

Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it ... You shall not bear false witness against your fellow.

The *Midrash Rabbah* (47:6) teaches that the *Aseres HaDibros*, Ten Commandments, were written side by side, five on each tablet. Thus, the injunction to observe *Shabbos Kodesh* stands opposite/next to the prohibition against false testimony. A Jew who observes *Shabbos* attests that the world was created by Hashem's utterance. When one bears false testimony, he corrupts his speech, which leaves him unable to testify that Hashem created the world. (He created it, then He rested on the Seventh Day. *Shabbos* attests to this verity.) Truth is the force that keeps the world alive, while falsehood is destructive. One who prevaricates cannot possibly provide testimony about *Shabbos*. This means (I think) that, while one can observe *Shabbos* – for himself, it does not necessarily mean that his observance serves as testimony. Thus, such a person's observance lacks the ability to inspire others to observe. The *Zera Shimshon* underscores every Jew's connection to *Shabbos* as a witness to the creation of the world. This places an added responsibility of *Shabbos* observance. First, it is a *mitzvah*. Second, it is our testimony attesting to Hashem as Creator of the world. A Jew who observes *Shabbos* makes a powerful statement: "I attest to the fact that Hashem created the world."

Rabbi Nachman Seltzer relates a story within a story concerning *Shabbos*, which emphasizes the Jew's partnership with Hashem in the creation of the world. A *Chassidic* Jew once came to the *Rebbe* for a *brachah*, blessing. He was going through a difficult period, and he and his wife were facing a tremendous test from Heaven concerning their infant son. As soon as the *Chassid* entered his *rebbe's* chamber, he burst out in bitter and painful sobbing. The *Rebbe* waited as the man cried himself out. Once he regained control of himself, he began to speak. His young son lay curled up in bed deathly ill... The doctor had just about given up hope. From a medical point of view, the child had no chance of recovery. The man left his wife at the hospital to await what the doctor claimed was the inevitable, while he went to his *Rebbe*.

The *Rebbe* listened to his *chassid's* tale of woe. He did not just listen, he hung on every word. When the *chassid* finished speaking, the *Rebbe* kept silent for a few moments, then said, "Do you think that I can just issue a blessing and Hashem grants me my every wish? It does not work that way at all!" But, the *Rebbe* continued, upon seeing the crestfallen face of his *chassid*, "There is one time every week when this is not so. Hashem created the world in six days and rested on *Shabbos*. On the holy day of *Shabbos*, we become partners with Hashem in Creation. On *Shabbos*, there is a special *koach*, power, granted for a Jew to ask Hashem's favor. After all, in our role as partner, we may make certain requests – such that we would never dream of asking during the week. So, go on home, and you can be certain that, this *Shabbos*, I will *daven*, pray, for your child, imposing on the special partnership we Jews all have with Hashem on this special day."

I write this story because it impacted me greatly. Who does not have a "shopping list" for Hashem? Who does not have that one *bakashah*, request, that keeps gnawing at him, that controls

his life, and is on his mind every waking moment? For some, it is health, personal or family; others require *parnassah*, a livelihood; yet others have issues with children/siblings and people in general. Now we know that *Shabbos* is an *eis ratzon*, special time when our prayers are heard. Like everything else, however, there is a catch: one must be *Shabbos* observant. This means that one's level of *Shabbos* observance has to be paradigmatic of a testimony about Hashem as Creator of the world. Who is prepared to say that his observance can tolerate such scrutiny? While we all observe the prohibitions, do we honor and sanctify *Shabbos* appropriately? Do we dress the part; go to *shul* on time; make *Shabbos* meals that include Torah thoughts and *zemiros*? Yes, all of this is part of positive *Shabbos* observance. The manner in which we observe *Shabbos* defines our attitude towards *Shabbos*: is it a drag, a day off, or a day of spiritual advancement?

Rabbi Seltzer relates another *Shabbos* story, which I feel is most meaningful and, regrettably, relates in some manner to many of us. A *chassid* once came to his *Rebbe* with a heavy heart. "Rebbe," he cried, "my business is suffering. Day after day, I am losing money. I cannot turn a profit. If it goes on like this much longer, I will be bankrupt."

The *Rebbe* looked at the *chassid* and asked, "Tell me, do you ever discuss your business on *Shabbos kodesh*?" This is a question that no one wants to be asked, since we are not on the spiritual level of entering into *Shabbos Kodesh* as if it were an island in time, with our minds totally devoted to spiritual elevation. The *chassid* trembled as he replied, "Rebbe, I am almost never home during the week. The only time that I have to speak with my wife is on *Shabbos*. Yes, invariably, there have been times that my conversation gravitated toward my business. It is not as if this was the original intent of the conversation, but, during the course of an extended, relaxed meal, business does invariably enter the subject matter of our conversation." The *Rebbe* listened, then looked his *chassid* in the eye and said, "If you will be *mekabeil*, accept upon yourself, that from here on in you will never talk about your business on *Shabbos*, then I can guarantee that your business will prosper as it did before."

I write this story because it affects us all. Our *Shabbos* observance is more than just a *kiyum mitzvah*, fulfillment of Hashem's command. When we observe *Shabbos* we are offering testimony that Hashem created the world. When we observe *Shabbos*, our spiritual comportment has to reflect the type of demeanor that one who is a partner with Hashem in the creation of the world would exhibit. Thus, when we act in such a manner, we have the "right" and "opportunity" to ask Hashem, our "Partner," for His blessing. It is as simple as that!