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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

The Benefit of Shabbos being like Olam Haba

By Rav Pinches Friedman shlita (Shiur E2)

Not everyone likes to think about it, but we all hope to be in Olam Haba one day. What will our attitudes and priorities be? How will we 'spend' the reward that we receive there?

Trust funds and the wise trustee

A parent knows that he cannot put generous gifts or even earnings into the hands of his young child. The child does not yet have the understanding needed to spend those funds wisely. The parent, instead, puts the funds into a trust which the child will be able to access when he or she is older. Hopefully, by that time, the child will be able to make wise decisions with the money. The key word in that sentence is *hopefully*. Nobody can guarantee that the sudden windfall will be well spent by the young adult. The parents can do little more than hope. In the end, the inheritance will come to them whether they spend it wisely or squander it.

שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא – there is no reward in this World

Hashem, by contrast, never gives us access to the reward that is created by our spiritual efforts in this world. The lure of the material world is too great. The potential loss if one would spend eternal reward on the trinkets and charms of this world makes the risk far too great. We do not know the eternal value of what we would be spending, and we do not know how worthless is the triviality that which we would be spending it

on. Therefore, the Gemara¹ informs us that there is no reward dispensed in this world at all. Every drop of reward is held in trust for us to receive in full in Olam Haba. The Gemara derives this setup from the Pasuk:

וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת הַמִּצְוָה וְאֵת הַחֻקִּים וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם (דברים ז:יא)

You should observe the Mitzvos...which I instruct you today to do them (Devarim 7:11)

If you enter Shabbos as a resident of Olam Haba, then Shabbos will bless your Olam Hazeih.

The words הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם mean that we are meant to 'do' the Mitzvos *today*, in this world. We cannot do the Mitzvos once we are in Olam Haba. And, conversely, we will receive the reward for our spiritual efforts *tomorrow*, in Olam Haba, and not today, in this world.

Getting Olam Haba in this World

Interestingly, because Shabbos is akin to Olam Haba, it is possible to receive spiritual bounty on Shabbos which can sustain us and provide for us throughout the week. And because this bounty and blessing is being provided through the 'Olam Haba' channels, it is protected from the dangers of being absorbed into material acquisition.

¹ קידושין לט:



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The ברכות of שבת are protected from misuse

To explain: The blessing that is bestowed by Shabbos is different from that which a person deludes himself into thinking he has 'earned' during the week. That which one sees as his having 'earned' during the week is at risk of being spent on material benefits which do not bring eternal profit. Earnings which are rooted in one's own efforts are a spiritual risk. But that which one knows is the blessing being bestowed by Shabbos is protected from our natural tendency to shortsightedness. When you spend the blessings of Shabbos during the week you yield yet more eternal blessing. You will find yourself spending on that which increases spirituality, and not on that which indulges materialism. That is the secret behind the assertion that Shabbos is the source of all blessings.

This principle is derived from the words:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ (בראשית ב: ג)

When the Pasuk says that Hashem blessed the day of Shabbos it means that Hashem made Shabbos the source of all blessing. The Zohar states it clearly:

כָּל בְּרָכָאן דְּלֵעִילָא וְתַתָּא, בְּיוֹמָא שְׁבִיעָא תְּלִין (זוהר יתר פח.)

All blessings, both spiritual and material, depend on Shabbos.

The blessings of Shabbos are protected blessings because Shabbos is akin to Olam Haba. But what does it mean to derive blessings from Olam Haba?

How do we step into Olam Haba and draw blessings from there?

The answer is that when we enter Shabbos, we intensify our connection with eternity. We do so by employing the adage, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.' If you want to enter Olam Haba and receive its blessings on Shabbos, then act as though you are in Olam Haba.

How would you act if you understood and sensed that all the material world only serves גשמייות – spirituality? What will your attitudes and priorities be in a world of pure spirituality?

If you pause to consider that question you will be on the road to entering Shabbos and, by extension, Olam Haba. If you hold on to an attitude whereby 'spirituality is nice but גשמייות is what makes the world go around' then you will drag the material world into Shabbos. Shabbos has nothing to offer to such a material world. But if you recognize that the only thing that matters is spiritual gain, then you will immerse the material world into the world of Shabbos then you will receive its blessings, both for your spiritual and for your material life.

More נשמה means that the food tastes better

You are granted an extra Neshama on Shabbos. That means that you have more רוחניות available. Surely that means that you can learn better and have more clarity of Emunah on Shabbos than you can during the week. But it does not only mean that you will learn better; it means that the food will taste better. The extra Neshama can taste Shabbos and enjoy the physical world to a greater degree than one could during the week.



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The Gemara² reports:

אמר לו קיסר לרבי יהושע בן חנניא: מפני מה תבשיל של שבת
ריחו נודף? - אמר לו: תבלין אחד יש לנו, ושבת שמו, שאנו
מטילין לתוכו - וריחו נודף. אמר לו: תן לנו הימנו! - אמר לו:
כל המשמר את השבת - מועיל לו, ושאינו משמר את השבת -
אינו מועיל לו

*The Caesar asked R' Yehoshua b Chananya,
'why does the food for Shabbos give off such a
fragrant smell?' R' Yehoshua b Chananya
responded, 'there is a spice called Shabbos
which we put into the food that gives it its
special aroma.' 'Then give me some of that
spice,' said the Caesar. R' Yehoshua responded,*

*'it enhances the food of those who observe
Shabbos; it would not enhance the food of one
who does not.'*

If you try to 'spice up' the Shabbos food with
earthly, physical embellishments, then you will
not get the taste of Shabbos. You will not have
let Shabbos add to the taste of the food; you will
have rather forced the extravagant food onto
Shabbos. If you enter Shabbos as a resident of
Olam Haba, then Shabbos will bless your Olam
Hazei and not only enhance your learning and
Chesed; it will even enhance the flavor of your
food.

Takeaway: I will use my relationship with Shabbos to become more of an 'Olam Haba' person.

² שבת קיט.