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"EVERY SABBATH IS A GREAT SABBATH"

1. This Saturday known as SHABBOS HA'GADOL or "The Great Sabbath", because it precedes the Exodus from Egypt and Freedom and Independence.
2. This special Sabbath has traditionally been set aside by Rabbis and Preachers for sermons about SHABBOS in general - the Sabbaths of all year. The theme of this sermon, therefore, as was the theme of Rabbis for generations before, is that "Every Sabbath is a Great Sabbath". Particularly in our times, and especially in our neighborhood - the heart of the business center - must Sabbath Observance be stressed.
3. But before a Rabbi criticizes and berates and flays his congregation - which is his privilege and duty especially on SHABBOS HA'GADOL - he might first be asked to explain. For to us, SHABBOS is more than a "day-off"; quite the contrary, it is perhaps a "day-on". Because while it urges us to desist from work, it does more than release us from all duties - it adds the duties of the soul and the heart and the mind. It is a day of active holiness. SHABBOS KODESH. And therefore Jews have a right to ask: why should I assume these obligations?
4. Rabbis of the Mishna understood that such questions would be asked. And so the great R. Joshua answered the question, and pointed out the three results of Sabbath Observance. Bible (on Manna): VA'YOMER MOSHE, ICHLUHU HA'YOM KI SHABBOS HA'YOM LA'SHEM. R. Joshua; give this day to G-d, and He will give you three gifts in return: IM TIZKU LI'SHMOR ES HA'SHABBOS, ASSID HA'SHEM LA'SESS LACHEM SHALOSH MO'ADOS * PESACH, VA'ATZERESS VE'SUKKOS.
5. A strange reward indeed! Ask housewife about PESACH, & she'll tell you ~~xxx~~ of the difficulties of housecleaning. (Sholom Aleichem on Pesach preparation). Ask husband of discomfort of eating in Sukkah on a chilly autumn day. But obviously, Sages intended not so much the festivals themselves as the symbols they are.
6. PESACH. Is the symbol of Freedom. (explain why). What sort of Freedom does Sabbath bestow upon its observers? - Freedom of being different, which follows upon a revolution against the commonplace. Usually the entire week is taken up in trading, manual labor; work which is, in the real sense, uncreative and unimaginative. It is PROSAIC. Shabbos gives you a breather - freedom from this prosaic and commonplace existence.

illustrate Shabbos of Mechallel Shabbos: under the car; in the cellar; paying unwelcome visits; being host to guests I may not want; shopping; or again the same cheap and unrewarding entertainment or television. Nothing different, same routine.

illustrate Shabbos of Shomer Shabbos: A day of poetic feeling, holiness, the soul is released and free to find inspiration and expression. The beauty of Nature, as expressed in BARCHI NAFSHI. See things you normally don't notice. Even here in this densely materialistic vicinity, the Shabbos spirit gives you a Freedom which leads you to inspiration. My own experience: coming to and from shul during week, never notice grandeur of Empire State Building. On Shabbos my soul soars at this beholden sight. I marvel. I wonder. I praise G-d for the Wisdom with which He has endowed Man. Indeed, Shabbos Psalm (MIZMOR SHIR LE'YOM HA'SHABBOS): "How great are Thy works, O Lord, how wonderful are Thy thoughts". I notice the different hues and shades of the cars in the neighboring Parking Lot, colors which I never thought existed except on the soft ground of autumn sprinkled with the panoramic color of leaves from majestic trees. These never impress me during the week. Shabbos gives me Freedom to enjoy my life and delight in my surroundings.

But Freedom is never a gift, it is always a purchase. It must be earned. Even if one loses money, he must try for this Freedom. Rashi on this Week's Sidra: BE'YOSSER TSARICH LE'ZAREIZ BE'MAKOM SHE'YESH CHISSARON KISS. Shabbos would not be worth observing if it was not worth sacrificing for. Perhaps a Rabbi should not speak about this - for though he has myriads of woes that a layman never dreams of, though he might help create

them, the Rabbi does not have the burden of having to sacrifice financially in order to observe the Sabbath. But a Rabbi has friends. And he has a father who was out of work for six months in the middle of the Depression because he refused to desecrate the Shabbos. "More than the Jews have preserved the Sabbath", says Achad Ha'am, ~~and~~ basing himself upon a Midrash, "has the Sabbath preserved the Jews". We owe it to Shabbos to sacrifice financially.

Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Yes, child of suffering, thou mayest be sure,
"He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor".

7. ATZERESS (Mishna's term for Shev^uoth). Is the symbol of SCHOLARSHIP (explain-Matan Torah). A chance to read and study, broaden my horizons. So often, Americans, after leaving High School or College, never open a book. So many say, "I wish I could study this or that". You can - and Shabbos is the day. A Bible, a Navi, or Pirkei Avoss. We are the PEOPLE OF THE BOOK and we should act it. Paraphrase Addison: Saturday clears away the rust of the whole week". Shabbos is the day of Culture.

Idea of the NESHAMA YESEIRA. Medieval (Rishomim) Jewish philosophers: three faculties: the vegetative, or that which accounts for physical growth and decay; the concupiscent, or that which controls man's emotions, his desires and sexual drives; and the intellectual. It is this third faculty which gains in stature during Shabbos. It is the intellectual side of man which this Extra Soul comes to reenforce. One need not be a genius. Just normal intelligence, diligently applied, can make of Shabbos a Shev^uoth.

Even more than just reading and study, it means the warm atmosphere of the synagogue. No matter how much one speaks of "religion in my heart" and "personal religion", nothing can compare to the spirit of true religious uplifting which comes from davening in the company of other communicants.

However, as important as the MIKDASH ME'AT is, it is not more important than Shabbos itself. Therefore, if attendance at shul violation of the Sabbath, the verdict of Judaism is clear and unequivocal - EIN BINYAN BEIS HA'MIKDASH DOCHEH SHABBOS. And let the word to the wise be sufficient.

8. SUCCOTH. Is the symbol of happiness. Harvest time in Israel always a happy occasion. Z'MAN SIMCHAS EINU. The Happiness brought about by Shabbos observance is mostly domestic happiness - SHALOM BAYIS. Statistics show divorce rate lowest among Orthodox. Why? Many reasons, but one of foremost is Shabbos. How? Because as result of restriction of work and travel, husband and wife have opportunity to be at home with each other. It is a chance for renewing acquaintances with your own spouse. During the busy week this is rarely possible. Mundane matters have a routinized quality, and they hinder the process of husband and wife getting to know each other, which is a life-long development. In addition, Shabbos is the opportunity for Father to get to know his own children. The pressure of business during the week does not allow this. Reaction of a Father is usually a scowl, a groan or a "don't-bother-me-now". During Shabbos, if observed properly, the chance comes to know the children. The chance for a compliment, study together, a gentle pat on the back, a heart-to-heart talk between Father and Son as they walk to shul. It is this respite in the week, this breathing spell in which families strengthen their bonds and draw happiness from the wells of their own personalities, that is the third reward of Shmiras Shabbos.

9. With the knowledge that Freedom, Study and Happiness are the Direct benefits of Sabbath Observance, every Sabbath becomes a Great Sabbath.

Judaism raises its voice in thunderous protest to that popular but false and morally debased conception that in a Machine Age of the twentieth century Shabbos is an anachronism, old-fashioned. Quite the contrary! This very age of mechanization has robbed us of our freedom to find imaginative delight in our immediate lives, our ability and even desire to advance ourselves culturally, and the pristine-pure happiness which once dominated the Jewish Home so universally. Particularly in our times must Sabbath be reintroduced in our lives, so that these rewards will be ours unto Eternity.