



Just as the first Shabbos defended Adam Harishon and saved him from death, so too every Shabbos advocates for us and in its merit we are showered with blessing and success

This coming Shabbos we will read Parshas Bereishis. The Shabbos itself is aptly referred to as “Shabbos Bereishis” as the Levush writes (O.C. 669): “[The] Shabbos that follows Sukkos is called Shabbos Bereishis.” Similarly, the great halachic arbiter, the Maharil (Hilchos Shabbos Bereishis) wrote: “Every year, Shabbos Bereishis immediately follows Sukkos, and it is thus called on account of the fact that we start to read the book of Bereishis.” The above notwithstanding, the name requires further explanation. Why is it that only this Shabbos receives a special name based on the parsha that is read and not any others? The Shabbosim that follow are not called Shabbos Noach, Shabbos Lech Lecha, etc.

This can be explained on a simple level by showing that Shabbos Bereishis is so called, not only because of the name of parsha that is read, but more importantly because this parsha is the source and very essence of the Shabbos itself. As we say every Friday night in the Maariv service as well as in Kiddush (Bereishis 2:2): “And Hashem blessed the seventh day and He sanctified it, for on [that day] He rested from all of His work that Hashem created to do”.

In his sefer Divrei Yechezkel, the holy Rav Yechezkel of Shineve, zy”a speaks about this idea in a manner which sheds light on our service of Hashem, and he quotes his father-in-law, the “Aryeh D’vei Ilai”, Rav Aryeh Leibush of Vizhnitz, zy”a:

“הענין כך הוא, דבימים הנוראים הקדושים כל אדם היה לו אז הרהור תשובה, וקיבל אז על עצמו איזו הנהגה טובה, כל איש לפי ערכו ומדרגתו, לכן נקרא שבת בראשית, שמזכירים להאדם שמה שעבר עבר, ומעתה מתחיל סדר חדש, וישתדל את עצמו שיהיה מעתה טוב.”

“Since on the holy Days of Awe every individual experienced thoughts of teshuvah, and he accepted upon himself some good practice, each person in accordance with his level, therefore [this Shabbos is] called Shabbos Bereishis, in order to remind the person that the past is past, and from now begins a new order, and he will exert himself to be better from now on.”

“Shabbos Bereishis” Defended and Saved Adam HaRishon

A further explanation behind the name “Shabbos Bereishis” can be understood based on the following Medrash. After Adam HaRishon sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge and Hashem banished him from the Garden of Eden, the first Shabbos came to his defense and he was thereby spared from death. The Medrash Shochar Tov (Tehilim 92) on the words – “A psalm, a song, for the day of Shabbos” says:

“בערב שבת נברא אדם הראשון, שעה ראשונה עלה במחשבה, שניה נמלך [הקב”ה] עם מלאכי השרת, שלישית כנס עפרו, ברביעית גבלו, חמישית עשאו גולם, ששית רקמו, שביעית נפח בו נשמה, שמינית העמידו על רגליו, תשיעית צוהו [שלא לאכול מעץ הדעת], עשירית חטא, אחת עשרה נידון, שתים עשרה נתגרש. בא [הקב”ה] ליתן לו איפופסין [את דיגו ועונשו], נכנס השבת פינהו משם...”

בא יום שבת נעשה לו סניגור, ואמר לפני הקב”ה, רבון העולמים בששת ימי המעשה לא נענש אדם בעולם ובי אתה מתחיל, זו היא קדושתו וזו היא מנוחתו, ובשביל השבת ניצל מדינה של גיהנום. כיון שראה אדם כוחה של שבת, בא אדם לומר הימנון לשבת, מזמור שיר ליום השבת. אמר לו השבת, לי אתה אומר הימנון, אני ואתה נאמר הימנון להקב”ה, שנאמר טוב להודות לה.”

“On Erev Shabbos Adam HaRishon was created. At the first hour his creation was conceived in thought. At the second [hour]

Hashem convened with the ministering angels. At the third, He gathered his dust. In the fourth, He kneaded it. At the fifth, He made him an inanimate form. At the sixth, He designed him. At the seventh, He blew into him a soul. At the eighth, He stood him on his feet. At the ninth, He commanded him [not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge]. At the tenth, he sinned. At the eleventh, he was judged. At the twelfth, he was banished. He came to serve [Adam] the verdict. Shabbos entered and removed [Adam] from there.

The day of Shabbos came and acted in his defense. Shabbos said before Hashem, 'Master of the World! During the six days of creation, no one was punished in the world. And You want to start with me? Is this an expression of my holiness, of my tranquility?' And for the sake of the Shabbos he was spared from the judgement of Gehenom. Once Adam saw the power of Shabbos, he desired to sing a hymn to the Shabbos – Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbos. So Shabbos said to [Adam], 'To me you are singing? Let us both together sing to Hashem!' As it says (Tehilim ibid), 'It is good to thank Hashem.'

From this we see that without "Shabbos Bereishis" [the first Shabbos] which advocated for Adam HaRishon, he would not have remained alive and would have been sent to Gehenom immediately. The above Medrash is also found in Pirkei D'Rebi Eliezer (Ch. 19). And how wondrous are the words of the holy Ohr HaChaim in Parshas Yisro who explains the mitzvah of "Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it" (Shemos 20:8) with this medrash. Hashem asks that we always remember that the Shabbos came to the defense of Adam HaRishon (and all the souls that were encompassed in him when he sinned) and saved him from death.

Accordingly, we must realize that when Hashem commanded us to "Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it," the intention was that on each and every Shabbos we should remember that Adam HaRishon lived only in the merit of Shabbos. It is therefore incumbent upon us to observe the Shabbos properly and in that merit Hashem will bestow upon us bountiful blessings and our handiwork will meet success. As the holy Zohar says (Yisro 88a): "All blessings, above and below, are dependent on the seventh day."

In order to bring our attention to awesome power inherent in each Shabbos, we therefore call the first Shabbos of the year "Shabbos Bereishis." By recalling the first Shabbos of creation,

we will commit ourselves to keeping the Shabbos properly. Keeping the Shabbos holy includes two modes: negative and positive. We must refrain from all work and mundane speech. And in the positive sense, we must fill the time with holy pursuits: learning, davening and enjoying the Shabbos meals in an exalted manner.

On Each Shabbos the World is Renewed for Another Six Days

The holy Ohr HaChaim (Bereishis 2:3) offers us an insight into the essential and ongoing role Shabbos has in creation. The verse says (Shemos 20:11): "For six days Hashem made the heavens and the earth." Interestingly, the Torah does not say "for **in** six days Hashem made..." but rather "for six days". This alludes to the fact that Hashem invested the world with only six days' worth of existence. It is through our observance of the Shabbos that another six days are brought into the world for the coming week. It must follow, says the Ohr HaChaim, that since the creation of the world there has never been a Shabbos without at least one person keeping Shabbos properly. For would it ever occur that there was no one to keep Shabbos, there would be no way for the following week to be sustained. And in his own holy words:

"ולך לדעת כי מיום ברוא אלקים אדם לא חסר העולם דבר המעמיד צדיק יסוד עולם שהוא שומר שבת, כי אדם [הראשון] שומר שבת היה ע"ה, ואחריו קם שת בנו כי הוא היה צדיק גמור, ואחריו כמה צדיקים, וכשזה גופל כבר בא השמש שומר שבת מתושלח וכו', נח, שם, אברהם וכו', ומשם לא פסקה שמירת שבת מישראל, ואפילו במצרים היו שומרי שבתות."

"And know that from the day Hashem created Man, the world never lacked a righteous person who kept Shabbos. Adam HaRishon kept Shabbos, and after him his son Sheis was a complete tzadik, and after him there were a number of tzadikim, and after them there was Mesushelach...Noach, Sheim, Avraham... and from then on Shabbos observance never left the Jewish people, and even in Egypt there were those who kept Shabbos."

How sweet then are the words of the Zohar (quoted above) that all blessings are dependent on the seventh day! Since it is the Shabbos that gives the following week its very existence, it follows that any and all blessings contained in the week must have their source in the previous Shabbos. And it is now clear

why the Shabbos came to Adam HaRishon's defense, for it is in the merit of Adam HaRishon's Shabbos observance that the world would continue to exist. Had Adam HaRishon not been spared, the entire world would ultimately be destroyed as well!

The Shabbos Switched a Day in the Life of Adam HaRishon to a Day of Hashem – One Thousand Years

But now, in order to better fulfill the commandment of remembering the Shabbos and keeping it holy, let us reflect upon the nature of the calamity from which the merit of the Shabbos rescued Adam HaRishon. It is clear from the above quoted Medrash that Adam HaRishon was saved from Gehenom. But this itself begs the question: Where do we find that he was indeed saved from Gehenom and how do we know he was exempt from Gehenom after he finally did pass away?

The Torah tells us (Bereishis 2:17): "And of the Tree of Knowledge [between] Good and Evil you shall not eat from it, for on the day you eat of it you shall surely die." Our Sages taught that Adam HaRishon should have died on the same day he sinned, as the verse clearly states, but in Hashem's compassion and kindness, the meaning of the verse was changed. Here is the Medrash Bereishis Rabbah (19:8) on the verse (Bereishis 3:8):

"וישמעו את קול ה' אלקים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום. אמר לו הקב"ה, לרוח היום לריוח היום, הריני מחיה את היום, כך אמרתי לו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות, אין אתם יודעים אם יום אחד משלי אם יום אחד משלכם, אלא הרי אני נותן לו יום אחד משלי שהוא אלף שנים, והוא חי תשע מאות ושלשים שנה ומניח לבניו שבעים, הדא הוא דכתיב (תהלים צ-י) ימי שנותינו בהם שבעים שנה."

"And they heard the voice of Hashem going in the garden to the direction of the sun. Hashem said to [Adam]: לרוח היום – to the direction of the sun. היום לריוח היום – to the sun's profit. Behold I will support the day. For thus have I said to him (Bereishis 2:17): 'For on the day you eat of it you shall surely die.' Now, you do not know if that means one day of Mine or one day of yours. But behold I shall give him one day of Mine, which is one thousand years, and he will live nine hundred and thirty years and leave seventy for his children, as it is written (Tehilim 90:10): 'The days of our years are seventy years.'"

The Shabbos Saved Man From Death So He Could Do Teshuvah

And now we can better understand the Medrash that we began with. The Shabbos said to Hashem:

"Master of the World! During the six days of creation, no one was punished in the world. And You want to start with me? Is this an expression of my holiness, of my tranquility?" And for the sake of the Shabbos he was spared from the judgement of Gehenom."

Were it not for Shabbos, Adam HaRishon would have died on the very day he sinned, thereby descending into Gehenom for he would not have had time to rectify his sin and do teshuvah.

But in the merit of Shabbos, Hashem changed the understanding of the verse: "For on the day you eat of it you shall surely die". Instead of a day of Adam HaRishon's, it now reads as a day of Hashem's - one thousand years. Now Adam HaRishon would have time to do teshuvah for his part in the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, as our Sages said (Eruvin 18b): "Adam HaRishon was very pious. Once he understood that he has caused the penalty of death, he sat in fasting for one hundred thirty years."

It is amazing when we look, in light of the above, at the Gemara (Sanhedrin 65b) that "Gehenom does reign on Shabbos." Because the first Shabbos saved Adam HaRishon from Gehenom, each subsequent Shabbos continues to give all future evildoers a respite from Gehenom (on Shabbos).

However, there is a problem with all this that must be resolved. If without the intervention of Shabbos Adam HaRishon would have died on the very day he ate of the Tree of Knowledge, as Hashem had warned him, it would come out that he would have died on the sixth day of creation and not on Shabbos. If so, what does the Medrash mean by "Shabbos entered and removed him from there"? And furthermore, why did Shabbos claim that starting punishment on Shabbos would violate her holiness and tranquility? Adam HaRishon was supposed to die on the sixth day, not on Shabbos!

The author of the Shevet Mussar and Medrash Talpiyos was the great kabbalist Rav Eliyahu Haltamari zt"l. He also wrote

a commentary on Pirkei D'Rebi Eliezer called "V'lo Od Elah." Therein he mentions much of the above ideas and continues by saying that the truth of the matter is that Adam HaRishon was banished from Gan Eden on the twelfth hour of the sixth day, but since there is a mitzvah of **שבת תוספות** - to add time to the Shabbos from the weekdays, therefore that last hour of the sixth day is already considered part of Shabbos. So the Shabbos rightfully said to Hashem: "During the six days of creation no one was punished and with me you are starting!"

Torah Study On Shabbos is Worth A Thousand Times More Than During the Week

It occurred to me to offer another idea regarding the power that Shabbos has to change the decree of "On the day you eat of it you shall surely die" from a day of Adam HaRishon to a thousand-year day of Hashem's. We will begin with a novel insight from the holy words of the Ben Ish Chai (Hilchos Shana Sheniya, Shemos d"h u'vzeh yuvan) Here are his holy words:

"ולכן בשבת שהוא מעין עולם הבא כמו שאמרו חכמינו זכרונום לברכה (ברכות נז:), צריך להרבות בו בעסק התורה, כי אז יצליחו בו יותר בבנין הרחני, ולכן כתבו המקובלים ז"ל, דגדול הפועל הנעשה מעסק התורה ביום שבת, אלה פעמים יותר מן הנעשה מעסק התורה של ימי החול".

"And therefore on Shabbos, which is a foretaste of the World to Come as our Sages said (Berachos 57b), one must increase his study of Torah, for then he will be more successful in the spiritual matters, and therefore the Kabbalists z"l wrote that the Torah learned on Shabbos is a thousand times more effective than that the Torah studied during the weekdays."

Now, the commentaries have not found a definitive source in "the Kabbalists" for the above statement, but it appears to me to clarify and expand on the lesson the Ben Ish Chai is teaching us, that his intention is to highlight what our Rebbe the Arizal revealed in Sha'ar HaKavonos (The Matter of Mizmor Shir), that on each Shabbos Moshe Rabeinu receives a thousand times more light than he receives during the week. And here are his holy words:

"When Moshe Rabeinu a"h ascended Har Sinai to receive the Torah, he was granted one thousand portions of light...and when the Jews sinned with the Calf, [those portions of light] disappeared from him on account of the Jews' sin, and only

one portion of light remained with him. That is the secret of the small [letter] Alef in ויקרא אל משה – And He called to Moshe (Vayikra 1:1)...

"תכיון אל מה שביארנו בענין ישמח משה במתנת חלקו, כי כשעלה משה רבינו ע"ה אל הר סיני לקבל התורה, ניתנו אליו אלף חלקי אורה... וכשחטאו ישראל בעגל נסתלקו ממנו בעון ישראל, ולא נשתיר בו רק חלק אחד מן האלה, והיא סוד האלה זעירא דויקרא אל משה (ויקרא א-א)..."

והנה בכל ערב שבת בבוא ליל השבת, חוזר משה רבינו ע"ה לקחת אותם הארות של אלף חלקים שלו עצמו שנאבדו ממנו, ולקחם בסוד תוספות קדושת שבת... וזה סוד ישמח משה במתנת חלקו, פירושו, כי משה הוא שמח עתה ביום השבת, במתנת חלקו עצמו האלה שנאבדו ממנו, ועתה ניתנו לו במתנה ביום השבת."

And behold, on every Erev Shabbos as the Eve of Shabbos arrives, Moshe Rabeinu returns to reclaim those thousand portions of light that were lost from him, and his taking them is an expression of [the mitzvah of] adding holiness to the Shabbos...and this is the secret of 'Moshe will rejoice with the gift of his portion' (Shabbos Shacharis Amidah), meaning, that on Shabbos Moshe is now happy, with the gift of his own [rightful] portion of the thousand that was lost from him, and now they are given to him as a gift on the day of Shabbos."

So we have a clear statement from the Arizal, the master of all the Kabbalists, that during the weekdays Moshe Rabeinu has only one thousandth of that light, signified by the small letter Alef at the beginning of the book of Vayikra, and on Shabbos the full one thousand portions are restored to him. This, therefore, is a source for that which the Ben Ish Chai brought in the name of the Kabbalists: *"The Torah learned on Shabbos is a thousand times more effective than the Torah studied during the weekdays."*

Shabbos Itself is Like One Thousand Days – A Day For a Year

Now let us continue onward to in our quest to grasp the power of Shabbos.

Since Torah study and Divine service on Shabbos are a thousand times more significant than during the week, it follows that it is within the ability of the Shabbos to change the "one day" of Adam HaRishon, which was a weekday, into a thousand days.

We find by the sin of the Spies who toured the Land of Canaan for forty days, that Hashem punished them for forty years, a day for a year, as the verse states (Bamidbar 34:14): “By the number of days that you toured the land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year, will you carry the burden of your sins.” But we are taught an important rule (Sota 11a): “The measure in an instance of good is greater than the measure in an instance of punishment.” Therefore, the Shabbos which is like a thousand weekdays, was able to lengthen Adam HaRishon’s life from one day to one thousand days. And Hashem, in His abundant compassion and kindness, extended it from one thousand days to one thousand years – “One day for one year.” And the only reason that Adam HaRishon did not live for the full one thousand years rather for nine hundred thirty is because Hashem left seventy years over for mankind – “The days of our years are seventy year,” (as the Medrash said above).

Behold, we have now gained a proper approach to the significance of the mitzvah to “Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it.” As we have learned from the holy Ohr HaChaim, the commandment is to remember how the Shabbos defended Adam HaRishon and saved him from death, by which he was

afforded ample time to do teshuvah and be spared from Gehenom. The seventy years that man lives are granted to us in the merit of the advocacy of Shabbos!

Therefore, through remembering the Shabbos and keeping it holy – with the holiness of the Torah and Divine service and by enjoying food and drink for the sake of Shabbos – we will merit that the Shabbos will come to our aid and endorse us to Hashem as well, that He may bestow an abundance of blessing and success upon us and all of our handiwork. It was for good reason that our Sages (Shabbos 10a) expounded on what Hashem said (Shemos 31:13): “To know that I am Hashem who makes you holy” – Hashem said to Moshe: A wonderful gift do I have in my treasure house and its name is Shabbos, and I want to give it to Israel. Go and inform them.”

And now in the spirit of “Shabbos Bereishis”, as we embark on a series of new Maamarim, we beseech the Almighty, the Giver of the Torah and Who grants knowledge to man, that He should guide us in the path of truth in our contemplation of the parshiyos of the Written Torah, through the clear lens of our Sages of the Oral Torah, and on the solid foundation of the teachings of our holy teachers the Rishonim and Acharonim who illuminated the world with their wisdom.



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