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# פרשת בשלח

WITH

# R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## Gifts of Shabbos

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## *Part I. A Gift to Treasure*

### **Black Gold in Pennsylvania**

Many years ago, in the mid 1800's, there was a person who owned a farm near Titusville, Pennsylvania. It was a nice-sized farm but it didn't produce like he expected – the crops were always poor. And so, after struggling with it for some time, the owner finally became disgusted and he sold it off to someone else.

Now, the man who purchased it, one day he was walking around to survey his possession and when he stopped by one of the waterholes where the cows were gathered to drink, he noticed that they were refusing to touch the water. He looked down into the pool and he saw an oily scum on top of the water.

So this man investigated – he did some digging and called in some experts – and discovered that this black scum was actually oil. There's a

reason why oil is called black gold; an oil gusher is just as valuable as gold, and this man became a millionaire overnight. You can imagine, when the first man heard the news subsequently, he regretted that he had not known what a treasure he had possessed under his feet all that time. He considered it a terrible misfortune. And he was right. For the rest of his life he was always thinking, “If only there would have been someone to tell me to take a look into that waterhole, to see what’s doing, I would have found that treasure.”

### **Your Black Gold**

Now, there is a certain treasure that all of us possess, a valuable treasure sitting right under our feet that Hakodosh Baruch Hu has given us, only that we’re unaware of what we possess. And because Hakodosh Baruch Hu doesn’t want us to end up like that poor fellow in Titusville, therefore when He first gave us this gift He made sure to say to us, “Look! I want you to see what I’m giving you.”

What am I talking about now? Which treasure is sitting under our feet without us realizing? In this week’s *sedrah*, when Hakodosh Baruch Hu was about to give the mitzvah of Shabbos to the Bnei Yisroel, He told Moshe Rabbeinu that he should go and tell them like this: **רְאוּ כִּי הַשֵּׁם נֹתֵן לָכֶם הַשַּׁבָּת** – *I want that you should see that Hashem is giving you Shabbos* (Beshalach 16:29).

Now that word, “**רְאוּ** – see!” is a remarkable introduction that we don’t find by any other mitzvah. It doesn’t say, “Look! Hashem is giving you *korbanos*,” or “See that Hashem gave you *kashrus* or *Pesach*.” By all the other *mitzvos* we don’t find such a thing – only by Shabbos, Hashem said, “See what I am giving you.”

Now when someone gives you something and tells you, “Make note; pay attention to the importance of this gift,” it’s not for nothing that he says that. It implies a desire of the giver that you shouldn’t think it’s a small matter; that you should properly use and enjoy it.

### **All-In-One Computers**

If someone gives you an expensive computer, let’s say, so you could use it maybe to put things on top of it. Let’s say when you’re washing dishes or pots and pans, you might deposit them on top of it to dry. Or you could hang your clothing there. A computer is good for that. It has various nooks and crannies where you can stick in a hanger. But that’s not making full use of it – it’s very far away from what the giver intended.

And that's why Hakodosh Baruch Hu said, "רְאוּ – see that I am giving you Shabbos." Because the Shabbos will be utilized for a very great benefit by the recipient only if he knows what a treasure he has. It's a great pity that the tremendous wealth of Shabbos that lies under our feet is not being utilized.

Now, I'm not saying it's a simple subject, it's a very big subject. But if Hakodosh Baruch Hu says "רְאוּ," it means He wants you to study it, to ponder its benefits in order to gain everything that He had in mind when He gave that Gift. It's only because not enough has been said on this subject and because it has not been studied enough, that's why the treasure is being squandered.

### **Let My People Know**

Now, the Gemara in Beitzah (16a) tells us a little more of the backstory. It reveals some more of what Hakodosh Baruch Hu told Moshe Rabbeinu when He gave us the Shabbos: אָמַר הַקְּרוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִתְּנָה – Hashem said, "I have a precious Gift in my treasure house which is named Shabbos, וּמִבְּקֶשׁ אֲנִי לְתַנְּהָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל – and I desire to give it to the people of Yisroel, לֵךְ וְהוֹדִיעֵם, – go and let them know. It means, "Let them know what they're getting."

Now, the Gemara is at first bothered by that statement. Why was Moshe sent on a special mission to inform the people about Shabbos? It's *avida l'gluyei*; it's something that would be discovered by them anyhow. Like every other mitzvah, like *shaatnez* and *tefillin* and everything else, they'll study the mitzvah and they'll learn all the details.

That's what they were busy with in the Midbar for forty years. Learning Torah! You have to remember that the *dor hamidbar* was a *kollel* generation. They were entirely unemployed. They didn't have any fields to plow and no work to do. Their food fell *min hashomayim*. They didn't have to sew any garments. שְׂמֹלֶתְךָ לֹא בָלְתָה מֵעָלֶיךָ – Forty years they didn't wear out their garments. They had nothing to do for forty years. What did they do? All day long they learned from Moshe Rabbeinu.

### **Nation Of Learners**

Moshe Rabbeinu taught them every day. Every day! That's a *rebbe!* Remember what Moshe Rabbeinu said (Devarim 4:5): רְאוּ לְמִדְּוַתִּי אֶתְכֶם – "I taught you all of the details of all the mitzvos just like Hashem commanded me." And if he said it, he didn't exaggerate, he did everything, exactly as Hashem commanded.

Not only Moshe. There were many great teachers in the Midbar. The *shivim zekeinim*, and there was Aharon and Yehoshua and Miriam; very many Torah teachers who would study and understand the laws of Shabbos and they would explain it to the rest of the people! Just like every other mitzvah that was learned in the Midbar. “And therefore,” the Gemara asks, “why was it necessary to send Moshe Rabbeinu on a special mission to teach them *hilchos Shabbos*? It was already included in his job.”

So the Gemara says, that’s true; they would know all about Shabbos. Certainly, they would learn all the details. And they would learn it well! You think they were nobodies, the people who received the Torah? They were great souls! So there’s no question that they would learn everything. But there’s something they wouldn’t learn, the Gemara says: **מִתֵּן שְׂכָרָה לֹא עֵבֶרְיָא לְגַלְיָי** – *the reward of Shabbos is something they wouldn’t know about*. Oh, that’s something different already. The reward you’ll get for keeping Shabbos, that was the mission Moshe was sent on; to tell them about the *schar Shabbos*, something that was not expressly understood.

### **Measuring Eternity**

Now, that’s the answer the Gemara gives but it still has to be explained. Because we understand that the same is actually true for any mitzvah of the Torah; **אֵין אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מִתֵּן שְׂכָרָךְ שֶׁל מִצְוֹת** – *you don’t know the reward for any of the mitzvos* (Avos 2:1). If you put up a *mezuzah*, nobody can calculate the extent of that reward. If you drop a penny in the *pushka*, it’s impossible to know the reward for that. Because a mitzvah is not paid in this world. It *can’t* be paid in this world because all the happiness and all the success of this world will never be enough to pay for one mitzvah. We have to get that into our heads. *Mitzvos* are eternal rewards and eternity cannot be measured.

And therefore if Moshe Rabbeinu was sent to tell the people the rewards of Shabbos, so the question arises: What could he tell them anyhow? Every *mitzvah* has an endless reward of happiness in the Next World that can’t be measured. Millions and millions of years will go by in happiness and you’ll never tire of that happiness. Whether it’s Shabbos or *mezuzah* or a penny in the *pushka*, it’s going to be eternal. What’s so different about Shabbos?

And the answer is, it’s true that we don’t know the reward for dropping a penny into a *tzedakah* box or for putting up a *mezuzah*. We don’t know the reward. But at least we know what we did. We did a

specific deed, and that deed is going to pay out reward forever and ever and ever and ever.

But Shabbos is something altogether different; because from Shabbos comes forth a fountain of *mitzvos*, an endless gusher in such abundance that it's impossible to calculate how many *mitzvos* the Shabbos brings to us.

### **Shabbos In Nursery**

Shabbos is a nursery where the seeds are produced to plant even more nurseries. Suppose you have a garden and this garden is full of beautiful plants and trees. But not only does a garden grow beautiful fruits which are enjoyable to look at and to eat, this garden produces the seeds that will plant thousands of other gardens. That's the greatness of this garden! The entire world can be cultivated by the products of this one garden! *Ooh wah!* Now we begin to appreciate that garden more. If it's such a garden that it'll make the whole world a garden, then that's the most precious gift. Not merely that you benefit from the fruits of this garden itself, but you can picture the endlessness of the results of this garden.

Shabbos is such a garden; it's the source of achievement of every kind. That's why Shabbos is called the fountain of blessing, the *mekor habracha*. All things that you can never imagine as a connection with Shabbos actually flow forth from the Shabbos. All the *mitzvos* of the Torah, all the ideals and attitudes of the Torah, are like nurslings that grow in the soil of Shabbos. And then they're transplanted and they continue to fill your life with achievement and with happiness all as a result of Shabbos.

That's what the Gemara means that **מִתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ לֹא עֲבִידָא לְגַלְיָי** – *the reward of Shabbos will never be known*. The reward of *any* mitzvah is not known; it cannot be known in this world but at least we know that this mitzvah is going to have a certain reward. But suppose you have a mitzvah that's going to bring on an endless number of other *mitzvos*, an endless number of other opportunities, then you don't dream of the vastness of the reward because it's exponential; it's creating gardens and gardens of *avodas Hashem!*

### **All Because of Shabbos**

So Moshe Rabbeinu was told to tell them, “**מִתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ**, the reward of Shabbos, **לֹא עֲבִידָא לְגַלְיָי**, is something that you couldn't know. I have to inform you that by keeping Shabbos properly, there's going to be a result

that will amaze you in its extent! Vastly more than the mere keeping of Shabbos!”

And therefore, after 120 years when the Jew comes to the Next World and he is confronted by a whole treasury of wealth and he's told, “That's all yours,” so he says, “How did I earn all that? What did I do to get so many deeds of merit?”

And they'll tell him, “It's because of Shabbos.” He didn't realize that Shabbos was bringing him so many different forms of achievement, so many opportunities to accomplish and to earn everlasting happiness.

## *Part II. Endless Gifts*

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### **Fount of Blessings**

Now, this is a subject that we won't be able to do justice to at all because it would need not one hour. It would need weeks and weeks and even then we wouldn't finish. But at least we'll make an attempt to talk about some of these things that are seeded in that grand garden of Shabbos. We'll take a few examples of what Shabbos means to the Am Yisroel in the sense of Shabbos as a fountain, an artesian well, a gusher of blessings and *mitzvos* that makes it impossible to calculate the benefits of Shabbos.

Among the blessings of Shabbos, the one that comes to mind first is that it's a national day of rest. I don't mean now in the sense of the 39 *melachos*; I'm talking about actual rest, a cessation from the grind of the workweek. Do you know what it means when a person is forced to take a rest on Shabbos? It's a lifesaver!

Many Jews are hustlers and their businesses would never close. When there's an opportunity to make money, a lot of people don't know when to stop. Don't you see some stores have a sign, “Open Seven Days a Week”? And it's a dangerous thing because people are overworked; they're tired and broken down.

### **Grounded By The Grind**

Many people have even left this world early because of that and were never able to enjoy the fruits of their labors. And the others, even if they lived, when they finally retire they are broken people; they have bad hearts or diabetes. The grind of the workweek has ground them down and when they finally retire, they're old and sick; they're not able to enjoy their retirement.

Along comes the blessing of Shabbos, one day every week, and the Jew retires in the prime of his life. He doesn't retire to the old age home or to doctors' appointments in Manhattan. He retires to his home, to his family, to good meals and happy times. That's what the Kuzari points out; he says that the Jew retires every week for one day while he's still young. And that means that Shabbos is a blessing for your health. The *Yom Menuchah* becomes actually a day of recovery and convalescence from the labor of the week.

There's no question that Shabbos saves a lot of people from premature deaths. I'm not talking now about the fact that we can't travel on the highways. Just the fact that we're forbidden from getting into our cars is a gift, because Shabbos is the day when there's the biggest number of traffic casualties. Do you know how many gentiles would remain alive if it wasn't for Saturday? Every Saturday, while we're sitting at the Shabbos table eating our *challah* and fish, they're smashing up on the highways. That's an important point; the fact that you cannot drive on Shabbos is life insurance. It's a very important point.

### **Sweet Blessed Sleep**

But I'm not speaking about that. Just the fact that a person rests and sleeps, he's rehabilitated. Not to work – now most people who don't work won't appreciate the subject that much, but working people they're waiting for Shabbos. Uh! You can hardly bear until Shabbos comes. Ah! Shabbos! Shabbos is a *ta'anug*, not to work.

It doesn't mean that you should climb into your pajamas and remain there all Shabbos – there are too many other Shabbos blessings that you'll lose out on if you sleep all day long. But there's no question that sleep is extremely important for our health, and therefore, included in the *schar Shabbos* is that because of Shabbos, many people are able to survive the week – otherwise, they would collapse from lack of sleep.

But it's not only a day of rest, that we rest physically. Shabbos is also a day of *menuchas hanefesh*, when our *spirit* rests. You know what a prophylactic, what a healing that is, one day when your mind is relieved? The fact is that many Jews would have completely worn themselves out with worries and anxieties; but every week Shabbos comes, and they banish all these thoughts from their head. We can't even talk about anything! If a Jew expresses a worry on Shabbos, everybody else says, "*Shah!* It's Shabbos today. Don't talk about it!" That's how it's supposed to be. That's how Jews are expected to live – you don't talk about anything sad on Shabbos.

## Optimistic Life

And so for one day, we have respite, a rest from all worries. And there's no question, the psychological benefit is inestimable. You know what that means in terms of health? In terms of longevity? It's blessings upon blessings upon blessings. It's health and life and *menuchas hanefesh*.

If once every six days you take vacation and you enjoy life, it's going to make the other six days much different. The whole week becomes different. That's why the Jew lives a more happy life, a more optimistic life, than anybody else. Even if he's not a thinking man, just this, that every six days he goes on vacation, it changes his life. His life is punctuated with relaxation every six days. The Jew was always more optimistic about this world, more capable of living successfully than all the nations of the world, because when Shabbos came, he relaxed his body and his mind.

But not only do we rest our bodies and relax our minds, but Shabbos means *oneg Shabbos*; it's a day of good times. On the seventh day it's a special mitzvah to have a good time in this world.

## A Day of Pleasure

That's why on Shabbos we are required to eat things that we like and to add a meal, a third one. Even if you're a poor man, whatever you're eating, you should try to smack your lips and feel how delicious it is. A piece of bread, how delicious it is on Shabbos! If you have more than that, surely.

There was one *tzaddik* who used to gorge himself every Shabbos in order to feel the taste of more and more food. I'm not recommending that. You shouldn't do things that are injurious to your health. But there's no question it's a very big mitzvah to put upon the table every kind of delicacy that you can afford in order to honor the Shabbos. In what way? All the ways.

Now, I have to explain something to you. Some people don't appreciate what *oneg Shabbos* is capable of doing for a person; *oneg Shabbos* is one of those *brachos* of Shabbos that is capable of transforming a person's life!

## Life Transformation

Shabbos is a day to enjoy, in order to feel how great the kindness of Hashem is to us. Shabbos, you know, commemorates the creation of the world out of nothing and that Hashem made a world of Kindliness. One

of the best ways of bringing that truth into our heads is by means of our stomachs. You should feel the kindness of Hashem in the pleasant tastes of Shabbos. As you take your first bite of the *challah*, you're thinking, *ahh*, Hashem created this out of nothing! And then you take another bite, *עוֹלָם הַסֵּד יִבְנֶה*. *Ahhh*, He did it out of Kindness, for me to enjoy!

Now, once you get busy practicing that up, your life becomes a different life. Not only does it add to the happiness of Shabbos, it adds to the happiness of *life*. *Oneg Shabbos* becomes a lubricant for the weekdays too. When your Shabbos is a day of happiness, a day spent with the family, sitting together around the table and singing *zemiros*, eating good food. Shabbos changes the whole week. Sunday is different and Monday is different. Your whole life is different.

### ***Prison of Happiness***

But even more than that, Shabbos protects the Am Yisroel in a more important way. When we rest on Shabbos we turn inwards; we are forced to turn our backs on the outside world. You don't go to work on Shabbos. You don't go to school on Shabbos. You can't even travel on Shabbos. You're stuck at home.

Did you ever hear about Shabbos being a prison? I heard that already. A girl, a *chassidische* Orthodox girl, called me up from the insane asylum and she was complaining to me; she said, "Shabbos is a prison."

What can I tell her? She never learned that it's a great gift to have one day that we isolate ourselves from the outside. Shabbos you're homebound, community-bound, and that means that Shabbos causes us to be kept apart - at least one day in the week - from contact with the nations of the world.

### ***The Mean Rabbi***

Even on the street you can't associate with the gentiles, you have to be careful. Let's say if a ball is thrown by a gentile child into the street and he says, "Mister, if you don't mind, give me that ball." You can't do it. It's very embarrassing.

I once passed by a ballfield near Downstate Hospital where medical students were playing and the ball came over the fence near me on the sidewalk. So they called out to me, "Please throw us the ball." But I couldn't. I said, "I'm sorry, I can't". I shrugged and went on. So they said, "Thank you, rabbi." It was quite embarrassing. The medical students were thinking, "Here is a rabbi and he's a mean fellow". Actually I'm not.

On the weekdays I don't hesitate. I pick up the balls all the time and hurl it back to them. I always do that. But I couldn't do it on Shabbos.

### **A Day For The Environment**

Shabbos forces us to keep away from everybody except your own. On Shabbos we are protected. We're in a holy environment; the *am kadosh* retires to its homes and we separate from the outside world. On Shabbos you cannot tune in on the radio. Your mind cannot be polluted by the lies and the evil of the media. Unless somebody is so eager to spoil his Shabbos that he brings in a newspaper. You shouldn't read newspapers on Shabbos. Protect your Sanctuary against invasion by foreigners!

Of course there are happy things to do too on Shabbos. We eat meals on Shabbos, and we put on special garments for Shabbos, and we rest on Shabbos. But the entire time in the Sanctuary is a period of sacred diversions, of holy occupations. We're alone with our families and our friends, our communities. For one day, we are alone with the Am Yisroel.

Now to be separate from the nations of the world that's of inestimable benefit. That's one of the blessings of Shabbos. Do you realize how many blessings come as a result of that? Shabbos is a refuge for our nation and from that came forth numberless *mitzvos*.

## *Part III. More Treasures*

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### **A Day For Mishpacha**

There was a man who came here once, a Reform Jew who came to New York from Philadelphia, and he was trying to convince me that the gentiles are "family people", that we should be jealous of them.

He says that he went to a *treifeh* restaurant on Saturday night and in that restaurant he saw a family gathering of Italians; they came together for the New Year or something else and they were eating together, eating and talking and laughing. And this person said to me, "We, Jews, unfortunately don't have such things." That's what this Reform Jew from Philadelphia told me. He was so jealous - a big family gathering of Italians. He saw the brotherhood of a family when they came together. "Why can't Jews do that too?" he wanted to know.

The answer is that the Jewish nation does that every week. The truth is that no nation in the world enjoys family ties as does the Am Yisroel. Every week, no matter what. It's a great happiness when the

father and mother and sons and daughters are together for an entire day. הִנֵּה מָה טוֹב וּמָה נְעִים שָׁבַת אֲחֵימִים גַּם יְהוּד. It's a great pleasure when family comes together! They find solace and comfort in each one's company. Nobody has such opportunities like the Jewish people because Shabbos is the day of the family. It's the *Yom Mishpacha*. Every week the Jewish nation comes together and they renew their family ties.

### **Where's Waldo?**

Only that this ignorant Reform Jew, he gave it all away. He sits down at the table and he looks around for his son.

"Where's Jerry?" he asks his wife.

"He drove to his friends in Manhattan tonight.

"What about Dorothy? Where is she?"

"She's at the library studying for her exams."

He went there. She went there. It's not a family. Your children are using your home just as a dormitory and they're living off of your largesse. You're supporting them but they do what they want.

### **The Royal Family**

But the Am Yisroel, the ones who are loyal to the Torah and plant the seeds of Shabbos in their lives, they reap the benefits of Shabbos. The fact that the Jew is forced to be together on Shabbos with his family, is a blessing that is immeasurable – only that we're so accustomed to it, that we forget to appreciate it. We become oblivious to the blessings of family that Shabbos brings.

Shabbos makes the family an organization. Everyone comes together; the father sits at the head of the table and near him sits the queen and all the children, the princes and princesses, sit around the table. You see your children. You can talk to them. They have a certain responsibility towards you. It's a real family.

Now, that family unit is of most precious importance to us because happiness in our lives is usually measured in terms of family *nachas*. It's so important to preserve the family, to be together at all times, and build that family unit of kindness and warmth and camaraderie. And that's what the Shabbos gives among its many blessings.

### **A Day For Ami**

But it's not merely the blessing of the immediate family; Shabbos is a day when the Am Yisroel becomes a family again. Shabbos is for the

community too because it's a day when you can associate with your friends in the *beis haknesses* or in the yeshivah. Shabbos causes Jews to be identified with their community.

Look at the irreligious Jews *lehavdil*. They're not identified. They're lost. Each one is an orphan. They don't have friends. They make friends casually; they'll see each other here and there by accident. But Shabbos means that you have a community. Whether you're this community or that community, you belong to a group of people. It's your address.

These people, many times, help out in a time of need. Many times they supply friendship to you. People ask where you were last week and they hear that something happened and people sympathize. Many people have been rescued from business disasters by their friends in the synagogue.

People come together and to a certain extent they are all one family. When there's some problem for the Jewish nation or for the local people, they make it their business to solve it on Shabbos.

### **A Day for Appeals**

In the olden days when Jews came together on Shabbos, they didn't speak only *divrei Torah*. They spoke *divrei chol* too. What did they speak about? "What's going on with Reb Yankev?" they asked. "All week he is wearing his *Shabbosdige kapoteh*." They noticed that. It means he has no clothing left. He's poor. All week he wears a *Shabbosdige kapote*. So they got together to think of ways and means of helping him. Jews came together on Shabbos because that's when they had time to meet and they planned how to help.

Somebody said, "You know, Reb Berel is in trouble. He has to pay the government because of something that they're suspecting him about and we have to bribe the officials to get him out of trouble." So the Jews came together, a *pidyon shvuyim*. Shabbos was the day when money was collected, when they appealed among people privately and they raised sums to help everybody.

And so Shabbos was a *mekor habrachah* for all the needy of our people. It's a remarkable thing! Shabbos doesn't mean you come to shul to *daven* and then you go home. You don't merely come for that. Everybody comes to worry about all their neighbors, what's happening with them, what they need and they put their heads together to solve problems and to help the needy of our people.

## The Princely Pauper

The truth is that Shabbos was a blessing for the poorer Jews even without *tzedakah*. Because on Shabbos every Jew became a prince or a princess. If not for the Shabbos, generations and generations of Jews who were poor would never change their garments. But Jews put on *bigdei Shabbos*, they change their clothes in honor of this great day. And so, even the wagon driver, when he came home Friday just before Shabbos, he took off his big boots. They were filthy with manure. And his clothing sloshed with mud, and he quickly took a little bath. He put on his Shabbos garments, and he was transformed.

From a hard-working servant he became like a king now, and he marched off to shul with his hands behind his back, slowly, with *kavod*, like a prince. The Shabbos changed us and made us a nation of dignity. They dressed up on Shabbos, and they all looked like kings. Even the poorest dressed up on Shabbos, and they walked to the *beis haknesses* with their families.

### Rabbi Miller's Favorite Subject

I want to add one more thing – there's much more but this one is my favorite subject and I can't leave it out. Among the great benefits of Shabbos is the opportunity to study Torah. Ahh! *Talmud Torah!* And if you think that's a small thing, you have to know that תְּלִמּוֹד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּל־מַתָּנָה – *the Torah is the very biggest of all gifts*; it is the core of our nation. We are the *Am Hasefer*, the People of the Book, and Shabbos is the day that made that happen. The Torah was given on Shabbos for that purpose to let us know it's "A Day of Torah".

In the very ancient times, when Jews came together on Shabbos, it was all day long in the *beis hamedrash*. *Mammesh* all day. The Syrian Greeks when they spoke about the Jews, when they describe us in their chronicles, they always spoke about the Jewish Sabbath houses, how the Jews spent all Shabbos in the houses of study. Besides being with their families for the *seudah*, and a short nap, they were gathered together and studying.

I remember in the old country, in Europe, the shuls were packed on Shabbos. It was a time when everybody looked in a *sefer*. Some said only Tehillim. Some went to learn *Ein Yaakov*. Some learned Gemara. But everyone was in the shul. On Shabbos the *Am Yisroel* all went to school. 'Schule' means school. They called it *shul*. They went to shul on Shabbos, to school, and they learned. The *Am Hasefer*, the People of the Book,

gained on Shabbos a great deal of intelligence. That was one of the glories of Shabbos.

### **Rabbi Miller's Shabbos**

Today it's the same thing. We have people who come here Friday night. They come here about seven, seven-thirty and they sit here learning till almost eleven-thirty at night. They're working people, professionals. They sit here in the shul for four hours on Friday night. Some a little less. On Shabbos afternoon people come to study here; on the longer days they study all day long Shabbos afternoon, in groups and individuals.

That's a gift that Shabbos brings into the home all week long. A home where the father is in *kollel* all Shabbos long is a different home. The children are different children, the wife is a different wife, a different mother. It's a *matan schar* of Shabbos that reverberates all week long in the home.

And that's the especial gift of Shabbos. It reverberates in our lives in so many ways. The Shabbos brings Torah into the home. It confers upon the Am Yisroel dignity and physical health and mental health. Shabbos brings along with it *tzedakah* and *chesed* and family and community and happiness and *oneg* and protection from the outside world. Shabbos is endless *matan schar*!

### **Blessings On The Surface**

Now, *Rabbosai*, there's no question that I haven't even yet scratched the surface of what it means 'the Gift of Shabbos'. There are many more things; we're just beginning. And you can be sure that the Jews who were sitting in the Midbar and listening to Moshe Rabbeinu were enlightened a million times more than you heard tonight. There are so many benefits that the Torah Jew receives from the Shabbos, so much *schar Shabbos*, that it would be presumptuous of me to imagine I could tell them to you – even if we could sit here together and speak for the rest of our lives, it wouldn't be enough.

And we're not talking yet about the *ikkar* of Shabbos, about utilizing the Shabbos the way Hakodosh Baruch Hu intended. We're speaking now only about being impressed with the outward blessings of Shabbos, the side benefits that spring forth from the Shabbos day, but actually we're expected to become philosophers on Shabbos, to become thinkers.

The greatest blessing of the day is when you spend time thinking about the lessons of Shabbos. About *briyas ha'olam yeish mei'ayin*, how

Hakodosh Baruch Hu created the world out of nothing. About how Shabbos is our badge of honor, the day that is an **אוֹת בְּיַמֵּי וּבְיַמֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Other things too. On Shabbos we should be thinking about the *Yom Shekulo Shabbos* which is *Olam Haba*. We should think about the Mann that fell and the lessons of *bitachon* we learn from that. All of that is very important; very very important. That's what Shabbos is for; for creating a Shabbos Mind.

But that's not our subject tonight. We're talking about the **מתן שכרה** that's **לא עבדא לגלויי**, the rewards of Shabbos, the seeds that are planted in the garden of Shabbos that create new gardens. Shabbos is the most special treasure because **לא עבדא לגלויי מתן שכרה**, you'll never know what a great reward the Shabbos holds in store for us because it's never-ending. It's not merely a gold mine under our feet. It's endless. It's a gold mine that goes through and through the earth and continues until eternity.

### Have a Wonderful Shabbos

## LET'S GET PRACTICAL

### Appreciating the Gifts of Shabbos

Shabbos is an endless fountain of gifts from Hashem which He wants us to appreciate. This week I will *bli neder* set aside some time each day to think about Shabbos and to recognize how much benefit Shabbos brings me. Every day I will spend one minute thinking about the happiness Hashem bestows on us on the special day - the day of Shabbos.

### This week's booklet is based on tapes:

106 - Preface To Shabbos 1 | 482 - Preface to Shabbos 6  
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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WITH RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Since you say that we have to thank Hashem for all the kindnesses He gives us in this world, is there anything that Hashem can do that is not kind?

A:

Yes. Sometimes Hakodosh Baruch Hu takes *nekamah*. א-ל נקמות השם. Yes, He takes revenge on certain wicked people in this world, and certainly when He takes revenge in the World to Come that is not a kindness to them. But that unkindness, you must know, is really the essence of kindness. It's kindness to those who deserve it. Now pay attention.

The kindness that Hashem does to the righteous people will never be complete unless Hakodosh Baruch Hu metes out punishment to the wicked. The punishment, the retribution on the wicked, is part of the reward of the righteous.

The righteous know, they are fully aware, that the man who did something wrong cannot get away with it. That's essential in the Plan of a rational universe. To say that a man can be wicked and get away with it, that's impossible. And it's not enough to say that he doesn't get Olam Haba, that he doesn't go to the happiness of the Next World. That's not enough. It's against all logic. And it's against all human feeling to allow him to leave this world without retribution.

And therefore, anything that Hashem does, it's called *חסד ואמת*, but it's not always *chessed* and *emes* to the person who is getting the treatment. When Pharaoh was drowning with his army in the Yam Suf, it was a great joy – but not to Pharaoh. It was *אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל*. It was a joy to *them*.

So certainly Hashem does only kindness, but kindness means to those who deserve the kindness. To the others it could be retribution. But even then, it's a kindness to the righteous who are aware of the retribution on the wicked. think he's wearing a *yarmulke* too. So it's a problem; you have to have both attitudes.

This week's Q&A sponsored:

לע"נ ר' שמחה בן הרב יצחק יוסף ז"ל