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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

A New World

By HaRav Eli Mansour (shiur E12)

Have you ever felt that you were transcending the mundane world around you? If you have never felt that you were rising above the normal traffic, then it is time to find out some more about Shabbat and Kabbalah.

The אריז"ל and Chamin

The אריז"ל addressed the three times that we are meant to engage with heat. (1) Before Shabbat (the subject of our discussion); (2) on Shabbat (We eat hot food for עונג שבת and to demonstrate our understanding of the Halachot of הטמנה on Shabbat); and (3) after Shabbat (The Gemara¹ refers to something hot on Motzei Shabbat as having curative powers. Indeed, the ומחבש draws from the Pasuk למחבש, where למחבש is an acronym for חמין במוצאי שבת, that hot food consumed on מוצאי שבת is also a remedy for depression).

Chamin on Erev Shabbat

Our focus here is on the חמין before Shabbat. In this case, we are not speaking about eating, but about bathing.

Some of the secrets that lie behind bathing in hot water before Shabbat can be found in the בראשית תמן, which is the 48th of the תיקוני זוהר הק' which the אריז"ל instructed his disciples to recite daily. The opening paragraph of the בראשית תמן teaches us that there are two שבתות, one לתת – down below, and one לעילא – a higher, upper-worldly

Shabbat. To understand what an upper-world Shabbat is and how it relates to a hot bath or shower on Erev Shabbat, we need to take a brief tour of the world of Sefirot.

The שבת and ספירות

There are ten ספירות, or emanations, that are described in the זוהר הק'. Those are divided between the three upper Sefirot (כתר and חכמה, בינה), which we generally have no connection to as they are too lofty for our daily existence), and the lower six Sefirot that relate to our daily six-day week (יסוד and חסד, גבורה, תפארת, נצח, הוד). [The Sefira at the bottom, so to speak, that connects us with the upper worlds is called מלכות.]

On Shabbat, we begin to rise through the Sefirot and come ever closer to a pure connection with Hashem. This follows gradations throughout the day starting on Friday night. By Mussaf on Shabbat we are already able to speak about the כתר and lift our feet as we recite קדוש indicating that we are stepping up levels.

*When these
parasites sense
that we are about
to elevate our
spirit, they try to
hitch a ride and
pick up some
קדושה along the
way.*

¹ שבת קיט:



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The pinnacle of the Shabbat elevation through the Sefirot comes at Mincha-time which is called רצון – the time of greatest רצון. All the movement that we are describing is experienced as moving out of this world and into the מעין עולם הבא.

Two types of Shabbat

The אריז"ל therefore describes two forms of Shabbat observance. There is the lower observance, which involves physicality (eating, drinking, resting, etc.) and the upper observance, which involves Torah study and Tefilah thereby using Shabbat to step into and get a glimpse of eternity. (The בן איש חי says that one hour of Torah study on Shabbat is equivalent to 1000 hours of learning during the week – in the upper world the metrics are different.) Torah and Tefilah even transform the physical activities which we engage with on Shabbat.

Take-off starts on Erev Shabbat

The 'lift off' which we experience with each activity on Shabbat begins at Mincha-time on Erev Shabbat. But the process is not unimpeded; there is an underworld.

מקטרגים and קליפות

There are negative 'drag' forces in the world that drain קדושה from us. And while we look forward to the day when all the קדושה that remains in those negative forces will be squeezed out and we will arrive at בלע המוות לנצח – there will be no more death, which is essentially the result of those life-draining forces. Meanwhile, though, we need to deal with those drags on our

elevation in קדושה. They are created by our קדושה and they get their energy from our קדושה.

When these parasites sense that we are about to elevate our spirit with the coming Shabbat, they try to hitch a ride and pick up some קדושה along the way. So, they grab on to our feet and get ready for the ride up. The אריז"ל teaches that we need to shake those קליפות off. Stamping our feet will not do the trick.

Fire from above

Hashem releases, on ערב שבת, a heavenly fire, called שלהבת י-ה. This fire is sent down to buffer between us and those קליפות that try to tailgate on to our lift. As we begin to rise, the fire keeps them at bay as they cannot penetrate the fire. That heavenly fire, the שלהבת י-ה, is activated by the hot water on Erev Shabbat. The grip of the קליפות becomes loosened. They fall back to their place and we begin our journey upward. All week long those קליפות are right up next to us, but as we move up on Erev Shabbat we need distance from them.

Spiritual vacuum - חלל

When we move up spiritually and the קליפות remain blocked below, a gap or vacuum is created. That gap is called חלל. That gap is meant to be a 25-hour buffer-zone between us and the קליפות.

It is essential that we do not get drawn back into that gap by its pull. It is a profoundly serious spiritual matter to go back into the dark zone after Hashem has lifted you up into the light. Such backsliding into the חלל is called חילול שבת,



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and the person is called a מחלל שבת, referring to being drawn down into that חלל.

The two Shabbatot

We have summarized the בראשית חמץ and described the two שבתות that Hashem created;

the down here, physical Shabbat, and the elevated, spiritual Shabbat above. We should now understand the significance of the hot water on ערב שבת, the חמץ, in facilitating our having an elevated Shabbat.

Takeaway: I will try to be aware that my Neshama is trying to soar on Shabbat and to do that which aids in the elevation of my Neshama.