

Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter

To Be an Erev Shabbat Jew

One year, in the course of a “Ten Days of Repentance” -lecture that Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (“the Rav”) used to deliver annually in various venues in New York City, he deviated from his subject under discussion (Maimonides’ view regarding the mentioning of the Tetragrammaton by the High Priest during his “confession” on Yom Kippur) to make “a kind of a private confession” of his own, sharing “a thought that has caused me loss of sleep.” He happily acknowledged that even in a world where “the profane and the secular reign supreme,” there are Jews who observe the Shabbat. “But,” he continued, “it is not for the Shabbat that the heart aches, it is for *erev Shabbat* (the eve of Shabbat). There are *shomrei Shabbat* (Sabbath observers) in America but there are no *erev Shabbat* Jews in it (“*Yehudim shel erev Shabbat*”) who go forth to greet the Shabbat with focused souls and yearning hearts. We have those who observe the *mitzvot* with hand, foot, and mouth, but how few are those who know what is service of the heart (*avodah she-ba-lev*).”¹

This emphasis of the Rav’s on the fundamental importance of feeling and experiencing *mitzvot*, in addition to being punctilious in their technical performance, is central to his thinking and world view. Perhaps the most well-known formulation of this is found in the eulogy he delivered for his “*machatenista*,” Mrs. Rivka Twersky, the mother of his older son-in-law, where, interestingly, the only example he provided was Shabbat. He said:

I learned from [my mother] very much. Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavor, a scent and warmth to *mitzvot*...

The laws of Shabbat, for instance, were passed on to me by my father.... The Shabbat as a living entity, as a queen, was revealed to me by my mother.... The fathers *knew* much about the Shabbat; the mothers *lived* the Shabbat, experienced her -presence, and perceived her beauty and splendor.²

And the importance the Rav placed on focusing on Shabbat in anticipation of its arrival was mirrored by his stressing the importance of extending the Shabbat even after it formally came to a close. At the end of another “Ten Days of Repentance” lecture, the Rav once shared a touching story from his youth:

Not far from where our family lived there was a Modzitzer *shtiebel* where I would occasionally go for *shalosh seudos*. The Chasidim would be singing *Bnei Hekhala*, *Hashem Ro’i Lo Echsar*, again *Bnei Hekhala*, again *Hashem Ro’i*. It occurred to me that they weren’t singing because they wanted to sing; they were singing because they did not want to allow *Shabbos* to leave.

I remember an encounter in this *shtiebel* as a small child. One of the men who had been singing most enthusiastically, wearing a *kapota* consisting of more holes than material, approached me and asked if I recognized him. I told him that I did not, and he introduced himself as Yankel the Porter. Now, during the week I knew Yankel the Porter as someone very ordinary, wearing shabby clothes walking around with a rope. I could not imagine that this individual of such regal bearing could be the same person. Yet, on *Shabbos* he wore a *kapota* and *shtreimel*. That is because his soul was not Yankel the Porter, but Yankel the Prince.

¹. Pinchas Peli, ed., *Al Ha-Teshuvah* by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (Jerusalem, 1975), 57–58, n. The book was translated into English as *On Repentance* (Northvale and London, 2000). See pp. 88–89, n. I have changed that translation where I felt it appropriate to do so.

². The eulogy was later published in R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “A Tribute to the -Rebbetzin of Talne,” *Tradition* 17:2 (1978): 73–83. For this quote, see p. 77. For -another formulation of the “distinction between mother’s and father’s mission within the covenantal community” along these same lines, see *idem*, “Parenthood: Natural and Redeemed,” in David Shatz and Joel B. Wolowelsky, eds., *Family -Redeemed* (New York, 2000), 114–15.

Well after nightfall I naively asked him, “When do we daven *Ma’ariv*?” He replied, “Do you miss weekdays that much [that you cannot wait to daven *Ma’ariv*]?”³

Shabbat, like any other *mitzvah*, deserves to be savored and experienced, anticipated in advance and extended after its departure. Indeed, this notion, that “Judaism” requires not just act and behavior but also emotion and feeling, was central to the world view of Rabbi Soloveitchik and was expressed by him in a number of different contexts.⁴

That proper observance of Shabbat requires a mindful preparation all week long is already discussed in rabbinic literature. The -Talmud (*Beitzah* 16a) relates that Shammai the Elder would think about the coming Shabbat every day of the previous week, setting aside the choi-cest food he would come across at any time to be eaten on that day, and, continuing in the name of Beit Shammai, states that “From the first [day] of your week [prepare] for your Shabbat.” Likewise, *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Yishmael* cites an opinion that one should “remember” the Shabbat from the first day of the week by setting aside any good food that one encounters at any time during the week for that day.⁵ And, indeed, Rashi cites this perspective as his interpretation of the verse, “*Zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat le-kadsho*” – “Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it” (*Shemot* 20:8) – and comments, “Pay attention to always remember the day of Shabbat so that if you will come across an attractive object, prepare it for Shabbat.”⁶ *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai* notes that Shammai the Elder interpreted the use of both verbs used by the Torah in the context of Shabbat (*zakhor* [*Shemot* 20:8] and *shamor* [*Devarim* 5:12]) this way, that the obligation of “*zakhor*” is relevant to the period before Shabbat, while “*shamor*” applies on Shabbat itself.⁷ It is thus clear that “memory” of Shabbat is not limited to the day of Shabbat nor limited to a one-time behavior but is a constant state of mind, relevant all week long.⁸ One does not just enter the Shabbat; one prepares all week for the arrival of Shabbat.

The clearest formulation of this obligation is found in -Nahmanides’ commentary on this verse (*Shemot* 20:8). He rejects Rashi’s interpretation, arguing that the talmudic source on which Rashi bases it represents only a minority, non-authoritative opinion, but he agrees with the fundamental principle that the obligation “to remember” is an ongoing, -week-long one. He cites a different passage, in the *Mekhilta -De-Rabbi -Yishmael*, in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak, that, unlike “-others,” we Jews should count each day “*le-sheim Shabbat*.”⁹ In his words, “-Gentiles (*goyim*) count each day of the week by the days themselves, they call each day by its own name or by the names of the [heavenly] ministers as the Christians (*Notzrim*) do, or by other names which they call them. But Israel counts all days with reference to Shabbat, ‘the first of the Shabbat,’ ‘the second of the Shabbat.’ This is an expression of the commandment which obligates us to remember it always, every day.” As Nahmanides explained earlier in this passage, the reason why remembering the Shabbat “constantly, every day” is so central is because “by us always remembering it we will remember Creation at all times and acknowledge at all times that the universe has a Creator.”¹⁰ It is interesting that in his *Sefer Chareidim*, R. Elazar Azikri quotes this passage but adds as part of the quote that this

³. See Arnold Lustiger, ed., *Before Hashem You Shall Be Purified: Rabbi Joseph B. -Soloveitchik on the Days of Awe* (Edison, 1998), 37–38.

⁴. I dealt with this aspect of the Rav’s thought in my “Tazri’a: Rabbi Joseph B. -Soloveitchik on Marriage, Mitzvot and a Jew’s Relationship to God,” in Naftali Rosenberg, ed., *Wisdom by the Week* (Jersey City, 2011), 324–31; my “Halakhic -Authority in a World of Personal Autonomy,” in Michael J. Harris, Daniel Rynhold, and Tamara Wright, eds., *Radical Responsibility: Celebrating the Thought of Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks* (New Milford and Jerusalem, 2012), 155–76, esp. pp. 171–72. See too my “Introduction,” in *Siddur Nehamat Yisrael: The -Complete Service for the -Period of Bereavement* (New York, 1995), xi–xiv; Reuven Ziegler, *Majesty and Humility: The Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (Jerusalem and New York, 2012), 96–103.

⁵. *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Yishmael* (Vienna, 1865), 76b, *Yitro, Masekhta De-Ba-Chodesh* 7. See too *Pesikta Rabbati* (Vienna, 1860), 115b.

⁶. Rashi, *Shemot* 20:8, s.v. *zakhor*.

⁷. *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai* (Frankfurt, 1905), 107.

⁸. It is clear that the notion of “memory” which is generally understood as applying to something in the past needs to be rethought and redefined in this context where we are bidden to “remember” something that has yet to occur. See *Chizkuni, Shemot* 20:7; R. Shlomo Yosef Zevin, “*Zekhirah*,” *Le-Or Ha-Halakhah* (Jerusalem, 2004), 274.

⁹. *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Yishmael*, *ibid.* See too *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai*, *ibid.*; *Ritva, Rosh Ha-Shanah* 3b, s.v. *chada de-sheini be-Shabbat lo ashkechan*.

¹⁰. *Peirush Ha-Ramban Al Ha-Torah, Shemot* 20:8. It is interesting that R. Chavel chose not to include the reference to Christians in his English translation of this passage. See Charles B. Chavel, trans., *Ramban (Nachmanides) Commentary on the Torah, Exodus* (New York, 1973), 313.

Nahmanides made a brief reference to this idea earlier in his commentary, on *Shemot* 12:2, s.v. *ha-chodesh ha-zeh lakhem*. For the connection between these two passages, see R. Yerucham Fischel Perlow, *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot Le-Rabbenu Saadia*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1973), 238a, *mitzvot aseh* 56.

remembering should be done “via the heart and through the mouth (*ba-lev u-ba-feh*),” a formulation not found in the original text.¹¹ But Nahmanides’ position is central, and the extent to which this idea of his, and the rabbinic sources he cites, permeated Jewish consciousness is indicated by the fact that he, and they, are quoted repeatedly in later Jewish texts. A representative sample includes: R. Chaim Vital’s *Sha’ar Ha-Kavanot*, R. Yitzchak Aboab’s *Menorat -Ha-Ma’or*, R. Moshe ibn Chaviv’s *Get Pashut*, R. Yosef Chazan’s *Sefer -Chikrei Lev*, R. Yaakov Chaim Sofer’s *Kaf Ha-Chaim*, R. Chaim Yosef David Azulai’s *Petach Einayim*, R. Dov Ber Trebich’s *Revid -Ha-Zahav*, R. Moshe Sofer’s *Torat Moshe*, R. Yechiel Michel Epstein’s *Arukh -Ha-Shulchan*, R. Yosef Chaim’s *Ben Ish Chai*, R. Yisrael Meir -Ha-Kohen’s *Sheim Olam*, and R. Tzvi Pesach Frank’s *Mikra’ei Kodesh*.¹²

For Nahmanides, the goal of “remembering Shabbat” all week long is conceptual, to remember “at all times that the universe has a Creator.” Other medieval exegetes, R. Avraham ibn Ezra and Seforno, for example, also interpret the verse of “Remember the Sabbath day” as applying to the entire previous week but, in their case, for a more functional, practical, or action-oriented purpose. In their view, by keeping track of Shabbat all week long a person will never become confused as to on what day it falls and will thus be able to observe it properly.¹³ Chizkuni, perhaps, offers both considerations in his commentary.¹⁴ What all these perspectives have in common is the fundamental notion that “memory” of Shabbat is not limited to the day of Shabbat nor -limited to one behavior but is a constant state of mind, relevant all week long. One does not just enter the Shabbat; one prepares all week for the arrival of Shabbat.

There are other applications of this principle as well. R. Yosef Karo writes that in dating a bill of divorce one writes “*be-echad be--Shabbat*” on Sunday¹⁵ and the assumption is that the same format is followed the rest of the week. Both R. Moshe ibn Chaviv and R. Yechiel Michel Epstein cite Ramban’s emphasis on remembering Shabbat every day of the week as the rationale for this ruling in their respective commentaries on this passage.¹⁶ In fact, some insist, based on this same consideration, that private letters should be dated this way as well.¹⁷ And, finally, many suggest that this is the basis for introducing the daily psalm recited at the end of the morning service (*Shir Shel Yom*) with “*ha-yom yom...-be-Shabbat*” – “today is the first day of the Shabbat,” “today is the second day of the Shabbat,” and so on, for the duration of the week. Once again, the intention is to place the memory of Shabbat at the forefront of our consciousness every single day.¹⁸ And, to take the association with Nahmanides’ position one step further, it is suggested that the reason why this

¹¹. R. Elazar Azikri, *Sefer Chareidim* (Venice, 1601), 19b. *Sefer Chareidim* is cited in R. Yosef Yuzpa Hahn, *Yosef Omez* (Zhitomir, 1870), 29b; R. Yair Chaim Bachrach, *Mekor Chaim on Shulchan Arukh O.C.*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1984), 293, on 271:3.

¹². See R. Chaim Vital, *Sha’ar Ha-Kavanot* (Jerusalem, 2005), 61a; R. Yitzchak Aboab, *Menorat Ha-Ma’or* (Vilna, 1878), 154a, *ner 3, kelal 4, chelek 7, perek 1*; R. Moshe ibn Chaviv, *Get Pashut* (Sedilkov, 1833), 43a, *E.H. 126:11*; R. Yosef Chazan, *Sefer Chikrei Lev*, vol. 1 (Salonika, 1787), 58a, *O.C. 33*; R. Yaakov Chaim Sofer, *Kaf -Ha-Chaim*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1913), 115a, *O.C. 132:26*; R. Chaim Yosef David Azulai, *Petach Einayim*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1959), 153, *Masekhet Temurah 7:4*; R. Dov Ber Trebich, *Revid Ha-Zahav* (Horodna, 1797), 28a; R. Moshe Sofer, *Torat Moshe, Sefer Shemot* (Pressburg, 1881), 17b, on *Shemot 12:2*, s.v. *ha-chodesh ha-zeh lakhem*; R. Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Arukh Ha-Shulchan, E.H.* (Pietrokov, 1905), 27a, on *E.H. 126:10*; R. Yosef Chaim, *Ben Ish Chai* (Baghdad, 1912), 50b, *Parshat Ki Tisa 17*; R. Yisrael Meir Ha-Kohen, *Sheim Olam* (Warsaw, 1895), 6b; R. Tzvi Pesach Frank, *Mikra’ei Kodesh, Purim* (Jerusalem, 1974; repr. 1992), 92. See too *Siddur Ha-Ari* (Jerusalem, 1984), 82b; R. Yedidiah Refael Chai Abulafia, ed., *Siddur Kavanot Ha-Rashash* (Jerusalem, 2003), 564.

¹³. See *Ibn Ezra Ha-Katzar, Shemot 20:7*, s.v. *ve-ta’am zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat*; Seforno, *Shemot 20:7*, s.v. *zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat* and s.v. *le-kadsho*.

¹⁴. Chizkuni, *Shemot 20:7*, s.v. *zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat*. See also Ibn Ezra and Chizkuni’s commentaries on *Shemot 31:16, ve-shamru Venei Yisrael et ha-Shabbat*.

¹⁵. *Shulchan Arukh, E.H. 126:3*.

¹⁶. R. Moshe ibn Chaviv, *Get Pashut*, 43a, and R. Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Arukh -Ha-Shulchan*, 27a.

¹⁷. R. Moshe Sofer, *Torat Moshe*, 17b; R. Yosef Yuzpa Hahn, *Yosef Omez* (Zhitomir, 1870), 29b; R. Yosef Yuzpa Kosman, *Noheg Ka-Tzon Yosef* (Tel Aviv, 1969), 79, no. 6. See too R. Barukh Ha-Levi Epstein, *Barukh She-Amar* (Tel Aviv, 1979), 200–01.

¹⁸. See R. Meir Poppers, *Or Ha-Yashar* (Fyorda, 1764), 50a; R. Yosef Chazan, *Sefer -Chikrei Lev*, vol. 1, p. 58; R. Yaakov Chaim Sofer, *Kaf Ha-Chaim*, vol. 2, p. 115a; R. Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Arukh Ha-Shulchan*, p. 27a; R. Tzvi Pesach Frank, *Mikra’ei Kodesh*, p. 92. See too R. Menachem Adler, “*Shir Shel Yom Ke-Minhag Ha-Gra*,” *Yeshurun* 5 (1999): 640, who cites this in the name of R. Chaim Brisker; R. Chaim David Saperstein, *Yadav Emunah* (Ramat Beit Shemesh, 2015), 171.

It would appear that this was instituted by R. Isaac Luria (“the Ari”) in the sixteenth century. R. Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Kitzur Ha-Shelah* (Ashdod, 1998), 149–50, *Masekhet Chullin – Inyanei Tefillat Shacharit*, s.v. *u-va-sefer zikhron Tziyon katuv*, cites that he found this in the *siddur* of Ari. See *Siddur Ha-Ari*, p. 82b. See too R. Menachem Adler, “*Shir Shel Yom Ke-Minhag Ha-Gra*,” p. 641; R. Yaakov Werdiger, “*Sheruta -de-Zelota*,” commentary to *Siddur Tefillah Zelota De-Avraham* (Tel Aviv, 1958), 391–94; R. Moshe Yair Weinstock, *Siddur Ha-Ge’onim Ve-Ha-Mekubalim Ve-Ha-Chasidim*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1971), 739–40. My thanks to Irving Klavan for bringing these two sources to my attention. See also R. Yaakov Chaim Sofer, *Kaf Ha-Chaim*, *ibid*.

daily association with Shabbat is expressed particularly here, before the *Shir Shel Yom*, is in keeping with Nahmanides' position, as mentioned above, that the reason we make reference to Shabbat every day is to "remember Creation at all times and acknowledge at all times that the universe has a Creator." This is directly in keeping with the talmudic assertion (*Rosh Ha-Shanah* 31a) that the choice of psalm for each of the six days of the week is specifically related to what happened on each of those six days of Creation.¹⁹ We thus remember God as the Creator by reciting each of these six chapters of Psalms *and* by intro-ducing each of them with a reference to Shabbat. In fact, some contemporary rabbis even had the practice of prefacing their recital of the words "*ha-yom yom*" prior to reciting the daily *Shir Shel Yom* with the words "*Zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat le-kadsho*," thereby explicitly articulating the importance of this message.²⁰

Once again, one does not just enter the Shabbat; one prepares all week for the arrival of Shabbat. In the words of R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, "The extent to which one will be engaged in preparation will determine one's awareness.... A person needs to expend his energies during the profane days in order to achieve something for himself on the Shabbat."²¹ The chasidic *rebbe* and founder of the Radomsk dynasty, R. Shlomo Rabinowitz, suggested that this is the meaning of the phrase "*u-verakhto mi-kol ha-yamim*" that is recited as part of the morning service on Shabbat. In his view it means that the blessing of the Sabbath ("*u-verakhto*") stems from and is contingent upon how the Jew behaves all the days of the week ("*mi-kol ha-yamim*").²² R. Yaakov Ba'al Ha-Turim interprets another phrase in Shabbat's morning service this way. "*Chemdat yamim oto karata*" – "You [God] have called it the most cherished of days." God cherished this day, he suggests, because it is the day in which all the other days delight and which they desire.²³ The six days of work look forward to the arrival of Shabbat; a Jew during those six days looks forward to Shabbat. One does not just enter the Shabbat; one prepares all week for the arrival of Shabbat.

It is true that some interpret "*ha-yom yom...be-Shabbat*" as a reference to the Shabbat that passed,²⁴ but the consensus surely is that it refers to the forthcoming Shabbat, thus underscoring the centrality of preparing for the next Shabbat as soon as the previous Shabbat is over. However, there is a well-known rabbinic principle (*Pesachim* 106a) that the first three days of the week (Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday) are an "extension" of the previous Shabbat and are considered to be "after the Shabbat (*batar Shabata*)," while the next three days (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) "belong" to the forthcoming Shabbat and are considered to be "before the Shabbat (*kamei Shabata*)." With the arrival of Wednesday, one's attention turns with an even greater focus to the forthcoming Shabbat. For example, the Talmud (*ibid.*) rules that if one did not recite *Havdalah* on *Motza'ei Shabbat*, one can do so on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday but not afterwards because *Havdalah*, which marks the end of the preceding Shabbat, cannot be recited on days (beginning on Wednesday) that are ushering in the arrival of the next Shabbat.²⁵ To illustrate this, the Maggid of Kozhnitz cites a classic chasidic thought in the name of the Besht, R. Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov (referred to as the "Rivash"). This, he said, is reflected in the verse (*Shemot* 34:21), "*-be-charish u-va-katzir -tishbot*" – "from plowing and harvesting you shall desist." The word "*charish*," consisting of the letters *chet*, *reish*, and *shin*, is an acronym for *chamishi* (the fifth [day], beginning with *chet*), *revi'i* (the fourth [day], beginning with *reish*), and *shishi* (the sixth [day], beginning with *shin*). The verse thus means to suggest that just as the act of plowing (*charishah*) is a preparation for planting, so

¹⁹ R. Menachem Mendel Chaim Landau, "*Emek Brakhah*" commentary to *Siddur Tefillah Zelota De-Avraham*, p. 393. See too R. Moshe Yair Weinstock, *Siddur Ha-Ge'onim Ve-Ha-Mekubalim Ve-Ha-Chasidim*, vol. 2, p. 737.

For a similar association between each of these six chapters from Psalms with each day of Creation, see also *Avot De-Rabbi Natan* 1:8.

²⁰ For R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, see Yitzchak Trager and Aharon Auerbach, eds., *Halikhot Shlomo*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 2000), 139, #14; R. Peretz Shmuel Mantel, *Shirat Shmuel* (Bnei Brak, 2003), 68–70; R. Avraham Yeshaya Pfofier, *Ishei Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 2004), 289, n. 44. For R. Simchah Zissel Brody, see his *Sam Derekh* on *Shemot* (Jerusalem, 2001), 149.

I am pleased to acknowledge how useful I found the following work to be in preparing this part of my essay: R. Yitzchak Bogats, *Shesh Zekhirot* (Bnei Brak, 2005), esp. pp. 22–27, 78–85.

²¹ R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, *Kedushat Levi* (Brooklyn, 1992), 55a, s.v. *va-yomer Hashem el Moshe*.

²² R. Shlomo Rabinowitz, *Tiferet Shlomo* (Jerusalem, 1984), 27a, s.v. *la-Kel asher shavat*.

²³ R. Yaakov ben Asher, *Peirush Ba'al Ha-Turim Al Ha-Torah, Bereishit* 2:2, s.v. *va-yekhal Elohim*. R. Yaakov Kopel Reinetz, the editor of the Jerusalem (1996) edition of that work, p. 14, n. 82, cites other relevant sources and refers the reader to R. Menachem M. Kasher, *Torah Sheleimah*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1992), 186, no. 26 (on *Bereishit* 2:2) for additional references.

²⁴ See the reference to the *Sefer Notrikon* by the author of the *Peri Megadim*, cited in R. Bogats, *Shesh Zekhirot*, p. 83.

²⁵ This notion is underscored in a number of different sources. See, for example, R. Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar Ha-Kavanot* (Jerusalem, 2005), 60b, *inyan vi-yhi no'am*; R. Avraham Danzig, *Chayei Adam* (Vilna, 1875), 69b; R. Yitzchak Palaggi, *Yafeh Le-Lev*, vol. 1 (Izmir, 1872), 135b; R. Yaakov Chaim Sofer, *Kaf Ha-Chaim*, p. 15a; R. Yisrael Meir Ha-Kohen, *Sheim Olam*, p. 6a; R. Moshe Yair Weinstock, *Siddur Ha-Ge'onim Ve-Ha-Mekubalim Ve-Ha-Chasidim*, vol. 2, p. 740.

too are the fourth, fifth, and sixth days of the week a preparation for Shabbat. The first three days of the week that follow Shabbat are then paralleled to the harvesting (*zer'ah*), when one benefits from all that was accomplished the previous Shabbat, like one benefits from all the plowing that was done. The week is thus divided into three units: 1) days four, five, and six; 2) Shabbat; and 3) days one, two, and three, with Shabbat in the center.²⁶ R. Shmuel Borenstein, the author of *Sheim Mi-Shmuel*, notes that there is a mindful parallel here – the number of days of preparation before Shabbat (three) yield the same number days of benefit after Shabbat (also three).²⁷ Once again it is clear that “memory” of Shabbat is not limited to the day of Shabbat nor limited to one behavior but is a constant state of mind, relevant all week long. One does not just enter the Shabbat; one prepares all week for the arrival of Shabbat, and one begins preparing more earnestly on the fourth day of the week.

The shift that occurs on Wednesday is reflected, I believe, in the liturgy in a most interesting way. The Talmud (*Rosh Ha-Shanah* 31a) identifies those psalms recited by the Levites in the Temple every day, and this is the list which serves as the source for the choice of those chapters recited daily as part of the *Shir Shel Yom*. On the fourth day, the Talmud states, “They would recite ‘A God of vengeance, Lord, *Kel nekamot Hashem*’ (*Tehillim* 94)” because on that day God created the sun and the moon and in the future will exact punishment from those who worship them. Rashi notes that in each case the entire chapter was recited, not just the first phrase. But it would clearly appear that only the chapter was recited, nothing more. And, indeed, a number of versions of the *Shir Shel Yom* for Wednesday feature the entire ninety-fourth chapter and nothing more.²⁸ Later, a decision was made to add the first verse, or the first three verses, from the following chapter, beginning with “Come, let us sing joyously to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation” – “*Lekhu neranenah Lashem; nari’ah le-Tzur yisheinu*” (*Tehillim* 95:1–3).²⁹ One explanation I found for this later addition is the discomfort that was felt in concluding the daily reading with a verse that is harsh and unpleasant. The final verse in chapter 94 is, “He [God] will bring back on them their wickedness, and will destroy them for their evil deeds; the Lord our God will destroy them.” To avoid ending with such unpleasantness, a few additional, more positive and pleasant, verses were added. This sensitivity is similar, continues this suggestion, to the decision to not conclude the book of Lamentations with its last harsh verse but to end with a repetition of its penultimate verse which is much more constructive and pleasing.³⁰

In my view, however, the explanation is more obvious. At some point it was recognized that what better way can there be to acknowledge that Wednesday is the introduction to Shabbat than by extending its daily psalm recitation by just a few verses into the very next chapter and thereby make reference to the iconic words which begin the Friday evening prayer, “*Lekhu neranenah Lashem; nari’ah le-Tzur yisheinu.*” Already on Wednesday we recite the very words that will usher in the Shabbat in just a few days, clearly drawing our attention to its immanent arrival. And

²⁶. R. Yisrael of Kozhnitz, *Avodat Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 2008), 309.

²⁷. R. Shmuel Borenstein, *Sheim Mi-Shmuel*, vol. 1, *Bereishit* (Jerusalem, 1974), 295, “Year 677.”

I am pleased to acknowledge how useful I found the following article to be, especially for making me aware of some of the many chasidic sources on this -issue: R. Dovid Shlomo Stein, “*Yemot Ha-Chol Sho’avim Kiyumam Mi-Ko’ach Arikhat -Ha-Shabbat Ve-Hakhanato,*” *Ha-Machaneh Ha-Chareidi* 1447 (March 5, 2010).

²⁸. See, for example, R. Immanuel Hai Ricci, *Sefer Mishnat Chasidim* (Jerusalem, 1985), 132a; R. Yedidiah Refael Chai Abulafia, ed., *Siddur Kavanot Ha-Rashash*, 569–70. See also prayer books reflecting the German rite: W. Heidenheim, ed., *Machzor Le-Yom Sheini Shel Rosh Ha-Shanah* (Rodelheim, 1868), end; W. Heidenheim, ed., and Zelig Bamberger, trans., *Machzor Le-Yom Rishon Ve-Sheini Shel Pesach* (Frankfurt a. M. [Rodelheim], n.d.), end.

²⁹. See, for example, other prayer books reflecting the German rite: S. Baer, ed., *Seder Avodat Yisrael* (Rodelheim, 1901), 151 (after printing Psalm 94 for the *Shir Shel Yom* of Wednesday there is a note in parentheses that some add the verse beginning *Lekhu neranenah*); *Siddur Sefat Emet*, Rodelheim (Basel, 1986), 68 (after printing Psalm 94 for the *Shir Shel Yom* of Wednesday there is a note in Hebrew that “one adds the first verse of ‘*Lekhu neranenah*’ and some add an additional two verses”). See also the 1989 edition of that prayer book which contains all the notes and directions, including this one, in German.

It is interesting to note that the English version of *Siddur Tefillot Yisrael: The Hirsch Siddur* (Jerusalem and New York, 1969; repr. 1978), 218, includes only Psalm 94 as the *Shir Shel Yom* for Wednesday with no additions, while the Hebrew edition (Jerusalem, 1992), p. 133, includes the next three verses beginning with “*Lekhu -neranenah.*” My thanks to Michael Richmond and Jacob Schlanger who brought most of these German rite *siddurim* to my attention.

³⁰. R. Yaakov Werdiger, “*Sheruta de-Zelota,*” 396. In keeping with this theme, R. -Jonathan Sacks, *The Koren Siddur* (Jerusalem and New Milford, 2009), 189, notes that, “-appropriately, some communities recite this psalm on Yom HaSho’ah.”

There are a number of analyses of the text of the psalm for Wednesday that do not address this addition at all. See, for example, R. Peretz Shmuel Mantel, *Shirat Shmuel*, 251–55; Eliezer Levi, *Torat Ha-Tefillah* (Tel Aviv, 1963), 153–54; and B. S. -Jacobson, *The Weekday Siddur* (Tel Aviv, 1973), 324–28.

therefore, in keeping with this notion, every Wednesday morning after davening I wish my fellow minyan-goers “a happy *lekhu neranenah* day.”³¹

The notion that one does not just enter into Shabbat but needs to prepare for it is reflected in a famous rabbinic dictum, “Whoever extends oneself on *erev Shabbat* will eat on Shabbat.”³² As we have seen, “eat” can be translated more broadly as “be nourished,” physically but also spiritually. In addition, “*erev Shabbat*” in this context could begin already as soon as the previous Shabbat has ended, but it surely refers, without question, to the day before Shabbat, literally *erev Shabbat*. There are many sources that stress the particular significance of preparing for Shabbat specifically on the day immediately prior to it, taking their lead from the verse (*Shemot* 16:5), “*ve-hayah ba-yom ha-shishi ve-heikhinu et asher yavi’u*” – “and it shall be on the sixth day when they prepare what they have brought in.” R. Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin points out that this preparation for Shabbat is more significant than preparation for *mitzvot* in general because of this specific reference to it in the Torah.³³ Indeed, citing this verse, the Talmud (*Shabbat* 117b) quotes in the name of R. Chisda, “A person should always arise early [on -Friday -morning – Rashi] to attend to the expenditures of the Shabbat.” R. Makhir derives the obligation to prepare for Shabbat early Friday morning from the extra word “*ba-yom ha-shishi*” – “on the day of the sixth.” He notes that the verse could have been written as “*ba-shishi, on the sixth.*” By including the apparently superfluous word “*ba-yom, on the day,*” the verse informs us that we need to start as soon as day arrives, i.e., in the morning.³⁴ The Talmud (*Shabbat* 119a), in fact, provides a number of examples of great rabbis who would personally involve themselves in preparations for Shabbat, in the words of Rashi, “as a person who welcomes his teacher into his home and shows him that he is important to him and how anxious he is to honor him by troubling and extending himself on his behalf.”³⁵ That this is considered more than the laudable behavior of a few great individuals is indicated by the fact that the *Shulchan Arukh* requires it as normative behavior incumbent on all.³⁶ R. Yisrael Meir Ha-Kohen even notes that, if possible, it is preferable to wait to buy food for Shabbat until Friday because then it is more apparent that it is being bought for use on that day.³⁷ And, as Shabbat was getting close, the Talmud (*Shabbat* 119a) records how R. Chanina would wrap himself in special clothing, stand, and say, “Come and let us go out to greet Shabbat the queen,” and how R. Yannai would also don Shabbat clothing and say, “Come, O bride, come, O bride.”³⁸

Among other sources that reflect the special nature of *erev-Shabbat* is the obligation to start Shabbat before the actual onset of nightfall, thereby extending Shabbat back into Friday.³⁹ Also relevant is the famous distinction made by R. Yitzchak Ze’ev Ha-Levi Soloveitchik (the “Griz”) between the *mitzvah* of enjoying Shabbat (*oneg Shabbat*) that can be fulfilled only on Shabbat itself and that of honoring the Shabbat (*kevod Shabbat*) which needs to be fulfilled only on *erev Shabbat*.⁴⁰ Once again, one does not just enter the Shabbat: one prepares all week for the

³¹. After completing this essay I was pleased to learn of the prevalence of this thought in the works of R. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn. See, for example, *Ha-Yom Yom* (Brooklyn, 1981), 10 (23 Kislev, 1943), based on the teachings of his father-in-law, R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, citing the latter’s grandfather (Wednesday is “*der kleiner lekhu neranenah, the small lekhu neranenah*”); *Ha-Yom Yom* (Kfar Chabad, 1990), 36; *Sichot Kodesh 5752* (North Bergen, 1992), 587; *Devar Malkhut, Shemot* (Petach Tikvah, 2005), 153; *Devar Malkhut – Tokhen Ve-Sikum* (Petach Tikvah, 2007), 140. My thanks to R. Joel Finkelstein who drew my attention to these sources.

For more on the *Shir Shel Yom* in general, see R. Elchanan Adler, “*Shir Shel Yom: Origins and Perspectives*,” in R. Daniel Z. Feldman and Dr. Stuart W. Halpern, eds., *Mitokh Ha-Ohel, From Within the Tent: The Weekday Prayers* (New Milford and Jerusalem, 2014), 303–21.

³². See *Avodah Zarah* 3a. For a similar formulation, see *Midrash Ruth Rabbah* 3:3, “If a person does not prepare [his meal] on the eve of Shabbat, what shall he eat on Shabbat?” In neither of these sources is this statement understood literally, as I present it here.

³³. R. Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, *Ha’amek She’alah* on *She’iltot De-Rav Achai Ga’on*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1953), 316–17, no. 169.

³⁴. R. Makhir, *Seder Ha-Yom* (Warsaw, 1876), 39.

³⁵. Rashi, *Shabbat* 119a, s.v. *mekhatef ve-ayel mekhatef ve-nafik*.

³⁶. *Shulchan Arukh, O.C.* 250:1. See too *idem*, nos. 242, 249, 251. For later formulations of the special value of preparing for Shabbat on Friday, see R. Avraham Danzig, *Chayei Adam*, 69b; R. Yisrael Meir Ha-Kohen, *Sheim Olam*, pp. 6b–7a.

³⁷. R. Yisrael Meir Ha-Kohen, *Mishnah Berurah, O.C.* 250:2, s.v. *be-yom shishi*; R. Makhir, *Seder Ha-Yom*, 40.

³⁸. For a slightly different version of Rabbi Chanina’s comment, see *Bava Kamma* 32b.

For the custom of tasting the Shabbat food on *erev Shabbat*, see R. Yitzchak Yosef, “*Hanhagot Ha-Ari Ba-Halakhah*,” *Techumin* 30 (2010): 395–96. For many laws and customs relating to *erev Shabbat*, see R. Yitzchak ben Moshe, *Or Zaru’a*, vol. 2 (Zhitomir, 1862), 1a–9b. See also R. Moshe Cohen, “*Arikhat Semachot Bi-Ymei Shishi*,” *Techumin* 34 (2014): 69–73.

³⁹. *Shulchan Arukh, O.C.* 261:2.

⁴⁰. See *Shi’urei Ha-Grach* (n.d.), 93. In yeshiva, we referred to this *sefer* as “R. Chaim in the stencils.”

arrival of Shabbat, one prepares more in earnest beginning the fourth day of the week, and one prepares with utmost mindfulness on the day immediately prior to Shabbat. In keeping with this notion, every Friday morning after davening I wish my fellow minyan-goers “a happy *erev Shabbos*.” In fact, I never wish anyone “a good *Shabbos*” or “*Shabbat shalom*” until Shabbat itself; even five minutes before Shabbat I make sure to greet people with “have a good *erev Shabbos*.”

In conclusion, I want to come full circle to the beginning of this essay. I noted there that R. Soloveitchik differentiated between *shomrei Shabbat* Jews and *erev Shabbat* Jews. Indeed we define a *shomer Shabbat* Jew as someone who observes the Shabbat, on Shabbat. However, a few years ago I discovered a statement of the Apter Rav, R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, that gave me an entirely different perspective on this issue. The Apter Rav wrote, “In truth it is appropriate and proper for every intelligent and wise person to take to heart all week to be from those who are *shomrei Shabbat* as [it is written], ‘and his father kept the matter in mind’ (*Bereishit* 37:11)”. After Yosef presented his dreams to his brothers, they were jealous but their father Yaakov “*shamar et -ha-davar*.” Rashi interprets it to mean that Yaakov “was waiting and looking forward (*mamtin u-metzapeh*) to when it would come true.” *Sh-m-r*, therefore, means to anticipate and to wait expectantly for something.⁴¹ Teaches the Apter, this is what it means to be a “*shomer Shabbat*”; it is someone *who looks forward* to Shabbat, who *waits expectantly and with great excitement* for the arrival of Shabbat.⁴² From this perspective, it is possible for a person to be a *shomer Shabbat* only *before* Shabbat; once Shabbat arrives it is too late. Thus, for the Apter, a *shomer Shabbat* Jew and an *erev Shabbat* Jew are exactly the same thing.

One does not just enter the Shabbat; one prepares all week for the arrival of Shabbat, one prepares more in earnest beginning the fourth day of the week, and one prepares with utmost mindfulness on the day immediately prior to Shabbat. If we want to gain the most out of Shabbat, it requires – and deserves – our careful, proactive preparation and forethought.

⁴¹. R. Menachem M. Kasher, *Torah Sheleimah*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1992), 1408, n. 93, on *Bereishit* 37:11, points to three places where Rashi interprets *sh-m-r* the same way, in each case referring to this verse. See Rashi, *Berakhot* 3a, s.v. *ve-shamar*; *Sotah* 18b, s.v. *shomeret yavam u-kenusah*; *Kiddushin* 27b, s.v. *kenusah*. My thanks to my son-in-law, Corey Tarzik, for bringing this source to my attention.

⁴². R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, *Ohev Yisrael* (Zhitomir, 1863; repr. Brooklyn, 1987), 54a–b, *Parashat Ki Tisa*, s.v. *va-yomer Hashem el Moshe*. See also *ibid*, p. 86b, *Parashat Ki Teitzei*, s.v. *zakhor et asher asah lekha Amalek*; R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk, *No’am Elimelekh* (Lemberg, 1865), 16a, *Parashat Vayigash*, beginning. I was later shown by someone (and I regret that I do not remember who it was so I could thank him) that Chizkuni, in his commentary on *Devarim* 5:11, s.v. *shamor et yom ha-Shabbat*, makes the same point, citing the verse of “*ve-aviv shamor et ha-davar*” to explain the word *shamor* there.

For similar explanations of the root *sh-m-r* as meaning anticipating, see Rashi and Rashbam on *Shemot* 12:42, s.v. *leil shimurim*; *Or Ha-Chaim* on *Shemot* 31:16, s.v. *ve-shamru Venei Yisrael*.