



THE POWER OF YAAKOV AVINU'S TORAH

YAAKOV'S LEARNING: FOCUS AMIDST DISTRACTION

In this week's *parshah*, the Torah tells us about Yaakov Avinu, who found himself in double jeopardy. Number one, he hadn't yet gotten married. He was no youngster anymore. He was in his sixties. So he was an older gentleman already and he was not married. His father had gotten married at the age of 40. So Yaakov Avinu was way over the top. That was one situation he was facing. The second challenge that he was facing, at this not-so-young age, was that he was a marked man. His brother Eisav was out to nail him. He had a clear bullseye on his back. And when Eisav made plans to eliminate somebody, he was usually successful. And now Yaakov leaves: ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע, "and Yakov left Ber Sheva" (Bereishis 28:10). The Torah tells us that he was now heading toward Charan, and it came to be through a roundabout route that he ended up in the place of the Beis Hamikdash. He decided, or he was encouraged by Hashem, to lay down there and go to sleep. The *lashon of Chazal* is that Hashem said, "Is it possible that this great *tzaddik* comes to My home and he's not going to spend the night?" So Hashem arranged for the sun to set in the middle of the day. It's astounding that Hashem went to such lengths to orchestrate that Yaakov sleep in the place of the Beis Hamikdash! He could have made him tired, He could have made him droopy or some other thing, without energy. And he had good reason to be tired. But Hashem went out of His way to *pushut* make the sun set early, which is just mind-boggling.

The *passuk* says וישכב במקום ההוא "and he laid down at that place" (Bereishis 28:11). Rashi says that the *pasuk* does not simply say that he laid down "in the place" but it says he laid down in "that place," which is an extra word. It's superfluous. So Rashi tells us that the reason the *pasuk* was written in this fashion is to reveal that during the previous fourteen years, when Yaakov was in the *yeshiva* of בית עבר, he didn't lay down at night because he was being *oseik* in Torah. Now, just to give you a little bit of a timeline. We just mentioned that Yaakov was a marked man: Eisav wanted to kill him. He was already up in years, and he also needed a shidduch. And he takes a detour and decides to go to learn for fourteen years?! That is very difficult to comprehend. That's mind-blowing. My Rebbi (Rav Meir Halevi Soloveichik) wanted to know why did the Torah have to teach us this? Why did Hashem want to teach us this piece of information? Why is it relevant at this juncture in time to know that Yaakov Avinu did not sleep for the previous fourteen years? It should have said, "the sun set suddenly, and he lay down, and went to sleep." Why does it have to tell us that for the previous fourteen years, he didn't lay down even once? That is some amazing piece of information. I don't think we could imagine that somebody should not sleep for fourteen years! Maybe Shavuot night you stay up, barely. Then you sleep for days afterward to make up for it. We heard of people missing a night of sleep traveling on a plane and getting jet-lagged, and then trying to catch up for who knows how many days. But fourteen years not to lay down?! Now, it doesn't say he never closed his eyes, but he never laid down in bed.

What was the reason that Hashem had to tell me this now? And what is the connection between the fact that he didn't lay down for fourteen years and that now he laid down? Perforce, my Rebbi said, it must be that the previous fourteen years of not sleeping were related to the fact that he slept that night, and it's related to what happened that night.

THE VISION IN THE MAKOM HAMIKDASH

On that night, Yaakov Avinu had a vision the likes of which we cannot imagine. Hashem revealed to Yaakov, like the Ramban says, how Hashem employs angels and directs the angels to do and take care of all the nations of the world, every individual human being, and every creation in the world. And He showed him how Hakadosh Baruch Hu is on a ladder and promised Yaakov Avinu a tremendous promise. And that is, that he will not be directed through the hands of the angels, but rather it's going to be 'כי חלק ה' - he's going to be directly under Hashem's control, and Hashem will be with him constantly.¹

Yaakov Avinu became aware that wherever he will go, and all the nations of the world - the main four powerful nations in the world - will challenge Yaakov's descendants in the future, and that Hashem will be with Yaakov's descendants and Hashem will go with them and will ultimately be *shomer* them, and be *matzil* them. And that all the nations of the world will be directed by angels. And you want to know why Yaakov Avinu was *zoche* to this? It was because for fourteen years, he didn't sleep, and was *oseik* in Torah. Now, let me give you a little bit of an insight into what that means. Sleep is part and parcel of what mortals require. We don't lie down and go to sleep because of luxuries. It's not an extra thing that people do. I see people that fall asleep all day long. They take their sleep a little too seriously. But Hashem made it that you're supposed to fall asleep by night. And by day, you stay up and you work.

AVODAS HASHEM AND RISING ABOVE NATURE

Now, how do you define that action of Yaakov Avinu? How would you describe a person who forgoes his sleep for so many years? You know what the *peshat* is? It's the highest level of *kedushah*. It's the highest level of *prishus*, the ultimate separation from a mortal human need. A person who could rise above whatever a human being needs, if a person who could forego on sleep and be *oseik* in Torah,

¹ והנה סלם מצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה והנה מלאכי אלהים עלים וירדים בו הראהו בחלום הנבואה כי כל הנעשה בארץ נעשה על ידי המלאכים, והפל בגזרת עליון עליהם, כי מלאכי אלהים אשר שלח ה' להתהלך בארץ לא יעשו קטנה או גדולה עד שובם להתעצב על אדון כל הארץ לאמר לפניו, התהלכנו בארץ והנה יושבת בשלוח או מלאה חרב ודם, והוא יצוה עליהם לשוב לרדת בארץ ולעשות דברו. והראהו כי הוא יתברך נצב על הסלם ומבטיוחן לעקב בהבטחה גדולה להודיע שהוא לא יהיה ביד המלאכים, אבל יהיה חלק ה' ויהיה עמו תמיד, כמו שאמר "והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתיו בכל אשר תלך", כי מעלתו גדולה משאר המלאכים שגאמר בהם (תהלים צא יא) "כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרך בכל דרכיך". ועל דעת רבי אליעזר הגדול (פרקי דר"א לה) היתה זאת המראה פנינו בין הבתרים לאברם, כי הראהו ממשלת ארבע מלכיות ומעלתם וירדתם, וזה טעם "מלאכי אלהים", כמו שגאמר בדניאל (י כ ג) "שר מלכות נון" ושר מלכות פרס", והבטיחו כי הוא יתעלה יהיה עמו בכל אשר ילך בנייהם וישמרנו ויצילנו מידם. אמרו (שם בפדר"א). הראה לו הקב"ה ארבע מלכיות משלן ואבדן. הראהו שר מלכות בבל עולה שבעים עוקים וירד, והראהו שר מלכות מדי עולה חמשים ושנים עוקים וירד, והראהו שר מלכות יון עולה מאה ושמונים עוקים וירד, והראהו שר מלכות אדום עולה ואינו יורד. אמר לו יעקב, "אך אל שאול תורד" (ישעיהו יד טו). אמר לו הקב"ה "אם תגביה כנשר" וגו' (עובדיה א ד) "רמב"ן על פי י"ב

that person has reached the highest levels of *kedushah*. At the end of *Mesillas Yesharim*, he talks about the last and the highest level of *kedushah*. Over there, he mentions this factor. You know why most people can't stay up? Because they are very far from the highest level *kedushah*. But a human has the ability to rise above nature and to become, basically, a *malach*. He could get such control over himself that he's able to not have what everybody in the world needs, and he could function and he could grow because

he's a *kadosh*. He becomes elevated over all mankind and he becomes one with Hashem! So because Yaakov rose above man by not sleeping for 14 years - because of his intense learning - that entitles him, that enables him to rise to the point that Hashem deals with him in an unnatural way! That's why Hashem chose to deal with him not in the usual fashion that Hashem deals with all the people in the world. Hashem deals with Yaakov personally. All the other humans living on earth are not elevating themselves, not rising above themselves. So they remain in this low earthly state. Do you know what you have to do to get into the world of Hashem? You have to get out of the world that you find yourself in!

In order for Hashem to show you higher aspects of His involvement with the world, you have to rise above this earth. It says in many *sefarim* that if you want to see Eliyahu Hanavi, if you want to be *zocheh* to have Eliyahu Hanavi come to see you, do you know what you have to do? You have to fast for 40 days. You rise above humanity. So now Hashem will reveal to you bigger revelations. The 14 years of Yaakov's *aliyah* would definitely accomplish rising above humanity. There's a very interesting *lashon* in the Midrash. It says, נטמן, Yaakov "buried" himself in the Beis Medrash (Rashi on Bereishis 28:9). What happens when you "bury" yourself in something? You cover it up, and you remove it from all its external environments. That's what happens when you bury yourself. Yaakov Avinu buried himself in that *yeshivah* in Torah, and removed himself from the world. He rose above Eisav. He rose above his need for *shidduchim*. And Hashem said, "Because you did that, you are going to be *zocheh* to this *nevuah*." Prophecy is the highest level that a human being could attain in being close to Hashem. And Hashem promised him he was going to give him Eretz Yisrael. He was going to watch him. Hashem was going to guide him wherever he went and whatever he did.

And that's why the Torah says, וישכב במקום ההוא, "he went to sleep in that place," in exactly this juncture in time because rising above one's natural tendencies is the only way to reach the highest of levels. Now, of course, we can't play this game. It's not a game. Yaakov Avinu prepared for this for many, many years of intense training, and he was *zocheh*.

THE NESHAMAH AS A LADDER CONNECTING HEAVEN AND EARTH

Now, the *emes* is that this is stated in a *sefer* written by someone named Rav Yitzchak Issac Chaver. He was one of the *talmidim* of the Vilna Gaon.² He revealed some amazing revelations and insights into the depths of the Torah. One of the many *sefarim* he wrote was called *Ohr Torah*. He writes there about Yaakov. Yaakov was an outstanding individual who came from the *yeshivah* of Beis Ever, where he was for fourteen years. He was *oseik* in Torah. He didn't taste even the taste of sleep. That's what he says. And that's why he merited to sleep in the house of Hashem, in the Beis Hamikdash. Listen to these words. He writes שהוא בעצמו קיום הבריאה, he was the one who was *mekayem*, who supported and held up the entire universe! He was a *sulam*, he was a ladder that had its feet on the ground, his *neshamah* was attached to his *guf*, but ראשו מגיע השמימה, his head reached Heavens. His body was in this world, but his ראש, which is the headquarters of the person's *neshamah*, reached into Heavens.

Yaakov Avinu became the human being who replaced Adam HaRishon. He became the person for whom Hashem created the universe! And that's why it says:

סיני סולם זה סיני (Midrash Rabbah, 68:12). He was shown that he was the center of the world! He was the purpose of the world and everything that was going on around: All the *malchim* that were in the world were all for him, and he was the one for whom the world was created. And the *avodas Hashem* of his descendants, their study of Torah, their *mitzvos*, etc. was the purpose of creation. Yaakov Avinu became the central figure of the world. That was the story of Yaakov Avinu's prophecy. This was not just another prophecy. He established the *beriah* through his learning of Torah.

And the *emes* is that Rav Chaim Volozhiner, in his *sefer* Nefesh HaChaim (שער א' פרק ט') writes that the ראש, the head, is the *shoresh* of a person. Now, the head of every person and the *shoresh* of every person, he says, is really in שמים. So the next time you look at yourself, try to imagine that your ראש extends all the way into the heavens and it extends from the heavens all the way down to the ארץ. And that's the *neshamah* that every Jew has, that they got directly from the breath of Hashem.

It comes down in the form of a ladder until it comes down and it lodges itself into the *guf*, the body of a person. And this *neshamah* affects all the worlds, all the universes, and depending on where a man is holding and where a person is standing, that has an effect on the whole *beriah*. And when you see a person who learns Torah down here in this world, it enables him to attach himself to Hashem in the highest of the highest places referred to as גנוי מרום. That's what a person has to know.

THE SPIRITUAL BOND THROUGH TORAH AND MITZVOS

Our *keshet*, our bond, our relationship with Hashem is such that we have the ability to do *avodas Hashem* here, to divest ourselves, to detach ourselves from our physical environment, from the world that all the nations of the world have a *shaychus* to, and elevate ourselves to *mamash* be attached to Hashem. And this is the power of *limud Hatorah*, and *avodas Hashem*. We should not look at it simply as we do learning here. We do *avodas Hashem* here, and Hashem gives us reward in the next world. Actually, when we do *avodas Hashem* over here, we are bonding with Hashem, we are connecting and becoming attached to the Ribon shel Olam. We are really becoming attached to ourselves. We are connecting with our source, our *shoresh*. That's what we are connecting with.

In the *Rambam* it says that even though it's a *mitzvah* to learn Torah by day and by night, most of a person's wisdom is learned by night, believe it or not. Therefore, he says, if a person wants to be *zocheh* to the crown of Torah, he should be very careful with all of his nights, and he should not lose even one of them entirely in sleep, but rather he should deal with תורה ותלמוד and דברי חכמה during his nights. Now, the crown of Torah is the highest level of Torah. That was what Yaakov Avinu was *zocheh* to merit in the *zechus* of his learning for

² Ed. note: Rav Yitzchak Issac Chaver (1789-1852) was the talmid of Rav Menachem Mendel of Shklov (1750-1827), who was a talmid of the Gr"a (1720-1792)

those fourteen years. So we, on our level, should make sure we learn Torah every night. By night, and surely every day. You should learn Torah יומם ולילה.

That's why the power of the *chatzos kollel* where they sit and learn a whole night, every single night, without any vacation, is so great. They learn *motzei Shabbos*, they learn through *bein hazmanim*, through the summer, through the winter, through Chanukah, through everything. It's unbelievable! That's the power of not losing one night. Others are different. Some *chatzos kollels* say Tehillim. A lot of the *chatzos kollels* are simply mini *kollelim*. Some learn for an hour, some learn for an hour and a half, and some even learn for two hours, but to learn the entire night is very rare.

The *kollel* that we're involved in is a *kollel* that learns without one break. The *tenai*, the condition to join this *kollel* is that you learn ברציפות, non-stop. The power of that Torah and the connection those *talmidei chachamim* have with the Ribono shel Olam is on such a level that that's the Torah that holds up the world! That's the Torah that gets Hashem to do things that He wouldn't ordinarily do.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us reach that level. At least we should value our Torah. When we're learning, we should learn with intensity, not by falling asleep, *neshamah* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu while you are engrossed in the learning of Torah.

SHABBOS - NESHAMAH YESEIRAH (5771)

We're going to explain today a little bit about the *neshamah yeseirah*.

On Shabbos, there is a change in the *bria*, but that change is not only in the *bria*. That change transpires within the *nefesh* and the *neshamah* of every single Jewish person in a personal way. Every one of us is *mekabel a tosfos neshamah* into ourselves.

Of course, not everybody gets the same amount of *tosfos*. Everyone gets it according to where he's holding. If a person wasn't *meichin* himself for Shabbos and didn't become a *keili* for the *neshamah yeseirah*, there is nowhere in that person for the *neshamah yeseirah* to be *chal*.

The Rashba explains that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bequeaths of Himself, Hashem takes of His *atzmius* and transforms the world from a place called *olam*, which means hidden, to something where Hashem's Presence is more revealed and recognizable.

And this is what the *neshamah yeseirah* is.

We once learned through a *shtickel* Ohr Hachaim in Ki Sisa that says: ביום שבת באה נשמה יתירה לישראל, like it says in the *passuk*, שבת וינפש. And he writes that this is a *sod ne'elam*, a hidden secret, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was not *megaleh* to the *umos ha'olam*.³

A PIECE OF HASHEM IN US

Now, the reason why it's called *neshamah yeseirah* involves the understanding of our *neshamah* as not simply a *nefesh chayah*. Even the *umos ha'olam* contain a *nefesh chayah*. They have what is called a soul. But there is something unique to Klal Yisrael, who have a *nefesh Eloka mima'al*, which means that Hakadosh Baruch Hu actually took of Himself and implanted a *shtick* of Himself into us. He didn't simply create us. The world is made up of creations of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, but we are not simply creations. Every Yid is a *shtick* of *Eloka mima'al*.

A person thinks I'm a mortal like everybody else. So okay, maybe I have another few drops of *chelek Eloka mima'al*. It's much more than a few drops.

R' Chaim Volozhiner explains that a person is much more *chelek Eloka mima'al* than he is a *guf*. That is why we are referred – the relationship between one's *guf* to one's *neshamah* is the relationship of the shoe to a body. The shoe is not something that covers most of the body. *Chelek katan me'od*.

A person has to know that *be'etzem*, his essence is a *chelek Eloka mima'al* that extends מתחת עד הארץ מתחת and is a part of our *neshamah* in ourselves.

Now, our *ma'asim* all week long either enable us or hinder our ability to connect to and feel that *neshamah*. Someone who is *osek in devarim ruchniyim*, someone who keeps the *shearim*, the hatches, open - as R' Chaim Voloziner puts it - attaches himself to his *neshamah* and feels the connection with *lebedikeit*. But if a person is *choteh*, specifically *lemashal bemachshavah*, then in order for his *neshamah* not to get *shmutzik*, a safety hatch gets engaged and becomes locked, and then he feels no spirituality.

³ עוד יתבאר על פי דבריהם ז"ל (ביצה ט"ז). שאמרו שבים שבת באה נשמה יתירה לישראל כרמז באמרו שבת וינפש, והוא סוד הנעלם שלא גלהו ה' לאומות כאומרם ז"ל (שם) נשמה יתירה לא אודעינהו, והעירוני בצפוני של דבר במה שהקשו בגמרא על הודעת שבת לאומות שאם לא אודעינהו לא לענשו עלה ואמרו שבת אודעינהו נשמה יתירה לא אודעינהו ע"כ, וקשה ולמה לא יבואו כטענה גם כן ויאמרו אם היה מודיעם נשמה יתירה היו מקבלין שבת ולא לענשו עליה, ונראה כי לזה נתחכמו רבותינו ז"ל ואמרו (שכת י'): מתנה טובה וכו' פירוש כי אין דבר זה אלא בגדר מתנה אשר נתרצה ה' לתת לעמו ואינה שכר שיבואו בטענה האומות כזכר כי אין דרך לומר למה לא נתת לנו מתנה גם אנחנו, עוד תמצא כי כבר קבלו ישראל עליהם שמירת שבת קודם נתינת נשמה יתירה, ומעתה ענוש יענשו כל האומות על השבת ועינינו ראוות. [וענין נשמה זו היתירה רמזו מקומה רבותינו באומרם מתנה טובה בבית גנזי וידוע הוא מקום הנקרא גנזי המלך שהוא בחינת עולם עליון ונשמה זו מחצבה שם היא ולזה תקרא שבת כאומרם ושבת שמה כשם העולם שממנו היא שנקרא עולם שכולו שבת (ר"ה ל"א). ועולם זה אין בו עצבון ועליו לא בא כדבריהם בו אלא עונג ושמחה, ולזה צוה ה' להרחיק ביום שבת כל אותם בחינות החול המלאכה והעיניו כי באחת מהנה תגלע הנשמה משבת בקרב איש, ולזה תמצא שעיקר איסור אזהרת מלאכות שבת ביאר ה' שהם במחשבה כאומרם (ביצה י"ג). מלאכת מחשבת אסרה תורה, ואפילו דבור של חול אסור (שבת ק"ג): דכתיב (ישעי' נ"ח) ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר, והכל לצד תוספת נשמה העליונה לעשות לפניה כסדר עולם שבאה ממנו, והוא מה שצוה ה' באמרו ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת פירוש נשמה הנקראת שבת ותכלית שמירה זו היא השגת עולם ששמו שבת, והוא אמרו לעשות את השבת, ותדע כי מן הנמנע החלטי שישגי אדם עלות לעולם עליון זולת באמצעות השגת ענף ממנו בהיותו בעולם הזה, ולזה אם לא ישיגו ישראל בחינת נשמה זו אין בהם יכולת לעמוד בגדר עליון. והוא אמרו לעשות את השבת פירוש באמצעותו תעשו לכם את השבת שתוכלו השג עמוד שם ולהתענג נפשם בגנזי עליון, ואמרו לדורותם כי שם יתבצו כל דורות בני ישראל שהיא בחינת עולם הבא] (אור החיים, שמות ל"א:טז)

TRUE SPIRITUALITY

Sometimes you meet a person and ask them how they feel, and they say, "I feel no spirituality whatsoever." Many times, I have met *yeshivah bachurim*, and I say, "Have you ever felt *ruchniyus*?" They say, "No." I say, "You should know, that is very telling." They say, "No, some people are just emotional and some people are not." I say, "It's not an emotion." Emotional people think they are experiencing spirituality. That's not spirituality. That's emotionalism, it's a *naarishkeit*. And the *raya* is, it's not *moshech* them to do the *ratzon* Hashem.

When I feel a *kesher* to somebody, I am drawn to that person. If I feel a *kesher* with my parents, I want to call them, I want to find out how they are doing. If I feel a *kesher* to my *rebbe*, I want to call him, I want to hear something from him. I want to know how he is feeling, how he's doing, how is his *mishpachah*.

A person who feels a *kesher* to the Ribono Shel Olam, if he gets in touch with his spirituality, he now wants to learn more, he wants to *daven* more. He doesn't want to go into the woods and pick flowers or go bathing in the ocean, or ride a horse. As one person once told me, when he gets spiritual, he likes to ride on a horse on the beach. There are those who told me that they had such experiences, when they have taken different substances, it makes them feel very spiritual. I told them that's not spiritual. That's called being under the influence. That's called nuts. That called you lost your mind. That's not called spiritual.

Spirituality is when you actually have a *meshichah* to the Ribono Shel Olam.

A PULL TO HASHEM, OR TO GASHMIYUS

Now, naturally, a human being has a *ratzon* to do what's right, while his *guf* is always desiring to do what's wrong. That's a constant battle and a struggle. A person who is *nimshach* and opens up the gate for spirituality, that person is *nimshach* now toward Hashem. He finds it easier to do the *ratzon* Hashem.

So if a person wakes up in the morning and he doesn't feel a *meshichah*, so the first thing he has to do is clear his mind. You know what it means to say? His mind is sullied. That's what it means. His mind is a *shtick shmutz* and he has no *meshichah* to *yahadus*. Because a person who has a *meshichah* to *yahadus*, that's the first thing he would do - try to clear his mind. Especially if a person is a *bachur* and he thinks no one knows this. It's very known. A person's behavior is very revealing of what's going on inside. If you see a person who is running after garbage, what are you supposed to think? "Really, he's a *tzaddik*, but this moment he decided to go after garbage?" If you see all of a sudden a bunch of flies coming down on a piece of meat, what do you know? You know one thing. There is no fresh meat there. It's rotten, *shmutzige* meat. If there are lots of flies, you know it's *tzo'ah gedolah*. You know it's an *emese neveilah musrachas*. You should know that. It's a *metzius*.

So a person all week long has a certain *meshichah*. You see certain *bachurim*, and even adults, they have an uncontrollable *meshichah* to *gashmiyus*. That's because they are not in touch with their *neshamah*. When a person develops more of a *shaychus* to the *neshamah*, all of a sudden, it becomes easier. He is more *mischashek* for *ruchniyus*. It doesn't mean to say he doesn't have a *ta'am* in *gashmiyus* anymore. It doesn't mean he lost his awareness. That takes a long time to lose. But it means to say, I have a *ratzon* to do this.

THE MESHICAH ON SHABBOS

On Shabbos, what happens is, a person's *guf* becomes diminished, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu expands his *neshamah*. And now it's much easier. You can test if you have any *shaychus* to Shabbos: if you find it easier to be *misgaber* on your *yetzer haras* on Shabbos than on the weekend. I'm not saying you feel like you want to fly, but this is a simple test you can do at home.

We all remember a time when it came Shabbos afternoon, and the last thing that was on your mind was sitting and learning. The *cheshek hagadol ve'hanora* to sleep was *lemaalah min hatevah*. That's how it is. I remember it very clearly. First, you try to play, *שניה בשבת תענוג* card. Then you try to blame it on the cholent, or whatever else you can blame it on. One thing is for sure; it has to do with pure *chumriyus*. You are an *adam megusham*, you are an *ish gas*, that's what you are. Because Shabbos - it's like Yom Kippur.

The Brisker Rav was once asked this question. How come you see *freier yidden* going to *shul* Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? They had an Elul?! They heard *shmuessen*?! They were at a *sichas mussar*? What did they do? No *shaychus* to that. Did they hear Shiurei Da'as?! No, of course not. The *teretz* is, because the *frum* people become *frummer* and that creates a *hashpa'ah*.

You have to know, it's much easier to sit and learn on Shabbos than it is during the week. During the week, when you have less *neshamah yeseirah*, there is a much bigger challenge. I don't care what anybody says. On Shabbos, it's much, much easier to overcome the *yetzer hara*. We are not saying there is no *yetzer hara*. There is a *yetzer hara*, but it's easier to overcome it.

Here is a *bachur* or somebody else, and all he's doing on Shabbos is investing in his *tumah*. Like the Chofetz Chaim says, by speaking *dibburim assurim*, a person is *metamei* his *guf*, and his *nefesh legamri*. And not *stam*. It is his mouth, he says, that runs the whole system, and the *guy* is *metamei* his *gantze zich*. A person opens up his mouth - boom.

You don't understand. I'm telling you. Test it. When I became aware of this, I began to make tests. You don't have to be on a big *madreigah* to be able to test it. Make an honest test. Can I sit and learn? Ask yourself - most people don't know themselves. They fool themselves. A lot of *bachurim* think they can learn three hours straight in *seider*, in their dreams. The only thing they do three hours straight is sleep. Very few people could have a *retzifus* of *shalosh sha'os* if they don't practice it. Those of you who practiced it got to some *retzifus*, and those who didn't practice it, maybe 30 minutes on a good day, without taking breaks. A *mentch* has to realize that. A person has to know himself. So know yourself. And then see on Shabbos if you committed yourself. Prepare yourself for Shabbos. That's the first thing. If you are not *meichin* for Shabbos, it's not going to work.

And you'll be shocked to find that on Shabbos, it's much easier to overcome your *yetzer hara* than any other time of the week. And *yetzer hara* bamboozles us into thinking, "Nah, *שבת אתה שלי*, Shabbos, you're mine. During the week, I want you to leave your fighting with me." Not on Shabbos.

EVERY JEW BECOMES A BEIS HAMIKDASH ON SHABBOS

You have to understand, Shabbos is such an opportunity to form and develop a *kesher*, a *chibur*, between Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the world, as a whole, and with Klal Yisrael *be'frat*. It says in the *passuk* in relation to Shabbos, לַדַּעַת כִּי אֲנִי ה' מְקַדְשָׁכֶם (Shemos 31:13). You know what that means, לַדַּעַת כִּי אֲנִי ה' מְקַדְשָׁכֶם? R' Tzadok HaKohen explains that it means, "I make you a *mikdash*." Every Jew becomes a *Beis Hamikdash* on Shabbos. That means a person becomes a *makom* for *hashra'as haShechinah*. This is the greatest *matanah tovah* of Shabbos.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu לא נתתי לגויי הארצות. A *goy* will try everything. This he can't have. The *mishkan* was a *keili* for *hashra'as haShechinah* and *kedushah* in the hearts of people.

That's what we say, ולא מצא היונה מנוח, as the song we sing, יונה מצאה בו מנוח. The Zohar says, ולא מצא היונה בו מנוח, you know what that refers to? In *galus*. When the *yidden* are in *galus*, the *yonah*, meaning Hakadosh Baruch Hu, doesn't find *mono'ach*. אלא שבת קודש, only on Shabbos Kodesh.

The next time you sing יונה מצאה בו מנוח, think about that.

Fortunate is the person who prepares himself for the *dira noa*, and that's when we become the *zug*, the mate of Shabbos, because we attach ourselves to the *Shechinah* and the *malchus* of Shabbos. The *derech* of a *zivug*, when a *zivug* mates with his mate, he always produces. There are *totzaos* and *tolados*. Here, the *totzaos* is a person who could become *niskadesh*. A person could feel his *nishmas kol chai*. That's what a person could get in touch with.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SHABBOS

So attempt it. Know that you have a *neshamah*. Understand your *gadlus*. Understand what Hashem put into you and think. Use your brains for one second. Think, is it worth it? Should I blow my Shabbos over one *shtick dibur asur*? Should I blow my Shabbos and get angry, *chas veshalom*? Angry, forget about it. You get angry, you might as well go to sleep and sleep the rest of the Shabbos because all you have is your *ragzanus* (anger).⁴ And even if you're not such a *tzaddik*, at least make this test to discover. Make a test, could I sit and learn better?

I'll be honest with you, I remember being shocked. If you would have told me it was *shayach* to wake up early on any day, I would have said, maybe, but not Shabbos. On Shabbos, it's not *shayach*. But then I said, "Why not?" If this is the *emes*, if this is a true theory, why do I sleep late on Shabbos? Because my *yetzer tov*? No. The *yetzer hara* tells me I need sleep, that's all. That's what the *yetzer hara* always tells you, "a person needs sleep." So you make a test. See if you can get up a half hour earlier. It's an amazing thing.

I'm doing you a *tovah, rabbosai*. I'm trying to train you to establish for life an awareness of the power that you have. If you know the *kochos hanefesh* you have, you seize this opportunity. I look at the *nebachs* – I look at some people and say, you are the *nebach*. They have such power and such *koach*, and they throw it away.

Let's be *mechazek* ourselves this Shabbos, and let us attempt to get in touch with ourselves and feel our *neshamah yeseirah* and know that it's the *neshamah yeseirah*. Because the *yetzer hara* doesn't get diminished, the *neshamah* gets strengthened. That's what happens on Shabbos.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

IN CONCLUSION

On Shabbos, every one of us receives an addition to our *neshamah*. According to the amount of preparation we do is the amount of addition that we will receive. The *neshamah yeseirah* is unique to Klal Yisrael, who already have a *nefesh Eloka mima'al*. The *goyim* do not have either of these spiritual dimensions. Our actions, and particularly our thoughts, are what determines how ready we will be for the *neshamah yeseirah*, come Shabbos. With a *neshamah yeseirah*, we can feel the connection to spirituality and feel drawn to Hashem. Doing *mitzvos*, such as learning Torah, is easier. If, during the week we invest, such as by having a clear mind, avoiding *dibburim assurim*, and avoiding anger, we'll find that on Shabbos it's much easier to overcome the *yetzer hara* in those same areas, as Hashem rests His *Shechinah* on each and every Yid who can receive it. We can each do a check and see if it is easier to overcome the *yetzer hara* on Shabbos than on a different day. This week (*bli neder*), I will try to avoid some of the temptations that disturb *ruchniyus*, and clear my mind of *gashmiyus* distractions. Then on Shabbos, I will test how well I can feel the *neshamah yeseirah*: Can I sit and learn? Is it easier to overcome the desire to sleep away most of Shabbos? Is it easier to avoid becoming angry? Is it easier to do what's right in general?

⁴ דרש בר קפרא: רגזן לא עלתה בידו אלא רגזנותא (קידושין מ' ב ; רש"י: לא עלה בידו - בשכרו אלא כחש בשרו ברגזנותו לא נשתכר כלום)