

To know that I am Hashem, Who makes you holy. (31:13)

Chazal (*Shabbos* 11:B) teach, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'I have a good (very special) gift in My treasury (where I keep My precious treasures). It is called *Shabbos*. I wish to give it to *Klal Yisrael*. Go and inform them.'" *Shabbos* is a precious treasure that Hashem saved especially for His children. We must learn to appreciate the unique nature of this gift, and, above all, how much it means to Hashem. The *Tzaddik*, *Horav Avraham, zl, m'Porisav* related in the name of the *Chidushei HaRim*, the meaning of, *Leich v'hodiam*, "Go and inform them" (which Hashem said to Moshe). *Leich* implies to go in the future. This means, says the *Gerer Rebbe*, that every *Erev Shabbos*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* himself goes to every Jew and informs him that *Shabbos* is coming. This implies that regardless of a Jew's geographical position – both physical and spiritual – the distance notwithstanding – Moshe will notify him that *Shabbos* is arriving. Thus, every Jew is able to sense the *kedushah*, holiness, of *Shabbos* when it arrives. Anyone who has ever reached out to an unaffiliated Jew and invited him for *Shabbos* will notice a certain sense of calm, a spiritual uplifting which overcomes him when he experiences his first *Shabbos*. This applies to every Jew, every *Shabbos*, everywhere.

The *Bais Avraham m'Slonim* once visited Teveriah. On *Shabbos* morning, after *davening*, he sat at the table together with his *Chassidim*. They had recited *Kiddush*, and potato *kugel* was brought out to the table. The *Rebbe* (as is customary) divided the *kugel* and gave *shirayim*, small portions, to each *chasid*. They began to grab for the *kugel*, which annoyed the *Rebbe*. He related the following story (in way of conveying a lesson to them).

The holy *Horav Shmelke, zl, m'Nikolsburg*, was well-known for his generosity. He would give everything that he had to the poor. As a result, he was the primary address to which to turn for those in need. One day, a man who was obviously a victim of abject poverty stood by his door with his hand out, begging for alms. The *Rebbe* was beside himself, since he did not have a cent in his house. Suddenly, he reminded himself that his wife kept her jewelry hidden beneath the mattress in her room. He went there and removed a gold ring set with a beautiful diamond. When he brought the ring to the poor man, the fellow began to dance with glee and left.

The *Rebbetzin* was coming up the walk and noticed this poor man who was all smiles, and she began to wonder what could her revered husband have given him. They had nothing at home. When she discovered what *Rav Shmelke* had done, she screamed, "That ring is worth three hundred rubles. The poor man has no idea what you just gave him! He will go and sell it for a few pennies!"

Immediately, *Rav Shmelke* ran out and searched for the man. When he caught up with him, he said, "I just wanted you to know that the ring that I gave you is worth hundreds of rubles. Do not sell yourself short." (Obviously, there is an important lesson concerning *tzedakah*, charity, to be derived from here, but that is not the focus of this thesis.)

That *Shabbos*, Rav Shmelke related the incident to his *Chassidim*. In summation he said, “This is what Hashem told Moshe, ‘I have a special gift for you in My treasury and *Shabbos* is its name. I wish to give it to *Klal Yisrael*. Go and inform them.’ What is meant by, ‘Go inform them’? Hashem was teaching Moshe to see to it that the Jewish People understand the extraordinary significance of *Shabbos*. They should learn to appreciate its value – not to give it away for a piece of *kugel*! There is much more to *Shabbos* than *Kiddush* with its many palate-friendly foods. *Shabbos* is a holy day reserved for achieving spiritual ascendancy, for taking stock of our lives and charting a course for spiritual success in the following week. It certainly is not about *kugel*!”