

צָרִיךְ לְזַהֵר מְאֹד לְהִיּוֹת שְׂמֵחַ וְטוֹב לֵב

Joy on Shabbos, and Looking at the Good

THE TEACHING

Be very careful to be joyful and good-hearted (שְׂמֵחַ וְטוֹב לֵב) on Shabbos (שַׁבָּת). Its delight and joy bring freedom (חֵירוּת); in freedom the mind (דַּעַת) is whole, and then fear of Heaven (יִרְאָה) is complete, without the foolishness of the weekdays.

Then a second teaching: Hashem looks at the good we do, so we must look only at the good in others. In His kindness there is both nature (טִבְע) and providence (הַשְׁגָּחָה), though in truth nature itself is His providence.

MAIN POINTS

- Shabbos is very great and precious in holiness. Learn the Gate of Holiness in רִאשִׁית הַקָּמָה, so the heart is kindled to receive Shabbos with great joy.
- On weekdays fear can be mixed with foolishness (כְּסִילוּת): “הֲלֹא יִרְאָתָהּ כְּסִלְתָּהּ” (איוב ד:ו), “is not your fear your foolishness?” Its cause is servitude (שְׁעָבוּד): under servitude and exile the mind is not whole, as with Moav, “שָׂאֲנֵן מוֹאָב מִנְעוּרָיו” (ירמיהו מח:יא), who never went into exile.
- Shabbos is freedom, and freedom comes from its delight: “אָז תִּתְעַנֵּג עַל ה'” (ישעיהו נח:יד), “then you shall delight in Hashem”, and “כִּי בְשִׂמְחָה תֵצֵאוּ” (ישעיהו נח:יב), “for in joy you shall go out.”
- In freedom דַּעַת is whole and fear is as it should be. Even fallen fears (יִרְאוֹת נְפוּלוֹת), like fear of an official, are lifted up through דַּעַת.
- So the rule: great joy on Shabbos, no sadness or worry at all. Delight in Hashem with food, drink and clothing as much as you can; Shabbos eating is entirely holy.
- Hashem looks at the good and not at the bad mixed in: “לֹא הִבִּיט אֶזְרָא בְיַעֲקֹב” (במדבר כג:כא), “He has not looked at iniquity in Yaakov.” All the more must a person never hunt for flaws in his friend's service, but look only at the good.
- When a person does good, Hashem leads him with providence; when not, He leaves him to nature so good can still reach him, until he returns. Yet the mind cannot hold both as one.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Prepare for Shabbos by learning about its greatness, and let no worry show on it. And look for the good in others, as Hashem looks for the good in us.

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