

Shabbat - A Set Time of Intimacy with Adonai

“¹²Then Adonai spoke to Moses saying, ¹³“Speak now to Bnei-Yisrael saying, ‘Surely (verily, KJV) you must keep (must guard, tishmeru, future command form of the verb shomer) My Shabbatot (Sabbaths), for it is a sign (ot) between Me and you throughout your generations, so you may know (yodea, intimate knowledge) that I am Adonai who sanctifies (from the Hebrew kadosh) you. ¹⁴Therefore you are to keep (shomer) the Shabbat, because it is holy (kadosh) for you. Everyone who profanes it will die (surely be put to death, KJV), for whoever does any work during Shabbat, that soul will be cut off from the midst of his people. ¹⁵Work is to be done for six days, but on the seventh day is a Shabbat of complete rest, holy to Adonai. Whoever does any work on the Shabbat will surely be put to death. [VeShamru Benei Yisrael...] ¹⁶So Bnei-Yisrael is to keep (shomer) the Shabbat, to observe (La-asot, infinitive of the verb to do) the Shabbat throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷It is a sign (ot, the ring or covenant sign) between Me and Bnei-Yisrael forever, for in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested (vayinafash is a vav-conversive future tense verb, it means to animate, or to give life. It does not mean to rest, i.e., to cease working or cease being busy. It has more to do with refreshing the soul, or nefesh. One will be refreshed.)”” ¹⁸When He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave the two tablets of the Testimony to Moses—tablets of stone, written by the finger of God” (Ex. 31:12-18)

The *Torah* is never so much up in heaven or so far away that it ignores the realities here on earth (See Deut. 30:11-14). In this week’s *Torah* reading we see how the Lord establishes intimacy with His brand new *Am Segulah* (literally, special treasure, peculiar) – His Israeli Bride. All marriages require special and significant times of communication and intimacy. In *Ki Tisa* we are introduced to the *marital appointed times* that the Lord is interested in – the *moadim*. *Adonai* makes a weekly date with His bride people – it is called *Shabbat*. Even though *Adonai* will ultimately provide a complete cycle of the *appointed times* (*moadim* or festivals) in Leviticus 23 (which, by the way, is discussed in part at the end of this *Parashah*), at the head of the list is *Shabbat* – which is a weekly *moed*, or a weekly appointed time (that is, a weekly date). It is on *Shabbat* that the **Bride and Groom meet** in a special way with each other. These were the words of the **Eternal Bridegroom for His Bride**.

Please note that we are to pull *guard duty* (the job of a *shomer*) over Shabbat (to *shomer* is to do the actions performed by appointed soldiers or guards in the military whose mission is to protect their assigned posts). One of the things we are told is that it is of the utmost importance that this *island in time* (*sacred time*, for *sacred people* in *sacred space*) is precious and must be guarded. Soldiers face stiff consequences for neglecting to keep their guard duty properly. The same thing holds true for us (we are the soldiers of *Adonai*) if we neglect our special guard duty – to *shomer Shabbat*. We saw an example of this kind of discipline in Exodus 31:14 above. The *Holy One* may levy such discipline upon those who violate their guard duty and endanger the whole community in the process.

When there is an occurrence in *Torah* of such weighty words as guarding something on a penalty of death, we know that what is being taught is based on the most basic of *Torah* principles. We see something that is either life or death, holy or unholy, clean, or unclean. There is no third possibility. To step out of the realm of life is to step into the realm of death. How does a person walk in the realm of life? The answer lies in the secret of Shabbat. Where do we find the secret of Shabbat? We find it in Hebrews chapter four.

In the fourth chapter of Hebrews, we find that Shabbat is *Elohim's* portrait of who we are in *Messiah* and what the *Good News* is really all about. It teaches us *Elohim's* definition of the real good news: You see, anyone who has believed in *Messiah* has entered *Elohim's* spiritual rest. That rest is identified as being nothing less than a *Sabbath* rest. *“For the one who has entered Elohim's rest has himself also rested from his works just as Elohim did from His” (Hebrews 4:10).*

The *rest* being implied here is a rest, which is intended to be the same as the *Lord's Rest*. Where do we find how the Lord rested? We find it in Genesis chapter two: *"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. On the seventh day God was finished with his work which he had made, so he rested (vayishbot, from the verb shabbat) on the seventh day from all his work (melachto, which means work, craft, skill, trade, vocation, occupation, labor) which he had made."* (Genesis 2:1)

What was the work He had been doing? He had been speaking forth the Creation of the world, and all of the inhabitants therein. The text says that *Elohim* stopped doing His craft, His skill, His trade, and His vocation (working) because the work was completed! Was there anything left to be done? Could anything be added? No! The text declares that creation was completed in its entire vast array. There were only two things left to be done: first, to stop the creative work and then, to enjoy that which had been made, to refresh His soul.

This portion tells us that, among other things, we are to *do* (*la-asot, to do*) *Shabbat*. In fact, the text implies that we are to make a *special effort to do it*. If *Shabbat* were to be a day of inactivity, then how would one *do Shabbat*? It is not by physical resting. The *ArtScroll Chumash* directs us to the best understanding when it states, *"It is a token of respect for the Sabbath that one prepares for it ahead of time ... Thus one, 'makes' (la-asot) Shabbat by preparing for it so that it will be observed properly when it arrives."*

Like so many other things in *Torah*, *Shabbat* is also a sacred picture. We must carefully guard *Adonai's* sacred pictures! Protecting this particular sacred picture means that we should do all we can to see to it that the preparations (spiritual & physical) for *Shabbat* begin early in the week by readjusting schedules and carefully planning our work and shopping for every week. This helps to ensure that when the preparation day (Friday) arrives, we are ready to do what it takes to *do Shabbat* properly. We came to meet face-to-face with the Holy One of Israel! *Shabbat Shalom!*