

ENJOY THE RIDE

by Rabbi Label Lam

And Moshe said, "Eat it (manna) today, for today is a Shabbos to HASHEM; today you shall not find it in the field. Six days shall you gather it, but the seventh day is a Shabbos, on it there will be none." It happened **on the seventh day some of the people went out to gather**, and they did not find. HASHEM said to Moshe, "How long will you refuse to obey My commandments and My teachings? See that HASHEM has given you Shabbos; that is why He gives you on the sixth day a double portion of bread. Let every man remain in his place on the seventh day." The people rested on the seventh day. (Shemos 16:25-30)

On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather: Who was it that went out? These were the ones in Israel that were lacking in trust! (Mechilta)

Why does it seem for some so impossibly hard to resist the temptation to toil even on Shabbos?

The Maggid of Dubno told the following parable that may help answer our question: A poor man with a heavy bundle on his shoulders was walking along the highway. A rich man with a fancy carriage came by and generously offered him a ride. The poor man gladly accepted the offer. You can imagine the surprise of the wealthy man when he glanced at his passenger and noticed that he was still carrying the giant load on his shoulders. He called out to him, "My good man what, in the world are you doing? Why don't you put your sack on the floor?" The humble traveler replied, "My dear sir you have been kind enough to me already. Your carriage has to bear the weight of my body even now. How can I presume to burden you with my bundle too?"

At this point the host laughed heartily and lectured his guest, "Silly man, why strain your back? Don't you see that all is the same for me whether you hold your parcel on your shoulder or whether you place it beside you? It's still in

the carriage and whatever you do the carriage is bearing its weight. You might as well let your burden down."

We are instructed by the Torah explicitly and for all time, "Remember the day of Shabbos to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work but the seventh day is a Shabbos to HASHEM your G-d." (Shemos 20:8-10) Is it realistic or even possible for someone to have done all of his work, as the Torah commands? Is anybody's task totally complete? About this Rashi answers, "It should be to you as if all your work is done!" A big secret is embedded in those words. There should be no

strain involved in restraining the impulse to engage in forbidden activities on Shabbos. It's easy! The war is over. The job is done, even if, in the mind alone, with the onset of Shabbos!

I have in my possession an old New Yorker cartoon portraying a man reclining in his hammock in the back yard while trying to read a newspaper. All around him, though, from all corners of the yard and house, those little balloons indicating someone speaking in cartoon lingo, bloom. Each demands a different chore, "clean me, mow me, trim me, paint me, fix me, and prune me!" All the while the man presumes to relax but we know that he's annoyed by the gnawing urge to get up and do.

The beauty of Shabbos may be summarized in words uttered by King David, "Cast your burden upon HASHEM and he will provide for you...(Tehillim 55:23) Until one is able to put the package down he can never truly come to a state of real restfulness. Shabbos affords us this opportunity. With the power of a Divine decree the hammer is taken from the hand, and a switch in the brain is made. Perhaps for this reason we show two loaves at each meal on Shabbos! While eating on Friday Night, for example, we are sending a signal to the worrisome that just as there is plenty now, so shall there be tomorrow, **enjoy the ride**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.