

Good Shabbos Everyone. Dr. Abraham Twerski, the noted mental health expert who is a practicing orthodox Jew, was once lecturing to a mixed audience of Jews and non-Jews alike. During the course of his technical and scientific discussion, Dr. Twerski mentioned something about the soul. One of the surprised listeners piped up and asked, "Dr. Twerski, do you mean to suggest that you have a soul?" "No," said Dr. Twerski. "I am a soul." (Heard from Rabbi Label Lam)

As we have mentioned several times, the Jewish soul is a holy spark of the Eternal One from Above. The body however is made up from the dust of the earth. After the soul leaves the body, the body returns to its source in the ground and the soul returns to its source in Eternity. The focus of our lives as Jews is therefore the spiritual growth of the eternal soul. *By investing in the soul, we invest in Eternity.* The highlight of the Jewish soul in this life is Shabbos. On Shabbos the *neshomah* – soul experiences a taste of the eternal bliss of the World to Come.

Hashem tells us: "I have a good gift in my storehouse, and its name is Shabbos." (Shabbos 10b) As we read in this week's parsha *Beshalach*, Moshe tells the Bnai Yisroel "See, Hashem has given you the Shabbos." (Shemos 16:29) Every week Jews around the world celebrate the gift of Shabbos with uplifting prayer, sumptuous meals, song, inspiring words of Torah and rest. The more a Jew separates himself from weekday activities, weekday thought and weekday speech on Shabbos, the more he will feel the special happiness of the Holy Day.

On Shabbos we have the custom of greeting each other with "Good Shabbos" or "Shabbat Shalom." Whatever greetings we may use during the week, such as "hello," "good morning," and "good night," etc., are replaced by "Good Shabbos." The holiness of Shabbos pervades the Jewish world on the seventh day.

The following beautiful story shows the power of a "Good Shabbos" to awaken the Jewish soul.

It was close to midnight on a cool Shabbos night as two new bochurim (Yeshiva students) slowly made their way through the streets of Ezras Torah in Jerusalem, on their way back to Yeshivas Ohr Somayach. "That was a long meal," said Jeff.*

"Yeah!" replied his roommate succinctly "I don't know where all those kids sleep in that small apartment." David added in wonderment. The silent night was interrupted by a sudden call: "Good Shabbos, boys!" Jeff turned to his long-haired friend. "Did you hear someone calling us?"

"I don't know, it looks like we're the only ones on the street." Again they heard the voice calling them. This time they saw that it came from the balcony of a first-floor apartment. "Up here! Good Shabbos." All they could make out was a bushy beard and a big smile. "Are you boys planning on walking all the way back to the yeshivah so late at night?" Asked the bearded man. "We really don't have much choice." Jeff replied.

"It is much too late to walk back tonight. It's cold, too. Come on, I have room for some guests. You can spend the night here, and I'll walk you back to Ohr Somayach tomorrow morning."

The boys did not need much convincing. They gratefully accepted their new friend's hospitality. The nameless savior escorted them into the shadowy "master bedroom" as he called it with a wry grin: two fold-out cots in the middle of the living room. The entire apartment didn't seem much bigger than the dorm room the pair currently shared. Wishing them good night, their host disappeared into his bedroom, while his guests quickly sank into a deep sleep.

David awoke early in the morning, and in the daylight, he took stock of his surroundings. The apartment seemed even smaller than last night. A nondescript small room with an old couch, somewhat worn dining-room table and chairs. The china closet against the wall suddenly caught his attention. There were some valuable silver items there: four Kiddush cups, a menorah, a silver Megillah holder; and a large and really beautiful Seder plate. David looked around and noticed an antique candelabrum on the dining-room table. He was amazed that the host would take the two boys into his house and trust them with all the valuable items lying around. The sincerity and warmth of the host made an impression on David and his friend.

David lay back in his bed and stared at the ceiling. He had a lot to think about. For years he'd read in the American newspapers how awful "those ultra-Orthodox Jews" were. Yet here was a man - a total stranger - who had trusted him implicitly on sight. David drifted back to sleep, thinking.

David ended up staying at the yeshivah for many months, during which time he thought long and hard about the decision to become observant. He attended countless classes on Jewish philosophy, Law, and Chumash. He went on a trip to Massada, hiked around Ein Gedi, and took a three-day tour of the Golan. He examined empirical evidence for the existence of G-d and the requirement of a moral imperative. But what made David into a baal Teshuvah and a Shabbos observer was the "Good Shabbos" that he heard from a tiny balcony. (*names have been changed. True Tales from Two Cities, R. Zev Roth p.117)

We see from this beautiful story the power of Shabbos to waken up the Jewish soul. We can be inspired by this story and by the holiness of Shabbos, to make sure always to say with a smile... **Good Shabbos Everyone.**