



SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

שמיני • SHEMINI

America is No Different

DISTRIBUTION DATE:

TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2007 / כ"ג ניסן תשס"ז

PARSHA:

SHEMINI/ שמיני

SERMON TITLE:

AMERICA IS NO DIFFERENT

A PROJECT OF THE SHLUCHIM OFFICE

DISTRIBUTION DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2007 • כ"ג ניסן תשס"ז
The author is solely responsible for the contents of this document.

Sponsored by Shimon Aron & Devorah Leah Rosenfeld & Family
In loving memory of

ר' מנחם זאב בן פנחס ז"ל
Emil W. Herman אה who loved and supported Torah learning.



SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

שמיני • SHEMINI

America is No Different

SHEMINI

AMERICA IS NO DIFFERENT

Sixty-seven years ago, in March of 1940, the Previous Rebbe arrived in America on the very last ship to leave Poland after the outbreak of WWII. It was a miraculous journey that saved the Rebbe from the hands of the Nazis. A huge crowd gathered in the seaport to greet the Rebbe. The welcoming party soon moved to the Rebbe's hotel where the impressive event continued. At the event the Rebbe, who at that time was partially paralyzed, made it quite clear that he had not come to America to enjoy the remaining years of his life. "My coming to America," the Rebbe said, "is a mission for my soul, to create organizations that will spread Judaism here."

The Rebbe then called a meeting to make a board to create Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in America. This yeshiva was to be built and conducted in the spirit of the "Old Country" yeshivas. It was then that the Rebbe coined the phrase, "*America is nisht andersh*. –America is no different!"

Among the attendees was a young man named Rabbi Pinchas Teitz of New Jersey. He came to visit the Rebbe at the hotel and he wanted to be admitted to the Rebbe's room immediately for he was in a rush. When asked where he was rushing he explained that he had a weekly radio show and he could not tarry lest he be late. The Rebbe's son-in-law, Rabbi S. Gurarie told Rabbi Teitz, "Announce on your show that the Rebbe has established a Yeshiva in NY." Rabbi Teitz was in shock! The



SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

שמיני • SHEMINI

America is No Different

Rebbe, already on in years and confined to a wheelchair due to deteriorating health, had just arrived on American soil and already he had established a yeshiva!

On that first night, the Rebbe received two important looking guests. These two guests sat with the Rebbe and worked to dissuade him from going through with the idea of building a yeshiva.

One said, "America is a land that swallows great men and makes them into nothing. Even great men who arrive here with the best intention will eventually be reduced to nobody." And the second said, "For the sake of your honor and the honor of Chabad we felt compelled to tell you the truth about the chances your yeshiva might have. Americans are easily excited and just as easily distracted. In the beginning there may be a lot of enthusiasm but in a few weeks it could be forgotten as if it never existed!"

The Rebbe himself repeated this conversation later and added, "It's obviously unnecessary to tell you what I was feeling when I heard these words."

That night as the Rebbe recited the Krias Shma before retiring for the night - the time when Chassidim review their accomplishments of the day - he cried bitter tears. "If this is how my closest associates feel," he thought, "what will everyone else say?"

Yet the Rebbe's endeavor grew from a handful of students to thousands of students in worldwide and indeed became a yeshiva just like those of the Old



SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

שמיני • SHEMINI

America is No Different

Country. It was the first of the many organizations created by the Rebbe in the Free World.

Where did the Rebbe, in his physically weak state, find the strength and perseverance to rouse the sleeping Jewish community of America from its slumber?

The Parsha this week is called Shmini, meaning "The Eighth". In it, the narrative of the Mishkan's (tabernacle) dedication is continued. In last week's Parsha, Tzav, we read of the seven days of assembling and dismantling the Mishkan and in this week's Parsha, we read how it is finally built and left standing on the eighth day. It was then that G-d's presence finally rested among our people.

Why does the Torah stop in the middle of a story – between the seventh and eighth days of the dedication? Wouldn't it be more appropriate to finish the whole story of the Mishkan's dedication in last week's Parsha and begin this week with the coronation of the priests, or even the subject of kashrut?

The Rebbe explains that the number seven symbolizes the complete natural cycle. G-d created the world and its nature in seven days. All the nations of the world count seven days in a week after which they start again from one. They do not continue on to eight nine ten etc. for seven is a complete natural cycle.

Therefore, the number eight symbolizes that which transcends nature, that which transcends logic and human understanding.

A PROJECT OF THE SHLUCHIM OFFICE

DISTRIBUTION DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2007 • כ"ג ניסן תשס"ז
The author is solely responsible for the contents of this document.

Sponsored by Shimon Aron & Devorah Leah Rosenfeld & Family
In loving memory of
ר' מנחם זאב בן פנחס ז"ל
Emil W. Herman
who loved and supported Torah learning.



SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

שמיני • SHEMINI

America is No Different

The same idea is found in one of the Jewish holidays. Which one last for eight days? (Ask congregation – point out that Pesach and Sukkos are really seven days)

Of course it's Chanukah. The miracle of Chanukah is in blatant defiance to the laws of nature, laws that say that many mighty overpower the feeble few and that one jug of oil lasts only one day. And of course this supernatural story takes eight days, for like the miracle itself eight transcends nature. Purim, on the other hand, is a very similar story of mighty trying to overcome the weak – yet the whole story seems to “naturally happen”. You need a microscope to find the hand of G-d in this story.

Where else is the number eight prominent? Every Jewish boy begins his relationship with G-d by being circumcised on the eighth day of his life. This is not coincidence – it's a clear sign that the Jew's connection to his Creator transcends the nature, logic and conventional thinking.

This is why the Torah pauses between the seventh and eighth days, to stress that the eighth day is not merely a continuation of the seven-day dedication process. What happened on the eighth day transcends nature.

On the eighth day G-d came to rest his presence in the small Mishkan. This was a phenomenal miracle. King Solomon puts it best, “The highest heavens cannot contain You, but this Temple can?” The infinite G-d squeezed His great and awesome presence between the two poles of the Holy Ark- this is definitely supernatural, and this is what the “Eighth Day” represents, that which transcends

A PROJECT OF THE SHLUCHIM OFFICE

DISTRIBUTION DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2007 • כ"ג ניסן תשס"ז
The author is solely responsible for the contents of this document.

Sponsored by Shimon Aron & Devorah Leah Rosenfeld & Family
In loving memory of
ר' מנחם זאב בן פנחס ז"ל
Emil W. Herman who loved and supported Torah learning.



SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

שמיני • SHEMINI

America is No Different

nature. That's why there is a break before the eighth day, because the eighth day is an entirely new, supernatural scale.

We find this idea in the Amida prayer as well. One of the blessings we say in the amida is the blessing of "refaenu" a prayer for healing. It seems like we are asking for regular natural healing but if you take the time to look you will find that this blessing is the eighth. In essence we are asking G-d to raise us above the natural order and heal us from the "eighth level" – the supernatural.

The previous Rebbe was the eighth Rebbe from the Baal Shem Tov. His personal life was clearly on the "Eighth Level". He was miraculously saved from the communists and their death sentence. He was miraculously saved from the bombings and the Nazi deportations in Warsaw. When he arrived in the US he was not influenced or affected by the limitations of the "Natural order". The Rebbe's advisers who predicted that Torah organizations in America would not survive the onslaught of American culture were correct. *Naturally* they had no chance at all to survive, and surely not to thrive. But the Rebbe, true to his being number eight, defied nature. He felt sure that G-d who had helped him throughout his life in a supernatural way would surely aid him in this venture too.

Dear friends, America is not different. One who understands that Jews are not bound by the limitations of nature, will always succeed. The very fact that there is a Jewish nation today is the biggest proof that nature has no bearing upon is. We have no need for logical or conventional thought. We must do what is within our power and G-d will bend nature for us!

A PROJECT OF THE SHLUCHIM OFFICE

DISTRIBUTION DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2007 • כ"ג ניסן תשס"ז
The author is solely responsible for the contents of this document.

Sponsored by Shimon Aron & Devorah Leah Rosenfeld & Family
In loving memory of
ר' מנחם זאב בן פנחס ז"ל
Emil W. Herman
who loved and supported Torah learning.