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CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

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The Beauty of the Blessing

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E2)

Do you bless people? Do you seek to be a conduit for the welfare of others? How you give Brochos on Friday night is a window into your world of blessings.

ברכות are crucial in our lives

Everyone wants blessing in their lives. We want Hashem to bestow His blessings on us generously, with an open-hand and a willing heart. A part of us knows that we cannot thrive without blessings.

Do not just want blessing, give blessing.

But how many of us see ourselves as a conduit to bring those blessings into the world, for ourselves (through our Tefilos) and for others (through our Brochos)? The reality is that we have a wellspring of blessing in each of us. We just need to tap into our souls and find the wellspring of blessing. The ideal place and time to tap into the blessing of our soul is on Friday night as we give Brochos to those who surround us.

Shabbos is associated with blessing

It makes sense that Shabbos is the time to connect with giving Brochos since we know that Shabbos is the מקור הברכה – the source of all Brochos. Hashem uses Shabbos as the medium to bring blessing into our lives and we should tap into Shabbos to bless those whom we care about.

Tradition of blessing children on Friday night

Bestowing a blessing on one's children, grandchildren and those close by is a venerated tradition in Jewish homes. In many homes, the Brocha is a spiritual highlight of the night. The elder generously gives his or her blessing and their offspring, with gratitude and humility, receive those blessings. The fuller one's heart is of love and well-wishing, the deeper is the wellspring of blessing that flows forth.

The Torah describes the blessings bestowed by a mere mortal, and a morally impoverished one at that. Lavan, the wicked father of the Matriarchs, blesses his children and the

Torah captures the scene:

וַיִּשָּׂאם לָבָן בִּבְקָר וַיִּנָּשֶׂק לְבָנָיו וּלְבָנוֹתָיו, וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָהֶם (בראשית לב:א)

Lavan arose in the morning, kissed his sons and daughters, and blessed them.

The Sforno (ibid) wonders what lesson are we to learn from the actions of a wicked person. He answers:

סיפר ברכת לבן לבנותיו ולהורות שברכת האב אשר על בניו בכל נפשו בלי ספק ראוי שתחול יותר בסגלת צלם אלהים המברך כאמרו בעבור תברךך נפשי (לעיל כז, ד)



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The Torah records Lavan's blessings because when a father blesses his children it undoubtedly comes from the depth of his soul. As such, there is no doubt that it will have great effect since the soul, the image of Hashem, is giving the blessing. This is an echo of the instruction that Yitzchok gave his son Esav to prepare so that Yitzchok's soul would bless him. (see Bereishis 27:4)

Blessing with one hand or with two?

As if to underscore the significance of this moment of blessing there is even a technical discussion as to whether the blessing should be conferred with one hand (the right hand, which is always associated with greater power than the left) or with both hands above the head of the one receiving the Brocha. When dealing with something as significant as a Brocha, then we even analyze the small details.

The Torah Temima¹ reports, from a reliable source, that when the Vilna Gaon blessed R' Yechezkel Landau (the future Bיהודה, Posek of Vilna) at his wedding he did so with his right hand only, in keeping with his position that a two-handed blessing is only permitted to Kohanim when they confer their blessings. As a result, there are those whose custom it is to confer their Brocha with only their right hand.

On the other hand,² there are those who infer that a full Brocha should be given with two hands. Hashem instructed Moshe to bless his successor, Yehoshua, with one hand (וְסִמְכָתָהוּ אֶת יָדְךָ עָלָיו)³ while Moshe blesses him with both his

hands (וְסִמְכָתָהוּ אֶת יְדָיו עָלָיו).⁴ Rashi comments on Moshe's change from the instruction by saying that Moshe wanted to confer overflowing blessing on Yehoshua and so he employed both of his hands, even beyond that which he was instructed. Apparently, there is a source for using two hands for an abundant Brocha.

While both customs have a basis (and rabbinic counsel should be sought if one is in doubt regarding one's own practice), they both serve to underscore that the matter of giving a Brocha is far from just ceremonial. It is a potent conveyor of the blessings of one's soul.

The wording of the Brocha

The wording of the Brocha for a boy is ישימך אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה. Yaakov Avinu predicted and prescribed that when fathers bless their sons, they will use that formula, *May Hashem establish you as Ephraim and Menashe*. When seeking the wording for the blessing for daughters we naturally reference the Matriarchs, שרה, רבקה, רחל ולא, *May Hashem establish you as Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah*. Why didn't Yaakov Avinu prescribe that fathers should invoke the Patriarchs when blessing their sons?

Remaining a true servant of Hashem in the Exile

Perhaps it is because Menashe and Ephraim, like Yosef before them, represented the spirit of resilience in the Exile. They remained unfailingly loyal to Hashem and His Torah even though they were confronted with an alien

¹ במדבר ו: כג

² Excuse the pun

³ במדבר כז: יח

⁴ שם כג



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culture which offered all the lures of the material world. Indeed, the Midrash⁵ informs us that Yaakov was in awe of the resilience of Yosef.

And, so, perhaps, Yaakov Avinu was giving us a formula which we could take with us into Exile and pray for our sons to remain loyal even when confronted with the lures and challenges of the exile.

A story about Friday night blessings

Dr. Nesanel Breningstall, a pediatric neurologist from Minneapolis, attends many conferences where advances in his field are discussed. At one conference, this one held in Israel, Dr. Breningstall noticed a Chasidish-looking fellow whom he did not recognize from the many such meetings that he had attended. He approached the man to give him a warm Shalom Aleichem and learned that the man had come to the conference to learn what he could about the treatments for the neurological disorder that afflicted his little daughter.

The two found many occasions to converse, once over a meal and another time after a Tefilah, and an acquaintance was struck. When it came close to Shabbos the fellow invited Dr. Breningstall to join him for the Seudah on Friday night. 'You shouldn't spend Shabbos alone at the hotel, please come join us.' And he added, 'I am certain that you will not be able to detect which of our daughters is the one with the disorder.'

Dr. Breningstall accepted the invitation and they met after davening and went to his host's home. When the eating and Zemiro and Divrei Torah were done the host turned to his guest and challenged him to see if he could detect which daughter was under discussion. Dr. Breningstall, in a whisper, correctly named the daughter. The host was very taken aback. 'How did you know?!' asked the host. 'You helped me know who it is,' replied Dr. Breningstall, 'I saw the special love and concentration that was written on your face when you blessed her when we came into the house.'

Takeaway: I will try to bless those who are close to me, offering blessing without judgement.

⁵ בראשית רבה צד: ג



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The Reward of Return

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E3)

Shabbos is an opportunity to refresh our tired souls. Have you thought of Shabbos as a form of Yom Kippur? An awareness of this aspect of Shabbos can unleash its power for you.

Shabbos and Teshuva

When we think of שבת, we generally think of the words rest and cessation from מלאכה, both of which are contained in the word שבת, as the Pasuk tells us that on Shabbos the Creator rested or ceased from Creating the world. But there is another thought that should come to mind when thinking of שבת, which alludes to returning or restoring something to its origin. We speak of השבת אבידה – returning a lost object, thus restoring it to its original owner. Similarly, points out the נתיבות שלום,⁶ the Pasuk highlights the fact that at the end of the bitter exile we will come back:

בְּצֹר לָךְ וּמִצְאוֹךְ כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים
וְשָׁבְתָּ עַד ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ. (דברים ד: ל)

When you are afflicted by all these sufferings at the end of days, you will return (וְשָׁבְתָּ) to Hashem, and you will heed His voice.

וְשָׁבְתָּ עַד ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ – we will be restored to our original alliance with Hashem. Again, the key word is וְשָׁבְתָּ, where we can readily see the word שבת. Indeed, *Shabbos can be called not only a day of rest, but a day of returning, a day of restoring and thus a day of reconnecting with our original source, Hashem, and the Torah.*

Shabbos and Teshuva are intimately linked. You cannot have one without the other. Shabbos lends itself to Teshuva because on Shabbos we are not resting, we are restoring.

Adam discovers Teshuva from Kayin

A fascinating Midrash⁷ underscores this point. The Midrash reports that Adam met Kayin after

the latter was sentenced for having murdered Hevel. Adam noted that Kayin did not seem broken in spirit. Indeed, his countenance was light and, seemingly, had joy. Adam could not contain his curiosity. He asked Kayin what happened at his sentencing? Kayin responded ונתפשרתי – I did Teshuva, and I received a commuted (compromised or halved) sentence. Adam struck his head in

shock and disbelief at how he could not have known that there was a force in the world such as Teshuva!

The Midrash concludes that, upon making this great discovery, Adam proclaimed the chapter of Tehillim known as שיר ליום השבת! The discovery of Teshuva led him to Shabbos. The connection, once again, is absolute. Shabbos is newsworthy in that it informs us that a person, though steeped in physicality, can transcend and

Shabbos can be called not only a day of rest, but a day of returning, a day of restoring and thus a day of reconnecting with our original source.

⁶ בשם החיד"א בנחל קידומים

⁷ בראשית רבה כב אות יג



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touch eternity. So, too, is Teshuva newsworthy in that a man steeped in error and misdirection, can return to the correct path, and restore his relationship with his Source.

A Story Connecting Shabbos and Teshuva

Mr. Jacobo Sherem from Mexico told me his remarkable story during one of his learning visits to Lakewood. By way of background, Jacobo is a highly regarded Mexican architect who would design and build buildings, sell them, and use the proceeds to build even larger buildings, to sell them as well. In the beginning of 1985, he completed a magnificent edifice in downtown Mexico City, but he had to take a large mortgage to complete the project and, as a result, he had difficulty finding a buyer.

At the same time, Jacobo began becoming more involved religiously. He had begun studying with R' Shia Deutch in a Kollel in his neighborhood called the Aram Tzoba Kollel. R' Shia encouraged him to start coming to shul on Friday nights. He was not yet observant, but he was starting out on the road by attending Davening on Friday night. This he did for two weeks running and the next step was a turning point for his religious life. He was about to endure a test of his newfound commitment.

On the following Thursday two people from overseas came to discuss purchasing the building. The meeting on Thursday carried on to Friday. And while the prospective buyers seemed interested, they were conducting a very, perhaps overly, thorough inspection of the building and the legal and financial paperwork associated with it. Jacobo noticed the hour was

getting late, and he did not want to miss going to shul on Friday night. He politely told the men that their inspections and negotiations would have to conclude by 3 pm as he would be leaving at that time. They would be welcome to pick it up again after the weekend. The men told him, "We are traveling back tomorrow. It must be completed today." They knew how desperate Jacobo was for a buyer, and they indeed felt they had the upper hand. With just an hour left until shul, Jacobo apologized and indicated that he must leave, inviting them, once again, to come back after the weekend. They told him, "Absolutely not, we're leaving tomorrow. No deal."

He was resolute at the time, but as he went home and got ready to go to shul, he began questioning his decision. He reviewed his decision with his wife later that evening. "Have I lost my mind? True, I have gone a couple of weeks in a row to shul. But what would have been so bad if I missed once? Imagine, we could have sold that building. I could have then gone back to shul next week and start again fresh." The doubts plagued him even as a core part of him knew that his decision to prioritize Shabbos over business was the right one.

It would not be long before the matter would be clarified for him absolutely. Two weeks later, on September 19th, 1985, Mexico City experienced the worst earthquake in its history. Nearly all the buildings in downtown Mexico were leveled, but Jacobo's building was standing, a testimony to the Providence that gave him the know-how to build advanced earthquake resistance into the plans. It did not take long for the government to realize that they needed space to operate. In



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addition, companies large and small were desperate for office space. Jacobo was able to rent out every inch of space at top rental prices. Not long thereafter he sold the building for a price higher than he could have imagined and was thereby transformed into a wealthy man.

Jacobo went on to become a fully observant Jew. And while it was common knowledge that he

had sold the building, no one knew the details until he made his first Siyum Maseches which he finished with R' Shia Deutch. At the Siyum he shared this story and even showed aerial photos of Mexico City highlighting the devastation and the single standing building.

Shabbos and Teshuva are intimate, inseparable friends.

Takeaway: I will try to see Shabbos as not just an opportunity to rest but to restore my soul in Teshuva.



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The Lyrical Message of Lecha Dodi

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E4)

What comes to your mind when you think of Shabbos? Do you think of the special food? Of the Tefilos? Of resting? How far down the list would we find the בית המקדש?

The author of Lecha Dodi

רבי שלמה הלוי אלקבץ lived for the first 76 years of the 16th Century. Most of his adult life was spent in the holy city of צפת, where he, together with his close circle of מקובלים, had moved from Turkey. His close circle included the great ר"י קארו, the אלשיך, and the רמ"ק (his brother-in-law). רבי שלמה was a מקובל, scholar, and poet and his Lecha Dodi was universally accepted as the poetic welcome to the holy Shabbos.

The themes of Lecha Dodi

The universally accepted פיוט to welcome the Shabbos contains only an introductory message about Shabbos. The first two stanzas announce the themes of Shabbos: First, that Hashem, in His absolute unity, announced both the שמור and זכור of Shabbos simultaneously. Second, that Shabbos is the source of all blessings. After these opening stanzas, there are six stanzas that focus on the yearning for the restoration of the Mikdash and the resurrection of our downtrodden People destined to rise from the dust of their exile to worship there. (Those who recite Lecha Dodi on YomTov only recite those first two stanzas, and

not the later six stanzas, in keeping with the joyous YomTov spirit.)

The structure of the פיוט begs us to understand the connection between welcoming the Shabbos and yearning for the ביהמ"ק. Rav Alkabetz makes the connection.

Yerushalayim and Shabbos

The Gemara⁸ teaches that our violation of Shabbos enabled the חורבן. Somehow, without Shabbos there is no Mikdash.

Conversely, the Midrash⁹ teaches that our redemption will be in the merit of Shabbos. Our observance of two שבתות, says the Gemara,¹⁰ would usher in the redemption. With Shabbos, there can be Mikdash.

The parallels between Shabbos and Mikdash

Rav Shimshon Pincus זצ"ל wrote about the connection between Shabbos and Mikdash in his Sefer, שבת מלכתא. He mentions that:

1. The 39 activities which we refrain from to establish the sanctity of Shabbos are precisely

⁸ שבת קיט:

⁹ ויקרא רבה ג: א:

¹⁰ שבת קיח:



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those that were needed for constructing the Mikdash.

2. The Menorah finds its parallel in our Shabbos candles.
 3. Our Challahs echo the לחם הפנים. (There are Rebbes who even put out 12 Challahs apart from the required two. The Vilna Gaon even suggested that we divide our two Challahs at each meal in half thus making 12 parts to commemorate the לחם הפנים.) Indeed, the table itself reflects the שולחן upon which the לחם הפנים were placed.
 4. Our distinct Shabbos clothing echoes the בגדי כהונה.
 5. Shabbos is associated with song, recalling the שירי הלויים in the Mikdash.
 6. Perhaps the custom to adorn Shabbos with flowers recalls the fragrance of the קטורת, which ensured that the בית ה' would have an inspiring aroma.¹¹
 7. We could also add that the presence of wine recalls the libation of wine associated with every Korban.
- The list goes on and on.

Back to Lecha Dodi

We are now more keenly aware of the message that Rav Alkabetz is sharing with us. If we want our Shabbos to be elevated to קדושה and not

remain on the pedestrian level of חול, then our thoughts must turn to the Mikdash, which is the source of קדושה to elevate the mundane world.

If you read the six stanzas referring to the restoration you will notice a pattern of upward, elevated spirit. Perhaps, like the days of the week, we take another step up and then another until the 7th stanza when we are ready to turn around and welcome the Shabbos bride, with real joy, both in the sanctity of שבת and of מקדש.

Our relationship with Hashem depends on our connection with קדושה. That קדושה surely includes שבת, but it is incomplete without מקדש.¹²

A story about Lecha Dodi

Rabbi Yakov Feitman recently wrote a wonderful book called Blueprints. On page 58 he recounts an incident in which a Nazi ישראלי went into a Shul with three grenades, intending to cause as much loss of life as possible. As he slipped into the Shul on Friday night, the community davening turned around for the last stanza of Lecha Dodi, בואי בשלום. Assuming that they were all turning to confront the lone attacker, he turned and bolted, dropping his grenades as he ran, causing a small fraction of the damage that he had intended.

Takeaway: I will focus on Shabbos as a catalyst for the redemption and the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash.

¹¹ The Gemara (שבת לב) reports that רשב"י saw an elderly man bringing הדסים home to add fragrance to שבת. Perhaps the tradition of bringing flowers into the home is a by-product of those הדסים.

¹² ed note: Both Shabbos and Mikdash are referred to as הגדול והקדוש. See the third Brocha of ברכת המזון and רצה within it.



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The Grandeur of Shabbos Guests

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E5)

When you think of your home and your table, do you think about enjoying them? Do you think about sharing them? Do you have a plan for what that sharing should (and should not) look like?

The story of הכנסת אורחים

Most everyone who has ever done the Mitzvah of הכנסת אורחים has a story to tell about the positive outcome of having welcomed a guest. In my case, my success as a writer and speaker all owe to that precious Mitzvah. You are reading these words because my parents – עליהם השלום – went out of their way to make sure that their guests were well-attended to and felt welcome.

The guest that made a lifelong impression on me was Rav Sholom Schwadron זצ"ל. My father ע"ה had been listening to and was deeply affected by the Maggid's talks for quite some time before Rav Sholom's visit to the US in 1964. In those days you could not download a shiur that was uploaded moments before. But the cassettes made their way to my father via a network of relatives who helped. And my father could not get enough of Rav Sholom's talks. He could hardly believe that a saintly Maggid lived in our times and was yearning to make his acquaintance.

And so, when Rav Sholom, together with Rav Yisroel Grossman, came to the US, three generations of my family went to the airport to greet the man whose Torah and piety had made such an impression on my father. My father had

never met him, but he knew that it would be a privilege to be in his proximity.

While the details of how Rav Sholom came to our home attest to the השגחה involved, the point for this discussion is that despite other arrangements, Rav Sholom stayed in our home for six months, and Rav Yisroel Grossman stayed for three of those months.

*Whenever
we attend to
the needs of
another, we
are winning
the game.*

I am testimony that if you bring a living ספר תורה into your home, there will be blessing. דוד המלך welcomed the ארון הקודש because if you cherish the קדושה of the Aron, the Aron brings blessing in its wake. That is how the Mitzvah of הכנסת אורחים became so dear to my heart.

The finest form of Chinuch

The message that children absorb when parents make room in their homes and hearts for חלמידי חכמים cannot be overstated. The parents are showing by example – the only language that children understand – that the walls of our house do not just shield us from foreign elements outside; they offer us the opportunity to bring Torah and purity into our homes.

The effect is not immediate, but it is durable. Years after my parents welcomed Rav Schwadron into our home, I was inspired to write the stories that he loved to tell and which he used to inspire others. And now, years later,



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you are still hearing the echo of that Mitzvah, if you will, the 'Echo of the Maggid.'

The history of הכנסת אורחים

Every child learns that אברהם אבינו was a specialist in הכנסת אורחים. The Posuk¹³ attests to this when it says ויטע אשל – simply translated as 'he planted an orchard.' Why do we need to know what his garden looked like? The answer is a packed message attesting to his performance of הכנסת אורחים.

First, רש"י cites two opinions regarding the אשל that he planted. It was fruits, to satisfy the desires of those who passed his tent. Or it was a place of lodging. The word אשל has been understood as an acrostic to refer to שתייה, אכילה, - food and drink – and the 'ל' can refer either to לינה – lodging, or לווייה – escorting one's guest, a crucial part of relating to a guest.

ר' בחיי notes that the letters אשל can be arranged to form the word שאל – asking. He is highlighting the fact that real hosting means inquiring and thinking about what the guest might need.¹⁴ The bottom-line is that when you think about others you are emulating the Divine and expanding yourself from your narrow self-interest to the focus on the welfare of your fellow. That is the essence of הכנסת אורחים.

Who do we welcome?

It is wonderful to welcome any needy or lonely person. Hachnasas Orchim applies to anyone

who could use a place to rest, a drink, a nourishing meal, or a kind word. Whenever we attend to the needs of another, we are winning the game. But when the guest is a Talmid Chacham, the stakes are even greater.

Some limitations

הכנסת אורחים is extremely precious. The essential message is that a human being, by nature caught up with, 'how am I? Am I okay?' can reach out beyond himself and ask, 'how are you?' This is a stretch of one's ego to include others; first one's spouse and children and then beyond, to include guests and even strangers. But we must not forget the order of the stretching. First come those who are closest to us. As our ability to care about others grows, we can include circles beyond. Attending to the guest must not come at the expense of tuning out those who are closest – our spouse and children. Naturally, it is easiest for me to bring that point out with a story.

Rav Reuven Feinstein shared with me that he did not feel deprived when his father, R' Moshe, did not attend the שבת of his מצוה בר. His father instead was attending to the needs of Klal Yisrael at the Agudah Convention that Shabbos.

R' Reuven explained that children who question their parent's love feel deprived when some overt demonstration of affection is lacking. In his case, his father's love warmed his veins. He had no question about his father's love and so he did not feel deprived. To illustrate how, as a

accustomed to; and (b) whatever his guests might request was already there – he had anticipated their needs.

¹³ בראשית כא:לג

¹⁴ ed note: In אבות דר' נתן ז:א we learn that Avraham Avinu prepared for guests such that (a) he upgraded his guests to serve them food above what they were



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young boy, he was able to point tangibly to his father's love, he reminisced about how his father, the saintly sage that he was, would come into his room early in the winter mornings and put his socks on the steam radiator. Later, R' Moshe would come in and put the warm socks on his son's feet. When R' Reuven woke up, his feet radiated warmth and love.

R' Reuven also recalled that he was always given the place of honor to sit next to his great father. He would bask in his father's warmth even in the presence of guests. The only exception was when a Gadol was the guest, then the children also participated in the respect due to the Gadol. But, short of the arrival of a Gadol, his son enjoyed that cherished spot. And so, commented R' Reuven, there was no sense of being deprived when the Shabbos of his Bar Mitzvah was marked in his father's absence. He was not missing the warmth, and that is what a child really looks for.

Zemiros are not just for men

Another way that we look after the needs of our loved ones first is by giving one's daughters an opportunity to sing and express themselves through harmony and Zemiros. In a Torah home where a girl would not sing in the presence of men who are not their father or brother, that means that sometimes there might be no guests, at least not unrelated men, at the table. Because thinking about others includes, and indeed

begins, with thinking about our loved ones who Hashem has blessed us with.

Children come first

There are many creative ways to demonstrate that the Shabbos meal is, first and foremost, about one's relationship with one's children. It is a chance to mark, together, the gift of Shabbos. The children discover that the precious gift of Shabbos includes them, as well. They are part of the embrace of Shabbos.

Cherishing a guest

Another important aspect of Hachnasas Orchim is giving the guest their dignity and the sense that they are desired, not a burden or an afterthought. This is sometimes tricky, especially when dealing with someone whose needs span over an extended period. One has the all-too-natural tendency to take such guests 'for granted' and to fail to give them a sense of being cherished. An extra measure of maturity, sensitivity and caring is needed to make such guests feel welcome. I was once chastised by such a guest. My offense? I called to invite him too late in the week. I took his need for a meal for granted and he resented it.

Treating a repeat customer as a valued guest is not easy and should be handled with care and intelligence. But the key is to look forward to being able to open our homes and hearts to an ever-widening range of guests.

Takeaway: I will recognize the need to stretch to see and think about the needs of others.



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The Mystery of the Malachim

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E6)

Where did the song Sholom Aleichem come from? What is it based on? Why do we refer to three different types of angels? Why do we send them away after welcoming them?

Hidden in plain sight

There is hardly a home where the Shabbos meal is not introduced with the recitation of שלום עליכם. It is so ubiquitous that few have stopped to analyze it. Everyone says it, every week. It has been sung to countless tunes. How could it be that so little is known about it? It seems hidden from view in plain sight!

Origins of שלום עליכם

We do not know who wrote שלום עליכם. We find it already appearing in the late 1600's. It likely originates with the מקובלים in Tzfas. But the way it has been received, it is as if Klal Yisroel wrote it.

Angels abound

The Gemara¹⁵ relates that two angels, one good and one bad, accompany a person to his home on Friday night. If the home has been readied for Shabbos the good angel blesses the home with the prayer that it be this way in the coming week as well. The bad angel is compelled to affirm the blessing and says אמן. If the home has not been prepared for Shabbos the bad angel curses the home with the prayer that there be disarray the coming week as well and the good angel is compelled to affirm the curse and says אמן.

*I am not only
welcoming
the Shabbos
— I am
greeting the
bride.*

These good and bad angels are advocates and reporters. The good angel advocates for the performance of Mitzvos and seeks to report on high that Hashem's Mitzvos are being fulfilled. The bad angel tries to lobby against the performance of that Mitzvah and then reports on high that the Mitzvah was not performed. Every Mitzvah has such a pair of angels, making every Mitzvah precious and consequential. But

because Shabbos is so central and vital to the spiritual life of a Jew, the stakes of how these angels relate to the Shabbos that they see is pivotal. One cannot overstate the importance of the moment when man joins with Shabbos. Everything about the home and the dweller, physically and spiritually, even the table and the beds, attest to how a person feels about being a living testimony to Hashem as the Creator.

Even the couches

The Halacha draws from this Gemara that one should take care to arrange the table and beds before the onset of Shabbos. While this certainly includes the beds for sleeping, the Gemara is likely referring to the couches on which they would eat. In the modern parlance, we would say that one should prepare the table and the chairs.

¹⁵ שבת קיט:



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Welcoming the angels

It seems clear that this Gemara provides the backdrop for our Sholom Aleichem song. We greet the Malachim (first stanza), we invite them in (second stanza), we request their Brochos as above (third stanza), and we bid them farewell (fourth stanza).

Three references to the Malachim

In Sholom Aleichem we refer to the Malachim with three descriptors. They are first called מלאכי השרת – angels that serve; next they are מלאכי עליון – angels on high; and thirdly they are called מלאכי השלום – angels of peace.

The list might be taken from the way we describe the angelic praises in Shacharis. After describing the praises that emanate from the heavenly luminaries, we turn our attention to the praises of the angels. תתברך לנצח צורנו – May our Creator and Redeemer be extolled, He Who Creates the holy ones (the angels). He fashions משרתים – attendants, a reference to the מלאכי השרת... those who stand at the highest places (a reference to מלאכי עליון) and sound their praises together. They join to accept Your Sovereignty, lovingly giving permission to one another to harmonize in praise – מלאכי השלום, angels of peace.

Another perspective

Another way of looking at Sholom Aleichem and its accompaniment, Eishes Chayil, is by thinking of our relationship with Shabbos and that of

Chosson and Kallah where Shabbos is the Kallah and Klal Yisroel is the Chosson.

Everything appears in pairs, except...

The Midrash¹⁶ describes how Hashem made everything in pairs. Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, Man and Woman, this world and the Next, everything has its mate. The only exception is the One Himself, a unity, alone and without any pairing. That is our declaration when we say שמע ישראל – we declare that Hashem is absolutely One and He does not share that Unity with anything else in His Creation.

With that in mind we can understand the petition that Shabbos raised before the Creator.¹⁷

Shabbos saw that each of the days of the week has a partner, a pair if you will. Sunday has Monday, Tuesday has Wednesday, and Thursday has Friday. But Shabbos felt alone, in a world where everything has a pair. The Midrash says that Hashem accepted the petition. Shabbos would be given its pair – כנסת ישראל היא – the Klal Yisroel will be your partner, your pair.

This is alluded to by the instruction that we are to remember Shabbos לקדשו – implying קידושין – marry her. Make her uniquely yours; cherish her as a husband would cherish his beloved wife.

The world is filled with imperfections and strengths. The strengths of one compensate for the weaknesses of the other. But Shabbos is perfect, and its perfection can only be paired with the totality of the Jewish People.

¹⁶ דברים רבה ב: לא

¹⁷ בראשית רבה יא: ח' מובא בחיד"א



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Another allusion to the marriage we are speaking of can be drawn from the first words of the Amidah on Friday night, the first 'Shmoneh Esrei' of Shabbos. There we read *אתה קדשת את יום השביעי* – while literally meaning 'sanctified' can also be understood as 'You gave Shabbos to us (Klal Yisroel) for the purpose of Kidushin – that we should marry the Shabbos.

Similarly, the paragraph that we recite three times on the eve of Shabbos, *ויכלו*, can be parsed to see the word *כלה* – bride – hidden within.

And if the eve of Shabbos is a marriage between Klal Yisroel and Shabbos, then the two escorting angels are the witnesses needed to affirm the union. And if the wedding ceremony takes place upon a man's entry into his home, then *אשה חיל*, a song of praise to the wife, both literal and proverbial, is certainly in order.

Takeaway: When I think of the onset of Shabbos, I will try to recognize that I am not only welcoming the Shabbos, but I am greeting our bride. It is not only Good Shabbos; it is also Mazal Tov!

Saying goodbye right after saying hello

The Rebbe Rayatz (the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe) explained why we take leave of the Malachim so soon after inviting them. It is a matter of proper respect. One should not eat in front of those who are unable to eat. And so, as we are about to partake of our meal, we bless the Malachim and bid them farewell, not to impose on them to stay while we eat, and they will not.

The *שערי תשובה* offers the explanation that we are not sending them away. We are limited as humans and we cannot see the Malachim. Thus, we do not know when they are going to leave. We bless them farewell such that whenever they choose to leave, they should go with our blessings of peace.

The *חיד"א* offers that these two angels parallel the pair who escort a *חתן* to his Chuppah. Having done their job, the *חתן* gives them a blessing.



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Illumination and Inspiration

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E7)

Many Jewish practices have suffered from the cruel effects of widespread Jewish ignorance. But the practice of Jewish women lighting Shabbos candles has persisted. What is the secret behind its durability? Why can no Jewish home be without those precious candles?

Shabbos candles and Aishes Chayil

In the Aishes Chayil, the closing chapter of Mishlei, which follows the order of the Alef-Bais and extols the merits of the Jewish woman, Shlomo HaMelech does not make a direct reference to Shabbos candles. Instead, there is a somewhat cryptic reference to candles in the Posuk beginning with the letter Tes. We read:

טַעֲמָה כִּי טוֹב סְחָרָה לֹא יִכָּבֶה בַּלַּיְלָה נֶגְהָ.

She senses that her enterprise is good, her candle is not extinguished at night.

Her candle is not extinguished

A simple reading of this half of the Posuk is a reference to a woman's remarkable diligence. She works tirelessly at all hours to ensure that everything that can be done is taken care of. We would not be wrong to understand the Posuk this way. But perhaps there is more.

At night

Another implication to the expression that her 'candle is not extinguished at night' is that 'night' does not only refer to nighttime. It can also refer to dark times, times when people are dispirited and disheartened. It is at those times when we

get to see the strength of the Jewish woman's candle. The Jewish men in Mitzrayim had lost the will to be with their wives and bring forth another generation. All looked bleak and dark. There was nothing to look forward to; redemption seemed unimaginable. It was precisely in that darkness that the Jewish women saw a glimmer of light. They carried the torch of faith in the promised redemption. They were able to relate to the coming dawn even while all around there was only darkness.

The ability to see past darkness requires a special kind of candle which the Jewish woman possesses.

The gift of positivity

This quality, exemplified in Mitzrayim, has been a hallmark of righteous Jewish women throughout the ages and is alive and well today, as well. The ability to see past the darkness requires a special kind of candle, and Shlomo HaMelech is

attesting to the Aishes Chayil possessing a durable, positive, forward-looking candle. The candle of *Bitachon*.

A light of Kedusha

Rabbi Gershon Ribner of Lakewood reported learning from Rav Yaakov Hillel that the role of the Jewish woman is to bring a spirit of Kedusha into the home. A home is a fortress bracing



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against the winds of impurity that blow all around it.

The candles are a symbol of that Kedusha. Apart from the familiar association of Kedusha with candles (we light a candle which impacts and connects with that which is purely spiritual, such as a Neshama), the *location* of the candles speak to the spiritual function that they serve. The candles are set in the focal point of the home, giving light to the table. There the family gathers to bask in the light and sanctity that she has kindled there.

By contrast, pointed out Rabbi Ribner, a man lights Chanukah candles outside. He ventures forth into the world to sanctify Hashem's Great Name in public. All the while, though, he is drawing from the Kedusha that is found in his home, where his wife has lit Shabbos candles.

The Shabbos candles in a Jewish home are durable because they hold the secret to Jewish endurance. They flicker with the light of *Bitachon* – a certainty that the light which Hashem has promised will dispel any and all darkness – and the light of *Kedusha* – that our lives are only meaningful to the extent that they are infused with sanctity.

Takeaway: I will try to take note of the Shabbos candles to 'see' the spirit of positivity and sanctity.



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The Wonders of Wine

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E8)

What makes wine so precious that it is considered sacred? Why is there no sacred Jewish moment without wine, including the Shabbos table? What about alcohol abuse?

The distinction of wine

Wine. The word elicits associations. Some associate wine with the fine tastes of connoisseurs who forfeit precious resources of time and money as they search for the perfect wine. Others think of wine as an escape from their reality via an intoxicating beverage, with all that implies.

But we associate wine with the most sacred rituals in our lives. We cannot imagine a wedding without wine under the Chuppah (in fact, there are two cups of wine under the Chuppah, one marking the Kiddushin and one for the Sheva Brochos) or naming a baby at his bris without holding a cup of wine. And few would consider a Shabbos table complete without wine.

Wine is a symbol of joy, as the Posuk¹⁸ teaches וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לִבָּב אָנוּשׁ – wine brings joy to the hearts of mankind. (Indeed, when joy is restrained, as in times of personal or national grieving, we also refrain from wine.) The רד"ק comments on this verse that drinking wine in proper measure even enhances one's ability to reason.

The paradox of wine

We have one of many paradoxes in Jewish life. That which is profoundly good can also be bad. The same wine that elevates a sacred moment and even enhances one's capacity for thinking is the same wine that can and has destroyed countless lives through its abuse. It has made wise the hearts of some and has turned great people into fools.

With wine we recognize and celebrate the potential that is inherent in every human being.

The Torah tells us that the righteous Noah, who was saved from the destruction that befell the world owing to his righteousness, slipped from his lofty level because of wine.¹⁹ As well, one of the opinions in the Gemara²⁰ identifies the vine as the forbidden fruit that אדם and חווה ate in Gan Eden. Wine is truly the finest and worst beverage.

The special characteristic of wine

Wine is transformative. On its most basic level wine is no different than the other extracts from fruit. If you squeeze an orange, you will have orange juice and if you squeeze an apple you will have apple juice. But those extracts are just a part of the original. They have no distinction of their own. This is evidenced by the fact that the Brocha recited over any of those extracts is a

¹⁸ תהלים קד: טו

¹⁹ בראשית ט: כ-כא

²⁰ ברכות מ.



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step down. The Brocha over fruit is העץ while the Brocha over that which is extracted from that fruit is שהכל. It steps down from a more distinguished Brocha to a more general, less special Brocha.

Not so with wine. The grape is העץ, but its extract is the precious wine which gets a Brocha of distinction. The extract is a step up from its source. It has been transformed. Like flour which has been elevated by our turning it into bread, the grape has been elevated by our turning it into wine. That transformation unleashes the potential that was contained in the grape. With wine we recognize and celebrate the potential that is inherent in every human being. Wine symbolizes the finest that is within us. But if that power is not harnessed then the wine will release the base instincts that lie in us and its destructive capacity must be recognized, as well.

The potential of two

Wine does not only release the capacity that is potential in a person; it symbolizes the potential that is hidden in a union. We hold a cup of wine under the Chuppah and thereby symbolically bless the couple that the potential in their union should be released and revealed.

May the juice be sweeter than the fruit

The Gemara²¹ refers to a proper union between two people who are dedicated to Hashem's Torah as ענבי הגפן בענבי הגפן דבר נאה ומתקבל – the fruits of the vine joining the fruits of the vine is a pleasing union. Why the choice of wine as the symbol of a good Shidduch? Because we look

forward to the new union to be even greater than their original vines. The couple has the capacity to unleash potential that was perhaps not seen in their parents. Let them be greater, ever greater, just as fine wine gets better and better. The connoisseur looks for the better wine, but he is forgetting that wine is but a symbol of the sacred potential that we are looking to unleash. Do not spend your time bringing out a better wine; invest in bringing out more of the spiritual potential that is unlocked in a person and in a union.

Similarly, at a bris, we hold a cup of wine while we pray and ask Hashem that זה הקטן גדול יהיה – this little fellow is but a lovable bundle of potential. The cup of wine symbolizes our prayer that the meaning and spiritual mission of this new life be revealed in the world. Wine is a symbol and an expression of the capacity to become more than it started out being.

The wedding of Shabbos

It is fitting, therefore, that we should hold a cup of wine as we bring in the Shabbos. On one level, the entry of Shabbos marks the union between the כנסת ישראל and the Shabbos. And so, we raise a cup as we would at a Chasuna.

But the symbol of the wine is that we are stepping up and revealing the sacred capacity that is hidden in time. Our transition from the secular six days to the sacred seventh day must be recognized as going from the grape to the wine, from the mundane to the sublime. When we unleash the sacred essence contained in time called Shabbos, it is fitting that we hold up a cup

²¹ פסחים מט.



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of wine. We remind ourselves that a person who lives on the plain of the grape all his life will never experience the greatness of wine. One who recognizes the step up reaches for wine.²²

Teshuva and wine

Perhaps our raising a cup of wine in celebration of man's capacity to transform and elevate himself is a form of תשובה. In this case, we are atoning for that first sin. Instead of using the fruit of the vine to debase ourselves and descend into our base instincts we are holding up the cup of wine celebrating elevation and transcendence. Shabbos is here and time has become sanctified.

Perhaps this significance of the wine of Kiddush is built into the fact that the word שבת hints at the word שב – return. And it would connect us with the Midrash that says that when אדם הראשון discovered the power of Teshuva he sang out מזמור שיר ליום השבת.

To understand the cup of wine is to understand the power of transcendence (the sanctity of time), of joining כנסת ישראל with the Shabbos (the Chasuna), repair and return (the שב of שבת), of stepping up exactly where one had previously slipped down – the essence of wine.

Good Shabbos, L'Chaim and Welcome back.

Takeaway: I will try to recognize wine as a powerful symbol of what can go wrong and all that can go right.

²² ed note: it is interesting that Challah can be used for Kiddush as well. Bread, like wine, is a symbol of the step up, in this case from the plain grain to the

sublime bread, as the continuation of our original Posuk reads – ולחם לבב אנוש יסעד –



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The Spirit of Song

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E9)

Do you know the power of music? How can you tap into the power of music to elevate yourself? Do you know what the word 'Zemer' means?

The Power of Music

Each of us is endowed with an intellect and emotions. The relationship is complex. In part the complexity stems from the fact that we reason and decide with our intellect, but we act with our emotions. R' Yisroel Salanter has been quoted as saying that the longest distance in the world is between one's mind and one's heart.

Our mission is to clarify things with our intellect to the point that they become clear to our heart and thereby impact our feelings, actions, and thoughts. As the Torah tells us:

וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשָּׁבָת אֶל לִבְךָ...

Today you should know and then turn that knowledge over to your heart...

The transition is hardly automatic. There are many barricades and roadblocks preventing what we know from connecting with what we feel. But that is our mission. On the one hand we must study and clarify what we learn to strengthen and intensify the message coming from the intellect. And on the other, we need to open our hearts and our emotions to receive that message. R' Yisroel Salanter saw this truth and he introduced *Mussar B'hispa'alus*. He taught that if you want to drill the truths of Torah and Mussar into your heart you must use music and song. The haunting melodies that his disciples employed to achieve

this connection would melt hearts of stone even before one listened to the words that they were trying to inculcate. A song opens the door to the heart and then we can open our heart to the song.

Music opens pathways to one's emotions and makes the heart receptive to the messages of devotion and truth.

Music is a pathway, indeed a highway, to the essence of man. The exalted service of the

Koahanim in the Bais Hamikdash was not valid unless joined with the chorus of voices and instruments of the Leviim. Their music was indispensable, even on Shabbos!

A Navi, a prophet, had to rise to levels of personal perfection that most modern readers would consider beyond the range of a human being. Yet, after rising to those lofty levels of complete devotion to Hashem they could not receive prophecy without music.

*A Zemer lets you
become aware
of that which
your head may
not yet know,
but which your
Neshama is
keenly aware of.*

The dark side of the coin

Because music opens channels to the core of the person it must be guarded with multiple sentries. If left unchecked, music can open channels to the darkest side of a person's nature, as well. The decadence of the society that surrounds us can be readily traced to music that draws out a person's raw emotion, unchecked by the intellect. Music is a powerful tool, indeed.



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Employed correctly, in the service of the intellect, it can elevate us to the Heavens. Used improperly it can unhinge man from his intellect and reduce mankind to the level of the animal that is meant to serve man.

Shabbos and song

With that background in mind, we can turn our attention to Shabbos. Shabbos is a taste and an entry point into the world of eternity. It is lofty beyond anything we can imagine so long as we are walking on earth. But we are meant to get a taste of things to come. Shabbos is not meant to be just another day of עולם הזה without some activities and maybe with some extra sleep. Shabbos is a taste of eternity.

To taste eternity, you need to step past what your intellect knows and encounter truths that only your Neshama knows. We wish to access, even for a day, the clarity about eternity and closeness (דבקות) to Hashem that our Neshama has stored up. Accessing your Neshama is a process like accessing your heart; it can be blocked by all sorts of distractions if you do not zero in and open some doors.

Once again, we turn to our trusty tools to open channels to our deepest self. Music and song.

Zemer and Shir

We have two words which seem to both translate to mean song. But in our holy tongue there are no synonyms. So, what is the difference between them?

Shir may refer to poetry. It is an expression of the intellect. It is produced by the mind when

one realizes something one did not realize before. It is not necessarily sung to a tune, though it may be.

Zemer may refer to that which is musical. It is the sound of one's soul. It springs forth either as the musical expression of the soul or as an invitation for the soul to share its precious gifts. It may be attached to a Shir, but it can also exist on its own.

But it must always be directed to drawing out the strains of holiness that are embedded in the soul.

Zemer and Pruning

Interestingly, the word Zemer also means pruning. When one prunes, one cuts away the branches that are drawing life-giving sap but are not producing life-giving fruit. By pruning the tree, we give the healthy branches full access to the nurturing sap of the tree.

In that sense we can see that a Zemer not only opens up channels to our souls, it also cuts away the distractions and obsessive thoughts about materialism. It should not surprise us, then, that before turning to the declaration of our total devotion to Hashem in the Shma (and its accompanying Brochos) we first recite פסוקי דמרא – which can be translated as verses of songs or verses of pruning. We must use the powerful knife of Zemer to cut past the mundane and distracting thoughts that prevent us from giving ourselves over fully to our Creator. Zemer opens pathways to our essence.

Experience the music of Shabbos



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It is hardly enough to know that today is Shabbos. If we remain on the level of the intellect, we will miss the core of Shabbos as a gateway to eternity. Rav Shach זצ"ל bemoaned that there were families, even those with learned fathers at the head of the table, who were not able to transmit the beauty of Shabbos and its eternal blessings to the next generation. Rav Shach זצ"ל attributed the failure to the absence of Zemiros. Shabbos must be experienced by both the intellect and the emotions.

Not just singing

When you listen and, hopefully, join in with the tunes of לכה דודי, שלום עליכם and of אשת חיל and the various Zemiros, you will hear the sounds that elevate us to meet our Neshamos.

Not all songs are meant to be sung

Klal Yisroel has a discerning ear. Some tunes have captured the hearts of the Gedolim and Tzaddikim because they are keys to open the gateway to the emotions and to the soul. Other tunes are imitations of the unchecked noises of the non-Jewish world and have not met with the approval of Klal Yisroel and its Gedolim and Tzaddikim. And because the stakes are high, we dare not invoke a tune or song which may not draw a connection to our Neshama. The opposite could be the effect and we would be giving attention and sap to a fruitless branch.

Takeaway: I will try to keep in mind the powerful tool of music and use it to draw truth into my heart and to draw clarity from my Neshama.

A song steps in when words fail

There are times when we feel a need to go beyond the limitations of words. And, again, we turn to our trusty tool, the song.

I have been privileged to travel with groups to visit places in Europe where Torah and Yiddishkeit once thrived. Those are also places where countless Jews were slaughtered, most leaving nothing, not even a gravestone. When standing next to a grave where lie countless Jews who were killed without leaving a trace on earth, we did not have words. We could cry, but that would be undirected, unchecked emotion. We could do more than that. We could sing. And when we combined our tears with our song of גם – כי אלק בגיא צלמות לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי while I walk in the shadow of death I do not fear because You are with me – we were able to tap into the place where the experience made a difference. We took what our heads knew, that Bitachon is the only response to what we were witnessing, and we cut through with song to give access to our hearts.

Do not shortchange yourself. Connect with the song, with the Zemiros, and let yourself become aware of that which your head may not yet know, but which your Neshama is keenly aware of. Connecting with eternity is what Shabbos is all about.



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The Treasures of Torah

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E10)

What is the relationship between Torah and Shabbos? Are food and rest central on Shabbos or is Torah central? Let us immerse ourselves in the subject and discover a way to combine the two.

Creation for Torah

Chazal teach us that the world was created on condition that Klal Yisroel would accept the Torah. And both the completion of Creation and the giving of the Torah to Klal Yisroel were on Shabbos. In a word, that means that maximum Kedusha (the Torah) met maximum Kedusha (the Shabbos). And with that combination, the mission of Klal Yisroel was set in motion. The centrality of Torah in the theme of Shabbos cannot be overstated. The Midrash spells it out clearly:²³ The Torah expressed concern over the fact that it was at risk of being neglected now that Klal Yisroel (upon entering Eretz Yisroel) would be occupied producing their daily bread. Hakodosh Baruch Hu then became the Shadchan, so to speak. Shabbos would become the mate for the Torah. On Shabbos, when Klal Yisroel are freed from all other concerns, they can give themselves fully to the precious Torah. It is not possible to disconnect Shabbos from the Torah. The question is only how to manage the connection. As we will see, managing this 'shidduch' can be challenging.

Two opinions in the Yerushalymi

The Yerushalmi²⁴ cites two, seemingly incompatible opinions about Shabbos. One opinion is that Shabbos was given to Klal Yisroel for eating and drinking, which translates to the term עונג. Another opinion is that Shabbos was only given to Klal Yisroel for learning Torah. The two opinions seem far apart, indeed!

*Growing in
Torah and
enjoying each
precious
moment of the
day must
permeate every
part of Shabbos.*

No conflict between the two views

The Meforshim agree that there is no conflict between the two views. The Halachic resolution of the two views considers what the person does during the week. Those who toil in Torah all week long were given Shabbos to recharge their batteries so that they can carry on their precious learning for the week to come. Those who earn their daily bread during the week were given Shabbos so that they can immerse themselves in the study of Torah. Both views agree that Shabbos is only for the study of Torah, but different people advance their Torah study differently on Shabbos.

Ironically, it is precisely those who toil in Torah all week who forgo their 'entitlement' to indulge on Shabbos. Their love for Torah does not let them be 'reasonable' and take it easy on

²³ בראשית רבה פרק י"א:ח

²⁴ תלמוד ירושלמי שבת טו:ג



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Shabbos.²⁵ An example of this 'unreasonable love' was shown to us by the saintly Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel זצ"ל, the legendary Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim.

Rav Nosson Tzvi זצ"ל had a burning love for Torah such that, even while burdened with the debilitating effects of Parkinson's Disease, he devoted himself with Mesiras Nefesh to Torah. When he was asked why he did not take advantage of Shabbos to ease up on his learning and rest, he concealed his 'unreasonable' love for Torah with a 'reasonable' explanation. He said that when his יתירה – the extra Neshama which is granted to each of us on Shabbos – returns to its heavenly abode on שבת מוצאי, they will ask it what it learned over Shabbos and what חידושים were culled from that learning. He did not want to leave his יתירה without a response to the heavenly question.

Another possible resolution

There is, perhaps, another way to join the two opinions stated in the Yerushalmi. Shabbos was given both for עונג and for Torah. And the way forward is to make sure that one's learning on Shabbos is עונג – pleasurable, and to make sure that one's שבת, eating and drinking, is filled with Torah study. On Shabbos we are meant to learn what we enjoy and enjoy what we learn.

This is not simply a clever way to combine the two opinions. This combination finds its way into the Halacha. If one would become so taxed by learning new material that one would suffer a loss of עונג שבת then one should review familiar material rather than delve deeply into new

material. But if one has the capacity to dig into one's learning and enjoy producing a חידוש – a novel understanding of חז"ל – then that becomes one's calling for Shabbos. The key is to ensure that one maximizes one's Torah and one's enjoyment.

Examples of Torah on Shabbos

My father, Rav Avrohom Zelig Krohn זצ"ל, was a master at finding the point where תורה and עונג meet. As we were growing up in Kew Gardens, Queens, my father זצ"ל took pains to make sure that there was an early Minyan in our Shul. The early Davening afforded an opportunity for combining תורה and עונג. He would arrange Kiddush for us after Davening at home which was the prelude to joining with him to learn עין יעקב. Here was an opportunity to highlight Chazal's approach to יראת שמים and אמונת חכמים. We were learning and we were enjoying.

And it was not just for us, his children. Many well-known figures in contemporary Jewish life got their foundations in אמונה and יראה from the lessons that my father ע"ה taught on those Shabbos mornings.

And the lessons were not just meant for the boys. I recall my sisters sitting around the table, soaking up the lessons that have guided our lives since. The link between תורה and עונג filled the air. And, looking back, it was that special Shabbos combination of תורה and עונג that inspired us to create Shabbos learning opportunities for our children, for our grandchildren, and for our guests! בס"ד

²⁵ כנאמר שאהבה מקלקלת את השורה



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Not a classroom

Rav Matisyahu Solomon שליט"א has pointed out the risks associated with forcing children to perform or with correcting them on Shabbos when they recall their lessons. I leave it to the teachers to decide if such practices are necessary in the classroom, but they have no place where the aim is to link תורה and עונג. Growing in Torah must join with enjoying each precious moment of the day and thus permeate every part of Shabbos; there is no place for putting one aside in favor of the other. If joining the two requires some creativity, then now is the time to tap into that creativity.

The role of preparation

When we think about the coming Shabbos, we must ask ourselves if we are looking forward to studying and sharing Torah on Shabbos. That requires special attention to our relationship with

Torah during the week leading up to Shabbos. We must each do what it takes to align our internal compass so that we cannot wait to learn, both ourselves and with our children, on Shabbos. The key is to seek out and find the parts and aspects of Torah that you love and are drawn to.

Children learn and pick up our values with amazing antenna. What interests us will interest them. Our curiosity becomes theirs. Shabbos is not the time to force oneself to learn or to say a 'required' Dvar Torah at the table, a 'to-do' on our list. It is an opportunity to let your interest and curiosity about Torah shine through. That is how children grow to have a thirst for Torah which they associate with pleasure and joy. If this message helps you to prioritize the Torah that you enjoy during the week so that you look forward to Shabbos learning, then you are on the right road.

Takeaway: I will try to blend תורה and עונג so that my Shabbos is filled with both simultaneously.



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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

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.

*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.*



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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 Zemiros 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.



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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 Zemiros 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.



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Instead of dismissing the young man the Chofetz Chaim asked to meet the Bochur. 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 Bochur 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

Bochur'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.



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Just One Shabbos

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E12)

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

The power of dedication²⁶

Much has been written about the spiritual bravery of Jews during the inferno of World War II. Among the many heroes of the spirit was the Klausenberger Rebbe, whose dedication to Hashem while suffering the travails of Iyov helps us define the term עבד ה' – servant of Hashem. Volumes have been written describing his selfless dedication to serving Hashem and his fellow Jews and many more can and should be written.

Learn from the spiritually vibrant

There is much to be gained from those who never said no to their soul's yearning for dedication to Hashem.

There are many books that describe the destruction, but never enough that detail the triumph of the נשמה.

Far more can be learned by studying the fire of faith that burned in their hearts than from recounting the fire that consumed their bodies.

The first שבת

It was the first Shabbos after the liberation of Jews from the torment and torture of the concentration camps in 1945. Survivors had been sent to various D.P. (Displaced Persons) camps. In the Feldafing camp near Munich, the Klausenberger Rebbe, Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam (1905-1994), was going through the camp calling out to people, “Men geit firren Shabbos (We will conduct Shabbos).” The Rebbe knew that the most vital step in liberation is freeing the spirit to relate to Hashem properly.

*The heavenly
gift called
restoration of
the dead souls
began in that
room.*

Most people viewed him scornfully. How could anyone be interested in Shabbos or any aspect of Yiddishkeit after what they had suffered? People had nothing but the shabby clothes on their emaciated bodies. The Rebbe had lost his wife and 10 children (he did not yet know that his 11th child had survived but had succumbed to illness in a D.P. camp). Many thought that if he could still feel an affinity towards the Almighty, so be it, but it was not for them. They were too angry and too embittered to even think about observing a Shabbos or performing Mitzvos.²⁷

²⁶ Heard from Rabbi Nosson Mueller, the Menahel of Yeshiva Toras Emes in Brooklyn.

²⁷ Years later the Rebbe reported, 'After the great devastation of our generation, many thought, at first, that Yahadus had become extinct. When I was liberated at Feldafing, where they designated a room



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Offer warm food and they will come

The Rebbe saw there was not much interest. He played a card which has been played for ages to encourage people to participate in spiritual events: he told them that they would be treated to warm food on Shabbos. That works well in most circles but was especially true for the famished survivors. To make good on this promise the Rebbe located some beans and potatoes and had someone cook them so they would be ready for the Shabbos morning seudah.

A long table was set up for those who would come to the Friday-night seudah. Barely a minyan came to daven, but, as the Rebbe predicted, there were close to 50 people at the table for some warm food.

Two worlds meet

The broken people who had gathered were just waiting for the food, but the Rebbe was deeply involved in the spirit of Shabbos. The contrast between those sitting around the table and the Rebbe was striking. The Rebbe had entered eternity and they were stuck in their present misfortune.

Started with שלום עליכם

They watched as the Rebbe began singing שלום עליכם. He was filled with deep emotion as he

for davening, a group of sincere youths attached themselves to me and, together, we cleaned it up and readied the room for use as a Beis Midrash. There were, however, others who were opposed to this, complaining that we were inciting another potential Hitler (G-d forbid). In addition, when we had begun to put up Chuppahs to conduct weddings, some Jewish folks pelted us with stones. In the end, Boruch Hashem, we prevailed. A spirit of teshuva came from

welcomed the peaceful, holy angels. Those angels would now replace the angels of death that had stalked, plagued, and overtaken His people throughout the preceding years. Two or three people meekly joined him in song while the others stood around, heads uncovered, unmoved. The Rebbe bid farewell to the angels of peace. Those angels had brought with them a glow of Shabbos that had not been experienced in what seemed like forever.

רבון כל העולמים

Then the Rebbe began chanting the prayer רבון אדון כל. When he came to the words, כל העולמים – Master of all souls, he was beside himself with grief. He allowed himself to experience the torrent of anguish for the countless lost souls, during what would later be termed the Holocaust. He had seen the deaths of thousands. Yet, now, in what seemed like an unbelievable affirmation of faith to those who were present, he turned to His Creator, 'the Blessed King, who redeems and rescues.' He continued the Tefilah, 'I gratefully thank You, Hashem for all the kindness You have done with me...'

The heavenly gift called restoration of the dead souls began in the room. Some people wiped tears from their eyes. Here was a man who

above, which inspired a great many Jews who we had thought were beyond reach We may not have possessed any great tzaddikim who could revive us with a tal shel techia (dew of life). It came straight from heaven in a wondrous way.' (Jewish Observer Nov 1994 p.12 Translated by Yisroel Yehuda Pollack)



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suffered so much thanking Hashem for His kindness. His belief and faith were incomprehensible! But the Rebbe carried on with the moving words — and carried some of the people with him.

'Please, O King, instruct Your angels to consider me with mercy.' He then recited the words in which the petitioner presents his merit for making this request:

'For I have kindled my lights and made my bed.' And lifting his hands up to Heaven, the Rebbe interrupted himself, and began speaking to directly to his Creator: 'Holy Creator, I say just the opposite, the הדלקת מטחי – You have burned my family, my wife, and my children – yet still, the הצעתי נרותי, I will set my candles, because Holy Creator, I believe in You and Your ways.'

Setting the candle

The Rebbe allowed his pain to emerge in prayer before Hashem and he repeated his inversion of the original prayer. As Shlomo HaMelech writes, נר ה' נשמת אדם – A man's soul is the candle of Hashem.²⁸ The Rebbe affirmed that he would reset Hashem's candle on many levels. Not only would he rebuild his family, but he would rebuild his community.

Takeaway: I will try to mark this Shabbos as though it is not another Shabbos, but my first Shabbos.

The miracle of restoration

By now almost everyone in the room was crying with him. It was only one Shabbos, but the experience of that Friday night re-opened the door to faith for many of the people who were present. They and their children and grandchildren who would be born in the years ahead would emerge as observant Jews from the spark that was ignited at that Shabbos table.

It was but one שבת

When telling this story, Rabbi Mueller concluded with the suggestion that this transformation is hinted at in the Posuk ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת – The Children of Israel shall observe *the* Shabbos. It is written in singular, one Shabbos, for when one Shabbos is kept with such intensity and inspiration, it will lead to לעשות את השבת לדורותם – the Shabbos being kept for generations.²⁹

This Friday night when you say the words, כי הדלקתי נרותי והצעתי מטחי, try to connect to how the Rebbe said them that Friday night in the Feldafing D.P. camp. Many in that era *died* על קידוש השם – for the sanctification of His Name. We who live in free countries with limitless opportunities should make it our life's goal to *live* to sanctify His Name.

²⁸ משלי כ: כז

²⁹ שמות לא: טז-יז



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A Day of Delight

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E13)

On Shabbos we are meant to bring out the best in ourselves. A story can help us get there.

The חסיד got delayed

Our story begins with a חסיד who was en route to spend Shabbos with his Rebbe, R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa (known as the Rebbe Reb Bunim 1765-1827. He was a disciple of the saintly Chozeh m'Lublin.). The Rebbe R' Bunim was known for his demand for authenticity and connecting with one's authentic feelings of service and devotion. The Rebbe's Shabbos was filled with profound joy – שמחה. Those who wished to see a living example of the words of the Zemer ושמחה אורה ונאור – this day (Shabbos) is for Klal Yisroel a day of light and joy – would come to Peshischa to share Shabbos with the Rebbe R' Bunim.

He did not make it to Peshischa

Our חסיד, still en route to his Rebbe, was not known for his cheerful demeanor. In fact, quite the opposite was the case. It did not take much for him to feel, and often to show his disdain for whatever it was that did not go as he would have wished.

Try as he may, one delay led to another and our חסיד had to spend Shabbos in a town not far from, but not with, the Rebbe R' Bunim in Peshischa. One might imagine that the various delays did not make his day any brighter. Indeed, when he came to the Rebbe on Motzei Shabbos he vented his unhappiness that he was unable to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe.

The Rebbe explains why the חסיד did not arrive

The Rebbe R' Bunim explained to the forlorn חסיד that his inability to make it to Peshischa was due to the intervention of Shabbos. Shabbos was unwilling to host him in Peshischa. And the Rebbe explained why.

Shabbos is a gracious host

The Rebbe described the various ways that Shabbos steps aside and makes room for others. On Rosh Chodesh, Shabbos steps aside to make room for the special Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh. On YomTov, Shabbos gives way and allows YomTov to take over the Laining and the Mussaf. Indeed, on Yom Kippur, Shabbos defers and allows even the meals to be set aside in favor of the fasting on Yom Kippur. What a host!

The exception

The only exception to the gracious hosting the Shabbos affords to those who come is when Tish'a B'Av comes knocking on its door. If sadness and grieving is at the door Shabbos insists that it wait until after Shabbos. Shabbos is only available for joy and light; it is not home for sadness and morose.

Now you understand

And so, concluded the Rebbe, Shabbos did not let you come to Peshischa. The Rebbe encouraged the חסיד to work on his Middos and become a joyful person such that Shabbos will gladly let him in.

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available for
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Learning Mussar from the Challah

Rav Abba Zalka Gewirtz זצ"ל was a close Talmid of R' Dovid Leibowitz זצ"ל, the founder of Yeshivas Rabeinu Yisroel Meir HaKohen, known popularly as the Chofetz Chaim Yeshiva (now located in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens). Rabbi Gewirtz reports a comment about human nature from his beloved Rebbe.

The fellow gets irritated

Imagine a fellow who comes home from Shul and notices that the Challah cover is sitting flat on the Challah tray. His wife has forgotten to bring out the Challahs.

[By way of background, we cover the Challahs because typically if one is going to eat bread and drink wine, then the order of Brochos is to recite בורא פרי הגפן first, and only then recite Kiddush over the wine. Chazal instructed that Kiddush should ideally be recited over wine and they thereby 'passed over' the Challah and designated the wine as first. The Challah is Halachically 'unhappy' with this change of order and so the custom is to cover the Challah such that it is 'not present' to witness its embarrassment when we

Takeaway: I will try to be on the lookout for anything that can help me reach the goal of joy and peace on Shabbos.

override the rules of priority to recite Kiddush over wine.]

How could you not bring the Challahs – think of the embarrassment!

The fellow is irate and chastises his poor wife in front of the guests. How could she have neglected the Challahs?! What an embarrassment!

Mussar from our Minhagim

R' Dovid, who gained his approach to Mussar from his Rebbe, the Alter of Slabodka, pointed out the irony of the scene. Here, the custom to cover the Challahs is to avoid embarrassing the Challah while the husband in the story is embarrassing his wife, perhaps even in front of guests, over the oversight.

We are meant to internalize the message of our customs and use those messages to help with the hard work of enhancing our Middos. There is no simple shortcut, but a good story and a good thought that stays on our minds can provide a steady stream of Middos development.



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Lifting Up the Lonely

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E14)

Shabbos is also a time for kindness. A story can help warm our hearts to kindness.

Being kind and using your head

The Chofetz Chaim, in his great work, Ahavas Chessed, points out the central role of Chessed in the life of a Jew. He stresses that we are meant to not only *perform* acts of Chessed – kindness – we are meant to *love* Chessed and seek it out. One of the ways of seeking out and loving Chessed is by applying our minds and thoughts to doing Chessed intelligently, not just giving, but giving wisely.

'אֲשֶׁרִי מִשְׁכִּיל אֶל דֶּל כְּיוֹם רָעָה יִמְלֻטְהוּ ה'

*Praiseworthy is he who contemplates the needy; on the day of disaster Hashem will deliver him.*³⁰³¹

Contemplating the needy means thinking as deeply and as thoroughly as one can about the needs of the other. What does the other person *really* need; what would help him or her in the best way?

Dovid HaMelech is telling us that a person who goes beyond just *doing* Chessed for the needy, but who thinks through the best way to do so, will be spared by Hashem on the day of Great Judgement.

Surely, it is worthwhile to spend a few minutes focusing on what it means to think about the

needy person and how best to help him or her. A story can bring this out perhaps better than any lecture about the subject.

Rabbi Salman Mutzafi

There was a great Rav and Kabbalist in Yerushalayim, Rav Salman Mutzafi (1900-1974). Among the many distinguished Rabonim who also lived at that time was a Rav who was confined to his bed. Rav Mutzafi, each week, would stop to visit this Rav at his home when he

left ישיבת בני ציון after Davening on ליל שבת. They would share Torah thoughts, and he would consult with the Rav about the questions and rulings that he had rendered over the course of the week. Of course, his visit would delay his meal at home as his family awaited his arrival.

Why on Shabbos?

Rav Mutzafi's family brought up the subject of the timing of the visit with the Rav. After all, the Rav was confined to his bed all week long. Why not visit at a time which did not conflict with the Seudas Shabbos?

Thinking about the other

The Rav described to them how nice it is for a Talmid Chacham when he is escorted home after

He would visit when the Rav at home would be most lonely and when a visit would serve most to lift his spirits.

³⁰ תהילים מא:ב

³¹ Translation from the Artscroll Tehillim



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Davening on שבת ליל שבת. Students and others gather for the escort. This one shared a novel Torah thought, this one raised a שאלה and received a פסק הלכה, this one just wanted to greet the Rav and receive his Brocha. It was a joyous time for a Talmid Chacham. And that means that this is an especially difficult time for the scholar who is no longer able to make it out to his Shul and is not escorted home. The infirm Rav surely would benefit from company at any time, but the time after Davening on שבת ליל שבת is a time when he felt especially lonely and dejected. *That* is the time for the visit, to pick up his spirits and provide some of that atmosphere of sharing Torah and consulting on Halachic and communal matters.

Having thought the matter through Rav Mutzafi knew that the time was right, and the time was then. He would visit when the Rav at home would be most lonely and when a visit would serve most to lift his spirits. Now his family

understood and embraced their role; they were delighted to be part of the thought-through and well-timed Chessed.

Less time requires more thinking

Most of us are busy. It would be too easy to claim that we do not have time for Chessed; we are occupied with making a living and looking after our family. But everyone wants protection when standing before the blinding light of truth on the Day of Judgement. The rush in which we live makes the need to think ever more carefully about the needs of others. The rush does not exempt anyone, but it certainly requires that we use the precious resource of time carefully. Hashem assures us that if we think and analyze the needs of others, we will be shielded from the blinding light of judgement.

And it could be that just the right time is on Shabbos!

Takeaway: I will try to be on the lookout for ways to best address the needs of others.



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Eminence and Elevation through Erev Shabbos

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E15)

Erev Shabbos is a time to set the tone for Shabbos. A story can help us keep Erev Shabbos in mind.

A Rav in צפת was a Bochur in Mir

Rav Avraham Simcha HaCohen Kaplan (1911-1989) was the respected Rov of Tzfas for nearly half a century. He would often relate this story about the precious significance of preparing for Shabbos on Erev Shabbos.

When Rav Kaplan was a bochur he learned in the famous Mirer Yeshiva in Mir, Poland. At that time most of the Yeshivos were still operating on a system whereby a bochur would pay to reside by, and often eat at the home of a local family. R' Avraham Simcha got to know his hosts quite well over the course of the years that he spent in their home.

Admonishing about ערב שבת

On one Friday morning R' Avraham Simcha overheard his hostess bidding farewell to her husband who was heading out to do some shopping for Shabbos. She reminded him to be back by noon since it was Erev Shabbos.

A single reminder would likely have been more than enough given that her husband was an *ehrlicher yid* for whom Shabbos was inviolate and given that his shopping trip would not take him far from home. But she not only provided one such reminder, she also provided several, one more urgent than the next.

After her husband left, R' Avraham Simcha plucked up his courage and asked his hostess about the need to provide repeated reminders about a matter that seemed 'covered' by the facts that her husband was a careful Yid, that his trip was short, and that the day was long.

A story about ערב שבת

His hostess shared with R' Avraham Simcha the story behind her special care about ערב שבת.

She and her husband were childless for many years and with great *סעייחא דשמיא* they were blessed with a son. Soon after, however, they noticed that their newborn was not developing properly *ר"ל*.

*The word שומר
in the term
שומר שבת
implies not
just guarding
but
anticipating.*

They went up the chain of medical experts, none of whom had very promising words to say. She finally traveled from Mir and reached the expert in the field in Vienna who gave her the grim, and seemingly final, prognosis. Their son's days were numbered.

She recalls leaving the doctor's office sobbing in the street clutching her baby in her arms. She did not even notice the impact that her sobbing was having on the street around her. But one Jew did not just turn away, he approached her and asked why she was wailing. She told her story and wept at the prospect of losing her only child.



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Go to the Chofetz Chaim

The bystander listened carefully and gave her advice: On your way back to Mir you must make a stop in Radin and seek a Brocha from the holy Chofetz Chaim. When the woman indicated that she understood that the Chofetz Chaim no longer was seeing people the bystander insisted. You must go and try.

Indeed, she made a stop in Radin and, as expected, she was turned away at the door. The Chofetz Chaim was not receiving people. Her cries upon hearing that the door to a Brocha was closed made their way to one of the attendants who inquired as to the nature of her concern. When he heard that at issue was her only long-awaited child, he brought her into the Chofetz Chaim.

A Lesson in ערב שבת

The Chofetz Chaim apologized for his inability to help. He was too old to undertake fasts on their behalf, etc. But when the attendant indicated to the Chofetz Chaim the nature of the pending tragedy the Chofetz Chaim began to speak. He told her what she must accept, and their son would be healed בעזרה.

The Chofetz Chaim gave the following prescription:

1. By midday on ערב שבת the tablecloth and candlesticks must be set on the table.
2. She must light candles per the time that is customary for הדלקת נרות.
3. Once she lights candles there is to be no more מלאכה done in the home at all; it is to be Shabbos for everyone.

Now you understand

With that background, R' Avraham Simcha understood that the stakes for his hostess were no less than the life of her only child, who began to thrive from the time they came home and undertook their new regimen for ערב שבת.

What it means to be a שומר שבת

This touching story is not just about a faraway place and time and the Brocha of a great Tzaddik. This story relates to our homes every week.

We generally associate being a שומר שבת with being cautious not to violate any of the איסורים associated with the holy day. But the word שומר implies not just guarding but anticipating. The Posuk (בראשית לז:יא) says that when Yaakov Avinu heard Yosef's dreams, וראביו שמר את הדבר, Yaakov Avinu, his father, looked forward to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Yosef's rise to greatness, ומתי יבוא when will it come, as Rashi there points out.

Being a שומר שבת means *anticipating* the arrival of שבת קודש as one would look forward to the most rewarding event coming up. That creates an atmosphere of joyful anticipation that dissipates the tendency of many to step on one another's toes on ערב שבת. Setting the Shabbos table early does not just signal that one is ahead of the frantic preparation game; it invokes a spirit of שבת קודש into the home on Friday.

ערב שבת and ששן

My Rav, Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א, suggested that when the first couple, אדם וחוה, came to



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discord on the first ערב שבת, they did not just have the world's first domestic spat. They opened the door for the שטן to get a foothold into the door of every Jewish home on ערב שבת. (He pointed out the note of the ערוך השלחן או"ח רסב:ה who asserts, based on the Gemara גיטין נב. that the שטן has special access to disrupt on ערב שבת.) From that first ערב שבת onward we have an extra

task on our plate. We do not just have to prepare for Shabbos, we must do so in peace and harmony to provide a תיקון, a correction for that first quarrel. By carefully attending to the peaceful preparation for Shabbos we invite Shabbos, the מקור הברכה, into our homes. In the end, that which is most precious to us can well be at stake.

Takeaway: I will look for ways to help the spirit of שבת permeate my home.



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A Lesson in Flames

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E16)

Shabbos observance, Hashgacha Pratis, and a tragic fire help us see Hashem's Hand.

The Facts of a Tragic Fire

History records that on Saturday, March 25th, 1911, there was a devastating fire that ravaged the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in Greenwich Village, New York. 146 workers, many of whom were young Jewish immigrant women (ages 14 to 39) lost their lives in the fire.

History further records that this fire was a watershed moment in the advancement of workers' rights and building safety in New York. Workers had initiated a great strike in 1909 to force reforms in workplace safety. Those efforts were aggressively rebuffed by the owners of the factories and the fire brought those reforms back to the table. History was left to ask who and what was to blame for the terrible loss and to celebrate the progressive agenda which came in its wake.

That is as far as the history can take us, because history is written to describe natural cause and effect; it is not written to describe *השגחה*; the Hand of the בורא עולם in our lives. For that, we need a different lens.

Parshas HaShavua

The Jewish calendar shows us some more of the story. First, we note, of course, that it was שבת

שבת מברכים ניסן, פרשת החודש קודש. Also, that it was פרשת החודש and the פרשת פקודי. In פרשת ויקהל we read תבצערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת. The 'הק' singles out the prohibition against lighting a fire among all the מצוות of שבת. As the Gemara³³ teaches אין הדליקה מצויה אלא במקום שיש חילול שבת. In שיש חילול שבת throughout the world the words תבצערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת rang out. שבת קודש protects us from the fire that would consume us and חילול שבת invites that fire ר"ל.

*Behind every
'big picture' of
השגחה, there
are countless
'small
pictures' of
יד ה'.*

So far, the 'big picture' of the השגחה. A lesson which is meant to make us sit up and take notice. But behind every 'big picture' of השגחה, there are also countless 'small pictures' of the יד ה'. To see those small stories, we must grab the magnifying glass.

A Family Moves to Monticello

In 1906, R' Hillel Berkowsky, of Varanava, Lithuania (a town near Vilna), needed פרנסה and saw that the future for his family was in the US. He went ahead of the family to try to earn the means to bring them over, as well.

R' Hillel found employment as the 'everything' person for the Landfield Avenue Shul in Monticello, NY. He was the חזן, the שמע, the שוחט, the מוהל, in a word, the 'everything.' He worked nonstop and בס"ד by 1908 he was able to

³² שמות לה: ג

³³ שבת קיט:



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bring his wife, Hinda, and their six young children to the US to join him.

What to do with Chaya Elka?

Monticello was not known as a center of Torah life. It would be hard to provide proper Chinuch for the children while living there, but there was no choice; they would be מחנך their children as best as they could in Monticello. However, for their 16-year-old daughter, Chaya Elka, staying in Monticello was not an option. She needed an education, she needed a job, and she needed to find a husband with whom she could build a proper Jewish home. She would have to go to New York City, the center of Jewish life at the time. So, Chaya Elka, known as Ida, took up residence with her Uncle and Aunt, the Shultz family, in NYC. She worked by day, attended school at night and tried to lay the groundwork for her future life.

The challenge of שמירת שבת

Young people today cannot fathom the challenge of שמירת שבת that existed during that time. Tragically, Jews who came and struggled to earn a livelihood in an earlier wave of immigration to New York became the owners of factories which employed the next wave of Jewish immigrants. But their employment came with a price. They had to work on שבת קודש. Many Jews were not able to withstand the test of poverty on one hand and שמירת שבת on the other. They took employment which included working on שבת קודש. Ida was offered just such a job, at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory.

Her newfound friends had already taken jobs there. There were hundreds of Jewish girls working there. It was the place to be, the thing to do. And now Ida was being offered a chance to join them.

Ida's choice

It was an overwhelming choice to put on the shoulders of a 19-year-old aspiring young girl. With great סייעתא דשמיא, Ida was able to lock in on the devoted חינוך that she was blessed with growing up and she mustered up the courage to turn the job down. She voted in favor of שבת. That decision was taken in the third week of March 1911. That Shabbos was that fateful Saturday, March 25th, 1911.

Generations stand up for her choice

I have had the privilege of meeting the children, grandchildren and even the great-grandchildren of Chaya Elka/Ida. Each one is living testimony to that decision. The choice may seem related to a distant time and place, but the generations that followed know that 'if she had (made a different choice and) been there, we would not be here.'

A comment about לא תבערו אש ביום השבת

We have spoken about the relationship between שמירת שבת and physical fire. But there is also a relationship between שבת and the internal fire called anger. The משנה in שבת teaches³⁴ that there are three things which one must say in his home as שבת is about to begin. The Gemara³⁵ adds that צריך למימרינהו בניחוח – they must be said gently.

³⁴ שבת ב:ז

³⁵ שבת לד.



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Keep the flame down

The תפארת ישראל infers this instruction from the words of the משנה itself. The Mishna teaches that these three things should be said בתוך ביתו – in one's house. That implies that they are not heard

in another house. Keeping the flame down is often associated with keeping the volume down. We must remember that שמירת שבת does not only involve staying away from מלאכת הבערה, it also means keeping the spirit of true שבת, as well.

Takeaway: I will try to keep in mind that every decision regarding Shabbos has eternal implications.



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Discover the Joy
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Challah and Unity

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E17)

Baking Challah is a chance to experience Shabbos during the week.

The Fragrance of Fresh Challah

There is something mystical about baking Challah. The experience of baking Challah is linked with the experience of Shabbos itself. It is as if the process of making Challah cuts a piece of time out of the week and transforms it into the sense of Shabbos. The wafting aroma of the Challah gives one the impression that one can smell Shabbos!

The Challah-bake

Several years ago, the Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Rabbi Warren Goldstein, initiated a program to encourage Shabbos observance. The idea was to designate one Shabbos and to promote the observance of that Shabbos around the world. The program carried the title "Keeping it Together" as Jews all over the world would be joining in Shemiras Shabbos. Many wonderful things have come from that big idea and every year increasing numbers of people become involved.

The Challah bake grew out of this program. It seemed like a natural extension of Shemiras Shabbos. Women gather in communities all over the world to bake Challah. They bring Shabbos into their lives by baking Challah. The numbers attest to the degree that Challah baking is ingrained into the Neshama of Jewish women. Even when they cannot gather and must join virtually, Jewish women throughout the world (I

was told by Rebetzin Joanne Dove of London that recently women participated from twenty countries) responded enthusiastically to the invitation to gather and bake Challah. Baking Challah is not simply breadmaking; it unifies one's Neshama with others and with Shabbos.

The braiding and the ingredients

We can find echoes of this theme in the Challahs themselves. The braiding of the strands of the Challah are a metaphor for the joining and interweaving of Jews embracing one another.

The ingredients also contribute to the theme. The sugar, a symbol of sweetness, activates the yeast to rise. We can thus see in the Challah how a kind and sweet word can help another person to rise, grow, and mature.

Oil is also a frequently used ingredient in Challah. Oil is a symbol of nobility and the spiritual greatness to which a person can and should aspire.

*Making Challah
does not only
add to the
Shabbos table; it
pays bountiful
spiritual
dividends, as
well.*

The אגרת הגר"א and Nobility

The ארץ ישראל set out to come to ארץ ישראל. And while he was not able to achieve that goal, he wrote a letter to his mother and wife as part of his parting message to them. That letter is known as the אגרת הגר"א. In it, he implores his mother and wife to go the extra mile to ensure that peace, שלום, reigns in their relationship.

He mentions that when our lives here are over, we will be called upon to answer for our lives.



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One of the questions will be המלכת את חברך, which literally translates to 'Did you crown your fellow?' Did you elevate the status of others in your eyes such that he or she was a king or queens for you? Oil is a symbol of anointing (Kings are anointed with oil) and it calls on us to treat one another like royalty. Treating someone like royalty is the key to bringing out their nobility. We are meant to relate to one another – via the ingredients of the Challah.

Two Challahs; Different Challahs

We are accustomed to reciting המוציא over two Challahs. This seems like a direct outgrowth of the double portion of מן which Klal Yisroel had in honor of Shabbos. The Posuk³⁶ tells us:

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי לָקֶטֶט לֶחֶם מִשְׁנֶה שְׁנֵי הָעֶמֶר לְאִתָּהּ...

On the Sixth day they gathered לחם משנה, two measures per person...

The words לחם משנה are superfluous since we are told that they collected two measures per person. My son, R' Eliezer, pointed out that Rashi addresses this question citing the מכילתא. He says that the words לחם משנה allude to their being לחם משונה – they were exceptional portions in their aroma and taste. The very first Shabbos that Klal Yisroel marked together needed an ingredient; the exceptional aroma and taste of Challah. Challah is not just a menu item on Shabbos; it carries with it a portion of Shabbos itself.

A story of Challah and Chesed

Rav Sholom Schwadron zt"l would often retell one of his favorite stories about a holy Yerushalmi Jew, Rav Yudel Holtzman. (I retold this story in my first book, "The Maggid Speaks.") Rav Yudel was a childless poor man

with a big heart that would break for another man's troubles. He insisted that the גבאי צדקה not skip his home. Despite his poverty, he would try to find a way to help others in need.

The neighborhood tailor needed an operation. He could not afford the sixty pounds which the operation would cost. The גבאי צדקה made his rounds and came to the home of Rav Yudel. As he explained the plight of the tailor, Rav Yudel sat dejected, constantly interjecting "how terrible, how awful."

When he had finished, Rav Yudel sighed and said "I wish so much that I could help but I really cannot. All that I give comes from Ma'aser and I borrow against future earnings to give צדקה. But my policy is that I do not borrow against future Ma'aser when I am a full year overdrawn against that account, and I have reached that point. I feel so bad for him. All I can do is wish him a רפואה שלמה."

The גבאי צדקה fully understood and left Rav Yudel's home. He had walked only half a block when Rav Yudel came running after him. "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Come back! Hashem has inspired me with a great idea!" Puzzled, he returned to Rav Yudel's home.

Rav Yudel began to speak excitedly. "Go to one of the larger Gemachs in Yerushalayim and tell them to lend you twenty pounds in my name. I will pay it back בעזרה. I spend half a shilling on wine for Kiddush every week. I can recite Kiddush over Challah on Friday night and I will have the extra money to repay the loan!"

³⁶ שמות טז: כב



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For the next fifteen years (!) Rav Yudel made Kiddush over Challah until the loan was repaid. His Challahs had been transformed into Chesed.

After one of the times that Rav Sholom related this story, he was approached by a young man. "I am Rav Yudel's nephew," reported the young man. "I was at my uncle's house many times and it always seemed strange to me that he recited Kiddush over Challah. Now I know why." "And," he said, adding to the *Hashgacha* of the moment, "this week is R' Yudel's Yahrzeit."

גאלדענע האנט חלה made with

The Gematria of חלה is 43. After consulting the ספר גמטריקון I discovered that 43 is also the

Takeaway: I will try to see Challah baking as an opportunity to unite with others and with שבת קודש.

Gematria of ידי הזהב, what we refer to as גאלדענע – golden hands, a reference to natural, inborn talent that some people are blessed with. Challah speaks to the fact that Jewish women were blessed with גאלדענע האנט.

There is no reason to burden or guilt-trip anyone into making Challah for Shabbos. But making Challah is a very tangible connection with Shabbos itself. It adds to the anticipation and experience of Shabbos. The investment of time and energy does not only provide a delicious addition to the Shabbos table; it pays bountiful spiritual dividends, as well.



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The Haftarah- Its History and Holiness

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E18)

What do you think you know about the Haftarah?

The origin of the word הפטרה

The אבודרהם teaches that the word הפטרה derives from the expression taught in the Gemara³⁷ אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן, whereby we learn that nothing else can conclude the סעודה of פסח after eating the פסח. The word מפטירין refers to a conclusion or finish. Hence, the word הפטרה refers to the portion of נביא which we read at the conclusion of שחרית or of קריאת התורה. It is then correct to refer to it as the Haftarah, not, as is commonly said, the Haftorah. Likely, since we just read Krias HaTorah, we started referring to the הפטרה as the Haftarah in a rhyming sort of way.

The history of the הפטרה

The אבודרהם dates the origin of the reading of the הפטרה to the בית שני period when the Assyrian Greeks (Antiochus) did their utmost to uproot the Torah from כלל ישראל (as we say in להשכיחם that they rose up על הנסים³⁸). The punishment for reading Torah in public was terribly severe and the Torah would be burnt ר"ל.

It seems, however, that they did not object to the Mussar messages of the נביאים which, in their view, did not imply living a Halachic lifestyle. Taking advantage of that 'loophole' חז"ל identified a word, phrase or theme in the נביא which referred to the reading that was meant to

take place that Shabbos and instituted its reading instead of the קריאת התורה.

Among many other teachings in his wonderful work, *Kol Dodi on the Haftaros*, Rav Dovid Feinstein זצ"ל points out the connection between each הפטרה and its associated פרשה.

Twenty-one פסוקים

Because the תקנה was to serve as a substitute for the קריאת התורה, the minimum number of פסוקים to be read is 21. This is another reminder of the seven Aliyos which each have a minimum of three פסוקים when reading from the Torah.

Why not from כתובים?

The תקנה was to read from the נביאים, not from the כתובים. The themes and wording of the נביאים lend themselves to align more closely with the words and themes of the פרשיות then do the כתובים.

A disagreement

The לבוש takes issue with the assumptions of the אבודרהם and says that there is no way that Antiochus would be more easy-going with נביא than with תורה. He asserts that the תקנה was earlier and that חז"ל wanted us to hear מוסר דברי מוסר from the נביאים each week.

The tunes (Trop)

³⁷ פסחים קיט:

³⁸ אבודרהם סדר תפילות של שבת דף ס"ג דפוס ויניציא



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The נביא is read in a different tune to that of the מנהגים per all קריאת התורה. The ספר חסידים asserts that the difference between תורה and נביאים is a הלכה למשה מסיני (as is the difference between those and the tune for כתובים). This is alluded to in שמות יט:יט where we read that Moshe spoke and Hashem responded בקול, meaning not only with a 'voice' but with a tune.³⁹

Keeping the תקנה with exceptions

Per the אבודרהם, the תקנה of reading from the נביא was kept even after Hashem defeated the army of Antiochus. חז"ל wanted to ensure, however, that people not place the הפטרה on an even footing with קריאת התורה and so they put some guidelines in place that would maintain the difference.

First, they declared that a person cannot be called to only read from the נביא. The one who will read from the נביא must first read at least three פסוקים from the תורה (known as the מפטיר).

Next, חז"ל permitted the נביא to be read from paper (א חומש or תנ"ך) and not only from קלף as is the case with תורה.

Further, חז"ל permitted a קטן to be called for הפטרה and reading the מפטיר.

Additionally, the שלחן ערוך, based on the Gemara⁴⁰ mentions that since (or perhaps to indicate that) מפטיר is on a lesser level of significance than קריאת התורה, they gave priority to the בעל מפטיר to lead מוסף to 'compensate' for the lesser כבוד associated with reading from the נביא and not from the תורה. Indeed, many חסידים do not even have the בעל מפטיר read the נביא

aloud but he recites the ברכות before and after and the ציבור reads the נביא to themselves.

When we read two פרשיות

When two פרשיות are read on one Shabbos, we read the הפטרה of the second. An exception to this rule is when אחרי-קדושים are read together. We then read the הפטרה of אחרי since the הפטרה for קדושים (יחזקאל כ) is a harsh description of the עבירות of כלל ישראל and we avoid it when we can.

R' Dovid Feinstein זצ"ל points out that when קדושים is read alone the הפטרה is read as it is uniquely suited to the פרשה. It speaks about laxity in כיבוד אב, שבת, the treatment of גרים, bribery and זרה, all themes that are echoed in the פרשה.

Reading the whole Sefer

On two occasions we read an entire נביא, the one being יוהכ"פ on מפטיר יונה and the second in פרשת וישלח when we read the one-chapter book of עובדיה. The story of the meeting and parting of יעקב and עשו feature prominently in both. When they part, the תורה tells us⁴¹ that שעריר bids עשו farewell until they meet שעריר, a reference to עשו, the portion of עשו. The נביא עובדיה refers to this future meeting with the well-known פסוק (כא) telling us of the great day when:

וְעָלוּ מוֹשְׁעִים בְּהָרַיִן לְשַׁפֵּט אֶת הָרָעָה וְהָיְתָה לָהֶם הַמְּלִיכָה.

Special הפטרות

Rav Yisrael Belsky זצ"ל speaks about the Mussar given to כלל ישראל in the three weeks leading up to ט' באב. The first of these three, called the ג', דבורי, begins with the word דבורי, the second

³⁹ ספר חסידים סימן ש"ב

⁴⁰ מגילה כד.

⁴¹ בראשית לג:יד



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with the word שמעו and the third with the word חזון. Rav Belsky זצ"ל asserts that these are the three components of the שנת חנים for which we suffer our גלות. There is someone who *says* something negative (דברי), there is someone who *hears* something unflattering (שמעו) and there is one who *sees* something negative (חזון).⁴²

The seven weeks of הפטרות that build up from ט' שבט are called the שבוע דנחמתא and they help us climb the ladder from the exiled sovereignty of Hashem (שכינתא בגלותא) up to celebrating the ר"ה on מלכות ה'.

Changes to the routine

There were communities where the הפטרה gave way to other occasions. One such change was when the community lost an אדם גדול ר"ל. On the following Shabbos they would read א ד:כא instead of the regular נביא which announces that גלה כבוד מישאל (the grieving of עלי הכהן's daughter-in-law when נפטר and the ארון הקודש was taken captive). This parallels the loss of an אדם גדול.

Indeed, on the week that the רמב"ם passed away there were communities that read the opening of ספר יהושע, where we find the words משה עבדי מת, an appropriate reference to the great רמב"ם, as well.

Today an important עלייה

There appears to have been a shift over the generations whereby מפטיר which was a 'lesser' Aliyah and was even given 'compensation' is now viewed as a significant honor, perhaps even more so than a 'regular' Aliyah reading from the

Torah. It is given to a בר מצוה, to a Chosson, a Yahrzeit, etc.

A story about an הפטרה⁴³

A couple from טבריה did whatever they could to be blessed with offspring but to no avail. His friends from the Kollel where he learned were already marking their sons' Bar Mitzvah's and they were still childless. Someone suggested that he go to receive the Brocha of the Norelna Rebbe in Bnei Brak, who was known as a great Tzadik and בעל מופת.

He went and poured his heart out to the Rebbe. With compassion the Rebbe asked him where he would be for Rosh Hashana. He responded that he would be, like all other years, with his Kollel in טבריה. The Rebbe suggested that he come to join him in Bnei Brak. After all, we read that שרה was miraculously granted a child and then we read the הפטרה wherein חנה was granted the miraculous gift of her child, שמואל. As the Rebbe put it, 'great things can happen' from this reading from the נביא.

After consulting with his wife, they decided to leave the 'Litvish' surroundings and spend ר"ה with the Rebbe. He did not know what the Aliyah might cost him, but he would stop at nothing to try to be blessed with a child.

After davening on the first night of ר"ה he stood aside while the חסידים made their way to the Rebbe to give and receive Brochos for the coming year. To his surprise, another man who was not a 'local' to the Chasidus also stood by and waited while the חסידים engaged with the Rebbe, waiting to greet the Rebbe.

⁴² My thanks to my son, R' Avrohom for citing this teaching from R' Belsky זצ"ל

⁴³ Heard from Rav Yitzchok Isbee זצ"ל at the Agudah of Avenue L



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They greeted one another and he was shocked to learn that this fellow was also childless and had also come to benefit from the blessing of reading the הפטרה, also per the recommendation of the Rebbe. Had the Rebbe forgotten that he had already invited him to come for that הפטרה?

He did not say anything, but he also did not sleep that night, tossing and turning in empathic agony over the other fellow whose heart was set, as was his, on getting מפטיר the next day. By the morning he had made up his mind. He would not take this away from the other fellow and crush his hopes. He found somewhere else to daven

that morning and let the other fellow get מפטיר by the Rebbe.

That year they were blessed with a daughter.

The Rebbe had indeed said that 'great things can happen from this reading' and indeed a great thing came from it. He had not said that he would be called for the Maftir; he said that great things can come from this reading.

Apparently, he had passed the test that was placed before him by putting the feelings of another Jew before his own, and Heaven put his feelings ahead of the many obstacles in their way to having offspring.

Takeaway: I will try to pay attention to the מוסר being taught in the הפטרה.



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A Farewell with Dignity

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E19)

What comes to mind when you think of Melave Malka? Songs? Food?

Setting the tone for a holy Seuda

The Holy Rizhiner Rebbe suggested that the סעודת מלוה מלכה is hinted at in the פסוק where Yaakov Avinu has a vision when he sleeps:

וַיַּחְלֶם וַיְהִי הַלַּיְלָה סֵלֶם מְצֻב אֶרְצָה וְרָאָשׁוֹ מְגִיעַ הַשְּׁמַיִמָּה... (בראשית כח: יב)

The word סֵלֶם is an acronym for סעודת לוויית מלכה – referring to מלוה מלכה. That meal is often regarded as מְצֻב אֶרְצָה, that it is not especially elevated in its holiness. Little does the person know that the סעודת מלוה מלכה, the סֵלֶם, is ראשו מְגִיעַ הַשְּׁמַיִמָּה, it is particularly important and has lofty heavenly implications.

The סעיף with only one סימנים

The Chozeh of Lublin remarked about two סימנים in שלחן ערוך which only have one סעיף each. סימן ש', the Halacha of מלוה מלכה and סימן תיט, the Halacha regarding ראש חודש each only have one סעיף. Clearly, the מחבר was interested in highlighting the importance of these two meals which might otherwise be glossed over.

He added, homiletically, that the admonishment to take these two סעודות seriously can be inferred from the Pasuk⁴⁴ in which Eliyahu HaNavi rebukes the People for straddling the fence between their belief in Hashem and להבדיל their belief in the בעל. His words, עַד מָתִי אַתֶּם פֹּסְקִים עַל

שְׁתֵּי הַסְּעֻפִּים can be interpreted as 'for how long will you gloss over the two סעיפים' which the מחבר highlights by making a separate סימן for but one Halacha each.

The Halacha

The מחבר (סימן ש) cites the Gemara⁴⁵ which says:

לעולם יסדר אדם שלחנו במוצאי שבת כדי ללוות את השבת, אפילו אינו צריך אלא לכזית:

A person should be careful to set his table on מוצאי שבת to escort שבת as it leaves, even if one only needs to eat a kezayit.

The משנה ברורה understands that 'setting the table' means to place a tablecloth on the table. To the extent that one is able, one should eat meat and make the סעודה special.

The ילקוט הגרשוני draws this Halacha out of the number of the Siman – Shin. In every Hebrew letter there are the hidden letters. The letter ש is spelled with the letters ש-י-ן, where the Yud and Nun are hidden, unseen and unheard. Together, they stand for

שולחנו יעשה נאה.

Even after YomTov

While it is not the common practice, the חזון אי"ש would eat מלוה מלכה even after YomTov.

⁴⁴ מלכים א יח: כא

⁴⁵ שבת קיט:



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Two meanings for Malka

The standard translation for Melave Malka is 'Accompanying the Queen.' Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א pointed out that the Gemara⁴⁶ speaks about שבת as the King. (The discussion there relates to Havdala when YomTov begins on Motzei Shabbos – the King is leaving, and the governor is entering, thus referring to שבת as the King.)

Clearly, though, Shabbos is also referred to as the Queen (שבת מלכה as we say in בשלום). He opined that the two definitions of King and Queen depend on how one writes the word מלך. It can be written in Aramaic – מלכא meaning King or it can be written in Hebrew – מלכה meaning Queen.

Dovid HaMelech

The סעודת מלוח מלכה is also referred to as סעודת דוד. This derives from the Gemara⁴⁷ that teaches how Dovid HaMelech ע"ה wanted ה' to tell him when he would pass away. ה' refused each of his requests until דוד המלך ע"ה asked which day it will be and ה' agreed to tell him that it would be on שבת קודש. Once he knew that, דוד כלל ישראל would make a סעודה together with them for another week.

Perhaps the reason we sing songs at the מלוח מלכה is owing to Dovid HaMelech's designation as the נעים זמירות ישראל – the sweet singer of Israel.

The Avos and the four meals

The four סעודות, while not equal (the 3 meals of שבת are drawn from an אסמכתא in the Torah), each echo one of the אברהם, יצחק, יעקב. אבות הק' ורוד. The ארבע points out that the words דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים=819, the same as סעודות

The Melave Malka as a סעודת הבראה

There is good reason to need comfort on Motzei Shabbos. For one, three great leaders passed away on Shabbos, Moshe Rabeinu, Yosef HaTzadik and Dovid HaMelech. That is why פסוקים recited after Mincha has three צדקתך. On Motzei Shabbos we also strengthen ourselves after recalling those losses.

In addition, the Gemara⁴⁸ reports that the נשמה יתירה which was given to us with the arrival of Shabbos is taken from us with its departure. This is alluded to in the words שבת וינפש where the word וינפש is broken into the words נפש אבדה.

The רמב"ן points out⁴⁹ that the נשמה יתירה is not just an extra dose of קדושה, though it certainly is that. It is also an upgrade in one's ability to comprehend that which one learns. The preciousness of learning on Shabbos cannot be overstated.

Thus, the מלוח מלכה is a form of הבראה (which means recuperation) to enliven us and give us strength to carry forward into the new week.

The לוח

לוח teach us that the לוח gets its sustenance from חז"ל. The name לוח is used in חז"ל to refer to that which is immune to deterioration and death.⁵¹ (The מלאך המוות has no role in the city of

⁴⁶ פסחים קג.

⁴⁷ שבת ל.

⁴⁸ תענית כז.

⁴⁹ רמב"ן על שמות כ:יא

⁵⁰ עיין משנה ברורה סימן ש' ס"ק ב'

⁵¹ יש לו גם שם נסכוי ואכמ"ל



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לוז, for example.⁵²) This לוז is part of our bodies and it never disintegrates. It can never be burned or crushed, and it remains in waiting for תחיית המתים when it will be the seed for our תחיית המתים.

When death was decreed on mankind when אדה"ר ate from the הדעת, we are taught⁵³ that the forbidden food entered all parts of his body except for the לוז. The לוז stands for eternal life as it was never cursed with death. As part of our firm belief in תחיית המתים we are careful to provide for the לוז through eating מלוח מלכה.⁵⁴

The menu

On the surface, there is a dispute between the מהרש"א and the חידושי הרי"מ as to whether one may eat leftovers for מלוח מלכה. The מהרש"א teaches⁵⁵ that one should eat something new for מלוח מלכה. Leftovers are a downgrade of the special nature of מלוח מלכה.

The חידושי הרי"מ was of the view that the Shabbos food is akin to קרבן and partaking of the Shabbos food after Shabbos is akin to eating the שיירי המנחה, which is a great Mitzvah and is spiritually elevating. Are they arguing?

Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א explained that they are not arguing. They are both referring to ways to elevate the significance of מלוח מלכה. If you highly regard and enjoy the food from Shabbos, then eating from that food on Motzei Shabbos is a sign of חשיבות for the meal. That is what the חידושי הרי"מ is pointing out. However, the מהרש"א would add, do not *only* eat leftovers. Since something new adds yet further distinction to the meal, then one should see that there is that element of distinction at the meal.

Special סגולה of Melave Malka

The גר"א was especially careful about eating מלוח מלכה. He asserted that this meal is a סגולה פרנסה including health and פרנסה.

Shpeisi Nacht

My first language growing up was Yiddish. And I heard my mother ע"ה refer to Friday night as Freitag zu Nacht and Motzei Shabbos she called Shpeisi Nacht. Until I researched מלוח מלכה I did not understand these terms. The mystery is unraveled in the ספר טעמי המנהגים (תכז).

The reference to Friday night as Freitag zu Nacht draws from the fact that we sanctify Friday even before nightfall with the Kedusha of Shabbos. On Motzei Shabbos we do the opposite and we wait for Havdalah even after three medium stars appear. To mark that addition of time the expression for Motzei Shabbos was Shpeit zu Nacht, or late at night. The term Shpeit zu Nacht became, over time Shpeisi Nacht which, itself, has no meaning but echoes its origins in honoring the Shabbos by extending it.

[That words morph that way is known. The term Kvater, for example, draws from the words Kovod Tir, or an honor given at the doorway or entrance. If you say it enough times, you will get from Kovod Tir to Kfater.]

Tea at Melave Malka

There are Chasidishe Rabbeim who drink tea at Melave Malka. In Yiddish (as in Hebrew) tea is תה, pronounced 'teh' which reminds us of the תהא where we plead: אבינו מלכנו

תהא השעה הזאת שעת רחמים ועת רצון מלפניך

⁵² סוטה מו:

⁵³ אליה רבה מובא בשער הציון שם ס"ק ז'

⁵⁴ וע' תוספות ב"ק טז:

⁵⁵ מהרש"א שבת קיט:



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They are drinking the tea as part of their Tefila (as we do with סימנים on the night of ראש השנה) that this time, as we are eating מלוה מלכה, should be a time of compassion and רצון.

May every מלוה מלכה be a time of רצון. אמן.

A thank you

I have learned a great deal while preparing to speak about important aspects of שבת קודש. It is

Takeaway: I will try to upgrade my מלוה מלכה and pray that the סעודה be an עת רצון.

fitting to thank the Agudah and, especially, the בדיבור אחד initiative, for facilitating bringing these aspects of Shabbos to our attention. We might not have paid them the attention that they deserve and with the help of this program we are filling in important gaps in our understanding of this central pillar of our lives.



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A Time for Distinction and Difference

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E20)

From Sanctity to Secularity – how to know and feel the difference.

Conflicting moods at Havdala

There is typically excitement or anticipation associated with embarking on a new project or beginning a new chapter in one's life. And some of that surely can be felt at Havdala as we approach the coming new week with its challenges and opportunities.

But a spiritually sensitive person can also feel an undeniable letdown. Shabbos is leaving and with it the spiritual gifts that it brought.

The closeness that we forged with the Creator and with family that came with Shabbos have taken a back seat. The נשמה יתירה we were blessed with on Shabbos is heading back. We must shift from the celestial heights to the pedestrian street. Havdala recognizes and addresses these losses with a boost of encouragement to propel us forward into the weekdays.

With You we will not fear

The סופר חת"ם points our attention to the encouragement contained in the Posuk with which we introduce הברלה:⁵⁶

הנה א-ל ישועתי אֶבְטַח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד כִּי עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה ה' וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה

The first part of the Posuk can be paraphrased as 'Hashem, we know that You are the source of our salvation and so we will not fear.' One who recognizes that everything is in Hashem's Hand does not fear the 'happenings' of one's life

because there is only one relationship that 'counts.'

In the next part of the Posuk we affirm that the relationship of total dependence on Hashem is pleasing for us; indeed, we sing out in praise over our realization that all depends on Hashem.

Drawing from the spring or the well

The next Posuk that we recite in הברלה is the next Posuk in ישעיהו:

וַיִּשְׁאַבְתֶּם מַיִם בְּשִׁשׁוֹן מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה

The מפרשים point out that when one draws from a מעין – a spring – there is a different feeling than when drawing from a well. A well always comes with a fear that this could be the last drink that one could draw from it. When drawing from a spring there is a sense of confidence that the source will give forth an unlimited supply of

fresh water. We affirm that You, Hashem, are the מעין, the spring and source of compassion and salvation. That affirmation gives us confidence as we step out of the enveloping cushion of Shabbos into the otherwise frightening week. We are drawing from Your endless מעין.

It's all in the Name

Hashem has different names. The four-letter name (י-ה-ו-ה) refers to Hashem's attribute of פסוקים. It is surely no accident that in the

⁵⁶ ישעיהו יב:ב



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that introduce the **הבדלה** the four-letter name of Hashem appears six times – Sunday through Friday! These **פסוקים** capture our **תפילות** for a week of **ברכה** and **רחמים**.

Hints in the parts of הבדלה

The four parts of the **הבדלה** form the acrostic of the word **יבנה** – (**י**ין, **ב**שמים, **נ**ר, **ה**בדלה) – This hints at our prayer that now that Shabbos is over (during which building was forbidden), we look forward to **יבנה המקדש** the ultimate building project, with the prayer that it commences immediately!

Another hint contained in the acrostic of **הבדלה** is the word **בינה** – understanding. The prayer for the gift of understanding is also part of our yearning as we step forward into the week. This acrostic can add a layer of 'understanding' into why the **הבדלה** which we recite in the **שמונה עשרה** מעריב is placed in **אתה חונן...ומלמד לאנוש בינה**.

The Wine

We have previously mentioned the benefits of wine which include happiness and, when imbibed in proper measure, an element of clarity of thought (**רד"ק**). While those are true with any cup of wine, they are especially true regarding a **כוס של ברכה** such as **הבדלה**.

My cup overflows – כוסי רוויה

Unlike any other **כוס של ברכה** there is a custom to let the wine of **הבדלה** spill over the brim of the cup.⁵⁷ This draws from the **Gemara**⁵⁸ which teaches that when wine spills like water there is a **סימן ברכה** in that home. We are invoking the sense of plenty and blessing implied by spilling valuable wine as though it were water.

But the **ט"ז** says that the **Gemara** is not referring to the wine, but to the attitude of the homeowner when wine spills. The **סימן ברכה** is invoked when a person does not get angry when something 'serious' happens, like spilled wine, just as one would naturally not get angry when some water spills on the floor. This interpretation aligns with the **Gemara**⁵⁹ which teaches that in the home where anger is present, **Brocha** is absent. When we are asking for **ברכה** to follow us into the coming week we ensure that there is no anger and that even **יין נשפך כמים** – the wine spills and causes no more irritation than water would.

From the bottom to the top

The **חשב"ץ** points out that the **Brochos** recited at **Havdalah** have an interesting sequence to them. They proceed from lowest to highest on one's face and from closest to furthest from oneself.

The **הגפן** refers to the sense located lowest of the senses on one's head and the taste of the wine can only be appreciated by one's tongue. It is the lowest sense and needs the source to be the closest. The **בשמים** are a step up. Fragrance can be appreciated by the nose and at a bit of a distance. Following the pattern, the **נר** is yet another step up to the eyes, and light can be sensed at great distance. Finally, the **הבדלה** involves **דעת**. The mind is without limit and can be the vehicle to grasp that which is **מסוף העולם** – from one end of the time and place to the other. It is the highest and the furthest. Through **הבדלה** we move up from the immediate and transitory to the most ethereal and eternal – **מעלין בקודש**.

A note about בשמים

⁵⁷ ט"ז או"ח סימן רצ"ו סעיף א'

⁵⁸ עירובין סה.

⁵⁹ סוטה ג:



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The ⁶⁰ comments on the בשמים and explains that by smelling the בשמים we are trying to comfort and restore our hurting Neshama which loses the נשמה יתירה when Shabbos ends. There is a logic to using the nose and a fragrance to comfort the Neshama. R' Shaya Winiarz writes⁶¹ that the Neshama comes in and leaves through the nose. The Posuk tells us ויפח באפיו – that Hashem blew the Neshama into Man through his nose and the Neshama leaves via the nose, as well. (Indeed, our custom to wish someone good health when they sneeze relates to the idea that a sneeze was the manner that the Neshama would leave the body, via the nose.) Thus, it makes sense to 'pacify' the Neshama via fragrance.

The eyes see the fire

Fire was created on מוצאי שבת קודש of that first Shabbos. The Gemara⁶² refers to two things that Hashem 'left' to create on מוצאי שבת and fire is one of them. The Midrash⁶³ teaches that the heavenly lights were cursed when Man sinned. However, owing to כבוד שבת, Hashem did not darken the world until after שבת קודש. אדם thought that this was it. His חטא caused eternal darkness. The Posuk⁶⁴ testifies to his fear – וְאָמַר אֶךָ חֹשֶׁךְ יִשְׁוּפְנִי – surely the darkness will envelop me.

Just as he was despairing, Hashem gave him the idea to rub two flintstones together and out came light – a flame which could provide both light and heat. His relief and joy at the newfound fire is echoed in our Brocha.

Perhaps that is why we bring together two wicks, not just a solitary flame. While there can

be comfort in a candle, there is hope and promise in a torch.

Separation – the Brocha of הַבְדֵּלָה

Separation and distinction lie at the core of responsibility. When a soldier is commissioned to a new level of service he is at once distinguished from the other soldiers and is given greater responsibilities as well. That is the story of the עַם ה'. Separate, distinguished, and responsible. The Holy Name rests on His People and we are called to bear that Name with distinction. The notion that everyone is the same is another way of saying that nobody must assume responsibility. That is clearly rejected when we recite Havdalah. For just as there is a difference between day and night, between the holy and the profane, there is a difference between כלל ישראל and the nations to whom we must serve as an example.

Without wisdom there are no distinctions

The Gemara⁶⁵ teaches the rationale for placing אתה חונן in the first request in Ma'ariv – הַבְדֵּלָה. We could assume that it is placed there because that is the first Brocha that signals that this Amidah is a weekday תפילה. But the ירושלמי teaches that אם אין דעה הַבְדֵּלָה מניין – if there is no wisdom, there are no distinctions. Without wisdom people may notice differences, but they cannot pick up distinctions. Distinctions are not just differences; they are the differences that make a difference.

Make the separation – aloud

To permit מלאכה one must declare the separation. At minimum, that declaration must be בריך

⁶⁰ ט"ז או"ח סימן רצ"ז ס"ק א'

⁶¹ In his book, *39 Things You CAN Do on Shabbos*

⁶² פסחים נד.

⁶³ בראשית רבה יא:ב

⁶⁴ תהלים קלט:יא

⁶⁵ תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות פרק ה' הלכה ב'



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המבדיל בין קודש לחול. It is important to note that one who, for whatever reason, did not Daven Ma'ariv may not do מלאכה without a declaration of separation. Permission to do מלאכה is not only a matter of time; it requires a verbal declaration. This requirement can be inadvertently overlooked if, for example, a woman wants to light the Havdalah candle but has not yet declared the separation.

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל would say גוט פון to the bus or cab driver after Shabbos, thus eliciting a שבוט טוב from the driver who may not have recited המבדיל ברוך. In that way, the driver would have minimally fulfilled the requirement to separate, and he would thereby not be doing (further) מלאכה before 'Havdalah.'

A precious prayer

Those who know me are aware of my special relationship with Yiddish. You can present an idea in English, but you can only give over the feeling of the Jewish heart in a Jewish tongue. In

Takeaway: I will try to focus my thoughts at Havdalah on responsibility and Brocha

that light, I encourage you to take a cue from generations of Jewish women and recite גוט פון before or after Havdalah. You will be hearing an echo of the yearnings of the soul.

Demonstrating preciousness

The Rema⁶⁶ brings the custom to extinguish the candle in the wine one spills from the cup. Indeed, many have the custom to touch one's eyes and pockets with the moisture of this 'mix' of the flame and the wine. The Mitzvah is dear to us and we thereby demonstrate its חביבות – preciousness.

Havdalah is a farewell, it is a separation, but it is also a boost and a lift of hope and prayer for the coming week. When we wish one another a גוט וואך we are announcing that Shabbos is over, but we are also filling our mouths with blessing –

ברכה May the coming week bring you boundless
והצלחה ברוחניות ובגשמיות.

⁶⁶ או"ח רצ"ו: א'



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The Teacher's Teacher

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E21)

A student became his teacher's teacher.

A road to שמירת שבת

Klal Yisrael is blessed with many people who chose to observe Torah and Mitzvos. They grew up in homes where Shabbos was not observed, and they made the bold decision to undertake Shabbos observance. Each person who undertook this great step has a story to tell as to what prompted them to do so. While the stories are varied, there is often an impact, a Kiddush Hashem of sorts, involved. Someone's קדושה shone through and a sensitive soul picked up on the special truth of that קדושה. The yearning soul felt the tug – and with it the desire to be like this person.

One cannot prepare for, nor rehearse a moment of Kiddush Hashem. One can only live a life of קדושה as best as one is able and הקב"ה takes care of the rest. If one has the זכות, others will feel the impact and there will be more קדושה in the world than was there before.

Not only can one not prepare for such moments, but one is also often unaware that such a moment occurred. Who can know the ripple effects of someone who saw someone who acted in accord with our sacred tradition and the flame was ignited? Such information is stored in the Heavenly Ledgers, and, in most cases, one does not find out about one's impact during one's lifetime. Our job is not to keep score, but to focus on living in a way that sanctifies Hashem's blessed name because that is the way that He wants us to live.

Need to know

Sometimes, however, knowing that one has had a spiritual impact on another can have far-reaching implications, and when one needs to know the Ribono Shel Olam has infinite ways of letting one know. The following story demonstrates one of those ways.

An irreligious boy – but...

Our story revolves around a Jewish boy, let's call him Jeffrey, who grew up in suburban New Jersey. His family was physically, emotionally, and spiritually distant from anything that related to Torah and Mitzvos. Their spiritual recharge came in the form of an annual drive to a Shul located miles from their home (and their hearts) to attend High-Holiday services.

*Most of us
do not know
our impact
on others.*

But Jeffrey's parents made a fateful decision to send their son to a Jewish Day School. They did so for cultural reasons, and they certainly did not expect nor intend that his attendance there would have any practical implications for his, or their, life. How could they have known...

A spiritually sensitive child

Jeffrey was a good student academically but, more significantly, he was spiritually attuned. And owing to something along the road of his studies, the young Jeffrey began to think about a relationship with Hashem and His Mitzvos.

It did not happen overnight. But slowly and surely Jeffrey felt increasingly connected to Yiddishkeit. His parents' store, where he would



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go to help on Shabbos, became increasingly foreign to him. By the time Jeffrey was ready to become a Bar Mitzvah, he felt ready to do just that, take on Mitzvos.

The upcoming Bar Mitzvah

Jeffrey's parents' only Jewish connection was to the Shul they attended three-days-a-year. And so that is where they decided to mark Jeffrey's Bar Mitzvah. They were quite shocked when Jeffrey announced that he was going to stay in the Shul building over Shabbos to avoid being driven to Shul on Shabbos.

Not knowing what to do and not wanting their young son to be alone in the building overnight his parents called the Shamash of the Shul and shared their plight. Their young son insisted on not being driven to Shul for the Shabbos of his Bar Mitzvah. The Shamash quickly understood the nature of the request and indicated that he and his wife would be only too happy to host Jeffrey for Shabbos.

Jeffrey joined the elderly couple for Shabbos. The Shamash and his wife did what they could to make the boy comfortable. In addition to the Seudos, Jeffrey attended davening on Friday night and, of course, in the morning, was joined by the relatives and friends who drove in from near and far for the festivities. The Bar Mitzvah was lovely, but it only served to fuel Jeffrey's growing interest in learning about Torah and Mitzvos.

Looking for more

Jeffrey expressed an interest in supplementing his Jewish studies and his parents were introduced to Rav Dovid Trenk זצ"ל, beloved Rosh Yeshiva of the Adelpia Yeshiva. They asked Rav Dovid if he could find someone who

would learn with Jeffrey a couple of times a week. Rav Dovid זצ"ל answered in the affirmative. He would find someone, and that someone would be Rav Dovid himself.

And so began the next step in Jeffrey's spiritual journey. He immediately took to Rav Dovid's warmth and authenticity and they learned 'together' as was Rav Dovid's way. Sometimes they would meet at the Yeshiva and other times they would meet at the Trenk home, thus giving Rav Dovid's dear wife (and my cousin) a chance to get to know Jeffrey.

What was the secret?

At some point Mrs. Trenk asked Jeffrey what sparked his interest in Yiddishkeit. Jeffrey quietly shared what was in his heart, but that he had never said. His fourth-grade Morah at the Day School made an impact on him. She was living a life of קדושה that spoke to him; she was the sort of person that he would like to become.

Mrs. Trenk knew who that Morah was. She was none other than the daughter of Rav Shneur Kotler זצ"ל, Mrs. Esther Reich (Rebetzin of the Rosh Yeshiva Rav Uren Reich שליט"א). Mrs. Trenk made a mental note to reach out to Mrs. Reich and let her know how her influence as a fourth-grade Morah was bearing fruit.

A forgotten call – a fortuitous moment

As much as we have good intentions, our lives are full and sometimes things get pushed off, and so it was with that phone call. Then, close to the start of the new school year Mrs. Trenk was at the grocery and there was Mrs. Reich! She grabbed the opportunity to tell Mrs. Reich about how Jeffrey's story was unfolding. Mrs. Reich indeed remembered Jeffrey as an exceptionally fine and sensitive boy. Mrs. Trenk then related



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how Jeffrey has been growing and learning and that he traced his spiritual journey back to his having been in Mrs. Reich's class.

Divine timing

Mrs. Reich had a surprising reaction to the news. Mrs. Trenk could not have known that just that day Mrs. Reich was planning to call the school to resign her job. The schedule at the school had changed and continuing her teaching would have involved a much-earlier start of her day, competing with her own home and child-care responsibilities. She was going to make the call to resign...but she did not. Having heard that a Torah life was launched in her classroom was enough to push her past the considerable hurdles. She would continue to teach at the Day School.

Sometimes we need to know

And that brings us back to the beginning. Most of us do not know of our impact on others, and,

by and large, our influence is out of our field of vision. But sometimes we need to know. And when that happens, Hashem orchestrates it so that the information reaches us.

We are all teachers

Mrs. Reich was a fourth-grade teacher. One might think that only someone who is seen by many students daily needs to be concerned with one's effect on others. That thought could not be further from the truth. The reality is that each of us are impacting others daily. We, and the lifestyle that we espouse, are on display all the time. The opportunity for קידוש השם is always present. Those around us are making crucial decisions about how they would like to live their lives based on our smile, our sincerity, and our loyalty to the Torah.

We are, indeed, all teachers. And Jeffrey turned out to be his teacher's teacher. He taught her about her impact, and she learned the lesson well.

Takeaway: I will try to take my potential influence on others a bit more seriously.



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Wheels of Fortune

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E22)

Some miracles are built into nature. Shabbos observance brings miracles, naturally.

Shabbos – unlike any other Mitzvah

Shabbos is a Mitzvah, inscribed in the עשרת הדברות and commanded to כלל ישראל forever. Its place in the minds of observant Jews is fixed.

As much as we think that we know about the holiness of Shabbos, there are aspects of Shabbos that are beyond our understanding. For example, the Gemara⁶⁷ tells us that widespread observance of Shabbos has the power to bring the Redemption to כלל ישראל. And, on the sad side, failure to observe Shabbos is a cause for our exile.⁶⁸ The spiritual centrality of Shabbos spills over into and impacts our daily mundane lives. Shabbos can be thought of as our 'secret weapon' when dealing with the challenges of day-to-day living. The relationship between Shabbos and our daily lives was captured by Ibn Ezra in his famous זמר. There he declares כי אשמרה שבת א-ל – As I preserve Shabbos, Hashem preserves me.

We might think of this expression as simply lyrical. But there are countless testimonies and anecdotes of the protection afforded by Shabbos observance. Ibn Ezra was not simply waxing poetic; he was describing a spiritual reality. The oft-told story of the late Sam Zeitlin is one such account. While the story is known by many, I was blessed to be introduced to Sam by his

daughter who was, at the time, studying at the Gateshead seminary in England. She gave me her father's number and I was able to hear the Sam Zeitlin story directly from Shimon Pesach Zeitlin ע"ה himself.

First the facts, then the story

When we recount a story with a strong element of השגחה פרטית in it, we must recognize that הקב"ה conceals His involvement in the world.

That means that someone can look at the facts and interpret them without seeing the hand of Providence. The only time that הקב"ה revealed His involvement in a way that does not allow for any doubt about His direct control over every aspect of our lives is when He took us out of מצרים and gave us the Torah. That was the once-and-for-all announcement that there is no such thing as a 'natural'

event without His direction. Everything is His Will and Providence.⁶⁹ From that time onward the facts do not reveal the story. The story is left for us to notice and reveal. One who has not internalized the lessons of יציאת מצרים will hesitate if not refuse to see any set of facts as proclaiming Hashem's involvement. And we do not argue. We see Hashem's Providence because we know that in His compassion, He runs every facet of our existence. There is only one set of facts that prove His השגחה. Every other set of

*R' Noach
instructed Shimon
Pesach to learn
during first Seder
and to train
during second
Seder.*

⁶⁷ שבת קיח:

⁶⁸ עיין ירמיהו פרק י"ז

⁶⁹ ראה רמב"ן סוף פרשת בא



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facts is but a booster for those who know about
יציאת מצרים.

The facts

In the 60's Sam Zeitlin was a talented, determined cyclist and a rising star in the US cycling world. He confronted intense anti-Semitism coming from every part of the cycling community, including from his own teammates. In 1966, on his way back to Brooklyn from training in Queens at Kissena Park, he was ridden off the street by a group of his teammates declaring their hatred for 'the Jew' as they did.

The 'icing on the cake' was in Northbrook, Illinois in 1967 when he was stripped of his title in the Grand Prix of the Americas because he raised his hands in victory at the end of the race. The never-enforced rule not to take one's hands off the handlebars was suddenly relevant when the winner was a Jew. Sam knew that there was no cycling future for him in the US.

He thought about Canada – too cold. He thought about Mexico – air is too thin for cycling. Israel made sense. He had already biked at the Maccabiah Games in Israel and was known there, so Israel it would be.

The cycling division of HaPoel Tel Aviv Sports Club was only too happy to welcome Sam. He gave the Israelis a hope that they could send a cycling team to the upcoming Olympics in 1972. They had never sent a cycling team before. Weightlifting, wrestling, and fencing teams had gone, but never a cycling team. Sam could change that. And so, the intensive training got underway.

During his training, Sam, who had always been curious about Judaism, went to visit the Kosel.

He only knew the Posuk of Shema, so he went with his Posuk and kissed the stones of the Wall.

Turning around, he was drawn to go over to two English-speaking Yeshiva Bochurim standing nearby. They turned out to be brothers from Chicago, Chaim and Dovid Goldberg (currently the Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) who were each learning in Brisk; Chaim by R' Dovid and Dovid by R' Berel Soloveitchik.

In the ensuing conversation the brothers sensed that Sam was sincerely interested in finding out more about Yiddishkeit and they referred him to Rav Gershon Weinberger. R' Gershon was an architect in Yerushalayim who opened his home as a home-away-from-home for Yeshiva and Seminary students who began coming to Israel after the Six-Day War. The Weinberger's welcomed Sam and he spent several Shabbos meals at their table. The Nigun that they sang for 'לה' שבת היום made an impression on Sam and became something of a theme song for him which resonated in his head often, reminding him continually of Shabbos.

A name change

Sam decided to intensify his Jewish identity by adopting his Jewish name, Shimon Pesach. R' Gershon Weinberger introduced him to Rav Noach Weinberg who was opening a Yeshiva in Bnei Brak called מגן אברהם. Shimon Pesach related to me that he was the *fifth* student of the Rav who would go on to become a major force in the Ba'al Teshuva movement when he opened Aish HaTorah in Yerushalayim.

Bnei Brak, Rav Noach, and Training

R' Noach instructed Shimon Pesach to learn during first Seder in the Yeshiva and to train for



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three hours daily during second Seder. R' Noach envisioned the קידוש השם which could be generated if a Yarmulke-wearing young man stood up to receive an Olympic medal. Shimon Pesach took his newly defined mission seriously and worked hard at both parts of his day. It was easier to train in Bnei Brak which is flatter than Yerushalayim. In addition, there were many large trucks, often carrying tanks on board, on the highways near Bnei Brak and drafting (taking advantage of the air stream created by a moving vehicle) was a tempting way to build speed as well.

Trials on Shabbos

Shimon Pesach was crushed when the Israeli Olympic Federation announced that trials for the Olympic team would take place on Shabbos. The Federation was unbending, and Shimon Pesach had to make a choice. He would either tryout on Shabbos or he would not qualify for the Olympics. And if he would not qualify, there was no chance for the rest of the cycling team and so they would not go either.

The painful decision

Takeaway: I will try to see Shabbos as a dear friend who looks after me as I look after it.

Shimon Pesach made the painful decision to put Shabbos ahead of his Olympic ambitions. He, and the rest of the cycling team, stayed behind. They did not go to Munich in 1972.

A tragic loss

On the 10th day of the Munich Olympics a group of Palestinian terrorists calling themselves Black September broke into the Olympic Village and attacked the Israeli team during their sleep. They killed two athletes at their residence and took nine others hostage. In the end, the Arabs killed all nine of their hostages. Eleven coffins were brought back to Israel and Shimon Pesach was struck by the awful reality of the fate from which he was saved.

כי אשמרה שבת א-ל ישמרני – the story

Shimon Pesach knew in his heart that there was a story behind the facts. He knew that his painful decision to protect and preserve Shabbos turned out to be that which protected and preserved him. Can we prove the significance of Shabbos observance? Not to others. But we know it deeply, and Shimon Pesach was testimony to the protection afforded by sacrificing for Shabbos.



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Shabbos, Heilege Shabbos

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E23)

השגחה פרטית comes in many shapes and sizes – and sometimes in a song.

The city of Kishinev - revisited

The city of Kishinev, once part of Romania, used to host a thriving Jewish community. After WWI there were reports of seventy Shuls and Shtibelach in Kishinev. There had been a great Yeshiva there and חסידיות of nearly every stripe and lineage. Sadiger, Beyan, Chortkov, Chernobyl, Slonim, Skulen, and others. The chief Rav of Kishinev was Rav Yehudah Leib Tsirelson who, together with the Skulener Rebbe, R' Eliezer Zisha Portugal, co-founded אגודת ישראל.

But the Hashgacha had other plans for Kishinev. During WWII Kishinev was occupied by the Germans and Romania was subsequently divided up and Kishinev became part of the Soviet Union, a section called Moldova. Jewish life was virtually wiped out, save the Yeshiva building which was spared. The Jews there were separated from their Torah roots by the Hammer and Sickle of the Soviets.

Rebuilding Kishinev

Even before the Soviet Union began to crumble in 1990, a visionary Rav, R' Mordechai Neustadt זצ"ל founded נדחי ישראל with an eye to reconnecting the Jews of the Soviet Union with their heritage. The outreach operations prior to 1990 were all clandestine as the government did not tolerate the dissemination of Yiddishkeit. But in 1990 with the fall of the Iron Curtain Rav

Neustadt moved the operation into the open. One of his projects was to rekindle the flame of Yiddishkeit in Kishinev by rebuilding the Yeshiva which stood there. Hashem blessed Rav Neustadt's efforts and a great yearning and interest in Yiddishkeit sprung up among the young Russian Jews who had been robbed of their heritage.

By 1992 there was already a boys' and a girls' division to teach the children and 60+ children had graduated from the rebuilt Yeshiva. For the following 15 years or so the Yeshiva continued to prepare young people for a lifetime of involvement with Yiddishkeit.

*Seventy years
later the
Hashgacha
brought that same
song back to
those same walls*

A school cannot exist without staff and Rav Neustadt זצ"ל recruited two couples, Rav Yona Lazar, already a promising Mechanech, left Lakewood with his wife, Mrs. Shira Lazar. They were joined by Rav Elazar and Mrs. Aviva Tabak who also left their homes in the US to take a turn teaching the youngsters in

Kishinev.

Lonely times

While their schedules were full – the husbands taught the boys, and the wives taught the girls – life there was hardly a picnic. There were local and governmental politics to deal with, financial constraints, and perhaps most challenging, the loneliness associated with being so far from the families and communities that they came from.

Thriving on Friday night



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R' Yona reported to me that what made their stay not only bearable but uplifting and memorable was Davening with the students on Friday night. Not only did they teach the children the content of the שבת ליל Davening, but they also started singing with them and the children picked up the melodies. Naturally, they started with לכה דודי but slowly R' Yona got bolder and added more songs from שבת קבלת.

One of the tunes that he sang with them was מקולות מים רבים. The tune is slow and has a low part:

מקולות מים רבים, מים רבים אדירים, מים רבים אדירים, אדירים משברי ים.

And a high part:

אדיר במרום, אדיר במרום, אדיר במרום, אדיר במרום,

And then comes back down:

אדיר במרום השם, אדיר במרום השם

The chorus of boys rang out and the walls reverberated with the sound of their sweet voices and Neshamos reaching out to the בורא עולם. Those moments made everything worthwhile.

R' Levi Yitzchok's Niggun

Once the youngsters got used to the tune, R' Yona kept the tune and inserted the words of a short song written by R' Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev in which he sings out his love for the Holy Shabbos. That song is often sung to the same tune (perhaps that use of the tune even came first).

R' Levi Yitzchok's Niggun was simple:

ווען איך וואלט געהאט פֿון
וואלט איך געלאָפֿן אין די גאַסן
און איך וואלט געשריגן שבת
שבת, הייליגער שבת

שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת
שבת היום לה', שבת היום לה'

שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת, שבת
שבת היום לה' שבת היום לה'

The song translates to, "If I had the ability to, I would go out to the street and loudly call out Shabbos – Heilege Shabbos!"

Shabbos, Shabbos, Shabbos Shabbos... today is Shabbos for Hashem."

R' Yona even inserted a JEP-inspired ending to the rhyme, "We are not like them." He taught them the meaning of the Yiddish words and the few words of English he had added.

And the children picked it up. Their voices moved each of them to a different zone, to the place of the Heilege Shabbos.

Back in Los Angeles

After a year, the couples came back, and others took over. R' Yona became the 7th grade Rebbe in Toras Emes in Los Angeles. But he did not forget the children in Kishinev. Every ערב ראש חודש R' Yona would share stories from Kishinev with his students. The students could not get enough. Indeed, the then-young Shaya Twersky reported that his grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twersky זצ"ל would be going to Kishinev to visit אבות קברי. The students were delighted that they now had yet another 'connection' with Kishinev.

Connecting the old and the new Kishinev

The surprise came when someone showed R' Yona an account of the earlier Kishinev written by Aaron Wasserman. He described life in the city graced by so many Chassidic dynasties. What struck R' Yona was the description of Friday nights in Kishinev. The Chassidim of all



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types would converge on the Yeshiva after their meals. First, they would make sure that the Bochurim had eaten properly and would bring them food to supplement their fare.

But then, Wasserman described, a Slonimer Chosid, a watchmaker by the name of R'

Zechariah, would always sing R' Levi Yitzchok's Niggun!

R' Yona realized that seventy years later the Hashgacha had brought that same song back to those same walls! A bit of the earlier glory of Kishinev had returned.

Takeaway: I will try to see the Hand of Hashgacha in the details of my life



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To Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E24)

Noticing the need of a youngster can reverberate for generations.

Paysach Sheni – the person, not the date

Some years ago, a teenage boy took an interest in, and started listening to, various recordings of talks that I gave over the years. An active, boy, he took his interest a step further and began imitating me. In jest, he began referring to himself, and others referred to him as Paysach Sheni (referring to my name, Paysach).

When I was alerted to this young man's interest and skill at imitation, I reached out to speak to him. I learned that he was an orphan with two living parents. His father had deserted the home and left his mother an עגונה. Apart from the tragic situation in which his mother found herself, the situation also left this boy without an anchor nor a rudder.

Who will daven and learn with him?

His mother did what she could to look after his physical needs, but it became clear, as is often the case with boys growing up without a father, that nobody was taking him to Daven nor learning with him to build his connection with Torah. A boy in his situation is at risk on every level.

Time was of the essence. Boys who lack a guide to help them daven become distanced from speaking with Hashem. And a boy whose father does not take an interest in his learning often becomes 'hard of hearing' when it comes to Torah.

My wife and I invited him often to join our table for Shabbos which allowed him to learn Zemiro and hear Divrei Torah in a warm wholesome environment. But he needed an angel, and an angel stepped forward to help.

His Angel stepped in for him

His angel turned out to be Rav Yaakov Landesman שליט"א. R' Yaakov met our 'Paysach Sheni' and understood what was needed. R' Yaakov picked him up and took him with him so that they could Daven together. Then he would sit with him and learn with him. If he did this once, it would be commendable. Doing this several times would be a sign of devotion. Rav

Landesman met with 'Paysach Sheni' for *ten years*! He stayed with the Chesed of providing a father figure in his life until the young man was ready to go to learn in ארץ ישראל.

As an aside, eventually his father agreed to give his mother a Get.

Sadly, too many years had passed for his mother to restart her life. And had those around Paysach Sheni waited all those years there would have been very few pieces of his life to pick up, as well. Fortunately, they did not sit by and Paysach Sheni was able to thrive בסייעתא דשמיא.

Thinking through the need

אשרי משכיל אל דל⁷⁰ stresses the Posuk – fortunate is the one who uses his Seichel when dealing with a person in need. The Posuk

*Rav Landesman
met with
'Paysach Sheni'
for ten years!*

⁷⁰ תהלים מא:ב



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concludes with the promise that one who does so 'ביום רעה ימלטוהו' – on the 'bad day' (referring to the day in which each person must stand in judgement and answer for his life) Hashem will safeguard him. One never loses when one thinks through the needs of another.

The next chapter

I have remained in touch with Paysach Sheni who has become an Avreich and is living in ארץ ישראל. My respect for him has always been high. But his stock went up to new levels when he reported that he became aware of a boy without a father in his neighborhood. And he began to speak with the boy. And he began to learn with the boy. And sometimes they Daven together and other times the boy goes to his Shul of choice. And the meetings did not happen once. And they did not only happen several times. They have been getting together for over three years.

Paysach Sheni has the maturity to pass on that which he received. Yet another generation is learning about caring and using one's Sechel to deal with the needs of another.

Beyond the story

I am not telling this story simply to praise Rav Landesman nor to just 'kvell' about Paysach

Takeaway: I will try to identify and reach out to a fatherless boy so that he can grow to Torah and Mitzvos.

Sheni and his wonderful growth. I am telling this story to inspire, encourage, and plead with you to open your eyes and notice the fatherless boys around you. They are vulnerable in every possible way. They need someone who will provide them with a haven. They need the example and guidance to grow emotionally and spiritually. They need a father-figure to pick them up and walk with them to Shul.

They likely do not know how to reach out and ask for the support that they need. That is where the *משכיל* comes in. I am asking you to be that Maskil. Do not sit by while a boy's developmental years slip by without a guide. Open your eyes and heart to be that guide.

The numbers are growing

Unfortunately, the number of such boys is growing. They are each orphaned. Some have living fathers, some do not; the common denominator is that nobody is walking him to Shul. Nobody is creating a safe place for that boy to feel at home in Shul or to speak in matters of Torah.

You may be his lifeline.



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A Sparkle in the Sky

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E25)

Reciting קידוש לבנה is a precious opportunity that, if we grasp it, can be ours every month.

Reciting קידוש לבנה at the happiest time

The timing of קידוש לבנה is discussed extensively in the Gemara and in the הלכה. The practical ruling is that קידוש לבנה must be recited during the first half of the חודש, while the לבנה is waxing (an old English word meaning to grow), before it begins to wane (diminish, which the לבנה does after it reaches its maximum, or full moon in the middle of the חודש).

However, there is another aspect of its timing which does not appear to be related to the waxing and waning of the לבנה; it preferably should be said at a time of joy, ideally שבת מוצאי שבת. ⁷¹ On מוצאי שבת we are dressed in our finest clothing after spending the day with הקב"ה, and on מוצאי יום כיפור we are joyous at having been granted סליחה מחילה וכפרה. There is even an opinion ⁷² that one who needs to recite קידוש לבנה during the week should dress up for the occasion. And even though we are not accustomed to change for קידוש לבנה during the week, ⁷³ the message is still clear – the recitation of קידוש לבנה is to be accompanied with an elevated, joyous spirit.

It behooves us to look carefully at this ברכה so that we can be moved to dance upon its recitation as Jews have over the centuries.

Standing before the King

The Gemara⁷⁴ discusses קידוש לבנה and gives us some hints about its significance. The first is the teaching that we recite after קידוש לבנה:

תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: אילמלא (לא) זכו ישראל אלא להקביל פני אביהן שבשמים כל חודש וחדש - דיים. אמר אביי: הלכך נימרינהו מעומד.

In the מדרש of ר' ישמעאל they taught that if כלל ישראל had only one opportunity a month to receive Hashem's presence – it would suffice. Hence, said אביי, it should be recited standing.

In keeping with the above, the Gemara reports that מרימר and מר זוטרא expended great effort to stand for קידוש לבנה. [The יד רמ"ה explains that they were elderly and stocky, and it was hard for them to stand.] Clearly, there is great significance to this ברכה.

Receiving Hashem's Presence

In one of his many Shiurim on TorahAnytime, Rav Shmuel Greenberg, שליט"א, noted that the significance of קידוש לבנה may be found in the words 'receiving Hashem's presence' quoted above. What are we 'receiving'? Surely, we mean standing before, greeting, and praising ה'. What is meant by receiving His Presence?

Rav Greenberg suggests that the idea of receiving draws from the fact that the לבנה has no light of its own. Through the dark night it reflects the light of the unseen sun and shines a night-light onto the Earth. The central mission of

The survivor told him that קידוש לבנה kept them going.

⁷¹ אור"ח סימן תכ"ב:

⁷² שם ברמ"א

⁷³ עיין מ"ב שם – ועכשיו אין נוהגים לדקדק בזה

⁷⁴ סנהדרין מב.



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כלל ישראל is like that of the לבנה. We draw our light, our קדושה, our תורה, from the רש"ע who is unseen, and we shine that light onto the world, to other Jews and beyond.⁷⁵

The first פסוק

Rav Greenberg applies this insight to address why the first רש"י in Chumash suggests that sanctifying the חודש, which is the first (and now we see the central) Mitzvah given to כלל ישראל, should be the opening Posuk of the Torah. The announcement must be made at the outset that the mission of כלל ישראל is like that of the לבנה. We are designed to receive קדושה from Hashem and to reflect it back into the world.

Waxing and Waning

כלל ישראל, like the לבנה, have a built-in but temporary limitation. Like the לבנה, our glory rises (imagine the courts of ע"ה and דוד המלך ע"ה). However, when חטאים get in the way, כלל ישראל wanes. This waxing and waning from spiritual and material glory to the depths of spiritual and material poverty is a cycle that has repeated throughout our history. But we are assured that ה' will redeem us from this cycle and we, under דוד בית דוד, will be restored to glory that will not be diminished. May it be בקרוב בימינו.

This parallels the promise which Hashem gave to the לבנה. Its waxing and waning will end, and it will be restored to its full-time glory. The night is dark and seems to be endlessly long, but dawn will come, and its light will shine forever.

Yaakov and the night

This explanation helps us understand why the name יעקב is embedded into לבנה. We turn to the לבנה and bless its Creator using four terms with the acrostic of יעקב:

ברוך יוצרך ברוך עושך ברוך חונך ברוך פוראך

is the voice of אמונה, faith and trust at night, in darkness and in גלות. He instituted גלות מצרים and he led כלל ישראל into תפילת מעריב.

And יעקב redeemed הקב"ה from that גלות and we trust absolutely that He will redeem his descendants from the last גלות as well. Note the שחרית⁷⁶. In פדה ה' את יעקב וגאלו מיד חזק ממנו: פסוק we praise הקב"ה with the words גאל ישראל. In מעריב, though, we add this פסוק since we refer to יעקב אבינו at nighttime. And we hint at אבינו again when we recite לבנה. The waxing and waning of the moon is a גלות phenomenon, one from which יעקב אבינו and כלל ישראל will be redeemed.

Part of a פסוק, forward and backward

It may have surprised you when reciting קידוש לבנה that we recite a part of a פסוק from forward and then backward. First:⁷⁷

תפל עליהם אימתה ופחד בגדל זרועך ידמו כאבן

Then, we reverse the order:

כאבן ידמו זרועך בגדל ופחד אימתה עליהם תפל

Rav Elie Munk in World of Prayer explains that Hashem always brings down the enemies of כלל ישראל. Sometimes their downfall takes a natural (forward) course. But sometimes the salvation is anything but conventional. It is as if the forces of nature are being reversed.

⁷⁵ וכן בפסוק תהלים פד: יב - כי שמש ומגן ה' אלקים

⁷⁶ ירמיהו לא: י

⁷⁷ שמות טו: טז



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And to you, Peace

After speaking about the downfall that we pray for our enemies, we turn to one another with Brochos. The שלום עליכם to each other is an affirmation that our Tefilos for the downfall of our enemies does not, ח"ו, apply to the beloved Jews around us. To our precious brothers we only wish שלום.

The Protective Power of קידוש לבנה

Rav Meir Schwab שליט"א, Menahel of the Bais Yaakov of Denver, shared with me a story whose central figure was his great father, Rav Shimon Schwab זצ"ל.

After celebrating the Bar Mitzvah of a grandson in Philadelphia, Rav Meir set out to bring his elderly father back to Washington Heights. As they set out Rav Schwab זצ"ל remembered that he had not yet said קידוש לבנה. He asked Rav Meir to stop the car so that he could get out. With superhuman effort (given his painful arthritis) he stood to recite קידוש לבנה.

Rav Schwab was careful to say קידוש לבנה as early in the month as possible, on the first clear night. No waiting. There was even a little German rhyme that the children knew back in Germany which translates roughly to mean that during the winter months (טבת, שבט ואדר) we say קידוש לבנה as soon as the לבנה is visible.

When he got back into the car, Rav Schwab asked R' Meir if he had yet recited קידוש לבנה. R' Meir indicated that he had not, but that he would say it in Washington Heights when they arrived. Rav Schwab insisted that R' Meir say it then. R' Meir got out of the car and said it then.

The protection afforded by קידוש לבנה became quite apparent later in the trip. The road became increasingly slippery as they drove through the

freezing rain. At the approach to the toll plaza of the George Washington Bridge the car went into a skid and spun around over the span of four lanes. At one point the car even threatened to tip over as it went up on two wheels.

When the car finally came to a stop, they realized the extent of the miracle. There was not another car in sight. They had not hit anyone and R' Meir's fears for his and his father's wellbeing did not materialize. All R' Meir remembers is hearing his father saying, 'See, I told you to say קידוש לבנה...' [As an aside, even when he was quite ill and required hospitalization, Rav Schwab requested that he be placed in a room whose direction would allow him to say קידוש לבנה...]

[The באר היטב סימן תרב:ד quotes an account of salvation associated with קידוש לבנה which is brought in the אור חדש. Robbers let him say קידוש לבנה as his 'last act' and he was miraculously redeemed from their hands. He even asserts that one need not worry about passing away that month once having said קידוש לבנה.]

קידוש לבנה kept him going

This story, which Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz would regularly recount with great emotion, is recorded in the Sefer צדיקים.

R' Chaim asked a survivor of gruesome camps how he didn't despair during those dark times. The survivor told him that קידוש לבנה kept them going.

He said that a group of them would risk everything to go out at night and recite קידוש לבנה. He was the only one who remembered the words and so they would recite it with him. Their strength came from the words:



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וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ. עֲטֹרַת תְּפָאֶרֶת לַעֲמוּסֵי בֶטֶן שֶׁהֵם
עֲתִידִים לְהִתְחַדֵּשׁ כְּמוֹתָהּ. וְלִפְאָר לְיוֹצֵרָם עַל שֶׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ:

*Hashem told the לבנה to renew itself in a crown
of splendor for those to whom Hashem 'gave
birth' – the Jewish People – for they will be
renewed like the לבנה and will glorify the majesty
of הקב"ה.*

This promise, Hashem's promise, kept them
going. That sparkle gave them hope.

It is that sparkle that prompts the Halacha⁷⁸ to
associate קידוש לבנה with joy and dancing, like a
festive Chasuna. We dance and sing out our
confidence, our אמונה, that the waning of כלל
ישראל will turn to endless waxing once again.

Takeaway: *I will try to infuse my קידוש לבנה with a sense of joy and hope.*

⁷⁸ או"ח שם



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The Mikdash Me'at

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E26)

Inspiring us to upgrade our relationship with Shul and Davening.

Looks can be deceiving

The Shul where you Daven may look like a brick-and-mortar building in the city or town of your residence. But looks can be deceiving. The נביא יחזקאל and חז"ל tell us otherwise. The מקדש מעט tells us that those buildings are a ⁷⁹מקדש מעט.

לכן אמר פה אמר א' ה' כי הרחקתם בגוים וכי הפיצותם בארצות ואהי להם למקדש מעט בארצות אשר באו שם.

Hashem is announcing that though we are physically distanced and scattered, He will be a מקדש מעט for us in the lands of our dispersal. The Gemara⁸⁰ wonders what is this מקדש מעט that the נביא is referring to. It answers:

ואהי להם למקדש מעט, אמר רבי יצחק: אלו בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל.

Hashem has promised that the houses of prayer and study in the Exile will be small versions of the המקדש. And further the Gemara points out that those houses of prayer will be embedded into ארץ ישראל. The מהרש"א highlights the implications of this teaching:⁸¹

ונמצא עתה בגלות שאני עומד בבית הכנסת הרי הוא מקום המקדש גופי' דלעתיד

Standing in Shul, wherever the Shul is located, is standing in the future המקדש. How many times do we need to review that teaching until the new reality dispels the false impression that we are 'just' in Shul?! [The Gemara⁸² reports a

remarkable comment when ר' יוחנן heard that there were elders in Bavel. "How could that be," he asked, "does not the פסוק say למען ירבו ימיכם – long life is a feature of ארץ ישראל, not of חו"ל." When he was told that they start their days early in Shul and the Bais Midrash and end their days there as well, he relaxed. "Ah," he responded, "that is what enables them to have long life." We can now understand his question and answer. After all, they are 'living' in ישראל! When you step into Shul you are stepping into ארץ ישראל – no flight needed!]

*Come on in
and find the
שכינה that is
waiting for
you.*

קדושה The steps needed to protect the

With the above in mind surely each of us will be thinking of ways to protect בתי מדרשות and בתי כנסת of the קדושה. The רמ"א gives us a place to start when he rules⁸³ that it is forbidden to kiss one's children in Shul. The children

know that we would love to kiss them; and now they will learn that while in Hashem's embrace that love precedes all others.

The משנה ברורה cites the של"ה who would rail against those who brought little children into Shul as though it were a playground. Running around Shul without יראה paves the way for them to lose their way as adults. The children who run around in Shul today are the adults who carry on in Shul tomorrow. It is only once the child can

⁷⁹ יחזקאל יא: טז

⁸⁰ מגילה כט.

⁸¹ מהרש"א שם ד"ה עתידין

⁸² ברכות ח.

⁸³ אור"ח סימן צ"ח סעיף י"א ברמ"א



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begin to observe his parent's focus and intensity as the parent humbles himself before Hashem it is time for the child to have a place in Shul. There will no need to remind such an adult how to Daven as he will have the image of how his parent Davened etched in his mind.

Going to Shul with fervor

The פסוק tells us to go to Shul with *enthusiasm* – אֲשֶׁר יִחַדְדוּ נִמְתִּיק סוֹד בְּבֵית אֱלֹקִים נְהַלֵּךְ בְּרָגֶשׁ.⁸⁴ The word *ברגש* does not only mean with great feeling and fervor, but it also spells out the acrostic of *ברד*, *רוח*, *גשם*, *שלג* (we come not only with enthusiasm, but with dedication, even in the face of inclement weather, hail, wind, rain or snow). And if you prefer your acrostics in Yiddish, my uncle, Reb Yehuda Ackerman ע"ה, reported that in Yiddish they say *שניי גליטש, ריגען, בליץ* (lightning, rain, ice or snow).

Indeed, we are meant to give tangible expression to the enthusiasm we feel upon going up to the miniature House of Hashem. The Halacha⁸⁵ teaches us that we should run, even on Shabbos, when a *מצוה* such as Shul is the destination. The פרישה points out not to run on Shabbos when nobody can tell that the glory of Shul hangs in the balance. But when it becomes clear that the destination is Shul then each person, depending on his ability, picks up the pace. Give expression to your fervor.

Bring the שכנה

The Gemara⁸⁶ teaches that a person should try to get the merit of being one of the first ten men in Shul. What is this merit? To understand this merit, points out the מהרש"א, we need to know that a Jew brings קדושה with him wherever he

goes. If there are two Yidden, there is more קדושה, three still more (allows for זימון). But when the number reaches ten, there is a quantum jump in the level of קדושה in the room. They are now called an עדה and Hashem said that His Name will be sanctified in the presence of an עדה. Thus, once there is an עדה, they can recite קדיש, קדושה, ברכו, קריאת שבת, etc. The קדושה that we are speaking of is the power to draw down the שכנה into their midst. The first ten draw down that powerful measure of שכנה. And while every person adds honor to the King – ברוך עם הדרת מלך – it is the first ten that brought the שכנה. They are considered to have that merit even if 100 people come after. If people knew the power of being one of the first ten there would be a bidding war over who merits to enter the Shul as one of those ten.

Speaking of coming early

Imagine that one's relationship with Davening is the same as a member of a philharmonic orchestra or choir. One finds out the time of the rehearsal or the performance (when the Minyan starts) but that is only to work backwards to know when to come. The performer knows that he must take off his hat and coat, settle in, acknowledge with respect the others who have come and tune his instrument (פסוקי דזמרה and קרבנות). One would not imagine that one would jump in with an untuned instrument, in the middle of the rehearsal or performance. He certainly would not think of 'catching up' by playing the piece faster than everyone else to get to the 'important part' with them. He certainly would not leave before the great finale (the final

⁸⁴ תהילים נה:טו

⁸⁵ אור"ח סימן צ' סעיף י"ב

⁸⁶ ברכות מז:



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(אמן יהא שמיה רבה מברך). Now consider how you relate to the 'start time' of Davening.

If you think your involvement with Davening is somehow different or less significant than the philharmonic player, it is only because the Yetzer, the great deceiver, knows the truth and tries to hide it from us. And he has done a marvelous job of keeping us from knowing that everything that we need or want in our lives hinges on the relationship that we build with Hashem and the sincerity of our requests to Him. Then going to greet the שכינה in the presence of ten Yidden would certainly not be considered 'optional.' It would be an 'I cannot wait for the next opportunity' moment for each of us.

And when we did not cherish the proximity of the שכינה in ירושלים, we were sent away and exiled from His House. And we are all witnesses that the same can happen to our own precious Houses of Tefilah. The נביא declares⁸⁷ **כִּי תֵבֹאוּ לְרֹאוֹת פָּנַי מִי בִקֵּשׁ זֹאת מִיָּדְכֶם רָמַס חֲצָרִי** – If we do not cherish these moments, we can easily be 'told' to stop coming.

But at least I came

There are those who comfort themselves, or defend themselves if confronted, by saying that they are better than those who do not come at all. After all, at least I came.

One Jew who used that defense was shown, just a couple of days later, how empty that defense really is. He was berated for coming consistently late. The הלכה provides guidelines for the once-in-a-blue moon occurrence when coming late was unavoidable. But those הלכות are not meant to become the 'new normal' as permitting cutting this corner or that of Davening! "How

could you come late all the time," he was chided. And he responded with the standard defense, "at least I come in the end."

A couple of days later he found himself pleading with the fire department to come and save his burning store. His livelihood was going up in smoke! And, *in the end, they came*. But coming 'in the end' was not enough to save his store. They managed to spare the neighboring stores by soaking them down before the fire could reach them, but he spent eight months without his source of פרנסה. That was time to consider the defense of 'in the end I came.' Surely, that is not an approach to Davening.

The ways that we demonstrate the specialness

There are tangible ways that we show Hashem, ourselves, our children, and others, how special it is to be in the House of Hashem. We already mentioned picking up the walking pace when approaching. But what about when we are there? The Gemara⁸⁸ teaches that one may not go onto the הר הבית with his 'ordinary' attire. The same must be for the מקדש מעט. You can feel this difference between someone who prances into Shul with his sneakers versus someone who puts on a hat and jacket and perhaps even a tie to daven. This is not about 'frumkeit.' This is about how we declare that this is not an 'ordinary' place and Davening is not an 'ordinary' activity.

Similarly, shutting off one's phone is not simply appropriate decorum, something that we would, or hopefully do when attending any meeting of significance or sitting with one's spouse or child. When it comes to Shul, turning off the distractions is a way of declaring that this space and time are sacred. Nothing is going to encroach on this sanctity. My time here is

⁸⁷ ישעיהו א: יב

⁸⁸ ברכות סב:



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limited and precious and I will not have other things on my mind. Imagine the philharmonic player getting a text message in the middle of his performance...

At the door?

We know that a person needs a set place to Daven. The Gemara⁸⁹ speaks of the great merit of one who has a set place for his תפילות. But we

Takeaway: I will try to upgrade my relationship with Shul and Davening.

also know that there is a door to the Shul and חז"ל tell us to set one's place in the Shul, not near the door.⁹⁰ Sitting (or standing) near the door is a sign that one does not embrace the שכינה that is there. Only one who wants to leave stays near the door.

Come on in and find the שכינה that is waiting for you.

⁸⁹ ברכות ו:.

⁹⁰ שם ח.



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The Words and the Thought Process

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E27)

Inspiring us to upgrade our relationship with Davening.

The עבודה of Davening

The Gemara⁹¹ asks on the פסוק of לבבכם פסוק, what is the עבודה that is in one's heart? The Gemara answers that the פסוק is referring to Davening. תפילה is therefore called עבודה שבלב – heart-service.

Of course, the Yetzer, the Great Deceiver, wants us to think that it is a service of the lips – saying words of תפילה. But the Torah teaches us that he is wrong. It is a service of the heart, and that is how we must relate to תפילה. Empty words, bereft of thought and intent, only play into the hand of the Deceiver; they are not תפילה.

The word תפילה refers to thinking

The מהר"ל demonstrates that the word תפילה is a reference to thought, not to recited words. The word has its origins in the declaration of יעקב who, in his joy at seeing the children of יוסף הצדיק, says ויאמר

– I did not allow myself to even *think* about seeing you, let alone about seeing your children. רש"י spells it out –

לא פללתי – לא מלאני לבי לחשב מחשבה שאראה פניך עוד.
פללתי – לשון מחשבה

The key of תפילה is the thought that goes into it. And thought requires understanding.

Make your Siddur your Friend

I suggest that you get your own siddur and start making it really yours. As you understand more of the תפילות, take notes, highlight, or underline the words and thoughts that speak to you. Your connection to תפילה will intensify because you will be seeing yourself and your thoughts as you Daven.

As a young ימים נוראים, I learned with my Zayde, Rav Chanoch Henoch Krohn בעל תפילה who was not only an accomplished בעל תפילה in the Scranton and McKeesport area, but he was also a בקי in ג"ך. He would ask me, as we

practiced, if I knew the meaning of this word or that. Often, I did not.

He reminded me that as the representative of the ציבור I must know what I am saying. I noted many of the translations that he taught me into my מחזור. That made the מחזור mine and it turned the Davening into a personal experience, not just a recitation.

And do not be afraid of using a siddur with translation. Distinguished חכמים do so. It comes from a desire to understand the תפילות.

A Shiur in תפילה

Rav Sheftel Horowitz (1592-1660, son of the 'של"ה הק'), in his role as a Dayan in Frankfurt, set up a סדר לימוד where they learned the פירוש התפילות. Perhaps that is a practice that should be revived. In any case, how does that contrast with

⁹¹ תענית ב.



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the all-too-popular current notion that saying the words is 'more than enough.'

Less, but with כוונה

The Gemara⁹² (citing the Zohar and the Midrash) teaches that רחמנא ליבא בעי – Hashem wants and seeks out our hearts. Words and songs are only as useful as they bring out the sincerity of our thoughts. Alone, without devotion of the heart, words and songs are but a reminder of our distance from Hashem.

This is codified in הלכה. The מחבר rules⁹³ that quality of כוונה is more valuable than quantity without כוונה. And while quantity with כוונה is the ideal, one who must choose between the two should opt for less with כוונה than to sacrifice כוונה. The same, adds the משנה ברורה, applies to לימוד התורה. When the issue is an eternal relationship with ה', it is not the time to check your watch. It is the time to check your כוונה. And that, as we have said, is a real עבודה. And especially on שבת קודש, when we set aside more time than on a weekday to Daven and connect, we should focus our attention on our כוונה.

Examples

Surely, as you study the תפילות, you will discover insights that speak to you. As we mentioned, try to collect them in your Siddur so that you can recall them while you are Davening. In the meantime, here are some thoughts that can get your collection started:

Dovid HaMelech describes הרופא לשבורי הקב"ה as הרופא לשבורי – He heals the brokenhearted. I recall being

struck when I was first shown that the first letters of those words spell הלל. The greatest praise for Hashem is His encouragement. It prompts me to reflect on how I am doing with encouraging others. Am I emulating Hashem and taking that role seriously? That is an important underline for me, and it might be meaningful for you, as well.

In להמשיל לו, we say that there is none להחבירה. What do those words mean? When I realized that להחבירה comes from the word חבר, I understood why ArtScroll translates it to mean 'to compare to Him, to declare as His equal.' There is no משל that can capture His Unity.

Every word that we do not understand is a window, an opportunity to discover what חז"ל are showing us. Do we know what רצה והחליצנו means (the addition for Shabbos in ברכת המזון)?⁹⁴ Or, do we know what the Aramaic words ביה אנא mean in בריך שמיא? ('In Him I trust.')

חזרת הש"ץ

Speaking during Davening is always forbidden. However, when speaking about חזרת הש"ץ, the מחבר reserves a rarely-used language for one who speaks during חזרת הש"ץ. He says⁹⁵ that not only is the speaker committing a grave חטא, but that the sin is גדול עונו מנשוא – greater than one can bear. This language alludes to Kayin's claim after having murdered הבל. He asked ה' if his sin is too great to be borne.

I heard Rav Matisyahu Solomon shlita⁹⁶ wonder how speaking during חזרת הש"ץ could earn a description which is otherwise reserved for the

⁹² סנהדרין קו: 92

⁹³ אור"ח סימן א' סעיף ד'

⁹⁴ See the footnote in the ArtScroll Siddur which points us to ויקרא רבה לד: טו which explains that והחליצנו has several connotations.

⁹⁵ אור"ח סימן קכ"ד סעיף ד'

⁹⁶ מתתיהו חיים בן עטל לרפוא"ש בתשס"י



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first murderer?! I found myself thinking how this sin could be so grievous?!

Consider a person who is on trial for serious matters. His lawyer is pleading his case before the judge. And while this drama is unfolding the defendant notices his friends and starts catching up with this one and that one on the latest. Is it hard to imagine how the judge would react? Is it a stretch to then say that this offense is too great to bear before the heavenly court? At stake are the things that are most precious to us! Our 'lawyer' is presenting our case on our behalf, and we are doing what?!

A story: Echoes of Davening into Eternity

This story has two main characters and one hidden one. You decide which is main one. It was shared with me by Rabbi Aryeh Rodin shlita, Rav of the Ohev Shalom Shul in Dallas. At the time the story began, Rabbi Rodin was the Rav of the Young Israel of Dallas, before the new Shul was built in the north.

With a knock on Rabbi Rodin's door Leonard Frohman was welcomed into his home. The two had not met previously but the visitor was interested in learning more about Yiddishkeit and Rabbi Rodin was only too happy to spend time trying to answer his questions. A bond was quickly formed. Leonard was touched by Rabbi Rodin's refined character and authenticity, and he began attending Davening, eventually changing his life to come closer to Torah and Mitzvos.

When it became clear that Rabbi Rodin was going to move north to reach out to an underserved neighborhood in Dallas, Leonard jumped in to help. He did not just move to the new neighborhood; he donated generously to the

construction of the new Shul, and he even convinced his friends to move and do the same.

In time, the secret behind that first meeting became known. Leonard had just come back from a tour of Israel. Their last evening was going to be the 'religious' part of the tour and included an evening visit to the Kosel.

Not knowing what the protocol was, Leonard copied the actions of others who were writing notes and placing them in the wall. But as he approached the wall to put in his note he was struck by the simple, sincere prayers of the Yerushalmi Jew who was pouring out his heart next to where Leonard stood. He did not know how to respond. He would have liked to help the man if money were what was needed, but more than anything else, he yearned to have the sort of intimate connection with the Creator that this Jew had. What does it take? How is it done?

Upon his return to Dallas, he turned to his friend who worked at the Kosher Bakery there. He described the sincere, connected Jew to his friend behind the counter and asked one question: If that man came to Dallas, where would he go to pray? Without hesitation his friend said that he would go to Daven with Rabbi Rodin. And with that background, Leonard made his way to Rabbi Rodin's door.

Sadly, Leonard had not married before he suffered a heart attack and passed away at 49. But at his Levaya, his mother thanked Rabbi Rodin for being the conduit through which her son found his way back to authentic Judaism. Indeed, she undertook to match all her son's donations to the Shul and those funds allowed the project to be completed.

At the Shloshim, Rabbi Rodin reflected on that Yerushalmi Yid who was Davening at the Kosel.



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At the end of his life, at his Heavenly Review, he will be told that he is being credited with building a Shul in Dallas. He will surely be puzzled beyond words. I built a Shul?! Where?!

But they will be telling him the power of sincere prayer. Apart from whatever answer they

showed him from Heaven at the time of his prayers, in שמים they will show him the power of a simple prayer. You cannot put too much effort into building an authentic relationship with Hashem and giving that expression in your Davening. And you cannot imagine the ripple effects of that sincerity.

Takeaway: I will try to upgrade my relationship with Davening.



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The Mysterious and Mystical Meal

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E28)

Some of the secrets behind Seudah Shlishis (or Shalosh Seudos)

Take good care!

There is an unusual emphasis in the הלכה when referring to שבת קודש of סעודה שלישית. The מחבר admonishes us⁹⁷ to be exceedingly careful to fulfil the requirement to eat three meals on שבת.

Part of the required care is to make sure that we leave room to eat a שיעור of bread at שישית. After all, on a short (winter) Shabbos it is very easy to lose track of our eating at the main Shabbos meal such that we have no appetite for סעודה שלישית. This could result in our forcing ourselves (אכילה גסה) which is not called eating at all. Or we will be unable to eat the third meal at all and we will have to rely on one of the בדיעבד alternatives. The מחבר preempts the story by telling us to let our wisdom and not our stomachs dictate our consumption. Keep סעודה שלישית in mind.

A special time within a special day

There is more to סעודה שלישית than just making sure that you have room to eat it. If we had to mark the spiritual high-water point of שבת קודש we would, based on the Zohar, say that point is when the holy day is nearing its conclusion. The Zohar teaches:⁹⁸

תא חזי, בכל שיתא יומי דשבתא, כד מטא שעתא דצלותא דמנחה, דינא תקיפא שלטא, וכל דינין מתערין. אבל ביוםא דשבתא, כד מטא ערן דצלותא דמנחה, רצא דרעין אשתכח,

ועתיקא קדישא גליא רצון דיליה, וכל דינין מתכפין, ומשתכח רעותא וחדו בכלא.

Translated into Hebrew (סולם):

בוא וראה בכל ששת ימי השבת, כשמגיע שעת תפלת המנחה, דין קשה שולט, וכל הדינים מתעוררים, אבל ביום השבת, כשמגיע שעת תפלת המנחה, רצון הרצונות נמצא, ועתיקא קדישא מגלה הרצון שלו, וכל הדינים נכנעים, ונמצא רצון ושמחה בכל.

And, in English:

During the weekdays at Mincha-time there is a predominance of strict judgment and shortcomings

are highlighted. However, on שבת, when Mincha arrives, there is an outpouring of desire for human beings and all judgment is subdued, and great desire and joy is present.

[The Rebbe of Riminov דצוק"ל explained that the ebbing hours of Shabbos are the moments before creation of the World (which began on יום ראשון) when, despite all the imperfections of future mankind,

Hashem desired that the World come to be. Hence those moments are filled with רצון.]

We should feel Hashem's great yearning for us and reciprocate with deep yearning for connection with Hashem. It is a time of inspiration and looking to the תורה הק' for insight and connection. This is the best time to give one's נשמה a boost.

Typically, a time of פן

⁹⁷ אור"ח סימן רצ"א סעיף א'

⁹⁸ זוהר שמות (יתרו) דף פח:



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As we saw in the Zohar, the Gemara⁹⁹ teaches that typically Mincha is a time of judgment. For example, Eliyahu HaNavi needed to bring down judgment on the idolatrous prophets and so he was careful to take advantage of Mincha time.¹⁰⁰

But another implication of the תפילה of Eliyahu HaNavi is that he was answered immediately at that time. Hence, concludes the Gemara, one must be careful with Mincha. It is a great source of רחמים that the same time on Shabbos is a spring of great רצון. That is the 'news' of the רצון – the time of great רצון on Shabbos. [It is said that the סופר חת"ם taught that one can seek protection from the deadly effects of a מגיפה ר"ל by paying special attention to סעודות. The relevance to our times should be obvious.]

Have Bread/Challah at שלישיית סעודה

The ערוך השלח makes the case strongly that one should not rely on leniencies when it comes to שלישיית סעודה; one should wash on a proper שיעור of bread and given that the preponderance of Rishonim rule that one must eat bread, "עבירה גדולה – it is a great transgression to be lenient.

שלוש סעודות זו סעודה שלישיית

Grammatically, the third meal is called, in Hebrew, שלישיית סעודה. However, check at your Shul and you will hear it called שלוש סעודות (or, even more commonly, שלושודים) – meaning 'three meals' instead of the 'third meal.'

I have heard it explained that in a sense, this meal is all three meals. The Friday night and Shabbos morning meals are predominantly a fulfilment of עונג שבת – after all, one is hungry, and a filling meal provides relief from that

hunger and עונג for the one eating. But כבוד שבת, doing some for the honor of Shabbos, not just for one's comfort and pleasure, seems absent.

But once we set the table and enjoy the third meal לכוך שבת קודש (since it is a meal that we would not necessarily look for as עונג), we thereby announce the importance of כבוד שבת and that כבוד was part of our agenda even when we were enjoying the previous meals. In a sense, then, we are now gaining the כבוד שבת of all three meals. Perhaps that is why it is universally referred to as 'three meals' and not just as 'the third meal.'

Davening for פרנסה

Rav Pinchos M'Koretz said that since שלוש סעודות time is a time of רצון דרעון, it is appropriate to request that Hashem provide one with sustenance (פרנסה). This seems surprising given that we do not make requests on שבת קודש. My Rebbe Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א suggested that such a request is already built in to the Minhag to recite מזמור לדוד three times at שלוש סעודות. There we say ה' רועי לא אחסר – Hashem is my Shepherd; I will not lack. We are making the request by proclaiming our faith in the ה' יד, three times!

קבלת עול מלכות שמים

In many Shuls, particularly Nusach Sfar, The Rov stands before the דרשה at שלוש סעודות and leads the קהילה in accepting upon themselves the sovereignty of Hashem. Some say ה' מלך, ה' מלך, ה' מלך and some also declare the שמע. Given the עת רצון that these moments represent, it is only fitting that we should declare our absolute loyalty to Hashem at that time.

⁹⁹ ברכות ו:

¹⁰⁰ עיין צרור המור בראשית פ' חיי שרה



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Source for the three meals on Shabbos

The Gemara¹⁰¹ derives the requirement to have three meals on Shabbos from the three appearances of the word היום when Moshe instructs the People how to handle the מן and the Shabbos meals.¹⁰²

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הוֹי הַיּוֹם כִּי שַׁבַּת הַיּוֹם לָהּ הַיּוֹם לֹא תִמְצָאֶהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה.

[A Rebbe once quipped that the fare at סעודה שלישי is often rather sparse when compared with the other two meals... the third היום in the פסוק is followed by the words לא תמצאֶהוּ – you'll not find it...]

Raise a cup of wine

The Rambam¹⁰³ rules that all three meals must be accompanied with a cup of wine. While חז"ל did not establish a formal קידוש over the third meal, the idea that the performance of a significant Mitzvah is always accompanied with a cup of wine is familiar to us. And while it is not formalized in the Halacha, many people have the custom to adorn the third meal with this cup.

The אריז"ל explained his custom to drink wine at the third meal as having to do with his sadness over the imminent departure of the holy שבת. He therefore took advantage of the joyful properties of wine to dispel his sadness (as the פסוק says יין ויין למרי נפש and ישמח לבב אנוש).¹⁰⁴

Three Avos, three Meals

The three meals align with the three אבות הקדושים. The Friday night meal aligns with חסד; the day

meal with יצחק אבינו; and the third meal with יעקב אבינו, the Middah of Torah. [This might explain how this meal could be fulfilled through Torah study for one who has no food or who cannot eat.]

אתקינו סעודתא

We have no writings from the אריז"ל (what we have is all related by his Talmid, Rav Chaim Vital) except for the פיוטים called סעודתא which the אריז"ל wrote for the three meals of שבת. The prevailing custom is to recite this פיוט only at the third meal (although you should feel encouraged to recite the others if you are inclined). We find there a reference to the חקל – the field of holy apples – who are coming to join the הקב"ה at the meal.

This reference to Klal Yisroel as a field of holy apples surely draws from the Gemara¹⁰⁵ where we are likened to the apple. One aspect of this comparison is that other fruit trees produce a flower before the fruit emerges. The apple tree does the reverse; it bears fruit and then produces flowers. The ספרים say that this alludes to the way that כלל ישראל reversed the usual order when accepting the Will of הקב"ה when they said נעשה before נשמע.

Grab the opportunity

If you are looking for that which is very precious in the world, check for that which is regarded lightly by people. That is a good indicator that great holiness is lurking behind the scenes which the Yetzer attempts to conceal from us. Shalosh Seudos, the רעוא דרעוין is one such example. Let this be an encouragement to gather with the

¹⁰¹ שבת קיד:

¹⁰² שמות טז:כה

¹⁰³ הל' שבת פרק ל הל' ט'

¹⁰⁴ תהלים קד:טו ומשלי לא:ו

¹⁰⁵ תענית כט:



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'holy apples' and join הקב"ה at this meal,
declaring our unity with Him, being מכבד the

שבת קודש and giving a weeklong boost to our
נשמות.

Takeaway: I will try to regard סעודה שלישית with the significance that it deserves.



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The Blessings of Blessing

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E29)

Notes about Birkas HaMazon (Part 1)

The focus on ברכת המזון on Shabbos

In the Friday-night Zemer כל מקדש we read the praise of ישראל that they are סועדים בו לברך – they eat meals on Shabbos to Bentch three times. While we are obligated to recite ברכת המזון after any bread meal, the Zemer is highlighting the opportunity for ברכת המזון as a reason to eat the three meals on Shabbos. Clearly, the themes of ברכת המזון are those which are especially relevant to Shabbos. As we look at those themes the connection may become clearer.

The source of the obligation

ברכת המזון is unique in that the חיוב to recite it is spelled out in the תורה. We read:

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ
הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ (דברים ח:)

*Eat, be satisfied, and bless Hashem,
your G-d, for the good land that He gave you.*

The uniqueness of a ברכה being obligated by the Torah is highlighted by ר' בחיי who comments:¹⁰⁶

ויש לך להתעורר כאן כי יש בפסוק זה פתח להבין סוד הברכות
ולא תמצא בכל התורה בשום מקום שצוה הקדוש ברוך הוא
שנברך לשמו כי אם במקום הזה

*Take notice that this פסוק holds the key to
understanding the secret of all ברכות, as you will
not find another instance where הקב"ה instructs
us to bless His Name.*

Does Hashem need our blessings?

Any ברכה, and certainly ברכת המזון, gets its name from the opening words, ברוך אתה ה'. What do we mean when we say those words? We cannot mean that we are blessing ה' as it is not logical to bless ה' who has everything. What *does* make sense, says ר' בחיי, is to acknowledge that ה' is the מקור הברכה and that everything flows from the בריכה עליונה – the heavenly spring.¹⁰⁷ The affirmation and acknowledgement that everything comes from הקב"ה is the most basic

premise of every ברכה, and is the starting point of ברכת המזון.

And thank you

Once we acknowledge that everything, and certainly the food that we just ate, comes from ה', it is both logical and compelling to humble ourselves in gratitude to הקב"ה for that which we have eaten. No matter how grateful a person may be, there is always room for more humility and gratitude to הקב"ה for addressing our needs.

Rav Yechezkel (R' Chatzkel) Levenstein זצ"ל cautioned us not to Bentch simply because that is the הלכה; to Bentch after a bread meal. We must activate our *gratitude* and Bentch with הכרת הטוב.¹⁰⁸ We must be grateful not only for the specific benefit we have received, but also for the *opportunity to say thank you*. We say this twice a day (and thrice on Shabbos) in the מודים

¹⁰⁶ ר' בחיי שם

¹⁰⁷ ר' בחיי שם ובכד הקמח "ברכה"

¹⁰⁸ אור יחזקאל עמוד 327



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thank you – מודים אנחנו לך... על שאנחנו מודים לך – דרבנן
you...for the opportunity to thank you.

This, adds R' Chatzkel, is also built into the first ברכה of ברכת המזון where we acknowledge that הקב"ה sustains us וברחמים בחסד, בחן, ברחמים. The חן refers to the fact that food is appealing to us; חסד refers to the fact that it tastes good; and רחמים refers to the fact that it nourishes and enables us to do that which we are here for. There is no limit to gratitude if you just stop and think about it.¹⁰⁹

On Shabbos, when we declare, by keeping שבת, that הקב"ה is the Creator and Master of everything and we sing out His praises and our gratitude, the obligation to recite ברכת המזון becomes part of the theme of the day. Indeed, as we say in the מקדש, כל, we are eating the meals of Shabbos in order to Bentsh!

More incentive to Bentsh properly

If the acknowledgment and gratitude were not enough incentive to invest time and focus on ברכת המזון, perhaps the סגולה for פרנסה will provide an additional boost. The ספר חינוך writes:

כך מקובל אני מרבותי, ישמרו א-ל, שכל הזהיר בברכת המזון
מזונותיו מצויין לו בכבוד כל ימיו.

*I have a tradition from my teachers, May Hashem Protect them, that anyone who is careful regarding ברכת המזון will always have sustenance with dignity.*¹¹⁰

[People would come to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל to seek ברכות and סגולות for פרנסה. He would cite this חינוך and wonder why people

would look further than this wonderful guarantee.]

This סגולה is mentioned in the טעמי המנהגים as well. He adds that the סגולה applies when one recites ברכת המזון aloud and with joy.¹¹¹ Likely these סגולות draw from the פסוק which teaches that ברכת ה' היא תעשיר ולא יוסף עצב עמה – one should not be saddened or depressed over his פרנסה since wealth comes from Hashem's ברכה alone.¹¹²

Bentshing aloud

Having mentioned the סגולה to recite ברכת המזון aloud, we note that the title of the סימן that deals with ברכת המזון in Shulchan Aruch¹¹³ is entitled: – לברך בהמ"ז בקול רם, ויתר פרטים בברכת המזון aloud. We might add, if you had time to eat, as we do on שבת, then you have time to focus on your ברכת המזון. There have been those, like those of the Telshe Yeshiva, who have said the words with great concentration until they gave the words a melody or a Nusach which can still be heard in the Yeshivos and homes that those students went on to the establish.

Caution, Satiety Ahead

Unfortunately, there is a part of each human being that does not handle satiety well. When a person is full, teaches the Gemara¹¹⁴, he is at great spiritual risk of rebelling against, instead of humbling himself before הקב"ה. מלי כריסיה זני – a full stomach leads to trouble. That can explain the sequence of the פסוקים regarding ברכת המזון. "Eat, be satisfied, and thank Hashem for the wonderful Land...lest you forget Hashem

¹⁰⁹ R' Chaim Kanievsky שליט"א explains how we can say when nobody lives forever. He answered that the food that we eat in עוה"ז carries us into eternity – לעולם ועד.

¹¹⁰ ספר החינוך סוף מצוה ת"ל

¹¹¹ טעמי המנהגים עמוד 566

¹¹² משלי י: כב

¹¹³ א"ח סימן קפה

¹¹⁴ ברכות לב.



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and not keep His Mitzvos...¹¹⁵ is critically important to protect our רוחניות and humility.

Indeed, בחיי says that the brothers could only have sold יוסף הצדיק because they had just eaten a full meal (בראשית לו: כה).¹¹⁶ Eating and drinking to satiety is a spiritually high-risk activity.

[It is said that פדיון הבן is meant to be a כפרה for the חטא of מכירת יוסף. Note that it is the only occasion where we wash *before* the מצוה. At every other occasion (Bris, Chuppah, etc.) we wash *after* performing the Mitzvah. But when reenacting the מכירת יוסף we wash *first* and then do the *right* thing to counter the effect of their *right* thing to counter the effect of their *wrong* thing.]

Who wrote ברכת המזון?

The Gemara¹¹⁷ teaches the משה רבנו ע"ה instituted the first Brocha, ברכת הון, to be recited upon eating the מן. My Rebbi Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א pointed out that the content of the ברכה has been passed down as a קבלה through the generations.¹¹⁸

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss שליט"א, in his wonderful book Power Bentching, cites the פאר who points out that תורת משה begins with a 'ב' and ends with a 'ל' and so does the ברכת הון which משה רבנו ע"ה also composed.

ברכת הארץ

The Gemara teaches that the second Brocha, נודה, called ברכת הארץ, was composed by יהושע,

who led us to take possession of the Great Land. Rav Weiss also writes that the reference to ברית in ברכת הארץ may relate to the great Bris that performed on Klal Yisroel before entering ארץ ישראל.¹¹⁹ This was a prerequisite for entering the Land, hence יהושע included it in ברכת הארץ.

The third ברכה

The third ברכה, known as בונה ירושלים, starting with רחם, is the only ברכה which contains requests. Any requests, such as יעלה ויבא and רצה, can only be said in this ברכה (for example, one is not יוצא if one said רצה where we insert the praise of ברכת הארץ in על הניסים).

The Gemara teaches that this ברכה is the combined efforts of דוד המלך ע"ה (reference to ירושלים) and his son, שלמה המלך ע"ה (reference to בית המקדש).

Note the descriptions and praises of Hashem's Hand towards the end of רחם. Nusach Ashkenaz is לִיָּדְךָ הַמְּלֵאָה הַפְּתוּחָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֵבָה. The Sephardic custom is to say לִיָּדְךָ הַמְּלֵאָה וְהַרְחֵבָה. It would seem likely, points out the ערוך השלחן,¹²⁰ that the Ashkenazi custom was to say הגדושה – overflowing, instead of הקדושה – holy, continuing the description of Hashem's Hand. And while we do not alter our מנהג based on such assertions, the idea helps us focus our concentration on Hashem's limitless gifts.

In רחם we ask Hashem that we should not need to rely on gifts nor loans, but on His Hand alone. We refer to those gifts and loans as מתנת בשר ודם.

¹¹⁵ דברים ח: י-יא

¹¹⁶ כד הקמח שלחן של ארבע שער ב' ד"ה וצריך שתדע

¹¹⁷ ברכות מח:

¹¹⁸ R' Dovid שליט"א also quoted his son, Ami, who noted that Hashem is referred to as אלקינו ה' in each of the ברכות of ברכת המזון, echoing the פסוק of וברכת את ה' אלקינו על הארץ הטובה

¹¹⁹ See יהושע ה: ב. Klal Yisroel had not circumcised their sons during their sojourn through the desert and only did so under Yehoshua's direction before entering ארץ ישראל.

¹²⁰ ערוך השלחן סימן קפח סעיף ו'



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תלמיד חכם a great משה מרדכי הלוי שולזינגר זצ"ל and biographer, told me that his Rebbe, Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, understood these words as also requesting that one not need a transplant nor a transfusion, drawing on the literal translations of the words *מתנת בשר ודם*. My Rebbe Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א explained that when we are dealing with the perfect wording instituted by the הגדולה אנשי כנסת then even nuances like these can be drawn from the holy words.

רצה והחלצנו

One of the requests that we insert in the ברכה of שבת קודש refers to *רצה והחלצנו*. The term *החלצנו* has four distinct implications as described in the *מדרש*.¹²¹ It is part of the genius of חז"ל that all four meanings were intended by the אנשי כנסת הגדולה.¹²²

Takeaway: I will try to clear my head to focus on ברכת המזון, especially on שבת קודש.

¹²¹ ויקרא רבה לד: טו

¹²² In the ArtScroll Siddur the four translations of *רצה והחלצנו* are rendered as 1. Help us avoid [all

suffering]; 2. Strengthen or fortify us; 3. Save us [from troubles that have engulfed us]; and 4. Allow us to rest [from the travail of seeking a livelihood].



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The Blessings of Blessing (2)

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E30)

Notes about Birkas HaMazon (Part 2)

The fourth Brocha – הטוב והמטיב

The fourth Brocha of ברכת המזון is called הטוב והמטיב – *the One who is good and Who does good for all*. The theme of Hashem's goodness repeats throughout. We are clearly being called to stop and reflect on Hashem's boundless goodness. The context for this Brocha makes the theme even more poignant.

The backstory

The Gemara¹²³ describes the events which serve as the backdrop for the institution of this Brocha by the חכמי יבנה.

After the חורבן many Jews still could be found in ארץ ישראל, living under Roman rule. That situation continued for 52 years after the חורבן. Then, a leader known to us as בר כוכבא (Shimon bar Coseva), led a revolt against the Romans in the city of Beitar, located about seven miles southwest of Yerushalayim.

Bar Kokhba amassed a very significant following of thousands of Jews who were willing to go to war to regain independence. His revolt was initially successful, and the Romans were forced into defensive positions. But, after bringing a vast army from Rome to back them up, the Romans, furious at having been defeated by the revolt, conquered Beitar and slaughtered the thousands of Jews who were involved in the revolt.

In their anger, the Romans forbade anyone from going into Beitar to bury the dead and the thousands of people were unburied and exposed to the elements for years. The grieving for the חורבן was thus greatly intensified.

Eventually, Rabban Gamliel, through תפילות and bribes, received permission to bury the הרוגי ביתר. Upon arriving, the Jews discovered that the bodies all survived completely intact. They did not decompose, nor did they emit even the terrible smell of death which quickly overtakes the body after the Neshama has left.

Bitachon does not preclude sadness; it precludes anxiety.

The miracles associated with bringing the קבורת ישראל to הרוגי ביתר is what moved the חכמי יבנה to institute the fourth Brocha of ברכת המזון. The name of the Brocha carries the message: הטוב – that the bodies did not decompose; והמטיב – that they were freed to be brought to קבורת ישראל.

Find the Good in the Everywhere

We might wonder why this event, miraculous as it was, became an integral part of ברכת המזון. After all, we have a day to recall the חורבן, but we are instructed to recall the miracle of bringing the הרוגי ביתר to קבורה every time we eat a meal! Surely the message of this ברכה is central to our lives.

That message is that the requirement to see and perceive Hashem's kindness is never restricted to the 'good times' leaving the impression that

¹²³ ברכות מח:



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Hashem's kindness is absent during the 'bad times.' Nothing could be further from the truth. Hashem showers us with kindness even during the darkest moments of our lives.

And because this message is tricky, we review the message all the time, every time we eat.

The message is made trickier given that we are inundated with the gloom and doom of the media. We get endless reports of every horror and tragic mishap. The salvations and silver linings are not trumpeted in the headlines. Hashem's kindness is intentionally hidden by a world that seeks to deny His lovingkindness. The job, therefore, was assigned to us, individually and regularly, to declare that no matter how dark it may seem, Hashem is the טוב and the מטיב. Always. Without fail. The message is so important that חז"ל attached it to one of the most frequently recited ברכות in our lives. We have a declaration to make, an affirmation of absolute confidence in Hashem's boundless goodness.

Goodness always

A central theme of our affirmation is that Hashem's goodness transcends the limitations of time. He extended His kindness in the past, it is found in the present moment, and it will always be present into the eternal future.

The eternal nature of Hashem's goodness comes up in the first and second Brochos of ברכת המזון, as well. In the first Brocha we say הוא נותן לחם – present, – past, and ואל – future. In נודה we also speak about His goodness being eternal – בכל עת (The Brocha of רחם is a בקשה, not a הודאה, and all requests refer to the future.)

Whenever we praise Hashem for His goodness (for example, in מודים) we refer to its eternity.

Hashem's goodness is rooted in the מדות of הקב"ה. He made the world only to shower us with His goodness, and there is nothing that can alter His הטוב והמטיב.

And if that message is hard for you to swallow, you are invited to have a meal... and to Bentch.

Bentching the הבית בעל

Per the Gemara, a guest must give a Brocha to the host at the conclusion of ברכת המזון. This Brocha includes a blessing that the host be successful with his possessions and that his possessions be close to the city.

It is not hard to assume that the possessions being spoken of are the goods of one's business enterprises. The blessing would seem to revolve around business success without the need to travel distances to close the deals. It was with that in mind that a guest at the home of R' Chaim Kanievsky שליט"א asked the Rav if this Brocha is relevant to the Rav who surely is not involved in any business matters.

R' Chaim שליט"א responded that is certainly applies to him. His 'possessions' are his ספרים and his 'success' is his learning. And 'close to the city' means, in his case, a blessing that the Sefer that he needs should be close at hand and not require climbing to learn from it.

We must see ourselves as teachers

In the הרחמן for one who is eating at his parents' table, as well as whenever one refers to one's parents, one refers to father as אבי מורי and one's mother as אמי מרתי. Was my parent my classroom teacher?



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Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky שליט"א commented that this reference is meant to remind each of us that our children and grandchildren are watching carefully and are learning lessons all the time. Nobody is exempt. Everyone is a teacher and a משפיע. Our influence is built into our roles, and we must take our roles seriously.

The abandoned Tzadik whose children seek bread

פסוקים concludes with two פסוקים. The first of the two has raised many questions in the minds and hearts of those who say them:

נער הייתי גם זקנתי ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב וזרעו מבקש לחם¹²⁴

I was young and I have grown old [but] I have never seen a Tzaddik abandoned and his children ask for bread.

Those who think about the פסוק tend to ask if it never happened that the children of a poor, righteous person had to beg for bread? Surely the evidence before us speaks otherwise.

Rav Shimon Schwab זצ"ל suggested an explanation.¹²⁵ He says that the פסוק is describing the faith of the Tzadik. A Tzadik never feels abandoned, even if his children must beg for their bread. That is the measure of the righteous. They also feel the loving hand of הקב"ה on their shoulder even when there are challenging times.

Rav Schwab related that, as a little boy in Germany, bread was rationed. A certain sized loaf would have to suffice for each soul in the family for a week. Every mother had to take

pains to portion out the bread to allow each member of the family to survive the week.

One night he was very hungry and asked for a second piece of bread. His mother declined his request explaining that this is what Hashem has given us and the rest must wait for the other days of the week.

As she turned away the young Shimon Schwab glimpsed the tear in his mother's eye. Her sadness at not having more bread to offer her hungry child mixed perfectly with her certainty that הקב"ה allocates exactly that which is meant for every one of us. Bitachon does not preclude sadness; it precludes anxiety.

The blessing of שלום

The closing words of ברכת המזון are ה' יברך את עמו. בשלום. The Midrash¹²⁶ extols the wonderful qualities of שלום. We know that many ברכות conclude with שלום: Kadish, the Amidah, Birkas Kokhanim, and Birkas HaMazon. שלום is the way that we bless one another. And שלום, concludes the Midrash, is going to be the first announcement of the מלך המשיח as the פסוק says¹²⁷

מה נאוו על ההרים רגלי מבשר משמיע שלום מבשר טוב משמיע ישועה אמר לציון מלך אלקיה.

The מבשר טוב will be משמיע שלום – he will announce the long-awaited שלום.

The Gemara¹²⁸ refers to the פסוק of ה' יברך את עמו and teaches that לא מצא הקב"ה כלי מחזיק ברכה בשלום and teaches that כלי – vessel refers to כהנים, לויים, ישראל. When the various parts of ישראל

¹²⁴ תהלים לו: כה

¹²⁵ Rav Schwab on Prayer p. 519. The same explanation is found in the ArtScroll siddur in the name of the יסף יוסף.

¹²⁶ ויקרא רבה ט: ט

¹²⁷ ישעיה נב: ז

¹²⁸ סוף עוקצין



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are united we can reveal the secret vessel that is
called שלום.

Takeaway: I will try to relate to ברכת המזון as the treasure-trove of Bitachon that it is.



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Blessings Abound

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E31)

100 Daily Opportunities – and how to take advantage of them

Reciting 100 Brochos each day

The Gemara,¹²⁹ cites R' Meir who teaches that we are obligated to recite 100 Brochos each day. He supports this assertion with a play on the word in the Pasuk¹³⁰ which says: 'וַעֲתָה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁאֵל מֵעַמּוֹךְ'. The word מה means 'what' as in *what* does Hashem ask of you. However, the word מה can be read as מֵאָה – a hundred. On a weekday, one would easily reach that mark as we recite 57 Brochos in the three Amidos alone.

However, continues the Gemara, on שבת ויו"ט, one should 'fill in' Brochos (each Amidah on שבת ויו"ט has seven fewer Brochos than on a weekday). We will discuss how later.

Dovid Hamelech and the 100 Brochos

The ¹³¹ דוד המלך ע"ה comments that מאה ברכות instituted the practice of reciting ברכות. There was a plague and 100 Jews were dying each day. He saw Hashem's intervention as a call to strengthen our acknowledgement and gratitude to ה' for that which He showers on us. The plague ended and his תְּקֵנָה took hold.

The Zohar: לך לך = 100

The Zohar¹³² clues us into the significance of these 100 Brochos. The departure of אאע"ה from his parental/ancestral home is the first step towards the creation of ישראל. His first step, teaches the Zohar, echoes the first step of a new

Neshama as it leaves its Heavenly abode and comes down into this world. ה' makes the נשמה take an oath of loyalty to serve Him throughout his lifetime. In doing so, ה' gives the נשמה 100 keys with which to succeed: the 100 daily Brochos. This is alluded to in the Gematria of לך לך which equals 100. Each Brocha is an opportunity to connect our fleeting physical world to the eternal spiritual world and is thereby a key to our spiritual success.

Connecting with the Source

A central aspect of this spiritual 'key' is the reminder that everything in our world has but one Source. That fact is easy to forget. We go about our day thinking that 'this' (whatever we are looking at) caused 'that' and doing 'this' will bring about a 'known' outcome. It is very easy to forget that the only 'this' that causes every 'that' is the Will of ה'קב"ה, the Source of everything that ever was, is, or will be.

Indeed, asserts ר' בחיי (in ברכה – ברכה), the word בְּרִיכָה itself derives from the word בְּרִיךְ – a wellspring. When we say the word ברוך we are at one time offering both praise and prayer, acknowledging ה' as the Source of blessing and praying that the blessing continue. (You may have noticed that in the supplemental תפילה for שמע which is printed in many סידורים in קולנו, we request that Hashem's bounty be

*You recite a
Brocha to eat
an apple; I eat
an apple to
recite a Brocha.*

¹²⁹ מנחות מג:

¹³⁰ דברים י: יב

¹³¹ On the above פסוק in דברים י: יב

¹³² פ' לך לך אות יד



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showered on us from the *בְּרִיכָה עֲלֵינוּ* – the Heavenly wellspring.)

Increasing our awareness - continually

A question that is asked by many is why do we need to request anything of *ה'*, Who knows our needs better even than we do? R' Simcha Wasserman זצ"ל pointed out to me that R' Aharon Kotler זצ"ל addresses this question.¹³³ He says that we need to strengthen our awareness that everything comes from *ה'*. Everyone needs help in humbling oneself before *ה'*.

Nothing is more humbling than dependence. And nothing brings out our sense of absolute dependence better than a meaning-filled *ברכה*.

R' Aharon Karliner and I both recite ברכות

One of the first stories I heard from Rav Sholom Schwadron זצ"ל in my parents' home on Friday night was how R' Aharon Karliner recited, and then explained, his Brocha. At the Rebbe's Tisch R' Aharon recited a Brocha over an apple and the Chasidim, inspired, sought to partake of a bit of that apple. A boy in attendance could not understand why they were making a fuss over R' Aharon's Brocha and the apple. After all, he also makes a Brocha over an apple and nobody rushes to join with his Brocha nor his apple.

Sensing the boy's question, R' Aharon explained the significance of his Brocha. The Rebbe related that when he wakes up in the morning, he sees anew Hashem's magnificent and wondrous *בריאה*. He feels deeply moved to recite a Brocha to humbly acknowledge his awareness of Hashem's creation. "However," the Rebbe added, "I cannot just recite a Brocha over my thoughts and feelings; that would be a *ברכה*

לבטלה. Instead, my feelings of awe and gratitude well up and inspire my davening, growing stronger with each moment. Those intense feelings spring out when I finally can hold an apple and recite a Brocha. I am eating the apple to give expression to my feelings. On the other hand, you wake up and look forward to eating an apple. And since you know the *הלכות*, you wait until after you have davened. And then you do not eat the apple without first reciting a Brocha. You recite the Brocha to eat an apple; I eat an apple to recite a Brocha."

The 'holy' apple

The Gemara¹³⁴ raises a contradiction between two *פסוקים*. One *פסוק* states that everything on earth is Hashem's – *לֵה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוּאָהּ*. Another *פסוק* states that the Heavens are Hashem's but the Earth He gave to mankind – *הַשָּׁמַיִם שְׁמִים לֵה' וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִבְנֵי אָדָם*. The Gemara resolves the apparent contradiction by saying that one *פסוק* speaks before one recites a Brocha while another is after one recites a Brocha.

The simple reading of the Gemara's answer is that everything on Earth belongs to Hashem until one recites a Brocha after which Hashem gives the Earth to mankind.

Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל took note of the fact that the Gemara does not identify which *פסוק* is before the *ברכה* and which is after. It simply says *כֹּאן לִפְנֵי הַבְּרָכָה* כאן לאחר הברכה. He therefore suggested that the Gemara could be understood as describing the apple that one is eating. It is an earthy, lowly apple before one recites a Brocha over it. It is nothing but *אָרֶץ*. However, when a person has recited a *ברכה*, the apple is transformed. It is now a holy apple

¹³³ משנת רב אהרן – תפילה חלק א' עמ' צב

¹³⁴ ברכות לה.



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which carries קדושה. The world has now been infused with Hashem's presence; it is His.

Shabbos and the Brisker Rav

As mentioned, one has to be more conscious on שבת וי"ט if one is to recite 100 Brochos. It is told that the Brisker Rav asked his host if he could provide him with an apple and a banana. The host went to bring those items, surprised as he was over the request, while the Brisker Rav went to Mincha. When he returned, he thanked his host for supplying the apple and the banana but said that he no longer needed them since he was honored with an Aliyah (לוי, of course) at Mincha. He was only seeking to 'fill in' to reach 100 Brochos. (Those who are inclined can analyze why just the apple *or* the banana with בורא נפשות would not have sufficed to supply the two missing Brochos.)

Creative ways to reach 100 on Shabbos

A full Oneg שבת זכר/Kiddush could include מזונות, העץ, האדמה, שהכל, על המחיה, בורא נפשות. That

Takeaway: I will try to increase my consciousness of reciting 100 Brochos daily, including on שבת.

yields 6 (night and day is 12). Using the bathroom over Shabbos will generally yield 3-4 additional Brochos (16). Two drinks of water (2 each) can readily supply the missing 20 ברכות.

However, there are other, more creative ways to reach 100.¹³⁵ One is by smelling fragrances. Another is by listening to the 16 Brochos recited by those who go up for Aliyos (7 Aliyos plus Maftir) with intent to be יוצא with those Brochos as well. Five additional Brochos can be gained from the הפטרה. The Mishna Berura cites the אין כאלקינו who holds that each part of ויטרי is also a Brocha and can provide 12 Brochos (note that the words מי, אין, and נודה make up the acrostic of אמ"ן.) Indeed, the רמ"א explains that we need not recite אין כאלקינו on Yom Kippur because we have 'enough' Brochos, unlike שבת.

Crowns on the ק

The תגין בעל הטורים refers twice to the crowns or תגין on the letter ק which refer to the 100 ברכות that one is meant to recite every day.^{136 137}

¹³⁵ There are two excellent books on the subject, one by Rav Mordechai Potash כהלכתא ברכות מאה and one by Rav Eitan Shoshan ברית איתן. These suggestions are discussed by Rav Shoshan.

¹³⁶ בעל הטורים על דברים ד: ו, ז:

¹³⁷ Our ספרי תורה do not have crowns on a ק. The references led me to discover the ספר תגין, in which copied the Torah as it appeared on the stones that יהושע erected when Klal Yisrael crossed the river into ארץ ישראל. These תגין appear there.



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Lighting the Future

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E32)

The simple wave of the arms at candle lighting – there are no insignificant מנהגים

Candles in the Home have a history

The Posuk¹³⁸ relates that יצחק אבינו brought רבקה into his mother's tent. The Midrash,¹³⁹ cited in part by Rashi¹⁴⁰ teaches that there were traits of שרה אמו which Yitzchok saw in Rivka.

Among those is that a candle stayed lit from one Friday night to the next. With such a history, it is not an exaggeration to say that candles on Friday night are a symbol of a Jewish home.

Oneg Shabbos and Kavod Shabbos

Our מנהגים are never 'just' מנהגים. Authentic מנהגים are packed with meaning. Let us begin with the basics.

Two aspects of candle lighting highlight our relationship with Shabbos. כבוד שבת refers to that which we do to give Shabbos distinction. As it refers to Shabbos candles, we light the candles to give the Shabbos table a regal touch. No matter how much electricity is available, there is nothing that turns a meal into a regal dinner more surely than candles.

שבת refers to that which we do to bring joy and pleasantness into our homes and lives on Shabbos. As it refers to Shabbos candles, we light the candles to push away the darkness that brings a depressive air into the home. On a practical level, the light also protects those who would otherwise trip over this and that from the frustration of groping about in the dark.

עונג שבת could be accomplished with any light, lit anywhere. But כבוד שבת pushes us towards the table, or at least nearby where lighting on the table is not practical. One should be able to see and benefit from the candles for both reasons.

The wave

As universal as is the candle lighting is the custom of Jewish women to wave their hands in a circular motion towards themselves.

They then close their eyes (often covering them with their hands), recite the Brocha and open their eyes.

First the הלכה

While the הלכה does not explain the hand waving, it does explain why women close their eyes and only open them upon reciting the ברכה. That is owing to a principle of הלכה that ברכות are to be recited עובר – immediately prior to performing a Mitzvah. Per that rule, a woman should recite להדליק נר של שבת and then light the candles. The problem with that arrangement is that the Brocha of להדליק נר של שבת constitutes a woman's קבלת שבת. And now that it is Shabbos, she cannot light the candles. The problem is circumvented by covering her eyes, reciting the Brocha and then opening her eyes to the candles as if they are now being lit.

*Her truth
beat out his
progressive
world. She
won.*

¹³⁸ בראשית כד: טז

¹³⁹ מדרש רבה בראשית ט: ט"ז

¹⁴⁰ שם



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And the wave

Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky שליט"א quoted his mother who explained that she waved her hands in an inclusive way to indicate her desire to include *all* the lights in the house (not just those she is in front of and lighting) in the Mitzvos of עונג שבת and כבוד.

Others have explained that with this hand motion they are gathering and drawing in the קדושת שבת. Whatever the reason, this motion is highly evocative and elicits deep emotion. It, and the subsequent covering of the eyes, are often associated with prayers from the depth of the woman's heart, even with tears for their fulfilment. Those who are present for that moment are invariably touched by the sanctity of that moment. The following story gives expression to the specialness of that moment.

From Mogalev to Queens

The last time that Tzippy and her brother, Shraga Feivele spent Shabbos with their parents was when Tzippy was eight and her brother was 14. The Nazis ישר"י came to their town in Romania and took the family to the Ukraine, the town of Mogalev. There they killed her father (טלית ותפילין) and treated them horribly, as was their evil custom. Their mother cried out her grief and died two weeks later.

The Hand of Providence caused them to survive in Mogalev, against any דרך הטבע. By the time the dust settled, though, there were 900 orphaned children in Mogalev. It is fitting to remember the kind deeds of Mr. Ira Hirshman, the representative of the US War Refugee Board. He was based in Istanbul, Turkey and did not sit idly by upon hearing of the plight of these orphans. He came to Mogalev and oversaw the

transport of the children to Israel. Many of the orphans were stateless and without documents but Mr. Hirshman did not stop until they were on board a boat to Turkey, then on to Lebanon and then to the port of Haifa. Ira Hirshman merited to be Hashem's agent to save Tzippy, Shraga Feivele and hundreds of other orphans.

The welcome to Israel

A tragic chapter in Jewish history is being written by those who abandon Torah, Mitzvos and מנהגים and denounce the uniqueness of Klal Yisrael. They want to modernize and become like all other nations. Such people do whatever they can to lure from children away from their holy heritage. The opportunity to grab these orphans away was tempting and so they grabbed it. While the older orphans, like Shraga Feivele, were permitted to choose where they wished to be absorbed, the younger orphans were sent off to Kibbutzim where any trace of their past was eradicated. Tzippy was too young to choose for herself.

A nice man, representing one such Kibbutz, approached little Tzippy with gifts of a doll and a watch. What treasures for a little girl to clutch a doll after so long and could proudly look down on the watch that the man put on her wrist! He gently told her to come with him and she would be well looked after with other children, new friends. Somehow, though, from a voice that spoke from the depths of her being, Tzippy sensed that something was not right. She stopped the man and asked him if where he was taking her was a place where they wave their hands and cover their eyes in front of the candles.

The man did not need any interpreter to understand her question and the motion that she



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made with her hands was etched in his memory from his childhood as it was etched in hers. He feebly tried to convince her that the future is different from those parts of her past, but Tzippy could not be fooled. She took off her new watch and handed the watch and the doll back to the man. She would not go with him. Not to a place where the women did not wave and cover their eyes at candle lighting.

The man could not hold back his tears. He knew well that her truth beat out his progressive world. She won. He would not send her off to the spiritual gallows of the secular Kibbutz. He was so moved that he took Tzippy over to the dispatcher and gave instructions that she be put on the bus to a *מוסד עליה* Kibbutz called *שומר שבת*. She did not have a doll or a watch, but she had her mother's Shabbos candles and the wave associated with it.

Reunited

As *השגחה* would have it, Shraga Feivele had chosen to go to *מוסד עליה* as well. They were

Takeaway: I will try to upgrade my reverence for our holy Minhagim, and remember the wave.

reunited on the bus from the port to the Kibbutz and remained together on the Kibbutz until they both moved to the US. Little Tzippy became Mrs. Tzipporah Adler. She took an active role in the Torah community of Queens. She served for years on the *חברא קדישא* of Queens together with my wife and it was in the context of their doing Chesed together that Mrs. Adler shared her story with my wife.

Choosing Eternity over Modernity

Perhaps each woman is drawing something unique to herself when she waves her hands inward at candle lighting. For one, she is including all the lights in her home. For another, she is drawing in all future generations, her descendants, to gather with her under the canopy of the Shabbos lights. Mrs. Adler's late mother drew in her daughter and, hence, by extension, her descendants remained loyal to the Torah all their lives.

No Minhag is 'just' a Minhag.



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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Potential Pleasure on Shabbos

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E33)

Thinking about Shabbos should bring joy and pleasure on many levels.

Shabbos as a holy pursuit

The Gemara¹⁴¹ relates how R' Shimon b. Yochai (רשב"י) and his son R' Elazar were forced to hide from government agents who were trying to kill them. They spent years in a cave, immersing themselves in Torah. When they were able to emerge from hiding, their spiritual level was such that they could not countenance anyone engaging in any mundane pursuits.

On Erev Shabbos, shortly after they emerged, they saw an elderly man [the expression *ההוא סבא* could be a reference to *אליהו הנביא*] running with something in his hand. They stopped him to ask him what he was transporting. He told them that he was bringing two fragrant *הרסים* home for Shabbos. They asked him why he was bringing *two* when one would have sufficed. He said that he also thought that one would be enough, but then he gave the matter more thought and concluded that he would bring one for *זכור* (the *מצוות עשה* of Shabbos) and one for *שמור* (the *מצוות לא תעשה*).

R' Shimon b. Yochai turned to his son and helped him put this 'worldly' pursuit into proper perspective. "Take a look," he said, "כמה חביבין – see how precious Mitzvos are for Klal Yisroel." As the Novominsker Rebbe זצ"ל pointed out, they were impressed with his having thought about how to express his love for

Shabbos. He loved both the requirements of *שבת* (the *מצוות עשה*) as well as the restrictions of *שבת* (the *מצוות לא תעשה*). When a Jew gives such importance to the *מצוות* then their 'mundane' activities are not mundane at all.

Every day and Shabbos

The Gemara¹⁴² records how both Hillel and Shamai would 'relate' to the coming Shabbos.

Shamai would designate the finest item for Shabbos (this fine animal will be for Shabbos) until he chanced upon an even better item. He would then use the first item during the week and designate the finer item for Shabbos. In this way, every purchase all week long, became a purchase *לכבוד שבת קודש*.

Hillel had a different approach. He was continually strengthening his *בטחון* that *הקב"ה* would provide him with fine food for Shabbos. His week was not filled with purchases; it was filled with intensifying his relationship and gratitude to *הקב"ה* through his Bitachon.

The Halacha¹⁴³ indicates that those of us who do not dwell on the high plains of Bitachon as did Hillel should conduct ourselves as Shamai did. In that way we will be keeping Shabbos in mind all week long, with every acquisition.

¹⁴¹ שבת לג:

¹⁴² ביצה טז.

¹⁴³ אור"ח סימן ר"נ ועיי' מ"ב ס"ק ב'



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Save the best for Shabbos

The approach of Shamai does not need to be restricted to animals for slaughter. My wife recalls that seasonal fruit, such as watermelon (which could only be had during the summer in Denver in those years), would be first served on Shabbos. The same was true for special drinks.

A new shirt, tie, etc., even if it was bought to be worn during the week, was first worn on Shabbos. (Given that it was not a downgrade to the honor of Shabbos to wear it on **שבת קודש**.)

Have we lost Erev Shabbos?

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל pointed out that with Hashem's mercy Shabbos was saved in America. The laws changed and the terrible pressure to compromise **שבת קדושה** was relieved. But, he added, while Shabbos was saved, we lost Erev Shabbos. The loss of Erev Shabbos included the consciousness of the approaching Shabbos; an awareness that would not only slow down the approach to Shabbos on Friday, but which would inform the whole week.

Saving the best for Shabbos saved his life

My daughter-in-law, Mrs. Genendel Krohn described¹⁴⁴ an incident during the final illness

Takeaway: I will try to keep in mind to save the best for שבת קודש

of Rav Aharon Kotler, זצ"ל. Rav Aharon זצ"ל suffered from a severe gastronomic condition which his physician, Dr. Porter, said, precluded his being able to ingest anything by mouth at all.

The students, noticing how parched R' Aharon's lips had become asked the attending physician if perhaps R' Aharon could be allowed to suck on a lollipop to provide some relief to his parched lips. The physician approved and the students ran down to buy a lollipop for their beloved Rebbe. But, when they brought it to R' Aharon he indicated that while it will surely give him great pleasure, it is now Friday afternoon, **ערב שבת קודש**. He indicated that he would rather defer the pleasure until **שבת קודש**.

The delay in enjoying the lollipop on Erev Shabbos was enough time for them to learn from Dr. Porter that authorizing the lollipop was a terrible mistake. Had R' Aharon indulged as most people would have under those sad circumstances, it would have cost him his life. The additional time that R' Aharon was able to spend with his Rebetzin and Talmidim was owing to the honor that he gave to Shabbos by postponing his pleasure until **שבת קודש**.

¹⁴⁴ Sparks of Majesty p. 209



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Discover the Joy
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A Story of Mesiras Nefesh

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E34)

The preciousness of Shabbos is, of course, related to the price one is prepared to pay to observe it.

Precious Shabbos from a Precious Source

This story is very close to my heart given that the protagonist of the story is my late, revered mother, Mrs. Hindy Krohn, ע"ה. She wrote this story in her book, *The Way it Was* (Artscroll) where she talks about growing up in Jewish Philadelphia in the 1920's and 1930's.

The story would be a testimony to anyone's relationship with Shabbos, but to get its proper impact one should bear in mind that there was no בית יעקב in Philadelphia in those years, and that my mother was but sixteen years old at the time of the story.

She was schooled in the public schools, but she was educated in her parents' home where she imbibed the values of a true daughter of Israel. The depth of that חינוך will become evident when you think about the story.

Everyone needed a job

In the early 30's, after the Great Depression, there was a need for everyone to have a job. Few people had the luxury to afford higher education and young people went to work very young. At sixteen, my mother ע"ה had the training needed to get a job as a bookkeeper in Mr. Stein's company. Given the job market, Mr. Stein could afford to choose the best and the brightest and my mother ע"ה qualified. She was as tenacious as she was bright and whatever she chose to do she pursued without holding back.

The first weeks went well as she was hired in the summer when שקיעה allowed one to work until 6:30pm every day, including Friday, without jeopardizing Shabbos. She had time to make the hour-and-a-half trek home on the trolleys and arrive before candle lighting.

But long days do not last and as the season changed it became increasingly difficult to finish her work and get home in time.

*He muttered, half
under his breath,
"sometimes you can
learn something
even from a kid."*

Until there was just no time

The tension over leaving early on Friday was brought to the boiling point one Friday when Mr. Stein walked over to her desk, pointed at the mountain of work that sat waiting for her and asked, in his

less-than-gentle way, "Edith, how long are you going to be here today?"

When she promised to do her best but that she needs to get home for Shabbos, he said (demanded would describe it more accurately), "You can stay until 3:30 and you will be able to finish the work." And with that he stalked off and walked out of the office.

She knew that this was a mission impossible. The math did not add up. Candle lighting was at 4:18 that afternoon.

Trial and Failure?

She began to plan her commute home. She knew which trolley she needed to take to the stop not far from her home. She would walk home from there. Knowing that it would already be Shabbos



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by then she stored her purse in the office, taking only one trolley token with her so that she would not carry past שקיעה. She could lose her job, but she would not lose Shabbos.

But the expected trolley did not come as expected. She realized that she needed a Plan B. But this plan was far more radical than the first. She would run home. She had two good feet and six brothers who had taught her how to use them as a boy would, to run like the wind. But first she had to get rid of the token. And just as she knew how to run with her feet, she knew how to throw with a strong arm. She pitched the token like a pro into the distance and said, "this one is for you, הקב"ה." And with that she ran through the many streets of Philadelphia.

She hopes that the lady forgave her when she was bowled over by the flying Edith, dropping her packages. And she made it home.

A mother saves the day

As she entered her home the reality began to set in that she had missed the entry of שבת קודש. Her father (my namesake) ע"ה had already left for Shul. And when she saw her mother, she thought she would burst into tears. But her mother was a wise woman, and she took her daughter into her arms. She let the wonderful aroma and atmosphere of Shabbos fill the moment of her daughter's pain. She assured my mother ע"ה that she figured that she had to walk. There were no

hard feelings, only the love and warmth of שבת קודש. As has been the case so many times in our history, a wise mother saved the day.

They enjoyed a beautiful Shabbos for which Edith had sacrificed so much, even knowing that her choice could cost her job.

A different week

Nothing went according to plan when she went back to work. She expected to be fired first thing Monday morning, but she was not. Mr. Stein only asked her how long she stayed on Friday. Instead of answering directly, she told him that she stayed so long that she had to walk home for Shabbos.

Mr. Stein was incredulous. He knew the distance involved. "You walked home?!" he exclaimed. And that was the last word she heard from him all week.

All week, that is, until Friday at about noon. He came over to her desk and, in terms far humbler than she had ever heard him speak before, he told her that he never wanted her to have to walk home again. She could leave two hours before candle lighting to get home. Her מסירת נפש had even touched Mr. Stein.

As he walked away from her desk he muttered to another worker, half under his breath, "sometimes you can learn something even from a kid."

Takeaway: I will consider the price that I am prepared to pay for Shabbos.

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