

In Hilchos Shabbos

You have heard the shaylos . . .
Now learn the issues & the opinions

**Shabbos:
A Day for Oneg
Shabbos or for
Studying Torah?**

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

*BaYam Darkecha*¹ writes that “many *Ovdei Hashem* grapple with the following question: We all know the greatness of learning Torah and that there is no better way to connect with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Yet, on *Shabbos*, which is the loftiest day of the week, one has less time to learn Torah, due to the longer *davening*, the *seudos*, and the *inyan* to sleep. This causes some to feel disappointed; it detracts from their enjoyment of *Shabbos* as their *Avodas Hashem* seems to suffer on this holy day.” In this chapter we will attempt to resolve this seeming contradiction, discussing the importance of both studying Torah on *Shabbos* and partaking in *Oneg Shabbos*.

Oneg Shabbos or Studying Torah?

The Gemara² relates that when Rav Zeira would enter the *bais medrash* on *Shabbos* and see pairs of *rabbanim* learning together, he would approach them and say, ‘I ask of you, please go and busy yourselves with your *Shabbos seudah* and do not be *mechalel* [*Shabbos*].’ We see that it is actually possible to be *mechalel Shabbos* through learning Torah and not busying oneself properly with *Oneg Shabbos*!

On the other hand, we find that the *Talmud Yerushalmi*³ states, “*Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* were given for the Jewish people to have time to learn and toil in Torah.” The *Tur*⁴ states that “when the Jewish people were about to enter *Eretz Yisroel*, the Torah came to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* with the following complaint: When the Jewish People will settle in *Eretz Yisroel*, they will be busy working their fields – what will become of me? When will they have time to study me? *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* responded: *Shabbos* will be your mate, on the day of *Shabbos* the Jewish people will study you.”⁵

Again, we seem to have a contradiction: is *Shabbos* meant as a day for *Oneg* or for studying Torah?

Rabbanim vs. Working People

There is an interesting *P’sikta*⁶ which states as follows:

Rav Chiya bar Abba said, “*Shabbos* was only given for *Oneg*.” *Rav Shmuel bar Nachman* said, “*Shabbos* was only given for study of Torah.” But these two opinions do not argue: One who is a *Talmid Chacham* and studies Torah all week, for him *Shabbos* is a day of *Oneg*. For one who is a worker and does not have the opportunity to study Torah all week, *Shabbos* is a day to study Torah.

Thus, Rav Zeira would enter the *bais medrash* and tell the *rabbanim* that they should busy themselves with *Oneg Shabbos*, as they had spent time studying Torah during the week. The *Yerushalmi*, on the other hand, is discussing working people who do not have the opportunity to study Torah during the week; for them *Shabbos* was given to study Torah. Thus, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* answered the concern of the Torah as follows: for **those who toil in their fields** during the week, *Shabbos* will be the day when they study Torah.

This is codified in the *Rema*⁷ as well:

*People who work during the week and generally do not have the opportunity to delve into Torah learning, should be careful to learn more Torah on Shabbos. People who have the opportunity during the week to delve into Torah learning should spend some time enjoying Shabbos through eating and drinking.*⁸

Accordingly, *Eis La’asos*⁹ writes that “someone who works during the week has a holy obligation to learn Torah on *Shabbos* and not to squander his time with napping and relaxing, rather he should use it to make up for the time when he could not learn Torah during the week.” The *Elyah Rabbah*¹⁰ clarifies that “although someone who studies Torah during the week should spend his time on *Shabbos* having *Oneg Shabbos*, this does not mean that these people should waste the entire day of *Shabbos* with physical enjoyment, as *Shabbos* is a day to learn Torah,” rather the intention is that they should have a little more *Oneg* on *Shabbos* than they do during the rest of the week.¹¹

We will now discuss the importance of the mitzvah of *Oneg Shabbos* and studying Torah on *Shabbos*.

Oneg Shabbos: Me’ein Olam HaBa

The *Navi*¹² states that “You should call the day of *Shabbos* *Oneg*.” We will discuss why *Oneg Shabbos* is such an integral part of *Shabbos*. The Gemara¹³ states that the holy day of *Shabbos* is *Me’ein Olam HaBa* – a semblance of the next world. The *Midrash*¹⁴ states:

When HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave the Torah to the Jewish People, He said, “If you keep the Torah, you will receive reward in Olam HaBa.” The Jewish People thereupon requested that He show them a resemblance of Olam HaBa in this world. He answered, “You have the day of Shabbos which is a sixtieth of Olam HaBa, as on this day you will enjoy an Oneg of rest,” as the verse¹⁵ states, “Then you shall have Oneg with Hashem.”

The *Mesilas Yesharim*¹⁶ writes that the purpose of *Olam HaBa* is to have *Oneg* from Hashem. On *Shabbos* we taste a sixtieth of that enjoyment as we have the opportunity to have *Oneg* with Hashem.¹⁷ Thus, when the *Navi* states that “You should call the day of *Shabbos* ‘*Oneg*,’” he was referring to the *Oneg* of the *neshamah* which connects to Hashem on *Shabbos* in a manner resemblant of its connection to Hashem in *Olam HaBa*.¹⁸

Physical Enjoyment on Shabbos

What is difficult to understand is why we celebrate this spiritual *Oneg* with physical *Oneg*? The *Baal Shem Tov*¹⁹ explains this with a parable:

There was once a prince who was captured and taken to a faraway land. One day the prince received a letter from his father the king saying that he had not forgotten about him and planned to have him freed. When the son read the letter he rejoiced; however, he could not rejoice publicly [as those around him would be suspicious as to why he was rejoicing]. What did the son do? He gathered the people around him and gave them good food and drinks so that they too would be happy allowing him to rejoice over his letter as well.

The same is true, explains the *Baal Shem Tov*, regarding *Oneg Shabbos*: one’s *neshamah* wishes to rejoice and enjoy the connection with Hashem which it attains on *Shabbos*. However, since it lives in a physical world [and the body will not allow it to rejoice with Hashem] one must also provide physical *Oneg* to his body as well. “Then you shall have *Oneg* with Hashem,” which is *Me’ein Olam HaBa*.

*BaYam Darkecha*²⁰ gives the following practical advice:

“When having the *Shabbos seudos* one should contemplate the following three things:

1. **One’s Outlook.** One’s outlook towards the *seudah* should be that the main purpose is for one’s *neshamah* to connect with Hashem.
2. **One’s Actions.** The way one acts at his *seudah* should be elevated to show that he is involved in a spiritual pursuit. This is why we have the custom to sing *zemiros* and say *divrei Torah*.
3. **One’s Thoughts.** One should focus his thoughts during his *seudah* on his *neshamah*, enjoying the connection with Hashem. He should try to focus on this thought.”

Studying Torah on Shabbos

As we discussed, *Shabbos* is also meant as a day to study Torah as it is a day when one rests from work and is free to learn Torah. Additionally, the *Ben Ish Chai*²¹ writes in the name of the *Mekubalim* “that the Torah that one studies on *Shabbos* is a thousand times greater than during the week.”²² What is so unique about the Torah that one learns on *Shabbos*?

*BaYam Darkecha*²³ explains that there are two ways that one can study Torah. 1) In a superficial way of viewing the Torah as a subject and knowledge he wishes to acquire, or 2) as a way to connect to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

The Gemara²⁴ writes that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says regarding the study of Torah:

“I put my soul into the words of the Torah.”

In other words, through the study of Torah one can access connection to Hashem. This is the purpose of studying Torah, as the Ramchal²⁵ writes:

[The Torah has two facets:] One must study Torah in order to know how to act, for if one does not study Torah how will he know what to do? Aside from this, studying Torah is the greatest tool which can bring a person to completion since *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* placed a part of Himself into the Torah.

When one studies Torah on *Shabbos* he can access the inner part of the Torah in a greater way than he can during the week. Since *Shabbos* is a day which allows us to see the *P'nimius*, the spiritual side, of the world, when one studies Torah on *Shabbos* he connects to the inner part of Torah one thousand times more than he does during the week.²⁶

In Summary

Shabbos is a day when we connect to the *P'nimius* of the world, and we deepen this connection through the two *mitzvos* of *Oneg Shabbos* and the study of Torah. *Oneg Shabbos* allows one's *neshamah* to enjoy its connection with Hashem - *Me'ein Olam HaBa*. Studying Torah on *Shabbos* connects a person to the deeper part of the Torah.²⁷

Studying Torah and Oneg Shabbos

The *poskim* point out that although there is an important *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbos* one must be careful to spend time studying Torah on *Shabbos* as well. The *Elyah Rabbah*²⁸ writes that “although someone who studies Torah during the week should spend his time on *Shabbos* having *Oneg Shabbos*, this does not mean that these people should waste the entire day of *Shabbos* with physical enjoyment, as *Shabbos* is a day to learn Torah.” The *Chayei Adam*²⁹ writes that “*Shabbos* was given to eat a little and drink a little and then to use the remainder of the day to toil in Torah, as this is the greatest *Oneg* for one's *neshamah*.”³⁰ *Noheg KaTzon Yosef*³¹ writes that, “Unfortunately, there are many unlearned people who, after filling up their stomachs, fall into a deep sleep. They have no interest in learning Torah even though there are many *sefarim* nowadays written with translation that they can learn. They argue that they are in fact performing a *mitzvah* since it is well known that the *Midrash*³² writes that the word *שבת* is an acronym for *שינה בשבת תענוג* – sleeping on *Shabbos* is an enjoyment. However, they do not know that the word *שינה* has two connotations: *sleeping* (as it is normally translated) and *learning* (from the word *משנה*), and one should be careful to fulfill both, for the Torah mourns and is embarrassed by people who do not learn on *Shabbos*.” The *Shelah HaKadosh*³³ criticizes those who eat excessively at the *Shabbos* meals because this causes them to get drowsy and

to be overtaken by sleep, and as a result they cannot apply themselves to Torah study, because the purpose of *Shabbos* is to learn Torah.

Which Subjects to Study on Shabbos

The *Mishnah Berurah*³⁴ cites the *Zohar* that on *Shabbos* “there is a *mitzvah* to innovate *Chiddushei Torah* (novel Torah ideas).” The *Zohar*³⁵ explains that “on *Mo'tzo'ei Shabbos*, when one's *Neshamah Yeseirah* returns to Heaven, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* asks it what new Torah ideas it was *mechadeish* on *Shabbos*.”³⁶ The *Mishnah Berurah* adds that “one who cannot innovate novel thoughts on *Shabbos* should learn a fresh subject.”³⁷ However, Rav Yaakov Emden³⁸ disagrees, stating that “a person must make *Shabbos* special in everything that he does – even the learning which he does on *Shabbos* must be different, it must be light and enjoyable and not a difficult burden. A *talmid chacham* should not strain himself on *Shabbos* to learn in a deep way so that he can think of *Chiddushei Torah* as this would be considered *Chillul Shabbos*.” However, the custom does not follow the ruling of Rav Yaakov Emden, and one may learn deeply and compose *Chiddushei Torah* even if it is strenuous.³⁹ Still, the *Machazik Berachah*⁴⁰ writes that “if a *talmid chacham* does not want to learn deeply on *Shabbos* he may learn lighter topics on the *parshah* or *Gemara*. This is in fact the custom of most *talmidei chachamim* in most of the places which I have visited.”

Public Shiurim on Shabbos

The *Tur*⁴¹ writes that “on *Shabbos*, public *shiurim* should be established where *halachos* are taught.” The *Bach* explains that this means that the focus of the *shiurim* is not to be *aggados*, rather practical *halachos* – particularly those of *Shabbos* or those related to the topics of the *sidra* – and *mussar* that inspires the public to *Yiras Shamayim*. The *Chafetz Chayim*⁴² also writes that “forming groups to learn Torah is an important matter, particularly so on *Shabbos*.”⁴³

Public Shiurim to Learn Hilchos Shabbos

The *Mishnah Berurah*⁴⁴ concludes his introduction to *Hilchos Shabbos* as follows:

It is appropriate and proper for anyone who fears the word of Hashem to form groups to learn the halachos of Shabbos so that he and others will not stumble and violate them. The Midrash⁴⁵ teaches this to us and writes that 'HaKadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe: gather groups and teach them in public the halachos of Shabbos. [The future generations will learn from you, and they too will gather groups every Shabbos and enter the Bais Medrash to learn the halachos. Through this My Name will be praised by My children.]' It is well known that keeping the laws of Shabbos hastens the final redemption. As Chazal⁴⁶ state, 'If only the Jewish people would keep two Shabbosos, they would immediately be redeemed.'

May we merit to see the final redemption together, speedily, in our days.

¹ *Shabbos*, p. 361.

² *Shabbos* 119b.

³ Cited in *Mishnah Berurah* 290:7.

⁴ OC 290 (cited in *Mishnah Berurah* 290:5).

⁵ The *Chida* (*Yosef Tehillos* 75:3) explains the gravity of not studying Torah on *Shabbos*: One who neglects his study all week long due to his financial preoccupations and does not compensate for it on *Shabbos* will be held accountable for all of the lost time of the week as well. He can no longer argue that the reason that he did not study Torah during the week was due to his responsibilities for his livelihood, for by not learning Torah on *Shabbos*, he shows that irrespective of his livelihood he does not do so. Based on this idea, the *Chafetz Chayim* (*Mishnah Berurah* 290:7; *Shem Olam* 5) explains the *Gemara* (*Gittin* 38b) which states that “one of the reasons a wealthy person loses his wealth is because he ate his *Shabbos* meal while the public communal *shiur* is given on *Shabbos*.” Since the purpose of *Shabbos* is to learn Torah (as a person is too busy during the week), one loses his wealth which he amassed during the week if he does not take the opportunity to learn Torah on *Shabbos* (see *Shulchan Aruch* 290:2).

⁶ End of *perek* 23.

⁷ 290:2.

⁸ Based on this halachah, the *Chasam Sofer* (*Toras Moshe, Yisro*, s.v. *sheishes yamim*) resolves a contradiction between two *pesukim*. In *Parshas Yisro* (20:9-10), the Torah states “You shall labor for six days and do all of your work, and the Seventh Day shall be *Shabbos* for Hashem your G-d.” Yet, in *Parshas Vayakhel* (35:2), it says, “Six days work shall be done and on the Seventh Day it shall be for you holy.” He explains that the *pasuk* in *Yisro* is referring to someone who works during the week (as it says, “You shall labor for six days”); for such a person *Shabbos* is a day designated “for Hashem” – to increase his Torah learning. *Vayakhel* is referring to a *talmid chacham* whose entire week is designated to serving Hashem (as it says “work shall be done for you”); for him *Shabbos* is “for you holy” - to increase his enjoyment of eating and drinking.

⁹ 14.

¹⁰ 290:2.

¹¹ *Kovetz Halachos, Shabbos*, vol. 1, p. 564.

¹² *Yeshayahu* 58:13.

¹³ *Berachos* 57b.

¹⁴ *Osios d'Rabi Akiva*, p. 15.

¹⁵ *Yeshayahu* 58:14

¹⁶ Chapter 1.

¹⁷ *Chemdas Yamim*, p. 10.

¹⁸ *BaYam Darkecha, Shabbos*, p. 409.

¹⁹ *Bereishis*, 86.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

²¹ *Shanah 2, Shemos*, introduction.

²² *Sha'ar HaMelech (Sha'ar 4, Rosh Hashanah 2)* writes that "the Torah one learns on *Shabbos* creates angels which are holier and more respectable than the angels which one creates through learning Torah during the week."

²³ *Shabbos*, p. 362.

²⁴ *Shabbos* 105a.

²⁵ *Derech Hashem* 4:2:1 (see also 1:4:9).

²⁶ The *D'rishah* (430) explains differently, "Shabbos is an auspicious time to study Torah, because the extra *neshamah* that one receives on *Shabbos* helps him understand it better. The *Tur HeAruch (Shemos 20:11)* also writes that "HaKadosh Baruch Hu designated *Shabbos* for one to receive an extra *neshamah* (which allows a person more) wisdom than during the rest of the week."

²⁷ **The Ohr HaGanuz – The Hidden Light**

It is worthwhile to briefly discuss the *Gemara (Chagigah 12a)* which states that when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* created light on the first day of creation, "He saw that the light [was so powerful that it] could enable a person to see from one end of the world to the other. He knew that it was not fit for the wicked, so he hid it [גנוז] for the *Tzaddikim l'asid lavo* (the future righteous people)." The *Sefas Emes (Chanukah תרס"א)* explains: "Our world consists of a physical nature which hides [*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*] and brings darkness to the world. The *Ohr HaGanuz* – a spiritual light – allows a person to see through that darkness, perceiving the true *P'nimius* of the world." explains that when the *Gemara* states that the *Ohr HaGanuz* was hidden for the *Tzaddikim l'asid lavo*, the righteous of the future, it was not referring only to the *Tzaddikim* who will live in the times of *Mashiach*, rather to the *Tzaddikim* of all future generations. But where did *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* hide this spiritual light and how can a *Tzaddik* access it? The *Ba'al Shem Tov (Degel Machaneh Ephraim, Bereishis, d"h Va'yaar)* explains that when the *Gemara* states that the *Ohr HaGanuz* was hidden for the *Tzaddikim l'asid lavo*, the righteous of the future, it was not referring only to the *Tzaddikim* who will live in the times of *Mashiach*, rather to the *Tzaddikim* of all future generations. [Rav Chaim Volozhiner, *Introduction to Shnos Eliyahu* writes this as well.] But where did *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* hide this spiritual light and how can a *Tzaddik* access it? The *Zohar (Mishpatim, 148b-149a; Bereishis, 21a)* states that the *Ohr HaGanuz* was hidden in two places: 1) In the Torah for those who toil in it, 2) In the day of *Shabbos Kodesh*. Thus, by utilizing these two *mitzvos*: *Oneg*

Shabbos and studying Torah on the day of *Shabbos* one can access and see the *P'nimius* of the world.

²⁸ 290:2.

²⁹ *Zichru Toras Moshe* 10.

³⁰ The *Alshich HaKadosh* (cited in *Pnei Dovid (Chida), Behar-Bechukosai 5*) points out that the *Gemara* states that one should be 'מענג את השבת' - provide *Oneg for Shabbos* - it does not state that one should show *Oneg to himself* on *Shabbos*. That is, the primary *Oneg* on *Shabbos* should be through studying Torah as this is an *Oneg to Shabbos* and one's extra *neshamah*.

³¹ P. 164.

³² *Yalkut Reuveini, VaEschanan*.

³³ *Maseches Shabbos* (cited in *Nishmas Shabbos*, vol. 2, p. 463); see also *Reishis Chachmah, Sha'ar HaKedushah*, 15.

³⁴ 290:3.

³⁵ *Shelach*, 173a (cited in *Elyah Rabbah* 290:2).

³⁶ The *Ibn Ezra (Shemos 20:8)* writes that the *Neshamah Yeseirah* is provided to allow greater capacity for wisdom on *Shabbos*. The *Shelah (Maseches Sukkah, Ner Mitzvah 45)* writes that it is so that he can better concentrate on his learning.

³⁷ The *Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah (8:12)* writes similarly, "One does not need to create masterful *Chiddushei Torah*, rather every person, within his abilities, can clarify a halachah in a truthful manner or give a new insight in a *passuk*. It is also clear to me that over the day of *Shabbos* he can think of a new thought in areas of *Yiras Shamayim* which he will act upon during the rest of the week. These thoughts are considered like words of Torah and bring a great *nachas* to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, as He delights in them. They serve as a crown for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and all of His palace and all of the *neshamos* of the *Tzaddikim* in *Gan Eden*."

³⁸ *Siddur Yavetz, Seder Shabbos, Kevius Midrash* 8.

³⁹ *Kovetz Halachos, Shabbos*, vol. 1, pp. 564-565, n. 10.

⁴⁰ 290:6.

⁴¹ 290.

⁴² *Nidchei Yisroel* 14.

⁴³ Rav Hillel Lichtenstein, *Maskil el Dal (8:8:3)*, condemns the *Talmidei Chachamim* who, due to their laziness, do not give public *shiurim* on *Shabbos*.

⁴⁴ Introduction to vol. 3, *d"h v'Akaveh*.

⁴⁵ *Yalkut Shimoni, Vayakhel*.

⁴⁶ *Shabbos* 118b.