



The Ultimate Source of Blessing

By HaRav Eli Mansour (shiur E5)

Most of us want blessings. We want Hashem to shower goodness into our lives. What do you do to receive His blessings? Do you try to get righteous people and Torah scholars to do the heavy lifting of blessing you? Do you try to get your money to do the job? Where are you in the story? Where is Shabbat in the story?

Segulot

People are often drawn to Segulot. The underlying message of adherence to a Segula is that:

1. I need/want help.
2. I need blessings to achieve that which I want/need.
3. I do not know how to relate directly to Hashem with my needs/requests.
4. There are those who claim that I can get my needs/requests met doing this or that.
5. What do I have to lose?

The answer to the last question needs to be addressed first. What you stand to lose is the real source of blessing that you are looking for.

Revisit לכה דודי no matter how many times you have said it

You have said לכה דודי perhaps hundreds of times and so it is hard to imagine that you are going to find anything there that you have not already seen. But give it a try. There may be gold in them hills.

The author of לכה דודי, the great Kabbalist Rav Shlomo Alkabetz, alludes to the real source of blessing when he writes:

לקראת שבת לכו ונגלכה כי היא מקור הברכה.

Let us go and greet Shabbat, for it is the Source of Blessing.

Blessing is measured by the degree to which something is not simply good; it is that which showers good on other.

I may give to Shabbat but what do I get from it?

In what way is Shabbat the source of blessing? It is certainly enjoyable and refreshing but a simple calculation says that the source of blessing comes from the six days of the work week and if anything, we spend some of that blessing for the sake of having an enjoyable Shabbat. Most would say that it is well worth the expense, but the source for Shabbat is the work week, not the other way around.

Shabbat is the source of blessing

Rav Alkabetz is alerting us to a paradigm shift. The cycle looks like it starts from the work week and spills over to Shabbat, but the reality is that it starts from Shabbat and spills over to the work week.



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Think of a fountain

You can visualize this in your mind's eye if you follow the instruction of the AriZal who teaches that the fourth, fifth and sixth days of the previous week (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) are attendants on one side and the first second and third days of the week (Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday) are attendants on the other side and the 'bride' is in the middle. The fountain of Shabbat fills the days that surround it with its blessing.

The difference between something good and a blessing

Blessing is measured by the degree to which something is not simply good; it is that which showers good on other. Wednesday cannot be a blessing even if it was a great day, because it does not shower anything onto Thursday. However, thinking about the upcoming Shabbat in the latter half of the week gives meaning and direction to those days. And basking in the spiritual bounty of the Shabbat that just passed gives meaning to the first days of the coming week. In that way Shabbat is always showering blessing on every day of every week.

Shabbat does not seem to produce

You may claim that Shabbat has nothing of its own, it does not 'produce' anything; you are not

even permitted to engage in any production on Shabbat. And you would be correct. Shabbat receives anything and everything that you bring to it and converts it from a spend to a blessing.

The Talmid Chacham and Shabbat

An analogy to this model can be found regarding our relationship with a Talmid Chacham – a Torah scholar. We, individually and as members of the community support the scholar. One might claim that the scholar does not 'produce' anything. We spend on him. And while it may seem like a good thing to spend on, it is a drain. And yet, when a person needs a blessing his first thought is to seek out the blessing of a Torah scholar! How does that work? The answer is that the model is the same as Shabbat. Whatever you bring to the Torah scholar is turned into a source of blessing for you and for the world. The world is sustained by the Torah scholar. In the case of R' Chanina ben Dosa, says the Gemara, he was able to convert a mere dried fruit into the sustenance for the whole world. That is the relationship with Shabbat and that is the relationship with the Torah scholar.

The scholar is called Shabbat!

Would it then surprise you to discover that the Zohar¹ states that תלמיד חכם איקרי שבת – a Torah scholar is called 'Shabbat!'

Takeaway: I will try to shift my focus to see Shabbat and Torah scholars as the source of my blessing rather than as a good thing to spend on.

¹ זוהר פרשת נשא