

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

*Shabbos* is much more than one of the 613 *mitzvos*. It attests to Hashem as the Creator of the world. We rest in recognition of Hashem's "resting" from Creation. We tend to gloss over another element of *Shabbos*. *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 2) relate: "The *Shabbos* came before Hashem and said, 'Everyone has a partner, but I do not.' Hashem replied, '*Knesses Yisrael* is your partner.' When *Klal Yisrael* stood at *Har Sinai*, Hashem said to them, 'Remember the *Shabbos* to keep it holy.'" Each of the six days of the work week is considered a "work day," a day of creative mundane activity. Each of these days was assigned the adjunct of a working day. It required *kedushah*, holiness, another day to complement it, a day to help it to actualize its potential, establishing three sets of partnerships. *Shabbos*, however, was bereft of a partner. Its potential could not be realized thoroughly in order to grow in sanctity. Only *Klal Yisrael* could achieve this goal.

One does not turn his back on a partner. It is a relationship of mutual sharing in which two people (entities) enhance and complete one another. This concept should define our relationship vis-à-vis *Shabbos*. One might conjecture that laxity in *Shabbos* observance is a deficiency to be found in those who do not practice *mitzvos*. Specifically, because *Shabbos* is the soul-mate of *Klal Yisrael*, even the observant have difficulty doing justice to one aspect of *Shabbos* observance.

*Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl*, relates that one *Erev Shabbos*, he noticed his neighbor walking into the apartment building carrying two heavily-laden shopping bags. He was certain that he was transporting delicacies for his *Shabbos* meal. This was confirmed (he thought) when the man smiled to him, and said, "My *Oneg Shabbos*, *Shabbos* delights." Since the man practically invited him to look in the bag, *Rav Galinsky* peeked to see what types of goodies his friend had bought. He was shocked to see that this man's idea of *Oneg Shabbos* was newspapers and magazines. While it is not *halachically* inappropriate (*Shabbos* should be a day for Torah and *tefillah*), it is a sad commentary concerning this man's perception of *Oneg Shabbos*.

In his inimitable manner, the *Maggid* presents an analogy to describe the man's obtuseness. On the day of a king's coronation, the future monarch sought to do something for the benefit of his kingdom. He met with his advisors and suggested that every citizen be allowed one wish/one request which he would fulfill. His advisors countered that would break the royal treasury. Instead, they suggested that for one hour each week on a specific day, whoever presented his wish, would see it fulfilled. Two days prior to the designated day, the lines were forming. People slept on the street. They would do anything to get in during that hour – which would allow for only so many people. Once the hour passed, regardless of the length of the line, the king's benevolence would halt.

The awaited moment had arrived, and the gates to the palace were opened as the people edged

forward. Suddenly, out of nowhere, someone pushed through and went to the head of the line. How did he do it? He was the town leper, afflicted with the contagious, dread disease, covered from head to toe with pus-filled boils emitting a noxious odor. Everyone was careful to give the intruder a wide berth. The guards were not prepared to permit this man, with his decrepit soiled clothes and foul-smelling body, to enter the palace. They scrubbed him from head to toe, gave him clean clothes and sprayed him with a powerful deodorizer. He was now as ready as he would ever be to greet the king.

“How can I help you?” the king asked. “My master, the king, I have a miserable life,” the man began. “My wounds are painful; their odor drives people away from me. The only food that I eat is derived from the scraps that I find in the garbage. I do not enjoy anything in life, except for one thing: When I scratch my skin, I have some pleasure. I wait for that moment. There is, however, a problem. I am unable to reach my back. I ask that the king arrange for me to obtain two long brushes with which I will be able to scratch my back.” The king agreed and had the royal scribe enter the leper’s order for two brushes.

When the king saw the smiles on his advisors’ faces, he asked them why they were laughing at this wretched man. They replied, “This man had a one-time opportunity, a chance of a lifetime, to ask the king to provide him with a specialist that would heal his pain and restore his body to its original healthy self. Instead, he asked for brushes. How pathetic!” The leper looked at them and raised his voice, “No one tells me what to do. I want brushes! You will not deprive me of my two brushes.”

*Shabbos* is Hashem’s gift to His People, a gift which provides us with the opportunity to be with Hashem through prayer and study. Instead, this man’s notion of *Oneg Shabbos* is reading a newspaper. He would rather have the brushes than the cure.