

And six years you shall sow your land... but the seventh year you should let it rest and life fallow... six days you should do your work, but on the seventh day you should rest. (23:10,11,12)

The Torah juxtaposes the laws of *Shemittah*, the Sabbatical year, upon the weekly *Shabbos*, simply because both attest to the handiwork of the Creator which took place during the Six Days of Creation. Following these “working” days, Hashem rested, which was the first *Shabbos*. This seventh day of rest is commemorated both weekly on *Shabbos* and every seven years, in the form of *Shemittah*. In his *Pri Tzaddik*, **Horav Tzadok HaKohen, zl**, cites the *Mechilta* 20, that tells us that the Torah cautions us not to neglect the weekly *Shabbos* during the *Shemittah* year. This statement begs elucidation. Why would we think that the prohibitions associated with *Shabbos Kodesh* are relaxed during the *Shemittah* year? In what way is the *Shemittah* year different from all other years?

Rav Tzadok explains that the Torah is alluding to a misguided presumption that we might make. There are those who err, thinking that *Shabbos* was given to us as a day of rest from the difficult work in the fields, so that we can focus on our Torah studies. The *Shemittah* year was a time when physical work in the fields was suspended, allowing for sufficient time for studying Torah during the course of the entire year. Since one might speculate that *Shabbos* observance was not compulsory during the *Shemittah* year, the Torah makes a point of underscoring the requirement to observe *Shabbos* day during *Shemittah*.

Rav Tzadok wonders what is really wrong with the premise that the *Shemittah* year be a time for relaxed *Shabbos* observance. After all, it makes sense that, if one is constantly free to study Torah, it would not be necessary to set aside a specific day for rest. If we have all of the time in the world to study Torah, why assign a special day of rest for the purpose of studying Torah? *Rav Tzadok* explains that such a question indicates that one does not understand one of the founding principles upon which *Shabbos* is established.

When we observe *Shabbos*, Hashem bestows upon us an elevated level of *kedushah*. A *Shabbos*-observant Jew is a new being. He is endowed with greater *kedushah*, sanctity. “Verily you shall observe My *Shabbos*, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Hashem, Who sanctifies you” (*Shemos* 31:13).

Indeed, although we have sufficient time during the *Shemittah* year to study Torah, the reward of increased levels of *kedushah* are available only to those who observe *Shabbos Kodesh*. Hashem designated us as a holy nation. *Kedushah* is the purpose of our lives, and *Shabbos* is the time for renewing and increasing our capacity for it. *Rav Tzadok* observes that the Torah often prefaces the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos* with instructions concerning the days preceding *Shabbos*, such as, “Six days

you should work.” Is it not obvious that one may work on the days leading up to *Shabbos*? Why does the Torah specifically address working on the days preceding *Shabbos*?

Rav Tzadok explains that herein the Torah is teaching us an important principle concerning *Shabbos*. To get the most out of *Shabbos*, one must prepare during the six days preceding it. On a spiritual plane, this means that *Shabbos* is inherently linked to the weekdays that precede it. The preparation of “Six days you should work” is a reference to the spiritual “work” of Torah-study and *mitzvah* observance.

One does not just become holy. It is a mindset that he achieves through plumbing the depths of Torah, by developing a strict code of ethical behavior, and by understanding that “we” are not like everyone else. Hashem wants us to strive for holiness. *Kedushah* is a state of being that applies to the entire Jew; it does not just address basic *halachos*. I recently came across an article decrying the fact that ethical behavior, which used to be the measure of a Jew, no longer seems to play much of a role. There are written rules, and there are written rules and behaviors that obligate a *ben Torah* to act in a demeanor which reflects *kedushas Yisrael*.

The author quotes *Horav Dov Katz, zl*, author of the *Tenuas HaMussar*, a close *talmid*, student, of *Horav Reuven Dov Dessler, zl*, and the *Alter* of Slabodka, *Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zl*. He writes: “It is obvious that all contemporary dealings concerning religious issues revolve around the commonly known *mitzvos*, such as *Shabbos*, *kashrus*, *shul* worship, etc. It is almost as if the entire Torah consists only of these few principles and in them lies the salvation of Judaism in its entirety. No one seems to protest against heretical views and false conceptions disseminated among the masses.... No one cries out against the breakdown of modesty and purity, both abroad and at home, against the desecration of the sanctity of Jewish family life, against the permissiveness that has become rife and that has exceeded all limits (the author passed away in 1979). No protests are raised against lying, cheating, deceit and forgery prevalent in business, against theft and violence, usury, the withholding of wages and exploitation that fill every corner of the land. No one decries the hatred toward man, the widespread corruption of virtuous conduct, the foolishness (in the way people act) and ignorance (which by their actions they manifest). No one deplores the dissolution of every vestige of the image of G-d from the human personality... These matters, it seems, are not the function of Orthodoxy. They do not enter into the purview of Judaism.”

These are powerful words which can be summed up simply as: We do not reflect a presence of *kedushah* in our lives. We live by what is permissible and what is not. Apparently, everything in between and above – what is proper and correct, and what is inappropriate and should be frowned upon – does not seem to affect us.

Returning to *Rav Tzadok*’s thesis, we must bear in mind that what we do in the “six work days” is critically relevant to the creation and success of our *Shabbos* experience. The level of *kedushah* that we achieve on *Shabbos* is greatly determined by the scope of our spiritual preparations for *Shabbos*. Thus, after *Shabbos* passes and we have risen to new heights, we once again

commence our journey of preparation for the upcoming *Shabbos*.

Rav Tzadok delves deeper into the important aspect of *Shabbos* preparations. We often think that we function in two disparate arenas of activity: physical and spiritual. On one side of the spectrum stands the Torah, with its positive and prohibitive commandments. On the opposite side of the spectrum are the physical activities of life, the mundane acts eating, sleeping, working, etc. We view some of these activities as necessary, while others are viewed as neutral activities, which, if a person desires, he will carry out. We certainly do not view them as necessities.

The **Ramban** says that there is no such thing as a neutral activity. Rather, we should elevate our actions: sleeping, so that one is not tired when he learns Torah; eating, so that one has sufficient strength for Torah-study. In such a manner his “mundane” activities achieve *mitzvah* status. They are no longer in the realm of physicality. If, however, his intentions remain purely physical, he has obviated their ability to achieve *kedushah*, relegating them to the dimension of physicality.

The lesson to be derived herein is significant and profound. We need not disavow our involvement in legitimate physical activity. It is just that when we carry out these legitimate activities, we do not execute them simply in accordance with the “dos” and “do nots” of *halachah*. Our eating should contain sublime thoughts concerning the origin of all food and the true purpose of life. Thus, we accord our gratitude to the Almighty for enabling us to serve Him, and for giving us the food which will energize us to carry out our mission in this world. As such, the mundane act of eating takes on a new perspective. Animals eat and humans eat, but only a fool is unable to discern the difference between these two legitimate physical activities. When we “plant” spirituality – we reap spirituality

Likewise, our *Shabbos* is reflective of our work week. When the primary focus of the mundane is physical in nature, we cannot expect much more from our *Shabbos*. The more sanctity we inject into our daily mundane lives, the greater will be Hashem’s bestowal of holiness from Above.