



## When I Observe the Shabbos

### Parshas Va'Eschanan

Leilui Neshmas Meira Chaya Nechama Bracha A"H

Bat David Mordechai V'Zelda Shaindel Sheychu

Many years ago a devout man had travelled to the United States to raise funds for Israel. Despite his comfortable accommodations, something felt amiss, it was Friday night, and the food at the meal had been wonderful. Something was missing; he missed his friends and family very much. That was not the only thing – the spirit and song of Shabbos were missing. He went outside and took a walk, and wandered through the now empty streets of Boro Park. It was very cold that night, and it was unclear even to him why he was walking through the streets, or for that matter where he was going.

While walking, he had not noticed that he had wandered off. After two hours he found himself in an unfamiliar neighborhood. The he saw a sign for Brownsville, he then remembered that my great grandfather Rabbi Zalman Grossman was in town, and decided to go visit him. Reb Zalman was also visiting the United States; he was on extended stay and had taken an apartment in the Brownsville section. Reb Zalman conducted his life just as he would at home. One of his customs was not to sleep on Shabbos eve at all. He had conducted himself in such a way from a young age, he wanted to utilize every moment of the holy day. Not wanting to waste precious time he would stay awake, and would rejoice in the Shabbos even when he was by himself just as he would in the company of others.

The messenger went to find him. He got to his apartment and tried to knocking on the door, and calling his name, but there was no response. But then he heard a weak groan coming from the other side of the door. When he failed to open the door, he went to find help. As luck would have it a police unit was passing by. The police managed to open the door.

\*\*\*

There are several differences between the two places that the Torah discusses the Ten Commandments. In Shmos, it is written: "Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it", whereas in our weekly Parsha it is written: "Observe the Shabbos day to sanctify it, as the Lord your G-d commanded you".

Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz wrote in his famous liturgical song Lecha Dodi: ""Observe" and "Remember" in a single utterance, we were made to hear by the unified G-d". His words are based on Talmud: "It has been taught: "Remember the Shabbos", and "Keep the Shabbos" were pronounced in a single utterance - an utterance which a (human) mouth cannot utter, nor the ear hear".

Our Sages have taught that women are obligated by the Torah to recite Kiddush during Shabbos day: "Rabbi Ada ben Ahabah said: Women are bound to sanctify the Shabbos day, by decree of the Torah, for Scripture says: "Remember" and "Keep"; all who are included in the exhortation **Keep** are included in the exhortation **Remember**; and women, since they are included in **Keep**, are included also in **Remember**".



What is the difference between remembrance and observation?

On the verse "but his father awaited the matter" Rashi explains: "He was waiting and looking forward in expectation of when the fulfillment of his dream would be realized. Similarly, "awaiting" the realization of God's promise". Yaacov waited to see the actualization of his son's dream. Observing, in this context, means to anticipate something which you cherish.

The Ten Commandments in our Parsha teaches us that we should not only remember and observe the Shabbos during the Shabbos day itself, but further anticipate it as well, yearning for it to come during the entire preceding week.

The Righteous have added, saying that he who anticipates the Shabbos, awaiting its coming, will be remembered by G-d who will observe his actions from above.

\*\*\*

The police officers broke through the door to find Reb Zalman lying on the floor, on the verge of losing consciousness. He was evacuated to a local hospital.

It turns out that as he took the cup of wine to recite the Kiddush he felt strong pains in his chest. He collapsed; paralyzed. He had suffered a severe case of appendicitis. The doctors later said that if he would have been found later on, they would not have been able to save him. They congratulated the messenger for his quick action – not knowing that he had travelled a long way – decreed by G-d – wandering through the night, not knowing why he was drawn from so far away.

As Reb Zalman was being taken out of the operating room his face was glowing, and he was chanting in a very soft voice. The messenger got closer to hear, and heard him singing the words of the Shabbos song – "If I observe the Shabbos, G-d will watch over me".