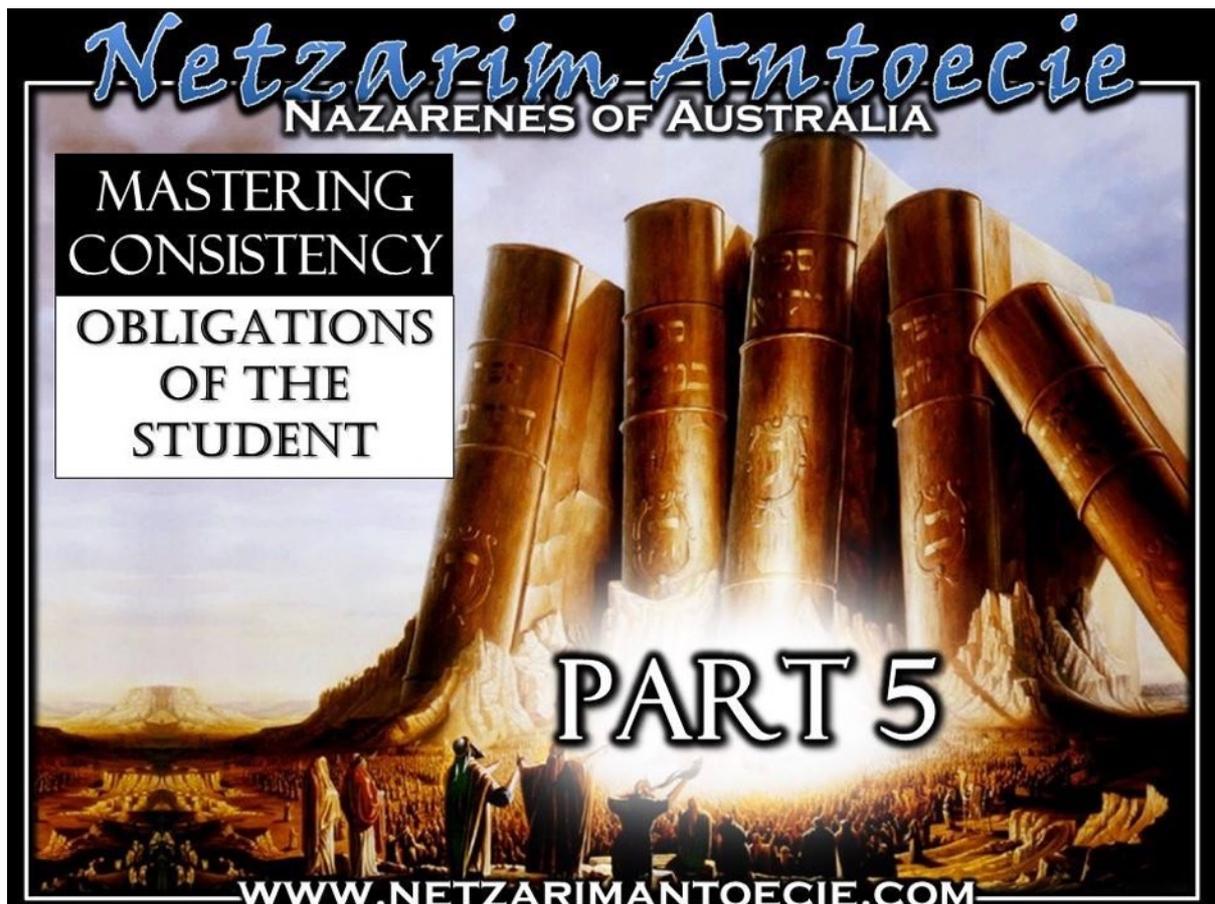


The Obligations of the Student – Part 5

Consistency



Intro: With anything in our lives, the key to success in it is consistency. Constancy is the quality of being faithful and dependable. It is the quality of being unchanging or unwavering, as in purpose, love, or loyalty. It is firmness of mind and faithfulness.

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Consistency

"Messiah Yahshua is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)"

"...You remain the same, and Your years will never end. (Hebrews 1:12)"

"I Yahweh do not change. So you, the descendants of Ya'akov, are not destroyed. (Malachi 3:6)"

"But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end. (Psalm 102:27)"

"Elohim is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil? (Numbers 23:19)"

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Seven Covenants



The Edenic Covenant
(Genesis 1:26-31; 2:16-17)

The Adamic Covenant
(Genesis 3:16-19)

The Noahide Covenant
(Genesis 9:1-18)



The Abrahamic Covenant
(Genesis 12:1-4; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8)



The Sinai Covenant
(Exodus 20:1 - 31:18; Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28)



The Davidic Covenant
(2 Samuel 7:4-16; 1 Chronicles 17:3-15; Isaiah 9:6-7;
Psalm 89:3-4, 89.35-37; Daniel 7:14)



The Renewed Covenant
(Deuteronomy 29-30; Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:6-13, Matthew 24:4)

The Word is telling us that the Creator and the manifestation of his Saving Right Arm (Yahshua) is a constant, forward moving entity. This is good, because in theory it makes Him easy to follow. This eliminates second guessing as he clearly presents His nature in the Torah like a measured pattern of movement. As man climbs his way back into relationship with him he revealed Himself in the form of seven covenants –

The Edenic (**Gen. 1:26-31; 2:16-17**),

Adamic (**Genesis 3:16-19**),

Noachide (**Genesis 9:1-18**),

Abrahamic (**Genesis 12:1-4; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8**),

Sinai (**Exodus 20:1 - 31:18; Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28**),

Davidic (**2 Samuel 7:4-16; 1 Chronicles 17:3-15; Isaiah 9:6-7;**

Psalm 89:3-4, 89.35-37; Daniel 7:14) and

ew Covenant (**Deuteronomy 29-30; Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews**

8:6-13, Matthew 24:4). Each covenant is a slow forecast,

progressive reveal of His desire for mankind's destiny.

So the sign of whether we are succeeding in our faith is not

prosperity. Anyone can be cheerfully observant in times of plenty.

Rather the sign of our success is a steady attachment to Yahweh Elohim in any life situation, whether in times of prosperity or hardship. You'll know if someone is wavering. They'll be steady in their observance and as soon there is a bump in the road they fall off the wagon. Religion is futile, if you only do it when you're in a good mood, are getting your own way or it's convenient. Yahweh never said He offers you convenience. His yoke is easy, but like anything, the initial stages are hard and even when it gets easier, it's still a yoke. This means it's still something you have to choose to carry and it's still defined as work or effort. The name of this effort is called *avodah shebalev*, which means "service of the heart."

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Consistency

In Hebrew the concept of someone or something that is *consistent* – that is, behaving in a reliable or predictable manner (i.e., *taking steady footsteps*) is: עֵקְבִי (eek-VEE) in the masculine and עֵקְבִית (eek-VEET) in the feminine.

עֵקְבִי eek-VEE עֵקְבִית eek-VEET



The Hebrew word for heel (the back of the foot) is עֵקֶב (EH-kev). It's the root of the name Jacob – יַעֲקֹב (yah-ah-KOHV), who was born holding onto the עֵקֶב of his twin brother, Esau – עֵשָׂו (eh-SAHV).

"Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. (Psalm 119:133)"

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We learn from this that consistency is the following in the footsteps of someone ahead of you. The act of walking requires consistently measured movements. If the movement isn't consistent and measured movement is slow and awkward. **“Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. (Psalm 119:133)”**

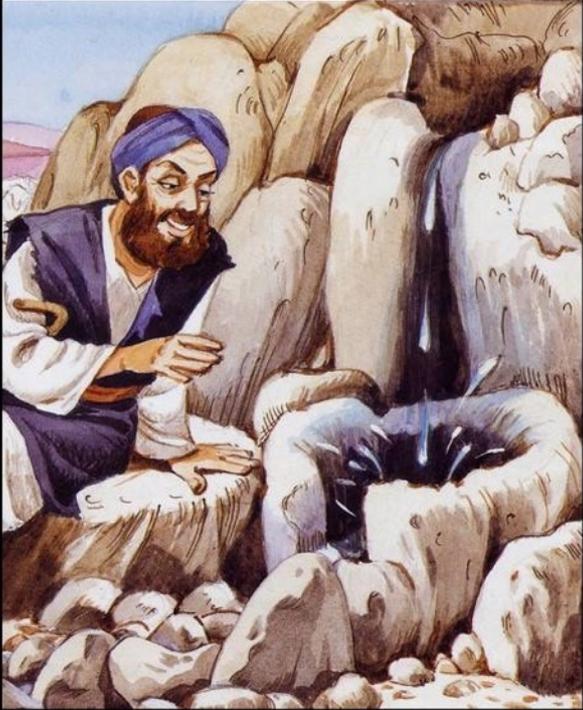
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Rabbi Akiva, originally a poor unlearned son of a convert who didn't begin to become observant until the age of 40, became one of the foremost Sages of Judaism. How?

One day he was walking past a waterfall and noticed a rock with a hole right through it. He noted that the hole had been caused by the steady drip of water that was falling exactly where the hole was. Seeing that he thought to himself “if water which is soft, can make a hole in a rock, which is hard, then all the more so Torah which is fire can make a hole in the heart of man, which is soft”. He goes to Yeshiva, enrolls into the equivalent of primary school, learns the Aleph Beit, and twenty-four years later returns home with 24,000 thousand students.

What did he see? The drops of water only made a hole in the rock because they fell in the exact same place over and over again.



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The obligation of the student of the Torah or of Messiah (both terms are interchangeable because they are one and the same) is to develop and maintain consistency.

It's become apparent that some students who have been listening to my teachings for quite a few years are still lacking in basic of the Torah. Some think that by just not attending their place of employment, they are keeping Shabbat.

Imagine your child's birthday is coming up and you throw him a party. Only problem is you do the absolute bare minimum. No balloons, no clown, no presents, no decorations and no friends.

Just a cupcake in the middle of a table with one candle stuck in it.

Do you think your kid will be happy with that? No some impoverished children in the world would, but why would you not try and make the day as special as is within your means?

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"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the Elohim of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)"

Children thrive on consistency, and appreciate uniformity and stability in their lives. They will intuitively discern which standards and values we regard as essential and immutable, and which can be challenged and negated. The basis of successful parenting is establishing *matot*--firm, unbending principles through which to guide our children. Matot means "tribes" but it also means "a firm rod." A rod is straight and can be used as a disciplining tool.

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 'Make level paths for your feet,' so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. (Hebrews 12:11-13)"

King Solomon teaches in Proverbs, "*chosech shivto, soneh benoh*" which literally means, "he who withholds the rod, hates his child" (hence the popular adage, "spare the rod and spoil the child"). The message of this wisdom for our times is that a loving, caring parent must imbue his child with *conceptual* rods--firm and unyielding principles to guide him through the bewildering paths of life.

"...in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:6)"

A Nazarene Israelite should put into practice what he gleans from his rabbi or teacher. **"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the Elohim of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)"**

The key is to maintain consistent observance.

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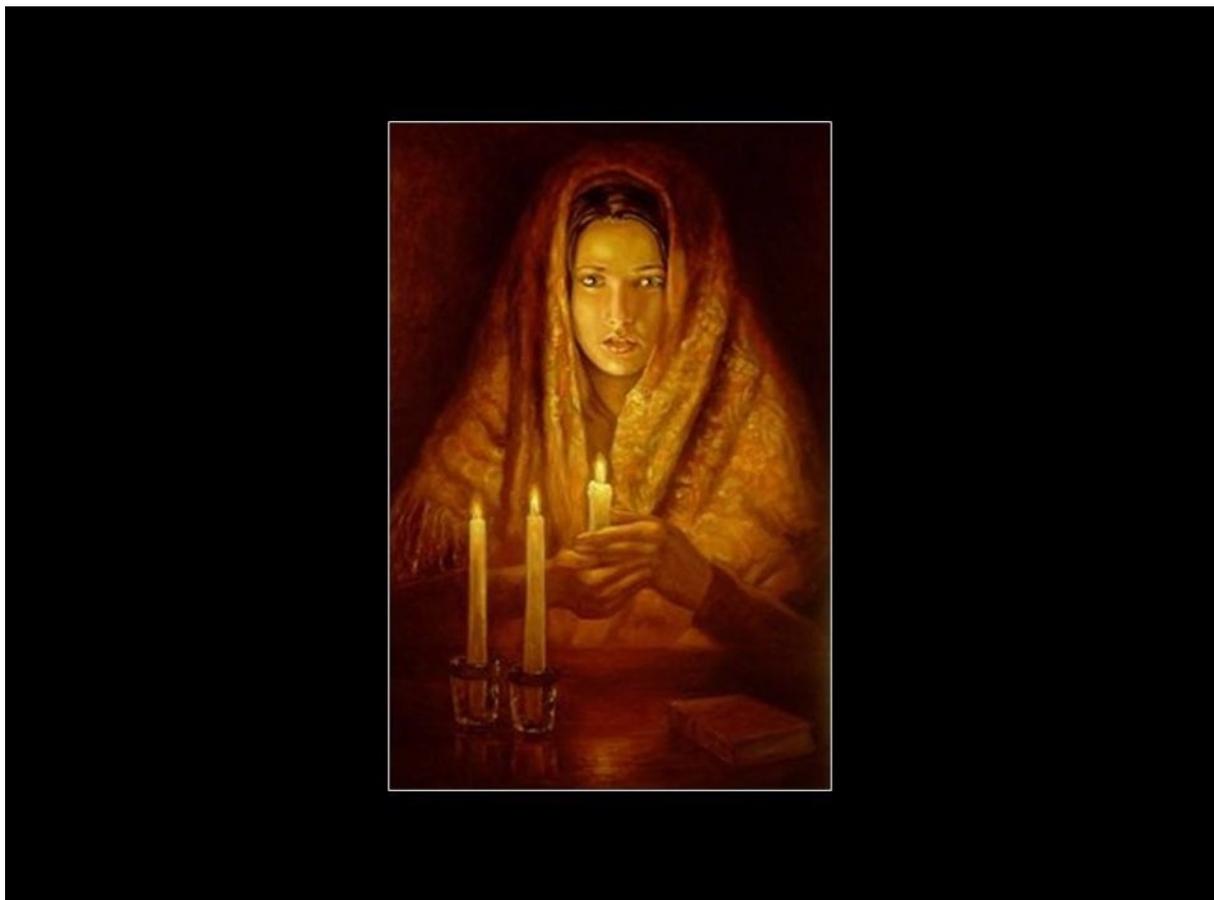
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"...in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:6)"

We should not be content with just listening to straight things, but doing straight things. The gay community have a word for heterosexuals. You know what that word is? STRAIGHT!

SHABBAT



The most important aspect of our faith is the weekly Shabbat. It is one of the best known yet least understood observances within Judaism and the Netzarim faith. Shabbat is the only ritual

observance instituted in the Ten Commandments. It is more holy than Yom Kippur, because congregants are called up to read from the Torah unlike Yom Kippur where the burden of the service is born by the Chazzan. The word "Shabbat" comes from the Hebrew root Shin-Beit-Tav, meaning to cease, to end, or to rest.

We are commanded to remember Shabbat; but remembering means much more than merely not forgetting to observe Shabbat. It also means to remember the significance of Shabbat, both as a commemoration of creation and as a commemoration of our freedom from slavery in Egypt.

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"Remember the Shabbat day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Yahweh your Elohim. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)"

In **Deuteronomy 5:15**, while Moshe reiterates the Ten Commandments, he notes the second thing that we must remember on Shabbat: **"Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you forth from there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm; therefore Yahweh your Elohim commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."**

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The problem today is that most people see the English word “work” and they immediately think that the Shabbat is about avoiding any physical effort to do anything. The Torah does not prohibit "work" in the 20th century English sense of the word. The Torah prohibits “melachah.” Melachah generally refers to the kind of work that is creative, or that exercises control or dominion over your environment. The word may be related to "melekh" king.

Going back to the analogy of a party. The idea is that when one throws a party, they prepare the party before the event. They buy food, decorations, presents, send out invites and do everything they can to sustain the events that are required to be held on that day. Generally, a person does not want to be setting up decorations after the guests have arrived or go out during the even to purchase more wine and spirits and leave their guests unattended.

Shabbat is a weekly practice for the World to Come. In this current world we accrue provisions for our status in the World to Come, where we are rewarded according to our deeds.

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Shabbat



“Blessed is the man... who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me... (Isaiah 56:2, 4)”

“I gave them my Sabbath days of rest as a sign between them and me. (Ezekiel 20:12)”

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Why do we have to keep Shabbat? If we observe Shabbat, we please the Almighty and receive a blessing. **“Blessed is the man... who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me... (Isaiah 56:2, 4)”** It is also a sign. **“I gave them my Sabbath days of rest as a sign between them and me. (Ezekiel 20:12)”**

So how do we keep that Shabbat?

At about 2PM or 3PM on Friday afternoon, Orthodox Jews and Netzarim leave their place of work to begin Shabbat preparations. The mood is much like preparing for the arrival of a special, beloved guest: the house is cleaned, the family bathes and dresses up, the best dishes and tableware are set, a festive meal is prepared. This is called Erev Shabbat (The Evening of Shabbat), because a Biblical day starts at Sundown, while the heathen day starts at midnight.

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Erev Shabbat

The Erev (evening) Shabbat Service is extremely important. It is a weekly family orientated event in the home. Children will quickly learn that there is a unique nature to this day. The traditional activities associated with welcoming Shabbat will teach young minds the set-apart and sanctified nature of this time. No longer will it just be words in a book. The Shabbat will come alive. It will have a lasting audible, optical, touchable and ingestible effect on them. The shofar sounds, the candles are lit, wine is tasted and warm fresh Challah bread is shared. A family meal is followed, the Torah is shared and some households sing songs and even dance with their children.



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The challenge for parents is to convey how all the “restrictions” actually open up an exciting new dimension of fun. With the right approach, Shabbat becomes the kids’ favorite day, which they anticipate with excitement all week long.

Shabbat should be looked upon as an anticipatory event. A day when the Creator imbues His children with a heightened spiritual awareness.

By greeting the Shabbat with a formal service in the home around the dining table before the evening meal, the children will begin to note that this is a very special day, different from all the other nights of the week.



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1. Buy special Shabbat clothes for the kids – Shabbat shoes, Shabbat hair ribbons, etc.
2. Let the week lead into Shabbat remind the kids with comments like “Only three more days till Shabbat!”... “Tomorrow is Shabbat.”
3. Get the kids involved in Shabbat preparations: cooking, setting the table, tidying, shopping. Let each child “help” make his favorite Shabbat dish and then let him bring it to the table. Or give each child the choice of pre-cutting things like pickles. Even the smallest child can place napkins at each place setting. Find what they like to do and give them a task within their means.
4. If you are having guests, get the kids involved by having them make handmade place-setting cards, making up the guest room with fresh sheets, towels, flowers, etc. Tell the children who is coming and encourage them to learn the guests’ names ahead of time so they can greet them properly.
5. Offer to serve fresh challah on Thursday night or Friday, to give them a taste of Shabbat coming.
6. Serve the kids special Shabbat-only treats – e.g. soda, ice cream. (Of course these are only special if they’re “only on Shabbat.”) Even if you don’t normally let the kids eat sugary cereals or junk food during the week, on Shabbat let them have it all. (It’s a good way of avoiding it during the week – “Treats are for Shabbat!”)
7. Keep a collection of toys and games that are exclusive for Shabbat. Put away the ones they can’t use on Shabbat (musical instruments, crayons, etc.) and take out the new ones.
8. At candle-lighting, small children like to stand beside their mother to help say the blessing and enjoy the whole mitzvah.
9. When you bless each individual child before Kiddush, don’t rush it. Especially if you don’t have guests, you can really take your time and spend a few precious minutes with each child.

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10. Children like to imitate by saying their own Kiddush. (They love getting a full cup of grape juice!) Have little inexpensive wine glasses for the kids, so they can feel special and grown-up.
11. If you have guests, remember that your children and family come first. You are not expected to alter your normal Shabbat environment. More than anything, your guests will appreciate joining in the activities, and absorbing the family atmosphere
12. Encourage children’s involvement by assigning special Shabbat responsibilities. One child can be the “dessert waiter” and help serve the dessert; another can be the “towel person,” handing the hand towels to the guests after they wash for bread, etc.
13. Ask the kids if they’ve heard any new jokes. This gets everyone in a good mood.
14. At the Friday night meal, tell personal stories of Divine providence (*hashgacha*). It adds a very powerful dimension. Guests can tell a story from their whole life, not just the past week. People routinely have amazing stories. Give candy incentives for those who participate. It forces everyone to pay attention during the week to see Elohim’s hand in our lives.
15. Let each child take a turn choosing another song. Sing at least one extra-fast song with rowdy singing, banging on the table, and circle dancing. Kids love it.
16. When singing songs, hold the note at the end for as long as you can, and have a contest to see who can sing it the longest without taking a breath. It becomes a lot of fun and everyone joins in.
17. Show off the any school projects they made that week in school. Each child really looks forward to his turn for “show and tell.”
18. Do things on Shabbat that you don’t do during the week – play games, cuddle up, have uninterrupted talks.
19. After the meal, tell a long story with a powerful message, either historical, contemporary, or an allegory. The most important part is the end where you discuss the message.
20. Read special Shabbat books or Bible stories.

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- 21 Ask questions about the parsha, targeted for each child's specific age. Hand out candies (chocolate chips, jelly beans) for every correct answer.
- 22 Arrange to have their friends stay over for Shabbat.
- 23 When Shabbat is over plan a party – with hot cocoa, popcorn, milk shakes and music. Bring out the crayons they couldn't use on Shabbat and let them color to their heart's content. It will prolong your special family time even more.
- 24 After Shabbat is over, when you're putting them into bed, review all the highlights of Shabbat. "Remember how yummy the challah tasted?"... "Oh, you were so quiet while Daddy made Kiddush!"... "Wasn't our Shabbat outing fun?"
- 25 Most of all, set a good example. If they see you enjoying the preparation and fulfillment of Shabbat, that will be the greatest influence on them.

Remember, be consistent!

But how do we approach such a day with kids? Here are a few suggestions.

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REMEMBER, BE CONSISTENT!