sanctity