

In Hilchos Shabbos

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

Shabbos and
Rav Shimon
Bar Yochai

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

The Navi¹ writes, “So says Hashem, during the six days of the week the gates of the inner chamber are closed, but on the day of Shabbos they are opened.” Similarly, we find that Hashem tells Moshe Rabbeinu, “I have a great gift in my inner chamber, Shabbos is its name, go tell the Jewish people.” In this chapter we will attempt to explain what is contained within this inner chamber and what do we access on this great day of Shabbos.

Shabbos and Rav Shimon Bar Yochai

The Gemara² cites a dispute between Rav Shimon Bar Yochai and Rav Yishmael regarding how one should conduct himself in life:

Rav Yishmael holds that one must work to earn a living and whenever he has time he must learn Torah.

Rav Shimon Bar Yochai however asks on this approach: If someone is busy with his livelihood all day, what will become with the Torah? Rather one should learn Torah and he will merit that his work will be done by others, and Hashem will take care of his needs.

The Gemara concludes:

“Many have tried to follow the opinion of Rav Yishmael, and they were in fact successful, however many have also tried to follow the opinion of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai, but they were not successful (to reach this level).³

On Shabbos we all follow the opinion of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai

Rav Matisyahu Solomon⁴ writes that “although the standard during the week is to follow the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, and the opinion of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai is intended for only a select few, on the holy day of Shabbos *all of Klal Yisroel* elevates themselves to reach the level required by Rav Shimon Bar Yochai. On Shabbos, all of Klal Yisroel closes their businesses and refrains from performing melacha and *entirely* trusts that Hashem will provide for him without any intermediary help. On the day of Shabbos, Klal Yisroel as a whole *entirely* rely on Hashem and toil in His Torah.” In fact, the Zohar⁵ writes that Rav Shimon is called ‘Shabbos’ as the day of Shabbos is holy and Rav Shimon is holy.” Interestingly, the numerical value of name שמעון בר יוחאי is the same numerical value of the word שבת!⁶

Rav Shimon was at ease: Extending Shabbos into the rest of the week

The Gemara⁷ relates that when Rav Shimon and his son Rabbi Elazar came out of the cave, he saw people who were plowing and harvesting and remarked, ‘What will become of the Torah?’ Everything he looked at was burnt and destroyed. On erev Shabbos he was walking with his son and saw a man running holding two *hadasim* and asked the man what they were for. The man responded that they are in honor of the holy day of Shabbos. Rav Shimon asked him, if so, it should suffice with *one haddas*? The man responded that one was for Zachor and one was for Shamor. When Rav Shimon heard this, he turned to his son and said, ‘See how beloved mitzvos are to Klal Yisroel!’ and they were at ease.

Perhaps the meaning of this Gemara is as follows:

Rav Shimon holds that one must immerse himself in learning and rely *entirely* on Hashem, even during the week. Therefore, when he saw people plowing and harvesting, he remarked ‘what will become of the Torah!’ and burnt everything he looked at. However, when he saw that Klal Yisroel running to honor Shabbos he understood that they are excited for Shabbos and at least on one the day of Shabbos when they reach the level of Rav Shimon, they were excited and honored the day. Therefore, the holiness they attain on

Shabbos will spill over and affect the rest of their week as well, even though they work in the fields. Thus, Rav Shimon and his son were at ease.

The Chasam Sofer⁸ writes, “One who keeps Shabbos properly will merit to extend the holiness of Shabbos into the weekday in a manner that the entire week will attain the holiness of Shabbos. Although Shabbos has boundaries as it begins on Friday night and ends on Motzai Shabbos, yet one who watches Shabbos properly the holiness of Shabbos will break through the boundaries of Shabbos and his entire week will be holy to Hashem, as the Gemara⁹ states ‘One who keeps Shabbos properly is given an inheritance without boundaries.’¹⁰

Similarly, the Bas Ayin¹¹ explains the Gemara¹² which states עשה שבתך חול - Make your Shabbos into weekday, to mean that must bring the holiness of Shabbos into the rest of the week thereby “making Shabbos extend into the weekday”.

The Rabbinical prohibitions of Shabbos

If we take a look at some of the halachos and prohibitions that Chazal instituted for Shabbos, many of them seem to encourage and expect a person to reach the level of Rav Shimon on the day of Shabbos:

1) Even thinking about one's business is prohibited

The Shulchan Aruch¹³ writes that “as soon as Shabbos arrives one should consider it as if all his weekday work has already been completed, as it is a *mitzva* to refrain from even thinking about business at all on Shabbos.” Rav Matisyahu Solomon explains that this is because we are expected to reach the level of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai on Shabbos and place our trust in *entirely* in Hashem and not to even think about our *hishtadlus* and our livelihood.

2) The prohibition of Refuah (taking medication)

Chazal prohibited taking medication on Shabbos (unless certain conditions are met) as this may lead to someone grinding herbs on Shabbos.¹⁴ Some wonder that it would seem that not taking medication would detract from one's Oneg Shabbos as it is now prohibited for someone who has a (minor) headache to take Advil on Shabbo, if so, why would Chazal prohibit taking medication on Shabbos? [Particularly nowadays when the medication typically comes in the form of a pill and the concern of grinding herbs does not particularly apply.] Nevertheless, there are many reasons for the prohibition which Chazal enact, more than just the basic reason which they reveal.¹⁵ Perhaps, we can explain that on Shabbos we reach the level of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai and *entirely* rely on Hashem without any *hishtadlus* of other intermediary help. Thus, one who is ill (e.g., has a headache) must strive to trust *entirely* on Hashem to cure his pain and not to use forms of *hishtadlus* such as medicine.¹⁶ [There are situations where Chazal permit taking medications on Shabbos.]

3) Amira l'Akum – Asking a non-Jew to perform melacha on Shabbos

Chazal prohibited asking a non-Jew to perform melacha on Shabbos.¹⁷ The Mishna Berura¹⁸ adds that this rabbinical prohibition is hinted to in the Torah¹⁹ when it states “Do not do any melacha” – even through a non-Jew. Perhaps, Chazal wanted that on Shabbos we *entirely* rely on Hashem and do not do any form of *hishtadlus*, even through a non-Jew performing melacha. [There are situations where Chazal permit Amira l'Akum.]

A day without Angels

When reciting the Zemer of Shalom Aleichim in the beginning of the Shabbos meal, many have the custom is to recite the concluding stanza of *Tzeis'chem l'shalom*, where we bid farewell to the visiting angels. Rav Yaakov Emden²⁰ takes issue with this custom, “It is a wonder that one would send away the

angles of Hashem by reciting *Tzeis'chem Tzeischem l'shalom*. Would it not be favorable for them to stay in our homes and bring even more blessing? Why then do we hurry to send them away? Would it not be better not to recite the stanza of *Tzeis'chem l'shalom* when reciting this prayer?"

Perhaps we can explain that since Shabbos is a day when we interact (so to speak) directly with Hakadosh Baruch Hu without any intermediaries we ask even the angels to leave as it is a day just between Kalal Yisroel and Hakadosh Baruch Hu.²¹

The falling of the Mahn

We find a connection between the falling of the *mahn* and the day of Shabbos, as the Torah tells us that the *mahn* did not fall on Shabbos, but a double portion fell on Friday, one portion for Friday and one portion for Shabbos. To remember this miracle, we use *lechem mishna* at the Shabbos meals. But why did the *mahn* not fall on Shabbos? The Zohar²² writes that the source of the falling of the *mahn* was the holiness of Shabbos (and that is why it did not fall on Shabbos²³).

The Chasam Sofer²⁴ writes that if one makes the proper calculations, he will find that the day that the *mahn* began to fall in the Midbar was Lag BaOmer (the day of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai). Hakadosh Baruch Hu provided the *mahn* so that Bnei Yisroel did not need to work their fields and could dedicate themselves to learning Torah – the level of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai. Thus, the Zohar states that Shabbos was the source of the *mahn* as it is a day of total reliance on Hashem.²⁵

The Names of Hashem

We have discussed how although during the days of the week one may perform melacha (relying on the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael), on the day of

Shabbos one must rely directly on Hashem without doing any *hishtadlus* or relying on any intermediaries.

The six days of the week are governed by the Name of אל-הים whose numerical value is 86 and equals the word הטבע, nature.²⁶ The day of Shabbos is governed by the Name of יהוה which is the realization of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and how he directly runs the world.²⁷

In fact, the numerical value of the Name יהוה is 26 which is equivalent to the numerical value of the word שבת (702) in its fullest form (26x26+26=702).²⁸

This also seems clear in the verse²⁹ which states: וביניכם לדרתיכם לדעת כי אני יהוה – “[The day of Shabbos] is a sign between Me and you for all generations to know that I am Hashem (יהוה).”³⁰ The verse states clearly that the purpose of the day of Shabbos is to recognize the Name of יהוה and interact directly with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.³¹

A Day of Praise to Hashem

We say in davening on Shabbos: מְזַמֵּר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, טוב וישיבנו השבוע ואומר, “The day of Shabbos (itself) praises and says: It is good to thank Hashem.”

It is interesting that the praise of the day of Shabbos is ‘Thanking Hashem’ as why is praising Hashem the focal point of the day of Shabbos more than any other day of the week when we must also thank Hashem?

On Shabbos one benefits directly from Hashem without any intermediaries thus the feeling of gratitude is much greater. Certainly, one must thank Hashem during all the days of the week, but during the days of the week one receives what he needs through intermediaries and thus does not feel the same level of gratitude as he does on Shabbos when everything is directly from Hashem.

¹ Yechezkel 46:1

² Berachos 35b

³ Nefesh HaChaim (1:8) writes that of course there are individuals who are bothered by the question of “What will become of the Torah” and have the ability and even the obligation to follow the opinion of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai.

⁴ Matnas Chaim, p. 82

⁵ 3, 144b

⁶ *Rashbi mi'Mesivta Kaddisha* 1, p. 159 [Shimon Bar Yochai = 703 and Shabbos = 702 (+1 with the *Kollel* of the one word itself).

⁷ Shabbos 33b

⁸ Shemos 31:16

⁹ Shabbos 118a

¹⁰ He explains that this is the intention of the verse (Shemos, *ibid*) that states “One should watch Shabbos for all generations,” that one must keep Shabbos in a way that it is for all generations without any interruption as it continues into the weekday as well.

¹¹ Parshas Vayeisheb quoting HaRav mi'Pulnah

¹² Shabbos 118a

¹³ 306:8

¹⁴ Shulchan Aruch 328:1; Mishna Berura 327:1

¹⁵ Rambam, Hilchos Mamrim 2:2; see *Igros Moshe* O.C. 2:100. See Ketzos *ha'Shulchan* Vol.7, in *badei ha'Sulchan* 134:7; Tzitz Eliezer 8:15:15

¹⁶ Rav Gershon Ribner once remarked that if (on a weekday) one has a headache and takes an Advil he is not on the level of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai since he is performing his *hishtadlus* and not entirely relying on Hashem.

¹⁷ See Mishna Berura 243:5

¹⁸ 243:5

¹⁹ Shemos 12:16

²⁰ *Siddur Ya'avetz (Musach Shabbos, Mittos Zahav, 10* (see *Sha'arei Teshuva* 262:2)

²¹ Thus, once the angels come to our homes and ensure that we have indeed set the table and prepared for Shabbos and our Guest (i.e., Hakadosh Baruch Hu), they leave and allow us to spend the holy day directly with Hashem.

²² Cited in Beer Mayim Chaim, Parshas Bereishis

²³ See Beer Mayim Chaim and Malbim (Breishis) who try to explain this seemingly difficult Zohar.

²⁴ Y.D. 223

²⁵ The Ohev Yisroel (Bereishis) asks, would it not have been better if the *mahn* did fall on Shabbos, as the *mahn* was a spiritual food and would have made the day holier? (see there for his answer)

But perhaps even an intermediary such as the falling of the *mahn* would still detract from our direct connection with Hashem on the holy day of Shabbos. On the holy day of Shabbos there is *no* effort made to attain one's needs, even going out to receive the *mahn*. Everything is prepared before Shabbos so that one can entirely rely on Hashem on the day of Shabbos. Thus, the falling of the *mahn* would have been an intermediary which would have detracted from the holiness of Shabbos and our connection with Hashem.

A blessing for all generations. The Even Ezra (Breishis) asks, the falling of the *mahn* was relevant for only one generation, so how does this blessing for Shabbos and holiness of Shabbos effect all the other generations? He answers that “this blessing and holiness resides on all those throughout all generations who watch over Shabbos as they are blessed and holy.”

This opportunity to entirely disconnect from all intermediaries and rely solely on Hashem remains for all generations and one who does gains a special blessing that his needs are provided and becomes holy by connecting to Hashem.

²⁶ See Nefesh Hachaim 3:9

²⁷ Thus, we begin Shabbos by reciting Kiddush on Friday night and start with the words of “יום השישי ויכולו השמים” as its acronym spells the Name of יהוה, to emphasize that this is the Name of the day of Shabbos.

²⁸ Bas Ayin, Yisro; Vayichi Yaakov p. 305.

Furthermore, the Mekubalim write that the numerical value of the second letters of the word שבת equals 26, the numerical value of the Name of Hashem (ש"י) (Shiyarei Yehuda, p. 440)

²⁹ Shemos 31:13

³⁰ **Yismach Moshe.** In davening we state במתנת חלקו – Moshe Rabbeinu should be happy with his portion. What is the connection with the portion of Moshe and Shabbos? The verse (Shemos 6:3) states that Hashem tells Moshe “I appeared to the Avos and My Name (יהוה) was not revealed to them. And yet they trusted me while you, who have this Name (of יהוה) revealed to you, do not trust me? The Ramban (*ibid*) explains that only Moshe Rabbeinu had the ability to bring the open miracles which defied nature through the Name of יהוה (such as were done in Mitzrayim), while the Avos did not, they only merited miracles through the messengers of Hashem. Thus, Moshe had the merit of the gift of Shabbos which is also a day of the Name of יהוה.

³¹ See Gemara Shabbos 10b