

# 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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We often think it is young children who complain of being scared of the dark, and yet, truth be told, a primal association linking night and darkness with danger and fear is deeply ingrained within us all. When searching for an apt title for his personal account of the horrors of the Holocaust - the ultimate darkness of hell on earth - Elie Wiesel went with one simple word: "NIGHT".

This week's parsha tells the story of a special and unique night, a night which rather than signifying darkness and despair, has been highly anticipated for generations as a beacon of light, shining hope upon a sea of darkness. Pesach night, a night of great suffering for our enemy ("for there was no house in which there was not found a corpse"), was at the same time a night of hope and deliverance for the people of Israel. This night, the Torah tells us, was a LEIL SHIMURIM, "a night of watching unto Hashem for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this same night", the Torah writes, "is a night of watching unto all the children of

Israel throughout the generations" (Sh'mot 12:42).

Rashi explains that when referencing G-d, the term LEIL SHIMURIM is to be understood as a night which Hashem had highly anticipated (SHOMER UM'TZAPEH), in order to finally fulfill the promise He had made to Avraham long before to take the Jews out of Egypt. When applied to the people of Israel, this same term (SHIMURIM) means safeguarding: On this night we were, and will forever be, protected from the MASHCHIT, the destroyer who would harm us if only granted the possibility to do so...

There are several customs that pertain to the first night of Pesach being a LEIL SHIMURIM. One such custom is to open the entrance door to the house when we arrive at the section of SH'FOCH CHAMATCHA - pour out your wrath on the nations. The Rama (Ohr HaChayim 480,1) tells us that in the merit of this demonstration of our faith that this is indeed a night of watching (and therefore we need not fear anything, Mishna B'rura, 10), the Mashiach will come and pour his wrath over all who deny G-d. Similarly, the Rama writes (Ohr HaChayim 481,1) that as we retire on this night, we do not say the verses usually recited K'DEI L'HAGEIN, for protection, as this night is a LEIL SHIMURIM MIN HAMEIZIKIN, on this night we are

promised protection from those who would harm us.

Sadly, this has not always been the case... Jews living in Christian lands would often fear "blood libels" at this time of year, and here, in Israel, we still remember the night terrorists attacked a hotel in Netanya killing Jews who had come together to celebrate the Seder.

According to Ibn Ezra the true understanding of the verse is that as a result of the fact that G-d watched over us on this night in Egypt, therefore for generations to come we shall become like watchmen, or guards, on this night. The term SHIMURIM brings to mind the verse SHOMREI HACHOMOT - "Guardians of the (city) walls". Like the guardians who remain vigilant and do not let their eyes sleep, so too we shall remain awake upon this night giving thanks and retelling G-d's miracles.

Bringing these two interpretations together, we might suggest that we shall merit the divine protection of LEIL SHIMURIM when we are willing to acknowledge our own responsibility of becoming SHOMREI HACHOMOT.

Yishayahu 62:6 reads: - "Upon your walls O' Jerusalem I have set SHOMRIM (watchmen) all day and night." Recent history has clearly shown that the best SH'MIRA for the

walls of Jerusalem, and for the Holy Land in its entirety, is having Jews come on Aliya and populate it - nationwide - these inhabitants have proven over time to be the best protectors of the Land. This belief, over a hundred and twenty years ago, led to the foundation of the CHIBAT TZION Movement, dedicated to the belief that we must begin the process of buying up the land and establishing colonies, working thereby to make Redemption a reality.

Recent news headlines have made mention of Jewish anarchists who are willing to endanger the lives of Arab homeowners wishing to sell their land to Jews, passing over their names to the Palestinian police. Readers of this column assumedly find such acts reprehensible, and yet do we do all in our power to act in the opposite manner? If we see that there are those who are willing to go so far in order to prevent Jews from acquiring additional areas of the Holy Land, we must ask of ourselves whether we are willing to invest ourselves fully to safeguard the walls of Jerusalem? We commonly refer to ourselves as SHOMREI Torah and mitzvot. It is time we invested more in becoming SHOMREI HACHOMOT, the watchmen of the walls of Jerusalem.

BONEI YERUSHALAYIM HASHEM - you, too, can contribute to the rebuilding of Jerusalem! 🏠👉