

“Maimonides 613 Series”
The Ten Commandments:
Fourth Commandment: Remember the Shabbos

Exodus 20:2

זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ
Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it

Deuteronomy 5:12

שָׁמֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ
Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it

Maimonides Positive Commandment #155

The 155th mitzvah is that we are commanded to make a verbal declaration when Shabbos enters and when it leaves. We must mention the greatness and exalted character of this day, and how it is distinct from the other days of the week which precede it and follow it.

Maimonides Negative Commandment #320

The 320th prohibition is that we are forbidden to do *melachah* on Shabbos. The source of this commandment is G-d's statement, ["It is Shabbos to the L-rd, your G-d]; do not do any *melachah*."

Pshat - The Surface Level

In the Book of Exodus, we find that the Fourth Commandment reads, "*Zachor es Yom haShabbos*" - "**Remember** the Sabbath". When the Ten Commandments are repeated in Deuteronomy, however, the Fourth Commandment says, "*Shamor es Yom haShabbos*" - "**Guard** the Sabbath". Which did G-d actually say? The Talmud tells us that He said both words at the same time. Mankind, however, can only hear one word at once. When Moshe recorded the Torah, G-d instructed him to write *zachor* in Exodus and *shamor* in Deuteronomy. *Zachor* literally means "to remember"; *shamor* means "to guard or abstain". In the context of Shabbos, *shamor* tells us to abstain from the 39 categories of work, i.e. sowing, baking, cooking, transferring objects from public to private domains. We must guard and watch over the Shabbos. On the term *zachor*, Rambam teaches that this means to

remember the Shabbos with words: we make *kiddush* to usher the Shabbos in, and *havdala* to escort it out.

On a deeper level, the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya that one should have immense meditation and concentration during prayer and Torah study, with the objective of cleaving to the One G-d. This is *zachor* on a deeper level, and the main focus of Shabbos. *Shamor*, according to the Alter Rebbe, means to refrain from speaking of weekday business on Shabbos. Just as G-d worked for six days to create the world and abstained completely from His work on Shabbos, so we should refrain on all levels from weekday work on Shabbos.

Remez - The Level of Hints

The Talmud, in Tractate Avodah Zara, says that whoever toils on the eve of Shabbos will eat on Shabbos. On Shabbos, which is 25 hours long, we are not allowed to cook or bake - so how do we eat? We must prepare beforehand. If you prepare all week for Shabbos, and especially on Friday, you will eat royally on the day itself. The concept of Shabbos is a hint at the World to Come and allusion to the everlasting day of peace and tranquility that will be the Messianic Era. How does one reach this era; how does one *live* this era? -- By working during the six "weekdays", the six millennia preceding the World to Come - by increasing in our Torah and mitzvot, by growing in our relationship with G-d, and by becoming better people. We are now in the year 5773, which is Friday afternoon on the universal clock. We can already smell the aroma of the Shabbos delicacies being prepared for us, the tantalizing aroma of the World to Come. The table is set, now all we must do is welcome the Shabbos!

Drush - The Homiletic Level

The Ramban tells us, quoting the Mechilta, that Rabbi Elazar ben Chananya teaches us to already start remembering Shabbos from Sunday, from the first day of the week - we should remember it all week long! How do we do this? Shammai says that on Sunday, he would walk into the field, find a beautiful cow, and say, "Ah! This cow I will save and prepare for Shabbos!" On Monday, he would walk into the field again, find an even more beautiful cow, and say, "No, *this* cow I will prepare for Shabbos! The cow I found yesterday I will eat today." And so it would go for the entire week. Every single day, he would find something that could be used to honor the Shabbos. When we find a nice tie, or a great pair of shoes, or a beautiful bottle of wine, we should set them aside for Shabbos.

The Mechilta offers another opinion: Rabbi Yitzchok asks, how does one remember the Shabbos all week? By counting each day up to Shabbos. On Sunday we say, "Today is the first day leading up to Shabbos," and so on. The Alter Rebbe quotes this in his *Shulchan Aruch* that the House of Shammai learned that to "remember the Shabbos" means to designate beautiful things each day of the week for use on Shabbos.

Sod - The Level of Secrets

Sefer haBahir says that *shamor* and *zachor* are the two phrases connected with the Fourth Commandment, and they represent two different time zones within Shabbos itself. *Shamor* is Friday night, and *zachor* is Shabbos day. To understand this, we must go deeper, to the fifth level of the Torah.

Chassidus - The Essential Level

A heretic approached Rabbi Akiva and asked, "If G-d really respects the Shabbos, how can He make the wind blow, and the rain fall, and the grass grow on that day?" Rabbi Akiva responded, "On Shabbos we have a prohibition of carrying from a private to a public domain. Within a private domain, however, we may carry all we want. The entire world is G-d's private domain; He may do what He wants." If we reflect on this answer, we see that Rabbi Akiva did not actually answer the question; he answered the person. This heretic's essential question was, "What is the essence of Shabbos?" It is as we say in the Ten Commandments: Shabbos is a day for G-d. We are to fix our minds and hearts on G-d all throughout Shabbos. The Sefer haChinuch writes, on Shabbos a person must affirm and fix in their mind and heart the faith that G-d is truly the Creator of the Universe and created the world in six days, and that He continues to create the world anew each moment. Rabbi Akiva teaches that because this world conceals G-d, one may think there are two domains: a private domain corresponding to holiness and spirituality, and a public domain, corresponding to chaos and negativity. Then Shabbos comes along and affirms that there is only One Master of the Universe, only one domain - G-d's -- and even the public domain is His. On Shabbos, we affirm that G-d is Master of All. Therefore, we start with *shamor* on Friday night, we abstain from working, relinquish our power over nature. All week long one may think that it is our ingenuity, our own cleverness and work that acquires us wealth, but when we relinquish this mindset on Friday night, we affirm the truth -- that everything is G-d's and G-d's alone.

From *shamor* we ascend to *zachor*, and draw closer to Him by meditating on His greatness and studying His Torah. On Shabbos afternoon, we reach a level called Secret of the Secret and Deepest of the Deep. In this zone, *shamor* and *zachor* are one, as G-d Himself spoke, and we climb to a level truly beyond time and space. We experience for ourselves that there is but One Master and one domain, both within the infinite and the finite, with the ability to unite these opposites.

A Story

Rose, a young girl from Poland, was sent to the United States by her parents, in the hope that she would have a better future in the Land of Opportunity. As she went to board the boat that would take her across the ocean to America, her father pulled her close and said, "I love you and will always be with you. Always know that G-d is watching over you. Always keep the Torah and mitzvos, and above all else, always keep Shabbos. For more than the Jews have kept Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jews." These words penetrated deeply into her heart.

When she arrived in America, her distant family was there to greet her and help her get settled in her new country and culture. They got her a job, where within the first few days she distinguished herself as a quick and brilliant worker. Come Shabbos, however, she stayed home from work. The next day, her boss asked where she had been. "I had a stomachache," she answered. "Okay," her boss replied, "but make sure you're here next Saturday." For the next two weeks, it was the same thing; Rose would come up with an excuse for not being at work on Shabbos. Finally, her boss called her family and said, "Rose is a wonderful worker, but if she misses work on Shabbos one more time, I'm going to have to fire her." Her family pleaded with her to follow the rules and conform to the standards of America. The next Shabbos, they packed her a lunch and sent her off. Rose left her lunch bag by the door, not wanting to carry on Shabbos, and walked to Times Square, where she stood all day, singing Shabbos songs and praying quietly. When night fell, she knew Shabbos was over, and she walked home. As she neared the apartment, she saw her cousin in front of the building. "Rose!" he shouted. "What happened?! Where were you?!" "I'm sorry," she said, "I just couldn't go to work on Shabbos." "What do you mean?" he asked, "Didn't you hear about the fire at your factory? There were only 40 survivors. One hundred and ninety died! Thank G-d you're all right!" This was the infamous Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire of 1911. Rose Goldberg survived because more than the Jews have kept the Shabbos, the Shabbos has kept the Jews. We pray that through our keeping Shabbos, it will indeed keep us, and that very soon, we will merit the eternal Shabbos with the coming of Moshiach, may it be today! Amen!

