



MIZRACHI
UNITED KINGDOM

THE **SHABBATON** **@ HOME** #3



Welcome back again!



It has now been almost 6 months since we last got together nationally for a UK Community Shabbaton at Home. We did not think, when we chose to run another Shabbaton, that barely 36 hours before this

Shabbat, our shuls would have to be closed again. Over the last few months it has been inspiring to read how Rabbis and communities have made sure that their shuls could open safely and securely. We now wait till we can open them safely again.

Actually the main reason we chose this Shabbat is that it is also the global Shabbat Project. To create a sense of renewal within the community in South Africa in 2013, Chief Rabbi Goldstein offered a simple solution: Jews from all walks of life – across the spectrum of religious affiliation, young and old, and from all corners of the country – come together to celebrate this day of rest.

The initiative was such a runaway success that communities around the world began calling the rabbi asking to participate the following year. And thus The Shabbat Project was born.

Since the first project's inception, thousands of events have been celebrated in more than 1,600 cities around the world. And it continues to grow.

We are proud that our third Shabbaton is part of the Shabbat Project. The global theme this year of the Shabbat project is 'Bringing it Home' a perfect link to our UK Shabbaton at home.

Once again thank you to our team made up of Rabbi Daniel Fine of Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue

and David Reuben, Director of Programmes for Mizrachi UK. Huge thanks to them as well as to Gemma Denby from Mizrachi UK for liaising with all the communities.

Like the last couple of times, tens of thousands of homes all across the UK are joining together both with their communities as well as nationally to celebrate this Shabbat in your homes.

We will be launching on Thursday night with a special concert for Shabbat featuring one of the Jewish world's top names in music as well as addresses from the Chief Rabbi and the Israeli Ambassador.

Over Shabbat please enjoy the pack during your meals and throughout the day. And then at 6:30pm on Motzei Shabbat join us for the first GREAT UK COMMUNITY SHABBAT AT HOME QUIZ with our friends from Etgar. Some of the questions will be about the information included in this booklet

Once again a total of over 75 communities from 12 cities across the country are participating in this Shabbaton at home, sending the project into well over 30,000 homes.

Once again we want to make the 25 hours of Shabbat as enjoyable and inspirational as possible, linking everyone together, so that no Jew should feel in spiritual isolation. Each of the meals is themed to link to a different concept of Shabbat as well as halachic advice on how to observe Shabbat.

This Shabbat, we once again join into one enormous community, united in purpose and spirit.

Shabbat Shalom and enjoy a very special Shabbat.

Rabbi Andrew Shaw
CEO, Mizrachi UK

SHABBATON @ HOME #3 TIMETABLE

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER

18:30

International Challah make with Seed **LIVE**

20:00 **LIVE**

Launch event with Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis,
Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein,
Her Excellency Tzipi Hotovely and Ishay Ribo

FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER

Candle Lighting

Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat @ home

SHABBAT 7 NOVEMBER

Shacharit @ home

Mincha @ home

Shabbat Out & Maariv @ home

18:30 **LIVE**

THE GREAT UK SHABBATON AT HOME QUIZ

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**The
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KEEPING IT TOGETHER

Friday Night

INTRODUCTION – THE THREE PHASES OF SHABBAT

On Shabbat and Chagim, the Amidah does not contain the thirteen blessings of request that we say on a weekday, but one blessing dedicated to the sanctity of the day. Uniquely on Shabbat, this blessing is different for each of the three services on Friday night, Shabbat morning, and Shabbat afternoon.

On Friday evening, we speak of the Shabbat of Creation, in the morning of the Shabbat of revelation – as it was commanded on Mount Sinai – and in the afternoon, we look forward to the Shabbat of redemption.

Thus, in the evening, we think of the birth of time, in the morning of historical time – the remembered past and the living present – and in the afternoon the culmination of time and the world to come, of which Shabbat is the foretaste.

Shabbat becomes a journey through the three phases of faith: Hashem's Creation of the Universe, His self-revelation to humanity, and His redemptive acts. Shabbat collectively summons us to build a world at peace with itself because it is at peace with Hashem.

Welcome from Rabbi Daniel Fine



It's interesting that of all the mitzvot and special days, Shabbat has an added welcoming piece. We have a service called accepting Shabbat. In fact, there is a special mitzvah to personally get involved in the Shabbat preparations, there is a mitzvah

to taste the food before Shabbat, and we are even cautioned not to eat too much on Friday, so we have an appetite for the Friday night meal. What is so special about Shabbat that it demands such a welcome or pre-show?

One of the commentaries on the monumental work of Jewish philosophy– the Kuzari writes that the uniqueness of Shabbat is that it is sensual. Shabbat is a mitzvah that we saw with our own eyes – we saw that two portions of manna fell on Friday in preparation for Shabbat, we delight in the enjoyment of Shabbat in which we use all our senses. Over the course of Shabbat we taste food, we look at the Shabbat candles, we place our hands on our childrens' heads to bless them, we smell besamim spices, and we listen to Shabbat melodies.

As the Brisker Rav points out, the preparations for Shabbat mirror the preparations the Jewish People made before receiving the Torah. Just like the Giving of the Torah was an all-immersive experience, so too is Shabbat.

When we invite guests for Shabbat, we don't do a giant food-tasting beforehand. But before a wedding there is a food-tasting. In a similar vein, often individual mitzvot may not need major amounts of preparation. But events require a pre-show – they need preparation to show the event respect and to make sure we are in the right frame of mind to be part of that event to its fullest. Shabbat is not just a mitzvah, it is an immersive event!

Shabbat is the most potent spiritual event we have. And on a Shabbat where hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world are committedly kindling candles then rekindling their commitment to Shabbat and its observance, we are lucky to be a part of it. Enjoy this incredible Shabbat.

It's a gift to be treasured.

Rabbi Daniel Fine



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Halacha from the Dayan: Shabbat Candles



Lighting candles before Shabbat is a Rabbinic mitzvah, generally performed by the woman of the house.

The goal of the mitzvah is to honour Shabbat and increase one's enjoyment of Shabbat.

Many men have the custom of preparing the candles first. Most people light two candles, though some add an extra candle for each child they are blessed with.

Around the world, there are different customs as to candle-lighting time. It certainly must be before sunset, and in many communities, candle-lighting is 15 or 20 minutes before sunset. In some areas of Israel (Jerusalem), the siren indicates that candle-lighting is 40 minutes before sunset. One should not light before plag ha'mincha (which can get as late as 7:30pm in the summer).

After lighting the candles, we close our eyes, and upon opening them, one recites the blessing of 'le'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.' Customarily, one recites a prayer for the spiritual success of one's family too. Upon lighting candles, a woman has accepted Shabbat. If any prohibited activity still needs to be done, the husband can still do this – as long as it is before sunset. In cases of need, a woman may stipulate before lighting candles that she will only accept Shabbat later (as long as this is before sunset), and she can perform activities prohibited on Shabbat until sunset.

The candles should be lit in a place a person will benefit from their light. They should preferably be lit on or near to the table used for the Shabbat meals. When the candles are burning, they may not be moved, and the candlesticks remain muktzeh too for the duration of Shabbat.

Dayan Shmuel Simons

The Friday Night Quiz

1. Name the top five countries Jewish population in 2020 – Israel, USA, France, Canada, UK
2. Name top five countries in 1900 – Russia, USA, Poland, Hungary, Germany
3. Discuss
4. What percentage of the world is Jewish? a) 0.02% **b) 0.2%** c) 2% d) 10%
5. What percentage of Nobel prizes have been won by Jews? a) 0.05% b) 2% c) 10% **d) 20%**
6. Discuss
7. What number country is Israel in size of population? a) 70 b) 85 **c) 100** d) 115
8. What number country is Israel for life expectancy? **a) 10** b) 20 c) 30 d) 40
9. What number country is Israel for number of satellites in space? a) 5 **b) 13** c) 18 d) 23
10. What number country is Israel ranked in the world innovation index? a) 1 b) 5 **c) 10** d) 15
11. Discuss
12. What do all three groups of questions have in common?
13. How does it link to Shabbat?



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Friday Night Dvar Torah

Shabbat: The Power of Creativity



The seven-day week cycle is universally accepted. But, there were times in history (even as recently as the 20th century), when society proposed other units of time – such as ten days – for the week. This is not surprising, because seven days is the only unit of time in the year

that is unconnected to a cycle within nature: the day is linked to the rotation of the earth; the month to the moon's cycle; and the year to that of the sun. The week, however, has no reason to be seven days long, and it is noteworthy and significant, therefore, that the Torah's cycle for a week is the one adhered to worldwide.

The Torah gave us a seven day cycle to teach us to emulate God's Creation of the world, to become creators like Him, as we move through the same time-cycle with which He originally formed the world. The first six days of the "work" week, correspond to the first six units (days) when God was involved in active Creation; whereas the seventh day – Shabbat – parallels God's cessation of activity on that seventh day. Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin adds that the seven day week symbolises an actual partnership with God which explains the statement in the Talmud (Shabbat 119b) that when a person makes Kiddush on Friday night, they start by reciting Vaychulu (the last verses of the creation story) because it is as if they are now paralleling God, being a partner with God in Creation. Saying these words in Kiddush, therefore, is a declaration that Shabbat is being observed as a holy day, not only because of the commandment to do so, but following on from the concept of God creating the world in six days and resting on the seventh.

This accords with an idea of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, regarding the common denominator shared by all of the 39 prohibited categories of work on Shabbat. He explains that they are all not actually acts of labour per se (some require almost no physical input at all). Rather, they are all acts of creativity that impose human will on the physical world – which is why they are termed melachah rather than avodah (the normal world for labour). For six days we do melachah and on the seventh day we rest. For six days, we are creative, as God was, thereby advancing civilisation, developing society and doing whatever is necessary to improve society. But on

Shabbat we cease and, like God, we dedicate the seventh day to rest.

But what did God achieve by creating a day of rest? What in fact is the role of Shabbat, when it appears to be an empty day – given that conventional wisdom measures productivity as rising only from tangible activity such as making money or creating things that we can touch and feel? The remarkable answer is that Shabbat teaches us that creativity is not only about what we produce physically, but is also an internal, intangible process. On each day of the week, God completed physical phenomena (the land, sea, animal, stars) whereas on the seventh day, He created Shabbat. Thus, Creation was completed on the seventh day even though nothing physical was brought into existence.

Unfortunately, in today's materialistic society, many of us measure ourselves only by concrete productivity. We think that unless we are producing something that can be touch, measured, or priced, we are not being constructive or using our time effectively. But there are two kinds of creativity: external and internal, and both are important. The internal, emotional, intellectual and spiritual elements of our development assist us in becoming better human beings, rather than simply becoming more efficient machines.

Shabbat gives us space and time free from the distractions, demands and pressures of daily life, so that we can develop who we are internally – and this is no less creative process than our productivity during the week. When we desist from all physical creativity on Shabbat, we are free to create a renewed spiritual and emotional identity that imbues us with the inspiration and peace of mind that comes with living a life of purpose. When we take time out on Shabbat to sit, sing and talk together as a family, our most precious relationships are created and nurtured, and we draw comfort and emotional well-being which comes from these loving bonds. When we learn Torah and pray on Shabbat, we connect to Hashem and to our awesome spiritual heritage, and are thereby enriched and inspired. All of these non-physical experiences are amongst the greatest acts of Creation of which we are capable. Shabbat affords us the opportunity to engage a different facet of our creative selves – a creativity that enables us each week to transform and uplift every dimension of our lives in the most profound and exciting way.

Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein



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Friday Night Story

The Creation of a State

On 15th May 1948, Shabbat was witness to another creation – that of the Modern State of Israel. Due to Shabbat's sanctity, the ceremony was brought forward to Friday afternoon, even though the British Mandate did not end until Midnight.

Yehuda Avner, in his wonderful book, *The Prime Ministers*, recalls that awesome Shabbat in the trenches just outside Jerusalem:

Daylight was fading fast. Far to the west, the sun's last rays were receding behind the hilltops of Judea, heralding Shabbat. Grimy, exhausted diggers assembled in the glow of a hurricane lamp hanging on the door of a stone ruin, hidden from enemy view to recite Kabbalat Shabbat. It was a heavenly pause: Shabbat stillness suddenly seemed to reign over everything.

The Shabbat silence was broken only by the crunch of rushing feet, panting breath and the winded cry of Leopold Mahler running out of the blackness into the light of the hurricane lamp shouting, "I have news, I have news!"

"Has Ben Gurion declared independence – yes or no?" asked Elisha Linder beside himself. Mahler took a deep breath and solemnly said, "David Ben Gurion declared independence this afternoon in Tel Aviv. The Jewish state comes into being at midnight."

There was dead silence. Even the air seemed to be holding its breath. And then the air exploded into joyful tears and laughter. Every breast filled with exultation as we pumped hands and embraced and roared the Hatikvah at the tops of our voices.

"Hey Mahler," shouted Elisha, cutting through the hullabaloo. "Our state – what's its name?"

The violinist stared back blankly, "I don't know. I didn't think to ask."

"You don't know!" Mahler shook his head.

"How about Yehuda?" Suggested someone, "After all, King David's kingdom was called Yehuda."



"Zion," cried another. "It's an obvious choice."

"Israel" cried a third "What is wrong with Israel?"

"Let's drink to that," said Elisha with delight, breaking open the bottle of Carmel wine and filling a tin mug to the brim "A l'chayim to our new State, whatever its name!"

"Wait," shouted a Chasid whom everyone knew as Nussen der chazzan – a cantor by calling, and a most diligent volunteer from Meah Shearim. It's Shabbos, Kiddush first".

Our crowd gathered around him in a hush as Nussen der chazzan clasped the mug and, in a sweet cantorial tone, began to chant "Yom HaShishi," the blessing for the sanctification of the day.

As Nussen's sacred verses floated off to a higher place of Shabbat bliss his voice swelled, ululated, and trilled into the night, octave upon octave, his eyes closed, his cup stretched out and up.

And as he concluded the final consecration, "Blessed are thou O Lord who has hallowed the Shabbat," he rose on tiptoe, his arm stiffened, and rocking back and forth, voice trembling with emotion, he added the triumphantly exulted blessing to commemorate this first day of independence- "Shecheyanu vekiyemanu vehiganu lazman hazeh" – Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe who has given us life, sustained us, and brought is to this time.

"Amen!"



Shabbat Day

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: OUR MOST INSPIRING SHABBAT



Sometimes the most inspiring things come immediately after the most challenging things. They say this is why night precedes day in the Jewish calendar – challenges are a prerequisite to success. Our most memorable Shabbat was preceded by the most difficult experience of our ten years in Israel.

It was a regular November morning, a week before my 29th birthday. We had been living in the Har Nof neighbourhood of Jerusalem for six years now, and all was quiet – as usual. Until I woke up to what I later understood to be gunfire. Two terrorists had entered a Shul around the corner and had killed four people during the morning services (they all had children in my son's school).

The neighbourhood's serene atmosphere was shattered, people were shocked and grieving simultaneously. I have never received so many calls from people asking if I was alive (I used to pray in that Shul each evening). We were shocked too. But there was also something else on our minds – something that we were attempting to ignore. I was teaching in a yeshiva at the time and we had planned a Shabbaton in Har Nof for that Shabbat! We had made all the

arrangements, we had planned the schedule and sorted the food. This was due to take place a few days after the attack, and we didn't know whether the Shabbaton should go ahead, nor whether we now had the energy for it! But we decided we should go ahead – it was best for the yeshiva boys. So, a few days after a terrorist attack, thirty 18-year old boys descended on Har Nof for Shabbat. And it was incredible! The meals were full of energy and spirituality, we arranged a special oneg to be held in the Shul across the road from where the attack happened – an oneg that was full of deep conversations and singing until far past 1am. We had resolved to make this the best Shabbaton ever, and the boys picked up the vibe and ran with it.

Singing, camaraderie, Shabbat atmosphere, food – it was all there. And the events of the previous few days meant that there was a focus, a willingness to be open, to connect and to grow – and to examine our role in continuing the Jewish legacy. It didn't have to be said, but it was on everyone's lips – if these people died while they were doing what they believed in, we must make sure we live for what we believe in. During the closing banquet at the end of the year (July), the boys remarked how impactful and powerful the Har Nof Shabbaton was.

Rabbi Daniel & Janine Fine



Halacha from the Dayan:

KIDDUSH



There is a Torah mitzvah to recite Kiddush on Friday night in the verse from the Ten Commandments ‘remember Shabbat to sanctify it.’ The purpose of Kiddush is either to cordon off Shabbat from the week (Rambam) or to add human-made sanctity

to the Divine sanctity invested in Shabbat (Ramban). Kiddush on Shabbat day and on Yom Tov (night or day) are Rabbinic obligations.

Both men and women are obligated to hear Kiddush, but one should not have two people reciting Kiddush at the same time.

We usually use wine or grape juice for Kiddush. If these are not available, then on Friday night, one would make Kiddush on the challot (wash hands beforehand), and on Shabbat day, one would make Kiddush on whisky or pure fruit juice (though 86ml needs to be consumed!).

The kiddush cup should contain at least 86ml (preferably 150ml on Friday night). The common practice is to fill the kiddush cup, even if it has more than 150ml (a standard plastic cup contains 200ml). After Kiddush, the wine or grape juice should be drunk – at least 86ml should preferably be drunk by the person who makes Kiddush (or by sharing it out around the table if needed).

During kiddush one should cover the challot on the table, just like the manna was covered with a layer of dew.

Dayan Shmuel Simons

Parashat Vayera:

THE CORE IDEA



Why does God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? What does this test teach him, and us? Traditionally, we learn that this was a test of Abraham’s love for God, above even his love for his son. But the Torah believes that child sacrifice is one of the

worst of evils. Had the point of the trial been Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son, then Abraham would have proven he was no better than the idolaters of his time, who often sacrificed children to the gods.

In fact, Abraham’s very essence is to be a model father. The name Abram means “mighty father.” God then changed

his name to Abraham signifying “father of many nations.” Abraham was chosen to be a role model of fatherhood. A model father does not sacrifice his child.

The classic interpretation that Abraham loved God more than he loved his own son, while powerful, contradicts all of this. This trial tested Abraham’s faith to the limit. But what was the true nature of the test? Perhaps the true test was facing the contradiction between God’s promises and the reality. God had promised Abraham that through Isaac, he would have many descendants who would become a great nation. And then God demanded he sacrifice him as a youth.

The trial was therefore not to see whether Abraham had the courage to sacrifice his son. The trial was to see whether Abraham could live with what seemed to be a clear contradiction between God’s word now, and God’s previous promises. Could Abraham live with uncertainty and maintain his faith?

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks



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SPOT THE 12 DIFFERENCES



Shabbat Day Dvar Torah

Shabbaton of Revelation



In addition to the Shabbat described by the Torah as the pinnacle and conclusion of creation, the commandment to observe Shabbat is mentioned twelve times throughout the Torah. To appreciate the unique aspect of each reference, we must re-explore the respective textual expressions and contexts in which they appear.

We're generally most familiar with the passages recounting the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments as they appear in the Books of Shemot (Exodus) and Devarim (Deuteronomy). They appear with different wording and significance of the day; The Shemot account begins with the word "Zachor" (remember) and introduces Shabbat as a reminder of creation. In Devarim, Shabbat is introduced with the word "Shamor" (guard, protect) and is observed as a commemoration of our freedom from slavery, even for our servants, employees, and domestic animals. Both accounts are integrated into the text of the Friday night Kiddush as we sanctify Shabbat as a remembrance of creation (zikaron lemaaseh bereshit) and as a reminder of the Exodus (zekher liyetziat Mitzrayim).

Axiomatic to Jewish faith is the belief that God is encountered in three ways – in creation, in redemption and also in revelation. Shabbat is a day through which we encounter God in all three! In fact, the first time Shabbat is commanded to the Jewish people, we hear the echoes and significance of revelation! A particular term is employed to teach the nation of Israel about Shabbat – "Shabbaton". It is a day wherein they may not leave their homes to collect the manna but rather must prepare the day before. They must begin counting days of the week in order to sanctify time through the seventh day and "guard" the manna collected on Friday as they stay in their homes. These laws are reminiscent of the laws of Korban Pesach, prepared on the fourteenth of the "first" month as Bnei Yisrael began to sanctify time through the lunar months. They were not allowed to leave their homes then either as they consumed their prepared paschal lamb, for Divine revelation was manifest through the land of Egypt as God smote the firstborn. Shabbat is observed in this context not as a reminder of our redemption, but as a weekly re-experience of Divine revelation.

This is underscored through three more references to Shabbat as a "Shabbaton" in the context of the Mikdash, the medium

for continued revelation through sanctity of place. The middle book of the Torah, Sefer Vayikra, introduces the Mo'adim (appointed times for meeting God) and Mikra'e Kodesh (a day made holy through our proclamation) with "Shabbat Shabbaton" After numerous chapters defining holiness based on Divine mandates, the Torah teaches us that holiness may be acquired by human beings when we act like God and sanctify time as He did at the beginning of time. Shabbat in this context establishes the precedent for humankind to celebrate private moments of revelation throughout the year. It is not about remembering creation of the past, nor anticipating another Exodus/redemption of the future, but celebrating the present moments of a relationship with Hashem. Yehuda HaLevi beautifully wrote that on Shabbat, it is as if God had personally invited us to be dinner guests at His table.

For this reason, the term "Shabbaton" is also employed regarding the festivals of the seventh month (Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot) wherein we achieve atonement and celebrate the annual renewal of Divine revelation. The seventh, explain our Sages is always beloved and establishes a foundation for blessing, holiness and revelation. That is why when the Torah speaks of Shabbat as a "sign" of the covenant established at Har Sinai through revelation and continued through the Mikdash, the term "Shabbaton" is incorporated.

The threefold significance of Shabbat as creation-redemption-revelation is embodied in the prayers of Shabbat as well. In the Friday night Amidah we refer to the Shabbat of creation and on Shabbat afternoon we anticipate the ultimate redemption. The middle tefillah on Shabbat morning focuses on the moment of revelation on Har Sinai: "Moshe rejoiced at the gift of his portion... He brought down in his hands two tablets of stone on which was engraved the observance of the Shabbat."

Shabbat is a day through which we fortify our foundations of Jewish belief in creation, revelation and redemption and re-experience each dimension successively throughout the day. "Creation is God's relationship with the world. Revelation is God's relationship with us. When we apply revelation to creation, the result is redemption: the world in which God's will and ours coincide."

Shabbat Shalom!

Rabbanit Shani Taragin



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Shabbat Lunch Story

The Shabbat Suitcases and Self-Sacrifice

As an 18-year old in the late 1940s, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Stern made the courageous decision to travel from the comfort of New York to Israel (Palestine at the time). He was only issued a travel certificate because a family had suddenly backed out due to sickness and there had been all of one day to prepare. This was the first ship traveling from America to Palestine after World War Two, and young Moshe Aharon was eagerly anticipating the fulfilment of his life's dream to bask in the sanctity of the Holy Land. As they reached the end of the two-week voyage there was a sudden change of plan. Due to a security threat, the captain announced that instead of docking at Haifa as planned, they would dock at Alexandria, with the last leg of the journey requiring a train ride. This did nothing to douse excitement until it became clear that they would be docking at Alexandria on Shabbat!

A group of Orthodox Jews approached the captain and explained that, 'we are not allowed to carry our possessions, nor disembark.' The captain was insistent and ordered the crew to transfer the religious passengers' luggage to the dock. But the group did not budge. Citing their religious rights and that remaining aboard harmed nobody, they remained on the ship for the duration of Shabbat, davening together in one of the cabins. Though they had lost their possessions, they comforted themselves

that they had stood up for their values and would surely be assisted when they arrived in the Holy Land.

After Havdalah, the group received a surprise address. They were promptly summoned to a meeting with the captain, who confessed the following. "I have travelled all over the world," the captain said. "I have met people of every nationality and origin. One conclusion I've reached is that there is no such thing as

religion when it comes to a person's wallet. I've seen it time and time again in people of every religion.

Money always wins. But this is the first opportunity I had to test religious Jews – which is why I had my crew throw your luggage off the ship. I wanted to see if you were sincere about your claims regarding your Sabbath. To my surprise, you withstood the test. And seeing that you passed this challenge, I had my crew members guard your belongings throughout the Sabbath – go take them."

Thankfully, in 2020 we are rarely tested in such dramatic ways regarding our commitment to Shabbat. But it's good to know about the strength and commitment of those who did face such challenges. And in some ways, when we put aside our weekday concerns and are willing to immerse ourselves in Shabbat mode, we are every much as heroic as Rabbi Stern.



Shabbat Afternoon Learning

In this section we will first discover the partnership between the Jewish Nation and the day of Shabbat, then we will identify two elements of Shabbat. Try and see as well whether Shabbat is the last day of the week, the first day of the next week, or perhaps the middle of the week? The sources below will provide you with answers and material for discussion.

1a. Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 11:8

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught: the day of Shabbat came before Hashem and complained that 'every day had a partner, but I have none.' Hashem assured Shabbat: 'the Jewish People will be your partner.' And when the Jewish People stood at Har Sinai Hashem reminded them that they were to be the partners of Shabbat: 'remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it' (Shemot 20:8).

What does it mean that 'each day has a partner?' And how can a nation partner with a day?

1b. Vilna Ga'on's Commentary on Bava Kama

Partners bring out the best in each other. In the case of the above Midrash, the partner sees the latent potential in its pair, and then actualises this potential. Therefore, days 1 and 4 are partners: on day 1 Hashem created light and dark, but on day 4 the sun and moon gave expression to this light. Day 2 and 5 are partners. For day 2 created water, but day 5 created the fish to inhabit that water. Day 3 created land, but it was desolate and had not reached its potential – until animals and humans were created on day 6 to live on the land. And so, the day of Shabbat came to Hashem, complaining 'I have so much sanctity, but who will actualise my potential?' Whereupon Hashem provided the perfect partner – 'The Jewish People will be your partner – they will give expression to your spiritual potential by observing Shabbat and connecting to its sanctity.'

2a. The Two aspects of Shabbat: Gemara Shabbat 69b – The Desert Dilemma

אמר רב הונא: היה מהלך (בדרך או) במדבר, ואינו יודע אימתי שבת – מונה ששה ימים ומשמר יום אחד. חייא בר רב אומר: משמר יום אחד ומונה ששה. במאי קמיפלגי? מר סבר: כברייתו של עולם, ומר סבר: כאדם הראשון.

If a person was travelling in the desert and lost track of time, such that they do not know when Shabbat is, what do they do? Rav Huna opined that they count six days and observe the seventh. Chiya Bar Rav disagrees and says that they observe the first day and then count six. What is the basis of their argument? One says we follow the Creation of the world, whilst one looks at it from Adam's perspective.

(The Gemara later clarifies that one marks Shabbat in this case by reciting the Kiddush and Havdalah)

2b. Shem Mishmuel Explanation (שם משמואל פרשת ויקהל שנה תרעב)

ששבת יש בו שתי בחינות, מה שהוא אחר ימי המעשה והשלמה אליהם, ועוד יש בו שהוא נותן כח וחיות על להבא ומיני שיתא יומין מתברכין, ומר אמר דזה עיקר מהות השבת, ומר אמר דזה העיקר.

For Shabbat has two elements. First, it completes the previous week. Second, it gives energy and rejuvenation to the coming week. The argument between Rav Huna and Chia Bar Rav was simply which is the more powerful element. Rav Huna said that the most powerful element of Shabbat is that it completes the previous week – hence counting six days and then observing Shabbat. But Chiya Bar Rav opined that the prime focus of Shabbat is to give energy and substance to the following week – hence arguing that one first observes Shabbat and only then counts six days.



Halacha from the Dayan: Enjoying Shabbat



It is a mitzvah to personally prepare things for Shabbat, and it is also a mitzvah to engage in acts of enjoyment on Shabbat. These are known as the mitzvot of Kavod Shabbat and Oneg Shabbat, respectively. It is a mitzvah to have three meals on Shabbat – one on Friday night and two during the daytime. One uses two full loaves of bread, known

as challot, for each meal: one should not cut the challahs until after one has finished the blessing of hamotzi. It is a praiseworthy custom to serve fish (as long as one likes fish!).

It is a mitzvah to serve meat and wine and other food and drink that a person enjoys. There is a special paragraph in birkat hamazon (retzei) added on Shabbat.

Dayan Shmuel Simons

Seuda Shlishit Dvar Torah Shabbaton of Revelation

Rashi cites a most fascinating idea when it comes to our mind-set during Shabbat. When Shabbat comes in, we are to behave as if all our work is done. This means that even if we are in the middle of an essay, project, deal, or deadline, we are to put this aside and welcome Shabbat. There seems to be something very wrong here. If I know that as soon as Shabbat goes out I will resume my work, how can I be mandated to fib to myself and pretend as if everything is complete – that sounds like delusion, not spirituality!?

There was a social psychology experiment whereby psychologists assessed how long a waiter or waitress could remember the order they had taken at the table. Even with the most capable, they found that they could no longer recall the order as soon as they served the food to the customer. Why? Because our brain only retains relevant information. Once the information is no longer relevant or important, the brain discards it. The upshot is that if the information is exciting and somewhat relevant to you, the brain stores it for years (hence, people can remember random sports scores or movies from decades ago!).

As Rav Dessler explains, when Shabbat enters, our mind-set is that anything else is irrelevant – I am now raised above any weekday activity, and I am currently in a different zone. So, on one level, the Torah is telling us that when Shabbat comes in rise above your weekday activities. But there must be more. After all, we are not being told to ignore your work. We are being told to see it as if all your work is completed.

Via Shabbat, the Torah is sensitising us to the concept of living in the moment but not for the moment. The Torah is telling us that Shabbat provides context to all our weekday activities: that all our actions should have a purpose. On Shabbat we take a step back from our regular activities not because they are irrelevant but because we examine their purpose. Thus, it can be challenging to desist from weekday activities because they are real. But as far as Shabbat is concerned, they are complete when Shabbat enters, for actions without purpose become meaningless.



Seuda Shlishit Story

The Last Jewish Girl In The World

For three summers in the mid 1990s, Rav Avraham Berkowitz, a Chabad Shaliach and his friend went to Alaska, particularly to its more remote corners, to seek out Jews. On one occasion, they came to a small city in the northwest part of the state. The mayor told them that he knew of no Jews in the city, the population was largely comprised of Native Americans, but invited them to give a talk to students at the local school. He shared with the children some teachings about Judaism. The students in turn performed a few eskimo dances for them, and the two Lubavitchers performed a Chasidic dance.

Knowing the Rebbe wanted them to find Jews if they could, Berkowitz asked the students, 'Did any of you ever meet a Jew?'

A young girl, of clear Eskimo appearance, raised her hand.

'Whoever did you meet?' Berkowitz asked her.

'My mother,' the girl answered. 'She's right there.' She pointed to the school's fifth-grade teacher.

After the class, the mother was visibly moved and thanked him for coming. She had always loved nature and years earlier had come to Alaska and fallen in love with a native man.

'I must tell you that living here, I don't know if my daughter will ever meet another rabbi again. I ask you to give my daughter a message so that she will always be proud of her Jewish identity.'

Berkowitz's mind began racing. He knew he only had these few minutes, that this was, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but what should he say? Thinking back to the Rebbe's talks, he realized that one of the Rebbe's great strengths was his ability to personalize a mitzvah for the individual to whom he was speaking, and to thereby inspire and empower that person. He started to speak to the girl about the holiness of the Shabbat: 'And who ushers in Shabbat?' he continued. 'It is mothers and daughters

who light the Shabbat candles. They bring peace and light into the world.

He then asked her: 'Where is the first place in the world where the sun sets?' The girl, who knew her geography, said, 'Probably New Zealand or Australia.'

And Berkowitz told her: 'That's right. Jewish women in New Zealand and Australia are the first to usher in Shabbat. And then Shabbat is ushered in with lit candles in Asia, in Israel, in Europe, and then New York, Chicago, Seattle, Anchorage. And even then, there is one part of the world where the sun has not set. Here in the Yupik territory of Alaska. When mothers and daughters around the globe have welcomed the Shabbat, God and the Jewish people are still waiting for you, the last Jewish girl in the world, to light Shabbat candles.'

If you think of it, this wonderful idea can go further. Because after 25 hours, eventually at nightfall, Shabbat must end, and we must return to the working week so we make Havdalah. Just like the coming in of Shabbat, starting from New Zealand Shabbat will gradually disappear from the world.

Until there is just Alaska.

That mother and daughter would be the last Jews in the entire world that still have Shabbat, that still have the kedusha, the sanctity of Shabbat. So, one hopes, that when it comes to the time for Havdalah, they wait, knowing that the two of them are the last two Jewish people still keeping Shabbat alive in the world.

I don't know if they still live in Alaska, but as we make Havdalah tonight, we should pause to reflect on the blessing of Shabbat, and what it adds to our lives and get ready to come together as one community all across the UK for the Great UK Community Shabbaton at Home Quiz.



THE GREAT SHABBATON QUIZ

Compete as individuals or families against thousands of others from across the UK in the first ever online Great Shabbaton Quiz.

Several questions will be from the Shabbat Booklet – so get reading!

Motzei Shabbat
7th November
6:30pm – 7:15pm

Register here:
mizrachi.org.uk/quiz



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