



From the desk of
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1

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

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TORAT

Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei

HAMELECH

Done for You

“Six days, work shall be done for you, and on the seventh day...”

Why does the Torah say, “Work shall be done for you,” instead of saying, “You should work”?

The Torah is giving us advice how to refrain from working on Shabbat. For many people, it is not so easy. They view it as a day of potential income. Even if they decide not to work on Shabbat, still, to close early on Friday is also a challenge.

So the Torah tells us to see things as they really are. If you think that all week, it is your actions which bring you success, then refraining from working on Shabbat may prove difficult. But if you realize that all week, your income is decided and delivered from On High – it is Hashem's doing and not yours – then you will have a much easier time not working on Shabbat.

That is why the Torah says “*tei'aseh*” and not “*ta'aseh*.” Realize that your work is always being done for you and it is not your doing.

Making Shabbat

It's one thing to be ready for Shabbat on time. It's even better to be ready for Shabbat *early*. The Torah talks about “*la'asot et haShabbat*” – “to make Shabbat”. How can we make Shabbat?!

Doesn't Shabbat come every weekend, whether we like it or not?

Certainly Shabbat comes. But there are those who wait for Shabbat to come and there are those who go out to greet it and usher it in. People who are ready for Shabbat early and manage to light the candles and refrain from *melacha* a bit before the designated time, of them it can be said that they are *making* Shabbat! (Ohr HaChaim Shemot 31:16). They actually took part of the mundane workweek and transformed it into the holy Shabbat! That is a feat worthy of praise!

Our Sages say that one who enjoys himself on Shabbat will merit a portion without constrictions. Someone who adds on to the Shabbat day certainly seems to enjoy Shabbat, so since he extended the Shabbat beyond its natural boundaries, he deserves to receive an expanded portion.

Alternatively, we can explain that as Shabbat enters, some people are still preoccupied with all of their business-oriented thoughts. Some people cannot get their minds off of their jobs. But we are supposed to put all of those weekday thoughts aside and focus on Shabbat. Someone who is able to put his workweek away, also in his thoughts, and enjoy Shabbat, has put a boundary



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2

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on the workweek. As such, he deserves unbounded reward.

Guard and Gain

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu, "I have a special gift in My treasury and I wish to give it to My children. Go tell Yisroel." (Beitza 16).

Indeed, Shabbat is a great gift. There's nothing to do. Just be at home with the family. No phones, no cars, no work, no distractions. Just sit around the table, eat delicious food, wear beautiful clothing, sing melodious hymns, share divrei Torah and inspirational stories.

Those who tried to get rich, ignoring Shabbat protocol, only lost out.

We all know about Yosef Mokir Shabbat who honored the Shabbat and thereby got rich. His gentile neighbor had a horrifying dream – that all of his assets would go to Yosef the Jew. Terrified, he sold everything and bought a precious gem, sewed it to his hat and did not let it leave his head. Until one day, while walking on a bridge, a wind blew the hat into the water where a fish swallowed the gem.

The fisherman pulled out a hefty fish, so large that no one wanted to buy it. They were directed to Yosef's house, because he was known to spend money on Shabbat delicacies. Indeed, he bought the big fish, sliced it open and discovered the gem.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba related: I was hosted by a wealthy man in Ludkia. His servants brought before him a golden table, which took 16 men to carry. It had 16 silver chains hanging from it. Upon it were all types of food and drink... I asked him how he had merited this. He responded, "I was a butcher. When I saw a nice animal, I would designate it for Shabbat."

4,000 Rubles

The Chofetz Chaim once came to the city of Chernikov. He heard that one of the Jewish residents owned a factory which employed Jewish workers and had them work on Shabbat. The Chofetz Chaim tried to convince the man to close the factory on Shabbat. But the owner said, "Every Shabbat, I earn 4,000 ruble."

The Chofetz Chaim said, "And with chillul Shabbat you stand to lose the whole factory."

Shortly thereafter, the Bolsheviks invaded Russia and the factory owner escaped with his life, but no factory.

A Handful of Blessing

In the city of the Chofetz Chaim, there was a man who would close his shop late on Friday and run to open it on Motzai Shabbat. The Chofetz Chaim told him the following parable.



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An ignorant villager brought sacks of wheat to sell. For each sack he would unload, the buyer placed one kopek in his hat, planning on paying five ruble for each kopek. (There are 100 kopeks in a ruble.) As they were unloading the final few sacks from the wagon, the money-hungry ignoramus seized the opportunity to scoop up a handful of kopeks without the buyer noticing.

When they counted the kopeks, they came out to a much smaller number than anticipated. The buyer paid his discount price and the thief scratched his head, not understanding how he had cheated himself.

So too, says the Chofetz Chaim, Shabbat is the source of all blessing, including financial prosperity. One who runs in late to Shabbat and runs away early is snipping away at his own blessings. How utterly foolish!

Closing Time

There was once a man who sold expensive materials. Every Friday he would close at midday so that he would have enough time to get ready for Shabbat.

One Friday morning, in walked a well-dressed customer. He was prepared to place a major order. He moved around the shop, measuring different amounts of varying materials. He took his time and seemed to have all day. At midday,

the merchant informed him that he had to close for the day. The client said that if you stop me now, I will not purchase anything from your store; I will go elsewhere.

The merchant did not care. He said, "I have to close, now."

The client walked out, buying nothing and Eliyahu Hanavi came and told the merchant, "Since you closed on time for Shabbat, you will have a son who will light up the world with his Torah."

That son was Rashi.

Shabbat Can Heal

Rabbi Simcha Kaplan of Safed related the following incident. When he had been a young Yeshiva *bochur* in Yeshivat Mir abroad, he stayed with a family who had one son.

One Friday morning, the husband was about to embark on a short journey and his wife implored, "Come back on time for Shabbat; come home early."

After Mincha, Reb Simcha returned to his lodgings and saw the wife standing at the window agitated. She kept on saying, "It's almost Shabbat, It's almost Shabbat."

Really, there were several hours left until Shabbat. Reb Simcha asked her why she was concerned. She related: For years, we had no



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4

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Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

children. Finally, Hashem gave us a son, but he was not growing properly. The local physician diagnosed a heart disease and sent them to a professor in Vilna.

The professor told them that the boy's days were numbered and there is nothing to be done.

On the way home, they took a detour to Radin to visit the Chofetz Chaim. The Chofetz Chaim was already aged. He was not taking visitors. But the Chofetz Chaim's grandson-in-law recognized the husband from Yeshivat Mir and somehow got them in.

They told their story. The Chofetz Chaim listened and then said, "What can I do for you?"

The woman burst out into tears. The grandson-in-law said, "This is their only child."

The Chofetz Chaim said, "My daughter, take in Shabbat early."

She asked, "When is early?"

"Be all ready at midday on Friday," the Chofetz Chaim responded.

The woman accepted this upon herself and already on the way home, the boy's health seemed to be improving. He developed an appetite. He soon seemed healthy as can be.

They revisited the town doctor, who couldn't believe his eyes. He sent them once again to a follow-up visit to Vilna. The professor there said,

"This is not the same child as the one I examined before."

They said, "This is our one and only."

"What did you do for him?" he asked.

"What did Shabbat do for him?" they answered.

"And that is why I wait anxiously for my husband to return," said the woman. "My son's life depends on it."

Complete Coverage

Mr. Wahigi lived in Yafo. He was in the building business. His biggest expense was cement which was imported from abroad. One Friday in the early summer, he received cement barrels and left them uncovered at the building site, as it rarely rains in Israel in the summer.

But then it got cloudy and overcast. His workers contacted him and suggested going to the worksite to cover the barrels, for if cement powder mixes with water, that's the end of it – you're stuck with heavy barrels of solid cement which cannot be used for building.

Mr. Wahigi saw that going to the site would involve chillul Shabbat, and that was out of the question. So he ignored his workers' pleas and spent an uplifting Shabbat at home. On Friday night it poured, but Mr. Wahigi was happy to be keeping Shabbat at any cost.



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5

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After Shabbat, he went to the building site. Lo and behold, all of his barrels were covered. How? It was discovered that the Solel-Boneh company had cement barrels in a nearby site. As the rain threatened to come, Solel-Boneh sent men to cover their barrels. As it was dark outside, the workers mistakenly covered Mr. Wahigi's barrels.

Break-in

Here's another one, more recent.

Two brothers owned a jewelry store. Late one Friday afternoon, they received a frantic phone call from their burglar detection agency that there had been a break-in. They were urged to get there as fast as possible. They noticed that doing so would involve *Chillul Shabbat* so they told the agency that they would not get there until after Shabbat.

The brothers proceeded to conduct a beautiful Shabbat with singing and delicacies as usual.

After Shabbat, they went to the store and found that only the jewelry on display had been taken. The safe was untouched. The police came and told them that the burglars had been caught. How?

After the break-in, the police explained, the burglars knew that the alarm would alert the owners. They hid nearby, waiting for you to come, planning on threatening you and harassing

you until you would reveal the code of the safe, and then they would finish you off.

Only because you did not show up at all last night, were we able to catch them and your lives were saved.

It became evident that the merit of keeping Shabbat had saved their lives. As we say in the *zemirot*, "As I guard the Shabbat, Hashem protects me."

You Can Do It, Too

One of the most challenging days of the week in the home is Friday. But with a little forethought and teamwork, Shabbat preparations can become a thrill and excitement, instead of unwanted pressure and tension.

Being ready for Shabbat on time and even early brings so much peace and serenity into the home. Rabbi Yosi would pray to be amongst those who bring in Shabbat early. It is a challenge, yet very rewarding and uplifting.

The greatest of our leaders made sure to be personally involved in Shabbat preparations in the home and kitchen. It was not beneath their dignity. On the contrary, it was an honor and privilege to take an active role in Shabbat preparations.

Fondly,

Mordechai Malka