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BASIC RULES OF MARKETING YIDDISHKEIT

ויהיו בני ישראל במדבר וימצאו איש מקושש עצים ביום השבת (במדבר ט"ו:ל"ב)

"And it was, when the Bnei Yisroel were in the wilderness, they came upon a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day."

רש"י: בגנותן של ישראל דבר הכתוב, שלא שמרו אלא שבת ראשונה, ובשניה בא זה ונחלה.

Today, we're going to discuss one of the most powerful tools for reaching out and inspiring others. In the world of sales, it's all about marketing. If you want to sell a product, you have to know what the customer is looking for and how to present it to the potential customer. If you have those two ingredients, they say the sale will go down by itself.

In Yiddishkeit, when you're reaching out to people who are unaffiliated or not connected as of yet, the key is to know the two parts of the first rule: What's the way to their heart? What are you presenting to them? Now, in this market, people don't know what they want to hear. But the Torah tells us what they want to hear.

The first premise is that they have doubts. You understand that if somebody is willing to sit down with you, whether one on one, or in a classroom setting, that fellow has 'told' you, "I have some interest." So, it's not like you're going into the street and setting up a soapbox and trying to sell insurance to customers. You have somebody who is already willing to come to see you or is committed to coming to a class. Now you've got a short window of time to sell to that person.

The second rule of sales is that you've got to believe in the product. If you think the product is junk or you don't appreciate the product, unless you're a slippery, slimy car salesman, it's not going to work. It's not *erlich*. So the first thing you'd have to do is really convince yourself. You have to sell it to yourself first.

Now, the tool we're going to speak about today is Shabbos. Very sadly and very tragically, many *frum* people barely keep Shabbos. At most, what they do is, they're not *mechallel* Shabbos. They don't do *melechtes borer* too much, one of the most common *melachos*. There are a number of the thirty-nine *melachos* that have a connection to *melechtes borer*. That's one of the most common ones.

Understanding what Shabbos is and what Shabbos has to offer is the key to being able to sell Yiddishkeit because, as we said, the first thing the fellow sitting opposite will say to you if he opens his mouth is going to be, "Rabbi, I have my doubts." That's what he's going to say. "I have my questions." Then he's going to launch into his, "Why did the Holocaust happen?" or "Why did this happen?" "I'm not sure I believe in G-d." "I don't believe in G-d." Whatever nonsense he's going to say.

The key is, is there a method to clarify his doubts for him, without you having to deal with each specific question one by one? Is there some headquarters or a center of operations from which orders are issued? Yes, there is - and that is Shabbos.

SHABBOS IS LIKE A BIG SIGN

There is a *passuk* in *Parshas Ki Sisa* that says as follows: דבר את בני ישראל לאמר, speak to the Bnei Yisrael, אך את שבתותי תשמורו, however My Shabbosos you should observe, כי אות היא ביני וביניכם לדורותיכם, this is a sign for all future generations. (Shemos 31:13). Hashem says, it's a sign, between Me and you *ledoroseichem*. Now, what does that mean, אות היא? If I tell you, go down the street and read the sign, it will say, "Arland Court." Let's say there's no sign. My request has no validity. You can't read a sign you can't see.

Hashem tells us Shabbos is a sign. Rashi tells us אות גדולה היא, it's not just a little sign.¹ Sometimes you say, "Don't miss the sign" when you are talking about a small sign. But Shabbos is an אות גדולה. It means it's a large sign. You can't miss it. בינינו, between Me and you, Hashem says, שבחרתי בכם, that I have chosen you. Every Jew wants to know they were chosen. Do you believe Hashem chose you? Do you feel chosen? Most Jews don't feel chosen. Most Jews at best, I'm talking about *frum* Yidden now, feel, "I was told I was chosen: מל מל העמים. אשר בחר בנו מל העמים. I was told we were chosen." Do I feel chosen? Most people say, "No."

Now, Hashem said, "I'm giving you a tremendous sign for you to know you are chosen. It's got to be a big sign. "You can know I chose you," Hashem said, בהנחילי לכם, by My giving you My day of rest for you, for *menuchah*."

Now, when I saw this Rashi for the first time, it blew my mind. I said, "I've been keeping Shabbos for many, many years, and I never saw the sign." I enjoy Shabbos, but like most *yeshivah* people, Shabbos was like a mini *bein hazmanim*. The question just was, when did it start? For some people, *zerizim makdimim*, it starts from Thursday afternoon. Some people start it Thursday night. In Eretz Yisrael, there is no real learning taking place on Friday. In American *yeshivos*, officially there is learning on Friday, but it's like *bein hazmanim* type of learning. And then it's basically off until mid-Sunday morning. And then there is an off-Shabbos in the *yeshivah* high schools and sometimes the *batei medrashim*. This is what happens. It's funny because Hashem says, "I'm giving you an opportunity to see the sign." So obviously, you have to connect with this sign.

THE SIGN TO FEELING CHOSEN - LADA'AS

What is this sign of *bechirah* - this sign that Hashem has chosen me - (supposed to let me feel? What am I supposed to feel from this sign? It says כי אות היא ביני וביניכם לדורותיכם. Hashem says, if you read this sign, you will *lada'as*, you will know. You know what you will know? כי אני ה', that I, Hashem, היה הוה ויהיה, the Boss of all bosses, the Creator of all creators, the *melech malchei hamelachim*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, מקדישכם, has made you holy, has made you unique.

Now, it's a frightening thing that I wasn't aware of this previously. I am very, very *makir tovah* to my *Zeida* (Rav Avigdor Miller) and a *yungerman* from Yeshiva Beis Hatalmud. In my younger years, I met a *yungerman* from Yeshiva Beis Hatalmud who was a very, very big *talmid chacham*. Today, he is a noted *talmid chacham*. He tells me, "I have to tell you something. You know my wife was sick. She was pregnant, and she was laid up. I had to buy her some books to read." This is going way back in the days. He said, "One of the books I bought for my wife was your *zeida's sefer* called *Rejoice O Youth*. I gave it to my wife. My wife wasn't interested in reading it, so I started reading it. I have to tell you, I read the *sefer*. I *pashut*, for the first time in my life, have a *hakarah* in how unique it is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu chose us to be His Am Yisrael." This guy was a Brisker kind of guy. I was shocked. I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah." He said, "Have you ever read it?" I said, "To tell you the truth, not really. I have the same *hargashah* your wife had. Maybe a *ba'al teshuvah*..." However, after I heard what he said, it intrigued me, and I read it. The sense of feeling that I got after reading that book, was: עלינו לשבח לאדון

¹ כי אות הוא ביני וביניכם. אות גדולה היא בינינו, שבחרתי בכם בהנחילי לכם את יום מנוחתי למנוחה

הכל לתת גדולה ליוצר בראשית שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות, a feeling, a sense of understanding, a sense of feeling that I am unique.

BELIEVING CLEARLY THAT YIDDISHKEIT IS SPECIAL

Growing up in Western society, when you're exposed to everybody, your feeling is that 'Yiddishkeit is something we do.' What's so special about Yiddishkeit? You say a *brachah* every morning שלא עשני גוי. I've heard this from many people over the years, "*Lema'aseh*, if you're a *goy*, you can do what you want, how you want, when you want, wherever you want. You can eat in the street. You can eat in the bathroom. You can do what you want how you want. That's not so bad. Is it so bad being a *goy*?"

Now you have to understand, you have to clarify this to yourself before you go out there and do *kiruv*. Why? Because if you go out there, somebody might lean across the table and say, "Rabbi, in all the truth, in your heart, do you believe you're special? Or you just got stuck with this thing, and you're trying to sell it to me because you got stuck with it?"

Don't go into this business if that is the case. This is not for you, then. You've got to feel it clearly, like my *zeida* used to say. We say it every morning - שלא עשני גוי. That's a backup. The first time we say it is, אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו. But in case you were sleeping in round one, we come again in a second round and say: ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם שלא עשני גוי. You have to identify with yourself honestly and truthfully. Do you feel that sense of uniqueness?

REVEAL YOUR JEWISH PRIDE

Now the question is, how do I feel it? And the answer is: Shabbos. Hashem says: לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם. Now, what does the word *lada'as* mean? You know what *lada'as* means? There are many types of knowledge. *Da'as* means absolute knowledge. The Torah describes Adam being with his wife as וידע אדם את חוה אשתו. He knew his wife (Bereishis 4:1). That's not something you imagine. That's a *yediah*. It's an absolute *yediah chushis*, a sensory perception with all your *chushim*.

Hashem says the opportunity of Shabbos, it's for you. It gives you an ability לדעת כי אני מקדישכם. If you don't have it, you're missing out on something major, one of the most basic things. Because if you have it, you have such clarity, such a sense of emancipation. It's not to say that you don't look at the *goy* and think about how a *goy* has a freer life. But you'll never say, "I wish I was born a *goy*." You'll never feel when you walk down the street, and some *goy* says something to you or looks down at you, you won't feel bad. You know what you're going to feel about the *goy*? "Boy, it's a pity on you. You don't get it." You won't have a feeling, a need to go down the street with your baseball cap turned to the side and try to look cool or try to feel like you're one of them. You won't want to do that. You'll be proud of who you are, and you'll have a sense of being chosen. And you have to have that sense in order to go out there in the street.

I've been on the front lines. I've been across the United States. I've been in Eretz Yisrael. I've met people from all walks of life. This is the bottom line. I have dealt with some very, very, very hardcore citizens, extremely hardcore citizens. People who made it to the epitome of society and when they became *frum*, I ask them all the time, "Can you look back and tell me what it was that got you? Was it my stories? Was it my inspiration?" They said, "No." They said, "It was your surety, you're absolute, absolute certainty that we missed the boat."

CONVICTION ABOUT YOUR OWN YIDDISHKEIT

A famous federal judge once said to me, "Rabbi, when I met you for the first time, you made me feel so puny." I said, "How is that?" He said, "All of a sudden, I needed answers and I didn't have answers." I said, "Are you serious?" He said, "Yeah." He said,

“You were so sure of yourself. You made me question my surety.”

I was once invited to go into a very classy Jewish health club. A very expensive, highy-tighty club for the *besser mentchen*. *Frum* Yidden don't go there. But I went. I'm taking off my shirt, and I have a big *tallis katan* on. People don't have a big *tallis katan* over there. No one has big yarmulkes over there. There's some guy looking at me. I can see daggers in his eyes. I turned to him and said, “Excuse me, are you Jewish?” He said, “Yeah.” I said, “Where are your *tzitzis*?” He said, “What?!” I said, “Where are your *tzitzis*? This is a Jewish club, isn't it? It's a VIP Jewish club. And by the way, I don't see you wearing a yarmulke either.” “Ahh ah ahahhh.” Eventually, I got to know the guy very well. He turned out to be a high-powered attorney. He told me later, “You got me in one second. You flipped it around.” He said, “At first, I was looking at you with this disdain, like how dare you have the audacity to walk in here with those fringes, as you take your shirt off and you are sticking it out. That big thing you're wearing. And then you look straight at me and say with an absolute conviction, ‘Where's yours? Why aren't you wearing them?’”

I remember once when I was at the sink washing my hands, and saw a Reform rabbi or maybe a Conservative rabbi. He was shaving with a razor. I said, “Rabbi, that's not really a razor. Is it? You know better than that.” He got all embarrassed instead of me feeling funny. If you don't have the conviction, it's never going to work. You've got to believe in it yourself. You can't be apologetic. “Excuse me, but I'm Orthodox.” No, no. No. It's got to be, “You do this? Jews do the opposite.”

I've been in places where women come over to me and say, “Why don't you shake hands?” I say, “Don't you know, Jewish men are not allowed to shake women's hands.” They say, “Really? Well, a lot of Jewish men shake my hands.” I say, “Well, they're not acting like Jewish men are supposed to act. That's all.”

It's never, “Excuse me” and “I'm sorry.” It has to be like that expressed with certainty. You'll never have that unless it's clear to you in your mind. It doesn't make a difference what level of *tzidkus* you're on. I don't care if you're a *rasha*, *chas veshalom*, and you know in your own heart you struggle with weaknesses, ups and downs. You have to be clear and you have to be certain about your Judaism.

You have to know that you were chosen. And the key to knowing that is Shabbos. That's what you've got to know.

HASHEM GAVE US THE GIFT OF SHABBOS

The Torah says it, black on white. It's in the *gemara*. I'm going to show you this *gemara*. It's a *gemara* in *mesechta Shabbos* (10b). The *gemara* says as follows: אמר רבא בר מחסיא אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב הנותן מתנה לחבירו צריך להודיעו *matanah* to his friend, he has to make it known to him. You have to notify your friend. What's the source for that? שנאמר, it says in the *passuk*, לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם, so that you should know that I am Hashem who sanctifies you.²

Now, this is an interesting teaching. A *noridige* chiddush! We see that besides for Shabbos being a *mitzvah* like all *mitzvos*, Shabbos has a unique gift encapsulated within it, and therefore, Hashem said, “I must tell you, Klal Yisrael, I'm giving you a gift.” When He told us about the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*, He didn't say that. When He told us about the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* He didn't say that. They're all wonderful *mitzvos*. Special *mitzvos*. But Shabbos is unique. It's a *matanah tovah*.

² ואמר רבא בר מחסיא אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב: הנותן מתנה לחבירו, צריך להודיעו. שנאמר: “לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם.” תניא נמי הכי: “לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם,” אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה: מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גזי ושבט שמה, ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל, לך והודיעם. מכאן אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל: הנותן פת לתניוק, צריך להודיע לאמו. מאי עביד ליה? אמר אביי: שאיף ליה משחא, ומלי ליה כוחלא. והאידיגא דחיישינן לכשפים מאי? אמר רב פפא: שאיף ליה מאותו המין. איני והאמר רב חמא (בר) [ברבי] חנינא: הנותן מתנה לחבירו אין צריך להודיעו, שנאמר: “ומשה לא ידע כי קר עור פניו בדברו אתו!” לא קשיא: האי במילתא דעבידא לאגלווי, הא במילתא דלא עבידא לאגלווי. והא שבת, דעבידא לאגלווי? מתן שכרה לא עביד לאגלווי.

Now, what's the reason why you have to notify somebody when you give them a gift? So Rashi says you know why?³ שמתוך כך יהא אוהבו. What's the purpose of giving someone a gift? A gift is an expression. A gift is a form of expression that human beings use. What does it express? Which *middah* does it express? It expresses the *middah* of *ahavah*. When an employer pays his employee, that's not the *middah* of *ahavah*. He may let you know many times over, "I'm paying you. I'm paying you. I'm paying you." But it's not the *middah* of *ahavah*. That's the *middah* of *ga'avah*. He's trying to remind you. So you have to remind him back, "I'm working for you."

But when somebody gives a *matanah*, that's the *middah* of *ahavah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Klal Yisrael, "I have expressed My *middah* of *ahavah* to you in the gift of Shabbos." Now, the *shaylah* is, how is the *ahavah* expressed, and how can we see the gift?

WHEN DO YOU POINT OUT WHAT THE GIFT IS?

The *gemara* (ibid.) then asks a question: How could you say that you have to notify? Rav Chama bar Chanina said the opposite, namely that someone who gives a gift to his friend need not inform him, because Hashem made Moshe's face glow (which was a gift), and nevertheless the pasuk states: "And Moshe did not know that his face shone when Hashem spoke with him" (Exodus 34:29). So the *gemara* answers: לא קשיא הא במילתא דעבידא לאגלויי. When Rav Chama bar Chanina said that one doesn't need to inform his friend, he was referring to a matter that is likely to be revealed; however, when Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said that he needs to inform him, he was referring to a matter that is not likely to be revealed.

For example, if I send a person a gift and the person knows. It comes in a package and he can tell it's a gift. He knows it's a gift. Then I don't have to tell him, because inherently receiving this gift is a notification that I'm giving the gift. I don't have to say, "Hello, I'm giving you a gift. But if I'm giving somebody something and he's not going to know that it's a gift, for instance, I slipped him \$20 in his pocket, and he'll just think he had another 20 bucks in his pocket, he'll think he put it there by himself - then, there is a *din* you've got to tell him.

So the *gemara* asks: but wasn't Shabbos דעבידא לאגלויי? Since Klal Yisroel was informed of Shabbat together with the other mitzvot, why was Moshe asked by Hashem to inform them about Shabbos separately? Why does Hashem have to say, "I'm giving you a *matanah*, and I want you to know I'm giving you a *matanah*, because you wouldn't know it on your own," if it already says in the *passuk* מדקדישכם לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם?

THE GIFTS: A RELATIONSHIP WITH HASHEM AND SCHAR

Do you know what you see from the *gemara's* question? An amazing *zach*. That every single person who observes Shabbos could actually know beyond a shadow of a doubt what the *matanah* of Shabbos is. He can appreciate what the gift of Shabbos is and he can understand it - it's not the *chulent*. He'll understand it's a gift from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He'll understand this is an אינו גדולה היא בינינו ואת we and Hashem are one. We have a unique relationship.

The *gemara* says, if so, why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu need to inform us of it? You know what the *gemara* answers? The *gemara* says, you're right. That's not what Hashem was telling us. When He told Moshe to go tell us about this great *matanah*, He was referring to *matan secharah* in the Next World. That they could not find out in this world, and since this matter is not revealed, you have to inform them about it. That means any benefit and any *brachah* of Shabbos in this world, anybody is able to find out and understand. What's not possible is to receive the *sechar* of Shabbos in this world.

³ צריך להודיעו - מתן פלוני אתן לך וזהו דרך כבוד דשמה יתבייש לקבלה ומתוך כך מתרצין בדברים ואינו בוש בדבר וכן אם נתנה בביתו שלא מידעתו צריך להודיעו שמידו באה לו שמתוך כך יהא אוהבו.

But to understand the tangible benefits and rewards of this matanah - that, Moshe Rabeinu had to tell us about.

FEEL PUMPED, INJECT YOUR LIFE WITH CLARITY

But what is more, in this *gemara*, it says black on white an amazing thing, that a Shabbos could change your life. That means every single Shabbos could give you clarity - to such a degree that your doubts, your insecurities, your lack of confidence, your lack of awareness and feeling could be resolved. How many times have you heard people say, "Yeah, I learn Torah, but I don't feel it. Yeah, I'm *frum*, but I don't feel it."

Here's a guy who puts on *tefillin*. I'm thankful to a *talmid* of mine that I feel *tefillin* today. Do you know why I feel *tefillin*? Because many, many years ago, I taught a young attorney how to put on *tefillin*, and I taught him the *halachos* of *tefillin*. I told him to prepare himself for *tefillin*. I said, "I don't want you putting it on just *stam azoy*. I want you to know the *halachos* about *kavanah*, about *guf naki*, what you're supposed to think, what *tefillin* are, what *tefillin* contain, the *sheimos* of Hashem." I went through the Rambam with him. I went through the *halachos* with him. After a few weeks of learning, I said to the fellow, "Do you think you're ready?" I said, "Are you sure you're ready?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Okay, tomorrow we're putting on *tefillin*." He came for the ceremony and he put on *tefillin*. After the *davening*, I said to him, "How was it?" I'll never forget the words he said. "Rabbi, I feel pumped!" I said, "You feel what?!" He said, "I feel pumped!"

Now, I understand a guy goes to a *kiruv* event, and they give him a lot of food and drink and then ask him, "How do you feel?" He'll say, "I feel buzzed. I feel pumped." That I understand. But I never knew a guy could say, "I feel pumped" from *tefillin*, and I remember thinking I felt like a dagger was in my *kishkes*. I was thinking, "I messed up here. This guy is feeling pumped from *tefillin*? That's not usually the feeling you expect to get from *tefillin*." I asked him the next day to come back, and he starts to put on *tefillin*, and he's like wow! Then I realized, I don't know what *tefillin* is! I may have known the *halachos*, but was I actually doing it or was I sleepwalking it? It's called sleep-putting-on-*tefillin*. Most people put their *tefillin* on in their sleep. They put it on by rote. Like in the famous *shaylah*, the guy comes to the *rav* and says, "Rebbei, I have my *tefillin shel yad* on, but I'm not sure if I'm in the middle of taking off my *tefillin* or in the middle of putting them on. I don't know which one I'm doing. What do I do *misafek*? Should I put my *tefillin shel rosh* on, or can I assume I had them on already and I'm taking them off?" That's how people are. They're asleep. They don't think about what *tefillin* reflects, what *tefillin* represents. They don't have these thoughts. If you don't have these thoughts what do you expect is going to happen? Nothing. You've got to put some *kochos* into it.

It says over here that Shabbos gives you this amazing clarity. All the doubts in your life will disappear. And I'm telling you, it'll happen. And it's something that's עבידיא לגלויי, you could know it. You'll never imagine it's anything else.

This is what you want to teach somebody else. This is what you want to offer somebody else. But you have to realize there are some conditions. And you'll understand why it doesn't work for you.

NOT A DAY FOR NAPPING

Most people are not aware of what Shabbos is. They think it's a day of rest. They worked hard all week long, and now they're supposed to rest. The bigger the *chulent*, the bigger the rest. The smaller the *chulent*, the smaller the rest. That's usually how it goes. But the people are not happy. They want to rest a lot. A winter Shabbos, people don't like so much because you don't get that big rest.

You have people who are '*machmir*.' They forget about *Minchah*. They get up for *Havdalah*. They have all kinds of *dinim* about how people get around that *shaylah*, but

the fact of the matter is people are not connecting with Shabbos, and that's tragic. Today, it's a tragedy of tragedies. So you have to understand how it works. And the way it works is as follows.

WHAT WE REALLY CELEBRATE ON SHABBOS

First, you have to know, what does Shabbos represent? Shabbos represents the day when every Jew gets together with Hashem and celebrates. What do you celebrate? You're celebrating that Hashem is the Creator of the world. He created the world, and He constantly creates the world. He's the only one running the world. He's the only one making any decisions in your life. He's the only one who can affect any good or any bad in your life. And in effect, eventually, there's going to be a system of *sechar veonesh* (reward and punishment). Some people get some *onesh* in this world. We get some dividends in this world too. The *ikar sechar* is in the Next World. That's what you celebrate on Shabbos, but most people don't know it.

There happens to be another uniqueness about Shabbos. Shabbos is the only day of the year that each of the *tefillos* are different. Most people don't realize that. The only day of the year that the *tefillos* are not the same for *Ma'ariv*, for *Shacharis* and for *Minchah* is Shabbos. No relationship between Shabbos *Shacharis*, Shabbos *Ma'ariv* and Shabbos *Minchah*. Each one is different. That's because Shabbos represents three different principles.

THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF SHABBOS

Principle number one is the Friday night principle. The Friday night principle of Shabbos is the fact that Hashem created the world. We talk about the fact that Hashem is the Creator. That's why we say *Vayechulu* in the *tefillah* on Shabbos Friday night. We don't say *Vayechulu* in the morning or by *Minchah*. It's only said at night. We talk about the fact that Hashem created this world and Shabbos. That's number one.

Then we have Shabbos morning. In *Shacharis* on Shabbos morning, it talks about the second principle of the world, the reason for creation. What did Hashem create the world for? בשביל ישראל שנקרא ראשית and בשביל התורה שנקראת ראשית. On Shabbos morning, we discuss Torah and the uniqueness of Klal Yisroel. That's Shabbos morning.

The third great gift that Hashem gave us was *olam haba*. That is in *Minchah*. The future, the *Avos*. Everybody is going to be happy and rejoice. That's going to be אתה אחד ושמן אחד ומי כעמך ישראל והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד. That's going to be in the future. That's where we're headed.

SHABBOS IS COMING, GET READY!

Now, these are tremendous principles, and we have to make it our *avodah* to connect with Shabbos. Shabbos has another very unique *halachah*. It's the only *mitzvah* that comes with a *mitzvah* to prepare. It doesn't say you prepare for any other *mitzvah*. You don't prepare for *tzitzis*. You don't prepare for *mezuzah*. You've got to buy one, that's all. You buy one, and you put it on. For Shabbos there is a *halachah* of *hachanah*. You must prepare for Shabbos. If you don't prepare for Shabbos you won't feel, or experience anything about Shabbos. Shabbos will pass you by. You'll be passive, you'll be in a 'coma' for Shabbos. It's like missing a wedding. You're going to miss the *simchah*. In order to get into the *simchah* of Shabbos, you must do a *hachanah*. You've got to be *mekabel* the Shabbos. You've got to await the Shabbos. That's a very, very big principle.

THE ISSUR OF V'DABER DAVAR

Now, the way it works is, once you get into Shabbos - you're *meichin* for the Shabbos, you're *mekabel* the Shabbos - then, the next thing you need to know is how to conduct yourself on the Shabbos. There's something very unique about Shabbos that people don't realize, and that is there's a unique *halachah* of דבר דבר.⁴ The Steipler writes about it in several places. He wrote a number of letters to *bachurim* about it. He writes this in the *sefer Chayey Olam*. He says that this is a crucial *tanai* for a person to get and feel the experience of Shabbos. You must minimize your *diburim beteilim*. Shabbos is the worst time for bull sessions. The tragedy of a *bachur* is he thinks that Friday night is made for bull sessions. That's what he thinks. Many people think Shabbos evening before you go to sleep, that's bull session time. People think during *davening* is the time for a bull session. This undermines the power of Shabbos for you. You're sucking the juice, you're sucking the joy, you're sucking the *yediah* of Shabbos out of yourself.

KEEP SHABBOS BECAUSE HASHEM WANTS US TO

A young man, a serious learner, called me to discuss a challenge of having heretical thoughts and doubts in *emunah*. I told him to accept to keep Shabbos properly. "The key is Shabbos," I told him. He said, "What does it have to do with Shabbos?" I said, "You've got to keep Shabbos. But this is the *tanai*. You've got to keep Shabbos *leshem Shabbos*." This is the key. The criteria is you've got to keep Shabbos because Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants me to be *shomer Shabbos*. It's amazing. Most people don't keep Shabbos "because Hashem wants me to keep Shabbos."

They keep Shabbos either by habit, they're *frum* from habit, or they just like not answering the phones. They like downtime. But people don't do things solely because Hashem wants them to. And even if people aren't *mechallel Shabbos*, they don't do it for the reason of "because Hashem wants me to keep Shabbos." We have to start to keep Shabbos because Hashem wants us to keep Shabbos.

ON SHABBOS, TALK ABOUT SHABBOS

Another thing to keep in mind is that we shouldn't talk garbage on Shabbos. Speaking garbage on Shabbos diminishes your returns from Shabbos tremendously.

I've tested this numerous times with *frei* people. I've taken secular people and I've implored them to please spend a Shabbos, one Shabbos. "Give me one Shabbos," I asked them. And I prepared them for it. I told them, "This is what it's going to be like. This is what you're going to expect. No, I'm not going to talk sports with you. No, I'm not going to talk about your boat. I'm not going to talk about the movies you like to go to. I'm not going to talk about your life. We're going to talk about Shabbos. Give me twenty-five hours of your life. You will eat good. You will rest good. You're going to discover there is a Hashem in the world. Give it a fair chance." "What am I going to do all Shabbos?" I answer them, "I guarantee I'll keep you busy." I've never had a guy who got into it who has not told me, after the Shabbos, that the experience didn't grab him. I remember one guy came to me and said, "I'm really sorry I came to you for Shabbos." I was shocked. I said, "Was it that bad?!" He said, "I'll tell you." He said, "You've been trying to get me to come for quite a while now, and I didn't come. I didn't feel bad at all. Every time you described what Shabbos was, it never spoke to me. It never did anything for me. It didn't exactly sound exciting. Now that I kept my first Shabbos," he said, "I feel like I went into space. I can't describe it. It's indescribable. And now I'm going to go back to my life, and next week when you're going to call me and say, 'Did you have a good Shabbos?' I'm going to feel guilty." I said, "*Mazal tov*. Congratulations. That was my point. That's what I was trying to accomplish."

⁴ יש דברים שהן אסורין בשבת אף על פי שאינם דומין למלאכה ואינם מביאין לידי מלאכה. ומפני מה נאסרו משום שנאמר (ישעיה נח ג) «אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפציו ביום קדשי» ונאמר (ישעיה נח ג) «וכבדתו מעשות דרכיו ממצוא חפצו ודבר דבר». לפיכך אסור לאדם להלך בחפציו בשבת ואפילו לדבר בהן כגון שיידבר עם שטפן מה ימכר למחר או מה יקנה או היאך יבנה בית זה וביא זה סחורה ילך למקום פלוני. כל זה יוכיזא בו אסור שנאמר ודבר דבר דבור אסור הרהור מתר (משנה תורה, הלכות שבת כ"ד)

WHEN SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The Steipler writes that even if a guy sleeps a whole Shabbos, it's better than talking. He says the key is: no talking. Talking on Shabbos messes up the Shabbos. There's a tremendous reason for that. On Shabbos, you are connecting with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and my point of connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu is my *dibur*. That's the point. Since Hakadosh Baruch Hu blew into me, ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים, and a person became a *ruach mimalelah*, a speaking person, speech is the point, the single most connecting point that I have to Hashem. When a person is *mevatef* that speech, that messes it up. That's why it says getting angry on Shabbos is not advisable. The Zohar says, when the *passuk* says, לא תבערו אש בכל מושבותיכם, that refers to *ka'as*. *Ka'as* on Shabbos is just out of this world. Forget about it! You want to get angry? Save it for Motzei Shabbos. I'm telling you. Box it up and put it away. Not on Shabbos. Of course, the *yetzer hara* makes sure everybody gets angry on Erev Shabbos.

This is a key to getting clarity. You must get this clarity. Every one of us sits down by a *gemara* and the *yetzer hara* starts to pound on us, instantly. You say, "Why am I doing this?" Everybody has had this question. I've heard this question from many *yungeleit* and *bachurim*. "What am I getting out of this? I'm doing this for years. I'm in *yeshivah*. There's a system I'm going through. I don't remember much. I can't tell you the *chakiros*. I don't remember...What am I gaining?" "How many Tosafos am I learning?" When I hear somebody say that, I know one thing. He's 'dead.' That's called *gesisah*. It's called spiritual *gesisah*. Most people don't understand that the *yetzer hara* is trying to kill you every single day. Whether you believe it or not, that's also part of it. People fool themselves. They say, "Ah, it's not really. *Lav davka*." But it's real, and a lot of people are 'dead' already. They're in a 'coma.' They're in a total spiritual coma. They have no connection with Hashem. Hashem means nothing in their life. They are completely כחי ועוצם ידי. Their *parnasah* is completely...They think, "I've got to take care of myself. It's time to become a *mentsch* and grow up." Many people have heard this from their parents who constantly tell them, "When are you going to stop learning? Cut it out. Time to get a job. Get real. Get a life. When are you going to become a *mentsch*? Get responsible." Excuse me? What do you think *yeshivah* is? It's not responsible? It's a very responsible thing.

THERE IS NOTHING SWEETER THAN JUDAISM

That's the whole key when you go out there and teach Yiddishkeit. When you go out there and teach Yiddishkeit, it has to be from a sense of, "Let me tell you, there is nothing like the *havayas* of Abaye and Rava. Let me tell you, there's nothing as inspirational as Torah. Let me tell you, there is nothing as great as Judaism." But you have to educate yourself first.

When people hear this, they say, "Really?" and I say, "Your life must be so boring. You get up in the morning. You go to the bathroom. You go to work. You come home. You watch TV. Go to the bathroom again. Maybe you go on the treadmill a little bit. Then you go to sleep. You wake up in the morning and go to the bathroom. What's your life? Bathroom and work, bathroom and work. And in the middle, a little TV, or a short vacation trip. That's the most boring life I've ever heard of."

They say, "What's your life?" and I say, "Let me tell you about my life. Before I eat breakfast, let me give you a little explanation of what I start off with. The first thing we start off with is *Modeh Ani*. Twelve words of thanks, connecting to Hashem. Then I put my *tzitzis* on. Then I get ready for *davening*. I get my body and my mind synced for *davening*. Then I get dressed accordingly, in a proper way." They say, "What do you mean?" I say, "You get dressed like a baby. I get dressed like a man." They say, "What does that mean?" I say, "Which shoe do you put on first?" They say, "What do you mean?" I repeat, "Which shoe do you put on first?" I say, "You see what I mean?"

You're a baby. You don't even know which shoe you put on first. When I ask my kid, 'Put your shoes on,' they say, 'Why Daddy? Why wear shoes? I like slippers. I don't like shoes.' That's what you sound like."

I say, "You put your shirt on. Which hand do you put in first, your left or your right?" And they say, "What?! What difference does it make?!" I say, "You sound like a guy driving in a car, and he wants to make a turn. He puts on the blinkers, and the guy says, 'No, no, not that blinker. The other blinker. What difference does it make? The blinker is on.'" I say, "It makes a difference. There's a right blinker, and there's a left blinker. There's a different indication. Just because you don't understand it, that doesn't mean it doesn't make any sense." I say, "There's a way to go to the bathroom. There's a way to get ready for *davening*. You put on your *tzitzis*. You put on your *yarmulke*. You put on your *tallis*. You put on your *tefillin*. You don't do anything else. Your mind is focused on going to *shul* to *daven*. You don't read a paper. You don't have breakfast. You don't have a little snack. You go to *shul*, and then you *daven*. Ah!"

"Do you know what we do in *davening*? Let me tell you what we do. First, we study a little Torah. Then you thank Hashem for your clothing, for your eyesight, for your spine, for your feet. You thank Hashem for the floor. You thank Hashem for everything you have; for all your needs. You thank Hashem that you're a Jew. You thank Hashem that you're a free man. You're emancipated. You thank Hashem you could do *chessed*. You list all the *chessed* (i.e., the sections of the Mishnah and Gemora after Bircas HaTorah). You start to connect with Hashem." I go on and on.

I say, "That's all before 8 o'clock. Now I'm ready to start my day." I say, "Do you see the difference between your day and my day? You're in the morgue, and I'm out here." When people hear this, it's amazing. But I remember the first time I heard this from my grandfather. I was thinking, "Shrek! I never looked at it that way." I was doing it, but I never thought about it. I'm in the same morgue as everybody else. And I was, because my actions made no difference to my life.

You have to come out of the 'morgue.' You have to realize that you're alive. You have to realize that you're living. You have to realize what Shabbos is. Shabbos is the key.

INSTEAD OF SLEEP AND REST...

Now let me tell you another thing. Not only is Shabbos the key, but the benefits of Shabbos are tremendous. Any success that you have the coming week - any - comes from Shabbos. Think about what that means. Think of any argument you've ever had with your wife. Think of any argument you've ever had with one of your kids. Maybe with your parents. Maybe with your landlord. Maybe with your *chavrusa*. Think of any unhappiness you've had or any happiness you've had. Any distress you had over paying a bill or over not paying a bill. Every single *brachah* that you have is determined for you via Shabbos. Shabbos is the *mekor habrachah*. Every single *davar tov* that happens to you, happens to you on Shabbos. You've got to be out of your mind if you waste the opportunity by sleeping. If you want to sleep when they're giving out the goodies, you're a fool. I've talked to people. Shabbos is the one day they want to sleep. Sleep on Motzei Shabbos! Sleep Erev Shabbos! Sleep on Thursday night! Don't sleep on Shabbos, because Shabbos is your *mekor habrachah*.

...DO THE SHABBOS TEST

Now, there's a simple test you can make. I tell people to do this test all the time and they're amazed. Part of this *bechirah* that Hashem gave us on Shabbos, part of this awareness that we could have on Shabbos *מקדישכם כי אני ה'* is that if you want, you have a much easier time fighting your *yetzer hara* on Shabbos than you do on any other day of the week. Now, I was shocked when I heard this.

You know why? Because naturally as a *bachur* in *yeshivah* the most down day was Shabbos. Shabbos was the most down day. You *shmoozed* on Shabbos. You chilled on Shabbos. You slept on Shabbos. You ate on Shabbos. Shabbos, you knew you could relax.

And I'll tell you what happens. The *yetzer hara* gets us from a young age. And when the *yetzer hara* gets you, you become a member of his club. And the second the weekend starts to arrive, you change your clothes, and you go into what's called '*yetzer hara mode*' completely. He dominates you. The *davening* on Shabbos is the first thing that goes because there's no *parnassah* on Shabbos. You're not asking for *parnassah* on Shabbos. So what's in there for me? You don't ask for *selichah*. You don't ask for *da'as*. You don't ask for *teshuvah*. You don't ask for *refuah*. (If people are sick, you ask for *refuah* during the week.) There's no *barech aleinu*. What is there in the davening on Shabbos? You talk about Hashem. That doesn't turn people on because people are into themselves. When you are young, the *yetzer hara* gets you on that, and then he owns you. He controls you. You become a complete member. You become an *eved* to that *chulent*. There are people who live for *kiddushim*. They just go from *kiddush* to *kiddush*. They go after the best *chulent*. They're not even embarrassed to say it. Adults are not embarrassed. *Bachurim*. A *bachur* and a *chulent*? Forget it! With a bottle of whiskey. And it's amazing. There's nothing else going on, so that becomes the *ikar*. And people sell their souls to the devil.

And what happens is you become completely devoid of Shabbos. The second you decide to start keeping Shabbos, you will be amazed. When I became aware of this, I can honestly say that it was shocking. I said, "That means to say if Shabbos is מקדישכם לדרתת כי אני ה' מקדישכם, it should be much easier to learn on Shabbos." I said, "Could that be so?" I decided to do a test. If you sit down and learn during the week and you try to learn a Tosfos, your mind is going to be challenged. You have things to call, things to do, things to take care of. People are trying to get a hold of you. All kinds of things going on. But when it comes to Shabbos, it's not there, the challenge is not there. Now I'm telling you, if you did it, you'd be shocked. I've told people that I'm a reformed Jew. I've reformed myself from somebody who didn't know what Shabbos was to somebody who knows. I tell you, I feel heartbroken over all the Shabbosos that I missed when I was young.

So, here is a test to prove that you need much *less* sleep on Shabbos than you need any other day of the week. I'm telling you. I tested it. I tested this with dozens of people. I understand that people don't want to go onto the program because they want to stay in that sleep mode. I understand that. But if you want to get out of that mode, you can go on less sleep.

AMAZING GAINS FROM LESS (SLEEP) IS MORE

Your life will be reformed and transformed if you do this. You will become a *ba'al teshuvah* yourself, the likes of which you cannot begin to imagine. You will become aware of Hakadosh Baruch Hu in this world. You will have such an awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Your mind will be blown by how it's *shayach* to have such a connection with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You'll see. Your *parnasah* will become enhanced. It has to be. You know why? You're at the well. This is the *mekor habrachah*. You're sitting at the well, the *mekor habrachah*.

I understand you don't want to break the whole habit. Believe me, I understand. I've been there. I tell people to just try to do something. Try. What do you have to lose? A few weeks of sleep? Years ago if you would have told me it's possible to get up earlier on Shabbos morning, I would have said to you, "I don't know what planet you're on. It's not *shayach*." Now that my test has proven it, I'm telling you, it's easy! But you've got to *want* to do it.

IT'S HARD ENOUGH LEARNING ALL WEEK

Now, how much napping does a guy really need on Shabbos? Does a guy need a four-hour nap? A five hour nap? A forty-five minute nap, an hour nap, an hour and a half is usually more than enough, *dai vehoser*. Then you have the rest of Shabbos available for better things. You know what the problem is? You tell an average guy that he can learn from 2 o'clock and on until 7, the guy usually starts getting hives, he starts getting the sweats, and he starts getting the shakes. "What am I going to do with so many hours?! It's not *sefer*. I've got a problem the whole week learning." That's the point. A whole week, that's business. That's a *chov*.

But this is Shabbos. This is the time you can actually connect to Hakadosh Baruch Hu in a way that's practical. I've gotten many people to appreciate Shabbos because of this plan. It works.

INSPIRE YOURSELF BEFORE INSPIRING OTHERS

But you've got to try it. And if you try it, *then* you can go to somebody else and say, "How about a spiritual experience?" And you invite somebody to your house for Shabbos. I've invited people to my house for Shabbos, and I've spoken to them until 4 in the morning. And they got up the next morning to *daven*. They slept for two hours, and I spoke to them again for five hours. We learned. We spoke. You want to know something? No sports. Of course, they always try to go there. "Rabbi, what sports do you like?" I say, "Right now, it's called Torah." I tell them, "Sports you can discuss elsewhere. You don't need me for sports. There are radio shows you can listen to for sports. I'm not a sports maven. Let's talk Torah. That's my area."

You talk to people about that. You elevate them. You get them to the connection of why you eat on Shabbos. You know it's actually a *mitzvah* to eat on Shabbos *leshem oneg Shabbos*, but it's got to be *leshem Shamayim*. Get some kind of *sefer* where it's going to be practical for you and learn about Shabbos every single Shabbos. And every Shabbos will become a tremendous wellspring for you. But you've got to keep to this - and I'm telling you, it's a tool. Then when you speak about Shabbos, people will say, "What planet are you coming from? Am I understanding you 100%?"

I've been there. I've done that. I understand you 1000%. If somebody would have tried to tell me this when I was younger, I would have said, "Okay, I'm happy for you." But I tried it, and it works for my own Yiddishkeit. But it is especially powerful if you want to go out there and you want to tell people about Yiddishkeit.

KIRUV IS NOT AN EASY WAY OUT

Many, many years ago, I met a fellow who came to me. He wanted to go into *kiruv*. I said to him, "Why do you want to go into *kiruv*?" He said, "I'm not learning in *yeshivah*. I'm burnt out." I said, "Really? What are you learning in *yeshivah*?" He said, "I learn *Sukkah*." I said, "What *daf* are you holding?" He didn't remember. He said, "I already spent a few months on *mesechta Sukkah*. I don't even know how to build a *sukkah*." I said, "Did you actually think that the reason you were learning *mesechta Sukkah* was to know how to build a *sukkah*?" I said, "If you want to know how to build a *sukkah*, you go into a local supermarket, and on the way out, you'll see they have these little books, such as horoscope books. There is a little book they're selling, Ten Easy Steps on How to Build a Sukkah. Next time you go to Judaica Plaza, buy yourself one of these little books and you'll know how to build a *sukkah*. You don't learn *mesechta Sukkah* to learn how to build a *sukkah*."

I said, "Don't go into *kiruv*." "So what should I do?" I said, "Plumbing. Stick to plumbing. Stay as far away from people as you can." He said, "Why is that?" I said, "You're an anti-Semite." I said, "You hate Torah." I said, "I'm not blaming you. I feel

bad for you. But you hate Torah. You hate what our nation lives for. אין אומתינו אומה אלא and you hate it. How are you going to sell a guy Shabbos?! You're going to go sell a guy Yiddeshkeit, and tell him what is the most important *mitzvah*? *Shemiras Shabbos*! And he's going to say, "Do you like Shabbos?" "Food and sleep. It's great." The guy says, "That's great. I like exercise. I like sports." Many people have told me this. I say, "I also like sports and exercise. But let me tell you something. Shabbos knocks it down! It puts it down! Blows it out of the water!" They say, "Really?" I say, "Try it. You'll see. I can't explain it to you. It's an experience. You've got to have it to see it."

And very few people that have come to me, have not kept Shabbos after that. I don't let them come just raw. They have to be ready for it. I have to hook them up to it. I don't want it to be some kind of baby experience. I want it to be a mature, spiritual experience that they can relate to and understand. If a person can do that, if a person can be into it, then the person is *matzliach*.

IN SUMMARY

There are many approaches to answering peoples' questions in Yiddishkeit and even their challenging attitudes. Keeping Shabbos, however, is the most powerful tool we can use in kiruv. By keeping Shabbos properly, we can first convince ourselves, and then others around us, of our being chosen. Lada'as means to recognize Shabbos as a "big sign" that we are chosen and that Yiddeshkeit is special. We can share this through kiruv. However, a person should only approach the avodah of kiruv once he feels proud of being part of the am hanivchar and can share a real conviction about Yiddishkeit. With the words *לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם*, Hashem reminds us that He Himself makes us holy through Shabbos. Shabbos is the way to reach authentic avodas Hashem since the gifts of Shabbos in Olam Hazei include feeling excitement for mitzvos and clarity of mind. We enjoy being able to 'get together' with Hashem weekly, and most importantly, celebrate that Hashem is the Creator of the world. The gifts of Shabbos in Olam Haba await us, too. This week (*bli neder*), I will work on accessing the gifts of Shabbos by choosing one of these uplifting activities, and try to notice the result of connecting to the mekor habrachah. When I can, I will talk less mundane speech and more about Hashem and Shabbos. I will try to remember that I keep Shabbos because Hashem said to keep it. And I also will experiment finding a better balance between sleeping less and learning more Torah.

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