

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behar

Siman #249

“And the Shabbat of the land shall be for you for eating—for you, for your servant,” etc. (Leviticus 25:6). The additional soul (neshamah yeteyrah) that the simple person receives on Shabbat is something the Torah scholar already possesses during the weekdays (as explained in Kavanot of R’ Chaim Vital, Kisei Rachamim on Klach Pitchei Chochmah, p. ט ע"ג).

והיתה שבת הארץ לכם לאכלה לך ולעבדך וגו' (ויקרא כ"ה, ו'). הנשמה יתורה שיש לעם הארץ בשבת יש לתלמיד חכם בחל (כוונות קל"ח רי"י דף ט ע"ג), ואם פן נשמה של תלמיד חכם יותר מעולה בשבת, והיא בחינה אחרת מיוחדת.

He said that the Shabbat of the unlearned person is called “Shabbat of the land” (Shabbat haAretz), whereas the Shabbat of a Torah scholar is called “Shabbat to Hashem” (Shabbat LaHashem).

ואמר, כי השבת של עם הארץ נקראת "שבת הארץ", וישבת של תלמיד חכם נקראת "שבת לה".

And he jokingly said: “And the Shabbat of the land shall be for you, for eating—for you and for your servant,” meaning, it is equal among all. Not so the Shabbat to Hashem, which is of a totally different dimension.

ואמר על דרך הלצה: והיתה שבת הארץ לכם לאכלה לך ולעבדך וגו', שהוא שנה בכל, מה שאין פן "שבת לה". היא בחינה אחרת.

[NOTE: Summary:

This short discourse draws a sharp distinction between two kinds of Shabbat experiences. For the average, unlearned Jew (*am ha'aretz*), the holiness of Shabbat is something newly received each week—a temporary influx of spiritual elevation in the form of a *neshamah yeteyrah*. For the Torah scholar (*talmid chacham*), however, this elevated soul already abides within him even during the weekdays, and his experience of Shabbat is of a loftier, unique nature.

By using the verse “והיתה שבת הארץ לכם לאכלה לך ולעבדך” (Leviticus 25:6), which discusses the Sabbatical year but uses language associated with consumption and egalitarian access, the author humorously implies that the ordinary person's Shabbat is the same across all people—something basic and “edible.” By contrast, the Shabbat of the Torah scholar is “*Shabbat LaHashem*,” one of true divine intimacy and distinction.

Practical Takeaway:

This teaching invites us to consider how much of our spiritual experience depends on our weekday preparation. If we elevate our weekday lives with Torah and awareness, then our Shabbat becomes not merely a pause from labor but a gateway to an entirely different spiritual dimension.

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Chassidic Story:

The **Alter Rebbe**, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, once stayed overnight in a certain town, and on Friday morning, as he prepared for Shabbat, he noticed a man who had been drinking all night in the inn stumble into the *mikveh*. Later, the man showed up to shul in his finest clothing and sang the Shabbat zemirot with such passion that it caught the Rebbe's attention.

After Shabbat, the Alter Rebbe commented:

"That man's Shabbat is like a feast prepared from borrowed ingredients—it can be festive, but it won't nourish him in the long run. The Shabbat of a Jew must be the fruit of his own labor through the week—if he learns and refines himself during the weekdays, his Shabbat is not just a borrowed glory. It is 'Shabbat LaHashem.'"

Source: *Sippurei Chassidim*, compiled by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, under stories of the Alter Rebbe. **END NOTE]**

Siman #250

"Israel was only exiled because of the sin of the Sabbatical year" (*Rashi* on Leviticus 25:18). For the essential point of everything is to have faith in the Blessed Holy One, and *Shemittah* is an expression of faith—one must believe, as it is written: "And if you say, 'What shall we eat?' etc." (Leviticus 25:20), "*Then I will command My blessing*" (v. 21).

לא גלו ישראל אלא בעון שמטה (רש"י ויקרא כ"ה, י"ח). כי עקר הכל להאמין בה' יתברך, ושמטה הוא ברחינת האמונה, שצריך להאמין, כמו שכתוב וכי תאמרו מה נאכל וגו', וצויתי את ברכתי

And faith is in the secret of the "two supporters of truth," which are *Netzach* and *Hod*—these support the aspect of *Tiferet*, which is in the secret of *Truth*.

והאמונה היא בסוד תרין סמכי קשוט, שהם נצח והוד, שהם סומכין לבחינת תפארת, שהוא בסוד אמת

And through faith, one elevates the *Shechinah*, as it were—She who had been in the state of "Her legs go down to..." (Proverbs 5:5), now rises to the level of 144.

ועלידי האמונה הוא מעלה את השכינה כביכול, שהיתה בסוד רגליה יורדות כו' (משלי ה', ה'), ויש לה עליה קמ"ד

And when the *Shechinah* ascends, tens of thousands and myriads of souls ascend with Her.

וכשיש עליה השכינה עולים עמה אלפים ורבבות נשמות

And so it is regarding *parnasah* (livelihood), which is a great matter—one must deeply believe in the Holy Blessed One. When one believes with strong faith, then the elevation of the *Shechinah* takes place through him, and immediately the Blessed Holy One prepares his livelihood for him—at that very hour, at midday.

וכן הוא בענין הפרנסה, שהוא דבר גדול שמאמין בהשם יתברך מאד, וכשמאמין בחזק אמונתו אז נעשה עליו עליה השכינה, ותכף מומן לו השם יתברך פרנסתו בשעה זו בחצות היום, כי למעלה אין שום חלוק בין רב למועט, והבן

And one time I heard from him that the Holy Blessed One is *Ein Sof* (Infinite), and how can one measure within Him any notion of "a lot" or "a little"?

ופעם אחת שמעתי ממנו שהשם יתברך הוא אי-סוף, ואיך אפשר להעריך בו בחינת רב או מועט

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And when there is an elevation of the <i>Shechinah</i> , Who had been in the state of “Her legs...” etc., then there is an ascent to the level of the secret of faith, and the aspect of the faith-secret is strengthened in all souls.	וּכְשִׁישׁ עָלִית הַשְּׂכִינָה, שֶׁהָיְתָה בְּסוּד רַגְלֶיהָ וְגו', אָז יֵשׁ עָלֶיהָ לְבַחֲיוֹת סוּד הָאֱמוּנָה, וְנִתְחַזַּק בְּחִינַת סוּד הָאֱמוּנָה בְּכָל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.
[Alternate version: and likewise, the <i>manna</i> would fall each day to strengthen faith, and this is known to the Master of the world.]	נוסח אחר: וְכֵן הָיָה יֵרֵד בְּכָל יוֹם כָּדֵי [[לְחִזּוֹק]] הָאֱמוּנָה, וְהוּא כְּמוֹ שִׂיּוּדָע רַבּוֹנוֹ.
And afterwards, he swore on Shabbat Kodesh that the words I have said are true.	וְאַחֵר כֵּן נִשְׁבַּע בְּשַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ שֶׁהַדְּבָרִים שֶׁאָמַרְתִּי הֵם אֱמֶת.
[NOTE: Summary: This profound teaching by Reb Pinchas of Koretz reveals that the core sin which led to Israel's exile was their neglect of <i>Shemittah</i>—a direct breach of emunah (faith). <i>Shemittah</i> is not simply an agricultural law; it is a living embodiment of trust in Hashem's sustenance. The Torah itself anticipates human doubt—“What shall we eat?”—and promises, “<i>I will command My blessing.</i>” He explains that emunah is supported by the Sefirot of <i>Netzach</i> and <i>Hod</i>, which uphold <i>Tiferet</i>, the sefirah of Truth. When a Jew strengthens their faith—especially in matters like livelihood—they cause the <i>Shechinah</i> to ascend from its exile (“Her feet descend...” from Proverbs), bringing with it tens of thousands of souls. Through strong faith, even our material needs are arranged—<i>parnassah</i> arrives effortlessly at midday. In a striking comment, he affirms that Hashem, being <i>Ein Sof</i>, cannot be measured in terms of quantity. From that higher perspective, there is no difference between “much” and “little.” All that matters is the soul's alignment through emunah. He even recalls hearing this directly and swearing on Shabbat Kodesh that these words are true. Practical Takeaway: When facing uncertainty about livelihood, the highest response is not anxiety but faith. By actively trusting Hashem—especially in moments where logic fails—we elevate not only ourselves, but the entire collective soul of Israel. Don't measure success in material terms; measure it by your capacity to <i>believe without seeing</i>. That alone brings blessing. True spiritual change—like that of the <i>Shechinah</i> rising—comes not from control, but surrender.	

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Chassidic Story:

Once, a poor man approached **Reb Pinchas of Koretz** with anguish over his unpaid debts. The man was trembling: his landlord had threatened eviction, his children were hungry, and there seemed no hope in sight. He asked the tzaddik if he should abandon Torah learning to work full-time in town.

Reb Pinchas looked at him with fire in his eyes. “Do you think Hashem is limited? Is He a pauper like you imagine? Just as He provides breath every second, so too He can provide bread every hour.”

He told the man: “Tomorrow, go home, light a candle for Shabbos with joy, and set your table—even if it is empty. Trust in the merit of the Shechinah rising.”

That Friday, just hours before Shabbat, a stranger knocked on the poor man’s door. He was a wealthy merchant seeking a lost family heir, and he remembered the man’s grandfather. To thank him, he gave the poor man ten gold coins and arranged work for his sons.

When word reached Reb Pinchas, he simply said, “When a Jew trusts—truly trusts—then Hashem sends livelihood not because of what he’s done, but because of who he is. That is Shemittah. That is emunah.”

Source: *Niflaos Tzaddikim* (Machon Maayan HaChassidus, vol. 2), pp. 154–155; cross-referenced in *Imrei Pinchas Hashalem* §217. **END NOTE]**