



*Please note that this is a transcript of the recordings rather than an essay. May our learning be a zechus for the safety of acheinu b'nei Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael and help to protect all those engaged in the war against terror. May the coming year be filled with *ישועות*, *ברכות* and *נחמות* for you, your family and our people and our land.*

Sefer Shir Hashirim is sponsored by Helen and Moshe Sassover and family in the memory of their beloved father and grandfather Ted Orden (Mordechai ben Ephraim v'Miriam Golda) in commemoration of his 10th yahrzeit. His family is forever grateful for his devotion to family, vision, courage and optimism. May the merit of our collective learning elevate his neshama and bring unity and peace to klal Yisrael.

Shir Hashirim 7 Rebbetzin Rebecca Belizon

Welcome to Torat Imecha Nach Yomi with the OU Women's Initiative. My name is Rebecca Belizon, and today we'll be learning *שיר השירים פרק ז'*. Most of the פרק is Hashem's words to *כנסת ישראל*. He reveals to her how beloved she is in His eyes, and because of this, He promises her that He will bring the *גאולה*.

שובי שובי השולמית, turn back, turn back, perfect one. *שובי שובי*, turn back, turn back, *ונחזה בך*, that we may observe you. *כנסת ישראל* continues and says, *הקב"ה* elevated me and made me important, so much so that the *מלאכי השרת* ask to see my greatness. It says *שובי* four times, which parallels the four exiles.

When we return from these four exiles, then the angels will observe us, *ונחזה בך*. The angels ask one another, *מה תחזו בשולמית*? Why do you want to see *כנסת ישראל*? How do you know she is so great and important? The ones among them that know the answer, *כמחולת המחנים*. We saw the value and importance of *כנסת ישראל* when the *נס* of *יום סוף* occurred.

surrounded בני ישראל like a circle, *מחולה*, and the *שכינה* was in the middle, and each one was able to point with his finger *זה קלי*, this is my G-d. That was how close they were to *ה'* at that time.

פסוק ב'. In response to בני ישראל's request about the coming of the גאולה, ה' asks her not to fear because she is still beloved in His eyes and He will bring the גאולה.

מה יפו פעמך בנעלים בת נדיב, how fair were your feet in sandals, O daughter of nobles. ה' praises בני ישראל and says that they have a זכות that nevertheless will bring the גאולה.

They have a special יופי, a beauty. The תלמידי חכמים, they are beautiful. The ones that show them the right path, to the point that even the places that are נעול, that are locked or closed, they open for them. Sometimes a person is in a situation that he can't discern between good and bad, and the truth is locked from him. By asking גדולים, by asking תלמידי חכמים, the truth is unlocked and they are guided on the right path. It is not only the revealed leaders that bring כלל ישראל to שלמות by showing them how to act in all situations, but even the hidden צדיקים. The חמוקי ירכיך, כמו חלאים מעשה ידי אמן, are like jewels, the work of a craftsman. Their merit protects us and brings us שלמות.

It's so important to stop and reflect on this special praise of כלל ישראל. ה' praises כלל ישראל for these special people whose view of the world is shaped by their deep commitment and involvement in Torah learning. And when we ask for guidance, when we are unsure what the proper Torah path or choice is, that to ה' is praiseworthy and most beautiful.

פסוק ג'- שררך אגן הסהר אל יחסר המזג.

Your navel is like a round bowl, which lacks not for mixed wine. In the future, even the שררך, the רשעים, will have a תיקון and will complete כלל ישראל's beauty. They will mix with the צדיקים like water mixes with wine.

בטנך ערמת חטים סוגה בשושנים. Your stomach is like a heap of wheat, hedged about with roses. And your children, the פרי בטנך, the fruit of your womb, are like wheat, cleared from chaff and straw, because they are educated by and guided by the holiness of the צדיקים who are referred to as roses.

פסוק ד'. And through these זכיות, you will merit leaders. שני שדיך, two breasts, like משה and אהרן, who nursed and took care of כלל ישראל.

פסוק ה'. The תלמידי חכמים who are referred to as צוארך, your neck, because everything rests on the neck, they are like מגדל השן, an ivory tower, which doesn't bend or bow to other nations. They stand straight and erect. They, the עיניך, the תלמידי חכמים, they influence and give over Torah like a flowing pool, a ברכה. These צדיקים are equal to and in importance like the whole world, בחשבון על שער בת רבים. And therefore, when there is anger before Me, אפך, I deal with them like I did with the מגדל, with the בית המקדש. Meaning, I took My anger out on the בית המקדש and destroyed it.

And so now that there is no בית המקדש, צופה פני דמשק, the anger looks towards דמשק, towards the תלמידי חכמים. דמשק is an acronym for, דולה ומשקה מתורת רבו לאחרים, a person who draws out the Torah from his Rebbe and gives it over to others. When these תלמידי חכמים are taken, it acts as an atonement for the generation. ה' continues in פסוק ו' to strengthen us not to give up on the גאולה because ראשך, your head, the מלך המשיח is

ready to come immediately, but there is something preventing him, דלת ראשך, And that is, ארגמן, your sins that are red like ארגמן.

Nevertheless, מלך אסור ברהטים. Your King is bound in the ברהטים. I'm still bound to you because of the צדיקים, the ברהטים, those who are swift to run before Me, like a servant to perform My will. So don't despair about the coming of the גאולה because in their merit, for sure, the time of the גאולה will come.

צ' פסוק ז' אהבה בתענוגים, מה יפית ומה נעמת - פסוק ז' how beautiful and how pleasant will it be if the love comes, as a delight. Meaning, how pleasant and wonderful will it be if משיח comes because you fixed your ways and you won't need to suffer.

ח' פסוק ח' But even if your righteousness is not where it needs to be, your קומה, your stature, is that of a תמר, a tree which only gives fruit after 70 years, and your leaders, your שדייך, are like clusters, meaning they are able to be משפיע, to give over, but only minimally.

ט' פסוק ט' Nevertheless, even if you are not so righteous, אעלה בתמר, I will ascend on the palm tree. I will rest my head on שכינה, once asked his רבי ארי, the ארי, what merit his generation has in comparison to the earlier generations. How could they possibly have merits when they are almost nothing like those who came before them. The ארי answered that since now the סטרא אחרא, the power for bad is so strong, something small which we do in our generation is just as important before ה' as doing a lot in the previous generations.

This is a great חיזוק that any effort or love we put into even a small מצוה is valued in ה' eyes, and therefore he will bring the גאולה, as ה' says, אעלה בתמר. I will go up on the palm tree, even though it only gives fruit after 70 years, and perhaps is not as fruitful as maybe those before it. ה' continues: And not only that, in the time of the גאולה, I will grasp its branches. I will choose those who are not so worthy.

And your משפיעים, your leaders, כאשכולות הגפן, שדייך, will be like clusters of grapes. They will be full of juice and sweetness. They will bestow upon you abundance and influence, and the smell of your אף, your sins, will be like תפוחים, like apples, as they will be transformed into merits.

י' פסוק י' In the time of the גאולה, not only will the teachers give over תורה like clusters of grapes, כאשכולות הגפן, but the students will be able to receive that which was given over. חייך הטוב, your speech will be like good wine. They will understand what was taught and they will taste the sweetness of תורה like good wine, חייך הטוב. It will go to My beloved in the straight, ישר, right way, not like wine which intoxicates. Because of the power of the few מצוות you keep, I will raise you up to high places and you will not be damaged from the great wisdom I will reveal to you at that time.

פסוק י"א responds, רבונו של עולם, we know that You desire to cleave to us more than we desire to cleave to You, when really it should be the opposite, as the part desires to connect to the Whole. Even though אני לדודי, I am a piece of You and I am secondary to You, how great is Your kindness to us that it is the opposite. עלי תשוקתו, You desire us.

Therefore, בני ישראל says to ה'ה, לכה דודי, נצא השדה, come my beloved, let's go out to the field, just you and I, without the burden of the גלות. Please remove for us the burden of sustenance, the עול פרנסה, like when we left מצרים and we ate the מן, which looked ככפור, as the פסוק says, דק ככפור. And then we will be able to do everything you desire. כלל ישראל is telling ה'ה that the reason she doesn't yearn enough for the גאולה is because the burden of גלות hangs over her, and so we ask ה'ה to remove it so we can really desire the connection and work to strengthen it.

continues and says, if you free us from the burden of גלות, we will get up early to go to the כרמים, to the בית מדרש, and then נראה אם פרוחה הגפן, we will see the תלמידי חכמים flowering. The tender grapes will appear. תינוקות של בית רבן, the children will understand it and they will be clever. Even the רשעים who are compared to pomegranates will bloom. And then we will be able to bring out the love we have inside. את דודי לך שם אתן. There I will give my love to you. I will put the theory into practice because now it's hard because the burden of גלות hangs over me.

The baskets emit fragrance. These are the two baskets of figs, one good and one bad, in the prophecy of ירמיהו, representing different people and experiences in the exile. They started to give forth a good smell. They started to return and become better due to the יסורי הגלות, the suffering in exile. ועל פתחנו כל מגדים. And at our door are luscious fruit.

The good inside us, the luscious fruit is waiting at the door, ready to emerge. Just please begin to arouse me, to wake me up. חדשים גם ישנים, new and old. Those which חז"ל innovated, new things, and the old, the things which you wrote in your Torah. דודי צפנתי לך. My beloved, they are צפון בלבי. They are hidden in my heart right now, and I want to serve you with them. I want to properly follow the words of חז"ל and the words of Your Torah, but I can't serve You fully and with אמת, with truth, because of the suffering I'm experiencing, and the force of the יצר הרע.

And therefore, we continue in the next פרק to ask Hashem for a time when we can properly keep the מצוות.

שיר השירים in מדרש שלמה, the author of our ספר, and the other ספרים he wrote. The מדרש tells us that just as שלמה, שלמה's father was forgiven for his transgression, so too was שלמה. The מדרש continues, ולא עוד אלא ששרתה עליו רוח הקודש ואמר ג' ספרים: משלי וקהלת ושיר השירים, heavenly spirit rested upon him, and he wrote three books: קהלת, משלי, and שיר השירים. This needs explanation. What is the connection between שלמה being forgiven for his sins and the writing of these ספרים? According to the שבילי פנחס, through the ספרים, שלמה was rectifying his mistakes and giving over the lessons he learned as a result. It is with these three ספרים that שלמה was strengthening כלל ישראל to walk in the ways of Hashem and to cleave to him with simplicity, without trying to outsmart the reason or the purpose for the מצוות.

There are three special מצוות that are given to a king. שלמה המלך, being the wisest of all men, thought that their reasons did not apply to him and he would not be affected by not following them. These three ספרים come to strengthen us to go in the ways of Hashem, specifically in the places or realms where we may struggle. Ultimately, these ספרים come to remind us and enlighten us of the proper way to live and serve Hashem. The Torah tells a king, לא ירבה לו סוסים, not to amass too many horses, which are the instructions not to put too much השתדלות, too many efforts into doing things, not more than is necessary.

Man may think too many horses will ensure his victory in battle. To this שלמה writes משלי, where he instructs, סוס מוכן ליום מלחמה ולה' התשועה. A horse is ready for the day of war, but victory is Hashem's. A person needs to put in the proper effort, he needs to ready his horse for the battle, but not excessively, as real victory is in Hashem's hands, and therefore there is no need to accumulate too many horses.

להלת ספר קהלת corresponds to another לאו, that of מאד לו ירבה לא ירבה וזהב לא ירבה. A king should not amass too much gold or silver according to the desire to have and collect money and material possessions. To this, שלמה explains in קהלת that all of the קניני עולם הזה, the physical items a person can amass in this world, are הבל הבלים, they're vanity and pointless. The only currency that is really valuable is מצוות and יראת שמים. כי זה כל האדם - because this is the essence of man.

And finally, שיר השירים corresponds to the third לאו, and that is לא ירבה לו נשים. A king should not take too many wives. The desire for the male-female relationship is not meant to be expressed in many wives, but rather is an example and a conduit to understand the ideal relationship we are meant to have with the הקב"ה, the deep connection and closeness of a marriage, a passionate, dynamic, and loving relationship. שלמה המלך, the wisest of all men, is strengthening us in the belief that Hashem's instructions for us are what is ultimately best for us, and it is not for us to outsmart G-d. Though there are things that may distract us from our mission and focus in life, too much effort, the pursuit of money or pleasure, the relationship with Hashem, belief in Him, and following His מצוות are ultimately what will bring us to where we need to be.