



Discover the Joy of Shabbos

Explore the deeper meaning of the Zemiros, Tefillos and Hanhagos of Shabbos.



Shabbos – Me'ein Olam Haba

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How can we ensure that our Shabbos is not just another day, with the addition of some food and the subtraction of some activities? What is the secret to making Shabbos a day of transcendence?

Shabbos, we are taught, is a taste of Olam Haba – the World to Come. As Shabbos approaches, we are given an opportunity to get a sense of what our Eternity will be like while we are still among the living in this world.

Are we ready to ask why we are here?

To understand this lofty concept, we need to take a step back to look at the reason, purpose, and mission of our lives. Sound like a bold step? It is. But it is a critical step for each of us to take.

The answer is that One exists and lives in this world (the World of Action) to prepare for one's eternal life and existence in the World to Come (the World of Reward).

In our normal day-to-day lives, the idea that we are preparing for Eternity may seem remote and unavailable to our consciousness. But there is an exception to our normal day-to-day lives, called Shabbos. Shabbos affords us the chance to align ourselves to the otherwise-foreign reality of the World to Come and to get a taste of what that World will be like.

Three steps to making our Shabbos eternal

The first step in making the transition from the temporal world to the eternal world is by putting on hold any activity (or Melacha) which is associated with our daily lives. That is a necessary step, indeed an indispensable step for invoking the reality of the Other World. We must disconnect from this world to connect to the world of eternity. We are being invited into a world of eternity. To accept that invitation we must step out of the mundane activity of this world. Indeed, the Gemara draws from a Pasuk¹ that to enter the world of Shabbos we must refrain from even *speaking* about our everyday activities.

We are granted an extra Neshama on Shabbos

But stopping and disconnecting from all Melacha will not get us to where we are going. The invitation to eternity includes an extra measure of spirituality known as the Neshama Yeseira, (an 'extra' soul) which gives us the capacity to indulge

our bodies with food and drink on Shabbos without being dragged back into the mundane existence of this world.

No Melacha + an Extra Neshama = Shabbos?

We have, so far, a break from the activities of this world and the spiritual capacity to enter the world of eternity

Having Shabbos as a gateway to Olam Haba gives us a chance to check our Olam Haba pulse while we are still here.

¹ אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפצך ביום קדשי וקראת לשבת ענג לקדוש ד' ישעיהו נח: יג. מכבד וכבודו מעשות דרכיך ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר



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while still living with and indulging our physical lives. Now, we have the *capacity* to transcend our mundane existence, but the *path* into the world of eternity requires the study of Torah.

We cannot get above our temporal existence without Torah.

The Midrash says² that as the People entered the Holy Land, they made the transition from the desert (where all of their temporal needs were taken care of and they were all engaged in full-time Torah study) to the need to cultivate the Land. The Torah turned to the Creator with the concern that now that the People would be occupied with growing their food and earning a livelihood there would be no time left for Torah study. The Creator responded with assurance that He would 'pair' the Torah with Shabbos. Having freed the People from their daily pursuits on Shabbos they would be able to immerse themselves in the study of Torah.

The Torah requires each of us to have set times for learning every day and night, not just on Shabbos. But the immersion that Shabbos affords is unique. In a sense, the set times for learning during the week are part of the preparation for Shabbos where we can give ourselves fully to the study of Torah. The study of, and connection with Torah study provides the transition from this world to the Next. The Torah originates in the World to Come and our attachment to it connects us back to its source, our future. Indeed, the Midrash tells us that the Angels could not countenance that the Torah would leave the World of Eternity and be placed into the mundane world.

But that was exactly what the Creator wanted. He wanted to place Torah in this world so that we could grab onto it and hoist ourselves to the Next world.

Having Shabbos as a gateway to Olam Haba gives us a chance to check our Olam Haba pulse while we are still here. It provides a measure of our eternity. If we understand, as the Gemara teaches, that Shabbos is 1/60th of Olam Haba, then we can imagine that the transcendent and spiritual connection to eternity that we feel on Shabbos will be multiplied 60 times in eternity.

Eternity is an unimpeded and bliss-filled connection with the Creator. Shabbos, via leaving our mundane activities behind and connecting to the eternal Torah, allows us a glimpse into what awaits us in eternity.

Takeaway: I will increase my awareness of the role that Torah plays in my Shabbos

² המדרש זה (שאינן לנו) מובא בטור ובמשנה ברורה או"ח סימן רצ