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לע"נ לאה בילא רבקה בת ר' שמואל אליעזר ע"ה

NOAM HASHABBOS
נועם השבת

# Shabbos Of Our Generation

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The גמרא tells us a person who gives gifts to his friend should let him know the value of the gift so he could appreciate it. One of the proofs the גמרא brings is from שבת. Hashem told משה רבינו, "I have a precious gift in my treasure house; its name is שבת. Go tell כלל ישראל what I'm giving them." And it's difficult to understand what exactly needs to be explained about the gift of שבת. It's a day of rest, which is obvious. Why is there a hidden secret that Hashem has to tell משה, "Go reveal this to כלל ישראל"? Tell them the gift I've given them!

I think previous generations saw שבת, they loved שבת, they kept שבת, they treasured שבת. But there is perhaps one dimension of שבת that our generation is uniquely positioned to appreciate. Through my work in TAG (Technology Awareness Group), I've been approached by numerous developers from the non-Jewish world, each asking in one form or another how they can recreate the experience of שבת—how to give people an opportunity to detach completely, to switch off, to allow their attention and their minds to rest. And the truth is, it cannot really be replicated. This is the gift that we were given.

The פסוק says, אות הוא ביבי וביניכם לדרתיכם, this is a special sign, the gift that exists uniquely between us and Hashem for all generations. Throughout the week our attention is fragmented; it is pulled apart in tiny pieces. A message, an email, a phone call, another notification—it never ends. We are constantly being drawn from one thing to another. It's relentless. It's exhausting. And it's increasingly following us through every hour of the day and sometimes the night. And then comes שבת.

שבת is the only rest day in the week, not only for the body, but in our generation more clearly than ever before we can appreciate that שבת is also a rest for the mind. It's a day where we can rest our attention. For one day, we are no longer being pulled in every direction. We can remain focused, centered, and present. We can give our full attention to our family, to our davening, to our learning, to ourselves, and ultimately to the הקדוש ברוך הוא. For one day we can lift our heads above the noise and actually take in the gifts that Hashem has given us all around. This is genuine rest, מנוחה ושמחה, a rest that brings happiness, true relaxation.

Perhaps this is part of the secret of שבת. It wasn't obvious for 3,300 years, but now to our generation we can see how desperately we need שבת to give us the genuine rest. שבת was always שבת, but one of its deepest dimensions has become especially obvious and visible to our generation. We should treasure it, we should protect it, we should build upon it, take the gift that we were given and further enhance it. And every week we should thank Hashem for this extraordinary gift, the opportunity to stop the race, to quiet the noise, to gather our scattered attention, and to bring true tranquility into our lives, our minds, and to our נשמות.

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