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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Preparing for Shabbos

By Rav Pinches Friedman shlita (Shiur E3)

How do our preparations for an important event compare with our preparation for eternity?

Getting to know one's priorities

Shabbos is our glimpse of eternity; it is a spiritual high-water mark in our calendar and lives, to adjust to the splendor of eternity so that our future transition into the light of a fully spiritual existence does not blind us. We can get above and beyond our temporal existence and use Shabbos to get a sense of what eternity is like. Now we turn our attention to how we can use Shabbos to check our spiritual alignment.

If you want to get to know a person (especially yourself), ask the person what he is looking forward to; what he is planning for. Sadly, in a society that has lost its moral compass, the answer will often be nothing at all. He wants everything to be good and fun, but he has no goals, is planning for nothing, and is waiting for the lottery win. But now is not the moment to bemoan the loss of striving in the modern world.

People with a plan are more alive

If there is an answer, you will notice a spark in his eyes, a thoughtful look, a focus of attention and energy. He is planning for something; and he is looking forward to it. Whatever it is speaks

to him and warrants his concerted efforts. He does not consider the time spent planning to be wasted; it is time well spent in pursuit of that which is precious to him. He cannot put it out of his mind and just let things happen. If the planning involves architecture, he knows that the bridge will not just 'get built' and one day cars will 'just' go over and cross the river. Meticulous planning is needed and is warranted.

The higher the stakes, the more the planning

The longer the effect of the event is meant to last, or if the consequences of an error would be life-threatening, the more meticulous will be the planning. If the bridge is to last for a century, then painstaking attention to every detail of the construction will

precede the first step and will accompany every step along the way. Details are not left to chance. We will be sure to check and double-check to the extent humanly possible.

How much preparation does eternity require?

Trying to grab eternity too late

The Gemara¹ refers to eternity, the next world, as Shabbos. The Gemara relates that those who

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¹ עבודה זרה ג.



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failed to serve Hashem in this world will request to be given Mitzvos in the next world (after the party is over) and they will then fulfil His will! To which Hashem responds that it does not work that way. Instead, says Hashem, 'one who toils on Erev Shabbos will eat on Shabbos.' They did not prepare on Erev Shabbos (in this world) and here is the only place to prepare. One cannot prepare for Shabbos once it is already Shabbos. Our weekly food preparation for Shabbos represents the spiritual preparation that takes place in this world for the next. Eternity and Shabbos are interchangeable terms.

Remember Shabbos all week long

The Ramban² cites the Sifrei on the famous words *זכור את יום השבת לקדשו* as requiring us to prepare for Shabbos all week long. Indeed, per the Ramban, this commandment obligates us to say *היום יום ראשון, שני, שלישי וכו'* בשבת. Each day of the week is an integral part of the spiritual preparation for Shabbos. Each day adds to our awareness that we are here in the world to prepare for Shabbos. We are not meant to slip into the quicksand of the material world and then, somehow, like a jack-in-the-box, pop up into שבת with an awareness that transcendence and connection with eternity is our purpose.

Everything contributes to שבת

Rather, our learning during the week creates a bond with Torah, which is our strongest

Takeaway: I will look for ways during the week to upgrade my readiness for Shabbos, be it via learning, davening, reciting Brochos or reflecting.

connection with our Creator. Our Davening is designed to enhance our consciousness of our Creator. Every part of the week is meant to create the mindset and mood where we yearn for nothing but the union with the Creator on שבת.

A hint to the weekdays as preparatory to שבת

The six workdays are comprised of 144 hours. Dedicating those 144 hours to preparing for Shabbos is alluded to by the great Kabbalist, Rav Shlomo Alkabetz, in Lecha Dodi. He writes *לקראת שבת לכו ונלכה*, the preparation to greet the Shabbos starts מראש מקדם. The word קדם = 144.

Do not leave the spiritual heavy lifting for שבת

The פסוקים על פי דרוש חתם סופר explains:

ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' כל העשה בו מלאכה יומת. לא תבצעו אש בכל מושבתים ביום השבת.³

Creative activity shall be done for six days and the seventh day shall be holy for you...do not ignite a flame on Shabbos.

Says the חתם סופר, you need a flame to have a connection with the Creator. The flame of love, of focus, of intensity and purpose. But the Pasuk hints that we must not try to ignite the flame on Shabbos. That flame will not support the connection with the Creator. The flame must be ignited during the six days which preceded שבת.

² רמב"ן על שמות כ: ז

³ שמות לה: ב-ג