



Likkutei Sichos

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Bringing Shabbos Down to Earth

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1.

A BOUNDLESS HERITAGE

Regarding Hashem's blessing to our forefather Yaakov,¹ "You shall burst forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south," our Sages teach:²

Whoever delights in the Shabbos is granted a boundless heritage, as it says,³ "{If you proclaim the Shabbos a delight...} then you will be granted pleasure with Hashem... and I will provide you with the heritage of your forefather Yaakov." Your heritage will not be like that of Avraham... not like that of Yitzchak... but rather, like that of Yaakov, about whom it says, "You shall burst forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south."⁴

As known,⁵ a *mitzvah's* reward is measure-for-measure.⁶ We must therefore clarify: How is the *mitzvah* of (delighting in) Shabbos considered "boundless," for which reason its reward is also "a **boundless heritage**"?

2.

SHABBOS WAS UNIQUE TO YAAKOV

That the blessing "you shall burst forth" ("a boundless heritage") is the reward for observing Shabbos is taught also regarding Yaakov himself. Our Sages say:⁷

Avraham, about whom Scripture doesn't mention Shabbos observance, inherited the world⁸ in a measured way, as it says,⁹ "Rise,

¹ Bereishis 28:14.

² Shabbos 118a ff.

³ Yeshayahu 58:14.

⁴ {While the inheritance of Avraham and Yitzchak in the land of Israel was limited, Yaakov's was boundless.}

⁵ Sotah 8b, 9b, et al.

⁶ {Commensurate with the *mitzvah*.}

⁷ Midrash Bereishis Rabbah 11:7, Piskta Rabbati, end of ch. 23.

⁸ In Pesikta Rabbati, loc. cit., it says "the land."

⁹ Bereishis 13:17.

walk in the land, to its length and to its breadth...” But Yaakov, regarding whom Scripture does mention Shabbos observance, as it says,¹⁰ “He encamped before the city” — he arrived right before sunset {late Friday afternoon} and established *techumin*¹¹ while still daytime — inherited the world without measure, as it says,¹² “Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth...”

The commentators¹³ explain that the meaning of the clause, “Avraham, about whom Scripture does not mention Shabbos observance” is (not that the Torah makes no mention at all that Avraham observed Shabbos — since the Torah does say about Avraham that “he kept My charge.”¹⁴ And our Sages expounded this as teaching as meaning that “Avraham was knew even the laws of *eruv chatzeros*”¹⁵ — but rather) that his Shabbos observance is neither mentioned “explicitly” nor “specifically.”¹⁶ It is said only as part of a general statement, and is included with {Avraham’s observance of} all the other Torah *mitzvos*. In contrast, the Torah “specifically” teaches that Yaakov observed Shabbos.

Since the Torah emphasizes the *mitzvah* of Shabbos observance in relation to Yaakov (and not Avraham), this itself shows that Yaakov’s observance of Shabbos was more outstanding than the other *mitzvos* {that he observed}. And stemming from this unique quality of his Shabbos observance, he merited to receive the blessing that “you shall burst forth.”

We must also say that since of all the details of Yaakov’s Shabbos observance, the Torah mentions explicitly that he “established *techumin*,” we can infer that although the blessing of “you shall burst forth” is associated with the observance of Shabbos in general (as the Sages’ nuanced wording suggests, “Yaakov, about whom Shabbos observance {in

¹⁰ *Bereishis* 33:18.

¹¹ {Establishing a temporary place of residence beyond city limits before Shabbos — “*eruv techumin*” — allows a person to travel 2,000 cubits from the location of their *eruv* during Shabbos.}

¹² *Bereishis* 28:14.

¹³ Rashi and *Maharzav* on *Bereishis Rabbah*, loc. cit.

¹⁴ *Bereishis* 26:5

¹⁵ {The laws pertaining to how to allow carrying in a shared courtyard on Shabbos.} *Bereishis Rabba* 64:4, and Rashi ad loc.

¹⁶ {In the Hebrew original, “*b’derech prat.*”}

general} is mentioned”), nevertheless, this blessing is especially connected with *techumin*.

In other words, Yaakov excelled specifically in this unique facet of Shabbos observance — the *mitzvah* of *techumin*.

We need to clarify:

- a) What was the unique quality of Yaakov’s Shabbos observance compared with the Shabbos observance of Avraham? And by virtue of this unique quality, the *mitzvah* {of *techumin*} is only mentioned in the Torah about Yaakov, and Yaakov received the blessing of “you shall burst forth.”
- b) Why was this his special quality specifically expressed by *techumin*?

3.

EQUALLY RESTING

We can clarify this by prefacing with a teaching of the Mittlerer Rebbe — who was released {from prison} on the tenth of Kislev¹⁷ — in his discourse “*Atah Echad*,”¹⁸ where the difference between the *mitzvah* of Shabbos and other *mitzvos* is explained:

Other *mitzvos* are observed by a person “expending effort and performing an action.” As such, there are distinctions between the way great *tzaddikim* observe a *mitzvah* and the way simple folk do. For example, in contrast to simple folk, when great *tzaddikim* don *tefillin* {on their arms} opposite their hearts and on their heads, their hearts and (brains in) their heads in turn are elevated to an exalted spiritual plane. The same distinction applies to other *mitzvos*.

¹⁷ The date the discourse (that this *sichah* is based on) was said {by the Rebbe in 1961}.

¹⁸ Mittlerer Rebbe’s *maamar* “*Atah Echad*,” end of p. 8 ff. (pub. in a separate booklet, 1965).

Conversely, regarding the *mitzvah* of Shabbos observance, which consists of resting and **abstaining** from activity — “do not,” desisting {from *melachah*}¹⁹ — there is no difference between one Jew and another. True, simple folk desist from simple work, whereas those who worked on the *Mishkan* desisted from {the more noble function of} working on the *Mishkan* — additionally, desisting from work also includes desisting from the *avodas habirurim*²⁰ that happens during the week — the only difference between people {in the abstinence of work} is the type of work from which they desist. But as far as the actual cessation itself is concerned, “everyone is truly equal.”²¹

When a person fulfills perfectly the requirement to desist and rest {from *melachah*} because “in his eyes, it is as if all his work is done,”²² and “for the sake of delighting in Shabbos,” he has “no thoughts at all about his work,” then “there is no²³ greater form of delight.”²⁴

4.

SUBLIME REST

The Mittlerer Rebbe explains that everyone is equal regarding the *mitzvah* of Shabbos because the primary observance of the *mitzvah* of Shabbos is for “the essence of the soul to rest — the level of *yechidah*,²⁵ which is higher than anything {the lower planes of the soul} revealed within the brain and the heart.” Meaning, the *mitzvah* of Shabbos is associated with the soul’s essence, the level of *yechidah*. Therefore, there are no distinctions between one Jew and another, since at the level of *yechidah*, all Jews are equal from the greatest to the most simple.

¹⁹ {The 39 categories of prohibited activity on *Shabbos*.}

²⁰ {The spiritual *avodah* of extracting and refining the Divine sparks concealed within the world.}

²¹ Mittlerer Rebbe’s *maamar* “*Atah Echad*,” p. 9.

²² Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 306, par. 21.

²³ Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, *ibid.*, based on the *Tur* (*Semak*, end of sec. 280 (281))

²⁴ As to how delight of Shabbos results from desisting from *melachah* and from Shabbos rest, see *Siddur Im Dach*, p. 174a ff.; p. 199c ff.; *Hemshech* 5666, p. 543ff., et. al.

²⁵ {The quintessence of the soul that is one (*yachid*) with Hashem.}

Based on this, the Mittlerer Rebbe explains the wording of the *mincha* prayer of Shabbos: “From You is their rest, and by their rest they sanctify Your Name”:

Shabbos rest comes from “You Yourself” — from Hashem’s essence. Therefore, the Jews’ Shabbos rest is also associated with the very essence of the soul — the level of *yechidah*.

“And by their rest, they sanctify Your Name”: The potential to give up one’s life to sanctify Hashem’s Name is found in its entirety in every Jew equally, because the ability to give up one’s life to sanctify Hashem’s Name stems from the soul’s level of *yechidah*. Therefore, “by their rest they sanctify {Your Name}...” — because resting on Shabbos and sanctifying Hashem’s Name are both associated with the level of *yechidah*.

5.

BEYOND MAKIF

Every Jew’s *yechidah* is {always} whole regardless of the state of his {particular} abilities because the *yechidah* is completely elevated beyond a person’s soul faculties— it surpasses the plane of “revelation.”

Meaning, the soul’s *yechidah* is more sublime than even the levels of the soul’s *makifim*,²⁶ since those *makifim* levels {still} influence a person relative {to the total detachment of *yechidah*}. As Chassidus explains²⁷ regarding the teaching of our Sages,²⁸ “Even though they did not see it, their *mazal* saw it” — the level of *mazal*²⁹ of the soul, which is the soul’s *makif*, is the source for feelings of remorse that befall a person without any preparation on his part, etc.

²⁶ {The encompassing levels of the soul, which sublimely surround the soul and generally remain external.}

²⁷ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Bamidbar*” p. 16a ff; “*Teitzei*” p. 36d; “*Haazinu*” p. 71d, et. al.

²⁸ *Megillah* 3a; *Sanhedrin* 94a.

²⁹ {Lit., “a flow” from Above, it connotes fortune, or guardian angel.}

But the *yechidah* is beyond having a revealed effect upon the person. In fact, it appears as if the *yechidah* has no connection with him. Therefore, the *yechidah* cannot dwell in the vessel of the body. Moreover, it cannot even dwell in the encompassing elements of a person, such as one's garments or home, where a soul's *makif* levels reside — because these encompassing elements are related and tailored to the person.

[Not only do “garments,” which are a “close *makif*,” surround the person in a manner tailored to the size of the one wearing the garments, but even the “home,” which is a “distant *makif*” and is far from the person,³⁰ also has a connection and relative value³¹ to him.]

Consequently, *yechidah* cannot repose there, since *yechidah* is **altogether** removed from the person.

The *yechidah* can only reside (as is explained in the above mentioned discourse {of the Mittlerer Rebbe}) in a person's four cubits “which are at the furthest possible distance, where there is no greater distance.” Therefore, that is where the soul's *yechidah* can dwell.

This is the reason for law concerning the four cubits on Shabbos,³² which our Sages derive³³ from the verse,³⁴ “Let each man remain in his place; let no man leave his place”: Because on Shabbos, there is a revelation of *yechidah*, which dwells {specifically} in a person's four cubits.

³⁰ {Both clothing and shelter surround a person, but clothing closely surrounds him, and is tailored to his specific dimensions, while shelter is distant and is not tailored to a particular individual.}

³¹ {In the Hebrew original, “*erech*.”}

³² {E.g., a person who leaves the *techum* on Shabbos can only move within his personal four cubits.}

³³ *Eruvin* 48a, 51a; *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Eruvin* 4:1; *Mechilta*, “*Beshalach*,” ch. 16, v. 29.

³⁴ *Shemos* 16:29.

6.

YECHIDAH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH SHABBOS

Based on all the above, we can understand the connection between the blessing that “you shall burst forth” and the *mitzvah* of Shabbos: “You shall burst forth” connotes a “**boundless heritage**,” which in its truest sense refers the breadth of Hashem’s Essence, which has no limitations **whatsoever**. And this is elicited by observing Shabbos, since “from You is their rest” — “from Your very Essence.”³⁵

This was also the advantage of Yaakov’s Shabbos observance over that of Avraham’s:

In Avraham’s case, the Torah incorporates the detail of his Shabbos observance together with his observance of Torah **in general** because Avraham’s mission was not to demonstrate openly the advantage of Shabbos observance over other *mitzvos* — the revelation of the level of *yechidah*.

The aspect of *yechidah* radiated specifically with Yaakov (who personified the middle vector,³⁶ the only vector that ascends all the way to the innermost level of *Kesser*).³⁷ Yaakov’s abnegation to Hashem was absolute, and was openly evinced in his Shabbos observance, as elucidated above. This is why the Torah says (as a preface to the blessing, “you shall burst forth”), “Your offspring shall be as the **dust** of the earth,” since “dust” symbolizes absolute *bittul*.

³⁵ {Thus, drawing Hashem’s Essence into this world is accomplished through the observance of Shabbos.} See *Ohr HaTorah*, “Vayetzei,” 191b; *Maharsha, Chiddushei Aggados*, on *Shabbos* 118a, on the passage beg. “*Kol hame’aneg est haShabbos*.”

³⁶ {For an explanation of the terms *kesser* (infra), and “vector” (in the Hebrew original, “*kav*”), see <https://www.chabad.org/2329519>}

³⁷ {The highest *sefira* is called *kesser* or “crown,” identified with the will and desire of Hashem. Because of its sublimity, it is not typically counted among the ten *sefiros*.}

7.

A PERSON'S *YECHIDAH* SPACE

This also clarifies why from among all of the laws of Shabbos observance, the *mitzvah* of *techumin* is singled out about Yaakov: A person's "*techum*" is similar to his four cubits, since the "*techum*"³⁸ becomes "his place" (which is why this concept is derived³⁹ from the verse,⁴⁰ "let no man leave **his place**"). From this we understand that the revelation of *yechidah* is associated with a person's *techum*.

In other words: Just as *yechidah* dwells within a person's four cubits, so, too, we can posit that an indwelling of this sort occurs within people's general "space" — in a person's *techum*.

Therefore, although *yechidah* is expressed in the fulfillment of the Shabbos commandments as a whole, *yechidah* has a particular connection with *techumim* — since it is within these {demarcated areas} that the indwelling of *yechidah* occurs.

-Based on the *maamar* entitled, "*Vehaya Zaracha*," delivered on Shabbos *parshas Vayetzei*, 10 Kislev 5722 (1961)

³⁸ {The location where he establishes residency for Shabbos.}

³⁹ *Eruvin* 51a; *Yerushalmi*, loc cit; *Mechilta*, loc cit; *Shemos* 21:13; Rashi and *Targum Yonanon ben Uziel* on *Shemos* 16:29.

⁴⁰ {*Shemos*, *ibid.*}