



פרשת ויצא

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

A Career of Preparing

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Part I. Preparing For Marriage

A Lifetime Career

We're going to talk now about a subject that's applicable in many aspects of our lives. I'll call it *hachanah*, the subject of 'Preparing.' Now, don't be fooled by that one word and think that it's nothing, that it's not much of a subject – it's very important! Actually we'll see that it's such an important and far-reaching principle that we should really call the subject of tonight's talk 'A Career of Preparing.' Because once we understand what it means we'll see that it's actually a life-time career. But first an introduction, a little diversion.

When Yaakov Avinu was told by his parents to go to Charan and to take a wife from there so there's no question that he fulfilled his parents' command. **וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שֶׁבַע** – And Yaakov left from his parents' home in Be'er Sheva, **וַיֵּלֶךְ דְּרָוְנָה** – and he went straight to Charan (Vayetzey 28:10). Only that he didn't. It took him fourteen years to

get there; When our Sages calculated the years of Yaakov's life they found fourteen years that were missing. And they tell us that those were the years between the day he left home and the day he arrived in Charan; he got lost in the middle. That *possuk* took fourteen years from beginning to end!

So what was he doing? Where was he? So the Chachomim tell us that **הָיָה יַעֲקֹב בְּבֵית עֵבֶר מְטַמֵּן** **הָיָה יַעֲקֹב בְּבֵית עֵבֶר מְטַמֵּן** – all those years he was hiding out in the yeshiva of Eiver (Megillah 17a).

Studying A Parent's Command

And what was he doing there? He was studying. What else do you do in a yeshivah? In the Academy of Eiver, that's where the great teachings which had been handed down were being transmitted. And so, Yaakov instead of going straight to Padan Aram, he traveled to a *makom torah* and he sat at the feet of his great teacher, Eiver, and he studied for fourteen years.

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But the question is: that's not what his parents told him to do. His parents didn't say a word about going to the *yeshivah*. They told him to get married. קום לך פדנה ארם ביתה בתואל אבי אמך וקח לך. ממש אשה. It's as clear as a command could be: "Go to Padan Aram to the house of your mother's father, Besuel, and take from there a wife" (Bereishis 28:2).

So we'll understand that Yaakov Avinu studied his parents' commands the same way we study the Torah's commands. His parents' words carried weight with him and he studied them with *iyun*, with serious thought, and with *mefarshim*, commentaries. And he said, "If my parents told me to get married that means that I should make a *hachanah*; I should prepare."

Places That Destroy Marriage

The truth is we understand such a thing on our own. If your mother tells you to go to the grocery to buy a bottle of milk, she doesn't have to tell you to put on your shoes before you go. If it's cold outside, she doesn't have to tell you to put on your coat. "Go to the grocery and buy milk" means: make whatever preparations are required so that you can buy the milk.

"And so," Yaakov was thinking, "if my father and mother want me to marry, it means I have to make myself ready for marriage." And where is the place to prepare for marriage? You don't prepare for marriage by going to public high school or college. That's the place where you prepare to destroy a marriage. That's the place where you learn how *not* to be married. Even if they would advocate marriages – which unfortunately these *reshaim* don't always do, but even if they would advocate marriage, with their kind of marriage, you see what happens. It ends up in disaster.

So Yaakov understood that when his parents said "go and get married", it meant "go prepare yourself in the academies of the sages". "Get married" meant ילמד תורה ואחר כך ישא אשה – Learn

Torah first and after that, *then* you get married (Kiddushin 29b).

Solving The Shidduch Crisis

Now why is that? Why should you study Torah first? Why can't you get married and learn afterward? So the Gemara there gives us an important reason, a true reason. רחים בצוארו ויעסק בתורה. If you'll get married first, you'll have a millstone around your neck. You have a wife and then children come along, you have mouths to feed and rent to pay, so you're not able to learn.

But Yaakov Avinu understood that besides רחים בצוארו, there's another big reason, a more important reason. Because Yaakov Avinu was able to learn all the time. He had a big head, a very good head, and with him that reason didn't apply. Learning Torah first has a higher significance than the practical problem of a millstone on the neck. And that's the significance of *getting ready* to be married. You need to be prepared! Marriage means you must learn how to be a husband or a wife and you must learn how to be a father or a mother. These are two great careers and it's a pity that young people are permitted to enter these two careers without any preparation.

It's a pity girls get married at the age of seventeen and eighteen. Girls should have to wait until they're forty. They should get *semichah*, *girl-semichah*, in order to be married. Of course, she can't wait that long. By the time she's ready, she's wrinkled and her teeth all fell out; she can't have children either. And so a girl who will wait till she's ready for marriage will never get married. Besides the fact that nobody will take her, she won't take anybody else because she's too smart. She'll see everybody's faults.

Training Chaim and Chana

A boy too. A *bochur*, a *frum bochur*, he's very very *frum*. But he's still very raw material. He needs to prepare. Actually his parents have to begin preparing him when he's three. "Chaim'l,

you can't do that." "Chanale, say 'thank you' when someone gives you a plate of food." So little Chaim'l and little Chanale are preparing to be decent spouses.

Chaim'l says, "Pa, can I buy a bike?" The father says no.

"Pa, can I buy this nosherie?" asks Chanale. "No."

Whether it's because his Pa can't afford it or because his Pa thinks it's not good for him, that "No!" is a gift of preparation.

Otherwise, when your son or daughter get married, they're not ready. You know what happens when you have two people who all their lives never heard no and now they're married and one says no to the other, it's a trauma. That's a shock that they cannot take. "What do you mean no?!" she says to her husband. "But I really want to buy that carpet." And him too; he wants to do this and this. "What do you mean I can't go there?" he says. They never heard of no before in their lives. They were not trained for marriage. They were not trained for life.

The Third Party

But that's only the beginning. You need a lot more training, a lot more learning Torah, than that. Learning Torah doesn't mean you learn a piece of Bava Kama and that's all. Unfortunately the way it's taught in the *yeshivos* is not a preparation for marriage. Torah means a lot more. It's a pity it's not being taught in all places properly.

The number one piece of Torah is realizing that you are marrying now for the purpose of doing the will of Hashem, for *avodas Hashem*. You're not marrying for fun and good times, just for the adventure of it. And therefore even if you have a husband or a wife who might be disappointing in some ways – which usually is the case – nevertheless, you do your duty because you're not serving your spouse, you're serving Hashem. And that's so important that we're told

that at the *chuppah*, when the *chosson* and the *kallah* are standing under the *chuppah*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is there with them; He's the third party.

It's not our subject for tonight, preparing for marriage, but at least that we should realize. It takes a lot of Torah learning, a lot of Torah preparation, to make a successful marriage. Two people, a man and a woman especially – naturally both are *frum* and loyal to the Torah, but even within the Torah framework each one did what he or she wanted more or less. And now instead of being interested only in what you want, there's a new roommate who's constantly standing in your way. It's a big wrench! It's like taking a car that's travelling full speed in one direction and suddenly trying to turn it around the other direction. And that's why even in the best marriages there always is a strain; and in the weaker marriages there's a smash up. It takes a great deal of preparation to learn how to get along with somebody else; there's *Toras chesed*, and the Torah of being *mevater*, the Torah of *shtikah*; so many Torahs.

And so it would be a boon for the marriage if Chaim and Chana could spend fourteen years in the *yeshivah* like Yaakov did. Only we can't do that. If you'll be fourteen years in the *yeshivah*, so they'll make the *chasunah* in the old age home. And you want to have children too.

The Important Mission

Yaakov Avinu was a special situation. Because like the Rambam says, the sole desire of the Avos was *l'haamid umah ovedes es Hashem*, to establish a nation that would serve Hashem. And when you have to succeed at a very important mission, the preparation for that mission is very crucial for its success. Suppose you have to accomplish something like building a tall office building. You will have to spend a lot of time and effort making the plans for the building. It takes a long time to draw up plans for such a building. Yaakov Avinu

knew that getting married and having children was immensely more important than building a skyscraper. His getting married and having children was an accomplishment *adei ad*. He had to accomplish the building of a nation and therefore he had to prepare himself with the utmost *shleimus*.

A young man of twenty-one gets married and he makes all kinds of mistakes. He doesn't have the experience needed because he didn't learn too much about it. But little by little, by trial and error and some troubles, he is able to settle down after a while. But Yaakov Avinu couldn't afford trial and error. He couldn't afford such a thing because he was creating a nation, and if you're going to be the progenitor of the Holy Nation, you can't just jump into it like a bull in a china shop. And so although at that time he was already a 'young man' in his late sixties, he understood that for something to be most successful it takes preparation. And the more preparing, the more successful.

There's a tremendous lesson here because it's not only marriage that requires *hachanah*. Everything in life becomes better with preparation. We only mentioned the story of Yaakov Avinu so that we should see how a great man understood that *hachanah* was included in the command even though it wasn't told to him. Because it is included! It's a principle that applies in everything you do, all your life. Whatever you have to do, if it's done without preparation, it will be a failure – maybe not a failure *ingantzen* but compared to what it could have been, we'll have to call it a failure. A successful life requires *hachanah*.

Part II. Preparing For Life

The Idealist Leaves A Mess

Now, this attitude we're talking about now, preparation, is something we can practice every

day. Just to hear the idea but not to practice it is a waste – it goes in one ear, out the other, and it's forgotten. You have to make it real, it has to be practical.

I'll give you a few examples but you shouldn't limit it to these – you have to take the principle and apply it as far as you can. It's a Career of Preparing. Everything you do in this world becomes more valuable, more perfect, according to the preparation that's put into it. And the more we practice up, the more it changes our entire attitude as we walk through this world.

We'll start with a small example. Let's say you're a girl and you're a big idealist, so you rushed to get here; you wanted to hear Rabbi Miller's lecture. And so you dressed rapidly and left some stuff lying on the floor, your stockings and your other shoes and so on.

Now the lecture is finished and you're about to come back into your house. So while you're holding the doorknob, stop. Stop! You remember what you heard at the lecture about preparing? So before you turn the doorknob, get ready because your mother might greet you with a barrage: "How dare you leave your room a mess like that! I had to bend over picking up everything off the floor for you!"

Steel Yourself

And right away you'll get angry and you'll open your big mouth and it will be a scene, and you'll go to sleep all broken up. Instead of going to sleep inspired, you're discouraged now and broken up because of the fight you had with your mother.

So as you're holding the doorknob, make a *hachanah*! Prepare for that *mitzvah* of *kibud av v'eim*. Get ready and think about the worst that could happen. Your mother will say, "You lazy thing! I'm always cleaning up after you! I have to wash the dishes for you all the time. You run off for good times, to hear lectures, and I have to

prepare for Shabbos and I get no help from you.” Maybe she’ll say worse things. Be prepared! Steel yourself for the occasion and get ready for the ordeal.

As you’re holding the doorknob you say, “Come what may, even if she’ll heap hot coals on my head, I’m going to be a *tzidkanis*. I’ll keep my mouth shut. And maybe I’ll be strong enough to say, “You’re right mother.” Of course next week you should come again anyhow.

That’s the way to prepare in life. Don’t worry now about big preparations. Fourteen years in the *yeshivah*, that’s a very big *hachanah* for a very big person. No; we’ll start small. We’ll take baby steps and that way we’ll get into the habit of making *hachanos* as we make our way through life.

Let’s Go To Shul

Isn’t it a pity that we walk to shul every morning and on the way we’re talking with a friend or a neighbor small talk – or if we’re alone we think small thoughts – and meanwhile we’re frittering away a glorious opportunity. The *possuk* says **הַבּוֹן לְקִרְאת אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל** – Prepare yourself to meet your Hashem, Yisroel and here you’ll just barge in like a bull into the House of Hashem to speak with your G-d? No thoughts, no *hachanah*, no nothing?

הַסְיָדִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים הָיוּ שׁוֹהִיִּם שָׁעָה אַחַת קָדָם תְּפִלָּה – The pious ones of the earlier generations would spend a full hour before davening preparing for that great event (Brachos 32b). They waited a whole hour before every *tefillah* three times a day. An hour before davening? What’s the delay?! Let’s get busy davening already! The answer is that they understood this principle well. One hour before *shacharis*! And an hour before *minchah* too and then another hour before *ma’ariv*!

Now the Gemara there asks a question. If they spent so many hours thinking, preparing,

and that’s besides the hours in prayer, so when were they learning Torah? And how did they make a living? That’s the Gemara’s question. And the answer given there is that because they were *chassidim* they succeeded in their Torah in less time. They succeeded in their business too, in their *parnassah*. It was a special *siyata dishmaya*; a gift from Hakodosh Boruch Hu to His special ones who appreciated this principle of preparation.

Now we can’t go to such extremes. We won’t merit that special *siyata dishmaya* because we’re not serious about it; we’ll drink a coffee and waste time and so besides for not preparing we won’t succeed in our learning and make a living either. But the principle is true – something we must do. Something you must prepare.

Toiling For Nothing

Every day we say the following prayer: **הוּא יִפְתַּח לִבְנוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם בְּלִבְנוּ אֶהְבֵּתוֹ וַיִּרְאַתּוֹ** – Hashem should please open our hearts in His Torah, **וַיִּרְאַתּוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם בְּלִבְנוּ אֶהְבֵּתוֹ וַיִּרְאַתּוֹ** – and He should put into our hearts love for Him and fear of Him. And then we finish up like this: **לְמַעַן לֹא נִיגַע לְרִיק וְלֹא נִלְד לְבִהְלָה** – in order we shouldn’t labor in vain and toil for nothing.

It means like this: most of us davened today a whole davening, let’s say. But at the end of the davening we have to be afraid – maybe it was *larik*, *chas v’shalom*; maybe it was for nothing. If we’re just rattling off words without thinking, can that be considered davening? There’s no question that usually a great part of our davening is thrown out!

Isn’t that a pity? Suppose you didn’t daven; instead every day you had a *kevius* to learn Mishnah Berurah in that time instead of davening – you would be a *lamdan* in *halachah* already! If every day you would learn, let’s say, Mishnayos or Gemara during that time, you’d be a real *lamdan*. Isn’t it a pity you waste so much time of your life on davening if it’s thrown out anyways?

And therefore, every day we pray, “Ribono Shel Olam put into our hearts love of You and fear of You, לִמְעַן לֹא נִיָּגַע לְרִיק, so that we shouldn’t toil in vain, for nothing.”

Early Preparation

Now how is it going to happen that your *davening* will be with “hearts of love and fear of You”? One of the keys to that is *hachanah*. The way that you travel towards the *beis hakenesses*, that is going to set the way in which you will pray. Try it tomorrow morning. As you walk to the *beis hamedrash*, you walk a block, or maybe you ride five blocks, prepare yourself.

The truth is you should prepare yourself much earlier than that. As soon as you get up and wash your hands you’re preparing. The Rashba says (Beis Yosef O.C. 4) that *negel vasser* is for the purpose of showing that we are *kohanei Hashem*; just like the *kohanim* in the Beis Hamikdash whose function was to serve Hashem, our function in this world is the same thing. And by the *kohanim* it says, וְרָחֲצוּ יְדֵיהֶם ... בְּבֹאֵם אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (Shemos 40:31-32). Before coming in to serve Hashem, the *kohanim* washed their hands as a preparation for this important opportunity.

In the morning, we’re getting up in order to serve Hashem all day long. Washing your hands when you wake up means that you’re getting yourself ready to serve Hashem. You are a *kohen Hashem* all day long.

And therefore, as you’re pouring the water on your hands you’re thinking – you can say it too if nobody’s around – “I am doing this now because I am a *kohen*. I’m preparing now to make today a successful day of *avodas Hashem*.”

A person who does that, he’s ready, he’s prepared. Whether you’ll be in the kitchen cooking, whether you’ll be working in the office or shopping in the grocery store or learning or *davening* in the *beis medrash*, you’ve already prepared yourself. הַבּוֹן לְקִרְאת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל –

Prepare yourself to meet your Hashem, Yisroel by means of *negel vasser*. Don’t waste that glorious opportunity that you have every morning.

Preparing For Maariv

Think beforehand! Before everything! Right now, in a few minutes we’ll be *davening maariv* here. We’ll have a minute or two after the lecture before *Borchu*. You’ll wash your hands maybe, you’ll put on your hat. While you’re going through the motions of preparing, why not prepare your mind too?

You’re going to say *ma’ariv aravim* now. It means you’re going to be thanking Hashem for nighttime. Nighttime is not merely a lack of daytime. That’s what people think that nighttime means it’s not daytime. No. It’s a creation, nighttime. *Bechachmah poseach shearim, besevunah*, nighttime is a big wisdom. Only you have to study it. I’d like to talk about it, but not now, that’s your job. Think about the blessings of nighttime so at least the first *brachah* you’ll say with a full heart: *baruch atah Hashem hama’ariv aravim*.

And what about *oheiv amo Yisrael*, that great *brachah*? Oh! In just a few minutes I’m going to be making a big declaration in *shul*. Hashem loves me! He loves me and He loves my neighbor and my other neighbor and my wife and my boss. He loves the entire Am Yisroel! And He loves them with a love that can’t be measured! *Ooh wah! Boruch atah Hashem*, I thank You Hashem, *oheiv amo Yisroel*, that You love Your nation.

And what about *krias shema*? When you’re saying *שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֵּׁם אֶלְקֵינוּ הַשֵּׁם אֶחָד*, have in mind you’re doing it because of a *mitzvah* – a *mitzvah* of the Torah. Does it take long to think about that? In one second you can rescue that *mitzvah* from going *larik*, into oblivion. Think: “I’m now about to do the *mitzvah* of declaring *yichud Hashem*”. It takes a second, and then you say Shema.

Loving Hashem

Then you come to the *pesukim* of V'Ahavta. The Chofetz Chaim says that while you're saying V'Ahavta, you might as well do the *mitzvah* and love Hashem. At least for one *possuk* you can love Him! You ever thought about that? The Chofetz Chaim says: love Hashem right now while you're saying that *possuk*. You don't have reason to love Him?! The fact that you can talk is enough reason to love Him. You have to prepare for a V'Ahavta! Look how many people can't talk. They make noises and talk with their hands – that's how they walk around the world. And you can talk! You're a normal person! You should love Hashem. At least for one *possuk* love Him – fulfill the *mitzvah*.

The rest of *maariv* too; what does the first *parshah* say? And the second? The third? And so on. What does *emes ve'emunah* say? What does *hashkiveinu* say? And you say *baruch Hashem leolam*, what does that say? What does it say? Now you can't do all of that all the time, but you have to begin *somewhere*.

Don't Blunder Like a Bumpkin

Not only *davening*. Everything else too. If you're a *yeshivah* man on the way to the *yeshivah* to learn, or you're a working man going at night to the *beis medrash* to learn, prepare! What am I going to do now? What am I looking to accomplish? Will it help me accomplish if I start making conversation with everyone I see there? Will I succeed if I spend a half hour on the public phone before I go inside?

If you don't prepare then you suddenly blunder into this great treasury of opportunities and you waste it. It's like taking a country bumpkin, an oaf from the forest – and you take him out of his little cottage in the forest and suddenly you transport him to Tiffany's and let him into the safe for one minute to fill up his pockets. He takes a look at the sparklers. He's bewildered! *Ooh wah!* What is this? But he's so unprepared that he lets the opportunity go by. He forgot what he came

for. And then when the time is up, they pull him out. The poor fool didn't even begin to understand the treasures that were spread before his eyes.

And we are even worse because the treasures of Tiffany's are only stones. Colorful stones, shiny stones. But we're talking now about the true treasures, and we lose out because we're not prepared. And that's this great principle of getting ready.

Part III.

Preparing For Olam Habo

Are You Really Ready?

The truth is that every Jew recognizes this principle, at least with lip service. Don't we say, "הִנְנִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן – I am now prepared and set aside to fulfill this and this mitzvah."? The problem is that הִנְנִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן usually means: הִנְנִי אֵינִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן – "I am not ready." I say the words, but how am I ready? What ready? Where ready?

But we see at least that הִנְנִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן is a principle. Before you do a *mitzvah*, it's important to make sure to prepare yourself so that the *mitzvah* shouldn't go lost. You have to remind yourself to be *meyacheid* the *leiv*, to assign your heart to the task at hand. And the way to accomplish that is by making sure to prepare yourself beforehand; that's the secret ingredient לְמַעַן לֹא נִיגַע לְרִיק – in order that we shouldn't toil in vain.

And therefore הִנְנִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן; whether it's *davening* or learning or *tefillin* or *tzitzis* or putting on your head covering; your *yarmulke* or your *sheitel*, you must prepare yourself for that *mitzvah*.

The Great Day

Now, when it comes to preparing for *mitzvos*, there's one *mitzvah* that stands out as a model for us more than maybe any other *mitzvah* – it's the

mitzvah most familiar to us when it comes to the subject of preparing, and that is Shabbos.

Shabbos is The Great Day of Knowledge, the one day every week for acquiring a Torah mind. There are so many things that a person should gain on Shabbos, so many things to put into your head, and it's only possible if you prepare yourself. And that's why already from the earliest days of our nation's history our Sages instituted an especial *mitzvah* of preparing for Shabbos. It's in order to understand the value that Shabbos is going to bring to us, to remind us that more than anything else we have to prepare our minds.

And so when the lady of the house is standing all day long, on Thursday, on Friday, preparing for Shabbos, that's intended most importantly to remind her about *hachanah*! Yes, the kugel and the chicken and the potatoes, it's very important, but there's one condiment that she's expected to add that will create the greatest benefit of all. If she would leave out let's say the onions, so the cholent will lack some taste. If she forgets the salt, so the soup will be lacking. But there's one thing that if she leaves out, *everything* will lack taste, and that is the condiment of preparing herself to gain the Shabbos mind.

The Shabbos Notebook

You have to plan ahead for that great day. I have at home a notebook, and I keep written down there the different attitudes a person should gain on Shabbos. And in order that I should be prepared, I take a look in that notebook from time to time to remind myself what's going to be this coming Shabbos, what attitudes I'm going to attempt to acquire. I have written there at least thirty different ideas to think about on Shabbos.

And so, while the lady of the house is cleaning, so she's thinking: "This Shabbos I want to make sure to remind myself as much as possible that it's *zecher l'maaseh bereishis*." Hashem made the world out of nothing. The world has no existence.

There are no physical elements. There are no forces of nature. Everything was imagined by Hashem into existence.

That's a stunning idea which we must labor all our lives in order to gain just a little bit of its impact. And so we must plan ahead. "When my husband and children walk out the door to the *shul* on Friday night, I'm going to sit down on the couch for two minutes and think. I'll look at the Shabbos candles and think that this fire, this candlestick, is really nothing; it's just the imagination of Hashem."

She can plan for the Shabbos *seudah* too. She's thinking, "When I bring all the delicious foods out to the table, I'll remember to think about why we're *meaneg es haShabbos*, why we cause joy to ourselves on Shabbos. It's because we're practicing up on the great truth that not only did Hashem make this world, but He made it for pleasure. It's a world of *oneg*!

Preparing After Mommy

That's how to prepare for Shabbos. You're walking home from *shul* and you tell your children, "Let's prepare for the meal now, while we're walking."

"Prepare? But Mommy prepared everything already."

"Yes, Mommy prepared the food but we have to prepare our minds. We have to eat with a purpose; we're eating to taste from Hashem's world. It's His *challah* and His chicken and His potatoes and as we eat we'll be reminding ourselves that *עוֹלָם הָסֶדֶר יִבְנֶה*, that Hashem made this world a world of pleasure."

There's no question that if you're going to bumble into Shabbos without any preparation, you're going to lose out. You'll keep Shabbos of course; you'll be careful with all the *melachos* and you'll go to the synagogue and you'll fulfill all the *mitzvos* of Shabbos. But you're guaranteed to lose out on the goldmine of Shabbos if you don't

prepare. If you want to suck out all the juice from Shabbos and transform your mind every week, so you'll start preparing for Shabbos beforehand.

Shabbos And The Afterlife

Now, there's one especial attitude that we acquire by means of preparing for Shabbos that we can't leave out of our 'Career of Preparing.' And that is the thought on Shabbos that our stay in this world is one big career of preparing for Olam Habo. And just like our Shabbos preparations, the better we prepare, the greater will be our יום שְׂבִלּוֹ שְׂבֵת in the Afterlife.

In Mesichta Avoda Zarah (3a) our Sages tell us that מִי שֶׁטָרַח בְּעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת יֹאכַל בְּשַׁבָּת – If you prepared, you cooked and baked and shopped, before Shabbos, then you'll have something to eat on Shabbos. But if you don't prepare, you'll have nothing.

Now that's something you don't need the Sages to tell us. Everyone knows that. If the lady of the house will kick up her feet and lay on the couch all Friday afternoon then you can forget about Shabbos being a Shabbos. There'll be no good food to eat, no freshly laundered clothing to wear. If you don't go shopping or take a bath on erev Shabbos, you lost your chance. There's no bathing or shopping on Shabbos. Every child knows that; so what are the Chachomim telling us?

The answer is that among the lessons of Shabbos, one of the most impressive lessons is that Shabbos is a rehearsal for the Next World. Shabbos is Olam Habo.

A Mashal

Now don't think I'm just telling a *machshavah* out of my mind; it says openly in the Gemara (Brachos 57b) that Shabbos is a *me'ein*, a semblance, of the World to Come.

Of course, it's only a *mashal*, in this world, you're tired of eating after a while. You can't eat more than a certain amount. In Olam Habo,

however, you'll eat forever. It doesn't mean 'eat'; even better than eating. It's such a pleasure that the Gemara says if we would have that pleasure in our bodies, we would explode. Our nerves would explode. We couldn't take it – so much pleasure. A tremendous happiness awaits us in the World To Come, a million times greater than Shabbos! But Shabbos is a *mashal* for Olam Habo, a little something.

And why does it tell us that *mashal*? So that we should utilize it. And one of the ways of utilizing it is by reminding yourself always that Olam Habo is a place where we have to enter only after we're ready for it. If you don't prepare, forget about it. You won't be able to just waltz in and enjoy it, it requires a great *hachanah*.

And therefore we have to rehearse for Olam Habo. This world is a time of *erev Shabbos* and it's here that we have to prepare for the World to Come. You can't do *mitzvos* in the World to Come. This world is the only place where you can cook and bake and prepare *mitzvos* to take with you to the World to Come.

Thoughts For The Meal

So think about that! You're sitting down Shabbos at the table, everybody is well dressed, everybody is happy, on the table, the most tasty and delicious viands are being served, roasted chicken, cholent, compote, delicacies, kugels, all kinds of good things are there, and you're thinking, "Ahh! *Mei'ein Olam Habo!* How did we merit such a beautiful Shabbos? Such a tasty and pleasurable Shabbos? Only because we prepared. We cooked and baked, we shopped before Shabbos, that's why we have something to eat on *Shabbos*.

And so that's the great lesson of Shabbos; that this world is a Career of Preparing. If you want to make something from yourself in this world and in the World to Come, that's number one: You must learn how to prepare! To be successful you must live with that attitude of הַבּוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקִרְאָת אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל – Prepare to greet your Elokecha,

Yisroel. It means, in everything you do, prepare ahead of time so that you should be doing it with Hashem in the forefront of your mind.

Whether it's preparing for marriage or *davening* or *kibud av v'eim* or Shabbos, the more you prepare ahead of time, the more you'll achieve. And when it comes to Shabbos especially, one of the great lessons of preparing on *erev Shabbos* is that you're reminding yourself always that this world we're living in, as much as it seems that this is it, it's not it. And it's only the one who prepared himself in this world of *erev Shabbos*, he'll be the fortunate one who eats on *Yom Shekulo Shabbos* in the World to Come.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Setting Out On A Career Of Preparing

Everything we do should be with Hashem in the forefront of our mind. We can accomplish this only if we prepare ourselves properly. This week I will *bli neder* wash *negel vasser* every day with the thought that I'm washing like the *kohanim* who washed before beginning their Service of Hashem. I too am a servant of Hashem and I desire to prepare to serve Him all day. Starting my day off in this way will set the tone for the day ahead as I add intent and preparation to the many things I do in the service of Hashem.



Why don't you ever mention the source of your ideas, whether they come from Rav Simcha Zissel or from Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel of Slabodka or from Rav Isaac Sher?



The answer is that I don't want to burden these great men with my faulty expressions or my faulty explanations. Sometimes I might not say things correctly so why should I blame them? But more or less the ideas originate from these great men and from the *Chovos Halevavos* and other *sefarim*. Only it's like the rain. The rain comes down into the earth and it gets lost. After a while it comes out someplace as a stream and the stream prides itself that it's the originator of fresh water. You forget that it's really rain, that actually it all came from the rain that fell down someplace else. And so whatever you hear in this place was said by some great men only I forgot the source. And the wrong things were said by me.

TAPE # 314 (May 1980)

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