



was, he surely learned Torah lishmoh, to please only Hashem, so how could he have declared otherwise?

Let us begin by quoting the gemorah (Sotah 17.): "דריש רבי עקיבא, איש ואשה זכו שכינה ביניהן, לא זכו אוכלתן" Rabbi Akiva expounded, if a man and a woman are meritorious, the Divine Presence dwells among them, if they are not, they are consumed by fire. We can explain the meaning of Rabbi Akiva's teaching based on what we've learned (Kiddushin 30:): "תנו רבנן, שלשה שותפין הן ה' אלוהים, האב והאם והקב"ה אביו ואמו". The Rabbis taught, three partners form a human being-- the Almighty, his father and his mother. Rashi clarifies: his parents contribute the body, while the Almighty fills it with a soul. This coincides beautifully with another teaching in the gemorah (ibid.):

"תנו רבנן נאמר כבוד את אביך ואת אמך, ונאמר כבוד את ה' מהונוך, השהו הכתוב כבוד אב ואם לכבוד המקום, נאמר איש אמו ואביו תיראו, ונאמר את ה' אלהיך תירא ואותו תעבוד, השהו הכתוב מוראת אב ואם למוראת המקום". The scriptures equate one's parents with the Almighty with regard to respect and reverence.

We've learned a fact that is, seemingly, beyond human comprehension—the Almighty, Himself, is an equal partner, as it were, with a man and his wife in building a Jewish home. Just as He participates in all human births by providing the living soul, He also participates in all aspects of their lives including their financial support, their upbringing and their education.

Yet, we must remember that the Almighty designated Himself merely as a “partner,” to impress upon us that He demands the parents contribute their due shares to this partnership. If they fulfill their obligation, Hashem, blessed be He, will fulfill His obligation and assist them to successfully raise their children to live a life of Torah, holy matrimony and good deeds.

### To Remember the Divine Partner Not Only When One Requires Assistance

If all Jewish parents were cognizant, each and every step along the way of the parenting process, of Hashem's generous partnership, they would realize tremendous success in their efforts to support their children and raise them לחופה ולמעשים טובים in good physical and spiritual health. The sad fact, however, is that the yeitzer horah is very good at making parents forget this amazing fact; thus, most parents are oblivious to this divine kindness.

It is despicable that a parent remembers his divine partner only in times of calamity; then, he turns to Hashem for assistance. It is analogous, to someone taking on a business associate. So long as the business is profitable, he forgets to allot the associate his fair share; however, as soon as he faces financial difficulty, he doesn't hesitate to turn to him for financial assistance and investment capital. Surely, the partner will scoff at his request and send him on his way empty-handed. Similarly, if we don't include Hashem as an equal partner in our daily, household matters, and don't conduct our household affairs in accordance with Torah values and reverence, how will we dare turn to Him for assistance in times of dire necessity, chas v'shalom?

This is why Dovid hamelech, our sweet psalmist, proclaims (Tehillim 16,8): "שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד", ie I didn't call upon Hashem only in times of need, but I was cognizant of His Presence each and every moment. This was also the Romah's intention when he chose to begin his remarks in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 1,1) with the following:

"שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד, הוא כלל גדול בתורה ובמעלות הצדיקים אשר הולכים לפני האלקים, כי אין ישיבת האדם ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לבדו בביתו, כישיבתו ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לפני מלך גדול, ולא דבורו והרחבת פיו כרצונו והוא עם אנשי ביתו וקרוביו, כדבורו במושב המלך.

כל שכן כשישים האדם אל לבו, שהמלך הגדול הקב"ה אשר מלוא כל הארץ כבודו עומד עליו ורואה במעשיו, כמו שנאמר אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאום ה', מיד יגיע אליו היראה וההכנעה בפחד השי"ת ובושתו ממנו תמיד".

Simply put, he is advising us to be aware of Hashem's presence at all times and in all situations. This is the way of tzaddikim and will benefit us profoundly.

### His Servants Sit Inside While He Is Outside Protecting Them

The gemorah (Avodah Zarah 11.) recounts a marvelous tale about Onkelos. His conversion angered the Caesar which prompted him to send a Roman, military regiment to apprehend Onkelos. When the first regiment arrived, Onkelos enticed them with divrei Torah and they converted. The Caesar sent a second regiment, but warned them not to converse with Onkelos. When they met up with Onkelos, he skillfully engaged them in mundane conversation; they, too, converted. The Caesar sent a third regiment, and advised them not to speak with him at all.

They apprehended him and as they were exiting his house, he touched the mezuzah. The soldiers were curious and inquired about the mezuzah. He explained: "מנהגו של עולם, מלך בשר, דם יושב מבפנים ועבדיו משמרים אותו מבחוץ, ואילו הקב"ה עבדיו מבפנים והוא משמרן מבחוץ, שנאמר ה' ישמר" - "The way of the world is that a human king sits indoors, while his servants stand guard outside; not so with the Almighty—his servants sit inside, while he stands guard outside. . . Immediately, they, too, all converted.

In the "Drosches Chasam Sofer," he explains that the mitzvah of the mezuzah reminds us of the destruction of the Temple. Since the churban, Hashem stands guard outside, while his servants sit inside; while the Beis Homikdash was extant Hashem sat inside in the kodosh hokodashim, while the kohanim and leviim served watch outside. Here are his own, holy words:

"הנה ענין מזוזה עבדיו יושבים בפנים והוא משמרם מבחוץ, הענין בזה, כשעושים רצונו הרי הקב"ה בחינת מלך יושב בפנים בדביר קדשו הארון והלוחות וכו', ומשרתיו סובבים מבחוץ (מדות פ"א מ"א) בכ"ד מקומות הכהנים והלויים שומרים בבית המקדש. אמנם כשאינם עושים רצונו ח"ו ורק נשארה האמונה, וח"ו הקב"ה מבחוץ (ישעיה נז ח) אחר הדלת והמזוזה שמת זכרונו, זה רמז ב' פרשיות אמונה שבמזוזה שקובעים בחוץ על הדלת, מכל מקום הוא יתברך שמו שומר אותם, (ויקרא כו מד) ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אויביהם וגו' אני ה' אלקיהם".

### It Is Prohibited to Leave the Almighty Outside by the Door

Always remember, my dear friends, the Almighty does not wish to stand outside on the doorstep like a beggar; he longs to enter and come inside the Jew's home. This is why kneset Yisroel says (Shir Hashirim 5,2): "קול דודי דופק פתחי לי", ie Hashem knocks on our doors and pleads not to be left outside by the mezuzah; he wants us to open our doors and allow the holy Presence inside, in the sense of "איש ואשה זכו שכינה ביניהן".

In order for the Almighty to desire, as it were, to rest His Presence within our homes, however, we must insure that our homes are sanctuaries worthy of the shechinah. The man and woman must be diligent both to avoid negative influences and to institute positive practices inside their homes. On the one hand, the home should be devoid of items contradictory to יראת שמים; on the other hand, it should echo with the sounds of Torah. The gemorah (Berachos 6.) states that even if one sits alone involved in Torah study, the shechinah is with him. This seems to be the meaning of the gemorah (Shabbos 31.):

"כל אדם שיש בו תורה ואין בו יראת שמים, דומה לגזבר שמסרו לו מפתחות הפנימיות ומפתחות החיצונות לא מסרו לו, בהי עייל, מכריז רבי ינאי, חבל על דלית ליה דרתא ותרעא לדרתא עביד".

If one learns Torah without yiros shomayim, he is compared to a treasurer who has been given the inner keys but not the outer keys. The reference here is to one's front door keys. The Rabbis are teaching us that Torah and yiros shomayim go hand in hand. Learning Torah without yiros shomayim is comparable to having an apartment without the key to open the front door. The result is that we are leaving the Almighty standing outside on the doorstep by the mezuzah.

### He Wishes to Have a Dwelling Down Below

Let's examine this concept in the light of the Midrash Tanchuma (Nasso 16):

"בשעה שברא הקב"ה את העולם, נתאוה שיהא לו דירה בתחתונים כמו שיש בעליונים, ברא את האדם וצוה אותו ואמר לו (בראשית ב יז), מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו, ועבר על צווי, אמר ליה הקב"ה, כך הייתי מתאוה שי הא לי דירה בתחתונים כמו שיש לי בעליונים, ודבר אחד צויתי אותך ולא שמרת אותו, מיד סילק הקב"ה שכינתו לרקיע הראשון".

From the moment of creation, Hashem's desire was to have a dwelling below among us. Nevertheless, due to the sin involving the eitz hadaas, He removed His Presence from this world. Even though He bestowed His Presence in the Beis Homikdash, as it is written (Shemos 25,8):

"--that was only temporary. Once the Beis Homikdash was destroyed, due to our numerous transgressions, the shechinah has been exiled from place to place without a place to rest, as we've learned (Megilah 29.):

"תניא רבי שמעון בן יוחי אומר, בוא וראה כמה חביבין ישראל לפני הקב"ה, שבכל מקום שגלו שכינה עמהן, גלו למצרים שכינה עמהן... גלו לבבל שכינה עמהן".

A similar allusion is found in the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 1:): the possuk (Bereishis 8,9) reads "ולא" "The dove refers to the shechinah that is unable to find a resting place while in exile."

Yet, even in exile, the Almighty desires to dwell within Jewish homes in keeping with "איש ואשה". He is pleading with us-- "קול דודי דופק פתחי לי" – open your doors, allow Me in; don't leave Me outside on the doorstep standing watch over you by your mezuzah, while you remain inside. In this regard, the Tikunei Zohar states (Intro. 1:): "אין חסיד אלא המתחסד עם קונו". The only true chossid is one who is benevolent toward his Creator and provides Him with a proper dwelling.

This suggests a beautiful interpretation of the berochah "שהשמחה במעונו" which is recited during the wedding ceremony. The chossen and kallah who plan to build a Jewish home founded on the principles of Torah and yiroh, have the tremendous joy of knowing that they are causing the Almighty tremendous joy—by providing a dwelling for His Presence even in golus. This is what the Almighty has longed for since the very beginning: "נתאוה שיהא לו דירה". The berochah "שהשמחה במעונו" expresses the fact that the true simchah at a wedding, comes from the fulfillment of Hokadosh Boruch Hu's wish.

How can lowly creatures of flesh and blood, who are here one day and gone the next, brazenly turn a deaf ear to the knocking on our doors? Afterward, how can we unashamedly daven the words "שמע קולנו ה' אלקינו חוס ורחם עלינו" asking Hashem to heed our pleas when we don't heed His? Who can be so ungrateful toward He Who has provided us with everything, by not welcoming Him into our homes and denying His simple request "שיהא לו דירה בתחתונים כמו שיש"? "בעליונים"?

### Rav Sheshes Stood by the Mezuzah to Speak with the Almighty

We've now shed light on Rav Sheshes' exemplary behavior. We need only introduce one important principle from our poskim: the usual, generic rental agreement is for thirty days. Sources for this principle are found in Bava Metziah 101: and Rosh Hashanah7:. This explains why Rav Sheshes would review his Torah studies every thirty days; he wished to renew his monthly lease and insure that the shechinah would remain inside his home.

Therefore, at the conclusion of every thirty day period of learning, he would lean on the doorpost, near the mezuzah where Hashem was standing guard over the house's inhabitants, and declare:

"לך קראי, לך תנאי", "my soul is gladdened, my soul is gladdened"; "חדאי נפשאי חדאי נפשאי", everything I have learned and studied is only in your honor; in the merit of my Torah study, you don't need to stand outside; bestow Your Presence within our home. It gladdens my soul to fulfill Hokadosh Boruch Hu's wish to dwell among us down below. This is the true meaning of "שהשמחה במעונו".