

No Peace in the Bathroom

Netiv HaShalom 1,1:213 - Rav Hamnuna said in the name of Ula that it is forbidden to greet one's friend in the bathroom by expressing "shalom" as it is written, "And he called to him 'Hashem Shalom'" [Shoftim 6:24], implying Shalom is one of Hashem's names [Shabbat 10b]. From this you see how great is the virtue of peace, for His name is peace. It is permissible to say EMET [truth], one of Hashem's virtues, in the bathroom for though truth is Hashem's virtue, it is not His name.

Why peace more than truth? Hashem makes peace between all creatures, and as creation was done in couplets of opposites, like light-darkness, day-night, heaven-earth, six days-Shabbat, good-evil, and Hashem makes peace and harmony between these opposites. Otherwise, the Universe could not continue to exist, and as His Unity includes all, as it says "there is nothing but Him alone" [D'varim 4:35]. There is peace between opposites for He completes and harmonizes all, and ties together and unifies all, making shalom, more than a description, an essence and a name.

Rabbi Mani and Rabbi Yehoshua said in the name of Rabbi Levi that SHALOM is great for all the blessings, the good, the comfortings that Hashem brought upon Israel are sealed with shalom. The evening blessing of k'ri'at sh'ma ends with "He who spreads the canopy of shalom...",

the shmona esrei ends with "He who makes shalom...", the Priestly Blessings end with "and puts shalom upon you". Lists of sacrifices end with peace offerings. Hashem is Shalom in His essence. Left to their own devices [sic] there would be no peace in all of existence if it were not the Shalom that emanates from Hashem.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr