

Rebbetzin Shira Smiles

Shemirat Shabbat

“Shamor vezachor b'dibur echad”. These two expressions said in one breath, direct us to experience the holiness of Shabbat in the most exalted way. Shamor relates to the positive mitzvot associated with keeping Shabbat, zachor relates to the negative ones.

From a halachic perspective the interconnectedness of the two is what obligates women in the positive mitzvot of Shabbat, albeit they are time-bound. Hence, women are obligated in kiddush, eating lechem mishneh and three seudot on Shabbat.

Shamor is guarding Shabbat; ensuring that one does not transgress any laws specific to Shabbat entails tremendous effort. The Chafetz Chayim in his introduction to the laws of Shabbat states emphatically that one who does not learn the laws of Shabbat will inadvertently come to transgress multiple laws each week. To strengthen Shemirat Shabbat many people have a custom to learn at least two Shabbat laws at each Shabbat meal; this creates a sensitivity to and awareness of the complexity and intricacies of Hilchot

Shabbat.

The Netivot Shalom likens Shabbat to the experience of entering a king's palace. When a person is in his own home, he has the right to touch, look and move things around without a second thought. However, when one is in someone else's home, he must respect the implicit boundaries and rules of that home. If the rule of the home is to take off one's shoes upon entering so as not to dirty the carpet, one must follow suit. If a person were to spend Shabbat in the home of a great person, she would obviously be careful to display the proper behavior and speech throughout Shabbat as well. On Shabbat it is as if we enter the Kingdom of Hashem. Our demeanor, speech and conduct must reflect this special reality. Shamor therefore, is not seen as limiting us as what we cannot do, rather it gives us the parameters of what is acceptable in such a holy environment.

Rav Matitayhu Salamon in Matnat Chayim notes that shamor is related to the idea of anticipation, as in “veaviv shamar et hadavar” (Bereishit 37:11). One should feel a sense of anticipation and excitement for Shabbat the entire week, in particular on Friday. This translates into the special preparation that we

do as we shop, cook and preparing the house. It also entails introspection and setting the proper attitude to appreciate the magnitude that the gift of Shabbat presents us. Indeed, we begin Kiddush on Friday night with the words “Yom hashishi”; Shabbat takes on its fullness only with our preparation on “yom hashishi”. To the extent we anticipate and desire, we can appreciate and experience.