



Potential Pleasure on Shabbos

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E33)

Thinking about Shabbos should bring joy and pleasure on many levels.

Shabbos as a holy pursuit

The Gemara¹ relates how R' Shimon b. Yochai (רשב"י) and his son R' Elazar were forced to hide from government agents who were trying to kill them. They spent years in a cave, immersing themselves in Torah. When they were able to emerge from hiding, their spiritual level was such that they could not countenance anyone engaging in any mundane pursuits.

On Erev Shabbos, shortly after they emerged, they saw an elderly man [the expression *ההוא סבא* could be a reference to *אליהו הנביא*] running with something in his hand. They stopped him to ask him what he was transporting. He told them that he was bringing two fragrant *הדסים* home for Shabbos. They asked him why he was bringing *two* when one would have sufficed. He said that he also thought that one would be enough, but then he gave the matter more thought and concluded that he would bring one for *זכור* (the *מצוות עשה* of Shabbos) and one for *שמור* (the *מצוות לא תעשה*).

R' Shimon b. Yochai turned to his son and helped him put this 'worldly' pursuit into proper perspective. "Take a look," he said, "כמה הביבין – see how precious Mitzvos are

for Klal Yisroel." As the Novominsker Rebbe זצ"ל pointed out, they were impressed with his having thought about how to express his love for Shabbos. He loved both the requirements of *שבת* (the *מצוות עשה*) as well as the restrictions of *שבת* (the *מצוות לא תעשה*). When a Jew gives such importance to the *מצוות* then their 'mundane' activities are not mundane at all.

Every day and Shabbos

The Gemara² records how both Hillel and Shamai would 'relate' to the coming Shabbos. Shamai would designate the finest item for Shabbos (this fine animal will be for Shabbos) until he chanced upon an even better item. He would then use the first item during the week and designate the finer item for Shabbos. In this way, every purchase all week long, became a purchase *לכבוד שבת קודש*.

Hillel had a different approach. He was continually strengthening his *בטחון* that *הקב"ה* would provide him with fine food for Shabbos. His week was not filled with purchases; it was filled with intensifying his relationship and gratitude to *הקב"ה* through his *Bitachon*.

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Those of us who do not dwell on the high plains of Bitachon as did Hillel should conduct ourselves as Shamai did.

¹ שבת לג:

² ביצה טז.

³ אור"ח סימן ר"ג ועי' מ"ב ס"ק ב'.



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Hillel should conduct ourselves as Shamai did. In that way we will be keeping Shabbos in mind all week long, with every acquisition.

Save the best for Shabbos

The approach of Shamai does not need to be restricted to animals for slaughter. My wife recalls that seasonal fruit, such as watermelon (which could only be had during the summer in Denver in those years), would be first served on Shabbos. The same was true for special drinks.

A new shirt, tie, etc., even if it was bought to be worn during the week, was first worn on Shabbos. (Given that it was not a downgrade to the honor of Shabbos to wear it on שבת קודש.)

Have we lost Erev Shabbos?

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל pointed out that with Hashem's mercy Shabbos was saved in America. The laws changed and the terrible pressure to compromise שבת קדושה was relieved. But, he added, while Shabbos was saved, we lost Erev Shabbos. The loss of Erev Shabbos included the consciousness of the approaching Shabbos; an awareness that would not only slow down the approach to Shabbos on Friday, but which would inform the whole week.

Saving the best for Shabbos saved his life

My daughter-in-law, Mrs. Genendel Krohn described⁴ an incident during the final illness of Rav Aharon Kotler, זצ"ל. Rav Aharon זצ"ל suffered from a severe gastronomic condition which his physician, Dr. Porter, said, precluded his being able to ingest anything by mouth at all.

The students, noticing how parched R' Aharon's lips had become asked the attending physician if perhaps R' Aharon could be allowed to suck on a lollipop to provide some relief to his parched lips. The physician approved and the students ran down to buy a lollipop for their beloved Rebbe. But, when they brought it to R' Aharon he indicated that while it will surely give him great pleasure, it is now Friday afternoon, ערב שבת קודש. He indicated that he would rather defer the pleasure until שבת קודש.

The delay in enjoying the lollipop on Erev Shabbos was enough time for them to learn from Dr. Porter that authorizing the lollipop was a terrible mistake. Had R' Aharon indulged as most people would have under those sad circumstances, it would have cost him his life. The additional time that R' Aharon was able to spend with his Rebetzin and Talmidim was owing to the honor that he gave to Shabbos by postponing his pleasure until שבת קודש.

Takeaway: I will try to keep in mind to save the best for שבת קודש

⁴ Sparks of Majesty p. 209