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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Lost in the Desert of Preparation

By Rav Pinchas Friedman shlita (Shiur E6)

Shabbos is called a special gift. In what way is it more special than all other Mitzvos?

The gift of Shabbos

The Gemara¹ relates that Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu that He has a 'good' gift which He wishes to give to the People, and its name is Shabbos. In what way is Shabbos 'good' as compared with all other Mitzvos?

Kedusha comes from Above

The Apter Rav (Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apt, known as the Ohev Yisroel), explained that every Mitzvah brings down Kedusha when one performs that Mitzvah. By example, a person who dons Tefilin is blessed with the Kedusha associated with Tefilin. That Kedusha envelops the person and helps him further his spiritual life. But the first step starts with the person's action here, and the repercussion of that action is Kedusha that descends from Above.

By contrast, the Kedusha of Shabbos descends on the person who merely refrains from doing Melacha on Shabbos. The gift does not originate with the person's action; it originates on high. Hence, Shabbos is called a 'good' gift owing to the radiance of Kedusha which envelops the

person and showers its blessing into the coming week, even while the person did nothing.

One who did not prepare

Given the above, it is possible for a person who failed to prepare for Shabbos to salvage the situation on Shabbos itself. Preparation is crucial, be it by focusing on the upcoming Shabbos, learning Torah to ready oneself for Shabbos, readying the house for Shabbos, etc. But the failure to prepare does not preclude one from deriving the blessings of Shabbos for the week to come.

One who lost track of the day of the week

The Gemara² relates a dispute regarding a person who was walking in the desert and lost track of the day of the week; he does not know when it will be Shabbos!

Ravina is of the view that such a person must count six days and then observe one day as 'his' Shabbos. This will be his personal cycle until he reconnects with civilization. Chiya bar Rav rules that he must observe the first day and count six

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¹ שבת י':

² שבת סט':



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days thereafter, thus starting his personal cycle with Shabbos.

An allegory to a lost person

The Shem M'Shmuel cites his father (the Avnei Nezer, the Sochatchover Rebbe) who understands the above Gemara as an allegory describing a lost person who does not feel ready for Shabbos. Ravina says that one who did not prepare for Shabbos cannot have Shabbos. There is nothing to do but invest the effort to prepare for the six days.

Chiya bar Rav, on the other hand, gives the person a second chance. Even if you did not prepare for Shabbos, just make Shabbos, and let the experience of Shabbos carry you forward to the subsequent six days.

Just keep two Shabbosos

The Gemara³ cites R' Yochanan who, in turn, repeated that which he had heard from R' Shimon bar Yochai. He taught that if Klal Yisroel would keep but two Shabbosos they

would immediately be redeemed. Why the need for *two*?

The imperfect and the perfect Shabbos

The Kedushas Levi explains that we are speaking about the two types of Shabbosos that were described above. The first Shabbos is observed without adequate preparation. But rather than give up, the People receive and accept the great Kedusha which descends on those who but refrain from violating the imperfect Shabbos. That Kedusha boosts the People's spiritual capacity and showers both material and spiritual blessings into the week that follows.

Those material and spiritual blessings become the ingredients for a spiritually charged week filled with the energy to prepare for the coming, perfect, Shabbos. The combination allows for redemption. It starts with the unique gift of Shabbos bestowed even on those who did not prepare and ends with the Shabbos for which one prepared intensively, leading to an even greater gift, spiritual and material redemption.

Takeaway: I will try not to lose hope even if I was not able to properly prepare for Shabbos by focusing on the spiritual gifts that Shabbos bestows.

³ שבת קיח: