



R' Pam once remarked that what he missed from Europe was the Erev Shabbos. "Chatzos came and people stopped their activities, focusing entirely on the holy Shabbos. People would come to shul early and say Shir Hashirim, learn a sefer on the parsha and so on. You felt Shabbos entering." R' Yaakov Kamenetzky expressed it in this way: "At the beginning of the 1900s, there was Chillul Shabbos in America. Over the years we recaptured the Shabbos. However, we have yet to reclaim the Erev Shabbos."

Preparing for Shabbos is biblical (See Biur Halacha 250, s.v. yashkim) as it says והיה ביום הששי והכינו את אשר יביאו, on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring (Shemos 16:5). The importance of preparing for Shabbos is shown in the gemara (Pesachim 13a, Eruvin 43b) that says Eliyahu will not come on Erev Shabbos (or Erev Yom Tov) because of the difficulties this would impose on those who would need to interrupt their Shabbos preparations to greet Eliyahu.

The holy Amoraim would prepare for Shabbos in their way. To name just a couple: Rava would salt fish for Shabbos whereas R' Huna would light lamps (Shabbos 119a, See the Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:6). This shows happiness and anticipation for Shabbos. This isn't just for Friday but the entire week like we see with Shamai. Beis Shamai said from Sunday, one should prepare for Shabbos (Beitza 16a).

We know that there is a distinct Yetzer Hara for arguing and getting angry on Erev Shabbos. This is portrayed in the story related in the gemara (Gittin 52a) of two people whom the Satan regularly incited so that during every twilight period on Erev Shabbos they fought with one another... What is the origin of this Yetzer Hara? Because the first sin was on Erev Shabbos, the Yetzer Hara has dominance then. We can be caught up in such a rush on Erev Shabbos that it can lead to quarreling. Indeed, the word נחש, the snake who was the instigator of the first sin, is rooted in חיש, act quickly, rush (as in חיש כי גז חיש, for it is cut off swiftly and we fly away – Tehillim 90:10). To counter this, we need to be ready early.

Erev Shabbos should be peaceful and not rushed. Then we can live up to וזכנו לקבל שבתות מתוך רוב שמחה, to receive Shabbos amid abundant gladness (Ribon Kol Ha'olamim on Friday night). This can be attained by following a unique interpretation of מה בערב שבת סימן יפה לו (Kesubos 103b) (The simple meaning is that if one dies on Erev Shabbos it is a good omen for him.): make yourself like you are dead on Erev Shabbos. Meaning, that you only deal with matters of Shabbos so that Shabbos can be brought in early and without tension.

We say in Kabbalas Shabbos פני שבת, let us welcome the Shabbos presence. Another explanation is to put on your Shabbos face (פני שבת). All week a person walks around with

a face of anxiety, tension and the like. But on Shabbos we should feel as if all our work is done and that our worries are gone. We should have a sense of tranquility on our faces. This is how we should welcome Shabbos (See R' Menachem Bentzion Zaks, the son-in-law of R' Tzvi Pesach Frank, in his sefer Menachem Tzion).

We need to be ready with time to greet Shabbos. We should live up to the words לקראת שבת לנו ונלכה, let us go welcome Shabbos (Lecha Dodi). The Rambam (Hilchos Shabbos 30:2) writes ...one should wrap himself in tzitzis and sit with proper respect, waiting to receive Shabbos as one goes out to greet a king. R' Chanina would wrap himself in finery and stand towards evening on Friday and say בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה, come, let us go out to greet Shabbos the queen. R' Yanai would put on his Shabbos clothes on Friday and say בואי כלה בואי (Shabbos 119a).

One can already feel Shabbos on Erev Shabbos. Indeed, שבת (ערב) means mixture like תערובת since Erev Shabbos has the kedusha of Shabbos mixed into it and one can already feel it on Erev Shabbos (See Sichos Hischazkus, Chanuka, 5758, 1). The Meor Einayim would actually feel Shabbos through his Shabbos preparations

such as the Mikva and the like. Once, on Erev Shabbos after his preparations, he still felt some Kedusha lacking. He then realized he was wearing his weekday socks!

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