

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

'יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו הרה"צ ר' גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א

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טיב המערכת

החודש הזה לכם – This month shall be for you

Moreinu HaRav shlita relates about his father, that when he was involved in compiling his *sefer* 'Ma'adanei HaShulchan', when the month of Nisan arrived, he would close his notes and would learn Hilchos Pesach, as Chazal said (Pesachim 6a), 'We inquire and expound the laws of Pesach thirty days before Pesach'. He fulfilled this statement literally. Now that we have come to these days, we must understand what we have to investigate, therefore, we are told to ask.

We all know that the righteous Jewish women have already started working hard to prepare the house for Pesach. Cleaning and preparing for the honor of Pesach. In general, the men join in a few days before the holiday (at best...) This is what we have to understand, was the mitzvah of preparing for Pesach only given to women? Certainly, men were not left out of this directive, so where are they?

The reason it was established to read Parashas HaChodesh on the Shabbos before the month of Nisan, or on Rosh Chodesh Nisan as it falls out this year, is to inform the people that the holiday of Pesach is approaching and they will get ready. When the Bais HaMikdash was standing, they had to get ready to go up to Yerushalayim since on Pesach there was a greater mitzvah than the other holidays because they had to offer the Karban Pesach. Since on this Shabbos everyone comes to shul, they established that on this Shabbos they would read in the Torah the section of the month in which HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded regarding the Karban Pesach. Nowadays, when we do not have the Bais HaMikdash, the reading alerts us to properly prepare for the upcoming Pesach, each according to his ability.

Now we return to the first question. Women clearly know what they have to do to get ready for Pesach, but what do the men have to do? It is regarding this that Moreinu HaRav shlita would say that just as the women are preparing already from Purim or even before it, so do the men have to prepare during this time for the mitzvah of '*vehigadta levincha*' – 'and you shall tell your son'. Everyone must properly learn the Haggadah with the explanations and commentaries. All this until Pesach, so that when Pesach comes, he will be properly prepared. Not like those men who sit down at the Seder with a large Haggadah and start looking for a *vort* or a nice explanation. The wise man has his eyes in his head.

- Based on a *sichah* in Kollel Shivti

טיב ההשגחה

'ואל תיטוש תורת אמך'

'Do not forsake the teaching of your mother'

Moreinu HaRav shlita relates a story that demonstrates how we must keep the customs of Israel, even the simplest of them: One of my students from a Heaven fearing family, a family of distinguished Talmidei Chachamim, came to me with a tray of Purim cookies, *hamentashin*. When I asked him about the cookies, he replied, "These cookies are my Judaism and that of my family!!!"

This is what he said: "My father was raised as a non-Jewish child overseas. One day when he was already a young man, my father went to the home of a good friend to study for a test. The friend's mother brought out coffee and cookies. Father was taken by the delicious cookies, and he said these were exactly like the cookies that his grandmother sent them... The friend said, "If this is so, then your grandmother is Jewish!!!" Father asked, "What is the connection?" The friend explained that these cookies are unique, Jews bake them for the holiday of Purim...

"Then his friend's mother began questioning him about his family, and it became clear that this was his mother's mother which made him Jewish. The friend's mother asked the family name in the past and present, and she told him that if his mother and grandmother were Jewish, then he was also Jewish!!!

"Father returned home speechless from the news he had just received, and he asked his mother if they were Jewish? She acknowledged that they were complete Jews, but after the Holocaust there was a great fear to be Jewish so there was assimilation. Father asked his mother what it means to be a Jew? His mother explained that she fasted on Yom Kippur, she bakes special cookies for Purim, and she bakes Challahs on Friday, and she does not eat non-kosher.

"Father inquired some more about Judaism, and over the years returned to his roots. He was circumcised at an older age, did complete Teshuva, married, and raised a Torah observant family. The Rav continued, I was very moved by the story, I made a bracha on the cookie with great concentration since it brought an entire family back to its roots. See what a simple and light custom which has no halachic basis can do, a simple custom of Jews, had the power to guard the flame of a Jew!!!"

והכינו את אשר יביאו
When they prepare what they bring

טיב הפרשה

ושלשים יום ושלשת ימים תשב בדמי טהרה בכל קדש לא תגע ואל
המקדש לא תבא עד מלאת ימי טהרה: (יבד):

For thirty-three days she shall stay in blood of purity, she may not touch anything sacred and she may not enter the Sanctuary, until the completion of her days of purity. (12:4)

The holy *seforim* explain the difference between the sanctity of Shabbos and the sanctity of the Moadim. It is not possible for the person to benefit from the light of the Moadim if he has not prepared himself for them beforehand, whether with the things connected to that holiday or whether studying the portion of the Torah that discusses the topics of the holiday. The light of Shabbos is different. The person can benefit from the holy light even if he did not prepare himself properly. This is because Shabbos is a gift to Israel, as brought down in the Gemara (Shabbos 10b), 'HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, "I have a wonderful gift in My treasure house, and Shabbos is its name, and I wish to give it to the Jewish people – go and inform them"'. Since this is a gift, no effort is needed to acquire it.

We find a support for this in Chazal (Yerushalmi Demai 4:1), 'an unlearned person has the fear of Shabbos upon him, and because of this a false word does not leave his mouth on Shabbos'. Chazal reveal to us with this that every Jew, whatever his status, benefits from the influence of the sanctity of Shabbos. Even one who is at a very low level, and he is categorized as an '*am ha'aretz*' [an unlearned person] whose heart is not attracted to Torah, and he has not earned the ability to be sanctified by the 'light of Torah', he still earns the light of Shabbos, which arouses him to fear of Heaven [*Yiras Shamayim*]. However, on the other hand, we also find in the holy *seforim* that even Shabbos needs preparation, and they bring support for this from the *posuk* (Shemos 16:5) 'והכינו את אשר יביאו' – 'when they prepare what they will bring'. According to how 'they prepare' they 'will bring' the sanctity of Shabbos on themselves. True, Shabbos was given as a gift, however, even one who receives a gift must prepare to receive it, he must make a utensil that will hold blessing. The person does this by sanctifying himself earlier before Shabbos he makes himself into the utensil for this. According to the value of the preparation, so is the value of the utensil, and according to the value of the utensil, so is the value of the sanctity one can earn.

One who is diligent will start preparing for Shabbos on Sunday, as we find in the Gemara (Beitzah 16a) that this was the habit of Shammai the Elder, 'From the first day of your week prepare for your Shabbos', and Rashi explains, 'On Sunday start thinking about next Shabbos'. Even though the Gemara there mentions a different habit of Hillel the Elder and he was only concerned about Shabbos on Friday, this was just for the mundane physical needs, as the Gemara mentions, but there is no doubt that regarding spiritual preparation Hillel agreed with Shammai that one prepares on Sunday for Shabbos.

We find a support for this in the Torah as well. After '*Kabbalas HaTorah*' [receiving the Torah] when Moshe went up the mountain to receive the *luchos*, it says (Shemos 24:16), 'וישכן כבוד ה' על הר סיני' – 'The glory of Hashem rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for a six-day period. He called to Moshe on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud'. Rashi explains, 'And the cloud covered Moshe for a six-day period after the giving of The Ten Commandments... This teaches you that whoever enters the camp of the Shechinah requires prior separation for six days.'

There is a famous rule that whatever is found in '*olam*' is also found in '*shana*' and in '*nefesh*'. Based on this we find that just as the holiest place in the world [*olam*] is called '*machane Shechinah*' [the camp of the Shechinah], so too the holiest day of the year [*shana*] is called '*machane Shechinah*' [the camp of the Shechinah], and that is the day of Shabbos, which is holier than all other times. We learn from here that before the person comes to Sanctity it is incumbent on him to sanctify himself for six days. Then he will merit that the light of Shabbos will take hold of him properly, as Chazal said (Avodah Zara 3a) 'whoever toils on Friday [*erev Shabbos*] will eat on Shabbos'.

It is for this reason that they established that we mention Shabbos every day when we say the '*shir shel yom*', '*hayom yom rishon b'Shabbos*' and so on, to remind the person and to hurry him to prepare and sanctify himself in Torah and *avodah* from Sunday until Shabbos (see 'Shaar Hakavanos Derushei Shabbos – Vayehi Noam). And so, every day we hurry him again, that if he has not done something on Sunday to prepare for Shabbos, at least do something on Monday or Tuesday. Even if he already started to prepare on Sunday, there is still room to hurry him on Monday to add sanctity to his sanctity, and the closer Shabbos comes, it is fitting to hurry him more.

It is especially fitting for the person to sanctify himself the three days before Shabbos, as Maran the Baal Shem Tov mentions (brought down in the holy *sefer* 'Avodah Yisrael' – Pirkei Avos 1) on the *posuk* (Shemos 34:21) 'בחריש ובקציר תשבות' – 'you shall desist from plowing and harvesting'. The word '*charish*' is an abbreviation for 'רביעי חמישי ששי' [Wednesday, Thursday, Friday]. These days are called 'prelude to Shabbos' (Gittin 77a) and they have a closer attachment to Shabbos. It is known from the Tzaddikim that from Wednesday when we say '*Lechu nerananah*' in the '*shir shel yom*', the light of the sanctity of Shabbos begins to shine.

We find a hint to what we have been discussing in the *posuk* before us, '**תשב בדם טהרה**' – '**she shall stay in blood of purity**', the letters of the word '*teisheiv*' spell out '**Shabbos**'. The Torah tells us that if the person only conducts himself in sanctity on Shabbos, only then will he be categorized as 'blood of purity'. However, if he forgets about Shabbos all week long, even though there is still '*kedusha*' and it is a 'wonderful gift' that our Creator gave us, still this is only as an '*am ha'aretz*' who is '**בכל קודש לא תגע**' – '**she may not touch anything sacred**', since he did not prepare in sanctity he did not earn the light befitting his level. '**ואל המקדש לא תבאו**' – '**and she may not enter the Sanctuary**' – he has not yet come to the superior sanctity called '*Mikdash*' and '*machane Shechinah*' for one cannot earn this '**עד מלאת ימי טהרה**' – '**until the completion of her days of purity**' – until the days of purity are complete, that is, he purified himself all six days, only then does he acquire the sanctity of Shabbos stress free.

When the person merits to extend the sanctity of Shabbos, he benefits all those around him, as it says (Shemos 23:12) 'וביום השביעי תשבות' – 'And on the seventh day you shall desist, so that your ox and your donkey may be at ease and your slavewoman's son and the stranger may be refreshed'. Rashi explains, 'Your slavewoman's son – an uncircumcised son. And the stranger – this refers to a resident alien.'

Look carefully at the wording of the *posuk*, 'may be at ease' literally. It seems more fitting to state it as a command 'so that your ox and donkey should rest' which warns about the resting of animals and slaves. The Torah hints at the great influence of the sanctity of Shabbos, to the extent to bring ordinary possessions to the sanctity, as they too will be influenced by the holy light of Shabbos.