



Discover the Joy of Shabbos

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



A Gift for Hashem

By Rav Pinchas Friedman shlita (Shiur E7)

Shabbos creates spiritual intensity even for those who did not prepare for it. Where did this power come from?

One who did not prepare

We have previously discussed that even a person who failed to prepare for Shabbos can imbibe the spirit of Shabbos on Shabbos itself and thereby salvage the situation. Shabbos is that powerful. But where does Shabbos get such power from?

The gift of Shabbos – whose gift?!

We have previously mentioned the Gemara¹ which relates that Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu that, "I have a 'good' gift in my treasure house and I wish to give it to the People; it is called Shabbos." The Rebbe, Reb Chaim Tirer, in his Sefer, *סידורו של שבת*, asks why Shabbos is called a gift before it is given? The expected terminology would be, 'I have a precious gem in my treasure house, and I wish to give it as a gift to the People.' The wording of the Gemara implies that Shabbos is, somehow, already a gift in Hashem's treasury even before it was given.

The backstory of the Gemara

The Midrash tells us that Moshe Rabeinu attempted to alleviate the suffering of the Jewish slaves in any way that he could. One strategy was to approach Pharaoh to

advise him to give the slaves a day off. Working them seven days a week, Moshe contended, would kill them, and leave Pharaoh with no slaves at all.

Pharaoh accepted Moshe's advice and gave Moshe the freedom to choose whichever day he wanted to as their day of rest. Moshe chose Shabbos.

Not just rest

The People, having been given a respite from the back-breaking work of the week, naturally rested on Shabbos.

Shabbos was a gift in Hashem's treasury before it was given to the People. That is the secret to its power.

But they did not just rest. They gathered on the day of Shabbos and read מגילות to one another. Those scrolls contained messages from and about the אבות. They thus reviewed where they came from, and they reminded one another to remain distinct from the מצרים. They affirmed their commitment to retain their identity as the children of אברהם יצחק ויעקב. They committed to retaining their ancestral language and their ancestral names. In a word, they did not just rest on Shabbos; they used Shabbos to strengthen their

connection with Hashem.

Precious gift

Those Shabbosos were precious to Hashem. It would have been understandable if the People had simply collapsed for the 24 hour break that they had, but they did not sleep away the Shabbos; they dedicated Shabbos to their relationship with Hashem and with one

¹ שבת י: 1





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another. Hashem cherished those Shabbosos and stored them in His treasure house as a gift to Him from the People.

We can now understand some of the meaning behind the Gemara we quoted. Indeed, those Shabbosos were a gift in Hashem's treasury before they were given to the People.

Moshe's portion

There is a hint to this story in Shacharis on Shabbos, when we say ישמח משה במתנת חלקו – Moshe rejoices with the gift of his portion. Moshe chose the Shabbos and that 'portion' turned into the precious gift which Hashem treasures. That brings Moshe great joy.

Giving the gift as a gift

The gift of those Shabbosos that Hashem gave the People is a way of putting back into the world that which they initiated. All other Mitzvos started from an instruction, indeed a plea and an insistence from Hashem that we receive and uphold the Mitzvos. By contrast, Shabbos was 'initiated' by the People. The People chose to turn Shabbos into a day of learning and uplifting.

מדה כנגד מדה

The People 'made' Shabbos and so Hashem, multiplying their initial step, gave them a Shabbos with enormous spiritual power. Shabbos 'works' in ways that other Mitzvos cannot. It is being boosted by the cycle called מדה כנגד מדה – what Hashem does for us is an echo of what we have done. We took the step of sanctifying the Shabbos and Hashem bolstered Shabbos for us, forever. When we connect with Hashem on Shabbos we remind Him, so to speak, of the Shabbosos that we spent during

the years of slavery and He, in turn, showers us with bounty, both spiritual and material, so that we can continue to come closer to Him.

That is the backstory, explains the סידורו של שבת, for how Shabbos lifts a person's Neshama even if one did not do the necessary preparation to receive that Kedusha.

Takeaway: I will try to connect to Hashem on Shabbos regardless of the degree to which I prepared for its arrival

