

## Shabbos Peace

### Shabbos: The Best Gift

Hashem said to Moshe: "I have a good gift in My treasure house. It is called Shabbos. I wish to give this gift to the Jews (Beitza, 16a)."

The true meaning of Shabbos is expressed in the peace of mind and soul that sanctifies the Jew who observes this day of rest. Keeping Shabbos connects us with the spiritual soul, refreshing it and energizing the life it gives us throughout the week.

Shabbos is compared to the entire Torah for, through its observance, the Jew is bound with the Torah. Shabbos is our true mate, which accompanies us throughout life.

Indeed, our ancestors in Egypt did not merit liberation until they observed the Shabbos. *Tosafos* (beginning of *Chagiga*) puts it this way: Hashem, Shabbos, and the Jews, form a three-way bond: Hashem and the Jews testify that Shabbos is indeed a day of rest; Jews and the Shabbos testify to the Unity of Hashem; Hashem and Shabbos testify that Jews are unique among the gentile nations. This unity is expressed by the liturgy of the afternoon Shabbos prayer, "You are One ..."

Moreover, when Rosh Hashana coincides with Shabbos, the sanctity of Shabbos overrides the obligation to hear the sound of the *shofar*. In certain aspects Shabbos is even higher than Yom Kippur—for it is only regarding Shabbos that Hashem promises to bring the Redeemer if all Jews would keep two Shabbosim. The entire Creation was halted to usher in the Shabbos.

Hence, one who desecrates the Shabbos violates our contract and eternal covenant with the Creator. Those who desecrate this holy day harm others as well, for this desecration weakens and secularizes Shabbos universally. Hence, desecrating the Shabbos is referred to as *Chilul*

*Shabbos*, for *Chilul* denotes secularization. Such people stand to lose many spiritual merits.

Shabbos brings rest even to livestock belonging to Jews. The fires of Purgatory also rest on this day. When one suffers great calamity, Heaven forefend, he is prohibited to feel pain and anguish on this special day. Hence, when the Fast of the Ninth of Av coincides with Shabbos, we are permitted to drink wine as usual.

Shabbos refreshes body and soul. The *Midrash (Breishis)* writes that keeping Shabbos brings prosperity to the Jews, as the verse says, "And G-d blessed the Seventh Day."

Upon ushering in the holy day, we light candles and cover our eyes *before* making the blessing. This is because we accept the sanctity of Shabbos with this blessing, making it forbidden to light fire.

When the Jews constructed the holy Temple, one day alone was forbidden to work—the Shabbos (*Yevomos, 6a*). Indeed, Shabbos is part of *gan eden*, Paradise (*Brochos*).

As Rabbi Eliezer said: "The Torah mentions the sanctity of Shabbos 28 times." This number far exceeds mention from most other *mitzvos*, because Shabbos brings the Jew to follow more *mitzvos* in its wake, and teach his children to do likewise and fulfill the precepts of Kashrus, family purity, etc.

The symphony of Shabbos—as expressed in the liturgy, "the seventh day praises and sings"—resonates in every Jewish heart, elevating and refining the soul. Shabbos transforms the Jewish house into a Temple, the table into an Altar.

However, it is important to remember that *electrical* lights do not replace Shabbos candles. Such light darkens the soul and the souls of his offspring.

It behooves us now to remember our Creator and the beautiful gift he bestowed upon us—the Shabbos. We are expected to observe and sanctify this day.

How many rivers of Jewish blood have been spilled throughout the travails of our exile! We suffer for our beliefs. Now too, unfortunately, there are those who sell their souls and bodies for some money, preferring to violate the Shabbos for financial gain.

Unfortunately, the terrible spiritual downfall experienced by many of our brethren is due to the desecration of the Shabbos. Secularizing this holy day brings anguish and hard work that exhausts us. Forgetting the Shabbos makes us forget the true riches of Jewish life and the spiritual taste of Shabbos bliss. Those who taste this bliss are rewarded with life!

It is tragic and heartbreaking to see how, in places advanced in civilized culture, Jews are opening their stores on Shabbos. (We read in the anguished words of the prophet in this week's *Haftorah* all the calamities befalling us for this sin.) It would be much better for us all to be particularly careful about our adherence of Shabbos, and not sell our souls and bodies for a kilo of bread or pack of cigarettes.

Desecrating the Shabbos brings financial and material ruin to the Jewish nation. Our present circumstances are bitter indeed; one of the harshest and most tragic times Jews have ever faced. An ocean of heresy threatens to drown the Jewish street. Ignorance and sacrilege threaten our nation. The *Shechina* has left us; darkness shrouds the Jewish sky.

Should our nation—known as the “Chosen People”—become disintegrated? Let us return to our eternal fountain of Torah, the Law of Life given to us by the eternal G-d.

Let us accept His eternal covenant, “the sign [of Shabbos] between Me and you.” Let us raise the crown of our nation, the Shabbos! If we shall observe the Shabbos as our ancestors did, we will be guarded and protected by the Shabbos!

Let us bring the sanctity and purity of Shabbos into our homes again. Shabbos will bring light once more to the darkened Jewish sky.

The *Midrash* says (*Psalms*, 47:92): “The Jews sin doubly by desecrating the Shabbos, for Shabbos contains two elements—“Shabbos for Hashem” and “Shabbos for you (Israel).” Therefore, in corresponding measure, Hashem brought double punishment upon them by destroying the Temple and Jerusalem.

“Yet, Hashem brings them double solace. By keeping the Shabbos, Hashem brings Elijah the Prophet and *Moshiach*, who will rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem, bringing eternal salvation to the Jewish people!”

Whoever has discerning eyes sees and feels that we are under Hashem's Divine Providence every single moment. Since the Creator guides our world for eternal time, let us live our life according to His desire and fulfill His Torah in a loving and thorough way.

The Torah elevates those who fulfill it. This eternal Torah guards their offspring forever, showering them with success from the fountain of blessing. He is watched by our eternal Father, Av Harachamim, to whom we turn and beseech: “Rise, assist Israel, and bring only good upon Israel!”

Notta, son of Yakov halevi, Lipshitz  
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Shabbos Nachamu, 5693 (1923)