

And the Seventh day is a day of complete rest, a holy convocation, you shall not do any work. (23:3)

The *Talmud* (*Shabbos* 10b) teaches, “Hashem said to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, ‘I have a *matanah tovah*, good gift, in My treasure house and *Shabbos* is its name, and I seek to give it to *Yisrael*. Go and inform them about it.’” The *Steipler Gaon*, *zl* observes that, obviously, when Hashem instructed Moshe *Rabbeinu* to inform *Klal Yisrael* about *Shabbos*, it was not concerning *hilchos*, the laws of *Shabbos*, because Moshe had an obligation to teach the laws of all the *mitzvos*. In this area, *Shabbos* would not be unique. In what area was *Shabbos* distinguished from all other *mitzvos* that Hashem instructed Moshe to “inform them”? The *Steipler* posits that this applies to *Kedushah*, the sanctity of *Shabbos*. Unlike any other *mitzvah*, one who observes *Shabbos* is ensconced in a period of extreme sanctity with which he is infused and essentially altered. One who observes *Shabbos* is privy to added *Kedushah*.

Furthermore, the *Steipler* quotes *Chazal* (*Shabbos* 118b), “Whoever guards *Shabbos* in accordance with *halachah*, even if he worshipped idols on the level of the generation of Enosh (in which the generation was totally steeped in every form of idol worship), he is absolved.” The *Steipler* questions this statement. If the person who had worshipped idols has not yet repented, what does he gain from *Shabbos*? *Shemiras Shabbos* does not erase idol worship. He must repent. If he repents, for what does he need *Shabbos* to repair his relationship with Hashem? His repentance will affect his forgiveness.

The *Steipler* explains that there are transgressions that, although one has repented, there still remains a taint, a vestige, an impression on his *neshamah*, soul. We cannot say that it is once again pristine. The sin left “something” behind. *Shabbos*, however, through its *kedushah*, has the power to expunge completely that strain which taints the *neshamah*.

Friday night we chant (in *zemiros*), *Kol mekadeish shevii karai lo, kol shomer Shabbos kadas meichallelo*; “Whoever hallows the *Shabbos* as befits it, whoever safeguards the *Shabbos* properly from desecration.” The *Chafetz Chaim*, *zl*, explains that there are two distinct levels with regard to *Shabbos* observance. First is the *shomer Shabbos mechallelo*, who safeguards *Shabbos* properly from desecration. He observes *Shabbos*, but *Shabbos* does not add much to his personal level of holiness, as he remains the same after *Shabbos* as he was prior to *Shabbos*. The second level is *mekadesh shevii karai lo*; whoever hallows the *Shabbos* as befits it, he leaves the *Shabbos* a different person – having been spiritually elevated and sanctified by *Shabbos*. It goes without saying that not only are their individual *Shabbos* experiences dissimilar, so, too, are their individual rewards disparate.

Horav Shlomo Bloch, *zl*, premier student of the *Chafetz Chaim*, related that when the sage completed his *magnum opus*, the *Mishnah Berurah*, he made a festive meal for six days straight, inviting the Torah scholars closest to him. Every day they would sit and discuss the *halachos*

connected to that volume of the *Mishnah Berurah*. When *Shabbos* arrived, he once again invited all of the scholars to join him for the *Shabbos* meal. One of his close students questioned this arrangement, since there are only six volumes to the *Mishnah Berurah*. The *Chafetz Chaim* replied that the night before "*Shabbos Kodesh*" had appeared to him and demanded an extra festive meal in honor of *Shabbos* (*Hilchos Shabbos*), claiming that *Shabbos* is the essence of the Glory of Hashem and His Kingdom. It is the source of all blessing, both in the material and spiritual spheres. So, should it not be accorded the proper honor that it deserves?