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Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

Shabbat – Are you Sleeping?

By HaRav Eli Mansour (Shiur E10)

What does it mean that Hashem 'created' rest? Rest implies an absence of activity – is that Menucha?

A common error about Creation

Most people, if asked, would say that Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the Seventh. A careful reading of the Pesukim of ויכלו (which we recite repeatedly on Friday night both in the Tefilah and in Kiddush) says ויכלו – אלקים ביום השביעי – that Hashem completed His worked on the Seventh day.

Rashi addresses the seeming contradiction between creation in six days and creation into the Seventh, offering two possibilities.

The first is the view of רבי שמעון. He says that it appeared as though Hashem was still creating when it was already Shabbat. But that is because we are unable to determine the exact moment of sunset. We must add time into Friday to safeguard Shabbat. For Hashem, this is not an issue so Hashem created into the last second which gives us the impression that He created on Shabbat. Creation was completed in six days.

The Creation of Menucha

The second explanation in Rashi is that בא שבת – with the coming of Shabbos something new was created called מנוחה. What is this new creation and why did it need to wait until Shabbos to be created? What needed to be

'made?' If מנוחה is simply rest, then why is it a creative process and not just the absence of מלאכה?

The Central Theme of Shabbat – Menucha

There is a popular error referring to Shabbat as a day of 'rest.' Menucha can only be experienced when one is awake. As useful as it is for those who toil in Torah all week to get some rest on Shabbat, that is not the Menucha that the Torah is speaking about.

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Menucha is the essence of eternity. We ask Hashem for יום שכולו שבת ומנוחה להיי – העולמים – the day that is entirely Shabbat and eternal Menucha. What is that day that we are praying for? It is Olam Haba.

Proof from Mincha

A quick examination of the Amidah of Mincha will reveal that we are speaking about much more than a good night's rest. Our praise is not part of the Shema before retiring; our Tefilah comes at the pinnacle of the sanctity of Shabbat, the holy of holies, as the day is ending. There we speak of

מנוחה וקדושה לעמך נתת ... מנוחת אהבה ונדבה... מנוחת
אמת ואמונה... מנוחה שלמה



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You granted your People קדושה and מנוחה. A מנוחה of love and graciousness, a מנוחה of truth and permanence, a complete and perfect מנוחה.

The place of Menucha is Olam Haba

The מנוחה that we are extolling is the מנוחה of עולם הבא, a taste of which we are experiencing on שבת. This world is bridge to עולם הבא and Shabbat is a foretaste of that eternal עונו. No distractions, troubles or worries. Pure connection with ה'. One who experiences שבת correctly can feel that tranquility. If not right away, then by Mincha-time.

Having a taste of Shabbat before Shabbat

One of the misunderstood and therefore frequently abused customs is tasting the Shabbat food before Shabbat. The message of tasting the food is that we are anticipating the message of Shabbat – a taste of what is to come. Everything about Shabbat is anticipation, looking forward to the eternal day of Shabbat.

The אריז"ל pointed to many of the הלכות שבת and saw references to that which is coming. We drink wine and חז"ל tell us that there will be a preserved wine (a 6,000-year-old perfectly preserved wine – what would the connoisseurs say to that – יין המשומר). There will be meat, a reference to the שור הבר, and so on. He even said that one must wash in hot water on ערב שבת to remind one that he is going through גיהנום, a necessary preparation for the eternal שבת.

Kayin and the Na vaNad syndrome

The Torah reports that Kayin was punished for his fratricide, the murder of Hevel. His

punishment was to be נע ונד. On one level that means that he would be a nomad, always moving from here to there. But on a more spiritual level it refers to restlessness. It means that as soon as he would sit down to learn his thoughts would start to wander away from the Sefer. That as soon as he was engaging in a serious conversation with his wife or with his child he starts fidgeting and reaching for his phone. It means that he is never experiencing the present moment because he is always looking out for some other moment. He was condemned to suffer from the Na vaNad syndrome.

Many, if not most of us are spiritual descendants of Kayin. And thus, there are many who suffer from the Na vaNad syndrome. Their restlessness does not know any respite. They cannot put it down, set the restlessness aside and reach for tranquility without using some chemical to calm themselves down.

The antidote to שבת is נע ונד

The Torah tells us that קין turned to Hashem saying that his punishment of being a נע ונד is unbearable. ה' responds by giving קין את שבת. The שבת that he gave him, says the תנחומא, is שבת. This is supported by the fact that שבת is called an אות, as we say כי אות היא ביני וביניכם אות.

Shabbat מנוחה is a מלאכה

It is not simple to shut down the engines of restlessness and engage the מנוחה of שבת. It requires focus. And the work is well worth it. But focus requires that we recognize that מנוחה is the goal. The goal of שבת is not to collapse from the physical exhaustion of the week; it is to embrace the spiritual tranquility of שבת.



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Making man before and after Shabbat

Looking at the פסוקים of creation we find that man was created on the 6th day in the image of Hashem and Hashem blessed and charged man to procreate, to dominate the animal kingdom and he was told what foods he could eat. There is no mention of Hashem breathing a soul, a נשמה, into man. With that the 6th day ends and Shabbat begins (ויכלו).

After שבת there is a recap of the history of man. There we learn that ה' fashioned man from the dust of the earth and blew into his nostrils the נשמה. Why is the נשמה absent before שבת and is only mentioned thereafter?

The answer, says רבנו בה"י, is that before שבת there is no meaning to a נשמה. Prior to שבת the instructions only relate to man's physical existence, procreation, dominion over the animal world, and food. That was it before שבת.

On Shabbat Hashem created spirituality

A נשמה can only exist where there is the prospect of eternal מנוחה. Once שבת has passed and with it the entry of מנוחה, it is possible to breathe into man a נשמה. Prior to שבת man could only relate to that which is תחת השמש – beneath the sun, physicality. Having experienced שבת man can now relate to that which is above the sun, spiritual bliss.

Takeaway: I will try to work towards feeling Menucha on Shabbat to feel like a different person after Shabbat than before.

That is what is meant when the Pasuk says that creation only ended on Shabbat. ויכל אלקים ביום – the real completion of the world was when the spiritual realm was introduced into the physical world.

The שלום זכר

The Ashkenazic custom of making a Seudah on the Friday night prior to the ברית could well reflect this fact. We mark the Shabbat because only then can we speak about a relationship with the Creator. To enter the Covenant, one first needs a Shabbat. Once there is מנוחה in the world then man's spiritual existence is possible.

ברית after 8 days, not 7

The מדרש explains why the Torah requires us to wait eight days before the Brit. It is comparable to servants who wanted to honor their king. They presented their plan to their king and the king was pleased with their honor and accepted. However, the king said, Please, wait for the queen to be here when I receive this honor.

So, too, the Jewish People knows how precious the ברית is to Hashem. But Hashem insists that first the Shabbat Queen be present.

A seven-day wait would not guarantee that a *full* Shabbat has passed. The queen was not here. Only an eight-day period offers that guarantee.