

## On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you. (35:2)

Of the seven days of the week, *Shabbos* stands out as *kodesh*, holy, consecrated for Hashem. *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 11:8) relates a dialogue that ensued between *Shabbos* and Hashem: “*Shabbos* said before Hashem, ‘All of the days of the week have a *zug*/mate, but I have no mate.’ Hashem replied, ‘*Knesses Yisrael* will be your mate!’” Simply put, each day of the week is matched with another day (Sunday/ Monday, Tuesday/ Wednesday, Thursday/ Friday), making three matches, leaving *Shabbos* as the odd day out. Others explain that each day of the week has as its mate the various entities which Hashem created on that day. Nothing was created on *Shabbos*, however, because it was the day of rest when Hashem completed Creation. *Klal Yisrael* became *Shabbos*’s mate. The *neshamah yeseirah*, extra soul, that Hashem bequeaths on *Shabbos* is the reward for *Shabbos*. We are imbued with the *Kedushas Shabbos* and, in reciprocity, *Shabbos* is awarded the extra soul which permeates its “mate.” Obviously, this association between *Shabbos* and *Klal Yisrael* is dependent on the Jewish People’s *Shabbos* observance. When we usher in the holy *Shabbos*, we are, by definition, affirming and enhancing our relationship with our “spouse.”

Returning to the original claim that every day has its mate, we wonder how one day can be paired with another day – and what difference it makes in the scheme of things. No inherent relationship exists between the days of the week – surely not one that would grant them mate status. *Horav Tzvi Lau, Shlita*, offers a novel explanation based on the concept of *eizer k’negdo*, “a helpmate opposite him,” associated with the creation of woman/Chavah, which sets the foundation and criteria for the marriage bond between husband and wife.

*Chazal* (*Yevamos* 63a) ask, “In what way does she help her husband?” (*Rabbi Yosi* asked this question of *Eliyahu HaNavi*.) The reply was: “Man brings raw wheat, and she prepares it; he brings flax, which she forms into a garment.” Is this really the function of a woman, or is this a metaphor for her real purpose as a helpmate? *Rav Lau* explains that the husband/wife relationship is much more than a partnership in life. Rather, the wife completes her husband in the sense that he provides the potential, and she converts it into a reality. He brings wheat; she makes a bread. A wife is perceptive about her husband’s potential. She recognizes his strengths and helps cultivate them, transferring raw potential into tangible achievements. Furthermore, a wise woman does not overshadow her husband, but rather, magnifies his potential, enabling both to grow together. Such a dynamic creates a home built upon the pillars of understanding, collaboration and purpose.

This idea applies equally to the concept of *Knesses Yisrael* as the *ben zug* of *Shabbos*. The mate for *Yom Rishon*/Sunday is *Yom Reviii*/Wednesday, because, on day one, Hashem created light, and, on day four, He placed the luminaries (which are the reality of light’s potential) in the sky. The mate of day two, Thursday, day five, since the waters which Hashem created on day two achieved their potential when He created fish and fowl. Day three found its match on day six, since the land

Hashem created on Tuesday saw its fulfillment with the creation of man and the other living creatures which would live on the land. Thus, *Shabbos* had a valid question: What about my potential, the treasure trove of *kedushah* that accompanied *Shabbos*'s creation? How will I realize the fruits of my *kedushah*? Hashem replied, *Knesses Yisrael*. They will observe *Shabbos* and, as a result of this exposure, become imbued with the effects of the *kedushas Shabbos*.

Hashem himself infused *Shabbos* with *kedushah*, marking it as a day set aside for spiritual growth and reflection. On *Shabbos*, the world ascends to a higher plane, and the Jewish people, as *Shabbos*'s mate, have the opportunity to connect with deeper levels of holiness.

Throughout the millennia, our people have demonstrated their deep-rooted commitment to Torah, even to the point of self-sacrifice. Nevertheless, the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos* stood out as particularly significant, because it defined a person's commitment to *Yiddishkeit*. *Shemiras Shabbos* was a defining *mitzvah* even to the Jew whose connection to *Yiddishkeit* was not founded in a profound knowledge of Torah. Furthermore, those who cared about *Shabbos* made every effort to see to it that their brothers and sisters adhered to this *mitzvah*.

A Jewish woman interned in a slave labor camp during World War II was caught stealing a few potatoes. The Nazis were especially sadistic in meting out punishment for such an "egregious" infraction. The Nazis were literally beating the Jews and starving them. Yet, to them, stealing was an onerous transgression which required punishment, determined by a court comprised of Jews. The protocol was for the defendant to confess to her "heinous" sin and beg forgiveness, to plead for her life. The Nazis stood by watching to see how the Jewish court would carry out its punishment of one of their own.

The pleading was what gave these sadists the most enjoyment. The woman did not plead. Today was *Shabbos*, and she knew that the holy day would accompany her throughout her ordeal. When the court saw that she refused to plead they were compelled to give her the full punishment – fifty lashes with a whip that was made for cattle. After twenty lashes, this pure soul passed out from pain. Even an animal could not have endured the cruel whipping. She was carried to her block where her friends addressed her wounds. After a while, she came to; her friends were incredulous. "Why did you not beg? They would have given you a few slaps and it would have been over," they asked. Her reply should inspire us. "Today is *Shabbos*. The man writing down the plea was Jewish. It would mean having him write "guilty," followed by my punishment. I was not going to be the cause of another Jew desecrating *Shabbos*."