

דברי תורה

Lessons Learnt from Shabbos Kodesh

Akiva Jacobs

By keeping Shabbos, we testify that Hashem created the world and rested on the seventh day. The Chofetz Chaim writes that one who doesn't learn Hilchos Shabbos cannot possibly keep Shabbos. In the same vein, one who does not at least try to believe that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world through studying His *hashgacha* in it, cannot possibly truly believe.

“Mi Shetarach B'Erev Shabbos Yoachal B'Shabbos.” The Sifrei Mussar use Shabbos as a Mashal to Olam Haba. One who does not prepare for Olam Haba, won't be able to reap it's reward or enjoy its benefit when they get there. Besides for a good nap and good food, there's a lot more going on!

Let us appreciate the great gifts and lessons that Shabbos has to offer.

Pitfalls of "Social Judaism"

Moshe Unger

What is “Social Judaism”?

It's the way that most of us live our lives. Today, it's all about what Yeshiva you go to, where you daven, where you live, what car you drive, what clothes you wear. We even spend money we don't have, trying to fit into other people's social circles.

We have turned Avodas Hashem from a way of life into an external Avodah practiced in order to keep up our reputation. Today, people go to the Bais Medresh because it's the “in” thing to do;

obviously, they just sit there and warm the bench. Yet, back in Europe, our grandparents were shoemakers and tailors, working fourteen hour days, yet still found time to truly serve Hashem every spare second.

But what about our real purpose in life? What should push us to wake up every morning and motivate us throughout the day?

I believe our biggest *nisayon* today is finding the perfect balance between our social lives and serving Hashem, and not subordinating our *ruchniyus* to the social scene.

My dear readers, I present you with a choice: will you get sucked into “Social Judaism” as well and get destroyed by it, or will you seek and find true “Torah Judaism”!

Avira D'Ara Machkima - Appreciate It!

Sruli Schaffel

The Gemara in Kiddushin says that there are nine Kavim of wisdom given to Eretz Yisroel. Throughout the generations, many Tzadikim tried to get to Eretz Yisroel because of its Kedusha and because of the Mitzvah to live in Eretz Yisroel. I was *zoche* to come to Yerushalayim where the Shechinah is strongest and I was also *zoche* to learn here.

Sometimes it is hard to feel the Kedusha - because it comes by so easily here, but when I learn Torah and learn more about Yerushalayim, it becomes much more tangible, just like when you learn about Shabbos, you feel it so much more.

Kedushas Eretz Yisrael

Yakov Bakst

The Peleh Yoetz says that Eretz Yisroel is the “Tzvi of Yisroel”. Every person needs to put his heart there throughout his life. A person must try with all his strength to establish his dwelling in Eretz Yisrael.

It's a big mitzvah for a son to help his parents travel to Eretz Yisroel. The main purpose of Eretz Yisroel is for Tikun Hanefesh and therefore when a person is in Eretz Yisroel he should try very hard to be *oisek* in Torah and the Mitzvos Hatiluyos Ba'aretz.

Tzadik Nistar

Anonymous

Pasuk says, "Give Ma'aser" as a double lashon. Why?

Gemara: Give Ma'aser in order to become rich.

Another Gemara: If you give on condition to become rich, you are a tzadik gamur. Tosfos asks, "Why?" What's the explanation?

Oneg Yom Tov: There's a difference between Kiyomis and Chiyovis. When you are not obligated to give – and give anyways, then you are a Tzaddik.

Dvar Halacha

Shlomo Stulberg

According to a few Poskim, if a book has letters or words written or stamped on the edge of Sefarim or library books, one can't open or close those books on Shabbos. The reason given for this is that by doing so you break up and combine the letters. Others argue on this ruling and say that since a book is opened and closed regularly, this doesn't count as erasing the letters, similar to opening and closing windows and doors which would not be considered building or destroying.

Most people hold by the more lenient opinion; it is customary to do so. It is better though, if one has a choice between two copies of the same book, one with writing on the edge and one without, to read the book without the writing.

Hishtadlus

Avi Levin

Learning Torah is very important. This day and age, people run to money away from Torah. This is backwards because Torah brings everything.

Hishtadlus is necessary in Ruchnius and in Gashmius. In Ruchnius it is an obligation and in Gashmius a Knas, a punishment.

Hamodeh B'knas Patur. If we sit and learn and **know (admit)** that Hashem brings everything, then we don't have to pay the Knas and our Parnasah will come without Hishtadlus.

Cutting Away the Orlah of our Hearts

Nissan Gordon

“Umalta es Orlas Livavtem”

Hashem asks us to fear Him and love Him yet this is really difficult.

Moshe Rabbeinu tells us that this is because we cover our hearts with all sorts of physicality.

The Torah tells us we must break through that blockage. How?

The Ibn Ezra says that the simple solution is through staying away from the “thick” desires of Gashmius. Only then will we have a chance of Ruchniyus and connecting with Hashem.

Faint Voice of Truth

Sruli Rubin

It says in Parshas Eikev, "and you shall circumcise 'orlas levavchem', 'the foreskin of your heart.'" What does that mean? Rashi explains, "a covering and blockage".

The Chumash says in Parshas Re'eh, "Behold I have placed before you blessing and curse." The Ohr Yisraelel explains that within our hearts is the recognition of good and bad. In order to access it, we must first circumcise the blockage that prevents us from seeing.

How is this done?

The answer is simple to those who care. The more we think and listen to that faint voice of truth, the more we will accomplish in removing the blockage.

Asei Lecha Rav

Moshe Baruchov

Hashem tells Moshe that he must command Klal Yisrael to enter the land and start to fight - afterwards he will die. We find that Moshe Rabbeinu did it right away. He could have waited and thereby have a longer life. Yet he didn't. From Moshe Rabbeinu's speed in carrying out Hashem's command, we see his Yiras Shamayim. Rashi explains that Moshe Rabbeinu received extra credit for his alacrity.

We find in Navi that Hashem told Yehoshua that when he commands Bnei Yisrael he will die. Yehoshua waited and Hashem punished him for it. Why did Yehoshua get punished? We see by Moshe Rabbeinu that it was only extra credit that he did it right away. It wasn't an obligation. Why then was Yehoshua punished for his lack of speed.

Perhaps, we can say an answer: Moshe Rabbeinu, who had no *Rebbe* to learn from, had what he did considered as extra credit. But Yehoshua, who had a *Rebbe* as an example and didn't act right away, got punished for waiting.