ו אלול תשעו September 9, 2016

פרשת שופטים

Don’t embarrass others

The Sefer Taamai Minhagim[[1]](#footnote-1) brings a fascinating story. A man named R’ Eliezer who lived in a small village was a big host of guests. He would set up people at the entrance of the city and tell them that when a guest comes, tell him to come to me so that he shouldn’t worry where to go in a place where he is unknown. After the guest would come, R’ Eliezer would give him a nice sum of money- in addition to feeding him- since the main purpose of a עני’s; poor person visit is to collect money. Once, in the upper world they were praising R’ Eliezer’s benevolent behavior and it was decided there to test him. So, Eliyahu Hanavi went to test him. After Chatzos on Shabbos, Eliyahu went in the appearance of an עני with his stick and backpack and said ‘good Shabbos.’ Instead of throwing him out since he was a מחלל שבת; desecrated Shabbos, R’ Eliezer was patient and didn’t embarrass him. He then immediately gave him food to eat for Seuda Shlishis. He later gave him food for Melave Malka as well as food on Sunday morning. He also gave him more money without mentioning his Shabbos desecration so he shouldn’t embarrass him.[[2]](#footnote-2) When Eliyahu saw this, he revealed himself to him and said ‘you should know that I am Eliyahu and I came to test you. As a reward for your behavior, you will merit a son that will lighten the eyes of the Jewish people.’ That son was the holy Baal Shem Tov.

Another riveting story about Shabbos desecration brings home this point. There was a boy in the Ponovich Mesivta that was מחלל שבת. The Rebbeim in the Mesivta went to R’ Shach to secure his consent to dismiss this student from the yeshiva. After they relayed to R’ Shach the חילול שבת of this boy, they asked his permission to throw him out. R’ Shach then asked if they know the situation of this boy at home- does his family have an income, do the parents have Shalom Bayis? They answered that they didn’t know since they were just giving a shiur on the third chapter of Baba Metzia. Although R’ Shach was very weak, he pushed himself up to a standing position and with a loud voice and tears streaming forth he exclaimed “you are Rodfim, please leave this room now, I don't want to talk to you. You don't know anything about the Boy in his home rather all you know is that you want to throw him out of the yeshiva." He then continued crying. After some research, it was discovered that the boy's ‎parents recently divorced because of the lack of Money.[[3]](#footnote-3)

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* The precious gift of Shabbos

The Gemara relates that Hashem told Moshe I have a מתנה טובה; wonderful gift in my treasure house and its name is Shabbos. I want to give it to the Jewish people, go and inform them.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Sefer Sifsei Kedoshim explains this Gemara with a story. R’ Shmuel Shmelke once encountered a poor person and didn’t have anything to give him. He therefore gave a precious ring he had in his possession. When his wife realized this, she got so upset since it was worth a lot of money. The Rebbe then said if it is worth that much let me go tell the poor person how much the ring is truly worth so that he doesn’t sell it for cheap. In this way we can grasp the above Gemara.

The word שבת is related to tranquility, serenity as in שובה ונחת; stillness and peacefulness, and as in נפשי ישובב; restores my soul.[[5]](#footnote-5) The evil forces desist on Shabbos as the Zohar[[6]](#footnote-6) says כד עיל שבתא... וכל שולטני רוגזין...; when Shabos arrives… all harsh judgements are removed… all wrathful dominions and bearers of grievances flee…

We need to experience a genuine Shabbos. R’ Moshe Leib Sassover would give the following analogy: there was someone who wanted to invite a great person. He therefore ordered the highest quality of everything- the finest delicacies, the top musicians, the funniest comedians, the best lighting and so on. However, he forgot to invite the guest. The same is with many people in regard to Shabbos[[7]](#footnote-7) as they prepare the best foods, wear their finest clothing, they wipe the floor clean, prepare beautiful Shabbos candles and so forth.[[8]](#footnote-8) However, they forget to invite Shabbos! In this way we can comprehend וקראת לשבת[[9]](#footnote-9) as one needs to also invite Shabbos.

There was a Jew from Yerushalayim who would say ‘Hashem you gave me Challa for Lechem Mishna, wine for Kidush and Havdala, and all that I need for Shabbos. Now, please give me Shabbos for Shabbos. We need to experience the joy, sweetness and holiness of Shabbos.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The Shela comments on וקראת לשבת ענג that Shabbos should have an ענג from you.[[11]](#footnote-11) That is, from the way you daven, learn[[12]](#footnote-12) and the like.

Shabbos has the ability to bring us close to Hashem as it says ואני קרבת אלהים לי טוב[[13]](#footnote-13) as קרבת; closeness, shares the same Gematria as שבת, 702. How does one feel the light of Shabbos? The Lechivitzer[[14]](#footnote-14) remarks on לוו עלי... ואני פורע[[15]](#footnote-15); borrow the funds needed for Shabbos and I- Hashem will repay your loans, that לוו can mean connect as in ילוה אישי; my husband will become attached.[[16]](#footnote-16) So, connect with Hashem and then ואני פורע- He will show you the light as פורע can mean to reveal as in כי פרע.[[17]](#footnote-17)

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Stay connected

The Ramban[[18]](#footnote-18) (1190-1270) says that one’s thoughts should never separate from Hashem whether he is on the road, just awoke or going to sleep. It should be to the extent that even when he converses with people, he is just talking with his mouth and tongue but his mind is with Hashem. When R’ Avigdor Miller was asked by his grandson why he had short conversations with people, he answered because he can’t speak to someone for too long without losing focus of Hashem. In this light, we can grasp the words of Yaakov to the Malachim כה תאמרון לאדני לעשו כה אמר...; so shall you say, to my master to Esav…. כה תאמרון לאדני, so should you say to the master of the world, Hashem. לעשו כה אמר...- to Esav, let it appear as if you are talking to him.[[19]](#footnote-19)

In defining the term עבד ה', the Redak[[20]](#footnote-20) (1160-1235) remarks it is one who puts all his energy, intentions, and השגחה in Hashem. That is, even when he is engaged in worldly matters, he has Hashem in his mind. That is an עבד ה' like אברהם עבדי and דוד עבדי.

Reb Nachman of Kossov would urge people to observe שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד,[[21]](#footnote-21) to always remember Hashem. He would encourage them to think about Hashem even while they were doing business. He was asked how this was possible since one’s mind may be focused on other matters. He responded I see that people are capable of thinking about their business when they daven, so why is this different?![[22]](#footnote-22)

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To change the world

The story is told of a son who was bored thereby irritating his father. To keep his son busy he decided to rip up a map of the world for him to construct back together. Expecting hours of silence from his son now that he would be busy, he was shocked when his son returned moments later with it all intact. The father watching in disbelief asked incredulously how he did it so quickly. The child responded that on the other side of the map there was a man. Once he put the man together the pieces of the world fell into place. The lesson is clear and powerful- when we fix ourselves, we fix the world. This helps us comprehend a deeper meaning in קשוט עצמך ואח"כ קשוט אחרים; correct yourself and then others.[[23]](#footnote-23) It can also be understood that through fixing yourself, you fix others.

This is the meaning שופטים...תתן לך as we first need to put judges and guards over our gates meaning to protect ourselves from sin. It all begins with us first and then it affects the world. Similarly, R’ Mendel Vorka reads ובערת הרע מקרבך, fix yourself up and then וכל ישראל ישמעו ויראו, others will change.[[24]](#footnote-24)

To receive this on a weekly email, feedback, comments or to support this publication please contact Yehoshua Alt at parshadt28@gmail. לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדור בן יצחק מאיר

1. Taamai Minhagim, pg 104, s.v. ובספר רחמי האב [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Another story of avoiding one getting embarrassed is told about R’ Akiva Eiger. He once had a guest who spilled a cup during the meal. A little while later, R’ Akiva Eiger did the same with his own cup in order that the guest shouldn’t be embarrassed. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sefer Chochmas Hanefesh, pg 139 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Shabbos 10b [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Yeshaya 30:15, Tehillim 23:3. Tangentially, we don’t say good night on Shabbos (rather we say Good Shabbos) since Shabbos is entirely light. The Gemara tells us (Moed Katan 24a) that there is no observance of mourning on Shabbos. This is because during the week, the conduct of Hashem is through a Malach whereas on Shabbos it is through Hashem himself, and it says ... וחדוה במקומו; delight are in His place (Divrei Hayamim 1, 16:27), in regard to Hashem. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Teruma 134:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Pasuk says זכור את יום השבת לקדשו (Shemos 20:8) which can be understood in conjunction with the actions of Shamai that if he came across a superior animal anytime during the week he would say this should be put aside for Shabbos. If he later came across a better animal he would designate this one instead for Shabbos (Beitza 16a, see Mishna Brura 250:2). So לקדשו is a contraction of לקדש ו, to sanctify Shabbos with the 6 days of the week as ו has a Gematria of 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. At Mussaf on Shabbos, we say אשרי aloud more than other days. The Levush (Orach Chaim 286:1) brings a reason that this is because אשרי...סלה forms an acronym of**א**חר **ש**שת **ר**אשונים **י**מים **י**ום **ש**ביעי **ב**חר **י**-ה **ב**רכת **י**-ה **ת**מלא **י**ין **כ**וס **ע**ופות **ו**בשר **ד**גים **י**שלש **ה**סעודות **ל**בוש **ל**בנים **ו**חלף **כ**סותך **ס**ליקא **ל**עשות **ה**בדלה. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Yeshaya 58:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Orach Chaim 262:3. The phrase שמור וזכור בדבור אחד; שמור and זכור were said in one utterance, can be interpreted as when one speaks of the שמור- can’t dos, and זכור- Oneg Shabbos and the like- it is all אחד- to bring out the Kedusha of Shabbos. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. In a similar fashion, the Chassam Sofer commented onלחזות בנועם ה'; to behold the sweetness of Hashem, that Hashem should get pleasure from the way we serve him. There is a concept that Mitzvos actually cry out to a person to fulfill it whether it is the Mitzva of Tzitzis, Tefillin and the like. This is the deeper meaning inאשרי האיש שישמע למצותיך; praiseworthy is the person who obeys your commandments- praised is the person who listens to the Mitzvos that are requested from him to fulfill them (Sichos Biavodas Hashem, pg 15). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. R’ Dessler said he remembers when he was around the age of 9, his father and his uncle would arise at around midnight on Shabbos and learn together for about 9 hours until Shacharis. His mother would also arise, and learn Ramban, Midrash and Malbim on the Parsha (Michtav Meliyahu, 1, pg 25). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Tehillim 73:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Toras Avos, Drachim in Avodas Hashem [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Beitza 15b [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Breishis 29:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Shemos 32:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Eikev, 11:22 s.v. ויתכן. In 1263, the Ramban had a debate by demand with King James and won, thereby receiving 300 coins from the king. The Ramban arrived in Acco in 1267. Since there was no Sefer Torah in Yerushalayim, he brought one from Shechem. He revived the community there and told them to be careful with their actions since in Yerushalayim, one is in the palace of the king. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See Noam Elimelech, Vayishlach. Similarly, this is how ויברך דויד... לעיני כל הקהל ויאמר דויד וגו' (Divrei Hayamim 1, 29:10) is translated. Dovid gave his blessing, לעיני כל הקהל ויאמר דוד- but to the people it seemed like he was just talking. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Sefer Yehoshua 1:1 s.v. עבד. His father died when he was 10. The Redak wrote a commentary on all of Tanach, although we only have his commentary on Breishis, Neviim, Tehillim, Mishlei and Shir Hashirim. As his popularity grew, they said (Avos 3:21) אם אין קמח אין תורה; if there is no Kemach there is no Torah (as his name was ר' דוד קמחי). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Tehillim 16:8. See Orach Chaim 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See Toldos Yaakov Yosef, Vayera [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Baba Metzia 107b [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Devarim 21:21. Also 17:12-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)