

I. Our portion this morning contains one of the most beautiful blessings ever uttered; so beautiful that it was reserved for the Kohanim in Temple. Nowadays ^{outside of Israel} on 4 occasions during year the Kohanim pronounce that blessing in synagogue. And it is the traditional blessing which we repeat on every solemn occasion. $\text{וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יְשֻׁבָה}$.

II. Analysis shows a pertinent fact: $\text{וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יְשֻׁבָה}$ is primarily a generalized blessing. The key phrases in the benediction are such general, unspecific expressions as: "bless", "protect", "be gracious", "favor". That is why our Rabbis in their comments gave so many varied interpretations - some parts were understood to refer to economic prosperity, physical health or other modes of good fortune. ~~There~~ There is only one phrase in this lofty benediction which is specific, and so important that it had to be mentioned separately, and that is the last and crowning phrase: $\text{וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יְשֻׁבָה}$ - "May He grant you peace". Of all the virtues, of all great blessings, Peace is the greatest.

III. That is why our Rabbis regarded it as one of the three pillars of life - Truth, Peace & Justice. That is why when 2 Jews in any part of the world meet or depart from each other, their greeting is: Shalom - peace. That is why the ways of Torah are termed peaceful - $\text{וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יְשֻׁבָה}$. That is why the greatest & most exalted visions of the seers & prophets of Israel culminated in the picture of Peace.

VI

So that the blessing the Kohanim pronounce over those courteous & respectful enough to remain after Yitkor on the Holidays, the benediction *pid' p'lei*, is not only a pious wish for a relaxation of international tension, but a direct and intimate allusion to *u'z pid'*, to one's domestic life, the peace between husband & wife. There is no limit to the good that flows from the blessing of true *u'z pid'*. And there is no end to the varied curses that result from a home broken and a family cut off because *pid'* is missing. Rabbis, psychiatrists, marriage counsellors, family doctors - anyone who has to do with domestic problems on a large scale - will tell you of the sordid & morbid effects of a broken home: The warped personalities & mental anguish of the children; the social rootlessness, ^{pathological} ~~behavioral~~ unhappiness and religious instability of the couple involved; the wounds, the scars, the festering sores of the relatives and close friends. *u'z pid'*, indeed, is the greatest blessing, and the lack of it is the greatest curse.

VII

Well, what can be done to ensure this greatest of all blessings, this *duvar* of *pid' u'z pid'*; *u'z pid'*, domestic peace & bliss? There is no magical solution. There is no hourglass that we can perform to make sure it's there. *u'z pid'* depends on the two components, the two parties, the husband & the wife. One writer has ~~given us~~ expressed this insight in the following well-put paragraph: "Success in marriage is much more than finding the right person; ~~it~~ it is also a matter of being the right person. Nor is it marriage that fails, it's people that fail. all marriage does is to show people up."

Those are words that ring true. People who are selfish, insecure, insecure, dishonest, ~~suck~~^{soak} themselves unstable, cannot expect to build a family life which is stable & decent & peaceful. This idea is beautifully hinted at in the Hebrew idiom for making peace between two people, or between husband & wife. We speak - as in our early morning prayers - of *וְיָבִיט אֱלֹהִים עַל הַשָּׁלוֹם* or *וְיָבִיט אֱלֹהִים עַל הַשָּׁלוֹם*. Literally, that means "bringing" peace between two people. "Bringing", & not "making" - for peace cannot be created *ex nihilo*, cannot be made out of thin air. Only if the two people involved have in their own characters & personalities the elements of decency & selflessness & humility & love & sympathy, can these elements be "brought out" & ~~made into~~^{compounded} *שָׁלוֹם*. The elements of *שָׁלוֹם* have to be there in the individuals, and the peacemaker's job is not to "make" but to "bring" that peace from within each to each other. If that inner peacefulness is lacking, there is no material for *שָׁלוֹם*, nothing to bring, and true peace, true *שָׁלוֹם*, is well-nigh impossible.

Think of those broken homes, those families where spite & quarreling & unhappiness is the rule. If these individuals themselves are or can be the right kind of people, *שָׁלוֹם* can be brought out. Otherwise, the outlook is bleak & the situation tragic. So that the best way to ensure *שָׁלוֹם*, domestic peace & happiness, is for each partner to strive, by & for himself or herself, to be a better person.

X Philo traces the origin of war, the ~~the~~ disruption of peace to a source we would not otherwise designate as such. War originates, he maintains, in idolatry - in polytheism, the belief in many gods. If you analyze the mythologies of the various idolatrous cultures of antiquity, you find that their gods are constantly at war with each other. The gods of the pagans are constantly envious, befriending, betraying, spying and killing. When a people's belief, states Philo, reflects constant war, their own designs + way of life can never be peaceful. Furthermore, when a man has many gods, they make many conflicting demands upon him, and he can never be at peace within himself. If the god of nations serve many gods, if they have allegiances + loyalties to different + sundry ideals + values, they too have no peace. As long as Russia worships Marx and America worships Money and Judia worships neutrality + Yugoslavia worships Tito, there can be no peace. That is why the prophets' vision of peace in the days of Messiah is so bound up with the ultimate acceptance by all mankind of One G-d, who is King above all earthly potentates. ~~(111) P112(11)~~
 3 N(111) P113 (11) P112, (111) L for 2(NP)3 (11).
 when all the world will give first choice to One G-d, & accept the principles of ethics + morality, then will their affairs be conducted peaceably + peacefully.

XI

and does not the same hold true for ... 112 P18?
 where husbands wife each bend the knee to different gods,
 their conflicting demands & divided loyalties break up
 the home. Just look at that pantheon, that amazing
 array of gods, that stakes its claim on the souls of men
 & women. There is the god of Dollars, the god of Amusement,
 the god of social climbing up-to-dateness, the god of
 busyness, the god of entertainment, the god of adjustment
 & acceptability. and their individual claims & demands
 are frequently in diametric opposition to each other. Such
 a home is a menagerie with different cubicles for different gods.
 Peace - 112 P18 - is terribly difficult to attain in
 such a home.

Take a home, however, where there is One g-d - not in
 name, but in fact - & you have the model Jewish home.
 I don't mean a home where the wife makes a feinting pass at
 kindling the Sabbath candles & the husband an annual jittany
 for a Jewish charity; I mean a home in which the most
 intimate aspects of life reflect this devotion to g-d + Torah. →
 There ^{in this kind of home} are any conflicting interests & desires are just passing words,
 for basically, both have one allegiance, one loyalty, one
 chief striving: g-d. No wonder, gentle sociologists report that
 with the unobswance of Traditional Judaism the divorce rate
 goes up. No wonder our Rabbis maintained that every
 successful marriage is a triangle - husband + wife + g-d almighty.
 No wonder the word P18 is one of the Names of g-d Himself.

when charity comes - study of dollars - entertainment
 July P18 - reflects god senselessness

XII

In the words of Isaiah: שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי
 "Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near". May Peace come to those who are far off: may peace grace the turbulent borders of Israel. May Peace still the violence in far-off jungles of Indo-China, and the tempest in far-off Formosa. And "Peace to him that is near". That is the greater prayer: may peace come near to us - in our ~~very homes~~ ^{families & ourselves}, near our hearts & in our hearts, peace of home & peace of mind, peace of family & peace of conscience. May that Peace come quickly as we each strive to become better individuals, and as all the world acknowledges the One G-d, who alone is capable of working Peace, for both him that is far off & him that is near.

Benedictions:

שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי
 שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי
 שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי שְׁלוֹמִי

Peace be within thy bones, & prosperity within thy palaces.
 For the sake of our brethren, may Peace be within each of us.
 May Peace's goodness come for the sake of the house of
 our Lord, the One G-d. Amen.