Shabbos, An Ideal In Prayer And Thought

from Rabbi Jacobson's דברי בן שלנוה

WHEN THE JEW awakens in the morning, he is quick to utter the prayer מודה אני; and, soon after, he pronounces the *brachah* praising Hashem for commanding us "to engage in Torah study."

Through Torah study, we mortals hear the Voice from above. In *tefillah* we project our voice from the depths. For through the means of Torah, G-d addresses himself to man, while through the means of *tefillah* man addresses himself to G-d.

To fully evaluate the great treasures of the *Shabbos,* not only do we consult the Torah, we may also examine our *tefillah* which, after all, is a repository of our response to Hashem for having bestowed the gift of the *Shabbos* upon us. The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim,* 292) comments on the fact that three different *tefillos* were composed for the *Shabbos,* while one alone serves all three times of prayer on the festivals. Every week, he tells us, we celebrate three different aspects of *Shabbos*: *Shabbos Bereishis*—the historical *Shabbos* of Creation; *Shabbos Matan Torah*—the one marking the giving of the Law, which is of eternal application; and the Messianic *Shabbos* of the Millenium.

"*Attah Kidashtah*—You sanctified," which we recite Friday night, describes the sanctity with which Hashem imbued the Sabbath Day at the time of Creation.

The morning prayer, "*Yismach Moshe*—Rejoice, O Moses," expresses the response of *Moshe Rabbeinu* after having secured from *Pharaoh* the Seventh Day as a day of rest for the enslaved Jews, prior to the Exodus and their receiving of the Law.

The *Minchah* prayer of *Shabbos* afternoon, "*Attah Echod*—You are One," bespeaks the unity and singularity of the Jews, the *Shabbos* and their Creator.

I would suggest that this same triple theme is expressed in the three required *seudos* (feasts) of the *Shabbos* Day. We infer the requirement of eating these meals from the three times that "*hayom*—this day," is written in the passage: "And Moshe said, 'Eat it (the manna) *this day,* because *this day* is *Shabbos;* on *this day* you will not find it in the fields' " (*Shemos* 16). These three correspond to the three eras in the Jewish continuum, also expressed as "this day." The Creation: "*On this day* that Hashem created the heaven and the earth"; the giving of the Law: "*On this day* you have become a people"; and the redemption of the Future: "Before the advent of *the* great and mighty *day* of G-d."

Not in vain is the *Shabbos* called an eternal covenant, for with every *Shabbos* one can experience glories passed, determine guidelines for the present, and catch a taste of the redemption of the future. On every *Shabbos,* one can hear anew the voice of the Creator of the world . . . of the loyal guardian devoted to His people, whose watchful eye was never removed from our ancestors in Egypt . . . of the eternal redeemer of Once and the Future.

So we must yearn for the weekly *Shabbos* as well as for the *Shabbos* of the Future, as those of lofty spirit once did: "Come let us go out to greet the *Shabbos* Queen, *Bo'e challoh, bo'e challoh,* Welcome O bride."

If G-d is our King, and the *Shabbos* is our Queen, shall we not celebrate as royal children? □

A Shabbos Experience in Sweden

from Rabbi Jacobson's אשא דעי לנורחוק

THE HEBREW MONTH of Av has always been a time of great suffering and loss for our People, its character forebodingly described in the Torah readings of *Shabbos Chazon.* Yet, we also find words of comfort and encouragement in the *Parsha* and *Haftora* of that *Shabbos.* One experience I had on a *Shabbos Chazon* illustrates the dual nature of that month as well as the Jew's sublime capacity for eternal self-renewal.

In Sweden there was a large D.P. camp for women refugees, most of whom were Jewish. A number of the Jewish refugees insisted on eating only Kosher food as soon as they reached safety in Sweden, and this greatly impressed the Swedes. They soon agreed to our request to re-open the camp at Helshin—the camp at Helshin had earlier housed the Jewish escapees from German-occupied Denmark—specifically for Kashrus-observing refugees. (The cooperation and helpfulness of the Swedes contrasted with the attitude of the Jewish bureacrats, led by the infamous Ehrenpreis, towards the religious needs of the returnees.)

During the week of *Shabbos Chazon,* one hundred-forty-eight orphaned girls plus one mother with her young daughter arrived at Helshin.

I arrived at Helshin from Stockholm on the Thurs-

day of that week to spend the first *Shabbos* with the refugees. As I stood watching, a thin, shriveled girl stepped down from one of the buses. She looked around with wonder: *"Trees, trees, trees—and no barbed wire!"* Then, with her eyes streaming tears but her voice strong, she pronounced the *brachah*: *"Shehecheyanu*—Blessed are You O G-d . . . for keeping us alive, sustaining us, and bringing us to this day!" *How could this youngster have retained the memory of the brachah of thanksgiving during six years of captivity and mind-numbing torture?*—I wondered. . . . Her tears were soon joined by mine.

As I SAID, it was *Shabbos Chazon.* Everyone there wished desperately to become wrapped up in the spirit of the holy *Shabbos,* yet the atmosphere seemed more akin to the *Tisha b'Av* that lay ahead; some thirty young widows kindled the *Shabbos* candles—a miracle of sorts, under the circumstances, but a most depressing sight, at the same time. Then *Kiddush,* the washing of hands, the *brachah* on the *challos,* the meal that was prepared so painstakingly and amid such great difficulties—and yet. . . .

But before long, the director of the D.P. camp and I realized that we dared not allow ourselves sink into the despair that seemed to have enveloped our "guests." After all, it was *Shabbos.* So I pulled myself together and took the initiative, and began to speak to the girls. I greeted them with the traditional Friday night "father's blessing." And then I tried to tell them how their matryred parents would be feeling, seeing them redeemed from their suffering at last, sitting at a *Shabbos* table under the loving care of friends who had hopes and dreams for them, and even planned to take the place of their departed parents—as far as such a thing is possible.

And so the room was slowly relieved of the tension that had gripped it, and the mood became more relaxed and *Shabbos*-like. Later, after *bentching,* I was told that three young sisters began to sing *zemiros.* They later confessed that if they had been asked earlier if they still remembered anything from home, they would have shrugged off the thought. But suddenly, at that *Shabbos* table, after all the years of emptiness, the *zemiros* came back to them intact.

The next day, on that *Shabbos Chazon* in Sweden, more than twenty years ago, I spoke about the *Parsha* (the week's Torah portion) and the *Haftora,* as well as some *dinim* (religious laws) of *Tisha b'Av,* to these Polish girls—many who later became students and beloved protegees of my dear wife.

Even in the week of *Tisha B'Av, Shabbos* has its full potency. □

Translation by MIRIAM MARGOSHES

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