



Discover the Joy of Shabbos

Explore the deeper meaning of the Zemiros, Tefillos and Hanhagos of Shabbos.



A Light in the Darkness

By Rav Eli Mansour shlita (Shiur E6)

Adapted by Ephraim D. Becker

Do you feel anything special when Shabbat comes in? Do you sense a spiritual upgrade? The answer likely is tied to how you prepare for Shabbat.

What we got, what we lost

The Ariza"l writes about the mystical gains that we received at Har Sinai and about the losses that we suffered when we built and worshiped the עגל. The standard version of the gain is that each of us was granted two crowns, one for having said נעשה – we will do, and one for נשמע – we will (then) listen and understand. This statement of absolute faith in Hashem and His Torah echoed throughout the upper worlds and we were each granted these two crowns.

The Ariza"l describes the gifts that we were granted as one thousand spiritual lights. That implies a powerful, indeed unimaginably powerful experience of קדושה and closeness with the ultimate source of Light. Those אלף אורות, the thousand lights, were taken away when we did not maintain the allegiance needed to warrant such a gift.

The lights were also taken from Moshe Rabeinu

The Ariza"l goes on to report that Moshe Rabeinu was also deprived of his thousand lights of sanctity. Though he was not a participant in the sin of the עגל, he suffered collateral damage from the People's drop in sanctity. However, says the Ariza"l, while he lost his lights, he was given the lights that were taken away from the

People. His net experience of קדושה remained the same. He lost his own lights but was given theirs.

Moshe Rabeinu's loss, given that it was not a result of a sin, would be treated differently from then on. Every week, on Erev Shabbat, Moshe Rabeinu has his thousand lights restored to him. He is once again able to bask in the spiritual glory that he had prior to the sin of the עגל. But now he has twice the amount of spiritual light. He has his own light and that of the People.

A person who is focused on the coming Shabbat can feel that his spirit is moved; his energy is focused upward.

Lost...and Found!

Moshe Rabeinu delights in his restored lights on Shabbat. This is captured in the Tefilah when we say ישמח משה במתנת חלקו – Moshe rejoices with the gift of his portion.

But Moshe Rabeinu is the עבד נאמן – the faithful servant – as we go on to say in the Tefilah. And so, he does not hold onto the lights which he was given that were not originally his. Instead, he gifts the light that originally belonged to the People to those who are engaged in preparation for Shabbat.

The gift of spirituality on Erev Shabbat

A person who is engaged in and focused on the coming Shabbat can get a glimpse of other-worldly elevation. His spirit is moved, and his energy is focused upward. He is less encumbered by the depressing pull of the mundane world because he is being buoyed by the light the Moshe Rabeinu is granting him.



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And Moshe Rabeinu is smiling. He is joyful over the gift that he received as well as with the gift that he has granted those who are immersed in preparation for Shabbat.

Hints in the Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabbat

There is an allusion to this return of the lights in the very name of Shabbat. Its letters ש-ב-ת can also be arranged as תשב – the return and can refer to the thousand spiritual lights that are returned every Erev Shabbat.

The chapter of Tehillim which proclaims the Shabbat also contains references to this wonderful sequence. If you check the first letters of the words מזמור שיר ליום השבת, you will find למשה – we are praising Moshe when we proclaim the Shabbat. Those same letters also spell שלמה – a reference not only to the great King of Israel, but a reference to the state of being whole and complete, a glimpse of which we are granted with the entry of Shabbat.

That chapter of Tehillim does not contain any other reference to Shabbat. Rather, its sublime praises are introduced by a reference to how we get the spiritual energy to praise Hashem so wonderfully. We get the fuel from Moshe Rabeinu, allowing us to praise with a full, whole spirit.

Takeaway: I will be attuned to the spiritual gifts associated with dedicated preparation for Shabbat.