

In Hilchos Shabbos

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The Protection of Shabbos

A summary of the weekly Wednesday night shiur by Rabbi Shmuel Stein at the Miami Beach Community Kollel / To receive a copy send an email to InHilchosShabbos@gmail.com

Shabbos Protects those who Protect it

The Medrash¹ states that on the day of Shabbos, we do not need protection, because Shabbos is our protector. For this reason, explains the Avudraham,² on Friday night we do not recite the blessing of שמור עמנו ישראל לעד - 'Hashem is the protector of the Jewish people forever,' as we recite during the week, because on the day of Shabbos we merit protection through keeping Shabbos.

A Year When Rosh HaShana falls out on Shabbos

The Aruch L'ner³ made the following observation, "If you look back at history, we find that the years which Rosh HaShana fell out on Shabbos and we did not blow the Shofar on Rosh HaShana, were either very good years or a very bad year." The Aruch L'ner explains this with the following parable:

The was a man who was charged of a terrible crime and could not find a lawyer to defend him. The man told his wife of his difficult situation and she responded with the following idea: It so happened that she frequently visited the king's inner chamber and offered to petition to the king on his behalf. She was thus able to persuade the king to save her husband. Several weeks later, a similar incident occurred to another man, but this man was physically abusive to his wife but nonetheless asked his wife to visit the king and petition to the king on his behalf as well. The wife agreed, but when she went to the king's inner chamber, the king realized that she was bruised and that her husband was abusive to her, the king got angry at the husband and was sentenced to a harsh judgement.

The Aruch L'ner writes, "That Shabbos is 'the mate of the Jewish people' and on a year when the Shofar is not blown and the Jewish people have no defendant, the wife of the Jewish people – Shabbos – comes to petition on our behalf. This is only effective however if we treat Shabbos properly and it can petition on our behalf. However, if we do not treat Shabbos properly then Shabbos cannot petition on our behalf and we G-d forbid are sentenced to a harsh judgement. Therefore, on a year when the Shofar is not blown, it can be a very good year, because if we treat Shabbos properly it comes to our protection. It can also be a very bad year, G-d forbid, because if we do not treat Shabbos properly it does not come to our protection, and we are left without any defendant." Thus, the Aruch L'ner concludes that "Certainly, in such a year one when we do not blow the Shofar on Rosh HaShana, one must strengthen himself in his Shabbos observance and do teshuva so that he can merit the protection of Shabbos."

Shabbos is the source of Blessing

The Zohar⁴ states that "All of the beracha which we find on this world and all the beracha which is found in the heaven, are dependent on the day of Shabbos." Similarly, the Torah⁵ states, "During the six days (of the week) you should work and perform all of your work." The Alshich hakadosh⁶ explains that if someone 'works [only] during the six days of the week' and does not perform melacha on Shabbos, will merit success while 'performing all his work' during the week. The Medrash⁷ also states that "When someone keeps Shabbos, a person can make a decree and Hashem will fulfill his decree."

The Source of all miracles

Similarly, the Bais Halevi⁸ writes that "Shabbos is the source of all miracles and revelations to the Jewish people." This is evident from the following stories which are recounted in the Gemara:⁹

There was once a pious man who was walking through his garden on Shabbos and noticed that there was a breach in his fence. In his mind he decided to fix the fence after Shabbos. The pious man was disappointed with himself that he even thought about performing a melacha after Shabbos¹⁰ and he decided never to fix the fence. In this merit, Hashem performed a miracle for him and a beautiful Tzaf tree¹¹ grew in his garden which was so valuable that it supported his family all his days."

The Maharsha¹² explains that although it is technically permissible to think about melacha on Shabbos which one wishes to perform after Shabbos (so long as one does not verbalize it), this pious man did not want to even have any thoughts or connection to his weekday pursuits and was therefore granted a miracle.

The Gemara²⁴ tells another story:

Yosef ben Simai has a property which caught fire on Shabbos. When the non-Jewish firemen came to extinguish the fire, Yosef ben Simai did not allow them to save his property. As a result, a miracle occurred, and it began to rain until the fire was extinguished. Although it was permitted on Shabbos to allow the non-Jew to extinguish the fire, Yosef ben Simai maintained a stricter level of Shabbos observance, to raise the honor of Shabbos, and was watched over and merited a miracle.

One who spends money in Honor of Shabbos... Shabbos repays him

The Gemara¹³ recounts a story of a man whose name was Yosef who would spend money well above his means to honor Shabbos and gained a nickname of יוסף מוקיר שבת - 'Yosef who honors Shabbos.'

There lived a wealthy non-Jew who lived in the same neighborhood as 'Yosef who honored Shabbos' and this non-Jew noticed that Yosef spent an exorbitant amount of money for Shabbos which was well above his means and would mock him. One day, the star gazers told this non-Jew that in the future all his property would end up in the hands of Yosef. To protect himself from this fate, the non-Jew sold all his properties and purchased one beautiful and expensive diamond which he placed in a beautiful hat that he would always wear. The non-Jew was walking by a river and suddenly a strong wind blew his hat into the river and the diamond was eaten by a fish. This fish was caught by a fisherman, and he brought it to the market on erev Shabbos. However, it was so close to Shabbos that there were no longer any buyers in the marketplace. The fisherman asked to whom he could still sell the fish to at this late hour? People told him to go to 'Yosef who honors Shabbos,' as he always buying fish in honor of Shabbos. Yosef bought the fish and found the diamond which he was able to sell for thirteen rooms full of gold. An elderly person met Yosef (and heard his story) and remarked 'One who borrows money to honor Shabbos, Shabbos itself comes and repays him.'

The Gemara¹⁴ recounts another story:

Rav Chiya bar Aba was once a guest at the home of a man in the city of Ludkia and they brought in front of a golden table which needed to be carried in by sixteen men and was set with the most beautiful dishes and was served the most delicious food. Rav Chiya was astounded by the man's wealth and asked him 'My son, what merit did you have to gain such wealth?' The man answered, 'I was a butcher and any time that I found a

part of an animal which was beautiful, I would set it aside for Shabbos.' Rav Chiya responded, 'Fortunate that you merited this and blessed is Hashem that He gave you this blessing.'

Someone who Keeps Shabbos... Hashem Forgives his Sins

The Medrash¹⁵ writes that "Someone who keeps Shabbos properly, it is as if he kept the entire Torah." The Gemara¹⁶ states that someone who keeps Shabbos in accordance with its *halacha*, Hashem forgives all his sins, even if his sins are like those of the generation of Enosh."

Keeping the *halachos* of Shabbos

The Chafetz Chaim¹⁷ writes that "the Gemara writes specifically that one must keep Shabbos *in accordance with its halacha*, as to gain the protection of Shabbos one must keep Shabbos in its entirety with all its *halachos*. But how is this possible? How can one keep all the *halachos* of Shabbos? The only way this is possible is by strengthening oneself to learn the *halachos* of Shabbos properly to learn what is permitted and what is prohibited, and then to review these *halachos* constantly. For if one does not learn what is permitted and what is prohibited, learning all of the *mussar* and beautiful ideas about Shabbos will not ensure that he keeps Shabbos properly. Therefore, the Gemara emphasizes that one must keep Shabbos according to its *halacha*."

The Jewish Nation is redeemed in the merit of Shabbos

The Medrash¹⁸ writes that "The Jewish people are only redeemed because of the merit of Shabbos." Similarly, the Gemara¹⁹ writes "If the Jewish people would keep one Shabbos properly the son of Dovid would immediately come (and they would be redeemed)."

May we merit to see the redemption together speedily in our days!

¹ Cited in Avudraham, Maariv Friday Night

² ibid

³ Minchas Ani, Parshas Hazinu

⁴ Vol. 2 p. 88a

⁵ Shemos 20:9

⁶ Toras Moshe, Shemos 20:9

⁷ Medrash Rabba 25:12

⁸ Bereishis d"v h v'hinei

⁹ Shabbos 150b; Yerushalmi Shabbos 15:3

¹⁰ As explained by the Gemara Yerushalmi (ibid) and Taz 307:14

¹¹ Interestingly, the *Shela ha'Kadosh* (Mesechtas Shabbos) writes that "I have a *kabbala* that this pious man was a *gilgul* of מַצְלִיחַ who was the one who chopped wood in the Midbar on Shabbos. This man

was fixing the sin which he performed years earlier and merited to have one *Tzaf* tree (צֶלֶף-עֵץ) as a reward. [Perhaps, by not even having thought of fixing the 'chopped' (wooden) fence, he fixed his sin of chopping wood on Shabbos.]

¹² On this Gemara Shabbos 150b

¹³ Shabbos, 119a

¹⁴ Shabbos 115a

¹⁵ Shemos Rabba 25:12

¹⁶ Shabbos 118b

¹⁷ Shem Olam, I

¹⁸ Medrash Rabba, Vayikra 3:1

¹⁹ Yerushalmi 1:1