



PART I: THE PRESENT OF ELUL

ELUL IS ALL RACHAMIM

I hope all of you had a wonderful summer and you're ready now to take on the climb of Chodesh Elul; to gain from it, and not to allow it to pass by in a blur. You have to realize that the *shpitz*, the end of the journey that begins in Chodesh Elul ends with the conclusion of Yom Hakippurim and hopefully we'll be *zocheh* to *selichah* and *mehilah* along this journey.

Let us examine some amazing words of the Vilna Gaon (Gr"a) and try to understand them as best as we can. The Gr"a has a compilation of *likutim* in the end of *Sefer Hayetzirah*, where he discusses, *al pi kabbalah*, the secrets that lie behind the months of the year and what they represent. And he says an interesting sentence. He says Elul is כולו רחמים כידוע. That's what he says. "Elul is complete *rachamim* as is known."¹

Now when you read the words of the Vilna Gaon, you have to analyze each and every word. Can anyone here tell me what is the operative word in this short sentence? Someone says *rachamim*. Anybody else want to weigh in on this? Someone says *kulo*. Now, that's the first half of the sentence. The second half of the sentence is והוא דרגה דחסד, that's a special level of *chessed*.

So, let's try to understand what this means. If you look at the beginning of the Torah, the Torah says בראשית ברא אלקים, "in the beginning Elokim created" (Bereishis 1:1). Rashi cites *Chazal* who point out that it doesn't say ברא ה'. It says בראשית ברא אלקים. Why? *Chazal* explain that initially Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to create the world only with *din*, justice.² That means that for every single infraction, on the spot - wham! Bang! There are no returns. According to *din*, for every single *cheit*, you are punished immediately. "It's like jumping off a roof," as my grandfather (R' Avigdor Miller) used to always say. Every *cheit* is like a guy who jumps off the roof. Are there second chances? No. He gets splattered. So Hashem wanted to create the world with *middas hadin*. A high standard. But ראה, Hashem foresaw, שאין העולם מתקיים, the world could not exist like that. So what did he do? He was הקדים, he preceded to create the world, first, with *middas harachamim*, the attribute of mercy, ושתפה, and [then] He created a partnership between *rachamim* and *middas hadin*. That's why the pasuk later says ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים, "on the day that Hashem Elokim made" ארץ ושמים. So when it says בראשית ברא אלקים - that was the original plan. But in actuality, it was ביום עשות ה' אלקים.

Vus shtait in this *passuk*? Do you know what the *passuk* reveals to us? That in order for the world to exist, for the *brias haolam* to exist and endure, it needed a partnership between the attribute of *rachamim* and the attribute of *din*. The world can't exist just on one *middah*. And just like Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world with a partnership of *din* and *rachamim* so too Hakadosh Baruch Hu runs the world continually based on *din* and *rachamim*.

The *Ramban* in *Sefer Vayikra* mentions this concept as well. He says that even Rosh Hashanah, which is the *yom hadin*, is a *yom hadin berachamim*.³ There's *rachamim* also. And Yom Hakippurim which is the *yom harachamim*, it's *rachamim bedin*. So the dominant *hanhagah* on Rosh Hashanah is *din* but it has *rachamim* there, and on Yom Kippur it's *fakhert*. The dominant *hanhagah* is *rachamim* but it has the *shutfus* of *din*. So you see that there always has to be a partnership between these two *hanhagos*.

Now we can begin to understand the words of the Gr"a. The Gr'a's *lashon* is אלול כלו רחמים. You know what kind of bomb *chiddush* the Gr"a is dropping on us? You know what he's telling me? The whole way the world was created was a *shutfus* of *din* and *rachamim*. There's no such thing as a one *middah* world! But Elul is the exception to that: אלול כלו רחמים. It's unbelievable! The Gr"a is saying that even though all the days of the year there's *rachamim* and *din*, Elul is כלו רחמים. There's no *shutfus* with *middas hadin* in Elul. כידוע, I guess for those people who know, it was *yadua* (known).

¹ ליקוט. חדשי החמה מלמטה למעלה. ניסן במלכות, אייר חדש זיו [יסוד] ששם נמנו ישראל, ועין בוהר ריש פרשת במדבר סיון נו"ה [הלוחות] שניתנו לישראל וכן במזלות. ניסן טלה [קרוב] פסח כרחל כו. אייר שוה בכור שורו יוסף כו. סיון תאומים תרי פלגי דגנפא. תמוז ת"ת. אב גבורה מזל אריה גימט' גבורה וכו' היה מה שהיה. אלול כולו רחמים כידוע והוא דרגא דחסד, וששה חדשי הגשמים סוד דדכורא מלמעלה למטה, אבל הכל בנוק' כי החדשים בנוק', ולכן ניסן ראשון לחדשים אבל שנים בסטרא דדכורא ולכן מונין מתשרי. וידוע שז' הוא בדכורא ו"ב בנוק'. ולכן שנים הם בסוד שבע, וחדשים בסוד שנים עשר (הגר"א בליקוטים סוף ספר יצירה, סוד החדשים)

² ברא אלקים ולא נאמר ברא ה', שבתחלה עלה במחשבה לבראתו במדת הדיון, ראה שאין העולם מתקיים, הקדים מדת רחמים ושתפה למה"ה, והיינו דקתיב ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים. וכו', ועל דרך האמת תרועה היא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו שנאמר (תהלים פט טז) אשרי העם יודעי תרועה ובענין שכתוב (ירמיהו ד יט) תרועת מלחמה כי השם איש מלחמה אם כן "יום תרועה יהיה לכם" שיהיה היום לתרועה לנו וכן "זכרון תרועה מקרא קדש" שיהיה הזכרון בתרועה ולפיכך הוא מקרא קדש ולא הוצרך להזכיר שופר כי השופר רמז ב"יום" והתרועה בו והנה הוא יום דין ברחמים לא תרועת מלחמה ומפני זה הזכיר הכתוב התרועה שכבר קבלה ביד רבותינו וכל ישראל רואים עד משה רבינו שכל תרועה פשוטה לפניה ופשוטה לאחריה ולמה יזכיר הכתוב תרועה ולא יזכיר התקיעות כלל לא בראש השנה ולא ביום הכפורים אבל התקיעה היא הזכרון והוא השופר והתרועה כשמה ומפני שהיא כלולה מן הרחמים תקיעה לפניה ולאחריה ולפיכך אמר ב"יודעי תרועה" כי בצדקה ירומו כי תפארת עומנו אתה והנה זה מבורך כי הכל תלוי בתשובה אלא בראש השנה מתיחד במדת הדיון ומנהיג עולמו ובוים הכפורים במדת הרחמים והוא מאמרם (ר"ה לב) מלך יושב על כסא דין וכו' ראש השנה יום זין ברחמים ויום הכפורים יום רחמים בדין ומן הענין שפירשו תבין טעם הכתוב במסעות (במדבר י ו ז) תרועה יתקעו למסעותיהם ובהקדול את הקהל תתקעו ולא תרועו כי במסעותיהם כתוב וישע מלאך האלהים (שמות יד יט) וכתוב ויפוצו איביך ויגושו משנאיך מפניך (במדבר י לה) כטעם פני ה' בעושי רע (תהלים לד יז) ובהקדול את הקהל נאמר (במדבר י לו) שובה ה' רבבות כטעם ויהי בישורון מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד (דברים לג ה) ועשרת הימים שבין ראש השנה ליום הכפורים ירמו לעשר ספירות כי ביום הכפורים יתעלה בהם ויגבה ה' צבאות במשפט כידוע בקבלה וגם יש בזה אמת בשמים שהחדש הזה מזלו מאזנים כי בו פלסו מאזני משפט לה'. (רמב"ן על ויקרא כ"ג:בד)

And he adds and he says: והוא דרגה דחסד, that's a tremendous *madreigah* of *chessed*. So even though there's a *klal* *חסד יבנה*, Hashem created the world with *chessed*, but it was *chessed*, *rachamim*, but also *din*. But *אלול כלו רחמים*.

YOU NEED RACHAMIM TO DO TESHUVA!

This is an amazing *chessed*. If we would only key into it and realize that Elul is an *עת רחמים לבר* - it's a time of only *rachmanus*. Now, of course, the *yetzer hara* tells us, "Take advantage of this moment to do some aveiros! If it's only *rachamim* so *chap arein*. Come on. Blow it. It's *כלו רחמים*." But the purpose of the *rachmanus* is to motivate us to amend our ways and for us to prepare ourselves for the great gift of Yom Hakippurim.

Now you can understand the following. People want to know: "What's the difference between doing *teshuvah* in Elul or doing *teshuvah* the whole year?" The whole year you could do *teshuvah*! There's no *mitzvah* of *teshuvah* just in Elul. There's a *mitzvah* of *teshuvah* all year long! So what's the difference between Elul and all other months of the year? But now you understand this *chodesh* is *chodesh hateshuvah* and I want you to know that to do *teshuvah* we need a boatload of *rachamim*. *Teshuvah* is not a natural thing. *Teshuvah* goes against all nature. Everybody knows the famous Chazal (Yerushalmi, Makkos 2:6). It says the *chachamim* were analyzing: What is the *tikun* for a *choteh*, for somebody who sins? What was the conclusion of *nevuah*, of *chachmah*, of whoever the question was posed to? What was the answer? *Yamus*, death. By logic there's no *din* of *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* is a tremendous *rachamim*, a tremendous *chessed*. So Hashem said the *teshuvah* needs tremendous *rachamim* and therefore, "I'm going to create a unique month for that *rachamim*."⁴

To give you an idea of how much *rachamim* a *choteh* needs, and to give you an appreciation of what Elul is, I will share a *gemara* with you. The *gemara* says that after they sinned with the *eigel*, Moshe went up to Har Sinai. He went up a few times. The third time he went up is when he prepared the new *luchos*. And it says: קל רחום וחנון (Shemos 34:6). That third time began in Chodesh Elul. That's when it began. That's when Moshe went up for the last time and he came down [on Yom Kippur with Hashem's response, סלחתי כדברך - Hashem granted them forgiveness for the *cheit ha'eigel*]. In that year Hashem revealed to Moshe thirteen *middos* of *rachamim*. I never heard of thirteen *middas hadin*. I know there's *middas hadin* and *middas harachamim* but He told him there are thirteen different *middos harachamim*. Unbelievable! Different *mesechtos* each one. The *gemara* (Rosh Hashanah 17b) says if the *passuk* wouldn't say it, we could never say such a thing - that Hakadosh Baruch Hu demonstrated each *middah* of *rachamim* to Moshe Rabeinu. It says ברית כרותה, it was a covenant, a very strong covenant that Hashem made with Klal Yisrael over these thirteen *middos harachamim*.⁵

THE CHIDDUSH OF TESHUVA THAT HASHEM CREATED

Now, what are the first two *middos harachamim*? Hashem Hashem. The first two *middos harachamim* are one. The *gemara* (ibid.) says the first *shem Hashem* refers to the *middah* of *rachamim* before a person sins: Hashem says, *אני הוא קודם שיחטא*. And the second name of Hashem is *אני הוא לאחר שיחטא ויעשה תשובה*, after he is *choteh*, when he does *teshuvah*. Hashem is *merachem* on us before we do a *cheit* and He's *merachem* on us after the *cheit*.

You know what you see from here? That *middas harachamim* loses its power once a person sins. The *middas harachamim* that exists before a person sins does not extend to after a person sins. *Middas harachamim* is only in existence naturally by default as long as you're not *choteh*. Once you're *choteh* you lose the *middas harachamim*. It's an amazing *zach*. So what did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do? He said, "I have to be *mechadesh*, I have to create a whole new *middah* of *rachamim*, a second *middah* of *rachamim*, and that *middah* of *rachamim* is for after you sin." That's amazing! You hear that?!

The *rachamim* that exists before a person sins has no power in the world. Once you sinned you forfeit your *middas harachamim*. You need a new *middah* of *rachamim*. Hashem has to create a new world of *rachamim*. It's called the *olam hateshuvah*. A tremendous *middah* of *rachamim*.

Now, I would think that if the first *rachamim* goes together with *din*, the second *rachamim* surely goes together with *din*. But says the Vilna Gaon - no! The even though all year long the second *rachamim* goes along with *din* but the *rachamim* of Elul is *כלו רחמים* and *הוא דרגה דחסד*, a *gevaldige madreigah* of *chessed*.

I always had a *shaylah* on this *gemara*. It says that the second *middah* of *rachamim* is *אדם ויעשה תשובה*, for after someone sins and does *teshuvah*. And Rashi explains: *אני מרחם קודם שיחטא ואני מרחם אחר שיחטא אם ישוב*. So, I wanted to know what *middah* exists after you did the *cheit* before you did *teshuvah*? You lost the old *middas harachamim*, and you don't have the new *middas harachamim* because you didn't do *teshuvah*, so the *shaylah* is what exists after you did the *cheit*?

HASHEM HOPES WE DO TESHUVA

There's a *moradige* Rabeinu Bachaye in *Bamidbar* (14:17).⁶ Rabeinu Bachaye points out that in the *parshah* of the *meraglim*, when Klal Yisrael sinned, it only mentions the *shem Hashem* once. It doesn't say it twice because after they sinned they lost the first *middas*

⁴ שאלו לחכמה. חוטא מהו עונשו. אמרה להם. חטאים תרדף רעה. שאלו לנבואה. חוטא מהו עונשו. אמרה להן. הנפש החטאת היא תמות שאלו לקודשא בריך הוא. חוטא מהו עונשו. אמר להן. יעשה תשובה ויתכפר לו. עליכן יורה חטאים בדרך. יורה לחטאים דרך לעשות תשובה. כתיב כצפור לנוד כדרור לעוף כן איש נודד ממקומו.

⁵ "ועבור ה' על פניו ויקרא". אמר רבי יוחנן: אלמלא מקרא כתוב, אי אפשר לאומרו. מלמד שנתעטף הקדוש ברוך הוא כשליח צבור, והראה לו למשה סדר תפלה. אמר לו: כל זמן שישראל חוטאין - יעשו לפני כסדר הזה ואני מוחל להם. "ה' ה'" - אני הוא קודם שיחטא האדם, ואני הוא לאחר שיחטא האדם ויעשה תשובה - "אל רחום וחנון". אמר רב יהודה: ברית כרותה לשלש עשרה מדות שאין חוזרות ריקם, שנאמר: "הנה אנכי כורת ברית".

⁶ ובמסכת ראש השנה ה' ה', כאן קודם שיחטא אדם ויעשה תשובה כאן לאחר שיחטא ויעשה תשובה. והוא מרחם אפילו על מי שרובו עונות אולי ישוב, וכענין שכתוב (תהלים קמה) טוב ה' לכל ורחמי על כל מעשיו. אבל כאן לא הכירו אלא פעם אחת שהוא כנגד ה' לאחר שיחטא, לפי שישראל היו בכאן חוטאים ולא עשו תשובה. ובאור זה ה' לאחר שיחטא כי אין בו שינוי והתפעלות אחר החטא כקודם החטא, מה שאין כן במלך בשר ודם.

harachamim, חסודם, ולם עשו תשובה, לפי שישרלל היו בכלל חוסים ולא עשו תשובה, they were sinners at this stage because they hadn't done *teshuvah*. And the second *middah* of Hashem, *rachamim*, he says, works after one sinned and it treats you as if you didn't sin, even before you did *teshuvah*, he says. So even though the *gemara* says in *Rosh Hashanah* כן קודם שיחטא וכך אחר שיחטא הוא מרחם, Hashem is *merachem*, he says, אפילו על מי שרובו עונות, even if a guy has a lot of sins, אולי ישוב, maybe he'll do *teshuvah*, like it says in the *passuk* טוב ה' לכל ורחמינו על כל מעשיו.

Rabeinu Bachaye tells us a *moradige yesod* here. Even though the *gemara* says the second *middah* Hashem is אים ישוב, it means Hashem created that new *middah* that goes into effect as soon as you do a *cheit* and it relates to you as if you never did the *cheit* because Hashem is hoping you will do *teshuvah*. It's a *moradige* insight!

So the first *middah* of *rachamim* is a partner with *middas hadin*. That's how the world was created. That's how the world exists. But after you sinned, the *middas hadin* says: "You have no *kiyum*. Once you sin you're finished." The *middas harachamim* joins the *middas hadin* so *lechorah* there's no hope for a person! But there's a new *middas harachamim*. There's a new *middas harachamim* that Hashem creates for after a person sins.

And that's what Elul is about. Elul is something that's כולו רחמים -an unusual *darga* of *chessed* that we have in Elul that we can exist and we can do *teshuvah*.

It comes out that the *rachmanus* that Hashem has on us after a person sins is really a tremendous *madreigah* of *rachmanus*, but *lema'aseh* there is a *shituf*, there is some partnership with *middas hadin*, but in Elul it's כולו רחמים.

In the *rishonim* you find a *lashon* that these are days of "ratzon." These are *yemei ratzon*. The days of Elul are days of tremendous *ratzon*. Hashem favors His Bnei Yisrael to such a level and He's *mechadesh* new levels of *rachmanus*. Hashem opens up a new door of *rachamim* in Elul. So it comes out that there are really two levels in the second *middas harachamim*. There's a general *middas harachamim* and then there's a unique *middas harachamim* that has no *din* along with it. That's the *middas harachamim* of Elul. It's a major *chiddush*!

DON'T LET THIS PASS YOU BY

We have to try and appreciate this tremendous gift of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. A great *talmid* of Rav Yisrael Salanter writes to his son that he spent the previous Elul with Rav Yisrael Salanter, his *rebbe*, and he *darshened* almost every single day, and he *darshened* until after Yom Hakippurim with tremendous emotion but in a different fashion than he usually *darshened*. He usually *darshened* with a loud voice but in Elul it was more of a low voice filled with emotion. He says, "I'm going to encapsulate the *shoresh* of all the *shmuzen* that he gave. To *daven betzibbur* for this precious gem that Hashem put into this world and that is Yom Hakippurim; *daven* that you should have a *shaychus* to Yom Kippur and don't let Yom Kippur pass you by without having done some *teshuvah*, *chas veshalom*." You hear that?

There was once a great *tzaddik* who was on the road during Chodesh Elul on his way to a *chasunah*. On the road, he encounters a very strange sight. A young person is beating an older person without any *rachmanus*; *zets* after *zetz* like he's trying to kill him. So this *tzaddik*, Rav Michel, stopped his wagon and he attempted to ask the young man, "Why are you hitting this guy?!" The man said, "This person I'm hitting is my father. We have a small vineyard and the family is supported from its produce the entire year. Now it's the time to harvest the grapes, and our entire *parnasah* for the whole year depends on this harvest. If we're going to be lazy about it we're going to lose our livelihood and later we're going to regret it and it's going to be too late. My father is a lazy bum and he's not undertaking to be responsible for the vineyard. I can't take it. I can't take how blind he is. And therefore I'm beating him."

Rav Michel heard this and he said, "What a *goy* understands, I shouldn't understand?!" He said, "I'm now holding in Elul. These are the *yemei haratzon*. If a guy is going to be lazy and lackadaisical about what he can accomplish right now and what he needs to do right now, he's going to lose out on his whole *shefa*, *brachah* and *hatzlachah* in the future! So how did I allow myself to undertake this trip and go to a *simchah*?!"

Rabbosai, we have a tremendous opportunity in this coming Chodesh Elul. Let us utilize it to correct ourselves, to make amendments, to prepare ourselves, and not to act in a risky manner. Let us all hope and *daven* that we should be *zocheh* for a little *kapparah* on Yom Hakippurim and that we should have a good year.

PART II: THE REAL ONEG SHABBOS (IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK) 5770

THE MITZVAS ASEI OF ONEG SHABBOS

The *navi* Yeshayah (58:13) tells us about Shabbos. He gives *tochachah* to Klal Yisrael and he says תשובת רגלך, "if you turn back your feet [from violating *techum* Shabbos]," עשוהו תפציר, "to do your desires" - i.e. if you refrain from doing *melachah* for your own business, ביום קדשי, "on Hashem's holy day," and then it says, וקראת לשבת ענג, "you shall call Shabbos delight." Hashem wants you to call the Shabbos an *oneg*.

In the first part of the *passuk* Yeshayah says, you have to refrain from transgressing the *mitzvos lo sa'asei*. That's the first step. That means not to transgress the *issurim*, such as *techum Shabbos* and the *melachos*.

Then he talks about the *mitzvos asei*. The *asei* is וקראת לשבת עונג. What does וקראת לשבת עונג mean? There is a *moiradige* Radak (R' Dovid Kimchi, 1160-1235) who explains this message of Yeshayah Hanavi.⁷ HaKadosh Baruch Hu refers to Shabbos as *yom kodshi*. Why? שאני קדשתי אותו, *I sanctified Shabbos*. The Torah writes in the beginning of *Parshas Bereishis*, ויקדש אותו, HaKadosh Baruch Hu was *mekadesh* the *zeman* of Shabbos. והקדוש הוא שהבדילו משאר הימים. HaKadosh Baruch Hu was the one who separated the day of Shabbos from the rest of the days, so it is *His* day of holiness.⁸ Now what does this mean?

SHABBOS IS HASHEM'S DAY

HaKadosh Baruch Hu was *miskadesh* certain *zemanim* in the year that are unique from other *zemanim*. For example, there is *Zeman Cheiruseinu*. What does *zeman cheiruseinu* mean? That means Hashem was *posei'ach*, He opened up a gateway from Himself to the Bnei Yisrael, that He is now giving them a *shefa* of *cheirus*. That *pesichas sha'ar* remains open forever and ever. There is *Zeman Matan Toraseinu*, which means HaKadosh Baruch Hu was *posei'ach* a *sha'ar* for *Matan Torah*. It remains a *pesichas sha'ar* forever and ever.

If a person is *ra'oy*, if he prepares himself to be *mekabel* from that *zeman*, he could walk through that *zeman*, and come out on the other side a different person.

So when HaKadosh Baruch Hu is *posei'ach* the *sha'ar* of *kedushah* in Shabbos Bereishis, at the beginning of *brias haolam*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu says, "This is the *sha'ar* of *kedushah*." It follows therefore that HaKadosh Baruch Hu says, "I want you not to do *melachah beyom kodshi*."

INDULGE ON SHABBOS - TIME FOR ONEG!

It says וקראת לשבת עונג. The Radak explains that אם תשיב משבת refers to *mitzvos lo sa'asei* and וקראת לשבת עונג refers to the *mitzvos asei*.⁹ Now think what are the *mitzvos asei* of Shabbos? The *mitzvos lo sa'asei* of Shabbos are extremely vast. There are 39 *melachos*, with so many *toldos*, similar situations. The gemara says *hilchos Shabbos* is *mamish* from the difficult *halachos*. They are numerous. But what are the *mitzvos asei* of Shabbos? [The answer is,] וקראת לשבת עונג. It's a *pele*. What does that mean? מצות עשה לענג הגוף ביום השבת במאכלים ערבים וטובים. There is *pashut* a *mitzvas asei*, he says, the first and foremost *mitzvas asei* of Shabbos, is to indulge the body with pleasures on Shabbos, such as sweet and good foods. That's *pshat* of וקראת לשבת עונג!

So what וקראת לשבת עונג means, is that on Shabbos your conduct should not only reflect that it is a special and a different day by not doing *melachah*, but it is supposed to reflect that it is a day of *oneg*. How does Shabbos reflect that it is a day of *oneg*? על ידי מצות עשה לענג את הגוף ביום השבת במאכלים ערבים וטובים.

EAT, TO REMEMBER!

Now, he says what's the *pshat*? שמתוך שישנהו משאר ימים לטוב במאכלים ערבים וטובים - Hashem wants us to be *meshaneh*, to change the day of Shabbos, לטוב, in a positive way, from all other days with מאכלים ערבים וטובים. What is the purpose of that? Why does Hashem want me to be *me'aneg* my *guf* במאכלים ערבים וטובים? The answer is that if you will do this, ויזכור מעשה בראשית, and you will remember that HaKadosh Baruch Hu was *mechadesh* the *briah*, He created a brand-new world, וישב ביום השביעי, and He stopped and rested on the seventh day. That's step number one, he says.

So the whole purpose of having a *seudah* tonight, the whole purpose of having a *seudah* tomorrow, the whole purpose of having snacks on Shabbos is for what? זיכור, it has to cause a *zechirah*. It has to kick in your memory. It has to jog your mind to something. If a person eats מאכלים ערבים וטובים and let's say it 'kills his mind.' Instead of giving him and causing him any *zechirah*, not only does he not remember anything, he forgets everything. It's not unusual. The proof is that a lot of times when a guy eats on Shabbos, his mind goes blank. He blanks out. He goes into a kind of a coma. Has anyone ever told you: "I can't think now." After eating you can't think. But the whole purpose of the *oneg* is that you are having a good time on Shabbos and the good time has to be, *yizkor*, in order to help a person remember.

And what is supposed to be the next step? ומתוך כך, once you will remember, וישב לקל, you are now going to express בפה, verbally, *shevach* for Hashem. ויפארהו בפיו ובלבבו, and you will glorify Him with your mouth and in your heart, and then you will enjoy being with Hashem. You will appreciate and you will then be *zoche* על ה' להתענג. That's what the Radak says.

REMEMBERING, IN ORDER TO PRAISE

One of the ways that we accomplish *zechirah* is by giving *hoda'ah* to Hashem. You have to understand the *hoda'ah* to Hashem is an expression *befiv*, with the mouth to be *meshabei'ach Hashem*, to praise Hashem, to be *mefo'er* Hashem, to glorify Hashem. To express to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, "I appreciate everything You have done for me. In addition to You being the *borei olam*, in addition to You being בראשית מעשה בראשית, מחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית, You cared for me." HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants me to remember and to express that.

⁷ ביום קדשי שאני קדשתי כמו שאמר ויקדש אותו, והקדוש הוא שהבדילו משאר הימים, ופירוש עשות הפצין מעשות, ומ'ם משבת עומדת במקום שנים, ורגלך, והפצן, חסרים יו"ד הרבים, ורבותינו זכרונם לברכה פירשו רגלך דרך המקרא לשון רבים שאמרו רגלו אחת בתוך התחום ורגלו אחת חוץ לתחום יכנס שנאמר אם תשיב משבת רגלך, רגלך קרינו, כלומר אין על פי שכתוב רגלך בלא יו"ד יש אם למקרא.

⁸ וכן אנו אומרים בתפילת קדושת היום, דהיינו: אתה קדשת את יום השביעי לשמך וכו', וקדשתו מכל הזמנים וכו', ויברך אלקים את יום השביעי ויקדש אותו וכו'.

⁹ וקראת לשבת עונג. אם תשיב משבת, מצות לא תעשה, וקראת לשבת עונג, מצות עשה לענג הגוף ביום השבת במאכלים ערבים וטובים שמתוך שישנהו משאר ימים לטוב זיכור מעשה בראשית ושהאל חדשו מאין ושב ביום השביעי ומתוך כך ישב לקל ויפארהו בפיו ובלבבו, ותתענג נפשו בו, ופי' וקראת כמו מקרא קדש.

Now, how important is this on Shabbos? The answer is, it is very important. Where do we see this? We can see it from the changes we make in the *tefillah* for Shabbos, from the regular *tefillas* of the weekday. Not only is the *tefillas Shemoneh Esrei* different, but we change a specific part of the *tefillah*. Not the *brachos of birchas hashachar*, nor the *pesukei d'zimrah*. There are some *hosafos*, but we are not *meshaneh* the *etzem pesukei dezimrah*.

We do change the *brachos* of *birchos krias shema* in the morning. Not the second *birchos krias shema* but the first *brachah*. Over there, what we do is, we express our *shevach*, appreciation and wonder for HaKadosh Baruch Hu over His *briah* and we say a whole different *nusach* than we say every day.

EMULATING HASHEM'S ONEG SHABBOS

We have to understand two things from this message. Number one, the day of Shabbos is like no other day. The *briah*, the world on Shabbos, the *maaseh Bereishis* on Shabbos is *chaluk*, separate from the *maaseh Bereishis* of the other six days. Number two, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is *mekadesh* this day. On this day it says: לקל אשר שבת מכל המעשים ביום השביעי התעלה, Hashem is elevated, וישב על כסא כבודו תפארת עטה ליום המנוחה עונג קרא ליום השבת.

What does it mean when it says עונג קרא ליום השבת? We know that Hashem told us through Yeshayah that we should call Shabbos *oneg*, וקראת לשבת עונג. What does it mean that HaKadosh Baruch Hu was עונג קרא ליום השבת?

The answer to that question is found in the She'ilta (d'Rav Achai Gaon, 680-752).¹⁰ In the She'ilta it says דמחייבין דבית ישראל למינח, [we have to] rest on Shabbos, because when HaKadosh Baruch Hu created the world, He created it in six days and He rested on Shabbos. He was *mevarech* the Shabbos. He was *mekadesh* the Shabbos. He says, on Shabbos, Hashem did the same thing that a person who builds a house does. When a person builds a house and the house is set up and he completes the work, you know what he does? He makes a *hilullah*, he makes a party. חד יומא, he celebrates one day. It's called הילול בתי, a *chanukas habayis*.

Shtait over here a *gevaldige zach*. He says, just as HaKadosh Baruch Hu was *shomer Shabbos*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu also fulfilled *oneg kara leyom haShabbos*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself kept the halachos. The *hanhagah* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu on Shabbos is one of *shevisah beShabbos*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu also has a *minhag* to be *me'aneq es haShabbos*. Our *oneg Shabbos* is *bedugmah shel maaleh*. We emulate HaKadosh Baruch Hu in His *oneg Shabbos*.

How do we do *oneg Shabbos*? We do it in a physical way. We start in the physical way, but the physical must lead you further, otherwise you are being *mechalel* HaKadosh Baruch Hu. You are taking the *oneg* of Shabbos, but you are not allowing yourself to reach the purpose of the *oneg Shabbos*.

APPRECIATING THE WORLD AND PRAISING HASHEM ON SHABBOS, OR, ZZZZ?

It's like saying to Hashem, "I don't care about Your *oneg Shabbos*. My *oneg Shabbos* is to give myself a good sleeping pill." Many people do that, you should know. They take *oneg Shabbos* just as a sleeping pill. When you daven tomorrow morning and say, הכל יודוך - "All will thank You," you should think, "HaKadosh Baruch Hu as a result of the appreciation of the physical enjoyment I have had on Shabbos, I am now going to express myself. First I am going to remind myself in my mind that You are *taka* the *Borei olam*, You are *מחדש בטובו כל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית*, and then I am going to be *meshabei'ach* and *mefo'er* that *Borei olam*. I am going to celebrate this great day of Shabbos with You, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and I am going to be *misaneg*, come to a *taanug hanefesh*. I want to have a *taanug hanefesh* on Shabbos. However, if a person has a *taanug haguf* that undermines his *taanug hanefesh*, then *Rachmana litzlan*, he is missing the boat, he is missing the message of Shabbos and he is *chas veshalom* not doing the *ratzon* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

THE BOTTOM LINE

For the world to exist and endure, it has to run on continued and necessary partnership of both *middos* of *din* and *rachamim*, as Chazal teach us. The incredible chiddush of the Gr"a that chodesh Elul is *rachamim* alone, without any *middas ha'din* - is especially amazing in light of above principle of constant partnership of these two *הנהגות*. Elul is therefore the momentous exception to this rule of the creation. And of course the idea that Elul is *rachamim*, is there to motivate us to change, so that we can prepare for Yom Kippur and do teshuva, for which we need as much *rachamim* as possible. We also learned, that similarly to how Hashem was *mekadesh* certain *zmanim* with specific *השפעות* (i.e. *חירות* on Pesach and *מתן תורה* on Shavuot) - to allow us to tap into their special spiritual *koach* and be transformed by that spiritual energy - Hashem also established Shabbos as a gateway of *kedusha*, available for us every week for us to tap into as well. Apart from sanctifying Shabbos by abstaining from *melachos*, we also have a positive mitzvah of *עונג* - to indulge the body with pleasures of delicious foods - but with the ultimate goal of remembering *מעשה בראשית* as a vehicle to praising and glorifying Hashem, and being *zoche* to reach the *madregah* of על ה' להתענג on Shabbos!

¹⁰ שאילתא דמחייבין דבית ישראל למינח ביומא דשבתא דכד ברייה קודשא בריך הוא לעלמיה ברייה בשיתא יומי ונח ביומא דשבתא וברכיה וקדישה כאיניש דבני ביתא וכד מצבית ליה וגמר ליה לעיבודתיה עביד הילולא חד יומא כדאמרי אינשי הילול בתי דכתיב ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי ואמר לן רחמנא נוחו ביומא דשבתא כי היכי דנחי ביה אנא דכתיב זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ואסור לאיענוי ביה אלא מתבעי ליה לבר ישראל לאיענוי ביה במיכלא ובמשתיא ויקוריה בלבושא ובכיסויא מעליא דכתיב וקראת לשבת עונג וכדברתו שלא יא מלבושך של חול, וכו'. (שאלות דרב אחאי גאון א')

