



## The Gift of Shabbos

"Only five days to go, Avi. I can't wait!"

"You sound pretty excited, Chaim. What's happening in five days?"

"I'm getting a big gift."

"Wow! What's the occasion?"

"It is a special gift that was promised to me a long time ago. I am not the only one receiving it."

"Who else will get it, your brothers and sisters?"

"Yes. All of my family members, all of my friends and neighbors, and all of my classmates. In fact, all of Klal Yisrael will receive this gift."

"I am beginning to understand. Who will be giving this gift?"

"The greatest giver in the universe."

"I figured it out, Chaim. Today is Monday. The gift that is coming in five days is Shabbos. It is Hashem's precious gift to His chosen nation, Yisrael."

"Right, Avi! This week's parasha describes Shabbos as a 'sign' between Hashem and Klal Yisrael (Shemos 31:12-17). Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, in his sefer Kedushas Levi cites the Gemora (Shabbos 10b) which learns an important lesson from these verses. When one gives a gift to his friend, the giver must inform the receiver. Hashem informed Yisrael by saying, 'I have a good gift in My treasury, and Shabbos is its name.'"

"It is a very good gift."

"**R**av Levi Yitzchak describes the goodness of Shabbos. Its light and holiness come from heaven and illuminate our hearts. A spirit of holiness, a new *seichel* (intellect), and a spiritual life force enter our souls on this holy day."

"That is mind boggling. What a *matanah!*"

"Yes, Avi. However, this gift needs preparation to properly receive it. During the weekdays, we have to anticipate the arrival of Shabbos. We have to yearn for its spiritual gifts. We also have to physically prepare for the holy day with special food and clothes. However, even with the greatest preparation, we do not 'earn' Shabbos entirely on our own merits. It is still . . . a *matanah*."

"You have really kindled a great desire for this special present, Chaim."

"Let me tell you more, Avi. The Kedushas Levi speaks about the reward for the mitzvos. 'There is no reward for a mitzvah in this world' (Gemora Kiddushin 39b). We all know that we will receive our reward in Olam Habbo for the mitzvos that we performed here on this earth. However, the Almighty, in His infinite kindness, wants us to taste that reward here in this world. The taste is called . . . Shabbos. It is referred to as *may'ein olam*

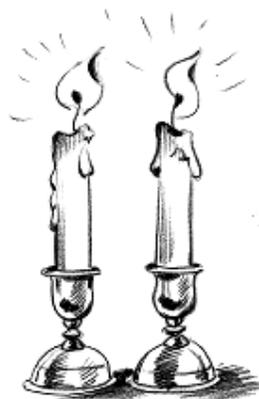
*habbo* - a world to come. All of the spiritual delights of Shabbos that we spoke about are a small taste of the great pleasures that are in store for us in *olam habbo*."

"You have really whetted my appetite for Shabbos, Chaim. I can't wait for it to come. B'ezras Hashem I will keep Shabbos in mind all week, and do some preparation each day. I want to properly experience the sweetness of Hashem's great gift - *may'ayin olam habbo*."

"May the Almighty help you to succeed!"

*Kinderlach* . . .

*We all love gifts. They show us how much the giver cares for and appreciates us. Hashem has given us so many beautiful gifts. Torah, mitzvos, and their reward. The reward is reserved for the next world; however, He gave us a taste of that reward in this world . . . Shabbos. What a wonderful present! Where would we be without it? Appreciate it! Prepare for it! When the holy day comes, enjoy its spiritual delights! Show Hashem how much you value His special matanah.*



## The Fear That Honors

**T**he huge banquet hall was packed. The Yeshiva's Annual Dinner was always well attended. This year was no exception. The crowd hushed silent as the emcee rose to the podium to begin his opening remarks. After a few words about the Yeshiva, he began to introduce the first speaker.

"The young man who is about to speak is the top student in our Yeshiva. He has been learning personally with the Rosh Yeshiva for the past year, and he is his closest talmid. He will now give a Devar Torah."

*The young man tried to rise from his seat. He was petrified. All eyes were upon him. He knew that his every action was being scrutinized. His behavior would reflect upon the Rosh Yeshiva. You can judge the*

*Rebbe by observing the talmid. That is what everyone would be doing. The young man would not want to do anything that would cause even the slightest smirch in the honor of the Rosh Yeshiva. Every action, every word must be perfect. That is the least he could do for his beloved teacher and mentor.*

**T**he Mesillas Yesharim, in Chapter 24, explains *Yiras Chet* (Fear of Sin). This is a very high *madrayga* (spiritual level). A person feels such a close attachment to Hashem that he does not want to do anything that will reflect badly upon Him. Any trace of sin in a person's actions is not befitting for a servant of the Almighty. His Honor is reflected by our actions. Therefore, how could we even dream of committing the smallest sin? This is the parable of the talmid of the Rosh Yeshiva. The young man would not want to do anything that lowers the honor of his leader.

**T**he Mesillas Yesharim illuminates *Yiras Chet* with an example from our parasha. Moshe is instructed to make *shemen mishchas kodesh* (holy anointing oil), to be used only for holy purposes. He is warned, "It shall not be smeared on human flesh" (Shemos 30:32). The penalty for violation is *kares* (being cut off from the Jewish people). The Gemora (Horios 12a) related Moshe Rabbeinu's fear, when he anointed his brother Aharon HaKohen. Perhaps he smeared the *shemen mishchas kodesh* improperly. Hashem sent down a voice from *shamayim* to assure him that no sin was committed. Aharon was also afraid that he benefited from the oil. A Heavenly voice assured him also. Moshe and Aharon, our holy ancestors, had true *Yiras Chet*; a genuine fear of besmirching the Honor of the Almighty.

*Kinderlach* . . .

*Who would want to cause dishonor to his parents? Who would want to cause embarrassment to his Rebbe? Who would want to humiliate her teacher? No one. How much more so, should we want to uphold the honor of Hashem. Just like the top student wanted to maintain the honor of his Rosh Yeshiva. This is a very high madrayga, kinderlach. However, it is worthwhile to know what the goal is. May you all merit reaching it!*

Parasha Questions:

- What is Shabbos a sign of? (Rashi 31:13)
- What is the punishment for Chilul Shabbos without witnesses and proper warning? (Rashi 31:14)
- Why does the Torah repeat a word by saying "Shabbos Shabboson"? (Rashi 31:15)