

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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**COMING SOON Bez"H**

**Fascinating Insights—The Sefer (in English)**

[A Rich Advancement](#)

Shabbos is most coveted of all days and as we say in the Shemoneh Esrei of Shabbos *המדת הימים*, most coveted of days. It is a day we must look forward to.<sup>1</sup> This is meant in *השבת*<sup>2</sup> את יום השבת, to anticipate Shabbos, as *ואביו שמר את הדבר* in *הדבר*<sup>3</sup>, Yaakov looked forward to when it would come true. In a similar fashion, the Ohr Hachaim interprets *ושמר בני ישראל* את השבת.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, we say every day (at the Yom) *היום יום...בשבת*.<sup>5</sup>

The Gemara<sup>6</sup> tells us that in regard to bringing in Shabbos, *כל כמה דמקדמינן ליה עדיף*, the more we advance it the better, as it shows we cherish Shabbos. Indeed, we sing in Friday night Zemiros *לבא וממהרים* to enter Shabbos. This shows Shabbos is beloved by him. The Shem Eliezer comments on *ביום השבת ביום השבת יערכנו* that the two times it mentions *יום השבת* refers to Shabbos and *Tosefes* (adding onto) Shabbos. When we do this, *יערכנו*—it shows that we value Shabbos.

Among the benefits of observing *Tosefes Shabbos* is that it has the ability to increase our Parnassa.<sup>8</sup> This is measure for measure as since when one extends

<sup>1</sup> See Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:2. Concerning playing chess on Shabbos, R' Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah, 3:15:2) writes that really it is not forbidden if one gets pleasure from it. Still, it is surely better not to play because of *דבר דבר* (See Shabbos 113). Also, sometimes the one who loses is upset and then it is surely forbidden (See also the Minchas Yitzchak 3:33:1 where he discourages chess).

<sup>2</sup> Devarim 5:12.

<sup>3</sup> Breishis 37:11.

<sup>4</sup> Shemos 31:16. We know that Shabbos is likened to *עולם הבא*, the world to come (see Brachos 57b). Just as *עולם הבא* is after one exits this world, says the Chidushai Harim, likewise Shabbos comes after one leaves the weekday completely.

<sup>5</sup> See Ramban Shemos 20:8. The Ibn Ezra (to Yeshaya 58:13) comments on *...that you should delight in hearing words of Torah*—*וקראת לשבת עונג*

<sup>6</sup> Pesachim 105b.

<sup>7</sup> Vayikra 24:8. The simple meaning is that each and every Shabbos he should arrange the *הפנים* להם.

<sup>8</sup> It has been said that "more than we keep Shabbos, Shabbos keeps us."

the boundary of Shabbos and narrowed the boundary of the weekday, Hashem extends his boundary and gives him more Parnassa, when he is in a narrow strait.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, R' Menachem Mendel Riminover explained *עשה שבתך חול ואל תצטרך לבריות*<sup>10</sup>—we should make our Shabbos while it is still weekday, meaning *Tosefes Shabbos*. Then, as it continues *ואל תצטרך לבריות*—we won't need to come onto people to ask them for Tzedaka.

Likewise, R' Noach Lechivitzor would translate *מאשר* מלך, from Asher, his bread will have richness and he will provide kingly delicacies.<sup>11</sup> The letters that precede *אשר* spell *שבת* as before an *א* is *ב*, before a *ש* is a *ת* and before a *ר* is *ש*. This refers to *Tosefes Shabbos*. From this, as the Pasuk continues, one earns fat Parnassa—*שמנה להמו*.<sup>12</sup> *הוא* refers to Shabbos itself where we will be rewarded in Gan Eden—*יתן* מעדני מלך.

Every moment of *Tosefes Shabbos* is valued by Hashem. To fulfill *Tosefes Shabbos*—as the Gemara says *מוסיפין* מחול על הקודש, add from the weekday onto the holy<sup>13</sup>—it has been recommended to accept Shabbos at least 10 minutes earlier than we normally would. In this way we can merit the many Brachos this affords.<sup>14</sup>

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## Disorderly Devotion

Many people suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder, known as OCD. One way it is expressed is through never-ending uncertainty about the satisfactory completion of tasks. Those with OCD are prone to repeatedly washing their hands due to concern of germs. For those who are Halacha observant, OCD can be especially severe since Halacha is demanding and detailed. Observant Jews with OCD may be unable to complete Brachos or Tefillos since they are in doubt as to whether they pronounced the words properly, which will make them recite the text repeatedly. Pesach preparations can be extremely stressful for those with OCD when they are cleaning for Chametz.<sup>15</sup> Typically treating OCD involves "exposure and response prevention" where the patient is

<sup>9</sup> After many years of being childless, a couple was finally blessed with a child. However, their excitement soon faded as they were informed that the baby boy was born with a hole in his heart which was threatening his life. All the top doctors they went to didn't help. The parents then traveled to the Chofetz Chaim. The grandson that was attending to the Chofetz Chaim told his grandfather the story of the infant boy with a hole in his heart and the danger the baby is facing. The Chofetz Chaim told them, "I don't know why you traveled so far to ask me for a Bracha as Shabbos is the source of Bracha. Accept upon yourself to start Shabbos a bit earlier, glorify the Shabbos a bit more than usual and you will receive the blessing you need from Shabbos itself (See Shabbos 12a)." The parents followed the advice and with Hashem's help the child was healed.

<sup>10</sup> Shabbos 118a. The simple translation is treat your Shabbos as a weekday rather than depend on people for aid.

<sup>11</sup> Breishis 49:20. This idea is also illustrated in *בְּיוֹמוֹ תִּתֵּן שְׂכָרוֹ*, on that day shall you pay his hire (Devarim 24:15), as its initials spell *שבת*.

<sup>12</sup> Adam Neumann, a Jewish billionaire who was raised secular, said the more he keeps Shabbos, the better his company does.

<sup>13</sup> Yoma 81b. See Orach Chaim 261:2. Incidentally, Shabbos is the holiest day—more than Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Just take a look at the punishments. For desecrating Yom Tov, one receives Malkus, lashes. For desecrating Yom Kippur, one gets Kares. However, for Shabbos desecration, one receives Kares and Sekila (death by stoning).

<sup>14</sup> We should keep in mind that no one ever lost out from keeping the Torah or performing a Mitzva.

<sup>15</sup> Those with OCD may not even get any joy out of their religious practices which are so important to them.

trained not to respond compulsively to the situation that causes obsessive thoughts. So for one who is observant, it can mean not to repeat the Bracha or Tefilla text even if he knows he recited it improperly.

The Torah addresses not going overboard. The Mishna says אין חוששין שמא גררה הולדה מבית לבית וממקום למקום דאם כן מהצר<sup>16</sup> we aren't concerned that a weasel may have dragged Chametz from house to house or place to place, because if so, then let us be concerned from courtyard to courtyard and city to city. There would then be no end to the matter. We must realize that למלאכי השרת לא ניתנה תורה למלאכי השרת, the Torah wasn't given to the ministering angels.<sup>17</sup> We are expected to be human, not perfect.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski related that one who suffers from OCD may not necessarily be reassured by the opinion of Halachic Authorities. One woman with OCD threw out three sets of dishes because she couldn't accept the Rav's ruling that the dishes were perfectly Kosher, saying, "The Rav didn't understand my question."<sup>18</sup>

A boy named Yosef was admired by many boys in his Yeshiva since he Davened such a long Shemoneh Esrei, intensely engaged in Tefilla. However, his Rebbe knew the truth: Instead of davening with *kavana*, most of Yosef's time in Shemoneh Esrei was spent agonizing over the possibility that he missed or mispronounced a word, compelling him to carefully repeat words and phrases over and over. Yosef was engaged in a torturous battle with himself. He sought the advice of his Rebbe, who tried to assure him not to worry. One time, his Rebbe told him, "I guarantee that you won't be held accountable for missing a word of Tefilla. I promise that I will take you out of Gehinnom. Stop worrying!" Yosef continued to worry, but he was afraid to bring it up anymore with his Rebbe. As a result, he suffered in silence. This surely isn't what the Torah wants as the Torah is דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל נתיבותיה שלום, its ways are ways of pleasantness and all of its pathways are peace.<sup>19</sup>

The question has been asked if restoring mental health is a good enough cause to knowingly allow one with OCD to fail to observe Mitzvos? For example, can a therapist train a patient not to repeat Brachos even when the patient is sure he missed a word? Can one with OCD continue Shema if he mispronounced or omitted some of the text? This question was addressed by the Steipler<sup>20</sup> (1899-1985) who wrote that the patient should be instructed to Daven from a Siddur and not to go back to recite any text that he fears may have been recited incorrectly or skipped. It is clear that according to Halacha one isn't obligated to do more. The Steipler also says that a rabbi shouldn't explain to one with OCD why he ruled it is permitted. Just say it without a reason. Otherwise, the person with OCD will counteract the ruling.

This question was also posed to R' Asher Wiess<sup>21</sup> who ruled that the OCD patient<sup>22</sup> must follow his therapist's

<sup>16</sup> Pesachim 1:2.

<sup>17</sup> Yoma 30a.

<sup>18</sup> See the Ramban in the laws of Nida 9:25 where he writes ומדיני החיצונית: לא טוב היות האדם מתמיר יותר מדאי ומחפש אחר הספיקות לפסול טבילתה בדבר הקל, כי Among the laws of Chatzitzta: It is not good to be overly strict, seeking doubts to disqualify her immersion for a light reason, for there would be no end to it...

<sup>19</sup> Mishlei 3:17.

<sup>20</sup> Kraina D'Igrisa 373.

<sup>21</sup> Minchas Asher 2:134.

<sup>22</sup> This was a Talmid Chacham that suffered from OCD. He was instructed by doctors not to repeat words during Davening even if he thinks he mispronounced them. He asks whether he should listen to them and, assuming he should listen to them, should he take measures to minimize the problems that may result from possible improper

instructions for overcoming his disorder even at the expense of observing Mitzvos. He writes that man's primary obligation is to do everything that is necessary for him to cure his illness, and to this end he is allowed even to violate the Torah's commandments.

R' Wiess says that Halacha absolves one from fulfilling a Mitzva when this is necessary to avoid illness. Just as one isn't required to pay more than 1/5 of his assets in order to fulfill a Mitzva,<sup>23</sup> one is similarly not required to subject himself to physical harm or debilitation for the sake of a Mitzva. So if a person suffers from a debilitating mental illness, and his mental health professional determines that his recovery requires suspending Mitzva observance, then the patient should comply as long as he is only neglecting the observance of *Mitzvas Asei* (affirmative commands) and not transgressing prohibitions. This is permissible for the sake of restoring his mental health.<sup>24</sup> R' Wiess later says it would also be permitted even if the treatment for OCD requires transgressing a Torah violation.<sup>25</sup> This is because since without recovering from his disorder, an OCD patient who can't complete Brachos or Tefillos<sup>26</sup> will likely never have the ability to properly fulfill these requirements. It is therefore preferable to have him knowingly suspend his observance of these Mitzvos for the purpose of treatment,<sup>27</sup> which will enable him to fulfill them properly throughout the rest of his life.<sup>28</sup>

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### [The Difference Between East and West](#)

The Gemara<sup>29</sup> tells us that when the Beis Hamikdash was standing, the Mizbeach would atone for us. It is written כרחק מזרח ממערב הרחיק ממנו את פשעינו, as far as east from west, has He distanced our transgressions from us.<sup>30</sup> The Gematria of מזרח is 255 while מערב is 312. When we take the difference (כרחק) of the sum between the two, we come to a result of 57, the same as the Gematria of מזבח! This alludes to that the Mizbeach atoned for our sins (הרחיק ממנו את פשעינו).<sup>31</sup>

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recitation of Brachos, such as never eating a שביעה כל כדי שביעה of bread so that he never has a biblical obligation to recite Birchash Hamazon.

<sup>23</sup> See Ravad, and others, to Baba Kamma 9b. Also see Orach Chaim 656 with Mishna Brura and Biur Halacha.

<sup>24</sup> A similar line of reasoning is found in the Igros Moshe (Even Haezer 4:32:4) where he permits a young divorced woman to leave her hair uncovered so that people wouldn't realize that she had been previously married. Just as Halacha doesn't require one to incur a loss of more than 1/5 of his assets for the sake of a Mitzva, a divorcee is not required to compromise her ability to find a new husband for the sake of a Mitzva. Therefore, if she truly believes that covering her hair would lower her chances of remarriage, then she is absolved of the hair covering requirement.

<sup>25</sup> See the Beis Yitzchak, Even Haezer 39.

<sup>26</sup> We say in Shemoneh Esrei (in שמע קולנו כל פה כי אתה שומע תפלת כל פה, Hashem hears the prayer of every mouth. כל פה includes the Tefilos of those who can't pronounce the words as they should.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning not eating a שביעה כל כדי שביעה of bread so that he never has a biblical obligation to recite Birchash Hamazon, R' Wiess cautioned against trying to minimize Halachic problems, as the constant search to avoid Halachic doubts and dilemmas will just feed his obsessiveness when the point of the exercise is to help him learn to live with it.

<sup>28</sup> This is similar to what the Gemara (Yoma 85b) says חלל עליו שבת אחת כדי שישמור שבתות הרבה, violate one Shabbos so that many more will be observed.

<sup>29</sup> Brachos 55a.

<sup>30</sup> Tehillim 103:12.

<sup>31</sup> Tangentially, the more sins one commits the less he can see the light of Hashem. This can be compared to one who covers a light with a sheet. The more sheets the light is covered with, the dimmer it will be.