

Shabbos with Rebbetzin Shira Smiles



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You “can set the table,” “wash your dishes,” and “buy groceries.” Or you can “prepare for Shabbos.” When we approach preparations with a Shabbos mindset — “*Likras Shabbos lechu veneilcha*” — then Shabbos is the *mekor habrachah*.

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Anticipating and Remembering Shabbos

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E1)

Erev Shabbos can last all week and it holds the key to the success of the whole week.

לקראת שבת לבו ונלכה כי היא מקור הברכה

The standard translation of this quote from לכה דודי is an invitation to join and greet שבת, which is the source of all ברכה. Perhaps after we look at the essence of Erev Shabbos we will arrive at yet another way to understand these famous words.

שבת ועולם הבא

Both Shabbos and Olam Haba are measured by the preparation invested in anticipation of their arrival. Indeed, when Chazal¹ speak about preparing for our eternal lives they use the expression, מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל בשבת, – only one who toils (to prepare) on Erev Shabbos can eat on Shabbos. The same idea refers to both שבתות – the weekly Shabbos and the eternal one.

שמור and זכור

The same שמור וזכור refers to the fact that שמור וזכור – בדבור אחד נאמר – the Mitzvah of Shabbos is introduced in the עשרת הדברות with two different words, שמור and זכור. They were miraculously said by Hashem, simultaneously. These two words give us insight not only to our observance of Shabbos, but also to how we relate to שבת.

שמור את יום השבת לקדשו

The אור החיים relates the word שמור as found in the עשרת הדברות to the expression² ואביו שמר את הדבר. There, after Yosef disclosed his dreams to his father and brothers, we are taught that the brothers were jealous. However, their father, יעקב אבינו 'watched the matter.' The implication of his 'watching' (as Rashi points out) is 'anticipating,' and 'yearning.' Ah, when will the greatness promised in Yosef's dream be

A measure of one's Erev Shabbos can be captured by one's relationship to the question, 'how much time until Shabbos.'

fulfilled? May it be soon! That, says the אור החיים הק', is the essence of our relationship to Shabbos. We are expected to look forward and anticipate the arrival of Shabbos as one would anticipate the arrival of a revered occasion and a beloved guest.

Indeed, adds the אור החיים הק', the words, לעשות את השבת, imply that we, somehow 'make' Shabbos. We 'make' Shabbos by yearning and longing for it.

A whole week of Erev Shabbos

The feeling of longing and anticipation is meant to carry us through the week. Chazal refer to a week as a שבת. The weekdays do not have names, they are rather marked by which day they are in the שבת.

It is said that the חפץ חיים would reference events by the day in the שבת that it occurred and would

¹ עבודה זרה ג.

² בראשית לז:יא



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name the פרשה that identified the specific שבת when the event took place. The impression that a date is meant to leave on us is in its relation to שבת קודש.

What does anticipation look like?

It should not be hard to visualize hosting a distinguished and beloved guest. It does not take much imagination to be certain that we would not be in our housecoat two minutes before their expected arrival... Everything would be set and arranged well in advance. Excitement would be in the air, children at the windows... when will the guest arrive?

It is that anticipation that defines a שומר שבת. The coming שבת is a focal point in one's life and is treated as such throughout the week.

זכור

The other reference in the עשרת הדברות is to זכור – את יום השבת לקדשו – *remember* to sanctify Shabbos. This 'recall' goes on all week long as well. A special treat that one finds in the store is transformed when one announces that this is in honor of שבת קודש. The words שבת קודש לכבוד should accompany one on one's shopping trip. We do not simply remember Shabbos when Kiddush is recited; we are remembering Shabbos all week long.

They were said in one breath

As we mentioned, the two references were said simultaneously. One cannot be sustained without the other. The honor that one bestows on Shabbos during the week of necessity must draw from one's anticipation of the upcoming שבת.

מעין עולם הבא

It has been taught that preparing for Shabbos in the זכור ושמור mode will save one from the fires of גיהנם. Becoming a 'Shabbos Jew' converts one's life into anticipation of עולם הבא, where one is spared from דין.

There are those who set up the candlesticks right after Shabbos ends. They are thereby saying that one is in Shabbos mode from the moment that Shabbos is over until the arrival of the next שבת.

Actual Erev Shabbos

It goes without saying that if one is in זכור ושמור mode all week, then the actual Erev Shabbos moves it into high gear. Preparation for Shabbos is not simply a necessary means to enjoy Shabbos, it is a Mitzvah in its own right. The word ערב relates to the word לערבב – to mix and join. We are mixing Erev Shabbos with Shabbos. Tasting the food – טועמיה חיים זכו – is tasting a bit of קדושת שבת and is meant to signal the notion of 'I cannot wait for Shabbos.'

Consider answering the phone with the greeting of 'a guten Erev Shabbos.' Ideally, the table is set before midday to charge the atmosphere with the news of the coming Shabbos.

From tension to anticipation

A measure of one's Erev Shabbos can be captured by one's relationship to the question, 'how much time until Shabbos.' For many, that question triggers a frantic rush. For others, however, that question is a cry of anticipation – I cannot wait! We are looking forward to joyfully



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announce the arrival of Shabbos, and with it the
שכינה הקדושה, into our homes.

A new meaning to לקראת שבת

We can now consider a slightly different
meaning to the expression we started with,

Takeaway: I will try to infuse my week with anticipation of שבת קודש.

לקראת שבת לכו ונלכה כי היא מקור הברכה. We are not
just saying that *Shabbos* is the source of
blessing, but we are affirming that the לקראת שבת
is the source of blessing. Let us go and greet the
Shabbos, for our greeting of Shabbos is, indeed,
the source of ברכה in our lives.



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The Meaning of the Mann

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E2)

What is the connection between the מן which fell for 40 years and the שבת קודש which is forever?

Hashem Blessed Shabbos with מן

The פסוק teaches:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ... (בראשית ב: ג)

Rashi cites the Midrash (בראשית רבה יא: יב) which teaches that this Bracha which ה' gave to שבת is a reference to the future מן which blessed the Shabbos of Creation with the מן in that two portions of מן will arrive prior to שבת and ה' sanctified שבת in that no מן will appear on שבת.

How does the מן which will be fed to ישראל for their 40-year sojourn in the desert come to be the blessing which ה' bestows on the שבתות of all time? Let us look at three of the explanations for the linkage.

Everyone received the precise amount

R' Chaim Friedlander זצ"ל teaches that שבת is a continuous reminder of the reality of the מן – that everyone received exactly what was designated for them. אחד המרבה ואחד הממעיט – whether a person tries to accumulate more than his due or a person refrains from taking that which is due him; everyone ends up with what is designated for him. Nobody grabs more and nobody gives some up. The Creator allocates to

every being exactly that which that being needs to accomplish his or her purpose in the world.

The הגוירה אמת³ puts is very succinctly: – That which ה' decrees is reality and the idea that our efforts bring results is fantasy. There can only be מנוחה when a person relaxes into Hashem's arms. The מן-message is מנוחה.

I shall not lack

Dovid HaMelech spells this out:⁴

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד ה' רַעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵר. בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיעֲנִי
עַל מֵי מְנַחֹת יִנְהַלְנִי.

The essence of מנוחה is contained in the certainty that I have everything that I need – ששעה לי כל צרכי – I am not lacking.

With this certainty and בטחון we can leave the everyday mundane world and its struggles behind us.

The Torah teaches השבת ביום ממקומו ביום השבת – the rule not to leave our תחום on שבת is an invitation to focus inward on the ברכות which have been showered on each of us. I have been granted all that I need because ה' knows and addresses my needs perfectly.

³ רמב"ן בראשית לז: טו ד"ה וימצאהו

⁴ תהלים כג



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טוב להודות לה'

When we focus on the מן-message of Shabbos we can take the time to notice things.

This challenge worked out; that one turned out differently than I had feared. In the end I found the item I was looking for or I discovered that I did not actually need it. Shabbos is an opportunity to acknowledge Hashem's involvement in my life and to encourage those around me to notice Hashem's Loving Hand in their lives, as well. The crucial ingredients are the מן-message, an openness to noticing and a desire to be grateful.

So, the first מן-message which connects to every Shabbos, is Bitachon.

Everything Depends on Your Thoughts

We are taught that the מן tasted like anything you would think of. Rav Shimon Schwab זצ"ל in חפץ חיים recalls being with the השואבה on Shabbos ויקהל-פקודי when the חפץ חיים asked what the מן would taste like if one was not thinking of any food at all?

The answer, said the חפץ חיים, is that the מן was רוחניות – it was spiritual food. And the rule with all matters of רוחניות is that if you do not think, you will have nothing. If a person did not think about the מן then it did not taste like anything.

An example is לימוד התורה. If a person does not give thought to the words that he is learning they are dry and tasteless. The sweetness of Torah is experienced when one thinks about what he is

learning and tries to understand it. Then he feels the מחיקה that we ask for in והערב נא.

That is the second מן-message for all שבתות. The degree of thought, anticipation and expectation of Shabbos determines the Shabbos that you will experience. If you limit your thoughts to rest and good food; that is what you will get from Shabbos. If you think about the eternal connection to the רבש"ע and רוחניות; that is the Shabbos that you will have. It is up to us.

The מן-message of אלוש

A third מן-message for every Shabbos is taught by Rav Gedaliah Shorr אור גדליהו in his זצ"ל. He cites the Midrash⁵ that teaches that the מן was given in אלוש, the first proper encampment in סיני. The Midrash further asserts that the name אלוש hints at the instruction that אברהם אבינו gave to שרה אמנו when he hosted the angels. He said לוישי ופשי עגות⁶. Rav Shorr points out that the bread became אורחים, and thereby it provided a resting place for the שכינה הק'.

The מן-message here is that, like אברהם אבינו ע"ה, we each have the capacity to upgrade something גשמי and turn it into something רוחני.

It is not enough to have a physical Shabbos and to leave it on that plane. Every bit and bite of גשמיות on Shabbos can be transformed and elevated to רוחניות. When we keep in mind that we are celebrating Hashem's Creation of everything, we turn the food into רוחניות. When we consider the קדושת ישראל that comes with קדושת שבת then the Challah tastes like רוחניות. We

⁵ שמות רבה כה: ה'

⁶ בראשית יח: ג'



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can look at the Challah covered above and below and be reminded of the מן, the לחם משנה. In so doing we elevate the Challah from its primitive גשמי state. We are eating משולחנו של מלך, an ultimately spiritual experience.

Everything gets elevated

When one invests attention to elevate one's food, it does not stop with the food. The beauty of

Takeaway: I will try to consider the מן-messages that turn the שבת of today into the שבת of eternity.

spiritual elevation is that it brings everything else along with it. One's speech and one's mannerisms each begin to reflect the increase in רוחניות. It may start with the taste of the מן in the food, but the מן-message for every Shabbos is our capacity to transcend and infuse every aspect of our lives, no matter how גשמי, with רוחניות.



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How to Really Make Shabbos

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E3)

What role can we have in 'making' Shabbos?

Making Shabbos

The Posuk tells us:

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת לְדַרְתָּם כְּרִית
עוֹלָם (שמות לא: טז)

The words לעשות את השבת imply that we have a role in 'making' or creating Shabbos. The obvious question is that Shabbos preceded our arrival, and we could hardly have had a role in making it.

The yearning for Shabbos makes it

We look forward to Shabbos. There is a reference to this yearning in the Zemiros where we are referred to as those who are מאחרים לצאת מן השבת וממהרים לבוא – we tarry when leaving Shabbos and hurry to come to Shabbos.

On one level this "delay and hurry" refers to חוספת שבת. That means that we add to Shabbos before sunset on Erev Shabbos and we add to Shabbos after the stars appear on Motzei Shabbos. In that way we 'make' Shabbos. We add from the קודש onto the חול – we turn time that is not Shabbos into Shabbos.

But the order that this addition is described in the Zemiros begs understanding. Does one first delay leaving Shabbos and then hurry into Shabbos? Surely the order is the reverse.

Rabbi Avraham Halevi Schorr, in his Sefer Ha'Lekach Ve'Halibuv, explains that the order is highly significant for how we live out the week. When we delay leaving Shabbos, we demonstrate its preciousness. It is that desire to 'stay' with Shabbos that infuses the coming week with an extra element of sanctity. And, in turn, a week lived with extra קדושה is a week that inevitably brings us to look forward to welcoming the next Shabbos and hence the haste to come to Shabbos.

The source of Brocha

*We 'make'
Shabbos
by
enjoying it.*

The yearning for Shabbos implies that we associate Shabbos with Brocha. Far from being a burden, Shabbos is the מקור הברכה – the source of blessing. It is known that when Rebbetzin Kanievsky זכרונה לברכה as well as Rebbetzin Kolodetzky תבדל להיים שתחיי respond to any and every request for a Brocha with the recommendation that the petitioner draw blessing into her life by adding ten minutes to Shabbos. When one adds קדושה into one's life, one adds Brocha with it.

The atmosphere of Shabbos

Rav Moshe Bik זצ"ל, in his Sefer Chayei Moshe, explains that there are two aspects of Shabbos being described in the Posuk above. The first, ושמר, is to be careful with the observance of Shabbos. The second, לעשות, is to create the atmosphere of Shabbos in one's home.





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The 'feel' of Shabbos is created in a variety of ways. The most basic ways are via learning and davening. The way one learns and davens on Shabbos sets the tone and declares that today is unlike any other.

Make room for creativity

But there are countless other ways to set the Shabbos atmosphere, limited only by one's personal inclination and creativity. The women who express their thoughts in their baking try to make a 'Parsha Cake' that draws on a theme from that week's Torah reading. Others think of games and still others tell stories. Asking questions sets a tone of curiosity and interest. And listening in a relaxed way to others, be they one's spouse, one's child or one's guest, says that today is Hashem's Shabbos. We are on His time today, not on ours as we tend to think during the week.

Oneg Shabbos

The key to setting the tone of Shabbos is עונג שבת. We 'make' Shabbos by enjoying it. It should be clear to anyone looking on, especially to one's spouse and children that one is enjoying Shabbos. We are all drawn to that which is pleasurable. And when children sense how much

their mother enjoys preparing for and spending Shabbos, they want to partake of that pleasure, as well. The joy that we bring to Shabbos cannot be decreed; it is something that we bring. In that sense we are 'making' Shabbos!

Make your Olam Haba

The אור החיים on the above Posuk goes so far as to say that to the extent that we observe and celebrate Shabbos we are making Shabbos not just here, but the Shabbos on high. We are creating our עולם הבא – our eternity.

Avoid a lackluster Olam Haba

The Nesivos Sholom comments on the words וחי בהם that we infuse the luster of eternity into our eternal Shabbos by enjoying Shabbos here. He points out the tragedy of one who attends to all the details of Shabbos but without enjoying Shabbos. That person's reward will, in turn, lack luster and shine. Tapping into the infinite joy of being ever closer to Hashem, to the זיו השכינה, is a byproduct of the pleasure that we took in the spiritual gift of Shabbos. Oneg Shabbos is not just about sleeping, it is about being happy to be close to Hashem. It is about celebrating the fact that we were chosen to mark His creation.

Takeaway: I will try to go beyond observing Shabbos and focus on enjoying, thereby 'making' Shabbos.



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Clothing Fit for Royalty

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E4)

Why do we have special clothing for Shabbos? There is more to those garments than meets the eye.

The plain understanding of Shabbos clothing

The Navi Yeshayahu⁷ instructs us in the proper observance of Shabbos. He includes the word וְכַבְדָּתוֹ which חז"ל understand as an instruction to designate special clothing for Shabbos.

This makes sense since we are being 'beamed up' to the lofty palace of the King on Shabbos. Specially designated clothing reminds us that we are in Hashem's palace. The impact of an action on the one performing that action is well known. If you dress the part, you will feel, act, and think the part.

Beyond the basics – clothing of the spirit

An additional dimension can be drawn from חז"ל. In Megillas Rus we read that Naomi sent Rus at night to the fateful encounter with Boaz. This encounter will ultimately determine the future of Klal Yisroel and the Melech HaMoshiach. Naomi gives Rus detailed instructions as to how to prepare for the meeting. She tells her:

וְרַחֲצֵתְךָ וְסָכַתְךָ וְשָׁמַתְךָ שְׂמֹלֹתֶיךָ עָלֶיךָ (רות ג:ג)

Bathe, anoint yourself and put your garment on.

On the plain level of the text, Naomi was giving her very mundane instructions. The ספר תכלית אור directs our attention to the way that Rashi interprets these three instructions. וְרַחֲצֵתְךָ – purify/cleanse yourself from any transgressions; וְשָׁמַתְךָ – anoint yourself with Mitzvos; וְסָכַתְךָ – put on your Shabbos clothing.

It seems clear that Naomi was not giving mundane instructions. She was giving spiritual direction to Rus in preparation for the meeting. And just as the first two are spiritual in nature (purification from עבירות and anointing with מצוות), so, too, is the third instruction a spiritual instruction. She was not simply telling her to wear something nice; she was telling her to wear Shabbos clothing; the garments of קדושה. She was to make a spiritual transformation.

Shabbos preparation is spiritual

The מהר"ל points out that bathing before Shabbos is part of the transformation from the impurity of the week to the sanctity of Shabbos. Indeed, the משנה ברורה advises that we should engage in תשובה – repentance – on Erev Shabbos to be able to receive its קדושה.

If Shabbos preparation is seen as a spiritual undertaking, there would be an added 'appeal' to 'peeling' the potatoes.

⁷ ישעיהו נח:יג



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If we could recognize the preparation for Shabbos as a transformative spiritual undertaking, then there would be an added 'appeal' to 'peeling' the potatoes. We would see ourselves on a road to an elevated state of sanctity.

The *רמ"א* indicates that right after bathing one should don Shabbos clothing. This reflects a steady stream of transition from the impurity of the week to the new self – the sanctity of Shabbos.

R' Tzvi Rotberg in his *ספר מודע לבניה* cites a *מדרש* that identifies the *כתנות עור* with which Hashem clothed אדם and חיה as the garments with which they entered Shabbos. And these were the same garments which אדם הראשון wore when he would perform an act of service before Hashem – they were his *כהונה*.

The significance of pointing out that, immediately after sinning, אדם הראשון was given Shabbos clothing was to send him a message. Albeit you have sinned, but on Shabbos your Neshama can glow in its glory. The light of Shabbos can shine through you still.

Shabbos clothing reveals the Neshama

We typically associate clothing with covering or concealing. Here we see that clothing can also be a vehicle for drawing out and revealing that which is hidden. When אדם הראשון put on his

Shabbos clothing his now-hidden Neshama was able to radiate. That is the real message behind the requirement to designate Shabbos clothing. We are not just dressing up for the King; we are opening a channel for our Neshamos to shine forth.

Clothing as a light

The Gemara relates that the Sefer Torah of R' Meir had the word אור instead of our word עור. Hashem did not just give אדם and חיה garments of leather; He gave them garments of light. Our Shabbos garments illuminate our Neshama. That is what they did for אדם הראשון and for רות, and that is what they can do for us.

Additional dimension of preparation

It is certainly true that we must appear appropriately before the King. And that requires bathing and donning clothing befitting of such an encounter. But the internal bathing, anointing, and dressing take on a greater meaning in light of what we have learned.

Include the children in the light

It would be lovely if we could internalize this message to the point that it spills over into our interactions with our children. That would lead us to have a special joy when we put on their Shabbos clothing which would communicate to them that their Neshamos are shining through those clothing.

Takeaway: I will try to pay attention to the internal process involved when I am preparing for Shabbos and to see my Shabbos clothing as a way for my Neshama to radiate קדושה.



The Magical Moment

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E5)

What do the Shabbos candles add if we already have plenty of electric light at home?

Preparing to light Shabbos candles

There is a custom to give Tzedaka prior to lighting candles. (There are those who give Tzedaka before the performance of any Mitzvah, but the custom is more prevalent here.) The פ' ה"א mentions the custom to give three coins. Then comes the magical moment.

Beyond the dog-eat-dog world

Rav Shimshon Pincus זצ"ל described our world as a place of darkness. It is a world where conflict, hatred, and jealousy reign supreme. It is a world that makes no sense. Into that world enters שבת קודש.

Shabbos is the 7th dimension

In addition, the world is a cube in that it has six dimensions (the six days of the week). Shabbos reveals the seventh, inner dimension of reality. The inner world. The outer world can be compared to a רשות הרבים – the public domain. We move from there into the רשות היחיד – the private inner domain.

To go into an inner domain, where there is no window, where the outer world cannot penetrate, there needs to be illumination. The Shabbos candles put a light into our lives and give us access to the inner dimension.

What goes on in an inner world

An inner world is a place where we can get a glimpse of Hashem's presence. We can discover the truth and all else falls away. That is the sense of מעין עולם הבא, where all the false features of our lives will have been flushed away and all that remains is the simple truth of Hashem's existence. It is the light whereby meaning and purpose become evident. That clarity is enabled by the Shabbos candles.

Inner light makes everything visible

Whenever חז"ל refer to the inner light, they are speaking about the original אור הגנוז. That spiritual light allowed the person to see from one end of the world to the other. That would include from one end of time to the other. It is a light which penetrates all the physical boundaries that block light as we know it.

Shabbos candles beyond time and place

The Shabbos candles are a part of that infinite light. The illumination of the Shabbos candles is not limited to lighting up the table or room in which they are lit. They give access to eternity, and with it, to the truths that withstand the tests of any madness the world can cook up. When the candles are lit, eternity opens up.

*If a person had
spectacular spiritual
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unfold as they gaze
into the Shabbos
candles.*





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The coming week is formed on Shabbos

The אור החיים points out that the Posuk, when it says *כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ*, should be translated literally. Hashem made a six-day world. The world does not have the energy to last beyond six days. The energy for the coming week is drawn from Shabbos.

And so, if a person were endowed with spectacular spiritual vision, they could see the week ahead unfold as they gazed into the Shabbos candles. What is coming ahead is all there, in that hidden light.

Creation began with Light and we initiate the next step of creation, the week to come, with light, as well. That original light carried with it wisdom and understanding and the ability to see the Hand of Hashem in everything that exists and in every event that occurs.

Where is the hidden light?

The holy Ba'al Shem Tov asked where Hashem hid that brilliant spiritual light. He answered that Hashem hid the light in the Torah and in Shabbos. That is why we derive so much wisdom from those who study Torah and that is why the light of Shabbos transcends the time and place where it was lit. When we light Shabbos candles, we are bringing the אור הגנוז, the hidden light, into our home.

Soaking up Emunah and Bitachon from the candles

Each of us is yearning to achieve the clarity and peace of mind associated with knowing that everything is in Hashem's loving and all-

powerful hands. That nothing can possibly happen without His say so. That there are no accidents because there is nothing that slips out of His hand – אין עוד מלבדו –. That clarity can be drawn from the candles. We need only open ourselves to the candles and they will guide us to greater *Bitachon*.

A time for Tefilah

When a woman taps into the infinite light, the newfound clarity also gives a greater sense of purpose and direction to her Tefilos. While during the week we turn to Hashem with the various needs that come up; when the candles have been lit, we can turn to Hashem with the purest yearnings of our Neshama.

Now that we have clarity, we can see past the common desire that our children be wealthy or famous. We can penetrate to the depths of our Neshama and call out with the plea that our children be a source of the light of Torah and Mitzvos. When we touch the nerve of the Neshama, the plea for authentic connection with Hashem takes over, and everything else fades.

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz, in his *Sefer השבת*, טיב, encourages a woman to take that clarity with her into her Tefilos. Do not hold your Neshama and its clarity back. If you sense that it is an עת רצון, a time when the pathways of prayer are open, then do not hesitate to put forth your passionate pleas. Implore the רבוננו של עולם for your family and for כלל ישראל with whatever spiritual means you have. (He suggests the תפילת חנה, the prayer of the של"ה הקדוש, שיר השירים, תחינות, whatever helps you pour out the yearnings of your newly clarified Neshama to its Maker.)



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The opportunity is precious.

The Brisker Rav gave a father advise when the father asked for a ברכה for his son's יראת שמים. He suggested that the child's יראת שמים be the focus

of his wife's prayers on ליל שבת. When the gates are open, genuine requests can enter freely. A woman who asks that her children be מאירים is pleading for exactly that which Hashem wants to grant in abundance.

Takeaway: I will try to think about and take advantage of the spiritual opportunity that candle lighting creates.



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Light of Peace

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E6)

What does the expression Shalom Bayis mean and what role do Shabbos candles play?

Three Mitzvos

We are taught that women have a special relationship with the three Mitzvos of נדה, חלה, and והדלקת הנר. These three Mitzvos 'belong' to women. In what sense is candle-lighting a woman's Mitzvah given that both men and women are equally obligated to light Shabbos candles?

Correction for the sin of Chava

The Midrash provides us with an answer that lends itself to interpretation. The Midrash says, "she extinguished the candle of the world as it is written נר ה' נשמת אדם – the candle of Hashem is the soul of a person – let her keep the Mitzvah of Shabbos candles.

On a simple level it would imply that the original mother turned out the lights (by bringing a death sentence to אדם הראשון thus extinguishing his divine Neshama-light) and so her daughters should take responsibility for kindling light on Shabbos.

But is that all there is to it? Why not put the woman in charge of the lights all week long?

Candles and Shalom Bayis

The Gemara⁸ connects Shabbos candles with Shalom Bayis. On an obvious level, friction can result when people cannot see where they are going, what they are doing or what they are passing to another at the table.

On another level, though, we learn (from Rav C.Y. Goldvicht זצ"ל in his *אסופות מערכות*) that Shalom Bayis is an internal peace between one's

גוף and one's נשמה. The struggle between the soul and the body did not start with Creation; it began with the חטא. In man's original and ideal state, the Neshama provides the fuel, infuses the body with its vitality and thus enables the person to live forever. The barrier that went up between the body and soul is what

blocks the Shalom Bayis in each of us. If so, what does lighting Shabbos candles have to do with restoring the proper relationship between the body and the soul?

The role of the 'extra' Neshama

The נשמה יתירה – the extra Neshama with which we are imbued on Shabbos affords a taste of the world to come where the body-soul relationship will be restored. When a woman lights the candles, she invokes the sanctity of Shabbos,

*When a woman
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spiritual capacity for
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שבת כג: 8



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and with it the spiritual capacity to put the Neshama in charge of the body. With the Neshama in its proper place a person can eat and drink and rest and can manage it all for the sake of the holiness of the day.

As Rashi points out, the נשמה יתירה allows us to eat and drink and not be revolted by the indulgence. Typically, when a person indulges, his Neshama is revolted by the petty needs of the body. But on Shabbos, when those needs are used only to serve and glorify the holy Shabbos, לכבוד שבת קודש, the Neshama derives pleasure from the eating and the drinking. That is authentic Shalom Bayis – the restored relationship between the soul and the body – that the woman invokes when she lights Shabbos candles.

The Shechina – the divine presence

Another aspect of the Shalom Bayis that the woman introduces when she lights the candles has to do with the שכונה. Rav M. M. Bernstein in his תכלית אור relates to this aspect of the candle lighting.

Chazal tell us that when husband and wife are in harmony (Shalom Bayis) the Shechina is present in the home. In that sense, both husband and wife are partners in this endeavor. Indeed, that is why it is the custom that the husband prepares the candles, and the wife lights them.

But there is an aspect of the Shechina, says the Zohar, that the woman is responsible for. That is the direct result of her devotion and dedication

to creating a place where the Shechina is 'at home.' When חוה sinned, she pushed the Shechina higher up, away from the daily goings-on down here. By lighting the Shabbos candles, the woman brings the Shechina back down into her home. She brings the beautiful presence of the Shechina into our lives, thereby providing a correction for the sin of חוה.

Still another aspect of Shalom Bayis

Rav Z. Leff, in *Outlooks and Insights* suggests that Shalom Bayis is not limited to harmony between husband and wife. Shalom Bayis is when all the members of the household feel that they are an integral part of the team that does the will of Hashem.

It is customary to add a candle when a new child comes into the home. The child grows to see that they are the cause for extra light, for additional כבוד שמים. As a family, together, we can advance the cause of Heaven. In that sense Shalom Bayis is not just about harmony; it is about unity.

Unique contributions

Each of us is meant to notice and highlight the unique contribution of each member of our household. Each one is an integral part of our household, of an extended family, and ultimately has an indispensable role to play in the mission of Klal Yisroel. Each of us, given our unique skillset is poised to contribute to the כבוד שמים which is the mission of Klal Yisroel. And by doing so, each one brings נחת רוח to the Ribono Shel Olam.

Takeaway: I will focus on the transcendent nature of Shabbos and tap into the spirit of Shalom Bayis.



The Power of a Prayer

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E7)

Do you know the power of your Tefilos? If you knew that no word goes unanswered and no tear goes uncounted, would your Tefilos be the same or would you Daven differently?

The זכות of one who performs a מצוה

Whenever we perform a Mitzvah, we create a שעת הכושר – an opportunity. The קדושה which one brings into the world when one does a מצוה opens channels of שפע which a wise person uses to draw down additional שפע. A life well-lived is a life where one takes advantage of those opportunities. An example of grabbing the opportunity created by the זכות of a מצוה is when we make a variety of requests right after fulfilling the מצוה of ברכת המזון. Those are usually prefaced with the word הרהמנן. But their timing and placement are designed to take advantage of the זכות created by fulfilling the מצוה.

The הדלקת שעת הכושר associated with נרות

Another such moment of זכות is when a woman fulfils the Mitzvah of lighting Shabbos candles. To take advantage of this שעת הכושר it has become a nearly universal custom to recite the יהי רצון which is found in every Siddur and often on the wall near the candles. While that תפילה has been widely accepted in ישראל it is not the only בקשה which can be said at that time. A woman can give expression to the deepest yearning of her soul through a variety of channels.

תפילת השלייה

Many who yearn for the spiritual welfare of their children have found that the תפילת השלייה gives expression to their hopes and prayers. While it has become customary to recite the תפילת השלייה on Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan, that is by no means the only time it can or should be employed. Candle lighting time is an auspicious time for including this בקשה.

A story about the תפילת השלייה

The prayer associated with naming the child helped and those children became נביאים!

R' Meilech Biderman Shlita tells a story about an anti-religious woman who had the 'tragic misfortune' that three of her daughters became בעלות תשובה, married בני תורה and were raising Torah-true families. At the wedding of the third daughter, she stepped away from the dancing to sob in the kitchen over her misfortune. How could such a thing have happened to her, after all she did to keep away from 'those' religious people.

A woman who found her in the kitchen asked her how, indeed, did she have the merit for this to happen. It then turned out that this woman had been handed a card with the תפילת השלייה and was told that reciting these words daily is an 'amulet' for having successful children. Without a clue as to what she was saying she did as the speaker suggested (she was given the card at an Arachim weekend which she could not wait to



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end; the card was the 'only' thing she took from the experience). After, all who does not want successful children?! Indeed, the well-worn card was in her purse even as she was sobbing over her fate.

R' Meilech added that if the תפילת השל"ה can have such a heavenly impact when said without any intent for its holy content, how much more so is it potent when one intends those precious words.

The תפילת חנה mentions של"ה

The של"ה refers to a custom to say תפילת חנה, the heartfelt prayer that חנה uttered in beseeching Hashem for a son (contained in 'פרק א' פרק א', שמואל א'), and her exultation in thanks to Hashem for His salvation (the first 11 פסוקים of 'פרק ב'). Chazal instituted this תפילה as the הפטרה for ראש השנה and it can be found there as well. It is considered a סגולה for raising children in these challenging times. חנה gives voice to all of us who plead to Hashem for children who will serve Him.

An insight into תפילת חנה

When חנה named her son שמואל she announced her motive in choosing that name, כי מה שאילתיו, –

for I have requested him of Hashem.⁹ Based on the word שאילתיו she should have called him שמואל, not שמואל. The חיד"א cites חז"ל who teach that for quite some time there was a בת קול announcing that a צדיק was going to be born by the name of שמואל. Throughout the period of the בת קול any woman who yearned that her son be a צדיק called her newborn שמואל. And like those other women, חנה called her son שמואל, attaching the name to the fact that she had requested him of Hashem, since the letters of the word שמואל appear in the name. On the day that she called him שמואל the בת קול stopped. The צדיק that the בת קול referred to, שמואל בן חנה had been born.¹⁰

What became of the others?

The חיד"א cites the ספר פרי הארץ who says that the קהל נביאים¹¹ – the group of נביאים who gathered around שמואל were those boys whose mothers called them שמואל with a prayer that he be a צדיק per the בת קול. The prayer associated with naming the child helped and those children became נביאים!

No תפילה goes unanswered and every tear is counted. The child may not become the צדיק that the בת קול referred to, but the תפילות have an impact and those many Shmuel's became נביאים.

Takeaway: I will try to seize the opportunity to make my heartfelt requests of Hashem at auspicious times such as lighting Shabbos candles.

⁹ שמואל א א: כ

¹⁰ חיד"א ספר מדבר קדמות מערכת ש

¹¹ שמואל א י: ה



Setting the Atmosphere

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E8)

Think about the role you play in setting the שבת atmosphere in your home.

Neiros, Tefilos, Now What?

R' Gamliel Rabinovitz reminds us that שבת is a time of connection and closeness with הקב"ה. And R' Tzvi Meir adds that the way that we usher in שבת is the way that שבת will flow throughout. After all, the foundation of a building (יסוד, ראשית) determines the strength and height of the building which can be built on it.

Now, the question turns to how to generate that energy to get שבת on track.

Shabbos is a חדר יחוד

R' Shimshon Pincus זצ"ל points out that we should think of שבת as a חדר יחוד. The idea behind this thought is that one should close the door to all outside factors and focus exclusively on building the relationship with שבת and הקב"ה. We would laugh at a חתן who interrupts the precious moment of connection with his new bride in the חדר יחוד to check on the sports scores that he missed while preparing for the Chasuna. So, we know what we are not meant to do when connecting with Shabbos. But what *do* we do?

The answer to that question is going to be very personal. When a woman wishes to connect with her spiritual essence and wants to bring her household along, honesty and focus are key.

Saying שיר השירים

R' Gamliel reports that an eight-year-old said that her happiest moment is when she joins her mother in saying שיר השירים on Friday night. Clearly, her mother connected to the message of Shlomo HaMelech, מלך שהשלום שלו when he spoke about פתחי לי רעייתי, inviting the intimate connection between הקב"ה and כלל ישראל.

Parsha Stories

Another option is reading Parsha stories with the children. Anything that you find of interest will be a delight for your children to learn together with you.

Appreciating the Parchment

The שבילי פנחס writes that the 600,000 letters in the תורה הק' are called the 'black fire' and the parchment upon which they are written is called the 'white fire.' The 600K letters (black fire) represent the men of כלל ישראל and the parchment (white fire) represents the women of כלל ישראל. Spiritually, the ספרים say that אש לבנה is on a higher level than אש שחורה. Whichever is 'higher,' the parchment is the environment which is the backdrop for the that which is said. We could say that the parchment is that which is unsaid, it is only felt or experienced. It is against that backdrop that the אש שחורה can be read.

The parchment is that which is unsaid, it is only felt or experienced.





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A Kallah and the Parchment

Based on this insight, there are those who explain that the Minhag for the Kallah to circle her Chosson seven times before they get married. She is thereby declaring her intent to create the environment, the home for the **אש** **אש שחורה** to find its expression.

Interestingly, it is the mothers who accompany the Kallah on this last and first journey. They are symbolically passing on to this new bride the task that was passed to them by their mothers. The **מסורה** will henceforth be the calling of the young wife as she receives the baton that has passed through the generations of Jewish women – she will forge the **אש לבנה** so that the **אש שחורה** can appear in the world. It is now her turn.

Use What Moves You

Some women love to dance, and others enjoy singing. Our unique gifts and inclinations are meant to be given expression rather than seeing everyone crawl off to a corner and forget that it is now Shabbos.

לכה דודי לקראת כלה פני שבת נקבלה

There are many lessons contained in this seemingly simple call. We are calling on our

Takeaway: I will try to see the quiet time after lighting candles as an opportunity to create the environment wherein Shabbos can feel eternally welcome.

beloved to go out to greet the Kallah, to receive the 'פני שבת.' When we sing those words with our children, we are inviting them to join us as we go out to greet the שבת. We may ask, though, we to we 'go out' or 'leave' to greet the Kallah? Why don't we follow the last stanza of the **לכה דודי** and welcome the Kallah – **בואי כלה**?

The answer may be that 'go out' carries the implication of **זריזות** – alacrity. Do not tarry. Do it with verve and energy. But one can see in the word **לכה** an echo of the word **לכו** as in **לכו בנים** – **שמעו לי** – it is not enough to come to me, your parent, to learn the precious lessons of **תורה**. The real story is for you to internalize the messages so that you can *leave* me with those messages firmly in place. Indeed, the word **פני** may refer to **פנים** – the lessons are meant to become internalized such that they create a **מאור פנים** – they shine on your faces.

We are not only creating an environment in the here and now, but we are adding to the chain whereby our children will receive the impact of **שבת** and will pass it on to theirs. The white parchment is the spirit of **שבת** which can rest on us and on our families **עד ביאת גואל צדק בב"א**



Blessing the Palace

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E9)

What is the significance of having the house ready for Shabbos?

The Angels

The Gemara teaches:

תניא, רבי יוסי בר יהודה אומר: שני מלאכי השרת מלוין לו לאדם בערב שבת מבית הכנסת לביתו, אחד טוב ואחד רע. וכשבא לביתו ומצא נר דלוק ושלחן ערוך ומטתו מוצעת, מלאך טוב אומר: יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך. ומלאך רע עונה אמן בעל כרחו. ואם לאו, מלאך רע אומר: יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך, ומלאך טוב עונה אמן בעל כרחו. (שבת קיט:)

Two ministering angels escort a person home from Shul on Friday night. One is good, the other bad. When one enters one's home and finds candles lit, the table set and the bed made, the good angel declares, 'May it be His will that it should be so for another Shabbos.' The bad angel is compelled to respond Omein. The opposite happens if those are not found in the home.

Why do we need more than the food?

We are left wondering why, so long as there is food for the Seudah, does the rest of the home, the beds, the table, and the candles make such a difference? Surely, we can take care of those as we go along.

כבוד שבת

Rav Moshe Meir Bernstein, in his ספר תכלית אור, points out that the issue at hand is כבוד שבת. The angels see whether the home reflects a desire

for, an appreciation of, and an anticipation of the coming שבת as a distinguished guest.

If one were going to host a גדול הדור, we would get a glimpse of what anticipation means. No stone of preparation would be left unturned and the freshly bathed children waiting at the window would attest to the spirit of excitement that filled the house. That image gives us a sense of the spirit with which we are meant to welcome and anticipate the שבת קודש.

*The angels
bring the שכינה
into your home
with them.*

(The table would be covered and set. All the tables in the house would be adorned with a special covering that announces the honor of hosting the precious guest. Indeed, the מנהג is for the dining room table to be always covered, even when the top tablecloth is being replaced for cleaning or when nobody is eating there.)

The angels bring the שכינה

The תיקוני זוהר says that the angels do not simply come and check if the home is ready for Shabbos; they bring the שכינה into the home with them. And so, at issue in our preparation is the degree to which we hold the שכינה to be precious. The anticipation of שבת is a spiritual pulse check.

You are leaving home on the שבת transport

The נתיבות שלום (the previous Slonimer Rebbe זצ"ל) compared the arrival of שבת קודש to a ride



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which transports us out of our homes and into a different dimension. We are transported כביכול into היכלו של מלך – the King's palace. We will be spending שבת קודש in the courtyard of the King. There are many implications to that idea.

It is the King's meal

The Gemara teaches:

אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל: בני, לוו עלי וקדשו קדושת היום, והאמינו בי ואני פורע. (ביצה טו:)

Hashem says to Klal Yisroel, 'my children, take loans and sanctify the שבת and trust Me that I will repay (the loans).

One of the implications of our being transported to the courtyard of the King is that the festive meal is sponsored by the King. Those who eat the סעודה for the sake of the שבת קודש can be assured that the expense will be borne by the Court.

What we touch

Another implication of the idea that we are being transported to the palace has to do with what we do and what we touch. When we or our children are guests, we do not touch the ornaments or take anything from the pantry without permission; we keep our hands to ourselves. Hence, the Halachos of מוקצה (as well as the מלאכה in general) take on a new meaning. In the palace we do not just do whatever occurs to us or touch whatever happens to be at hand.

It is reported that great בעלי מוסר could be seen with their hands shaking as the sun set on

Friday. They were focused on what they were going to touch and what they were going to avoid touching and the concern made its way to their nervous system – their hands spoke to their developed יראה שמים.

The מלאכים look for the אמהות

We are taught that there were qualities which characterized the tents of the אמהות (חז"ל) שרה אמינו regarding שבת and רבקה אמינו see רש"י on (סז) רש"י:

וּבְבֵּיתָהּ יִצְחָק הָאֵהָלָה שְׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־רִבְקָה וַתְּהַיְיֵלוּ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּאֱהָבֶהּ וַיִּנְחַם יִצְחָק אֶת־רֵי אִמּוֹ: רש"י מבאר: האהלה שרה אמו. ויביאה האהלה ונעשית דוגמת שרה אמו, כלומר והרי היא שרה אמו, שכל זמן ששרה קיימת היה נר דלוק מערב שבת לערב שבת, וברכה מצויה בעיסה, וענן קשור על האהל, ומשמתה פסקו, וכשבאת רבקה חזרו.

Those are the qualities which the מלאכים are checking for in our homes. The ברכה מצויה בעיסה is the set table, the נר דלוק מע"ש לע"ש is the lit candle and the ענן קשור is the reference to the presence of the שכינה, a function of בית שלום, the harmony between husband and wife which brings the שכינה, which the 'made beds' represent.

When the מלאכים see the qualities of the אמהות they give a Brocha that this should be a preamble to the שבת אחרת which does not only mean next week, but the eternal שבת of עולם הבא. It is a blessing that this family should experience the ultimate שבת. As we know, מי שטרה בערב שבת – anticipating the arrival of the שכינה here is a signal that one has a relationship with eternity

Takeaway: I will try to focus on my relationship with Hashem as I anticipate the arrival of the שכינה.



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A Prayer for Posterity

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E10)

How do you recall the ברכות you received on ליל שבת? How will your children recall that moment?

Greeting the Shabbos

The אריז"ל teaches that a man should extend a warm greeting to the Shabbos upon entering his home as a חתן would bring a shining greeting home to his כלה. This is the first step in invoking a spirit of warmth into the home.

As we will see, invoking a spirit of warmth does not only set the tone for a pleasant שבת, but it also sets the stage for bringing ברכה into the home, as well.

The custom of giving a ברכה to the children

There is a מנהג ישראל to 'Bentch' the children on שבת. R' Gamliel Rabinovich and others explain why the timing of this Brocha is on Friday night. During the week, a child may have irritated a parent, and an unintended קטרוג on the child may have been created by the parent's irritation. Friday night is singled out for warmth, joy, שמחה and רצון, such that it is the right time to give a Brocha and offset any קטרוג or negativity which may have accrued during the week.

Full of Warmth

The חסיד יעב"ץ points out that 'Bentching' the children should reflect warmth and closeness. The hands that are going to bless the child should draw the child into one's embrace. When יעקב אבינו was ready to bless אפרים and מנשה

he drew them into his embrace. Warmth has the powerful effect of creating an עת רצון for Brochos to be effective. It is an auspicious time where anyone can give a Brocha to anyone else, not only fathers to children.

The formula of the Brochos

The מנהג is to bless the children using the formula of the ברכת כהנים. We know that the כהנים declare, in the Brocha they recite before ברכת כהנים, that they are invoking these words in a context of love. And so ברכת כהנים is associated with an עת רצון.

When giving a Brocha to a son we precede the ברכת כהנים with the immortal words of יעקב אבינו who prayed that fathers would bless their sons with the hope that the child will be like אפרים and מנשה: He said, as we do, ישמך אלקים כאפרים ומנשה.

When 'bentching' daughters we precede ברכת כהנים by invoking the אמהות הקדושות, asking ה' to help this child be a fitting offspring to the saintly שרה, רבקה, רחל, ולאה.

The first words of Torah

Rav Meisels points out that right after we recite ברכת התורה each morning we say words of Torah. Which words? The words of ברכת כהנים. These are powerful words which open the שערי שמים and when they are uttered it is a time to ask for all צרכים, small and large.

*Friday night is
singled out for
warmth, joy,
רצון and שמחה.*



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Add your personal Brochos

Be encouraged to add your own Brocha to those in the formula. It is an *עו רצון* so give expression to whatever you wish for that child. Make it personal; think about what the child in your arms needs and ask Hashem's assistance for anything the child struggles with. It does not need to be said out loud, nobody needs to be put on the spot or embarrassed. But your heart should be filled with the needs of this child and your prayer for them to receive the *סייעתא דשמיא* that they need.

Looking into the future

Rav Sternbach שליט"א writes in *טעם ודעת* that we invoke the Brocha of *יעקב אבינו* because when he blessed *אפרים ומנשה* he saw their connection to the *רבש"ע* into the distant future. For that is the greatest Brocha, *בטורה*, *עוסקים בתורה*. We pray that not only our children will be engaged in the study of the *תורה הקדושה* but that their children will be engaged in Torah after them and their children in turn. It is with that prayer on our lips that we pray that our progeny will bring *נחת רוח* to their parents and to *אבינו* *רבש"ע*, the *שבשמים*.

Takeaway: I will try to create a spirit of warmth on ליל שבת so that my heartfelt Brochos can be effective.



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Discover the Joy of Shabbos

The Angels' Bracha

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E11)

What is שלום עליכם? Who are these angels? What are we saying to them?

Inviting Peace

The ספרים teach that we say שלום עליכם because peace is the theme of שבת קודש and is central to our yearning for our home and family. Hashem brings peace above (עושה שלום במרומי) by, for example, causing the angels of fire and water to coexist in peace. May He bring that spirit of שבת שלום and cause it to reside among us as well (היא יעשה שלום עלינו).

Asking for Blessing as we Bless

A second explanation for שלום עליכם relates to our desire to receive blessing just as we bless our children with our whole hearts.

There is a reciprocal relationship between giving ברכות and receiving ברכות. The Torah adds to the Bracha that Kohanim give to Klal Yisrael. When they bless Klal Yisrael, Hashem says ואני אברכם which refers both to the fact that Hashem will bless Klal Yisrael and that Hashem will bless the Kohanim who have given the Bracha. We, too, turn to Hashem via His messengers the angels, to shower us with Bracha just as we are giving Brachos.

All from Hashem

There is yet another aspect of שלום עליכם which adds to its significance on ליל שבת. We are reminding ourselves, before we begin קידוש, that everything in our lives comes from הקב"ה. There

is a danger lest we come to think that what we have or what we have done is somehow the product of our own efforts. We can lose track of the straight line to the Cause of everything.

That is why we refer to the angels. A quality of an angel is that it never loses track of its source and its mission. The angel has no name of its own because it exists only to carry out the Will of הקב"ה. We want to remind ourselves of their singular focus in the hopes that this insight will fill our consciousness as well. A central theme of Shabbos is the reminder that everything is drawn from His Will, and from His Will alone.

Why should we say Goodbye?

After the three explanations above we must wonder why we would bid the angels farewell?

The simplest answer is that the angels will leave at some point, but we do not know when. And so, we bless them now for whenever they go.

Different groups of angels

Another explanation for our bidding the angels farewell is that there is a changing of the angelic guard in our homes. We take leave of the angels that accompany us during the weekdays as we welcome the angels that accompany us through the שבת קודש. This echoes how יעקב אבינו saw the angels of ארץ ישראל leaving him (going up) and the angels of חו"ל joining him (coming down).

Only in the first stanza do we refer to the angels as מלאכי השרת.



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Calling them different names

The Belzer Rebbe pointed out that only in the first stanza do we refer to the angels as מלאכי השרת. Thereafter we refer to them in more familiar, direct terms, and then we say goodbye. He explained that there are three ways in which we relate to angels; superior, equal, inferior.

This is alluded to by the three ways that אברהם אבינו relates to the angels who come to his tent. First, he sees them as נצבים עליו, they are above him and superior to him. They are perfect beings, and he has not yet thought about how to relate to them. Next, he chooses to greet them. That is an exercise of the capacity that a human being to choose his service of Hashem and that is a capacity that angels do not have. He is now their equal, hence the term לקראתם. Once he begins to serve them, he has not only chosen to serve, but he has also acted on that choice. He is now above them, hence the term והוא עומד עליהם.

When the angels first arrive, we call them מלאכי השרת. When we contemplate fulfilling the great Mitzvah of זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, we drop the great title of honor as we are more their equal. When we are about to fulfil the Mitzvah of זכרהו

Takeaway: I will try to pay attention to the spiritual significance of the שלום עליכם that we sing.

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, על היין, we bid them farewell. We do not want to flaunt our superiority over the angels. We rather say goodbye and not generate any jealousy when we act on our choice to do this great Mitzvah.

Absolute privacy

Rav Shor adds another ingredient to the goodbye wishes. Referring back to the great Mitzvos that we are about to perform of זכור את יום השבת לקדשו and זכרהו על היין, Rav Shor teaches that these Mitzvos create a profound ייחוד with הקב"ה. This moment is akin to the כהן גדול entering the קדש יום הכיפורים.

That moment is so intimate and precious that the Torah forbids anyone from being present but the כהן גדול and the שכינה הקדושה. Nobody can be present, including the מלאכים – angels may not be there either.

Hence, when we bid farewell to the angels, we should consider the spiritual significance of the coming Kiddush. We are about to engage in a service which is akin to the spiritual high-water mark of יום הכיפורים.



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Around the Shabbos Table Part One

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E12)

Tips for handling challenges that can impede the spirit of the Shabbos table

The Technical Side

The mission of keeping children engaged with and enjoying the goings-on of the Shabbos table can be challenging at times. There is a lovely booklet by Rav Dovid Kaplan entitled 'How to Run a Shabbos Table' which provides some tips, and we will try to build off those.

Anticipate

Certain challenges are not a surprise. They crop up repeatedly. Those should be worked out with some strategy since we know that they are coming. For example, if children wrangle over who sits where, then setting up a system helps set that aside. If the children do not 'get' the system you can put out place cards. We all like to see our name at our seat.

If a predictable quarrel is about who got more Kiddush wine, then putting out the small Kiddush cups in front of each plate (adding a drop from the Kiddush cup to each) can put that aside. The basic message is that the challenges that recur should be addressed in advance.

Start right away

Children like to know what comes next. When they are unsure, they start to fidget. It is best to begin שלום עליכם as soon as the man/men come

into the house. If there is a delay, chatting with the guests, etc., the children feel lost.

The children are the point

The Shabbos table is the 'quality time' that everyone speaks about. It is a time for focusing attention on each member of the family. The guests will come to understand that the children are our focus, and the children will sense their significance in our hearts and minds.

*There is always
room for
creativity if you
and your
children are
inclined*

R' Moshe זצ"ל would seat his children near him and the guests were next. The message is not lost. R' Gamliel Rabinovitz שליט"א seats his young children near him while the marrieds are seated further on. The point of the table is to bring the children in, as close as our hearts allow. Closeness is the message of the Shabbos table.

Structure

As we have mentioned, structure works well for children. They tend to adapt to the predictable. Kiddush starts when Kiddush starts, and children adapt to be there when it does.

Those who wish to engage their children in serving and clearing might wish to structure who serves which and who clears which course. When the expectations are clear, children tend to rise to meet them. This removes the pressure of 'how will this work' and frees up energy for the



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table to be a place of joy, of companionship and singing זמירות which the children enjoy.

[As a practical aside, life is simpler if there are enough of the same Bencher for everyone to have access. In this way a simple page announcement is enough for everyone to know what we are up to.]

Food that the children like

While there is generally a 'Shabbos menu' which is traditional in most homes, there is still room for adapting the menu to the tastes of the children. When a mother has a spot in her heart for such a question it is wonderful to ask a child, "What is your favorite Shabbos food?" "I would like to make it for you this week." This is another way for the children, or for this one child, to look forward to the Shabbos meal.

Creativity allowed and encouraged

There is always room for creativity if you and your children are inclined. You may be surprised at what emerges if you let yours and your

children's imagination go to work for the Shabbos table. We know of Parsha-based centerpieces, Parsha cakes, color coordination of napkins, and flowers for an artistic presentation. These may seem like small things, but those small things are invitational for children. They connect with the Shabbos table experience and will want, yearn and long to be present.

Games can also add to the positive energy of the table. I was shown a version of "I spy" where the parent announces that he/she has a certain item in mind and whomever clears that item gets to give out the Shabbos treats. This creates an extra incentive for everyone to clear as much as they can to pick up the choice object.

The *שבת סעודה* is meant to be a highlight of *שבת קודש*. And if it is such for the parents, then they can transmit that to the children using tangible strategies such as décor, ambience and singing.

Those comprise the technical side of the Shabbos spirit. Next, we must look at how we instill the meals with *קדושה* and *יראת שמים*.

Takeaway: I will try to look at the Shabbos table as a tool for engaging with my children.



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Around the Shabbos Table Part Two

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E13)

Tips for bringing יראת שמים and קדושה to your Shabbos table

Success Stories

Everyone loves a good story. The stories of those who succeeded in the life mission of serving Hashem, the סיפורי צדיקים, set the bar towards which we strive and are embedded into the consciousness of all who hear them.

The Chasam Sofer would tell and retell stories of the יראת שמים of those who had preceded him. His son, the K'sav Sofer, had heard these stories many times. On one occasion, when his great father began telling one such story again to the guests around the table, the K'sav Sofer saw it as opportunity to learn. However, the Chasam Sofer told his son to close his Gemara so that he can hear these stories over and again. The repetition helps, not hurts, when it comes to speaking about יראת שמים.

Be genuine

Perhaps the first step is not in telling the story. The first step is for one who is telling the story to connect with his enthusiasm for עבודת ה'. The message of the story is a function of the heart of the one telling it. Nothing communicates like יראת שמים.¹² And so, the story begins in the speaker and then becomes available to the hearts of the listeners. Rehearsal

can help but connecting to a genuine part of oneself is the goal. As we are taught, בורים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב – that which emerges genuinely from one's heart penetrates the heart of the other.

Full focus precludes other tasks

A corollary of principle that the speaker must be invested in what he is saying is that the wife is invested in the precious moment of transmission from parent to child. The start of the Dvar Torah or the story is not the time to clear the table or to step away to prepare the next course. The story or the Dvar Torah are the main course.

An example of a genuine thought

A certain Rav was averse to delivering Drashos and so he agreed to serve as the Rav of the community on condition that he never be called on to give a Drasha. During the years that he was their leader, the community בית המדרש burned down, ר"ל. A delegation of distinguished and learned members of the קהילה approached the Rav with the request that he make an exception and deliver a Drasha to encourage everyone to join and rebuild the בית המדרש. The Rav reminded them that he does not give Drashos and would not make an exception. A

The Jewish mode of transmission has always been questions and, at times, answers.

¹² ברכות ו:



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member of the delegation turned to the Rav and said that he expected that would be the Rav's response and that he came prepared. He then handed the Rav a Drasha that he had written and asked the Rav to simply relate what he had written, not forcing the Rav to say a Drasha of his own. The fact that they could announce that the Rav was speaking would be enough to draw the community to the event.

The Rav agreed and stood up to give the Drasha at the appointed gathering. He began by informing the קהל that this is R' Chazkel's Drasha. R' Chazkel asked the following question, R' Chazkel offered the following answer, R' Chazkel then raised the following question, and suddenly he got stuck. He could not recall the next step of R' Chazkel's Drasha. At that moment, the script was gone and all that remained was the Rav and the community. The Rav then turned to the קהל and cried out passionately that the community must have a בית המדרש to replace the one that was burned. And with his cry he fainted.

The call from the depths of the Rav's heart met the hearts of the קהילה and the בית המדרש was rebuilt.

One take-home from the story is that what counts is what one authentically feels, not what one retells from what he read or heard.

Let it happen organically

Children have plenty of schooltime during the week where subjects are announced, and they must open their books. They don't need an announcement that it is 'Dvar Torah Time.' That triggers a 'tune out' reaction.

Instead, raise questions. If you are looking for inspiration for such questions, the books by Rav Zilberstein שליט"א, entitled והערב נא and rendered into English as *What If* (Artscroll) can help you find questions that draw others to think and contribute their thoughts. Another resource, *Welcome to Our Table* (Feldheim) by Rabbi Ari Wasserman, can help elicit curiosity and discussion about the Parsha. The Jewish mode of transmission has always been questions and, at times, answers. That is what draws the hearts of the children.

If the questions being raised can be answered from the Parsha, then it is helpful that there be copies of the Parsha which everyone can access so that each participant can look for the answers. 'What two animals appear in the second Aliyah?' 'Which Posuk in ראשון contains all the letters of the Alef-bais?' Far more is gained from the energy spent looking for the answer than from finding it. Older children can be taught to help the younger ones in the search and yet another good מידה is developed.

Another favorite of mine is *Raising a Mensch* (Mosaica Press) which is adapted by R' Dovid Sommer from the Hebrew series חובת האדם בעולמו by Rav Zev Festinger. He describes a מידה, tells a story related to that מידה, tells a Dvar Torah about that מידה, and then presents a 'challenge of the week' regarding that מידה which the family can work on together during the week, all based on the Parsha. With everyone involved the growth becomes personal.

The key is to bring the יראה שמים to the table in a way that is at least as palatable as the delicious food.



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Sharing השגחה פרטית

Some families encourage everyone at the table to share incidents where they saw and experienced השגחה פרטית during the week. This can be done by going around the table and giving each one a chance to relate that which happened during their week. One idea that some use is to have a השגחה פרטית mailbox in the house where the family members can write down the incidents that occur during the week and they get shared by the father who recounts the children's experiences. Having one's father spend time and focus on an event in one's week can touch a child profoundly.

Parsha Sheets

Caution should be exercised when going over the questions from the Parsha sheets that the

Takeaway: I will try to see the Shabbos table as place where love of Hashem and Shabbos shine.

children bring home from school to ensure that it does not turn into a test or a pressure for the child who may, or may not, recall the answers. The questions are a vehicle for connecting with the child and his week, not a test.

Similarly, do not reward correct answers with prizes but rather reward everyone after going over the sheets for their participation. There should not be anything at the Shabbos table that brings a sense of dread to a child.

Shabbos is not for drilling nor for testing. Shabbos is about transmitting one's passion for the opportunity to serve HKB"Y to the family. It is about love for Hashem and for each of His precious children. That is what the children will take away from the Shabbos table and will בעזרה pass on to their children in turn.



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The Importance of Fish

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E14)

The role of fish in one's spiritual diet

Not just a dietary consideration

A friend of mine wanted to invite us for סעודה שבת and asked if I had any dietary considerations (generally, this is a question regarding health issues). When I responded that ב"ה we did not have any restrictions, she asked if that meant that she did not need fish on שבת ליל. I quickly corrected her and told her that fish at a סעודה שבת is not a dietary consideration; it is a מנהג ישראל.

Indeed, the מגן אברהם indicates that we should partake of fish at all three meals while the פסקי תשובה emphasizes fish for the third meal. (He indicates that it is also a סגולה for פרנסה.)

The question arises, though, how fish became a מנהג? What is special about fish on שבת קודש?

Fish are silent

One reason we eat fish is that, like the silent fish, we should speak less on Shabbos than on a weekday. Shabbos sings its holy song in silence. One must be very still to hear the message of silence. Excessive talking obstructs our ability to hear the beautiful melody of שבת קודש.

Fish do not sleep

One of the many remarkable features of fish is that they do not close their eyes. They echo the message of הנה לא ינים ולא יישן שומר ישראל. The Protector of כלל ישראל does not sleep nor slumber (תהלים קכא:ד). This helps us reaffirm our absolute

faith that our destinies are in the safest possible hands.

Fish live in the water

Torah is compared to water (see שיר השירים רבה שיר:א for seven ways that Torah is like water). The fish remind us that a central purpose of Shabbos is to connect us with Torah.

The fifth day of Creation

Fish were created and blessed on the fifth day of Creation. Man was created and blessed on the sixth, and שבת קודש was made and blessed on the seventh. We join all three [fish, eaten by man, on שבת קודש] thus creating a חוט המשולש, a three-ply rope which, says the פסוק that החוט הקשה המשלש לא במהרה ינתק (קהלת ד:יב) which speaks of the durability of a three-ply rope. This 'strengthened' blessing draws from the connection between abundance and fish. When Yaakov gave a ברכה to his grandchildren he blessed them with abundance using an allusion to fish - וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ - you can spot the word דג in וידגו.

The לוייתן

The Gemara (בבא בתרא עה.) paints a picture of the delights that await the righteous in the world to come. That picture includes a festive meal, made from the meat of the primordial fish, the לוייתן (עתיד הקב"ה לעשות סעודה לצדיקים מברשו של לוייתן).



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Eating fish helps strengthen our faith in Eternal Reward as Shabbos is a 'taste' of eternity (ברכות :גז).

Fish and Birds on their own day

Rav Leib Mintzburg, in his ספר בן מלך asks why fish and birds were created on their own day (the 5th day of Creation) and not with the other creatures on the 6th day. He suggests that both the waters below us and the heavens above inspire us with a feeling of Hashem's presence. The heavens call out 'השמים שמים לה' as they 'announce' the Creator. The waters, similarly, inspire us. Many people experience calm when they are near the water since the water is untouched by man; it announces the Hand of Hashem. One who contemplates the heavens, or the waters is moved to sing the שיר של יום of the fifth day, הרנינו.

He also points out that Hashem created the birds and the fish with multiple colors and varieties, a

Takeaway: I will try to see the traditional fish in a more spiritual light.

feature which further underscores the כבוד שמים when we are drawn to admire and enjoy them. The birds and the fish proclaim that there is no place that is devoid of the presence and beauty of Hashem's Hand.

It is thus fitting that at the Shabbos table, where the connection with Hashem is the centerpiece of the סעודה, that we should try to make this message tangible by eating fish. There is also a common practice to eat birds as well, usually in the form of chicken, to further underscore the message that Hashem's magnificent Hand is everywhere, above and below.

In summary, tasting the fish is not about a dietary preference or need. It is about tasting מעין עולם הבא and reinforcing our sense of the גדלות of the Creator and bringing ברכה into our homes.



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The Power of Kiddush

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E15)

Kiddush is a unique opportunity to reflect on the meaning of Shabbos

The meaning of Kiddush

One's spirit can sense that Kiddush is a powerful moment. Much is happening. The first thing that is happening is that we are fulfilling the Torah's command of *זכור את יום השבת לקדשו* which *חז"ל* understand to mean *זכרהו על היין*, calling on us to recall and sanctify the *שבת קודש* over wine.

The technical side of a כוס של ברכה

There are many conditions necessary for a cup of wine to turn into a *כוס של ברכה*. One of those is that the cup should be rinsed out before being used.

In addition, there is a *מנהג* to add a drop of water into the wine. The message is that water represents *חסד* and wine is a symbol of *גבורה*, or strict justice, and so we use water to mitigate the *דין* of the wine. Some have the custom to put three drops of water into the wine to reflect the fact that *חסד* numerically equals 72 while *גבורה* is 216, which is 3 times *חסד*.

Looking at the candles

One recites Kiddush by raising the *כוס* in the palm of one's hand and looking over at the *נרות* when beginning Kiddush.¹³ There are various reasons given for this custom. One is to place

זכור and *שמור* in one's mind (and, as such, one looks at two candles, not at all the candles that may be lit). Another is that *נר* is numerically 250 and two candles make 500. The Gemara relates that taking large steps dims 1/500th of one's vision and that looking at the two candles repairs that impairment.

Others see in *שבת* a step towards restoring the *אור הגנוז*, the primordial light which enriched the world prior to the *חטא*. The light that was extinguished with the *חטא* is described in terms of a *נר* (*חזה כבתה נרה של עולם*) and hence we utilize *קידוש* to bring out the *אור הגנוז*, *יום שכולו שבת*, and restoration of the *נר* of the world. And because the numerical equivalent of

סוד and *יין* are the same (70, which is also the number of words in *קידוש* per those who abridge the Brocha, leaving out the words *כי הוא יום* and the seven words beginning with *...בחרת...*), we are taught that *יין יצא סוד* – when wine, 70, enters the secret, 70, emerges. Thus, the *אור הגנוז*, which has been hidden from us (*סוד*) can emerge via the *קידוש* over wine (*יין*).

יִכְלוּ Start with

The recitation of *יִכְלוּ* at the start of *קידוש* is a symbolic testimony. We are witnesses, testifying that *ה'* created Heaven and Earth. Witnesses

¹³ רמ"א או"ח סימן רע"א סעיף י'



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must stand when giving testimony and it is therefore customary to stand for ויכלו even if one's מנהג is to sit for קידוש (there are different מנהגים about standing or sitting for קידוש based on דברי קבלה).

A witness must also be free of הטא and, as such, it is proper to pause before reciting קידוש to do תשובה, to reflect on one's thoughts and actions and to resolve to better one's ways. This is true whenever one is called upon to be a witness (such as at a חתונה) and even more so when we are about to invoke the שבת קודש of זכור.

Teshuva is coming home

The פסוק, when speaking about שמואל הנביא, says ויהי שבתו הרמטה כי שם ביתו – *his return was to Ramah for there was his home*. We are meant to learn that תשובה is always a return to home. We go back to our essence. And at our core is the realization that ה' is the Creator of Heaven and Earth and is in absolute control of all that was, is and will be. This leads one to recognize השגחה פרטית, Hashem's intimate involvement in one's every moment.

All your work is done

The ערוך teaches that upon announcing the arrival of שבת קודש one should view all of one's pursuits and efforts as being complete (כאילו כל) (מלאכתו עשויה). Only when one lets go of the sense that "I must do this and that" can one recognize that Hashem does it all.

Takeaway: I will try to pause at Kiddush to reflect on the meaning of Shabbos.

Recalling יציאת מצרים

There is a surprising reference to יציאת מצרים in the קידוש. After all, the sanctity of שבת draws from מעשה בראשית – the six days of Creation and the original שבת. It does not seem connected to שליט"א R' Tzvi Meyer Zilberberg. יציאת מצרים is each person's constriction. That is what מיצר is. When one steps out of one's די ונצום ירי mindset one steps into the world of בלי מצרים – the unbounded world which we know as שבת קודש.

Rav Zilberberg שליט"א goes on to point out that the 70 words of קידוש correspond to the 70 nations which each carries a trait from which we must divest ourselves. This nation represents jealousy, this one arrogance, another strife, and so on. As we recite קידוש we embark on a journey to distance ourselves from these nation-traits and enter the dimension of עוד מלבדו.

Kiddush as a song – שירה

Kiddush can be viewed as a song, a שירה, of redemption. Klal Yisrael sang a song of redemption על הים when leaving מצרים, and the ultimate song will be sung upon the גאולה העתידה. בקרוב. On Shabbos we leave the גלות and enter the realm of עולם הבא. As such, we sing a song of redemption on both the national and personal level, and we mention the earlier song, זכר ליציאת מצרים.



Our Home, Our Beis HaMikdash

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E16)

The Connection between our Shabbos table and the Shulchan in the Mishkan

Noticing the Connections

If one looks past the well-pressed tablecloth and the delightful foods that adorn the Shabbos table one will see a miniature בית המקדש.

This closer examination will reveal that our בגדי שבת echo the בגדי כהונה since one does not serve Hashem in one's workday clothing. Further, the כהנים washed their hands and feet and immersed in a מקוה before doing the עבודה and we, too, wash ourselves in preparation for שבת קודש.

The candles recall the מנורה (some even place the candles on the southern side of the room since that was the location of the מנורה).

The table – the Shulchan

The table upon which the Seuda will be eaten brings the שולחן to mind. (The אריז"ל would eat on a four-legged table to emphasize this connection). And the חלה eaten on that table recalls the לחם הפנים, the twelve loaves placed on the שולחן and eaten on שבת קודש.

[There are those who are accustomed to bringing the number 12 into their חלות in a variety of ways. Some put out 12 loaves of חלה. Others make a חלה out of 12 separate pieces. Still others fashion their חלה in the shape of a 'Vav' to echo the 'holy joining' (the 'Vav' is a joining letter) referred to in אומר בשבתין recited on Friday night.

And two such חלות evoke two וויץ = 12, again, the לחם הפנים. Some braid a 3-ply חלה and make four such חלות (one loaf for each meal and one more to serve as the pair, or לחם משנה, for the other 3 and 4 חלות x 3 braids = 12). Others invoke the message of the 12 לחם הפנים by braiding 6 braids times two חלות. The message in all these customs is the same.]

Some people put flowers on the table, a reference to the sweet-smelling קטורת.

The centrality of שבת and מקדש

*We are
'beamed up' to
the celestial
realms where
we are living in
the Royal
Palace.*

Rav Shimshon Pincus זצ"ל points out that עונש סקילה applies to one who willfully violates שבת קודש as well as to one who improperly offers a קרבן. He explains the connection with a משל.

A surgeon tries, in any surgical procedure, to get it 'just right.' But in the case of most surgeries, the patient will still survive if the surgeon is off by a millimeter or two. That is in the nature of the various limbs of the body.

However, when dealing with the brain and the heart, there is no margin of error. The slightest deviation can be catastrophic.

In our spiritual lives, as well, every הלכה is important, and we try to execute them as best as we can.





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But when it comes to שבת and מקדש, those are akin to the heart of brain of our connection to Hashem. There is no room for deviation there. These are the nerve centers or the hub for Man's relationship with his Creator.

In the Master's Home

The Slonimer Rebbe would say that on שבת קודש we must view ourselves as going into the home of הקב"ה. In modern terms, we would say that we are 'beamed up' to the celestial realms where we find ourselves living in the Royal Palace. We are preparing a table for the King in *His* Home! And that is precisely what the מקדש is. The שבת is a step into מקדש.

The secret of serenity

Rav Pincus adds that our behavior on שבת קודש must reflect the proximity to Hashem. And the way that one demonstrates that one is entering the palace of the King is via calm and serenity. Anger is called חרון אף. The nostrils are involved in anger and in הקפדה – harshness. One who avoids anger and is not demanding on שבת קודש creates a fragrance, the beautiful aroma of the קטורת.

How to enter Shabbos calmly

The goal is to enter שבת קודש as calmly as possible. And whatever enhances our ability to do so is a step of שבת קודש. For some,

Takeaway: I will try to see Mikdash where others might see a simple table.

beautiful music on Erev Shabbos sets the calm tone. And if there is something on the menu list that is creating stress, then take that extra Kugel off the list לכבוד שבת קודש. Shabbos will appreciate the calm more than the stress-filled extra dish.

The key is peace, שלום בית, maximizing the שלום when it comes to singing שלום עליכם. A Shabbos table filled with joy, unity and without distress is a mini-Mikdash right in our homes.

This is the table before Hashem

The בן איש חי writes that when a woman places the final touches on her preparation, typically when she places the cover on the הלוח, she should motion to the table and say the words contained in the (מא:כב) who said וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלַי זֶה הַשֻּׁלְחָן אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי ה' – *He spoke to me saying, 'this is the table before Hashem.'* (Indeed, these words often adorn the בימה upon which the Torah is read. The table is our בימה.)

The פתחי תשובה indicates that if the woman has not 'adorned' the table with these words then the man should do so after greeting the precious members of his household and the holy guests, the מלאכים. Reciting this פסוק helps set the mood and the mindset that we are now entering the dimension of מקדש. It is not just a table; it is the Table before Hashem.



The Spice of Shabbos

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E17)

Does Shabbos food really have no calories? The Shabbos menu is unlike any other.

The Shabbos food is ‘something else’

If you have heard the adage that Shabbos foods have no calories, it is because those foods are not physical (גשמי) in the same sense as are weekday foods; they are spiritual (רוחני) foods.

Echoes of the מן

The foods that are served and eaten on Shabbos evoke a sense of the מן, the spiritual food which sustained us for 40 years as we traveled through the desert. The מן had miraculous qualities, among them was that it was entirely absorbed into the person; nothing missing and nothing extra.

The flavor of Shabbos foods is also unique; they contain the spice called Shabbos.

Traditional Shabbos foods and their secrets

Each community or עדה has foods which they recognize as Shabbos foods. They have passed those down through the generations. [It is said that the Marranos could recognize one another by the foods they ate.]

The selection of foods is not random and often there are allusions, usually to the מן or to Shabbos, built into them. Some of these allusions are linguistic, numerical, or even mystical. Here are a few examples of the ‘secrets’ behind the foods we eat on Shabbos. We may not be aware of these secrets, but we

are, nevertheless, ‘communicating’ their message when we prepare or eat them.

Farfel on Friday night

There is an Ashkenazi tradition to serve egg-barley at the Friday night Seuda. The word Farfel alludes to the Yiddish word, ‘farfallen’ which implies that the work of the week is done, gone, and over. A premise of עונג שבת is that the tasks that we were engaged in during the week are left behind so that עונג can now take their place.

*The flavor of
Shabbos foods is
unique; they contain
the spice called
Shabbos.*

Lokshen

Again, in the Ashkenazi community there is a tradition to include egg noodles in the Shabbos meal. Some put Lokshen in the soup and/or they serve Lokshen Kugel. One speculation regarding the origins of this menu staple is the play on the word Lokshen as being like לא קשין – not hard or difficult. This alludes to the מאמר חז"ל that says קשין מזונותיו של אדם – one’s sustenance is ‘hard’ or ‘difficult.’ By putting Lokshen on the table we are affirming our faith in the One Who Sustains every life *without* difficulty – לא קשין. Thus, Lokshen became a סגולה or symbol of abundance and פרנסה.

Another hint in Lokshen is Jewish unity and peace. One of the features of the noodles is that when they are cooked or baked, they join and connect, thus serving as a reminder that we are



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meant to be connected in אחדות and that Shabbos makes no room for disunity among members of the family or community.

The אמרי פינחס even saw in the first three letters of the word לקשן the abbreviation of לכבוד שבת – שבת קודש – food being eaten in honor of שבת קודש.

Chickpeas

Many serve chickpeas with the soup. Anything round is a symbol of the cycle of life and a reminder that our lives on this world, even the life of משה רבנו who passed away on Shabbos, is temporary and fleeting. We must take advantage of the opportunity to connect with Hashem while we have the chance. It is also brought that the chickpeas are a סגולה that one will not pass from this world without having done תשובה. The food that we eat on Shabbos can help us keep an eye on the goal and focus of our lives.

Apples

Some are accustomed to eating apples on Friday night, either fresh or as compote. This alludes to the way that the אריז"ל refers to the שכינה הקדושה on Friday night as the תפוחין קדישין – the field of holy apples.

The פסקי תשובות discusses this custom of eating apples and mentions that Friday night is the 'time' of יצחק אבינו. When he is about to bestow the blessings of bounty on יעקב אבינו he smelled the fragrant aroma and declared רֵאָה גֵּיחַ בְּנֵי כְרִית – *behold the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of the field which Hashem has blessed* (בראשית כז:כו). Rashi comments that the orchard to which יצחק אבינו was referring to was the fragrant apple orchard. And with that

fragrance he bestowed the blessings of bounty and ויתן לך יעקב אבינו on פרנסה, the Brocha of פסקי תשובות, the Maggid of Kozhnitz said that eating apples on ליל שבת is a סגולה for bounty and פרנסה.

[I will add a personal note that when, as a family, we learned this פסקי תשובות at our Shabbos table, I was moved to declare that henceforth we would have apples at the meal. There were some skeptics at the table... But they came around quite dramatically when, a short while later, my boss called me and doubled my salary without my having requested a raise. The skeptics are now also careful to have apples on ליל שבת...]

Eggs and Onions

Many are accustomed to eating eggs and onions at the day meal. The custom is so widespread that there are תשובות written how to properly prepare them considering the rules of שבת. But, leaving the Halachic issues aside we note that onions, a rather plain and earthbound food can also be elevated by קדושת שבת. But there is more.

The word בצל – onion – can also be read as בצל – in the shadow, a frequent reference to one's proximity to Hashem.

As a historical note, we are taught that the מן bore any flavor that one desired. Any, that is, except for the flavors of onions and garlic which are harmful for nursing women. By 'adding' the onions to the שבת-מן we remind ourselves that everything else is a hint to the מן and all that it implies.



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Indeed, many are accustomed to eating Kugel, which has a burnt surface on top and on the bottom as a reminder that the מן was 'served' by Hashem with a layer of טל above and below.

Cholent or חמין

It is quite universal to eat a hot dish on Shabbos day. So much so, that one who refrains from eating חמין or Cholent on Shabbos is under suspicion of following the distortions of the צדוקים who interpreted the Posuk of **לֹא תִבְעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מְשַׁבְתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** (שמות לה:ג) – you shall not kindle a flame anywhere in your residence on Shabbos – literally. They rejected the חז"ל who taught us how we are meant to properly retain heat for cooking on Shabbos.

Rav Biderman points out that one who leaves a half-cooked Cholent on the Blech before Shabbos is adding to the 'Farfel' message. I am letting go of the reigns. I am not in charge. I defer to the רצון ה'.

Numbers add up to Shabbos

The Gematria of many of the Shabbos foods add up to seven, the number of Shabbos.

יין = 70 which is 7+0=7

חלה = 43 which is 4+3=7

דג = 7

בשר = 502 which is 5+2=7

נר = 250 which is 2+5=7

The foods of Shabbos bring us back to the יום השביעי – Shabbos.

לכבוד שבת קודש

We declare over and again that everything we are eating is לכבוד שבת קודש. One might ask if I am being honest. The answer is that even though we are surely enjoying the delicacies eaten on Shabbos, our נשמה יתירה is consuming the food we eat on Shabbos entirely לכבוד שבת קודש.

Takeaway: I will try to see the Shabbos food in a spiritual light.



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