

“Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it.” (20:8)

The Torah introduces the institution of *Shabbos* in the Fourth Commandment of the *Aseres HaDibros*, the Ten Commandments. The first three commandments focus on our acceptance of Hashem as supreme Ruler and Creator, forbid us from worshipping other deities, and forbid us from showing Hashem disrespect by taking His Name lightly. *Shabbos* attests to Hashem being the Creator of the world, for it is a constant reminder that He created for six days and rested on the Seventh Day. When we observe *Shabbos*, we bear testimony to this fact. Therefore, the commandment of *Shabbos* should follow in the natural progression after the first three.

There is another aspect of *Shabbos* that we often overlook, although it is equally significant. The *Lecha Dodi* hymn, recited Friday night as we welcome the *Shabbos*, portrays *Shabbos* as *Klal Yisrael's* bride. Indeed, *Chazal* relate that when Hashem first introduced the *Shabbos* day into Creation, *Shabbos* complained bitterly to Hashem, “To every other day of the week You have given a mate: the creation of the First Day was completed and sustained by the creation of the Second Day; the creation of the Third Day by that of the Fourth Day; the creation of the Fifth Day by that of the Sixth Day. But me, the Seventh Day, You have given no companion.” Thereupon, Hashem replied, “I still have one more work of Creation to bring forth – *Klal Yisrael*, they will be your betrothed (*Yisrael yehai ben zugach*).”

Thus, when Hashem gave His Torah to *Klal Yisrael* at *Har Sinai*, He stated, “Behold, the *Shabbos* stands here alone and forgotten; remember her and hallow her unto yourselves as a *chassan*, bridegroom, cherishes and sanctifies his *kallah*, bride, on the wedding day.” Ever since that august moment, *Klal Yisrael* has kept the *Shabbos* day. It has celebrated its eternal betrothal to the *Shabbos*, as a faithful husband protects, sustains and treasures his beloved wife. This is the manner in which *Shabbos* should be observed: as a husband cherishes his wife.

Shabbos is *Klal Yisrael's* companion for eternity. Without the Jewish People to keep it, *Shabbos* would have disappeared from mankind. Likewise, were it not for the *Shabbos*, we would have succumbed to the many miseries and afflictions that have accompanied us throughout our tumultuous history. A wife and companion for life: what more meaningful terms can we use as an analogy for our relationship to *Shabbos*?

Our observance of *Shabbos* should be paradigmatic of the harmonious relationship between husband and wife. If this is the case, we may be so bold as to wonder whether those who reject the sanctity of *Shabbos*, negate its overriding significance to the Jewish People, are reflecting their own misperception of the institution of marriage. Do they understand the meaning of fidelity? We may suggest that the laws regarding the observance and hallowing of *Shabbos* should serve as a primer for the relationship between husband and wife. After all, the union of *Klal Yisrael* and *Shabbos* was the first marriage, since we are *Shabbos's* eternal companion. Examining *Chazal's* terminology concerning *Shabbos* and its relationship vis-à-vis *Klal Yisrael* serves as a powerful tool for understanding the manner in which a husband should view his wife.

Let us go back to the beautiful hymn of *Lecha Dodi*, which refers to *Shabbos* as *mekor ha'brachah*, a source of blessing. When Hashem first instituted *Shabbos* as a memorial to His Creation, He blessed it with a special message, a unique power. By means of the truth that it symbolizes and communicates to *Klal Yisrael*, *Shabbos* is able to train man for his spiritual and moral destiny, as well as to ennoble him, so that he can fulfill that destiny. *Shabbos* is all that in its being a source of blessing.

A wife can and should be the home's source of blessing. Quite often, her contribution to the home is not recognized – because it is not appreciated. This may serve as a parallel to *Shabbos*. The value and significance of *Shabbos* can be realized only when one appreciates it. This can only occur when one observes the *Shabbos* – properly – according to *Halachah*. By delving into the *Shabbos*, we will raise our level of appreciation, so that it can have a greater effect on our lives. This applies equally to marriage. Sometimes we have to sit back and think: What would life be like under different circumstances? Are we acting properly? Do we appreciate our mate? Do we display our appreciation? Let us each learn from *Shabbos* how to honor the “other” *kallah* in our life.