

פרשת בראשית

Parashat Bereshit, the opening Parasha of the Torah, speaks of the creation of the world in six days, and Hashem's resting on the seventh day - the holy Shabbat. Shabbat is much more than simply a "day of rest"; it actually infuses the world with an additional six days of existence. Our world is a "six day world". Every Friday night the world is about to "expire", when the Shabbat arrives it gives the world an additional six days of existence. If this is so, how was the world able to exist during the first six days of creation? There was no Shabbat that preceded them to give them their existence?! The first Shabbat was not until the seventh day of creation! The explanation is, that in reality, on the day *before* the creation of the world- the day of Shabbat (since the first day of creation was Sunday) - during the time of Minha- Hashem "decided" to create the world and it was the Shabbat that gave the world it's first six days of existence! This is hinted in the Lecha Dodi that we recite upon the onset of Shabbat. It says: "מראש מקדם נסוכה סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה". The סוף מעשה - end result of the creation of the world- only came through מחשבה תחילה - the original thought that Hashem had to create the world on the preceding day of Shabbat. The preceding words: מראש מקדם also allude to this concept. The numerical value of the word מקדם is 144. There are exactly 144 hours in the six days of the week, showing us that it is the Shabbat that infuses the world with an additional 144 hour of existence! There are also exactly 144 letters in the ויכלו portion of Kiddush, which is hinting to this same idea. This

also explains why we say in the Shabbat portion of Birkat Hamazon צרה ויגון - "there should be no suffering on our day of rest". Why do we only pray that we should be spared from suffering on the Shabbat?! Do we not care to suffer during the rest of the week?! We now understand that since it is the Shabbat that sustains the rest of the week, whatever happens on Shabbat is symbolic to what the next six days will bring. We therefore pray to be spared from suffering on the Shabbat because this means that we will be spared from suffering throughout the week!!

There are three major Shabatot that stand out from all the others. They are: 1) The Shabbat the world was created. 2) The Shabbat of Matan Torah (the Jews accepted the Torah on a Shabbat). 3) The future world with Mashiach- which is referred to as יום שכלו שבת "the day full of Shabbat". It will be a world of one long Shabbat. The three pesukim in ויכלו (that we recite during Kiddush) correspond to these three Shabatot. These Shabatot are also hinted to in the three prayers of Shabbat. On Friday night we say in the Amidah: "תכלית מעשה שמים וארץ" -which refers to the creation of heavens and earth, and corresponds to the first Shabbat of creation. On Shabbat morning we say in the Amidah: "ישמח משה במתנתו" -חלקו" which refers to Moshe Rabeinu's acceptance of the Torah and corresponds to the Shabbat of Matan Torah. In the Amidah of Minhah we say "אתה אחד ושםך אחד" - we declare the oneness of Hashem. This is referring to what is written regarding the future "ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד" -when all nations will know that Hashem is one and it corresponds to the third Shabbat- the Shabbat of the future world.

The holiness of Shabbat begins Friday night, and steadily increases as Shabbat goes on and it peaks at the time of Minhah. The holiest time of the Shabbat is the time of Minhah which is called "רעוה דרעוין" and as mentioned, it is the time that Hashem decided to create the world. This is perhaps why the Amidah of Minhah Shabbat is the shortest Amidah of the week. We are so close to Hashem that we only need say a few words and we are answered! During the week the time of Minhah is a time of דין-judgment. It is the prayer of Yishak who represent דין. On Shabbat however, it is the time of the most kindness!

We eat three meals on Shabbat. These three meals save a person from three types of punishment. 1) חבלי משיח - the "pangs of Mashiach" (the difficulties that potentially may arise just before the arrival of Mashiach). 2) גוג ומגוג (the war that will precede the Mashiach). 3) Gehinom. It is obviously of extreme importance that we properly partake of all three Shabbat meals! The three meals of Shabbat are alluded to by the three pesukim contained in the ויכלו portion of Kiddush. ויכלו contains three mentions of Hashem's name אלקים. (Hashem's name of דין-judgment). This refers to the three types of suffering mentioned previously. It also contains three mentions of Hashem's name of הויה (Hashem's name of kindness). This is in order to "sweeten" the three other mentions of דין- and the suffering they represent- through the partaking of the three Shabbat meals.