



# Discover the Joy of Shabbos

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



## Shabbos, Scholars and Blessings

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

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

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

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

**Revisit Lecha Dodi, no matter how many times you have said it**

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

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

לקראת שבת לכו ונגלכה פי היא מקור הברכה.

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

***I may give to Shabbos but what do I get from it?***

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

***Shabbos is the source of blessing***

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

***Think of a fountain***

You can visualize this in your mind's eye if you follow the instruction of the AriZal who teaches that the fourth, fifth and sixth days of the previous week (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) are attendants on one side and the first second and third days of the week (Sunday,

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



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Monday and Tuesday) are attendants on the other side and the 'bride' is in the middle. The fountain of Shabbos fills the days that surround it with its blessing.

## ***The difference between something good and a blessing***

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

## ***Shabbos does not seem to produce***

You may claim that Shabbos has nothing of its own, it does not 'produce' anything; you are not even permitted to engage in any production on Shabbos. And you would be correct. Shabbos receives anything and everything that you bring to it and converts it from a spend to a blessing.

## ***The Talmid Chacham and Shabbos***

An analogy to this model can be found regarding our relationship with a Talmid Chacham – a Torah scholar. We, individually and as members of the community support the scholar. One might claim that the scholar does not 'produce' anything. We spend on him. And while it may seem like a good thing to spend on, it is a drain. And yet, when a person needs a blessing his first thought is to seek out the blessing of a Torah scholar!

How does that work? The answer is that the model is the same as Shabbos. Whatever you bring to the Torah scholar is turned into a source of blessing for you and for the world. The world is sustained by the Torah scholar. In the case of R' Chanina ben Dosa, says the Gemara, he was able to convert a mere dried fruit into the sustenance for the whole world. That is the relationship with Shabbos and that is the relationship with the Torah scholar.

## ***The scholar is called Shabbos!***

Would it then surprise you to discover that the Zohar<sup>1</sup> states that תלמיד חכם איקרי שבת – a Torah scholar is called 'Shabbos!'

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

<sup>1</sup> זוהר פרשת נשא