



Shabbat

Hebrew/English Source Sheet

This material was prepared by Rabbi Yonatan Neril and Evonne Marzouk of Canfei Nesharim, as part of the Jewcology project.

Outline of Sources

1. Creation and Shabbat
2. Isaiah and Rejoicing on Shabbat
 - A. Conscious Movement
 - B. Conscious Speech
 - C. Conscious Thought
3. Spiritual Pleasure and Physical Pleasure

1. Creation and Shabbat

בראשית פרק ב, פסוקים א-ג

א. ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם: ב. ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה וישבת ביום השביעי מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה: ג. ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אלהים לעשות:

Genesis 2:1-3, Judaica Press translation

1. Now the heavens and the earth were completed and all their host. 2. And G-d completed on the seventh day His work that He did, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work that He did. 3. And G-d blessed the seventh day and He hallowed it, for thereon He abstained from all His work that G-d created to do.

Discussion Question:

Why does the Torah teach us that G-d rested on the seventh day?

רש"י בראשית פרק ב, פסוק ב

ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי: רבי שמעון אומר בשר ודם שאינו יודע עתיו ורגעיו צריך להוסיף מחול על הקודש, הקב"ה שיוודע עתיו ורגעיו נכנס בו כחוט השערה ונראה כאלו כלה בו ביום. דבר אחר מה היה העולם חסר, מנוחה, באת שבת באת מנוחה, כלתה ונגמרה המלאכה:

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, France, 1040-1105 C.E., commentary to Genesis 2:1-3, based on Midrash Genesis Raba 10:9

And G-d completed on the seventh day: Rabbi Simon said: [A human being of] flesh and blood, who cannot [exactly] know his times and his moments, must add from the profane to the holy [i.e., he must add some time to the Sabbath.] The Holy One, blessed be He, Who knows His times and His moments [exactly], entered it [the Sabbath] within a hairbreadth, and it therefore appeared as if He completed it [His work] on that day. Another explanation: What was the world lacking? Rest. The Sabbath came, and so came rest. The work was completed and finished.

Nachalat Yaakov, commentary on Rashi above by Rabbi Yaakov Selnik, 17th century, Crakow, Poland,

translation by Y. Neril

If G-d had not connected the seventh day to the [six] days of creation, the nature of people and creatures would have been to toil and work day and night, without desisting, and it would not have been in the nature [of people] to rest and relax. If so, the body would destruct on its own and the world would be destroyed to oblivion. But now that G-d linked the seventh day [to the other six days] and on it “He rested and was refreshed,” therefore there descended to the world the instinct to desist, rest, and find relaxation for one’s soul until it recuperates.

Discussion Question: Do you feel an instinct to rest?

2. Isaiah and Rejoicing on Shabbat

ישעיהו פרק נח פסוק יג-יד

אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפציה ביום קדשי וקראת לשבת ענג לקדוש יקנך מכבד וכבדתו מעשות דרכיה ממצוא חפצה ודבר דבר: אז תתענג על יקנך והרפכתיה על במותי כמתי ארץ והאכלתיה נחלת יעקב אביה כי פי יקנך דבר: ס

Isaiah, Chapter 58, verses 13-14, translation adapted from Judaica Press translation

13. If you restrain your foot because of the Sabbath, from performing your affairs on My holy day, and you call the Sabbath a delight (oneg), the holy of the Lord honored, and you honor it by not doing your habituated ways, by not pursuing your affairs and speaking words.

14. Then, you shall delight with the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the land, and I will give you to eat the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken

רד"ק ישעיהו פרק נח פסוק יד

אז תתענג על ה' - אם תתענג את השבת תתענג על ה' כלומר ישפיע לך טובות עד שתתענג עליו ותודה בו ובטובו כי מאתו הכל ובידו, והתענוג על ה' הוא תענוג הנפש

Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi (France, 1160-1235), commentary to Isaiah 48:14, translation by Y. Neril

If you will rejoice with the Shabbat, you will rejoice with G-d, which is to say that G-d will bestow on you good things to the point that you will rejoice with Him, and you will give thanks to Him and for His goodness, because everything comes from Him and is in His hand. The rejoicing with G-d is a soul pleasure.

נתיבות שלום, פרשת תזריע, דרשה ב

זוהי המדרגה העליונה ביותר של ש"ק, שמגיע לאז תתענג על ה', וזהו תפקידו של יהודי בש"ק, שישקיע את כל תענוגיו להתענג על ה'... וזה כל יעודו של יהודי בעולמו

Rabbi Shalom Noach Borozovsky, Netivot Shalom, 2nd drash on Parshat Tazria, 1st section, seventh paragraph, p.53, translation by R' Neril

This is the highest level of the holy Sabbath, to arrive at 'then you will rejoice with G-d' (Isaiah 58:14), and this is the purpose of a Jew in the holy Shabbat, to devote all of his pleasures to rejoicing with G-d. And this is the entire purpose of a Jew in his world...”

Discussion Questions:

1. What is Oneg Shabbat?
2. How can we access it?
3. What practices facilitate the experience of Oneg?

A. Conscious Movement

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף קיג עמוד א-ב

+ישעיהו נח+ וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך, וכבדתו - שלא יהא מלבושך של שבת כמלבושך של חול. וכי הא דרבי יוחנן קרי למאניה מכבדותי.

מעשות דרכיך - שלא יהא הילוכך של שבת כהילוכך של חול...

אלא שלא יהא הילוכך של שבת כהילוכך של חול מאי היא? ...

אלא: כדבעא מיניה רבי מרבי ישמעאל ברבי יוסי: מהו לפסוע פסיעה גסה בשבת? אמר לו: וכי בחול מי הותרה? שאני אומר: פסיעה גסה נוטלת אחד מחמש מאות ממאור עיניו של אדם. ומהדר ליה בקידושא דבי שמישי.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, p. 113a-b, Soncino translation and footnotes

And you shall honour it, not doing your own ways:¹ 'and you shall honour it', that your Sabbath garments should not be like your weekday garments, and even as R. Johanan called his garments 'My honourers'.² 'Not doing your own ways', that your walking on the Sabbath shall not be like your walking on weekdays. 'Nor finding your own affairs': your affairs are forbidden, the affairs of Heaven [religious matters] are permitted. 'Nor speaking your own words': that your speech [conversation] on the Sabbath should not be like your speech on weekdays. 'Speaking': speech is forbidden, but thought [about mundane matters] is permitted. Now, as for all [the rest], they are intelligible; but what is meant by, 'that your walking on the Sabbath shall not be like your walking on weekdays'? — As R. Huna said in Rab's name-others state, R. Abba said in R. Huna's name: If one is walking on the Sabbath and comes to a stream of water, if he can put down his first foot³ before lifting the second,⁴ it is permitted;⁵ otherwise it is forbidden.⁶ Raba demurred: What shall he do? Shall he go round it? Then he increases the walking [distance]!⁷ Shall he cross it [walking through]? His garments may be soaked in water and he is led to wringing [them] out!⁸ Rather [in such a case], since it is impossible [otherwise], it is permitted [to jump across]. But [what is meant]⁹ is as Rabbi asked R. Ishmael son of R. Jose: Is it permitted to take great strides on the Sabbath?¹⁰ — Who then permitted it on weekdays? he replied; for I maintain that a long stride takes away a five hundredth part of a man's eyesight, and it is restored to him by the evening Kiddush.¹¹

ערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן שא סעיף מג-מד

... נצטוינו בעצם הלוכינו שתהא שינוי בשבת מבחול... בשבת איסורא איכא לרוץ ולפסוע פסיעות גסות אלא הולך עקב בצד גודל כאיש מנוחה... ודבר זה הוא מכלל עונג שבת כמו שאומרים יום מנוחה ובעלי המנוחה לא רצים ולא פוסעים פסיעה גסה

Aruch Hashulchan 301:43 (by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, 1829-1908, Lithuania), translation by R' Neril
We were commanded that our walking should be different on Shabbat than during the week. On Shabbat it is forbidden to run and to take long steps. Rather, a person should walk by stepping on their heel like a person at rest... This matter is included in the rejoicing (Oneg) of Shabbat, as is said [it is] a day of rest. Those who are at rest do not run or take long steps.

Discussion Questions:

1. What contributes to the mentality of 'I've got to run'?
2. What effect does it have to walk slowly on Shabbat?
3. How can slowing down physically impact a person emotionally and spiritually?

B. Conscious Speech

¹ Isaiah 58, 13. The reference is to the Sabbath.

² The garments dignify the person.

³ On the other side of the stream.

⁴ From this side of the stream — i.e., he can negotiate the stream in a single stride.

⁵ Even to jump across.

⁶ To jump across.

⁷ Which is more tiring and certainly not preferable on the Sabbath.

⁸ Which is forbidden.

⁹ By 'that your walking on the Sabbath, etc.'—Isaiah 58:13

¹⁰ Or does it not seem in keeping with the restfulness that should characterize the Sabbath.

¹¹ By drinking the wine of Kiddush

מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת בראשית סימן ב

ודבר דבר (שם /ישעיהו נ"ח/) כי האי דאמיה דר' שמעון ב"י היא משתעיא מילי סגי בשבת אמר לה יומא שבתא היא והיא שתקה, א"ר חנינא מדוחק התירו שאלת שלום בשבת

Midrash Tanchuma, on Torah portion of Genesis, section 2, translation by Avrohom Davis

“Or discussing the forbidden.” This brings to mind the mother of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who was engaged in a conversation on Shabbos. He said to her, 'Today is Shabbos,' so she was quiet. Rabbi Chanina said: They only allowed greeting on Shabbos reluctantly.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף קיג עמוד א

ודבר דבר - שלא יהא דבורך של שבת כדבורך של חול. דבור - אסור, הרהור - מותר

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, p. 113a-b, Soncino translation

'Nor speaking your own words:' that your speech [conversation] on the Sabbath should not be like your speech on weekdays. 'Speaking': speech is forbidden, but thought [about mundane matters] is permitted.

Discussion Question:

Based on these sources, how do the Sages instruct a person to speak on Shabbat?

C. Conscious Thought

שמות פרק כ פסוק ח-ט

ששית ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך

ויום השביעי שבת ליהנותך א-להיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרך אשר בשעריך

Exodus 20:8-9, Judaica Press translation

Six days may you work and perform all your labor, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your G-d; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities.

רש"י שמות פרק כ פסוק ח

(ח: ועשית כל מלאכתך - כשתבא שבת, יהא בעיניך כאלו מלאכתך עשויה, שלא תהרהר אחר מלאכה)

Rashi to Exodus 20:8-9, Judaica Press translation

and perform all your labor: When the Sabbath arrives, it shall seem to you as if all your work is done, that you shall not think about work.

Discussion Question:

What would allow you to quiet your mind to prevent thoughts about work and the week on Shabbat?

3. Spiritual Pleasure and Physical Pleasure

Rabbi Kalonymous Kalman Shapira, the Pyasesna rebbe, Derech Hamelech, p. 244 (teaching on Shabbat Tshuva), translation by Y. Neril:

"Israel fulfills the Torah and their purpose is to come to 'And in Him you will cleave,' and G-d fulfills the Torah and His purpose is to cleave, as if it is possible, with Israel..."

"...the essence of pleasure (ta'anug) is in revealed holiness. And anyone who seeks after pleasures and lusts (ta'avot) of this world must be someone whose soul does not feel the pleasure of revealed holiness. This [seeking] is empty, and it appears to the person that he or she will become full through the pleasures of this world. Because the desire does not become full through the pleasures of this world, since it yearns for the

pleasures of holiness, it further adds sin to iniquity, desire on top of desire, G-d forbid. Distancing oneself from these is possible only by a person who makes their soul happy in the pleasures of holiness and by unifying in holiness, so that a higher light is revealed to them [the desires]. The world errs in saying that the trait of [material] contentment is difficult [spiritual] work. In truth, one who makes their soul happy in holiness, as mentioned above, has their soul happy and joyous in its holiness, and [material] contentment comes about on its own. Then a person does not [feel a] need to make themselves drunk in the pleasures of this world and to fill through them the yearnings and desires of their soul."

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think that a person can become full by the material pleasures of this world?
2. If not, what would allow for you to feel full?
3. Is there a type of spiritual work which would make a difference?

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