

Sefer Shemos

IN MEMORY OF R' SRULY MILLER A"H

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DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN

פרשת ויקהל - פקודי

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

The Shabbos Sanctuary

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Part I. Entering The Sanctuary

Everything Stops

After the nation had begun to build the Mishkan, when the first Shabbos arrived, Moshe Rabeinu made an announcement in the camp. And it was important enough that he didn't just call together the the nation's elders and ask them to relay the message to the people: וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - Moshe gathered together *all of the people of the Bnei Yisroel* (Vayakhel 35:1); men and women, boys and girls – everyone was called together to hear Moshe Rabeinu speak.

What did he say? It's in beginning of this week's sedrah: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֱלֹהֵם הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' - *And he said to them: "These are the matters that Hashem commanded you to do, שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶה וּבְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן לַה' - Six days work may be done, and the seventh day shall be for you a holiness of Shabbos Shabboson to Hashem* (Shemos 35:2).

It means that despite the fact that we're busy building the Mishkan, despite the fact that I've been saying, *V'asisa, V'asisa* – "You should make this for the Mishkan and you should make that for the Mishkan" – all those instructions are only for the six days of the workweek. *Yom rishon*, very good – build. *Yom sheini*, *yom shlishi* and so on, keep up the good work of building the Mishkan; but when it comes to the seventh day of the week, *Shabbos Shabboson*, everything must come to a halt.

Approaching the Sanctuary

At first glance that seems quite puzzling – we're busy now with the tremendous achievement of building a home where the presence of Hashem is going to reside! Shouldn't everything else recede into the background of such a noble undertaking? "No," says Hakodosh Boruch Hu. "The seventh day should be a day of rest, a day of abstaining from work. Don't worry about the Mishkan that you're building for Me – the Shabbos is a Mishkan itself." It means that every seventh day, as the sun goes down, the Am Yisroel enters into a Beis Hamikdash even more important than the Mishkan that was built in the Wilderness.

Now, imagine that we had a Beis Hamikdash today or that we were back in the ancient times

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when the Beis Hamikdash stood on the Har Habayis and let's say you were *zocheh* to come into the *azarah*. How would you enter into such a holy place? You wouldn't just waltz in – you would come in with great awe as if entering the palace of a mighty king.

That's one of the reasons the *Levi'im* were stationed as guards around its walls – to create that aura of holiness. When somebody tried to approach the Beis Hamikdash, the guards asked him, "Are you *tamei*? Did you go to the *mikveh*? Did you have *haza'ah* if you were a *tamei meis*?" Nobody could just step inside – you had to pass an interrogation before you could walk into the precincts of the Beis Hamikdash. And therefore, when someone approached the Har Habayis, he did it with the greatest trepidation.

A Holy Time

Now, when we enter Shabbos it's exactly the same. Hakodosh Boruch Hu declares that the twenty four hours of Shabbos is a Beis Hamikdash. Although it's not a sanctuary in space; you can't point at a specific spot – "Over there is the holy Shabbos" – but it's a sanctuary in time.

And it's not just a form of speech, a *drush*; we're actually entering a sanctuary. About the Shabbos we say, "*V'kidashto m'kol hazmanim* – those hours of Shabbos are more holy than any other time of the year, even more than *neilah* on Yom Kippur. That's a *chiddush* of the Torah that time also possesses *kedushah*.

We're used to the idea of separating between different types of objects and different types of people, but the Torah declares that when it comes to time too, some times are more *kadosh* than others. To the untrained eye it might appear like any other day – Shabbos has an evening and a morning and an afternoon just like Tuesday does – but actually there's a world of difference; the Shabbos is a Mikdash.

And therefore the first feeling when Shabbos comes is that you are entering a sanctuary. You need a certain frame of mind, a certain preparation of the thoughts, before you come into a time of holiness. You can't come into the Shabbos like you come into a Tuesday!

Shabbos Preparations

That's the great principle we call *hachanah*, preparation. You remember when Hakodosh Boruch Hu told Moshe that there's going to be Matan Torah, He said *וְהָיָה נִבְּוֹן לְבַקֵּר* – *Be prepared for that day* (Shemos 34:2). Now, did He have to tell him that? Didn't Moshe know he should keep the appointment? What, would Moshe be sleeping when the time came for Matan Torah? He'd be taking a walk in the park? Absolutely he'd be on the spot waiting there with the Am Yisroel.

But it means that when *kabalas haTorah* comes, it shouldn't be something that's sudden. In order to get the maximum benefit, or even any benefit, you must be prepared. You must be in a frame of mind for it; *הַכּוֹן לְקִרְאת לְאֵלֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל* – *Prepare yourselves to meet your G-d, O' Israel* (Amos 4:12).

That's why on Friday, long before twilight comes, the loyal housewife is already making very big *hachanos* – she's shopping and cooking and baking and cleaning – she's very busy. And the man of the house who is busy at the factory earning the money for all that, as soon as he can, as early as his boss lets, he's already out the door of the factory running to do the last minute errands. Even when he comes in the door of the house he's busy; at the very least he rushes to bathe and to change his clothing. And the children too – in the Jewish home all the children are helping out with the Shabbos preparations. We're all busy; all Jews are busy running on *erev Shabbos*.

The Important Ingredient

Only that we're so busy running that we forget the most important ingredient. When the lady of the house is standing in the kitchen all day long on Thursday or Friday preparing for Shabbos, so if she would leave out, let's say, the onions, so it will lack taste maybe; but other things will taste good. If the potatoes are lacking, you can always enjoy the chicken. But there's one thing that if left out, then *everything* lacks taste – and that is the condiment of thought! To remember that you're preparing now to enter the Sanctuary of Shabbos!

That's the way to get ready for Shabbos – you're standing making whatever you're making, doing whatever you're doing, and you're thinking, "I can't just go into such a Mikdash, such a sacred time, without making preparations." Try to add that thought when you're shopping in the grocery – it won't cost you any extra money – or when you're cleaning the house or taking a shower *l'kovod Shabbos*; keep in mind that you're preparing to enter into the Mikdash of Shabbos.

Think about it when you get dressed for Shabbos. Say, "I'm putting on special *bigdei shabbos* because Shabbos is a sanctuary, and for that sanctuary we have to prepare with *shinui begadim*, with a change of clothing." The Gemara (Shabbos 114a) says, *minayin l'shinui begadim min hatorah* – How do I know from the Torah that you must change your garments for Shabbos? So the Gemara doesn't bring a mere *sevara*, an idea, that in honor of the Shabbos it's more beautiful to wear fresh clothing. No! Our sages bring the *possuk* of וּפָשַׁט אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים. They bring a proof from the *kohen* in the Beis Hamikdash. You hear that parallel?! Just like a *kohen*, before he could enter the *mikdash* he had to change his clothing, the same is by us; before we go into the Mikdash of Shabbos we get dressed up in *bigdei shabbos*. It's a remarkable teaching – on *erev Shabbos* we are all *kohanim* preparing to enter a Beis Hamikdash.

Surrounded by Holiness

And finally, after all your preparations, Shabbos comes and now you're ready for it. As the sun begins to go down you shouldn't let that moment go lost. As the thick clouds of night begin to roll up over the heavens and the stars begin to appear, we should imagine that clouds of Shabbos are now coming up over the horizon and enveloping the world – we're being surrounded by clouds of *kedusha*. I say 'imagine' but it's actually the case. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is spreading a canopy of *kedusha* all around us.

That's why the first feeling when Shabbos comes – if you're prepared for it – is that you are entering a Sanctuary. You tiptoe into the Shabbos. *Lehavdil elef havdalos* if you remember from the days of your youth when you were sitting in the theater, and somebody came in late. He walks on tiptoe – he doesn't want to disturb anyone in their holy pursuits of watching a movie so he walks *b'hadras kodesh*. So *lehavdil elef havdalos* that's how we enter the Shabbos; on tiptoe.

I'm not talking now about when you go into the synagogue. That's something else – we're talking now about the *kedusha* of time. It means that even when you're walking down the street, on Kings Highway, and the Friday sun is setting you should feel like you're walking into the Mikdash. Don't look around at what all the ignorami, all the *beheimos* are doing. Don't look in the store windows. You're entering now the precincts of the Mikdash of Shabbos; you're tiptoeing because for the next twenty four hours you're walking through a *kedusha* of time.

Shabbos Walk and Shabbos Talk

That's why we say *hiluchach tehei b'nachas*. We don't stride at a rapid pace, we walk with a slow gait on Shabbos and that reminds us that we are *kohanim* in the Beis Hamikdash who walked *eikev betzad agudal* – they walked step by step because they stood in the presence of Hashem.

Shabbos hayom laHashem means that we stand in the presence of Hashem on Shabbos, and therefore we walk differently – unless you're going to a *mitzvah* like going to a *beis hatefilah* or going to hear the *drashah* or to learn Torah. But otherwise, *shelo yehei hiluchach shel Shabbos kehiluchach bachol*, we don't walk on Shabbos the way we walk on the weekdays because we're standing in the presence of the *Shechinah*.

Now you can better understand why in the ancient times Jews did not talk much on Shabbos. The Gemara says that (Shabbos 113a Tosfos s.v. *shelo*). When the sun went down on Friday evening they stopped talking. There was a sage who had an elderly mother and she was talking. So he said "Mother," he said, "it's Shabbos!", and she stopped immediately; she clammed up. You hear that? A person checked his tongue when he remembered it was Shabbos.

On Shabbos they ate, drank, sang and studied Torah and were happy, nothing more. Of course they said good Shabbos, they were friendly to each other, but they didn't gab. They didn't talk *devarim beteilim*. How could you gab in the Beis Hamikdash?

Fear of Shabbos

In the ancient times when Shabbos came in, an awe fell upon the people. Very many people became different during the Shabbos. Even the *am ha'aretz*, sometimes the most crude and ignorant person, on Shabbos he refused to tell an untruth; he refused to lie on the Shabbos. We have records of that.

The Gemara (Yerushalmi Demai 4:1) tells us that on Shabbos you can ask an *am ha'aretz* about his produce, "Did you separate a tenth from it?" and you could rely on his word. During the week you couldn't be sure but on Shabbos you could trust him because *eimas Shabbos al ha'am ha'aretz*, the fear of Shabbos was on the *am ha'aretz*.

You hear the old time *am ha'aretz*? *Halevai*, we should be an *am ha'aretz* like that. He was afraid to say a falsehood on Shabbos. We see how in the times gone by the fear of Shabbos was on the people. It's because they knew they were in a sanctuary. About the Beis Hamikdash it says, "You should fear My sanctuary," and so the Am Yisroel feared the Shabbos.

Part II. Erecting the Sanctuary

39 Constructs of Shabbos

Anyone who learned even a little bit of Torah is familiar with the concept of *lamed tes melachos*, the 39 forms of forbidden work on Shabbos. It's forbidden, under the penalty of death, to plant or to plow or to gather or grind or winnow and so on. There are 39 forms of forbidden work and each one has *toldos*, subdivisions, with details that are almost endless – there's more than one *mesichta* to learn about Shabbos – but as many different scenarios you might encounter that are forbidden by the Torah, they all fall under the general heading of these 39 *avos melachos*.

Now, our sages found that number 39 to be curious. Such an odd number – where does it come from? And so, the *gemara* tell us that the 39 *melachos* of Shabbos have a parallel in the building of the *Mishkan*. When the Am Yisroel got busy fulfilling the command of Hashem to build a *Mishkan* it was these 39 forms of work that were required to complete the job. And when Moshe Rabeinu gathered the nation together in the beginning of the *sedrah* to teach them about the *Mishkan* of Shabbos overriding the *Mishkan* of Hashem, it was these 39 *melachos* that he commanded them, *al pi Hashem*, to abstain from.

But the question is what's the connection between one and the other? Just because they abstained from 39 forms of work when they had to build the *Mishkan*, therefore forever and ever

the 39 forms of work on the Mishkan are the models for work that's forbidden on Shabbos?

A World of Construction

And the answer is that there is a big connection. Because the 39 *Avos Melachos* represent all the various forms of building, of creating, in this world. And the *shomrei shabbos* are making a demonstration to the world: All week long we are busy with working, creating, but on Shabbos we tell the world that we understand that it's all imagination – Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the only Creator.

What is Shabbos after all? For what purpose is it a Shabbos Shabbason, a day of ceasing all our activities? The answer is that we're making a demonstration – 39 demonstrations – that וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי Hashem finished on the seventh day, מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, the work that He did, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת, and He stopped, בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי. It means that at the advent of the seventh day He stopped – subsequently nothing came into being. On that day He stopped all the work אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת, that He created to do.

Now this has been explained already but I'll briefly touch on it again. לַעֲשׂוֹת, “that He created to do” means Hashem created that everything from now on should do on its own. From now on the world swings into action and it looks like it's doing by itself. All the animals are busy reproducing. All the plants are busy reproducing. The water from the oceans turn to clouds and rain and the rivers bring the water back to the oceans and it starts all over again. Everything seems to be going by itself from now on because Hakodosh Boruch Hu doesn't show Himself anymore. We go into action too. We're doers, creators – that's what it seems like.

Shabbos Alchemy

And then we come to the Sanctuary of Shabbos and we give up all of our pursuits and

take time to reflect: Is it really going by itself? Absolutely not. We go back to the Torah and read that *Bereishis bara Elokim*. The Shabbos reminds us of the fact that once there was no universe. There was just a great void. One big zero. *Ayin*, nothing. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu created everything out of nothing but His word, *vayomer Elokim yehi*.

But that's only the beginning of the story. Because the real lesson of *Bereishis* is that the world is really nothing even today. If we had time we could explain how every material in the world is really nothing. Wood is nothing and iron is nothing. It's nothing but energy particles; it's only because the energy particles are arranged in different ways, they rotate around the nucleus of each atom in a different way, that's what makes gold different from iron. And iron is different from gas because of how the energy particles in the iron rotate around the nucleus in a different motion than in the gas. But fundamentally gold and gas and iron are all one. They're all energy – the whole universe is nothing but movement – only that it's too small to see with our eyes. But if we would have a microscope big enough to let us see how the electrons are moving, we would see that all of matter is nothing but movement.

And if we could get electrons to stop moving, the whole thing would collapse; not into dust – it would collapse into nothing at all. So the whole world is *ayin*, even right now the whole world is nothing except the word of Hashem. He gave the order, “Get busy!” and it happened. He told all the energy particles to come into existence and to start moving and vibrating and rotating and orbiting and that's how all matter came into existence.

The Great Puppet Show

That's one of the great principles of Shabbos. The world came into being from nothing at all and even today there's nothing in the world

except *devar Hashem*, the word of Hashem. *B'devar Hashem shamayim na'asu* – by the word of Hashem everything was made and if He would withdraw His word, if He would take back His will, everything would collapse into one great zero again, one great void of nothingness.

That's one of the great principles we're expected to think about on Shabbos. Every Shabbos we affirm this great principle that even though it seems that nature is performing on its own but really Hashem is still there; everything we see is only the manifestation of His imagination and just like He was originally controlling everything during the six days of creation, He's still pulling all the wires – it's like a man who is managing a puppet show; the whole world is nothing but a puppet. All of nature is acting only according to His orders.

And that's what you're supposed to understand on Shabbos. We abstain because we want to remind ourselves that no matter what it looks like outside, everything is still being managed by Hashem absolutely no less than it was during the six days of creation. The 39 kinds of work we don't do are a demonstration for Shabbos; 39 separate demonstrations that we don't do anything because He is doing everything!

Demonstrating with Intent

By the way, it's good to think about that on Shabbos. When you pass by the electric switch, if you could add a little thought: "The reason I'm not flipping the switch is because I am making a demonstration that Hashem is the Borei." You can't do it every time? OK, but a few times you could remember.

Now the truth is you're doing it anyhow – by refraining from *melacha* the *Mikdash* of Shabbos is automatically erected. But there's a big difference in the quality of that building when you do it with intention; with thoughts of what you're trying to build.

That's why when your fingers are itching to write something on Shabbos; let's say you have some *chidushei Torah* and you feel like taking a pen and writing it down, or when you feel your pockets Friday night before you leave to the synagogue because you don't want to carry into the street, you should utilize those moments. Not just that it's *ossur*, it's forbidden. Oh no! It's much more than that! Add the thought into it: "I'm not writing today or I'm not carrying in *reshus harabim* because today is dedicated to building the Shabbos. I can't be busy with *melacha* now; I have a certain amount of time now, 24 hours, when I have more important work to do, more important things to build."

Building on Shabbos

Whenever we come to an opportunity to refrain from a work of Shabbos, if you'll add the thought that this is a demonstration that Hashem made world out of nothing and that He's still creating the world – He's still in full control – you are building the Shabbos edifice in your mind. While we do not create anything on Shabbos *that you can see*, we're actually very busy building on Shabbos. We're building a *Mishkan* in our minds; the Shabbos Mind.

In one of the songs of Shabbos we sing as follows: *De'eh chochma l'nafshecha* – *Know wisdom for yourself*, *vehi keser l'roshecha* – *as it will be a crown upon your head*, *Netzor mitzvas kedoshhecha* – *guard the command of your holy One*. Now the end of that stanza is an explanation of the first words: How will you know wisdom for yourself? How will you acquire the wisdom that will be a crown on your head in *Olam Haboh*? *Shemor Shabbos kodshecha*, by keeping Shabbos properly.

Acquiring the Crown

Now it doesn't mean merely to be a *shomer shabbos* – of course that in itself is extremely valuable but that's not enough if you want to acquire a crown for yourself. A crown means

daas; the more *daas* you acquire in this world the more successful you are because according to the quality of that crown of *daas* that you acquire in this world, that's how much you'll be able to enjoy the sight of the splendor of the *shechinah*. So if you gain a Torah mind then you're prepared for happiness in the world to come. More Torah mind, more happiness.

And Shabbos is one of the great opportunities to acquire *daas* in this world. What's the point of Shabbos? To eat cholent? To take a nap? That's good but it's not the purpose. The point of Shabbos is to acquire a mind!

And therefore Shabbos is a time to think about Hashem; everything is Hashem— that's the number one Shabbos thought. It's a stunning idea which we must labor all our lives in order to gain a little bit of its impact. Whenever you see something in the world, you're only imagining. You're actually seeing the will of Hashem. That thought is the real achievement; more than going to the synagogue, more than the fresh clothing and polished shoes.

Get to Work!

Now isn't it a pity that people who are *shomer Shabbos* don't think about that? If I look at you, I see Hashem. You are a manifestation of His will. You see the sky? You see a tree? It's nothing but a sign of Hakodosh Boruch Hu's will. Try thinking that thought once in a while. There are no benches. There are no walls. There's no ceiling. It's only the *devar Hashem*. If you can think for one minute straight about that, you know that this Shabbos, at least once in your life, you accomplished something on Shabbos. If you can think it more than once, you're a wise man.

Let's say next Shabbos you make it your business, you'll take out one minute and think that before it was *ayin*, nothing. If you're able to think two minutes, let's say a minute Friday night and a minute Shabbos morning, even better! Let's

say at each *seudah*, as you sit down one minute, the whole family is talking, they're happy – I hope you're also happy – but you're also thinking, “I have to fulfill my function of Shabbos זְכוֹר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית.” So while they're talking, they don't know what's going on in your head; you're thinking, “Hashem made the world out of nothing! *Yeish m'ayin!*” Ah! You fulfilled one of the great purposes of Shabbos. And the more frequently you think about it, the more you're gaining a crown on your head; that's *de'eh chachmah lenafshecha vehi keser leroshecha* – your thoughts become a crown of wisdom on your head as your mind becomes the Shabbos Mind.

Part III. In the Sanctuary

The Shabbos Goy

I was once sitting in Mesivta Chaim Berlin in my office when someone knocked on my door. I opened up and standing there was a *goy* with a banjo on his back.

I asked him how I could help him and he tells me he wants to become a Jew and that someone gave him my name. “I'm keeping Shabbos already,” he says. I jumped up, “Oh no! Don't do that – it's dangerous to do such a thing if you're not a Jew yet.” *Akum sheshavas chayav misah* – if a *goy* keeps Shabbos he's liable to be killed.

“What should I do?” he said. I told him that every Shabbos at least once he should turn on the electric switch. At least once, to show that you're not keeping Shabbos.

No Trespassing

This *halacha*, you have to know, is another manifestation of what we said in the beginning of our talk that Shabbos is a sanctuary – and the first rule of a sanctuary is that it's only for those who are permitted to come in. The Shabbos is not

open for just anybody who wishes to enter at his own volition.

It's like the *Beis Hamikdash* – you know, outside of the *Beis Hamikdash* there were signs in Latin and Greek that said, “Any gentile who comes inside will be put to death.” If the *kohanim* would catch a gentile in the forbidden precincts they would take him outside of the *azarah* and break his head with *gizrei eitzim*, pieces of wood. They would break his head open. And the Roman government approved of that. Even the Romans understood that gentiles have no right to trespass into the sanctuary.

The same thing is if a *goy* wants to keep Shabbos; he's trespassing on holy ground. It's like somebody who never went to medical school or he didn't pass the test and he wasn't licensed by the state, but he wants to practice medicine so he puts out a shingle and he opens up shop. He's committing a crime; he'll be arrested for that. A *goy* is not licensed to keep Shabbos and therefore even today a gentile who tries to keep Shabbos is *chavav misah*. We don't do it but Hakodosh Boruch Hu will take care of him. He has no right to pretend to this crown of glory which was kept only for the Am Yisroel.

The Second Teaching

And that brings us to another stupendous idea; it's the great Shabbos teaching that stands on the shoulders of the lesson of *Bereishis bara Elokim*, that everything in this world is being created right now by Hashem. The second teaching is *Bereishis – b'shvil Yisroel shenikre'u reishis*. This world that Hashem is creating right now is being created for the Am Yisroel!

Now, as queer as this sounds to American ears – and we all have American ears; the best of us have American ears – we must accustom ourselves to this thought because it's a teaching of the Torah. Whether you like the idea or not, get used to it because that's the rock bottom of

Judaism. And therefore included in the Shabbos Mind that we are building every Shabbos is the attitude that the world was created for a righteous nation and it was our people who stepped forward and accepted that role.

Two Parts

So we have two parts to Shabbos now. One part is *brias haolam yesh mei'ayin*, the creation of the world out of nothing – that it's Hashem's word alone that causes the world to exist and that whatever we see is only the *devar Hashem* concretized; everything is His words, His will, crystallized into certain forms of matter and motion.

Now, that on its own is such a stupendous idea that we must spend Shabbos after Shabbos thinking of that. But we're learning now that Shabbos is not only a celebration of the creation of the world; Shabbos teaches us that *we are the reason* the universe came into being. There has to be a nation that will dedicate itself entirely to Hakodosh Boruch Hu; that's the reason the universe came into being. And that nation is us. We are forever chosen by Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Now let the nations of the world howl and let them shout; let them ridicule – it doesn't mean a thing; they are nothing but waves that wash up on the beach and then recede; the beach always remains. And they can't complain – they have the opportunity if they wish; the doors are always open for them to take on the responsibility of what Shabbos entails. “But if they don't enter the covenant of My people,” Hashem says, “then the *Beis Hamikdash* of Shabbos remains off limits to them.”

Blessing of Work

Not only is it off limits for a gentile; it's dangerous for him. For a gentile, leisure is dangerous. The best thing for a *goy* is to be busy. A *goy* at work is a decent person. Only when he

stops work in the evening and he's sitting on his steps, that's when you have to watch out for him.

Look what happened when Saturday became a day off. More *goyim* are killed on the roads on Saturday than any other day. More *goyim* shoot each other on Shabbos than any other day. Most crime between gentiles takes place on weekends. In the restaurants they get together and shoot each other. They knife each other at parties. When you see three ambulances racing down the street one after another on a Sunday, you know that it's the end of a Puerto Rican wedding.

And therefore Hashem said to gentiles "Don't keep Shabbos." יום וְלִילָה לֹא יִשְׁבְּתוּ – they should never stop. Not only the big gentiles. All of their children should go to work too. Instead of going to school they should get jobs in the factories. The school gives them only narcotics and vandalism and promiscuity; every kind of evil they learn in the public schools. It would be a blessing if all the children went to work at an early age.

Like in Mexico. All the children in Mexico work and they're decent boys and girls because of that. What happens? They come to America, they cross the border, and they become criminals. They go to school and they're ruined by the Americans. That's one reason why the Shabbos Sanctuary is off limits. *Gedolah melacha* – a seven day work week; that's the biggest blessing for the *umos ha'olam*.

Day of Contemplation

And so when Shabbos comes the whole world is working. Nature is working. The gentiles are working – at least they should be. But the Bnei Yisroel – the ones who understand that Shabbos is a *mikdash* – we are relieved of any work. It's a great privilege, *beini u'vein bnei Yisroel!*

But it's a great responsibility too. Because Shabbos doesn't mean we sit back and do nothing. It doesn't mean you put on your pajamas and

climb into bed for the Shabbos. We are free from work because our purpose on Shabbos is to use our minds.

Shabbos is a day of knowing. Shabbos is a day when you are not hustling, when you're not rushed and you have an opportunity to think a little bit. And so we enter this *Beis Hamikdash* and we regal ourselves with *oneg Shabbos* so we're in a good mood too. We're happy and we have no mundane duties to perform; we're entirely at leisure and that means this day now is capable of being devoted to Your name, Hashem. *Shabbos hayom la'Hashem*. That's the ideal of Shabbos – I know it may seem somewhat burdensome to people who like only to enjoy themselves on Shabbos; they don't want to be busy building the Shabbos Mind – but that's what Shabbos really is.

Your Chance to Shine

That's how a Jew celebrates the Shabbos; the most important of all the functions of Shabbos is creating the Torah mind. Whatever you'll do is worthwhile – even if you'll reflect on Shabbos for a moment between the courses while your wife is bringing in the next course it's also worthwhile. And the more you're able to utilize the Shabbos, the greater you become.

And as you're sitting there thinking, so Hakodosh Boruch Hu sends His blessings on you. And of all the blessings of Shabbos the greatest is the success in improving one's mind by adding the noble thoughts that cause the Jew to live successfully in this world.

There's nothing like thinking on Shabbos. Even if you have one minute to add to your store of understanding, jump at it; *de'eh chochma lenafshecha* – know wisdom for yourself. Know wisdom! It's for yourself! Wisdom is the one form of property that you'll own forever. *Vehi kesser leroshecha* – all of those Shabbos thoughts become crown on your head.

Someday it will turn into a real crown, a crown of splendor. You'll sit in Gan Eden one day at that great eternal banquet and the crown of wisdom that you gained in this world by thinking on Shabbos will be upon your head forever and ever. That's the great success of the one who knows that Shabbos is a Beis Hamikdash.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

This Year, Transform Your Shabossos

Since Shabbos is a Mikdash of time, from now on I'm going to treat it like I'm entering into a Beis Hamikdash. On erev Shabbos as I'm doing something to prepare for Shabbos I will say to myself, "I'm doing so and so because I have to go into the Beis Hamikdash of Shabbos with the proper frame of mind."

And on Shabbos itself by every seudah I will stop for half a minute to think about how Hashem created the world out of nothing and how He's continuing to create it every second for His chosen nation.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

110 - Preface to Purim 1 | 575 - Preface to Shabbos IX | 722 - Shabbos-Day of Knowledge (Shabbos 13) | 791 - Ten Aspects of Shabbos

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגידך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

How do we explain the phenomenon of non-religious parents who sometimes have a religious child or sometimes vice versa?

A:

And the answer is this. We explain it with the principle that Hakodosh Boruch Hu told us: **החיים** **והמוות נתתי לפניך** - I put before you a choice of life and death, **ובחרת בחיים** - and you should choose life! It's an announcement from Hashem that there is free will in the world.

The fact that a man is born from ignorant or irreligious parents does not mean he cannot become a great tzaddik. If he chooses, then Hakodosh Boruch Hu will not prevent him. And the fact that a man is born from great tzaddikim, the fact that his parents are saints, doesn't mean he's going to be a saint. Every man must make it his business to be the best that he can.

And that's why, when you see such a phenomenon - of course, it's a tragedy when the sons of tzaddikim go wrong and of course it could be his parents were to blame too; maybe they didn't put enough effort in training him - however when it does happen, it's a demonstration of the power of free will.

Anybody can change. Anybody can change! And he can change tremendously! And therefore, as long as a man is alive, there's still hope. That's one of the lessons we learn when we see some children who are very different from their parents.

TAPE # E-43

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