



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Purified and Protected

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E11)

A story can help us go where we want to go. For that, you need two ingredients, a goal, and a story.

Intensifying the feeling by learning

Any good feeling that we want to maintain must be nurtured. A feeling that is not nurtured dwindles. There are many ways to nurture a feeling. The first is by acting on it. If a feeling is translated into action, then it finds a place in our hearts. So, step one is to act on the feeling.

Another powerful way to nurture a feeling is to learn about it. In the case of our discussion, the call is to learn the Halachos of Shabbos. The more deeply involved you are in the details of Shabbos, the closer you will feel to Shabbos. It will be on your mind, down to the details. That turns an inspiration into reality.

Intensifying the feeling by example

Another way to increase your relationship with Shabbos is experiential. Spend time around those who are connected to Shabbos and their attachment to Shabbos will rub off on you.

And when you are not able to be around those who spend 25 hours immersed in Shabbos, you can get a booster shot by telling and re-telling stories of those who were deeply connected with Shabbos. And that is what the two following stories are meant to help you with. They are descriptions of how people were attached to

Shabbos and how that attachment played out in their lives and in the lives of those around them. Use these stories well.

A link in the chain

There is a family of distinguished Talmidei Chachomim in Israel. Exceptional people who have made and who continue to make a

*He would hardly
sleep on
Shabbos; he was
so excited to be
in the presence
of the Queen
who had come
to share the day
with him.*

significant impact on the lives of many Jews in Israel. This family, the Grossmans, trace their survival to a fateful Shabbos in New York in 1912. If but for Hashem's grace on that Shabbos this gift would have been lost to His People.

Rav Yisroel Grossman

Rav Yisroel Grossman was something of a surrogate father for me after he stayed in our home for over three months when I was young. That fateful visit, during which Rav Grossman accompanied the legendary Maggid, Rav Sholom Schwadron זצ"ל, created the opportunity for me to learn from and be inspired by these great men. I went on to capitalize on the spiritual gold-mine that had been presented to me. I had the privilege of writing many of the Maggid's stories and I had the privilege of sharing the complete immersion in Shabbos that characterized Rav Yisroel Grossman's home in Yerushalayim.



KI HEIM CHAYEINU

כי הם חינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Every part of those experiences is etched in my memory. The קדושה of the Shabbos was palpable. The room was electric with the energy of Shabbos. [This is especially significant given that some Charedi families in Israel do not use electricity from the National Electric Company since its production is maintained by Jews on Shabbos. The issue is complex and relates to the Halacha that one may not benefit from the Melacha of a Jew on Shabbos. In those days, when there were not yet communal Shabbos generators, it was necessary to light small gas lamps around the house and power the refrigerator with a battery. Hardly a simple matter. But they made up for the absence of electricity with the electrifying atmosphere of Shabbos.]

His searing Nusach for רבון כל העולמים before Kiddush has been imported into my home and from mine to the homes of others. Rav Yisroel was transformed to a different plane on Shabbos. A bystander could have been forgiven for thinking that he was of this world; but he was not. He was attached to a world of eternity.

A spiritually rich man

Rav Yisroel related that his father, Rav Zalman, had a relationship with Shabbos that Rav Yisroel held in awe. He would hardly sleep on Shabbos; he was so excited to be in the presence of the Shabbos Queen who had come to share the day with him. He would learn, Daven, sing Zemirots and enjoy every moment of the Shabbos Queen's precious company. Rav Zalman's devotion to his 'Shabbos Queen' was something of a legend and all who knew him also knew that neither fatigue

nor worries would distract him from attending to his precious 'company.'

A financially poor man

As wealthy as he was in spirit, Rav Zalman was penniless and felt that he needed to take some steps to support his growing family. As a 'Hishtadlus' to earn a living Rav Zalman traveled to the US to work as a fundraiser for an Israeli yeshiva called אהל משה. Once in the US he rented a small office on the Lower East Side with a backroom that doubled as his living quarters. He hired others as fundraisers, Meshulachim, who, in turn, would travel to various communities and bring back money which supported each of them and brought needed resources to the Yeshiva they were working for.

In 1912 many of the amenities of Jewish life that we take for granted were unheard of. The saintly Rav Zalman did not eat any meat during his stay in the US as he did not know the Shochtim the way he knew those in Eretz Yisroel. And if it was limiting not to have any Fleishig, Rav Zalman also did not have any dairy products since it was nearly impossible to procure Cholov Yisroel in those days.

Yet, without Fleishig and without Milchig, Rav Zalman carried on the spiritual tradition that he had back home and his Shabbos, though he was alone, was spent in the close company of his precious Shabbos Queen.



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

The relationship with Shabbos that saved his life

One of the Meshulachim who was working for Rav Zalman returned to New York on Erev Shabbos and went to stay at the home of relatives in Manhattan. And though the Meshulach was exhausted from his travels he was unable to fall asleep on Friday night and decided to take a walk. Perhaps that would help him fall asleep.

The Meshulach, who barely knew how to navigate in New York proceeded to promptly get lost. After walking for what seemed like a long time, he gathered from the answers that he was getting along the way that he was closer to Rav Zalman on the Lower East Side than he was to his relatives. He made the fateful decision to go visit Rav Zalman. After all, he reasoned, if anyone was still up at this hour it was Rav Zalman who was surely soaking up every possible moment of the sanctity of Shabbos. He would not have thought of knocking on anyone else's door at that hour, but he had no hesitation to go to Rav Zalman and perhaps to share some Zemirots and Divrei Torah with him.

That decision, based on his knowledge of Rav Zalman's untiring relationship with Shabbos, was the catalyst for saving Rav Zalman's life. Unbeknownst to his approaching visitor, Rav Zalman was lying on the floor of his little office backroom writhing in pain from a burst appendix. He had been there, covered in wine, from the moment he collapsed while reciting Kiddush.

When the visitor heard groans in response to his knocking he ran outside and alerted a policeman who forced open the door and got Rav Zalman to the hospital in time for an emergency surgery that saved his life. The surgeon reported afterward that the patient was saved with little time to spare. His precious Shabbos saved R' Zalman.

Tell the story

When someone has a magnificent, rare painting in his home, visitors can be sure that they will hear the tale of how the wealthy man managed to get this masterpiece. Every detail of the saga will be told and retold because the masterpiece is so precious.

I can attest that in the Grossman family the story has been and will continue to be told and retold. That is because the masterpiece in their home is the precious Shabbos that Rav Zalman was able to return and bring back to their home. Every detail of the story has infinite value because the prize that came home was the holy Shabbos spent with the burning love that Rav Zalman had for it.

The preciousness of Shabbos for the Chofetz Chaim

Permit me another story about the preciousness of the holy Shabbos.

A student in the Yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim in Radun was smoking on Shabbos. The administrator who learned of the desecration of Shabbos approached the Chofetz Chaim to consult about dismissing the young man from the Yeshiva.



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Instead of dismissing the young man the Chofetz Chaim asked to meet the Bochor. It took many years for anyone to learn what happened behind those closed doors, but the young man turned himself around and was a dedicated Shabbos observer for the rest of his life.

Years later, on the day of the Chofetz Chaim's Yahrzeit, a speaker told what he knew of the above story, adding, as above, that he did not know what transpired behind those closed doors. After his inspiring talk about the sanctity of the great sage, all of the assembled left the hall. All, that is, except for one man who was still in his seat, lost in thought. The speaker approached the man and asked if he was alright. The man was unsure how to answer. Was he alright?

He was the Bochor in the story.

A drop of the Chofetz Chaim's tears

He told the speaker what happened behind those closed doors. The Chofetz Chaim took the

Bochor's hand into both of his and all he said was 'Shabbos, Heilige Shabbos,' That is all he said, over and over. And with each repetition the Chofetz Chaim reached deeper and deeper into the well of love and pure devotion that he had for Shabbos. Each repetition brought his holy Neshama closer to his holy Shabbos until tears started falling from the Chofetz Chaim's eyes. Each tear was packed with the intensity of the love and preciousness of the holy Shabbos. The man said that when the Chofetz Chaim took his hand closer to his chest one of the teardrops fell onto his hand. 'I thought that it would burn right through my Shabbos-desecrating hand.'

'At that moment I knew,' said the man, 'that I would never be Mechalel Shabbos again. I would never come between the Chofetz Chaim and the holy Shabbos. I would never cause such tears. I would learn how to love and cherish Shabbos.'

Takeaway: I will pause to reflect on the preciousness of Shabbos and try to coax my Neshama forward towards the holy Shabbos, using the various tools at my disposal.