

Oneg Shabbos

One of the *mitzvos* of *Shabbos* is the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos*, enjoying *Shabbos*. In this week's article we will discuss the source of this *mitzvah* and what it includes.

A *Pasuk* and a *Gemara*

Yeshayah *Hanavi* teaches us about *Shabbos* and its reward:

“If you restrain your foot because it is the Sabbath; refrain from accomplishing your own desires on My holy day; if you proclaim the Sabbath ‘a delight’ (*oneg*), and the holy [day] of Hashem ‘honored,’ and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs or discussing the forbidden – then you will delight in Hashem, and I will mount you astride the heights of the world; I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Yaakov, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken” (*Yeshayah* 58:13).

We see that for calling *Shabbos* “a delight,” i.e., performing activities that enhance one's enjoyment of *Shabbos*, he will be granted “the heritage,” or the portion of Yaakov *Avinu*. Indeed, the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 118a-b) cites this *pasuk* and expresses the idea as follows: “Whoever delights in *Shabbos* is granted a boundless heritage.” The *Gemara* then explains why the *pasuk* specifically mentions the portion of Yaakov, as opposed to that of Avraham or Yitzchak. It cites *pesukim* that indicate that the land promised to Avraham and Yitzchak was limited, whereas, concerning Yaakov, the *pasuk* states, “And you shall spread out powerfully westward, eastward, northward and southward” (*Bereishis* 28:14), indicating that Yaakov's portion is unlimited.

Kavod* vs. *Oneg

There is a *mitzvah* to honor *Shabbos* (*kavod*) and there is a *mitzvah* to enjoy *Shabbos* (*oneg*). What is the difference? The *mitzvah* of honoring *Shabbos* includes: bathing in hot water before *Shabbos*, cutting one's nails, shaving and taking a haircut (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 260:1); the table should be covered with a cloth; the house should be clean and orderly (*ibid.* 262:1) and one should wear nice, clean clothes (*ibid.* 262:2).

What is included in *oneg Shabbos*? The following is a partial list:

- 1) Preparing delicious food, each person according to his financial capabilities. One who does not have the means, can fulfill *oneg Shabbos* even by preparing one simple cooked dish (*Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos* 30:7).
- 2) There is a *mitzvah* to eat three meals on *Shabbos*, one in the evening, one in morning and one at mincha (*ibid.* 30:9).
- 3) Eating meat and drinking wine, provided one can afford to do so (*ibid.* 30:10).
- 4) Taking a *Shabbos* nap is included in *oneg Shabbos* (*Rema, Orach Chayim* 290:1).

Shabbos Candles

There is a *mitzvah* to light candles before *Shabbos*. We find differing views in the *Rishonim* whether the purpose of the candles is *kavod Shabbos* or *oneg Shabbos*. The *Rambam* himself writes in one place that it is for *oneg Shabbos* (*Hilchos Shabbos* 5:1), he while elsewhere writes it is for *kavod Shabbos* (*ibid.* 30:5).

One resolution to this contradiction is that when one lights the candles before *Shabbos*, he fulfills the *mitzvah* of *kavod Shabbos*, as he has lit them in honor of *Shabbos*. On the other hand, having them lit on *Shabbos* is a fulfillment of *oneg Shabbos*, as the candles enhance the *Shabbos* atmosphere (*Biur Hagra, Orach Chayim* 529:1, s.v. *shezehu*).

Another approach is that having lit candles where the *Shabbos* meal is served fulfills *kavod Shabbos*, as important meals are served in a well-lit room (see *Rashi, Shabbos* 25b, s.v. *chovah*). Having lit candles in other rooms in the house (or minimally to ensure that some light reaches every room which will be used on *Shabbos*) is a fulfillment of *oneg Shabbos*, as this prevents stumbling over various items on the floor (*Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chayim* 263:2; *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah*, vol. II, chap. 43, footnote #6).

Don't Overdo It

As we have seen, the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos* includes eating good food and taking a nap. However, it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of *oneg* and *kavod Shabbos* is to put the person in a good mood so that he can more easily connect to Hashem through Torah learning and *davening*. To use the physical pleasures as an end unto themselves is not considered *oneg Shabbos*, but merely the fulfillment of one's own personal pleasures (*Shelah, Meseches Shabbos, Ner Mitzvah* #36; *Mishnah Berurah* 290:3).

Mide'Oraisa or Miderabbanan?

Is the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos* *mide'Oraisa* or *miderabbanan*? This is disputed by the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*. Those who maintain that it is a *mitzvah min haTorah* point to a *pasuk* which refers to *Shabbos* as “*mikra kodesh*,” “For six days, labor may be done and the seventh day is a day of complete rest, a holy convocation (‘*mikra kodesh*’), you shall not do any work; it is a Sabbath for Hashem in all your dwelling places” (*Vayikra* 23:3). *Chazal* (*Sifra, Emor* 12:14.4) explain that “*mikra kodesh*” refers to a day that is to be sanctified through eating, drinking and clean clothing. This indicates that *oneg Shabbos* is a Torah requirement (*Ramban, Vayikra* 23:2; see *Shaar Hatziyun* 242:1; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 242:1; see also *Mechilta, Shemos* 12:16; *Yevamos* 93a and *Rashi ad loc*, s.v. *kol hayamim* and *Aruch Leneir ad loc.*).

Other *Rishonim* understand that the term “*mikra kodesh*” refers only to the concept of sanctifying the day through the cessation of work. According to this view, there is no indication in the Torah that one must have *oneg Shabbos*, and it is only a *mitzvah miderabbanan* (*Sefer Hachinuch* #297; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 242:1; see also *Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos* 30:1; *Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Orach Chayim* #208, s.v. *mikol makom*; *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah*, chap. 1, footnote #2). (It should be noted that this discussion of whether *oneg Shabbos* is *mide'Oraisa* or *miderabbanan* refers only to *oneg Shabbos*. *Oneg Yom Tov* on the other hand, is in all likelihood *min ha Torah*. However, we will leave that for a separate discussion.)

The Reward is Great

After outlining the disagreement concerning whether the *mitzvos* of *kavod* and *oneg Shabbos* are *mide'Oraisa* or *miderabbanan*, the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* writes: "Nevertheless, one must be very careful concerning them (i.e., these *mitzvos*), as *divrei sofrim* (*mitzvos miderabbanan*) are more stringent than words of the Torah (we will explain this shortly). Anyone who fulfills the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos*, his reward is explicitly stated in the words of the *navi*: 'Then you will delight in Hashem, etc.' (*Yeshayah* 58:13). And in the words of *Chazal*: He is forgiven for all of his sins and saved from the judgment of *gehinom*."

Let us now take a moment to explain the statement that *divrei sofrim* are more stringent than words of the Torah. This concept is found in numerous places in *Shas* and can be explained in numerous ways. One simple explanation by way of example is as follows:

A part of the *Torah Shebe'al Peh* is a *Baraisa* called *Megillas Taanis*. Primarily, it is a listing of various days throughout the year when it is forbidden to fast or eulogize because of rabbinic injunctions and other days when one should fast. The *Gemara* (*Taanis* 17b) cites a *Baraisa* which rules that when *Megillas Taanis* forbids fasting on specific days, it is also forbidden to fast on the days preceding and following them. Whereas, when it comes to *Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim* when one may not fast, it is permitted to fast on the preceding and following days. The *Baraisa* explains the difference: *Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim* which are ordained by the Torah do not require additional prohibition to guarantee that they are observed. However, since the holidays of *Megillas Taanis* are only rabbinically instituted, we are concerned that people might not observe them properly and, therefore we need to prohibit the additional days before and after.

We thus see that in practice, at times, *mitzvos miderabbanan* must be treated more stringently than *mitzvos min haTorah*.

Three Passages

In order to get a better understand of the obligation of *oneg Shabbos*, we must examine three passages in the *Gemara*.

The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 118b) wonders which foods should be prepared in order to delight in *Shabbos*.

1) The *Gemara* responds: "With a dish of cooked beets, large fish and cloves of garlic." These particular foods were dishes that were considered important during the time of the *Gemara*. Therefore, this passage is teaching us that one fulfills the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos* with a food which is significant in that particular time and place. Since most people enjoy meat and wine, these are fitting to serve on *Shabbos* and thereby fulfill *oneg Shabbos*. Indeed, for this reason the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 250:2) writes that one should have plentiful amounts of meat, wine and delicious fruits on *Shabbos* (*Mishnah Berurah* 242:1).

2) Another answer to the question of how one fulfills *oneg Shabbos* is, "even if he prepares something small, but he does so in honor of *Shabbos*." The *Gemara* explains that "something small" refers to "*kasa deharsana*," which *Rashi* (ad loc.) explains to mean small fish fried in its own oil with flour.

3) The third passage is a statement of Rebbi Akiva: "Treat your *Shabbos* as a weekday, but do not be dependent on people" (*Shabbos* 118a).

These passages need to be understood, for at first glance they seem to be contradictory. How is one expected to fulfill *oneg Shabbos*? With large fish, *kasa deharsana* or perhaps he does not have to add anything to the menu and eat his regular weekday fare?

Rather, the *poskim* explain as follows:

- 1) One who has the financial means must honor *Shabbos* with special foods according to his financial capabilities. This is the intent of the first passage cited above.
- 2) On the other end of the spectrum, one who is in dire financial straits and has enough funds to buy food for only two *Shabbos* meals (and certainly nothing extra for *oneg Shabbos*), should suffice with that and not take financial aid from others. This is the intent of Rebbi Akiva's statement. (Please note that this is not a *halachic* ruling, but rather advice. The *Gemara* is recommending that it is preferable for a person to make do with the minimum and not receive public funds.)
- 3) The second passage cited above refers to someone who has sufficient funds to buy enough food for all three *Shabbos* meals plus a little extra. The *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos* dictates that he should use that extra money and buy something small in order to fulfill *oneg Shabbos* (*Mishnah Berurah* 242:1).

“He Receives More”

The *Gemara* (*Beitzah* 16a) cites a *Baraisa*: “All of a person's income is fixed [each year] from *Rosh Hashanah* until *Yom Kippur*, with the exception of the expenditures of the *Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim*, and the expenditures for teaching one's children Torah. For [in regard to these expenditures], if one spends less, he receives less; and if he spends more, he receives more.” In other words, the expenditures made for these *mitzvos* do not diminish a person's total income.

(Please note that there is another version of this *Gemara* [see *Hagahos Habach*, ad loc.] where instead of “from *Rosh Hashanah* to *Yom Kippur*,” it states, “from *Rosh Hashanah* to *Rosh Hashanah*.” What this means is that a person's income is fixed on a yearly basis.)

Rashi (ad loc., s.v. *kol mezonosav*) explains that during the days between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, Heaven determines how much income a person is going to receive during the coming year. Therefore, he should be careful not to make large, extravagant purchases, because his income for food and essentials will not be increased beyond the amount that was fixed. However, when it comes to the *mitzvos* mentioned in the *Gemara*, even if a person spends large amounts for these *mitzvos*, he will receive an increase in his income to cover them.

There is a disagreement among the *Rishonim* whether this rule applies only to the *mitzvos* listed in the *Gemara* (*Tosafos*, ad loc., s.v. *kol mezonosav*), or to all *mitzvos* (*Ritva* (ad loc.)).

On this subject, it is worthwhile to see the words of the *Chofetz Chayim* (*Biur Halachah* 529:1, s.v. *ve'al yetzamtzeim*) where he decries the practice of overspending unnecessarily (on non-essentials) and points out what it leads to.

The Menu

We find in the *poskim* numerous suggestions of what to serve on *Shabbos* so as to enhance *oneg Shabbos*. These include:

1) The *Zohar* writes that one should have not less than two cooked dishes on *Shabbos* (*Magen Avraham* 242:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 242:2).

2) One should have fish at each of the three *Shabbos* meals. However, the *poskim* note that the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 288:2) cites an opinion that if a person enjoys fasting, he may fast on *Shabbos*. Based on this, the *poskim* write that concerning what to eat on *Shabbos*, it all depends on a person's nature and what he enjoys (*Magen Avraham* 242:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 242:2).

3) Our weekly *Shabbos*, often referred to as "*Shabbos Bereishis*," is called "*me'ein olam haba*," the World to Come in a smaller scale. In *Olam Haba*, referred to as "*yom shekulo Shabbos*," the *tzadikim* will partake of the "*shor habar*," the "wild ox" (Behemoth), the flesh of *Livyasan* (Leviathan), and the "*yayin hameshumar be'anavav*," the "wine that has been preserved inside its grapes" since the Six Days of Creation. Because of the special connection between *Shabbos Bereishis* and *Olam Haba*, on *Shabbos* we partake of the same foods that will be served in *Olam Haba*, meat, fish and wine (*Biur Halachah* 242:1, s.v. *Zecher*, citing *Imrei Yosher*). (For a synopsis of the *Aggados* concerning the *Livyason* and the *shor habar* as well as a list of the relevant sources in *Chazal*, see *Akdamos*, Artscroll edition, Stitch #75.)

Simcha on Shabbos

Everyone is familiar with the concept that one must rejoice on *Yom Tov*, as the Torah states: "*Vesamachta bechagecha*," "And shall rejoice on your festival" (*Devarim* 16:14). What about on *Shabbos*? Is *Shabbos* considered a day of *simcha* and therefore one must rejoice in the same manner as he does on *Yom Tov*? This is a matter of debate among the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*, as follows:

1) *Shabbos* is a day of *simcha*.

One of the proofs that *Shabbos* is a day of *simcha* is a passage in the *Yerushalmi* (*Megillah* 1:4). The *Gemara* discusses the procedure concerning when *Purim* occurs on *Shabbos*. (Please note that in our current permanent calendar, *Purim* cannot fall out on *Shabbos*. However, *Shushan Purim* occasionally falls out on *Shabbos*, as it will this year, 5785. Since in Yerushalayim *Purim* is celebrated on *Shushan Purim*, they will have a *Shabbos Purim* this year.) The *Gemara* rules that in such a situation, the *Purim seudah* is not held on *Shabbos*, but rather on the following day. The reason for this is because the *pasuk* says regarding *Purim*, "to make them days of feasting and rejoicing." This teaches that the *simcha* of *Purim* must come about solely because of an enactment of *beis din*, i.e., to rejoice on *Purim*. This excludes *Shabbos* where the *simcha* is ordained by Heaven.

Another source that *Shabbos* is a day of *simcha* can be found in the *Sifri* (*Bamidbar* #77). The *pasuk* states that the *chatzotzeros* (trumpets) were to be blown in the *Beis Hamikdash*, "*beyom simchas'chem*," "on the day of your rejoicing." The *Sifri* states that this refers to *Shabbos*.

We also find references in the *Rishonim* that *Shabbos* is a day of *simcha*. *Machzor Vitri* (#83) writes that the reason why the *tefillah* of "*Retzeih vehachlitzeinu*" was added to *birkas hamazon* on *Shabbos* is because *Shabbos* is a day of *simcha*, and there is an obligation on days of *simcha* to remember the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and Yerushalayim.

The *Sefer Hamanhig* (*Seder Tefilas Shabbos*) writes that the reason why *tachanun* is not recited at *mincha* of *Erev Shabbos* is because *Shabbos* is day of *simcha*.

The *Behag* (*Mitzvah* #47) includes “rejoicing on *Shabbos*” in his count of the *mitzvos*.

2) There is no special *mitzvah* of *simcha* on *Shabbos*, only *kavod* and *oneg*.

One source that there is no specific *mitzvah* of *simcha* on *Shabbos* can be found in *Tosafos* (*Moed Katan* 23b, s.v. *man de'amar*). The discussion revolves around the *halachos* of *aveilus* on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. For a person sitting *shivah*, *Shabbos* counts towards one of the seven days. However, if one loses a relative during the festival, even though the burial takes place on *chol hamoed*, the *shivah* does not begin until after *Yom Tov*, i.e., the days of the festival do not count towards the seven days. *Tosafos* explains that the reason for this distinction is that while “*simcha*” is written in regards to the festival, it is not written concerning *Shabbos* (see also *She'iltos* #15).

There are numerous other *Rishonim*, who base various *halachos* on the fact that the *mitzvah* of *simcha* is not written concerning *Shabbos*. Unfortunately, those discussions are beyond the scope of this article (see: *Teshuvos Hageonim* #30; *Rabbeinu Yonah*, *Brachos* 49a, s.v. *lo yadana*; *Tosafos Harosh*, ad loc; *Tashbeitz*, vol. III, #298; *Meiri*, *Moed Katan* 8b, s.v. *kol eileh*).

Eating is *Avodas Hashem*

“You shall tithe the entire crop of your planting, the produce of the field, year by year. And you shall eat before Hashem, your G-d, in the place that He will choose to rest His Name there – the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, and the firstborn of your cattle and your flocks, so that you will learn to fear Hashem, your G-d all the days” (*Devarim* 14:22-23). The *Gemara* (*Yevamos* 93a) explains that “all the days” refers to “*Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim*.” The *Gemara* derives from the juxtaposition between the *mitzvah* of setting aside *ma'asros* and “*Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim*” that one should take steps to ensure that the requirement of taking *ma'aser* does not interfere with *oneg Shabbos*, i.e., he should make sure to separate the *ma'asros* before *Shabbos* (see *Rashi* ad loc.).

The *Chiddushei Harim*, however, uses this connection to teach a lesson in *avodas Hashem*. Eating *ma'aser sheini* is a special *mitzvah* that has many *halachos* and requirements. It must be eaten in *Yerushalayim*. One must be *tahor*, ritually clean in order to eat it. In other words, eating *ma'aser sheini* is an act of *avodas Hashem*. The connection between the *pasuk* dealing with *ma'aser sheini* and the *Gemara's* allusion in the *pasuk* to *Shabbosos* is to teach us that *oneg Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, i.e., eating on those days, is also *avodas Hashem*, and one should strive to do so *lesheim Shamayim* (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh*, *Re'eih*, cited in *Kaftor Vaferach*, *Yevamos* 93a [*Mesivta* edition]).

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