

Rabbi David Wolpe's

# *Off The Pulpit*

July 9, 2015

## **No More Angels**

We gather around the Shabbat table, put our arms around one other and sing "Shalom Aleichem" — the song that greets the Shabbat angels. By the time we have finished the shabbat song, three minutes later, we are concluding with "Tzaitchem L'shalom" — go in peace, already asking them to leave. The poor angels must wonder why we do not wish them to stick around!

For a clue we can look at the Kotzker Rebbe's comment on the verse in Exodus 22:31: "You shall be holy human beings to me." The Kotzker said that God has enough angels, what God needs is holy human beings. Human

beings are effortful and striving; we fail and overcome. We are human.

So Rabbi Soloveitchik made the comment that we usher the angels out so quickly because human beings cannot live with angels. Our mission is to understand that no one is perfect, that we are cracked and fissured and flawed, and need forgiveness. Together around the Shabbat table, we are delighted to welcome and entertain the angels — but not for too long. We need to eat and argue and forgive — and love. *Shabbat Shalom.*