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נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Parashat Vayakhel

The Spiritual Benefits of Accepting Shabbat Early

Our *parasha* states (35:2), "For six days you shall work [*tei'aseh melacha*], and the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest [*Shabbat Shabbaton*] for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death."

In *Parashat Ki Tisa* (31:16) it states, "And the Jewish Nation shall observe the Shabbat, to make the Shabbat [*la'asot et ha'Shabbat*] an eternal covenant for their generations." In *Parashat Va'etchanan* (5:12) it states, "Safeguard the Shabbat day to sanctify it, as Hashem, your G-d, has commanded you. (14) And the seventh day is Shabbat to Hashem, your G-d, you shall not do any work – you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, your ox, your donkey, and all of your animals, and your convert that is in your gates; so that your slave and maidservant rest like you. (15) And remember that you were a slave in the Land of Egypt, and Hashem, your G-d, took you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore Hashem, your G-d, has commanded you make the Shabbat day [*la'asot et ha'Shabbat*]."

Questions

1 – Why does the first *pasuk* mentioned above state *tei'aseh* with a *tzeirei* beneath the *tav* and not *ta'aseh*, with a *patach* or a *kamatz*? 2 – Furthermore, why does the Torah need to mention the work that man performs during the six days of the week? The main goal of the Torah here is to command Shabbat observance! 3 – Why does the Torah use a double expression of *Shabbat Shabbaton*? 4- In *Parashat Ki Tisa*, the *Ohr HaChayim* asks why the Torah states *la'asot et ha'Shabbat*, which means "to **make** the Shabbat." Does the Jewish Nation make the Shabbat? Only the Festivals are dependent upon the *Beit Din's* sanctification of the new month, however, Shabbat has already been sanctified by Hashem. The same question can be asked on the *pasuk* from *Parashat Va'etchanan*. 5 – In *Masechet Shabbat* (118a) our Sages teach, "Said Rebbi Yochanan in the name of Rebbi Yosi: All those who delight in the Shabbat are given an inheritance without boundaries. This is as the *pasuk* states, 'Then you will delight in Hashem, and I will mount you astride the heights of the world; I will provide you with the inheritance of your Forefather Yaakov ...' Not like Avraham, about whom it states, 'Arise and walk about the Land through its length [and breadth, for to you I will give it] ...' And not like Yitzchak, about whom it is written, "For to you and your descendants I will give all of these lands.' Rather, it is like Yaakov, about whom it is written, 'You shall spread out westward, eastward, northward, and southward.'" **Why does one who delights in the Shabbat receive an inheritance without boundaries? How is this reward connected to delighting in Shabbat?**

How People Customarily Receive Shabbat

One of the difficult trials man faces with Shabbat observance is related to his livelihood. Since man attributes his success in business to his own efforts, he therefore utilizes each second to work as much as he can. Therefore, Friday is viewed as a day with much potential for profit, as there are a multitude of customers who wish to purchase items in honor of the Shabbat. Even though this is ultimately at the expense of his Shabbat observance, he nevertheless permits it for the sake of earning a livelihood. Additionally, there are many who return home shortly before Shabbat, and they barely manage to bathe and prepare for Shabbat. Let us not even mention receiving Shabbat early, for that is totally impossible. This does not only apply to those who are delayed because of their livelihood. Rather, it also applies to those who do not understand the significance of bringing in Shabbat early and the spiritual benefits accrued by doing so. They therefore prepare for Shabbat lazily, finishing close to sunset. They do so, because there is no fire burning inside of them which hastens them to receive the Shabbat. This occurs not only in the winter, when the day is short. Then maybe they could explain that their actions are due to the fact that there is simply not an abundance of time. However, this occurs even in the summer, when there is at least two hours to prepare for Shabbat. The reason this happens is due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the specialness, spiritual benefit, and blessing that the Shabbat brings. It also stems from a lack of faith and trust in Hashem, as we will soon explain.



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The *Manna* Taught that Man's Livelihood is Predestined

Let us begin by stating that the first sin of the Jews in the desert was caused by worrying about their sustenance and livelihood. This is what motivated them to go out and gather *manna* on Shabbat. However, Moshe Rabbeinu told them that by gathering the *manna*, Hashem would prove to them that man's livelihood is fixed by Hashem. Gathering more would be fruitless, and gathering less would not result in a lack of livelihood. Ultimately, each Jew would collect an *omer's* worth of *manna* - no more and no less, as explicitly stated in the Torah. This was proof that Hashem is the one who allots man his livelihood, and that man will not benefit by desecrating the Shabbat.

Why the Torah States *Tei'aseh*

One who has faith and trusts in Hashem knows that when Shabbat comes, he must stop working as if his task has been completed. This is as it states in the beginning of our *parasha* (35:1), "And Moshe gathered the entire congregation of Israel and said to them, 'These are the things that Hashem has commanded to do. (2) For six days you shall work [*tei'aseh melacha*], and the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest [*Shabbat Shabbaton*] for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death."

The commentators have asked why the *pasuk* states *tei'aseh* with a *tzeirei* beneath the *tav*, and not *ta'aseh*. *Tei'aseh* implies that the six days of work are performed on their own, as opposed to *ta'aseh* which implies that **man** is doing the work. Why, then, does the Torah state *tei'aseh*? However, according to what was stated above, we can now understand. The Torah is teaching us that man must reach a level of faith where he understands that, in essence, his work is being performed by Hashem. He must realize that all of his actions are merely *hishtadlut*, effort, which do not determine his earnings. This is what was learned from the *manna*, and only by believing it can one observe Shabbat properly. This is as Rashi, quoting the *Mechilta*, states (*Shemot* 20:9), "'And you should do all of your work.' When Shabbat arrives, you should view it as if all of your work is done, so that you will not think about work."

One Who Adds Sanctity to the Weekday "Makes" Shabbat

With this, we can understand why the Torah uses the expression *la'asot et ha'Shabbat*, "to make Shabbat." We cited the *Ohr HaChayim* who asks that man does not **make** Shabbat; it is a day sanctified by Hashem. In one of his explanations, the *Ohr HaChayim* (*Shemot* 31:16) writes that our Sages state (*Yoma* 81) that one is obligated to add sanctity to the weekday and abstain from work before Shabbat arrives. He must prepare himself for the holiness of Shabbat and go out like a *chatan* goes out to greet the *kallah*. He should sit and await the arrival of Shabbat and the moment that he will be able to fulfill the actions that are incumbent upon him. An additional interpretation of *la'asot et ha'Shabbat* is that by accepting Shabbat earlier, Hashem agrees to call the day "Shabbat" from the time that he accepted it. In that sense, this individual has actually "made" Shabbat. This is done by the Jewish Nation sanctifying Friday with the holiness of Shabbat, as well as adding its holiness onto Sunday as well. By doing so, the Jewish Nation makes the weekday into Shabbat.

According to this, I believe we can explain the double expression of *Shabbat Shabbaton*. *Shabbat* represents the Shabbat that **Hashem** made, and *Shabbaton* refers to the Shabbat that **man** makes by accepting Shabbat earlier. By doing so, he turns the mundane into something holy. It is therefore called *Shabbaton*, which connotes a "smaller Shabbat," because the Shabbat that he adds on is smaller in comparison to the actual Shabbat day.

Those Who Err in Delaying the Acceptance of Shabbat and Rush to Conclude it

The Chafetz Chayim would say, "How foolish are those individuals lacking in faith, who delay accepting Shabbat and rush to conclude it. The six days of the week draw sustenance from the curse of 'By the sweat of your brow, you will eat bread.' Only Shabbat is blessed with the blessing of Hashem. Those who delay in concluding Shabbat, receive the blessing for a longer duration. Those, however, who tarry in accepting Shabbat, receive its blessing later. By rushing to finish it, they rush from blessing to a curse."

When One Adds on to Shabbat, it Has No Boundaries



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Maran the Ben Ish Chai answers why one who delights in the Shabbat merits an inheritance without boundaries. In his *sefer Ben Yehoyada (Shabbat 118a)* he writes that this is *midda kenegged midda*, measure for measure. Shabbat, he explains, has boundaries that were set by Hashem. They are the first hour of the night, until the end of the twelfth hour of the day. However, the Jews, by adding on to Shabbat through accepting it earlier and concluding it later, make it like something which has no boundaries; for that which he adds is considered Shabbat in the fullest sense. However, what he adds does not have a set amount of time; sometimes it is shorter and sometimes longer. This is the intention of our Sages that all those who delight in the Shabbat by adding on to its beginning and end, making it a day which has no specific boundaries, merits an inheritance without boundaries, measure for measure.

Making Boundaries For One's Thoughts

We can furthermore explain our Sages' words that one who observes Shabbat merits an inheritance without boundaries (*meitzarim*). The nature of man is that even after Shabbat arrives and he is forced to abstain from work, nevertheless, he has difficulty controlling his thoughts. He continues to plan what he will do even after Shabbat. However, one who believes that everything is dependent on Hashem and not on his own efforts, overcomes these thoughts and views it as if all of his work is finished. He therefore does not need to continue thinking about his work. Resultantly, he has created a boundary – not only for his deeds – but even for his thoughts. Since he has made boundaries for the honor of Shabbat, he receives a reward without any boundaries. Alternatively, there are those who explain that *meitzarim* (boundaries) alludes to troubles and worries that distress (*meitzar*) him. By removing these thoughts from his heart, Hashem rids him of anything that distresses or worries him.

Story About Rashi's Father

Well known is the story about why Rashi's father merited a son who would illuminate the world with his Torah. Rashi's father was a fabric merchant, and on Friday he was accustomed to closing his store at noon-time. On one occasion, his store was visited by a successful, gentile merchant. From early in the morning, he was already measuring and choosing large amounts of merchandise. This took hours, and as noon drew closer, Rashi's father told the merchant to hurry, because he would soon be obligated to close his store. However, the merchant ignored him, since he saw that there were still many hours left to the day. When noon arrived, he informed the gentile that he was closing the store, and that he would resume business on Sunday. The merchant did not agree and began to argue, but Rashi's father stood firm. The merchant said that if he would not finish the business today, he would leave all of the merchandise that he chose and nullify their deal. Despite the fact that the gentile had prepared to buy a large amount of fabric, which constituted most of the store, Rashi's father was determined to close, even if it meant that he would lose the deal – which he did. At that point, Eliyahu NaNavi appeared to him and told him that his deed caused a great stir in Heaven. He was therefore informing him that because of this deed, he would merit a son that would illuminate the world with his Torah. This was all in the merit of *emunah* and *kavod Shabbat*.

Words of Mussar

We have learned about the specialness and greatness of Shabbat. Shabbat is the source of blessing and success for all the days of the week. The amount of blessing and success one receives depends on the how much he honors Shabbat. He will repaid measure for measure, and will be blessed many times over. This is as the *Tanna* Rabbi Yosi said, "My portion should be amongst those who accept Shabbat early and conclude it late." Accepting Shabbat early and preparing for it earlier is a known *segula* to prevent every misfortune, Heaven forbid. By doing so, we will merit seeing salvations and wonders. *Amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
 Rav Mordechai Malka