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CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Setting the Atmosphere

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E8)

You have a role to play in setting the שבת atmosphere in your home. Have you thought about that role?

Neiros, Tefilos, Now What?

R' Gamliel Rabinovitz reminds us that שבת is a time of connection and closeness with הקב"ה. And R' Tzvi Meir adds that the way that we usher in שבת is the way that שבת will flow throughout. After all, the foundation of a building (יסוד, ראשית) determines the strength and height of the building which can be built on it.

Now, the question turns to how to generate that energy to get שבת on track.

Shabbos is a חדר יחוד

R' Shimshon Pincus זצ"ל points out that we should think of שבת as a חדר יחוד. The idea behind this thought is that one should close the door to all outside factors and focus exclusively on building the relationship with שבת and הקב"ה. We would laugh at a חתן who interrupts the precious moment of connection with his new bride in the חדר יחוד to check on the sports scores that he missed while preparing for the Chasuna. So, we know what we are not meant to do when connecting with Shabbos. But what *do* we do?

The answer to that question is going to be very personal. When a woman wishes to connect with her spiritual essence and wants to bring her household along, honesty and focus are key.

שיר השירים

R' Gamliel reports that an eight-year-old said that her happiest moment is when she joins her mother in saying שיר השירים on Friday night. Clearly, her mother connected to the message of Shlomo HaMelech, מלך שהשלום שלו when he spoke about פתחי לי רעייתי, inviting the intimate connection between הקב"ה and כלל ישראל.

Parsha Stories

Another option is reading Parsha stories with the children. Anything that you find of interest will be a delight for your children to learn together with you.

Appreciating the Parchment

The שבילי פנחס writes that the 600,000 letters in the תורה הק' are called the 'black fire' and the parchment upon which they are written is called the 'white fire.' The 600K letters (black fire) represent the men of כלל ישראל and the parchment (white fire) represents the women of כלל ישראל. Spiritually, the ספרים say that the אש לבנה is on a higher level than the אש שחורה. Whichever is 'higher,' the parchment is the environment which is the backdrop for the that which is said. We could say that the parchment is that which is unsaid, it is only felt or experienced. It is against that backdrop that the אש שחורה can be read.

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A Kallah and the Parchment

Based on this insight, there are those who explain that the Minhag for the Kallah to circle her Chosson seven times before they get married. She is thereby declaring her intent to create the environment, the home for the *אש* *אש שחורה* to find its expression.

Interestingly, it is the mothers who accompany the Kallah on this last and first journey. They are symbolically passing on to this new bride the task that was passed to them by their mothers. The *מסורה* will henceforth be the calling of the young wife as she receives the baton that has passed through the generations of Jewish women – she will forge the *אש לבנה* so that the *אש שחורה* can appear in the world. It is now her turn.

Use What Moves You

There are women who love to dance and others who enjoy singing. Our unique gifts and inclinations are meant to be given expression rather than seeing everyone crawl off to a corner and forget that it is now Shabbos.

לכה דודי לקראת כלה פני שבת נקבלה

There are many lessons contained in this seemingly simple call. We are calling on our

beloved to go out to greet the Kallah, to receive the 'פני שבת.' When we sing those words with our children, we are inviting them to join us as we go out to greet the שבת. We may ask, though, we to we 'go out' or 'leave' to greet the Kallah? Why don't we follow the last stanza of the *לכה דודי* and welcome the Kallah – *בואי כלה*?

The answer may be that 'go out' carries the implication of *זריזות* – alacrity. Do not tarry. Do it with verve and energy. But one can see in the word *לכה* an echo of the word *לכו* as in *לכו בנים* – *שמעו לי* – it is not enough to come to me, your parent, to learn the precious lessons of *תורה*. The real story is for you to internalize the messages so that you can *leave* me with those messages firmly in place. Indeed, the word *פני* may refer to *פנים* – the lessons are meant to become internalized such that they create a *מאור פנים* – they shine on your faces.

We are not only creating an environment in the here and now, but we are adding to the chain whereby our children will receive the impact of שבת and will pass it on to theirs. The white parchment is the spirit of שבת which can rest on us and on our families *עד ביאת גואל צדק* – *בעזרה*

Takeaway: I will try to see the quiet time after lighting candles as an opportunity to create the environment wherein Shabbos can feel eternally welcome.