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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

The Magical Moment

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E5)

What do the Shabbos candles add if we already have plenty of electric light at home?

Preparing to light Shabbos candles

There is a custom to give Tzedaka prior to lighting candles. (There are those who give Tzedaka before the performance of any Mitzvah, but the custom is more prevalent here.) The **כף** **ההיים** mentions the custom to give three coins. Then comes the magical moment.

Beyond the dog-eat-dog world

Rav Shimshon Pincus זצ"ל described our world as a place of darkness. It is a world where conflict, hatred, and jealousy reign supreme. It is a world that makes no sense. Into that world enters **שבת קודש**.

Shabbos is the 7th dimension

In addition, the world is a cube in that it has six dimensions (the six days of the week). Shabbos reveals the seventh, inner dimension of reality. The inner world. The outer world can be compared to a **רשות הרבים** – the public domain. We move from there into the **רשות היחיד** – the private inner domain.

To go into an inner domain, where there is no window, where the outer world cannot penetrate, there needs to be illumination. The Shabbos candles put a light into our lives and give us access to the inner dimension.

What goes on in an inner world

An inner world is a place where we can get a glimpse of Hashem's presence. We can discover the truth and all else falls away. That is the sense of **מעין עולם הבא**, where all the false features of our lives will have been flushed away and all that remains is the simple truth of Hashem's existence. It is the light whereby meaning and purpose become evident. That clarity is enabled by the Shabbos candles.

Inner light makes everything visible

Whenever **חז"ל** refer to the inner light, they are speaking about the original **אור הגנוז**. That spiritual light allowed the person to see from one end of the world to the other. That would include from one end of time to the other. It is a light which penetrates all the physical boundaries that block light as we know it.

Shabbos candles beyond time and place

The Shabbos candles are a part of that infinite light. The illumination of the Shabbos candles is not limited to lighting up the table or room in which they are lit. They give access to eternity, and with it, to the truths that withstand the tests of any madness the world can cook up. When the candles are lit, eternity opens up.

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The coming week is formed on Shabbos

The *Posuk*, when it says *כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ*, should be translated literally. Hashem made a six-day world. The world does not have the energy to last beyond six days. The energy for the coming week is drawn from Shabbos.

And so, if a person were endowed with spectacular spiritual vision, they could see the week ahead unfold as they gazed into the Shabbos candles. What is coming ahead is all there, in that hidden light.

Creation began with Light and we initiate the next step of creation, the week to come, with light, as well. That original light carried with it wisdom and understanding and the ability to see the Hand of Hashem in everything that exists and in every event that occurs.

Where is the hidden light?

The holy Ba'al Shem Tov asked where Hashem hid that brilliant spiritual light. He answered that Hashem hid the light in the Torah and in Shabbos. That is why we derive so much wisdom from those who study Torah and that is why the light of Shabbos transcends the time and place where it was lit. When we light Shabbos candles, we are bringing the *אור הגנוז*, the hidden light, into our home.

Soaking up Emunah and Bitachon from the candles

Each of us is yearning to achieve the clarity and peace of mind associated with knowing that everything is in Hashem's loving and all-

powerful hands. That nothing can possibly happen without His say so. That there are no accidents because there is nothing that slips out of His hand – *אין עוד מלבדו* – That clarity can be drawn from the candles. We need only open ourselves to the candles and they will guide us to greater *Bitachon*.

A time for Tefilah

When a woman taps into the infinite light, the newfound clarity also gives a greater sense of purpose and direction to her Tefilos. While during the week we turn to Hashem with the various needs that come up; when the candles have been lit, we can turn to Hashem with the purest yearnings of our Neshama.

Now that we have clarity, we can see past the common desire that our children be wealthy or famous. We can penetrate to the depths of our Neshama and call out with the plea that our children be a source of the light of Torah and Mitzvos. When we touch the nerve of the Neshama, the plea for authentic connection with Hashem takes over, and everything else fades.

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz, in his *Sefer השבת*, טיב, encourages a woman to take that clarity with her into her Tefilos. Do not hold your Neshama and its clarity back. If you sense that it is an *עת רצון*, a time when the pathways of prayer are open, then do not hesitate to put forth your passionate pleas. Implore the *רבונו של עולם* for your family and for *כלל ישראל* with whatever spiritual means you have. (He suggests the *תפילה חנה*, the prayer of the *שיר השירים*, *של"ה הקדוש*, *תחינות*, whatever helps you pour out the yearnings of your newly



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clarified Neshama to its Maker.) The opportunity is precious.

The Brisker Rav gave a father advise when the father asked for a ברכה for his son's יראת שמים. He suggested that the child's יראת שמים be the focus

Takeaway: I will try to think about and take advantage of the spiritual opportunity that candle lighting creates.

of his wife's prayers on ליל שבת. When the gates are open, genuine requests can enter freely. A woman who asks that her children be מאירים בתורה ובמצות is pleading for exactly that which Hashem wants to grant in abundance.