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PART 1: PROPER HANHAGOS DURING ENGAGEMENT

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FROM THE SHIURIM OF

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THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE LESS SIMCHA YOU HAVE

One of the big issues and *shaalos* that arise when a couple finally become a *chassan* and *kallah*, is how often they should meet between the engagement and the *chasunah*.

Feigel Chaya (1905–1992), the daughter of the Chofetz Chaim from his second marriage - born when he was 64 years old - married Rabbi Menachem Mendel Yosef Zacks (1898–1974), known as Rabbi Mendel Zacks. The Chofetz Chaim spoke at the *chasunah*, and he spoke about this subject. And he said an interesting thing. He said, “In the *birchas hanisuin*, we say *שִׂמְחָה תִּשְׂמַח רַעִים הָאֵהוּיבִים בְּשִׂמְחָהּ* *מִקְדָּם* *וְעַד מִקְדָּם* *בְּגוֹן עֵדוֹן מִקְדָּם* (“Grant abundant joy to these loving friends, as You bestowed gladness upon Your created being in the Garden of Eden of old”). If you look into these words, you come to the conclusion that the ultimate *simchah*, the ideal *simchah* that becomes the model to copy, is the *simchah* of Adam Harishon and Chava. And that’s why we are *mevarech* the *chassan* and the *kallah*, and we are *mispallel* that they should be *zocheh*, that their *simchah* should be *mei’ein* (like) that *simchah*.¹

The Chofetz Chaim continued and said, “We have to understand what was the unique *koach* that singled out that *simchah*? Why is *davka* the *simchah* of Adam and Chava classified as the ultimate *simchah* and not all the other *simchos* of all the other *zugos* that got married? What was unique about it?”

So the Chofetz Chaim said, “You want to know what the *pshat* is? You could understand it based on the *gemara* in *Moed Katan* (8b). The *Mishnah* says a person can’t get married on *chol hamoed*: *אין נושאין נשים במועד*. What’s the reason for that? The *gemara* explains: *לפי שאין מערבין שמחה בשמחה*, because one may not mix one joy with another joy. In contrast to this, what if a man wants to be *machzir gerushaso*, he wants to get remarried to his former wife? A person is allowed to do that on *chol hamoed*. Why? Because a person remarrying his *grusha*, his divorcee, is not bound up with so much *simchah*. That *simchah* doesn’t interfere with his *simchas Yom Tov*.”

¹ As quoted in the Sefer called *Yesodos HaBayis*, p. 82-83

The Chofetz Chaim continued, “In what way is the *simcha* of a man who marries a woman for the first time different from that of a man remarrying his *grusha*?” So the Chofetz Chaim said, “The *pshat* is like this. The more that a person is *makir*, the more he recognizes, the more he knows a woman before he gets married, to the degree that he knows her more, his *simchah* becomes less. You know why? He already used up, or utilized, a part of that *simchah* from before.” That’s what the Chofetz Chaim said. He added, “Besides, he also knows more of her *chisronos* (deficiencies). That also is a cause for the diminishment of the *simchah* with remarrying his *grusha*.”

Therefore, a marriage with a new wife is much greater than the *simchah* of a marriage with a woman you already know. Therefore, the Chofetz Chaim says, the more he knows his woman before he’s married, the less *simchah* he’s going to have.

The Chofetz Chaim went on and said, “The *gemara* (Kiddushin 41a) says: *דְּאָמַר רַב יְהוֹנָדָה אָמַר רַב אֶסוּר לְאָדָם שִׁיקְדוּשׁ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה עַד שִׁירְאָנָה*, it’s prohibited for a person to be *mekadesh* his wife until he sees her. So now, you know what comes out? That every person who marries a woman, already saw and knows her, so automatically his *simchah* is *nifgam bemashehu* (slightly diminished)! It’s not the same *simchah* of somebody who, for example, is meeting his wife for the first time at the *chasunah* following their engagement. It’s a *peleh*!

If you would ask us, what would we say?

If a guy came to me, for example, and said, “I want to marry a woman the first time I see her.” I would tell him, “Are you out of your mind?! Who says you’re going to like her? *Meiheicha teisa* it’s a *shidduch*? What kind of silliness is that?” But that’s what the *gemara* in Moed Katan says: the more recognition a person has of his wife, the more it diminishes his *simchah*, even a little bit!

COMING CLOSE TO THE SIMCHA OF ADAM AND CHAVA

So therefore, the Chofetz Chaim said, “When we stand by the *chuppah* of a *yiddishe mentch*, we give him a *brachah*. You know what we say to him? Yes, we understand that you already saw your wife, so your *simchah* is not going to be the same *simchah* anymore. Therefore, we are giving you a *brachah* of *שְׂמַח תְּשֻׁמַּח רַעִים הָאֵהוּבִים*, Hashem should give you a special *brachah* that you should have the degree of *simchah* as if you’re meeting her for the first time, like Adam HaRishon who only saw Chava when he met her at the *chuppah*!”

Nowadays, we can’t meet our wives for the first time at a *chuppah* anymore, because Chazal told us, you have to see her beforehand. So now the *shaaleh* is, could we say you should

meet your *kallah* for the second time under the *chuppah*? In our generation, it's also a little difficult to say that. Even my *rebbe* (Rav Meir Halevi Soloveichik, zt"l) said, "Twice. You can get engaged after two meetings. That's allowed. Meeting the third time is already too much *hishtadlus*." And then after getting engaged, he said, "Now it's not *nogei'a* anymore," meaning, they are not supposed to meet before the *chuppah*.

The *vort* is that a *mentch* has to understand that multiple *pegishos* (meetings) that a person has between the engagement and marriage do not bring any *to'eles*. What it brings is the opposite: they are *mamash poigem* (impair) the *simchah*. And it's a *hefsed* (loss) that doesn't have any *tashlumim* (make up).

ASSUME THE RISKS OF FREQUENT MEETINGS

I could tell you from my experience. I was involved in many, many *shidduchim*, probably more *shidduchim* than most people go through in two lifetimes, and I could tell you that any guy who overdid the *pegishos* under the guise that his *kallah* needed it, his *shalom bayis* was *nifgah*. Ranging from "I'm not sure why I'm getting married to her" to "I just don't feel excited at all." Or coming to the *chasunah* with heavy hearts because of the recognition that they had of each other. The *pegishos* caused stress because he wasn't yet taught or well-versed in how to deal with her, and she wasn't taught how to deal with him. When you start going out, you don't know each other so well yet, so you say stupid things, you do stupid things. You could be a very nice person, but only when you're married, you could get over it very quickly in 'one-two-three,' but when you're not married yet, you sit there and fester, and all the bad *middos* of people come out. It's not pleasant.

I remember a girl who was here. Her parents once brought her here. She felt terrible. It was the night before the *chasunah*, and she was crying, "I'm not getting married. I can't marry the guy." And I put on a very stern voice and said, "You're marrying the guy, nothing to talk about!" She started crying more. I said, "You could cry the whole night – you're getting married." The parent says to me, "Rabbi Brog, are you sure it's going to work out?" I said, "I'm sure it's going to work out. Do you believe in the Ribono Shel Olam?" The parents were very *frum* people, even *frummer* than the girl.

You know what I saw? I saw right away, this guy was going to have a *shtickle gehinnom* in his life. With a wife like that, you're going to have a *shtickle gehinnom*. Because that shows what's inside. In this case, they did get married, *baruch Hashem*, and now they have many kids already. But I'm sure this guy is not licking honey. You're not eating honey cakes in the morning over here.

Why not? Because she revealed her level of nervousness. When a person could exhibit this before the *chasunah* when they don't have the closeness and tools to overcome it, you should understand that this *nekudah* is not only showing up in this *zach*. It can show up in everything else. When a *kallah* says and tries to convince you, "I'm a *tzadeikis*, *mamash*, but you're going to have to provide me a life that I could handle, so I could take it," it is an indication that people are feeling overwhelmed. What can I tell you? It's part of life. So is that *simchah* going to be a *simchah*? No.

Now, this often happens because they get to know each other too well. The *yetzer hara* gets involved and convinces you that you've got to get to know your future wife. And then she says, "I don't feel comfortable getting married." It's baloney. It's malarkey. And I am telling you, this messes up the *simchah* of a *shidduch*!

THE SIMCHAH SHOULD BE A MOTIVATING FACTOR

I had another guy *mamash*, with a similar story. He used to talk and talk and talk a whole night with his *kallah*. I begged him to stop. I called his *kallah*, and the *kallah* told me, "No, we're getting closer." I said, "I'm telling you, you're not getting closer." Three months after the wedding, she's in my office, crying away, "I want to get divorced." I was thinking, "*Shrek*. This is from all your hours of getting *ahavah ve'achva veshalom vereius* over here." But what's the *teretz*? The *teretz* is when you got married to the guy, the guy was that familiar 'old *shmatta*' whom you got to know very well. He's an *alte shmatta* already. And you? You were also an *alte shmatta*. You understand?! So that's why there was no *simchah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants that when a person gets married, he has the *simchah* to motivate him.

So here is a guy who comes to me and says, "I have known my *kallah* for years." I said, "You know her 'for years' - what does that mean?!" That is a bad prescription. That is a prescription for failure. That's what it is. It's a *metzius*.

Participant comment: It's not just a *simchah* of the *chasunah*. It's for an ongoing *simchah* during their entire life.

Answer: Yes. The *simchah* of a *chasunah* is for a life. Now, I'm not saying they shouldn't meet. I'm just telling you, the more a person gets involved, that diminishes his *simchah*. Chazal were *mesaken* a special *brachah*, *zogt* the Chofetz Chaim *pashut* to be *memalei* that *chisaron* of שְׂמֵחַ תְּשֻׁמָּה...כְּשֶׁמְקַדְּרֵי יִצְיָרָךְ.

Participant question: How do we see this difference between the engagement and marriage, if during the engagement, a couple doesn't really communicate and speak, but then after the

wedding, everything comes up. Why wouldn't this tension diminish the *simchah* of their marriage?

Answer: Because once a person is committed, he deals with things in a different manner. When people are married and they discover their spouse's *chisronos* it is a different story altogether. Does anybody think that their spouse has no *chisronos*? What are you, cuckoo? I knew one guy who came to me and said, "I thought my wife was perfect. I thought she was *mamash* perfect, *mushlemes mamash*." So I told the guy, "You were a *shoteh*, what should I tell you!?" You know what a person's approach should be during the *shidduch*? Here is what you say. "I know she's not a *mushlemes*, but right now I don't want to know the reason, because I want to get married to her in a positive light. And when I discover her *chisronos* after I already had that positive light, I'll deal with her and those issues." Once you're in something serious, you deal with the issues in a much better way. But when you're not in the issues and you're not committed yet, you naturally think, "Why should I get committed? I found that *chisaron*. Why should I get committed?" And you start to *kler* all these things. And this the reason why many engagements fall apart, by the way, because people don't understand this exact point - the *chisronos* they find in the other person before marriage scare them to the point that they think this is the end of the world and they need to end this now! What they don't understand is that they can deal with and overcome these issues much more effectively once they are married, precisely because now they are fully committed. This point cannot be overemphasized enough!

I used to think that everybody who was *frei* had the happiest marriages until I went into *kiruv* and I discovered that almost every one of them had terrible marriages. And you know what I believe one of the biggest reasons is? Because they knew each other well before they got married. They honestly thought that was contributing to their *simchah*. But what really happened is they used up all their *simchah* before they got married. That's what happened. *All* their *simchah* they had before they got married got used up. Then, when they got married, it was over! It's called doing things topsy turvy, *ferkert* from the way Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants things to be done. And if you do things not like what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants, it's a prescription for lack of *simchah*, not increased *simchah*.

You want to marry somebody fresh, who doesn't know you much, or you don't know them much, and when Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought you together, not the *yetzer hara* who brought you together.

WHEN THE YETZER HORA BECOMES A SHADCHAN

I'll never forget, I had a *talmid* who became *frum*. He went to Eretz Yisrael, learned in a very serious *yeshivah*. He came back, and bought an apartment in a duplex house. Another family came along with some *shiksa* and moved into the other apartment. The *shiksa* started borrowing sugar from him and started asking him *shaalos*, "What is that thing on your head for?" And, "Oh, I'm very interested." And before long, the guy was being *mekarev* her, you understand? Eventually, he sent her to Eretz Yisrael for three or four weeks, and she came back and became a *giyores* in America. And then he married her. So you know what I told him? "I'm not coming to your wedding." I refused to come to the wedding. He brought people from Eretz Yisrael, but I said, "I'm not coming to that wedding." I said, "You know why? The *yetzer hara* was the *shadchan!*" I said, "What chance do you have for that *shidduch* to be a good *shidduch*? I don't care what you were *mekabel*. I don't care if you stayed apart for three weeks. I don't care if for three weeks in Israel she was a *tzadeikis* and you were a *tzaddik*. I don't care if she put on a *sheitel*. The *yetzer hara* also puts on *sheitels*. I said, "The fact of the matter is, your *simchah* is garbage. It's the *yetzer hara's* *simchah*. At this *chasunah*." I said, "The only ones who are dancing are your foolish friends. I'm not participating in the *simchah*."

A CUP OF SUGAR THAT RUINED EVERYTHING

They didn't have any *shaychus* to me, of course, after I didn't go to their *simchah*. But two years later, he called me, "Could we come see you?" When they came, I asked them, "What are you here for?" He said, "You know, we're thinking of getting divorced." I said, "Oh really??" And you want to know a *peledike* thing? They decided from day one that they weren't going to have children until he felt committed through *simchah*. I said, "Isn't it a *peleh*? This is your *talmida muvhekes*. This is your *kiruv* job. You were *mekarev* her." I said, "She's your wife, you made her *frum*. *Mamash*, you made her a *ger*. You'd think you should be *samei'ach* with her like nobody's business!" The answer is, my friend, you used up all your *simchah* when you gave her a cup of sugar. That's what happened. And all your sugar turned into salt. That's what happened.

And therefore, a person has to realize that these *shidduchim* are prescriptions for failure. It has to be like that. It is a consequence. I don't care what it looks like now. And you get bamboozled. People think, "But why? I have invested so much into this!?"

I remember this fellow came to speak with me when he became a *chassan*. I said to him, "How do you do these things? You should be *mekarev* her?! Tell her to move out or you move out! Move on with

your life!” In the end, he got divorced. And the guy was a *bachur* for the next 10-11 years. Until he finally got a *zivug* when he was close to 40 years old. *Nebach*.

This is what a person has to realize and understand. But people don't understand it. You can't see it; you have tunnel vision. That's what the Chofetz Chaim tells us. It's a tremendous lesson.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR UNHAPPINESS

A lot of times, when a person lacks *shalom bayis*, or a person tells me, “You know, I'm not so excited about my wife.” You know what you have to ask him? “Tell me something, before you got married, did you know your wife well?” “Yes.” “Okay, very good, that's your prescription for unhappiness. You bought it right there. You've got to do *teshuvah* now. That's what you have to do. How could you be excited about somebody that you *nutzed ois*, you used up all your excitement?

So don't be a fool.

And why am I telling you all of this? Reason number one is, because if you are married (after using up your *simcha*), it's too late already, so you should at least understand that if you are being challenged in this area, and you don't feel excited, look back in your life and say to yourself, “I wonder if this would explain my situation.” And do a little *teshuvah*. It doesn't hurt to do *teshuvah*. And reason number two, is that the next time you meet a newly engaged couple (if you assume a position of authority where you influence people), you should think before you open up your *chachmadike* mouth and you say to them, “Well, I think you should get to know each other for as long as possible before you get married. You should see each other as often as possible.” This is a *shtus* I hear from people. They tell me they should meet every week. “It's a problem that he's out of town. He should come here for days.” I tell them, “It's the biggest *brachah* he lives out of town! He doesn't get to know her, she doesn't get to know him until they are married, and then they'll work things out.”

People don't realize this. Don't give your *chachmadike* advice next time when you are faced with this situation. Just say, “They have to see each other minimally. That is the *da'as Torah* of all the Gedolim.” Instead people listen to these *chachmei* Chelm they have today, who read these books. They read the books, “Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus,” and they make up their own rules according to this. *Ai*, you live on Mars! So go to Mars and live there! People make up these silly rules. It's unbelievable.

A *rav* once called me up to say, “Your *hashkafah* is wrong.” I said, “Thank you. I heard my *hashkafah* from my *zeide* (R' Avigdor

Miller), and I heard it from my *rebbe* (R' Meir HaLevi Soloveichik). Who did you hear yours from? What book did you read?" Maybe a magazine called "Happy Families"? What are you reading? That's what happens. You understand? People read these funny things and they think they are *chachamim*. People went to college, you understand?

I remember one girl told me, "I went to college." I said, "Really? You should take everything you learned in college and flush it." She was very upset at me. She was a *frum* girl, a very *frum* girl! She went out with a young man, a *talmid* of mine, and this young man told her, "My *rebbe* says that you should forget every word you learned in college." She said, "That's why I'm more qualified to raise children." I said, "Oy *vey* to raise children based on what she learned in college!" So many people in colleges nowadays get seriously brainwashed to either delay starting families until well into their thirties, or not even getting married and having children at all!

SHABBOS: MAKING YOUR OLAM HABA

THE STRUGGLE TO REACH HASHEM

I want to talk about a person's ability to be *omeid* in the daily *nisayon of bechirah*, and the challenge to do what's right. Choosing what is right is a *peulah of tikkun* of the *chet* of the *eitz hadaas*. Every time a person is *bocher b'tov*, he takes a step toward the *tikkun hacheit*. And every time he is *bocher be'ra*, he entrenches himself in the *kilkul*.

Now the *emes* is, it's an *avodah kashah* to make the right choices. As easy as it may sound, it is *b'emes* a very difficult challenge. So what can we do to make the choice easier?

The Ramchal in Derech Hashem says that האדם בעולם הזה - a man in this world, is in such a situation, שהחומר חזק בו - that his chumrius, his materialism, is a very strong element of who he is. And because of that chumrius, which darkens and clouds a person's seichel, he finds himself in a tremendous choshech, and he finds himself very distant from where it is *ra'ui* for him to be, which, as the Ramchal says, is to be *be'emet* to cleave to Hashem Yisborach.

Besides for the chumrius that is within the person, the Ramchal continues, the *makom*, the place where a person finds himself, is also choshech. And the people around him are *chumri'im*. And the *esek* of an adam in the world is an *eisek hachumri v'gufni*.

The nature and the makeup of man, he says, forces him to be constantly involved on a chumrius-dike level². It's אי אפשר, he says, to live without אכילה, it's אי אפשר to live without שתיה. It's אי אפשר to live without resting, going to the bathroom, and all the physical, natural ways. It's אי אפשר to live without money. It's אי אפשר to live without acquiring things. It's not shayech. So it comes out, he says, mitzad the guf haadam, and mitzad his olam, and mitzad his eisek, regardless, from any perspective you look at it, a man is טבועה בחומר - he's drowning in materialism. - ומשוקע בחשכו - he is soaked into the darkness of materialism. And great toil and the great hishtadlus is needed for a person to take himself out of this matzev and to reach the tzaddik where he relates to Hashem.

TAKING A STAND AGAINST CHUMRIUS THROUGH SHABBOS

So some of us are acting very naturally (i.e., living with materialism as if that is the natural state we should be in), but Hashem put us in a world that we're able to get out of this materialism. What did Hashem do to enable me to get out of the eisek me'tzad haguf, metzad ha'olam?

The Ramchal says in order that a man should be able to be omeid b'nisayon and reach for and shteig and see the light, Hakodosh Boruch Hu created a יום שכולו שבת ומנוחה לחי העולמים. That is the goal - to get to Olam Habah. It's a world where tzaddikim are יושבים ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה. What is the means that Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave to us to get to that goal? Shabbos Kodesh.

The kedushah of Shabbos is mashpia on (influences) all the days of the week. And me'koach its kedushah, says the Ramchal, a person is able to make the right choices throughout all the days of the week. And then, he comes to the next Shabbos, and he's a little more elevated than the previous one. The following Shabbos, he's on a higher level, and the next a little more, and so on.

² הנה מוכרח שתשתדל הנשמה ותתחזק ותהיה הולכת ומחלשת את כח חשך החומריות עד שישאר הגוף בלתי חשוך ואז יוכל להתעלות הוא עמה וליאר באור העליון תחת מה שהיתה מתחשכת ונשפלת היא עמו בתחלה. ואולם האדם בעה"ז הוא במצב א' שהחומר חזק בו וכמ"ש ובהיות החומר עכור וחשוך נמצא האדם בחשך גדול ורחוק מאד ממה שראוי לו שיהיה להיות מתדבק בו ית' ואמנם בזה צריך שישים השתדלותו לחזק את נשמתו נגד כח חמרו ולהיטיב את מצבו להעלות עצמו עילוי עד השיעור הראוי לו. מה שגורם לאדם עולמו ועסקו והמקום אשר הוא בתוכו גם הוא חמרי וחשוך וכל הנמצאים שבו חמריים והעסק שלאדם בו ובמלאו אי"א שיהיה אלא עסק חמרי וגופני. כיון שכלם חומריים וגופניים ותכונתו של האדם עצמו והרכבת חלקיו מכריחים לו העסק הזה כי אי"א לו מבלי אכילה ושתיה ושאר כל הענינים הטבעיים. ואי"א לו מבלי הון וקנין ושיוכל להשיג צרכיו אלה ונמצא שבין מצד גופו של האדם בין מצד עולמו ובין מצד עסקו הוא טבוע בחומר ומשוקע בחשכו ועמל גדול והשתדלות חזק יצטרך לו להתעלות אל מצב זך מזה והוא מוכרח בטבעו בענינים החומריים האלה. הפעולות החומריות נעשות פעולות שלימות ואולם מעומק עצת חכמתו ית' היה לסדר הדברים באופן שאף בהיות האדם שקוע בחומר בהכרח כמו שכתבנו יוכל מתוך החומר עצמו והעסק הגופני השיג את השלימות והתעלות אל הזך ואל המעלה ואדרבא השפלתו תהיה הגבהתו ומשם יקנה יקר וכבוד שאין כמוהו בהיותו הופך את החשך לאור ואת הצלמות לנורה יזרח. וזה כי שם ית"ש גבולות וסדרים לאדם בתשמיש שישתמש מהעולם ובריותיו ובכונה שיתנון בהם אשר בהשתמש מהם האדם באותם הגבולות ובאותם הסדרים ובאותה הכונה שצוה הבי"ת יהיה אותו הפועל הגופני וחמרי עצמו פועל שלימות ובו יתעצם באדם מציאות שלימות ומעלה רבה יתעלה בו ממצבו השפלי ויתרומם ממנו ואולם השקיפה החכמה העליונה על כל כללי החסרונות המוטבעים בעיניו של האדם ועל כל עיני המעלה והיקר האמיתי המצטרפים לו להיות ראוי לשיהיה מתדבק בו ית' ונהנה בטובו (דרך ה', חלק ראשון, במצב האדם בעולם הזה) (ב)

He says, Hakodosh Boruch Hu granted the people a type of kiddush, we call it a life raft, some kind of tube, in order that the choshech shouldn't drown us and swallow us up in the belly of this 'whale,' this huge whale. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu estimated exactly b'tachlis hadikduk how much a person needs to get out of the choshech. Hakodosh Boruch Hu therefore granted us Shabbos.³

Rabbosai, Shabbos is not just a heilige tog, it's not just another 'holy day.' Are you a person who struggles with the choshech of Olam Haze? Are you always tired? Do you find yourself drawn to the olam hachumri, the gashmiyes, the fun? Do you find yourself struggling to sit and learn? Do you find yourself struggling to sit and daven? Do you find struggling to lig in learning, to think in learning? If you do, you have to know your only hope is Shabbos Kodesh. That's your hope. With Shabbos, there's hope. Without it, it's not shayech. That's the lashon of the Ramchal - החומר חזק בו - materialism is very chazak.

GET KOACH FROM THE NESHAMAH YESEIRAH

And the emes is that the Ohr Hachaim (Shemos 31:16) when he speaks about the Neshamah Yeseirah in Parshas Ki Sisa, he says as follows: ותדע כי מן הנמנע החלטי, you should know that it is absolutely impossible for a person to attain an aliyah of shteiging without Shabbos. Zogt the Ohr Hachaim, it's not shayech for a person to reach, to climb, anywhere to the Olam HaElyon without Shabbos. Unbelievable! Do you know why? Because if you want to get to another world, if you want to have shaychus to another world, you need to have an anaf, a branch from that world, you need a branch to grab onto, to stop you from being dragged in by the raging waters of this world that you find yourself in. And he says, if the klal Yisrael would not receive a Neshamah Yeseirah on Shabbos, they would never be able to grasp this anaf. Hashem, therefore, had to give us the Neshamah Yesirah.

And he says that's why it says לעשות את השבת. Do you know what that means to say? That through the Shabbos, you will make (la'asos)

³ ענין שבת קדוש: ענין השבת בכללו הוא כי הנה כבר ביארנו למעלה שענין הנה"ך נותן שיהיו הדברים בו חול ולא קדש. אמנם הוצרך ג"כ שמצד אחר ינתן קצת קידוש לברואים כדי שלא יגבר בהם החשך יותר מדאי. והנה שיערה החכמה העליונה את כל זה בתכלית הדקדוק באיזה מדריגה צריך שיהיה החול ובאיזה מדריגה הקידוש הנוסף היה והגבילה כל זה ונמצא מספר זה מה שראוי שיקרא שיעור שלם כיון שכלו הוצרך להיות כל המציאות ויותר מזה ואולם בבחי' הזמן סידרה ענין הימים של חול ושל קדש ובימי הקדש עצמם מדריגות זו למעלה מזו כפי הנאות והנה סידרה שרוב הימים יהיה חול ולא יהיה קדש אלא השיעור המצטרך. ואולם גזרה שיהיו הימים כלם מתגלגלים בשיעור מספר א' שסיבוב בזמן כלו בסיבוב והוא מספר הז' ימים וזה כי הנה בהם נברא המציאות כלו ונכלל כל היותו במספר זה ונמצא מספר זה מה שראוי שיקרא שיעור שלם כיון שכלו הוצרך להיות כל המציאות ויותר מזה לא הוצרך כלל כי כבר נגמרה בו כל ההויה. אמנם יהיו מספר זה מתגלגל והולך וחוזר בסיבובו עד סוף כל הו' אלפים ולא עוד אלא שימות כל העולם כלו גם הם ישמרו השיעור הזה בכמות הגדול והיינו ו' אלפים ואלף מנוחה ואח"כ תתחדש ההויה למציאות בסדר אחר כפי גזירת החכמה העליונה. והנה כינה שסוף הסיבוב יהיה תמיד בקדש ונמצא זה עליו גדול לכל הימים שאעפ"י שרובם חול ורק חלק א' מז' הוא הקדש והוא מה שמצטרך לנה"ך כמו שזכרנו. אמנם מצד אחר בהיות החלק הזה סוף הסיבוב וחיתומו נמצא הסיבוב לו נתקן ומתעלה ע"י עד שנמצאים כל ימות האדם מתקדשים. והנה זו מתנה גדולה שנתן הקב"ה לישראל להיות שרצה שיהיו לו עם קדוש ולא נתנה לשאר האומות כלל שאין המעלה הזאת ראויה ולא מיועדת להם (דבר ה', חלק רביעי, בעבודת הזמנית)

yourself a Shabbos in the Next World! That means you are able to attain a position and a place over there, so you could someday come to Olam Haba.⁴ The Neshamah Yeseirah that Hakodosh Boruch Hu grants us is the means by which we can mekadash ourselves; without this gift at my disposal while I am still living in this physical world, I cannot attain for myself the Next World, called Shabbos, where I can enjoy that everlasting oneg, a true serenity. So I have to be shomer my Shabbos, to correctly utilize my Neshamah Yeseirah, to la'asos es Shabbos - to create a true observance of Shabbos for myself down here, so that I can be zoiche to attain the real Shabbos (i.e. the Olam Haba).

When I saw this many years ago, it changed my life. Because I realized that as long as I was going to make Shabbos my 'bein hazmanim' day, my one day that I didn't have an ol (yoke) placed on me, and not come to terms with the fact that I had to make (la'asos) es Shabbos - then I was basically going into a battle that I knew I couldn't win. I was walking into a war zone, knowing I didn't stand a chance. The only way a person will stand a chance in the battle is by being mekadash yourself through the Neshamah Yeseirah.

SHABBOS IS OUR LIFELINE THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

This concept is repeated in many sefarim. One of them is the sefer of R' Moshe Alshich (Maros Ha'tzovos, Yirmiyahu 17).⁵ The Alshich Hakadosh says: someone who is mekadash himself b'kedushas Shabbos - it's not enough to have a Neshamah Yeseirah, you have to be mekadash yourself, you have to utilize that Neshamah Yeseirah to be mekadash yourself - then the Neshama Yeseirah will rest in your nefesh in such a fashion that even after Shabbos, when that koach is removed from you, it is not completely uprooted because you still have a shayches, והוא לו, it will be a tremendous aid for his nefesh and his yetzer tov throughout the days of the week in conquering his yetzer hara and being oved Hashem.

⁴ וענין נשמה זו היתרה רמזו מקומה רבותינו באמרו "מתנה טובה בבית גנזי", וידוע הוא מקום הנקרא גנזי המלך שהוא בחינת עולם עליון, ונשמה זו מחצבה שם הוא. ולזה תקרא שבת, כאמרו "ישבת שמה" כשם העולם ששמנו היא, שנקרא עולם שפלו שבת (ראש השנה לא). ועולם זה אין בו עצבון ועליו לא בא קדריהם בו אלא ענג ושמחה. ולזה צוה ה' להרחיק ביום שבת כל אותם בחינות החול, המלאכה והעניו, כי באחת מהנה תגעה הנשמה משבת בקרב איש. ולזה תמצא שנקרא אסור אזהרת מלאכות שבת באר ה' שהם במחשבה, כאמרו (ביצה יג.) "מלאכת מחשבת אסרה תורה", ואפלו דבור של חול אסור (שבת קיג), דכתיב (ישעיה נח, יג.) "ממצוא חפצך ודבר דברי". והכל לצד תוספת נשמה העליונה לעשות לפניה כסדר עולם שבאה ממנו. והוא מה שצוה ה' באמרו ושמרו את השבת, פרוש נשמה הנקראת שבת, ותכלית שמירה זו היא השגת עולם ששמו שבת. והוא אמרו לעשות את השבת. ותדע כי מן הנמנע החלטי שישגי אדם עלות לעולם עליון זולת באמצעות השגת ענף ממנו בהיותו בעולם הזה, ולזה אם לא ישיגו ישראל בחינת נשמה זו אין בהם יכלת לעמד בגדר עליון. והוא אמרו לעשות את השבת, פרוש, שבאמצעותו תעשו לכם את השבת שתוכלו השג עמוד שם ולהתענג נפשם בגנזי עליון. ואמרו לדרתם, כי שם יתקבצו כל דורות בני ישראל שהיא בחינת עולם הבא.

⁵ וז"ל: "המקדש עצמו בקדושת השבת כל כך שורה על נפשו מהקדושה העליונה, שגם כי אחר השבת שנסתלק הכוח ההוא ממנו לא נקרא לגמרי, כי נשאר בצד מה שייכות מאותה קדושה בנפשו ורוחו, והוא לו לעזר וסיוע גדול מאוד אל נפשו ויצרו הטוב בכל ימות השבוע להכניע את היצר ולהעביר עבודתו ית' בתשובה ומעשים טובים".

The Chofetz Chaim in his sefer Shem Olam in perek daled similarly says: דכל הששה ימים של כל שבוע נמשך עליהן קדושה מיום השבת שלו, all six days of the week draw kedushah from Shabbos, כמו, because is like the heart, from which all the limbs of the body derive life. The Chofetz Chaim says, if a person is not shomer Shabbos b'shleimus, besides for the sin itself, כל ימי השבוע שלו מקולקלים, all his weekdays are spoiled too.⁶

THE OUTCOME OF NOT INVESTING IN SHABBOS

Look around, watch people, look at bachurim who struggle, it's gefehrlech. Here is the struggle: they wake up and they can't make the right choices. You know they want to be good, and would love to make the right choices. But it's a struggle. Do you know how many calls I get on this topic? It's unbelievable. People ask, "Could you help me?" And I always tell them, "I know one thing - your Shabbos is not good." Of course, if your Shabbos is garbage, what chances do you have to make it successfully through your week? Very small chance. L'mashal, what is the chance of a snowball remaining an iceball in Gehinnom? Very small chance.

So most people are dreaming, their whole life is a chalom. They're going to start to be regretful. They claim that they 'tried' all their lives. "I tried to get up. I tried to be good. I tried...I tried." And Hashem is going to say: "Did you ever try the Shabbos key? That was the cure." The guy is going to say, "Shabbos, the one day I had off, that was my one day. Hashem, give me a break, one day no sedarim, one day no pressure!" Rabbosai, if you haven't made good choices in your life, it's because you didn't invest enough into your Shabbos. Don't be mezalzel this gift, this key in your life.

I remember sitting and thinking there has got to be a way around this! How can I give up my one day of menuchah?! I don't know about kedushah but the yom menuchah! And this attitude is ingrained in our kishkes, rabbosai. It comes Friday afternoon, and as a borchur you feel, "Ahh, there is no seder anymore - gevaldig. Baruch shepatrani me'onsho shel zeh!" And you go outside and say, "How can I conquer the world?" So a guy who has small hasagos, nu? He tries to throw a ball into a hoop. If he has gresse hasagos, he gets a group of people together, and they jump on each other. He has gresse hasagos? They take a walk to a park, they mamash make a henini muchan u'me'zuman - they all take sticks and wear special gloves and they go on a hike, and they talk about it during the ganse

⁶ ז"ל: "בכל השישה ימים של כל שבוע נמשכים עליהם קדושה מיום השבת שלו, כי יום השבת הוא כמו הלב שממנו נמשך החיות לכל האיברים, ונמצא, שאם לא שמר שבת אחת בשלימות כדון, מלבד אותו העונן גופא כל ימי השבוע שלו מקולקלים" וזה גם ש"ך הלכה למעשה, כפי שכתב ה"ח אדם (כלל א' ס"ו א) בביאור דברי הגמ' בשבת (דף טו): "ההולך במדבר ואינו יודע מתי שבת, מונה ז' ימים מיום שנתן לבו לשכוח ומקדש שביעי, שעושה קידוש והבדלה". הרי בפירוש הותר לו לעשות שבת אע"פ שבאמינות אינו שבת, והיינו מטעם שקדושת השבת מתפשטת ונמשכת לכל יום, ובכל יום יום יש בו מקצת שבת"

Shabbos. You know how silly that is? The stupidest, silliest thing! Mature bachurim will chazer over the baseball game, the basketball game, they chazer it over and over. Or let's say a guy who likes to sleep on Shabbos. Most of us like to sleep because limiting our sleep is giving up on our yetzer hora too much. And a person almost kills himself to get his sleep on Shabbos. When it comes to Shabbos, people say, "I feel weak. I feel tired." It is such a shame that when it comes to Shabbos, a person misses the key ingredient of his growth potential!

DO WE BRING SHABBOS INTO THE WEEK?

This is where it's at, that's all. That's why it's called **יום ראשון בשבת**. When you say **יום ראשון בשבת** ask yourself is it **takke** **יום ראשון בשבת** or is it **ראשון** without the **שבת**?

I once saw this in the Manos Haleivi, he says, that's why we say **שני בשבת** because it's **שני** - I still have the **שבת** in me. And then **שלישי בשבת**. Your whole **hatzlachah**, your only **hatzlachah** - is that you have the Shabbos!

Rabbosi, be makadesh the Shabbos.

TESTING: SHABBOS AND WEEKDAY TIME PARALLEL

I tested this out once. I did the test in steps to see if it is even shayech, if it really works. I figured Shabbos is a twenty-four hour period. So I figured it has to be that this whole Shabbos corresponds to every day of the week. The morning of Shabbos corresponds to the morning of each day of the week. The afternoon corresponds to the afternoon of each weekday. And then I realized something else: what is the most difficult seder in a yeshivah? What's the seder that to most people is a dreg? Second seder.

So there are two mehalchim to get around the second seder. Either you're mekatzer it very very much, so it doesn't have a chalos shel seder - you come by five, you need a coffee and a tea, a little walk, a little shmooze, and by 6:45pm, it's supper time already. Ah, you made it! So it comes out that it's a little snap seder over there. That's one mehalach. The other mehalach the olam tries to do is, they try to daven up a little bit, read the Gemora a little faster, talk about learning, whatever it is - just not to learn. Most yeshivos, wherever I was, bachurim kept falling asleep. And that's after they took the Shabbos-dike naps. I'm not talking about people who didn't take a nap. Not at all. I am talking about guys who go to sleep k'seder at lunchtime, baruch Hashem. So what's the pshat? Why can't they stay awake during the second seder?

I even went to a doctor to find out. "Why am I getting tired?" He said, "If you sit around, and don't do anything, you get tired at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. What do you expect?" I said, "It can't be. I know people whom it doesn't happen to." So I decided I'm going to test this out. Maybe my long Shabbos afternoon nap is going to have to go. I wondered if this is

going to work. But it worked like magic. Like magic! I am telling you! And I realized that if you do take a short nap during the time of your weekday bein hasedarim on Shabbos, that works much better, because then it doesn't impose on your second seder timeframe during the week. Bingo!

Next, I made a test to see if it's possible to learn Friday night seder. That was the easiest seder for me. So, according to the parallel for my night seder, I could stay up late all week long! I never had a problem staying up learning late during the weekdays because I easily stayed up for a Friday night seder. I could learn because that was my night seder, and Friday night I could learn. Shabbos morning though was gehenom. Mamash. Getting up, for me, in the morning, as a bachur was...forget it! I loved Brisk for that reason alone...that was gevaldig! I had a very difficult time getting up. It wasn't shayech for me to think otherwise. "How can I get up? It's not shayech." And every day was a struggle, not stam. I tried this eitzeh, and that eitzeh, I tried to get up early, but nothing worked. And then I realized there's only one eitzeh that שבת בשחרית שניה שבת that's where the taanug is, to get an extra half hour on Shabbos morning, an extra forty-five minutes, an extra hour, and if you're mehadrin, you're mekatzter a shtickel from the davening, you come late, me'acharim lavo. And regarding my sleep on Shabbos morning, I said to myself, "Let's see if I could break that sleep for my shacharis, let's see if I could break it." It was Gehinnom.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE CORRELATION

You don't realize one thing - this is your only hope to make the right bechirah, rabbosai. This is your hope to make the bechirah b'tov. And if you're bocher b'tov you'll be able to get out of this impossible choshech, choshech haguf, choshech hamakom, and choshech ha'eisek of which, as the Ramchal himself says, you're טבועה and משוקע בו. This is the only hope we have. Have a good Shabbos!

IN SUMMARY

Shabbos represents a life raft of spirituality. It stops us from sinking in the otherwise overwhelming whirlpool of materialism that inescapably dominates our lives. The Neshamah Yeseirah that we receive on Shabbos gives koach to the Yetzer Hatov and the nefesh of every person - for Shabbos and for the whole week ahead. This means that the ability to choose good and come close to Hashem throughout our lives comes to us from Shabbos. For this reason it is wise to invest in Shabbos, using it to learn and develop in ruchniyus. This week, I will (bli neder) pay attention to patterns I could notice between when Shabbos is a spiritual 'success' and when my weekdays are filled with ruchniyus. I will also (bli neder) try to reduce how long I sleep on Shabbos and use the time for more ruchniyus.

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