



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

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

TORAT

Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei

HAMELECH

Shabbat Shalom

In these *parshiot* which delineate the instructions of the construction of the *mishkan*, we find reiterated the importance of *Shemirat Shabbat*. The Torah is teaching us that as special as it is to have a place for the *Shechinah* to reside amongst us, *Shemirat Shabbat* is even greater.

Unfortunately, many of our brethren are not aware of the beauty of *Shabbat*. They never experienced a true *Shabbat*. So they blatantly desecrate it. They view *Shemirat Shabbat* as a threat to their enjoyment of a day off. These people view the Torah as extremely restrictive.

Were they to become aware of how special *Shabbat* is, how it is a most unique gift which the King of the World took out of His Treasury and gave it to His Beloved Nation, Yisroel, they would certainly view it entirely differently. The Creator of the world and of all of mankind, He Alone knows what brings a person true pleasure and delight. He loves us more than anyone else. He gave us *Shabbat* so that we can enjoy a sample of other-worldly pleasures. Only someone who observes *Shabbat* can experience Paradise here on Earth.

There are many levels to this, most of which cannot be communicated in words. You have to do it to know it and to feel it. No one can describe it to you before you experience it yourself.

On a simple level, *Shabbat* brings the family together. Without *Shemirat Shabbat*, each one is lost in his own world. When they have a day off, each has his or her own interests and activities

which each wants to pursue. Their interests conflict and they get into each other's way. How does *Shabbat* look in a non-observant home? One is dressed in sport clothes, about to go to the gym; the other, to swim; the next, dressed in work clothes, finally he has some time to do some fix-it jobs around the house; yet another, still in pajamas, just waiting to sleep the day away, annoyed at his siblings' incessant banging and drilling. They don't sit down together for a meal. Each just grabs a snack, or quickly heats up something "to-go" in the microwave, and that's it.

And in a house with *Shemirat Shabbat*? The scene is diametrically different. Such a tranquility and harmony you can never imagine. Indescribable. If you didn't see it for yourself, you do not begin to know what we are talking about. Step into a Jewish home on *Shabbat* and you feel majesty. The floor is clean, everything is orderly, the table is covered in white and adorned with fine dishes. Everyone waits for Father to return home from the *Beit Knesset*. Songs are sung, welcoming the escorting angels and in praise of Mother for all her hard work throughout the week and especially in preparation for this special day. Everyone appreciates everyone else. The children are blessed, the *Kiddush* is recited, hands are washed, the special *challot* are cut and distributed.

The meal proceeds, course after course, as if you are at a royal banquet. Melodies are sung, with rhyming lyrics and stirring tunes, accenting the uniqueness of our nation and the awesome gift of *Shabbat*. All are dressed so elegantly, from the eldest down to the young ones.



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Stories are told of our pious leaders of this generation and of the past. Divrei Torah are discussed, imparting eternal lessons, appropriate to our daily lives.

Business matters are put on hold and we minimize discussion of troublesome and worrying issues. We put everything aside and jump into a different world; a world of truth and faith, a world of love and affection, a world of peace and tranquility, serenity and calm; a world in which we learn more and more about Hashem, and enjoy every moment of doing just that.

The food is delicious, the company is enjoyable, and there are no hangovers nor bitter aftertastes. On the contrary, the experience fuels us with encouragement and strength to return to our mundane lives, prepared to greet any challenge which may arise.

Nothing compares to an uplifting *Shabbat* in a homey atmosphere.

Segulah for Parnasah

Shemirat Shabbat and *Chillul Shabbat* are two total opposites. While *Shemirat Shabbat* brings with it all the blessings, *Hillul Shabbat* does just the opposite. How many people wanted to keep their stores open on *Shabbat*, hoping thereby to increase revenues, only to see major financial setbacks.

In the city of the Hafetz Hayim, one merchant was not so fast to close up shop on *Erev Shabbat*. Ironically, he was the first to open on *Motzai Shabbat*. The Hafetz Hayim saw in what direction this man was heading. So he went to give him some words of inspiration. He told him the

parable of the ignorant villager who would bring sacks of wheat to sell, once a week. So as not to lose track, for each sack which the villager would unload from the wagon, the buyer placed one small coin into the villager's inverted hat. The villager unloaded sack after sack, and the wholesaler placed coin after coin. As the wholesaler began arranging the sacks in his warehouse, the villager seized the opportunity to dig his hand into his hat and pocket a handful of coins, unnoticed. He thought he was getting himself a good deal, failing to understand that for each coin which the wholesaler would count, he would pay close to twenty times that amount, as it represented a full sack. At the end of the day, the villager could not comprehend why specifically on this occasion, the wholesaler ended up paying him so much less than usual.

The Hafetz Hayim concluded: The same is true of those who work on *Shabbat*. They think they are gaining but in reality they are losing manifold, in direct response to their desecration of *Shabbat*.

Heavenly

Moshe Rabbeinu went up to Heaven three times consecutively for 40 days each, totaling 120 days. That's 4 months! Everyone must have been very curious about what goes on up there. One of the very first things which Moshe spoke about upon his descent was *Shabbat*. He was telling them: Do you want to get a taste of Heaven? Keep *Shabbat* and you'll taste Heavenly delights.

It Gets Even Better

In Ketuvot 103a, we find Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi expressing his final requests prior to his departure



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from this world. He asked that *Shabbat* should be welcomed in the home in the same manner as when he was alive; with the candles in their place, the table set in the same manner, etc. Why? Because he came back to visit! Some say that he even continued to make *Kiddush* for his family! A neighbor once discovered his weekly visits and thereafter he ceased coming. He did not want people to start saying that he was more pious than *tzaddikim* of previous generations who did not merit to return home.

Now, where was Rebbi coming from each week? *Olam Haba!* Nonetheless, he wanted to come back to this world to experience *Shabbat* in this world! It seems that there is something about *Shabbat* in this world that even surpasses the sublime sensation of *Olam Haba*.

Something Fishy

We find that we are to eat fish on *Shabbat* (Siman 242). Why? One reason is that fish remind us of an essential lesson of *Shabbat*. What is that? Some large fish feed on smaller fish. They probably chase them down and then swallow them up. So we would have expected to open up a large fish and to see small fish in the same direction as the predator – head to head and tail to tail. How surprising is it to cut open a large fish and find inside smaller fish in the opposite direction: head to tail, and tail to head. How does this happen, time after time? What really happens? Indeed, the predator takes up the chase, but the fish it ends up swallowing are not the fish which it pursued. Rather they are other fish which the Master Planner already decided to

use to feed this fish today. So he set them head first to their destination: the large fish's belly!

This teaches the all-important lesson of *hishtadlut* vs. *hashgacha*. On the one hand, we are to work to earn a living. On the other hand, how much we earn and how we receive our needs are totally independent of our efforts! This is exactly what *Shabbat* is meant to teach us as well. When we abstain from forbidden labor on *Shabbat*, we show that we recognize that it is Hashem Who provides for us and it is not our efforts which bring us success.

A Matter of Factory

The Hafetz Hayim once came to the town of Chernikov and heard about a Jewish factory who employed Jewish workers and had them work on *Shabbat*. The Hafetz Hayim tried to bring this to a halt. He asked to speak to the owner. The owner said, "I earn 4,000 rubles a day. Do you want me to lose that much money every week?"

The Hafetz Hayim said, "If you stay open, you'll lose much more!"

The Hafetz Hayim explained himself. "When the Torah speaks about *Shabbat*," he said, "it first talks about working for six days. Why? To show you that only someone who keeps *Shabbat* will be successful in his endeavors of his six-day workweek. One who does not sanctify the seventh day will yield no income from his efforts."

The man just laughed and scoffed. But not for long. The Bolsheviks invaded Russia and shut down his factories by force. The owner himself barely escaped alive, without a penny to his



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name. He wrote a letter to the Hafetz Hayim confirming his remarks.

Cement-to-be

Let's now stress the positive. One who keeps *Shabbat* will see blessing.

There was a man who lived in Yafo and worked in construction. His biggest expense was cement which had to be imported from abroad. It arrived in powder form and had to be kept dry until just before it was to be used.

The man took on a big job to build twenty houses in a new community. To this end, he ordered a large amount of cement powder. The order arrived Friday morning in the beginning of the summer. Rain is uncommon in the summer in *Eretz Yisroel*, so the large barrels were left open.

Seemingly, out of nowhere, on Friday afternoon, the sky began to become cloudy. Heavy rainclouds threatened to release their goods which would render all the cement useless, a tremendous loss of money. Some of his workers said, "We had better go and cover the barrels."

The *Kablan* said, "No way. *Shabbat* is too close. We will be *Shomer Shabbat* and Hashem will do as He sees fit."

This was a tremendous act of strength. Indeed, on Friday night, there was a torrential downpour. As far as he knew, he suffered an unfathomable loss. Nonetheless, he maintained his composure and conducted *Seudot Shabbat* with a smile. He sang *zemirot*, learned *Chumash* with *Rashi* and said *Tehillim*, just like he did every *Shabbat*.

Only after *havdalah* did he begin to think about the building site. When he arrived there, he was

in for a big surprise. His barrels were totally covered. He checked his cement and found it to be perfectly dry. Did angels come to help him out?

It was discovered that a different construction agency had work to do at a nearby site. Fearing the impending downpour, they sent men on Friday night to cover their barrels. In the dark of night, the workers made a mistake and instead covered the barrels of the *Shomer Shabbat*. Thus, his cement was saved and theirs suffered the blow.

Now's the Time

Let us take to heart the value of *Shabbat*, the heart of our nation, and the heart of every happy family. Let us seize this opportunity, this oasis of time, a calm timeout from the frenzy of life's challenges. Observing *Shabbat* properly will only bring joy and gladness, harmony and unity. It will give us a delicious taste of eternal bliss. *Shabbat* is meant for our enjoyment. One who makes it his business to enjoy himself on *Shabbat* in a way that honors the *Shabbat* will receive unlimited goodness, and will see success in all of his endeavors. One who desecrates the *Shabbat* will pay dearly.

If we, as a nation, keep just two *Shabbatot* properly, the ultimate redemption will arrive promptly. Spread the word. We have a tremendous opportunity ahead of us. Let's get it right.

Shabbat Shalom U'mevorach,

Fondly,

Mordechai Malka