

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach : A Modern Hassidic Master

1) Teaching, parashat Veyetze

The Zohar Hakodesh (Zohar Vayeitzei 153b-154b) tells us that Rachel was so beautiful that you saw how lovely she was as soon as you looked at her. But you had to look at Leah many times before you could see her beauty. Still the real question is, after looking at Leah - gevalt, could you see the redemption of the world? Leah was the mother of Mashiach. Could you ever doubt for one second that Leah was beautiful? Rachel was Alma De'isgalya, the revealed world, and Leah was Alma De'iskasya, the hidden world. Sometimes you see somebody pass by and you don't notice anything. Then they pass by again, and you take another look. And this time - pshh, you can't believe what you are seeing. And you think, "How could I not have seen this the first time?" But the truth is, it's always both - Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid, Rachel and Leah. They go together... the outside beauty and the inside beauty. These two play a major function in our daily lives. There are times when we look at the world and are clearly able to see G-d's goodness, but sometimes when you take a look at the world - you don't see G-d's goodness right away. Only later on do you realize it was good.

Leah became the soulmate of Ya'akov at night, which means that there are these holy lights which come from a hidden world when you can't see and it's dark. G-d gives them to you at night, in the time of exile when everything is down. But then it says, "Vayehi Baboker Vehinei Hee Leah (Bereishit 29:25)," in the morning we realize how great the lights were at night.

I bless you and me that we should always be blessed to see the hidden and the revealed beauty!

2) The Story of the 405

We left the motel with Rebbe Shlomo in our car and drove onto the Los Angeles Freeway towards the Reform Temple where we were going to have a Shabbaton. Five minutes on the freeway we realized we were in the midst of a huge traffic jam. We later found out that a gasoline truck had overturned, spilling gasoline all over the freeway. We sat there, barely crawling along, for an hour. It was ten minutes till Shabbos and we were twenty miles from the Temple. We all looked at Rebbe Shlomo who sat in the front with his head back on the seat humming a melody. Five minutes went by. Suddenly Rebbe Shlomo yells out, "Let's go, we're walking." We jumped out of the car, locked up our valuables inside, and started walking.

We walked for about an hour, and it became dark. To top it off, it began to rain. Suddenly a car pulled up next to us. It's a car full of Jews from the Reform Temple. Since we were so late, they had come looking for us. Rebbe Shlomo said to them, "My friends, why don't you walk with us? Walking for Shabbos is the greatest *mitzva* [good deed]!" To our surprise, they pulled their car over to the side, got out, and started walking with us.

Now it seems that one of the people at the Temple had connections with a radio station. It was mentioned on the radio that Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach was "walking for Shabbos." More cars pulled up and people jumped out until we had a group of at least fifty people walking with us in the pouring rain. Rebbe Shlomo began to sing, "The whole world is waiting to sing the song of Shabbos." We all joined in clapping and singing as we walked.

Many songs, stories, teachings, and twenty miles, later, we arrived at our destination. When we arrived, we found that people had set up cots, hot coffee and food. Even the Red Cross was there with blankets and medicine. They had anticipated a weary, exhausted crowd, but they saw something much different. Rebbe Shlomo asked everybody to get in a circle and hold hands, which we did. Then he began to sing *Lecha Dodi* [Come my Sabbath Bride]. As we swayed back and forth, we forgot the aches in our bodies and the pains in our feet. We could only feel the rapture of our souls as Rebbe Shlomo carried us away into Heaven singing and dancing with all the Angels.

4) Teachings on Shabbat

“G-d created the world in six days and on Shabbos He rested.” What a sad translation! On Shabbos, G-d gave the world a soul. On Shabbos G-d created the world of souls, of depth, of tasting that which is most real. Shabbos is the Name of G-d.

The holy Shabbos, the most longed for day, is the day which gives us the strength to begin again. Three things are called chemda, which means longing and wanting in an absolute, crazy way (holy craziness): Shabbos, the Torah, and Israel. A true Jew is possessed by this holy, incurable craziness.

A Shabbos Test. If you want to know how much you like a person, see if you can sit with the person without doing anything. Shabbos is therefore given to you. Do nothing and show your love for Hashem.

The Preciousness of Shabbos: The Socheshever Rebbe, the son-in-law of the Kotzker Rebbe, said: “Imagine if I stop keeping Shabbos; I stop not because I don’t like the value Shabbos has, but because it is no longer precious to me. So, when I do tshuvah I have to learn the preciousness of Judaism.” Anything that is given to you by G-d you don’t receive, unless you know how precious it is. I can be married, but if I don’t know how precious it is, it will be nothing. “You can keep every Shabbos to the letter of the law, but unless Shabbos reaches the deepest and highest place in your heart, you haven’t kept Shabbos.”

Shabbos is back in Paradise. Paradise is a place where everything is good, everything is holy, everything is beautiful. Paradise is a place where suddenly it’s clear to me that I can fix all my mistakes. And even more so, everything I thought was a mistake, every street I thought was the wrong street was the only way to get there.

Shabbos is the highest energy center in the world. It’s not a day when you’re not doing anything. Shabbos is the day when your soul is at the most, most high. What’s the most

precious possession of a human being? According to Rebbe Nachman, it's our thoughts, what we can imagine with our minds and hearts.

On Shabbos our thoughts have to be so high, so heavenly that we can talk to G-d. And not only to G-d, but people, too! Because if you can't feel close to someone standing next to you, to someone you can see with your eyes, then how can you feel close to someone you can't see? And the more you look at people with great love, the more you can see G-d in everyone. But whether we look at people with great love or not, whether our thoughts are heavenly or not, on Shabbos something happens to the world—the world becomes infinite again.

The Lights of Shabbos: The lights that our Mother Sarah lit were burning from Friday to Friday. When I kindle a light in the week, anyone can blow it out. However, Friday night, the lighting of the candles is performed with such spiritual strength, that their glow lasts from Friday to Friday. According to our logic, the light of Shabbos, G-d's light, is so infinitely powerful, what can the candle add? But this is one of the fixings of Eve's eating of the tree of Knowledge. Because it isn't true that the candle is insignificant. According to the Tree of Life every candle makes the light more infinite and more deep. G-d's light is like a Picasso, it is so beyond beautiful that it can't reach inside my soul. But a painting of my own sweetest Dari has the light of the little candle of Shabbos that mamash tears my heart apart.

Shabbos invites all those who need new energy, all those who have been broken by the world of the six days, who need the world of Shabbos to make their brokenness whole again.

Shabbos invites all those who have so far only felt the pain of life and are crying for the joy, the bliss, the unbelievable heavenliness of being alive in a world created by G-d.

Shabbos invites all those who are tired of walking slowly, who only cover a spiritual inch per lifetime on their journeys. Shabbos invites all those who have traveled through the valleys of sadness, of waiting and waiting all the time. Shabbos is to get to the top of the

mountain in one second, and there discover even higher mountains that we may have never ever seen before.