



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

The Seventh Wing

By HaRav Eli Mansour (shiur E14)

Singing זמירות is not just for those with good voices or nothing else to do. It is a focal part of the Avodah of שבת.

שבת=שירה בשבת תענוג

Many people are familiar with the acronym of שבת as שינה בשבת תענוג which they translate as sleep. Unfortunately, rest on שבת can come at the expense of שבת. The person is not aware of שבת, having 'disappeared' into sleep.

One of the lesser-known aspects of עונג שבת is שירה, singing praises to Hashem. Every community in the world has made sure that their tunes and Nigunim are sung and make their way to the next generation.

Song learned from a Pasuk

The Sefer Chasidim¹ draws a surprising parallel. The Pasuk says ויברך אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת but it is not clear what ברכה was given to שבת. The ספר חסידים learns that with whatever curses שבת was cursed, Hashem blessed the שבת. For example, שבת was cursed the day of his birth with darkness and Hashem blessed שבת with אור. And one of his curses was אל תבוא רגל בך – let there not be song (on that day). Hence, we learn that Hashem blessed שבת with song – מכאן שיש לו לרנן – בשבת בשירות ותשבחות.

The angels would come to listen, until...

The פלא יועץ² describes how the angels would come to join the Shabbat table and listen to the זמירות of the saintly נגידה ז"ל ר' ישראל. They suddenly departed when, owing to the great heat, ר' ישראל rolled up his sleeve and removed his hat.

The level of reverence that is due to the Shabbat table and to the זמירות cannot be overstated.

The six wings

The Gemara³ cites the Pasuk⁴ מִכִּנְף הָאֶרֶץ – we heard songs from the corners (or wings) of the Earth... תוספות comments⁵ that the angels (חיות) have six

wings and each כנף generates the energy for the songs and praises to Hashem for one day. That provides זמירות ותשבחות for the weekdays. When שבת comes, the חיות turn to Hashem and ask, so to speak, for a seventh wing with which they can sing His praise on שבת. Hashem responds that the seventh wing does not come from the חיות but from the songs of בני ישראל. Hence the Pasuk proclaims that מִכִּנְף הָאֶרֶץ זמירות שמענו – the praises and songs were heard from the 'wings' of the Earth. כלל ישראל has a solo on שבת; the People are the seventh wing. This is amplified by the

*The angels
do not sing
on שבת.
They do not
have a wing
for that.*

¹ ספר חסידים (מרגליות) סימן אלף קמ"ז

² פלא יועץ ערך אכילה ושתייה

³ סנהדרין לז:

⁴ ישעיהו כד: טז

⁵ סנהדרין שם ד"ה מכנף



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Pasuk⁶ – עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתִי יספרו... I created this nation to sing My praises... The word 'זו' hints at this special privilege given to ישראל on שבת. The 'ז' and the 'ו' alludes to the fact that we not only sing for 'ו' six days, but we also sing on the 'ז', in the Seventh, שבת, and this is our special role.

שבת The one time the angels sang on

The Midrash refers to the angels singing Hashem's praises on the first שבת of Creation. Based on what we have just learned, however, the angels do not sing on שבת. They do not have a wing for that.

The answer is that for that very first שבת the angels *did* have a wing for שבת. They were created on יום שני! So, for that first week, and only for that first week, they had a wing available for שבת.

We have the responsibility

What we have learned places a great responsibility on our shoulders. There are no

angels as 'back up,' nobody else to rely on. The calling to praise Hashem on שבת is ours alone.

This is hinted at in one of the פסוקים in which שבת is given instructions regarding שבת. The Pasuk⁷ reads אַךְ אֵת שַׁבָּתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ כִּי אוֹת הוּא... בִּינֵי וּבִינֵיכֶם לְדַרְתֵּיכֶם לְדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי ה' מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם.

The word אַךְ is a limiter; it teaches that something is being excluded. The exclusion can refer to the fact that the angels are excluded from the שירה of שבת. That is because they are missing a wing – the word אַךְ can be the abbreviation of אֶחָד – the one wing that the angels are missing whose role we fill.

Our role, continues the Pasuk, is an אוֹת, a sign for us to forever know that Hashem has sanctified us.

Not a talent show

It does not matter if you do not have a great voice. Singing the praise of Hashem is not a talent show. It is an expression of the heart and soul, of one's love and emotion. Hence, it is fitting to say that שבת=שירה בשבת תענוג.

Takeaway: I will consider the significance of singing praise to Hashem on שבת.

⁶ ישעיהו מג: כא

⁷ שמות לא: יג