



## Anticipating and Remembering Shabbos

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

**לקראת שבת לנו ונלכה כי היא מקודם 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 Chazal<sup>1</sup> speak about preparing for our eternal lives they use the expression, **מי שטרח בערב שבת יכול בשבת**, – only one who toils (to prepare) on Erev Shabbos can eat on Shabbos. The same idea refers to both – **שבתוֹת** – the weekly Shabbos and the eternal one.

### שmeno and זיכר

The same **שmeno זיכר** refers to the fact that **לכה דודי** – the Mitzvah of Shabbos is introduced in the **עשרה הדברות** with two different words, **שmeno** and **זכר**. 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 **ערב שבת**.

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

**שמור את יום השבת לקדשו**

The word **שמור** relates the word **שmeno** as found in the **עשרה הדברות** to the expression<sup>2</sup> **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 fulfilled? May it be soon! That, says the **אור החיים**, 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**, 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**.

<sup>1</sup>עבודה זרה ג.

<sup>2</sup>בראשית לז:יא



It is said that the term **חפץ חיים** would reference events by the day in the week that it occurred and would name the specific **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 **שבת שופר**. 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 **הדברות** is to **עשרה השבת** – **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 קדוש**. The words **לכבוד שבת קדוש** 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 **זוכה-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 **לערבע** – 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 announce the arrival of Shabbos, and with it the **שכינה הקדושה**, into our homes.

***לקראת שבת***

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

לקראת שבת לנו 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.

*Takeaway: I will try to infuse my week with anticipation of שבת קדוש*