

THE AREM EDITION

שבת קודש מילתא חדתא

SHABBOS KODESH

Milta Chadta

Thoughts, insights and discussions on the profundity
of Shabbos, collected from the teachings of
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THE GIFT OF SHABBOS

From the Treasure Chamber of the King

וַאֲמַתָּה דִּבֶּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אַךְ אֶת שַׁבָּתִתִּי
תִּשְׁמְרוּ כִּי אוֹת הִיא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם
לְדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי ה' מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם. אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמַעַן, מִתְּנָה טוֹבָה יֵשׁ לִי בְּבֵית גִּנּוּזֵי
וְשַׁבָּת שְׁמָהּ, וְאֲנִי מִבְקֵשׁ לְתִנָּה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, לָךְ
וְהוֹדִיעָם.

“You shall speak to Bnei Yisrael and say:
‘Keep My Shabbosos, for it is a sign between
Me and you for your generations, so that
you may know that I, Hashem, am the
One Who sanctifies you” (Shemos 31:13).
Our Sages taught: Hashem said to Moshe,
“I have a precious gift in My treasure
chamber, and its name is Shabbos. I wish
to give it to Yisrael. Go and inform them”
(Shabbos 10a).

The Light from Above

What is the nature of this great gift of Shabbos, which Hashem granted to Bnei Yisrael? The *sefarim hakedoshim* describe Shabbos as a brilliant, holy

light that shines down from Heaven once a week, to illuminate our hearts and minds to such an extent that even the unlearned *am ha'aretz* is scared to lie on Shabbos, since "the awe of Shabbos is upon him."¹ This light brings with it a spirit of holiness and vibrancy, granting every Jew a taste of the World to Come, which is a world of perfect peace and pleasure.² It is a precious gift from the treasure chamber of the King.³

Shabbos is called a sign between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. The *Ohr Hachaim* (*Shemos*) explains that the peace and pleasure that a Jew experiences on Shabbos is a sign of the hidden reward that awaits him in the World to Come, a reward beyond our ability to fathom. Only the *neshamah yeseirah*, which we receive on Shabbos, can appreciate the magnitude of this reward.

A Gift Given to No One Else

Moshe Rabbeinu was told to inform Bnei Yisrael about the great gift of Shabbos that Hashem intended to give us. Hashem wants us to appreciate the value of this gift, which is beyond comparison to all the treasures of the world.⁴



1 Talmud Yerushalmi, *Demai* 4:1.

2 *Mechilta* (*Ki Sisa*, *Shabbasa* 1): "I, Hashem, am the One Who sanctifies you' – I sanctify you in the World to Come, with a holiness similar to that of Shabbos in this world. From here we learn that Shabbos is akin to the holiness of the World to Come. So, too, it is written, 'Mizmor, a song of the Shabbos day,' for the day that will be entirely Shabbos forever."

3 *Ohev Yisrael* (*Ki Sisa*).

4 My grandfather, the Yisa Berachah *zt"l*, wrote in his piyut *Yechidah Yafah Malkesa*: "Shabbos sanctified, Shabbos of peace; given to a nation pure; a gift better than diamonds; more precious than any jewel."

The *Yismach Yisrael* (*Toldos*) explained the stanza from *Yedid Nefesh*: "Your friendship will be sweeter to my soul than honey or any pleasing taste," as follows: "One who merits to taste the delight, the sweetness, and the dearness of closeness to Hashem and His mitzvos will find it more pleasurable than honey or any pleasing taste. All worldly enjoyments amount to nothing in comparison. This is the essence of *oneg Shabbos*: to merit the sweetness and closeness of Hashem's light."

Only if we recognize the importance of Shabbos, will we make sure to take full advantage of it, and not let a single moment of Shabbos go to waste. Seforno comments on the *pasuk*, “See that Hashem has given you Shabbos” (*Shemos* 16:29), explaining, “Recognize that Shabbos is not just a commandment. It is a gift that was given to no one else.”⁵

The most precious treasures of all are hidden out of sight. So too, Shabbos was hidden in Hashem’s treasure chamber, which leads us to understand what a truly precious treasure it is, and what a great honor it is for us to have received it.

Do Not Underestimate Its Value

A poor person once came to Rebbe Shmelke of Nikolsburg⁶ to ask for charity, but Rebbe Shmelke had nothing to give him, since he had already given away all his money. He looked through his house for something to give the poor man, until he found a valuable ring. When his wife noticed that the ring was missing, she realized that he must have given it to charity. “How could you have given away such a valuable ring?” she asked him.

When Rebbe Shmelke realized how valuable the ring was, he rushed out of the house and chased after the poor person. The poor person, who thought that Rebbe Shmelke had regretted the gift, started to run as fast as he could, but Rebbe Shmelke chased after him until he was within range to call out and say, “The ring I gave you is worth at least three hundred rubles! Don’t sell it for any less!”



5 Likewise, in our Shabbos prayers we say: “You did not give it [the Shabbos] to the nations... to the uncircumcised.” It is a special gift for Bnei Yisrael, as is written, “Bnei Yisrael shall observe the Shabbos, to make the Shabbos for their generations” (*Shemos* 31:16). The Midrash (*Devarim Rabbah* 1:21) compares this to a king and queen who sit side by side, and a stranger then dares to sit between them. Would he not be liable for death for this affront? Likewise, Shabbos is a special bond between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. “Between Me and Bnei Yisrael, it is a sign forever.” Therefore, any gentile who intrudes upon this sign, without having first accepted the covenant of *bris milah*, is liable for death.

6 Some attribute this story to Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev.

Gedolei Yisrael used this story as a parable. Hashem told Moshe to inform Bnei Yisrael about the precious gift of Shabbos. But at that point, they already knew about Shabbos, since they had been given the mitzvah of Shabbos when they camped at Marah, even before Kabbalas HaTorah. Why was it necessary for Moshe to inform them again?

Rather, the message that Moshe was sent to give them was not that they must observe Shabbos. They already knew that. The message was that Shabbos is far more valuable than they had imagined. Moshe was sent to tell them that it is a precious treasure from the treasure chamber of the King.

In order to receive the full advantages of Shabbos, one must appreciate its profundity. The more a person delves into this recognition, the more he can be uplifted by the holiness of Shabbos.

This is what Hashem wanted Moshe to tell Bnei Yisrael. Shabbos is something that is precious even in the eyes of Hashem, Who stored it in His treasure chamber until the time came to give it to Bnei Yisrael. Do not exchange it for anything less than its worth. Do not waste its precious minutes on idle conversations, or indulging in excessive food and drink. It is something far too grand to waste on trivial matters that do not advance us in our avodas Hashem.⁷



7 *Arvei Nachal (Beha'aloscha, Drush 2)*: "When Shabbos arrives... I see people eat, drink, sleep, and then go out strolling and chatting about foolish matters. My brothers, my people! Was this the purpose for which Hashem created His world?"

"Picture a wise king who builds a magnificent palace for a single guest. Knowing the guest will have many needs, he surrounds the palace with thousands of splendid chambers, each staffed with attendants - bakers and butlers, musicians and artisans of every delight, physicians and apothecaries. When all is ready, the king's ministers come eagerly to behold the man for whom the king has done so much. To their astonishment, the king has lifted a pauper from the refuse heap, brought him into the palace with great honor, and placed all those chambers and servants under his hand. They watch closely to see how he will honor or bring benefit to the king, but he does nothing. He only eats and drinks and indulges in the pleasures provided for him. One day they hear him murmuring. Hoping to catch words of praise for the king, they draw near, only to hear him complain: 'Today is market day. Had I remained in the refuse heap, I could have gone to market and begged for some coins! Here in this palace, I can't even get a single penny. What has the king done to me?' Could there be anything more shameful?"

A Time to Grow

In order to receive the full holiness of Shabbos, we must recognize its value and understand what a precious gift it truly is. This recognition changes our entire perspective. It allows us to reach a deeper and more meaningful sense of *dveikus* with its holiness. We become vessels capable of receiving the spiritual and material blessings that descend on Shabbos.

The more we appreciate the gift of Shabbos, the more we will utilize this precious time to grow in Torah, emunah, and the joyous fulfillment of mitzvos. In this way, we can receive, in bountiful measure, all that Shabbos has to offer. By observing Shabbos properly, and by cherishing it in our hearts, we can be transformed into loftier and more noble beings. We can inherit a world of blessing that will accompany us throughout the week.⁸



“Understand the parable. The King of kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, created myriads of worlds with their vast hosts, all so that this small world could come into being; and within it, countless creatures, great and small, all for the sake of man. As our Sages teach, ‘They were all created to serve me’ (*Kiddushin* 82b). And all of mankind was created for Bnei Yisrael, as Chazal taught, ‘*Bereishis* – for Yisrael, who are called *Reishis*’ (Rashi, *Bereishis* 1:1) ... The angels, seeing all this, wondered how it could be. ‘What is man that You should remember him?’ they asked (*Tehillim* 8:5). They watch the deeds of Bnei Yisrael to behold the honor paid to the King of Glory. Fortunate is he who brings honor to Hashem, for that is the purpose of creation. But when people stray from His ways, the angels see that they bring Him no honor. Each day, when they see lips moving in prayer, they incline their ears (see *Bereishis Rabbah* 65:21 on *Yechezkel* 1:24), hoping to hear words of awe and reverence; instead, they sometimes hear words that profane His honor, His Name spoken without fear or awe. And when Shabbos comes, this priceless treasure, a taste of Olam Haba, during which a person who rest from his labors and is attentive to his ways, being careful not to speak idle talk and trivialities, such a person can taste Olam Haba even during his life, and acquire for himself Olam Haba. But instead, people complain that had it not been for Shabbos, they could have made a few more coins. Woe to this disgrace!”

- 8 The Gemara (*Beitzah* 16a) comments on the words, “*Shabbos vayinafash* – when Shabbos is over, *vay!*, the extra *nefesh* we receive on Shabbos is lost.” On Erev Shabbos, Hashem grants a person a *neshamah yeseirah*, and at the close of Shabbos that *neshamah yeseirah* is taken from him. Why does the verse only bemoan the

Every Moment Brings a New Mitzvah

The Reward for Restraint

What is so precious about Shabbos? Why is it any greater than other mitzvos? Most simply, Shabbos is special because it envelops a person throughout the entire day, guiding everything he does. On every moment of Shabbos, in everything we do, we are faced with the question of, “Is this permitted on Shabbos?” Again and again, we overcome our yetzer hara and refrain from our normal weekday activities, conducting ourselves purely in accordance with the Torah.

Chazal tell us that if a person sits and refrains from sin, he is rewarded as if he had fulfilled a mitzvah (*Kiddushin* 39b). Obviously, this refers to a situation in which a person was confronted with an option to sin but chose not to. On Shabbos, every single moment confronts us with precisely such an option. Everywhere we turn, we make a decision not to act as we normally do during the week, but to conduct ourselves according to the holiness of Shabbos. Thus, each moment of Shabbos brings us another mitzvah.

The *Ohr Hachaim* thus explains the *pasuk*, “Bnei Yisrael shall keep the Shabbos, to observe (*la’asos*) the Shabbos throughout their generation” (*Shabbos* 31:16). The word *la’asos* implies doing something active, whereas



departure of the *neshamah yeseirah*, but there is no verse stressing the joy one feels upon its arrival?

Furthermore, this *pasuk* is read during Maariv on Friday, night, following Hashkiveinu. Here too we must ask, why make note of the departure of this special *nefesh* immediately when Shabbos begins? Why not make note of it at the end of Shabbos, when we have reason to bemoan its departure?

The Baal Shem Tov explained that precisely because such a priceless gift is placed in man’s hands, he must be reminded to cherish it. Therefore, immediately upon its arrival, we remind ourselves that it is just a temporary gift. Tomorrow at nightfall it will ascend back to Heaven. This reminder inspires a person to treasure the extra soul while it rests within him, and use it to deepen his love, joy, and fervor in the observance of Shabbos. We must not allow a moment of Shabbos, when the precious *neshamah yeseirah* is with us, to go to waste.