

# CHIZUK & IDUD

*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra  
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael  
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

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## **B'har**

In this week's parsha we find that the Torah groups together Shabbat and Beit Hamikdash: "My Shabbatot you shall observe and my Sanctuary you shall revere - I am Hashem" (Vayikra 26:2).

Shabbat and the Mikdash represent different types of holiness: Holiness in time (Shabbat), as opposed to holiness in space (Mikdash). There are major differences between these two models of Kedusha: One is tangible - you can touch and feel the Mikdash, while the sanctity of Shabbat, is intangible, ineffable. Man clearly has the capability to appreciate and incorporate both the sanctity of time and place into his life. Nonetheless, the juxtaposition of these two different themes naturally leads us to ponder the nature of the connection between them.

I recently came across a passage on this topic from the writings of "Manitou", an important albeit somewhat lesser known 20th century Sefardi Jewish thinker. Manitou, whose real name was Rav Yehuda Leon Ashkenazi, was born in Algeria in 1922, made Aliyah from France after having been active in Jewish education there for many years, and

passed away in Israel in 1996. Although widely recognized during his lifetime as a major intellectual and spiritual figure by the French-speaking community, Manitou did not reach the broader attention of English speaking Jewry.

This past Shabbat my granddaughter was studying for a Bagrut (matriculation exam) in Machshevet Yisrael (Jewish Thought), and happened to show me a selection from Manitou she was having some trouble deciphering.

According to Manitou, (if I understood his flowery language correctly), the purpose of Shabbat, is to highlight the Brit, the covenant, between the Creator and His creations. Manitou's piece starts off with the enigmatic statement that "The rays of the sun are infinitely greater than the flame of the candle", to which he adds that "in order to create a world for man G-d had to be MISTATER, he had to hide himself". This is a reformulation of the Lurianic Kabbalistic notion of TZIMTZUM, contraction, practiced by the EIN SOF (the infinite). Since the Almighty's glory fills all, if not for this constriction there would be no room for the creation and existence of the universe inhabited by man. However, as a result of this TZIMTZUM, the Almighty cannot appear within our physical world unless Man undergoes a similar process of psychological self-effacement. The process of contracting one's ego - BITUL HAYESH - allows one to recognize Hashem's sovereignty over

our world. Thus the Rabbis taught that a BAAL GA'AVA, a haughty individual, leaves no room for the Shechina. A person full of himself must, of necessity, contract his ego, his YESH, in order to make room for the Almighty.

Manitou sees a connection between Shabbat, which marks the completion of the Creation when the Almighty practiced TZIMZUM, and the building of the Beit HaMikdash where Man practiced BITUL HAYESH in order to bring the Almighty down to Earth.

The G-d of Shabbat is the G-d that hides. Were He not to hide, were the Almighty to appear clothed in His full splendor, the world could not exist. By safeguarding the Shabbat one declares their awareness of the existence and sovereignty of this KEIL MISTATER.

The Torah tells us that the building of the Beit HaMikdash, the process of bringing the Shechina to reside on Earth, must be preceded by Shabbat, by Man's self-effacement.

Rav Soloveitchik quotes this same verse to say that the Almighty contracts Himself in order to reside in the finite world and find repose in the Beit HaMikdash. But the Rav connects this idea to an earlier verse in Vayikra 19:3 where the Torah groups together parents and Shabbat: "Each person shall fear his Mother and Father and shall keep my Shabbat, I am Hashem". The Rav says that this pasuk teaches us that in order to come into contact with the

Shechina; one need not make the pilgrimage to the physical sanctuary of the Mikdash. The Divine presence can be found through the act of respecting and fearing one's parents as well.

Thus, every Shabbat when parents and children sit together exchanging Divrei Torah we are, in effect, welcoming in the Shechina to our home.

The notion that man can, and should, act to make himself a MA'ON LASHECHINA - a resting place for the Shechina - is found in a further point noted by Rashi and Ramban. The verse says: "I will cut (one who engages in child sacrifices) off from amongst his people for he has given of his seed to the Molech in order to defile my sanctuary." In this verse, we see that the defiling of a Jewish soul is referred to as defiling of the Sanctuary, since the Torah relates to the People of Israel as G-d's sanctuary.

Today, we are blessedly far removed from child sacrifice, and yet we too can easily fall into the trap relevant to our times. We can too easily defile the Divine sanctuary by refusing to recognize the holiness of the Holy Land - the Palace of the King - by refusing to call it home. Is this not a Chilul Hashem?

In my mind I play through an imagined conversation, which I wish would take place in thousands upon thousands of homes. I imagine a father turning to his son, (or vice versa), one spouse turning to the other, and saying that it is time to make Aliyah. I imagine them explaining

that it is time to experience Kedushat HaZ'man and Kedushat HaMakom in Eretz HaKodesh. It is time to strengthen our bond with the Ribono Shel Olam, and with the throbbing heart of Am Yisrael living in proximity to Har HaBayit, G-d's Sanctuary! I imagine these sentiments shared with friends and neighbors, and influencing them to follow suit by making Aliyah themselves - what a dream! 🏠👉

*These weekly words of Torah wisdom can be found in my recently published book "Eretz Yisrael and Aliyah in the weekly Parsha". It can be ordered by calling 052-336-0553 or by ordering it on Amazon*