

“You shall keep My Sabbaths and fear My Sanctuary. I am Hashem.”

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A fundamental principle in Jewish mysticism is that everything that exists in this world appears in three dimensions: space, time and soul. Sefer Yetzirah (The Book of Creation) refers to this concept as Asha'n, an acronym for Olam, space, Shanah time, and Nefesh, or how the essence of the time or place is also manifest in our souls.

This concept makes the above verse's connection between Shabbos and Mikdash more clearly understood. Shabbos is a Mikdash, a sanctuary that is expressed in each of these three dimensions.

A Mikdash in time: Shabbos is the highest, most sanctified day of the week just as the Mikdash is the most sanctified space on earth. A Jew going into Shabbos is like the Kohen Gadol going into the Mikdash. Throughout Shabbos we experience Temple-consciousness, and our service is like that of a Kohein laHashem, a priest cleaving to the Divine Presence.

A Mikdash in space: As we sit at the Shabbos Table, we are recreating the holy spatial environment of the Beis haMikdash. Our table is an image of the Mizbe'ach, our Challah is like the Lechem haPanim, our wine is like the Nesachim — wine libations poured on the altar, and our Shabbos candles are

like the heavenly lights of the Menorah. The delicacies we enjoy are compared to eating from the Korbanos, the most elevated form of eating. There is a Minhag, a custom on Friday night, to enjoy the fragrance of Hadassim, myrtle branches, or Besamim spices; this is like the fragrance of the Ketores in the Temple.

Our singing of Zemiros is like the singing of the Levi'im, and our Divrei Torah reflect the words of the Sanhedrin, the gathering of sages which would occur in the Lishkah, next to the Temple. The Dibuk Chaveirim and togetherness of our family and friends that we experience at the table is like the heightened atmosphere of Divine love in the Kodesh haKedoshim. As in the Temple, our home is filled with revealed goodness and total connection.

A Mikdash in soul: Most importantly, as we feast royally, we are in presence of Hashem, the King, lacking nothing. Our souls luxuriate in the Beis haMelech, the House of the King, where every good thing and holy delight is amply provided. We are all in a state of completion, in which no Melachah is to be done, no changes are to be made — even spiritually.

The Makom haMikdash is referred to as haHar haTov haZeh (Devarim 3:25), the mountain of revealed good. Shabbos is our time to enter that world of revealed good, and to identify the

good in ourselves and others. Shabbos is a time of blessing and goodness, a time to consider our spiritual state from a positive vantage point. Tzadikim compare this approach to the way we entered the Temple in a state of Taharah, purity, wholeness.

The Shem MiShmuel of Sochotchov (Parshas Shelach 5677) writes: “On Shabbos one should not dwell on unworthiness at all, rather maintain an attitude of delight, joy and desire.

No words of criticism or anger come to our mouths or minds. It is not the time to delve into character traits or to examine that which might need improvement; Klum Chaser b’Veis haMelech, nothing is lacking in the presence of the King.”

One practical suggestion to maximize this opportunity is to cultivate a positive, sanctified space for guests and family at our Shabbos table by sharing a Milah Tovah, a ‘good word’, something positive about ourselves, or goodness that we have recently experienced. Call attention to what you are proud of: a challenge in Midos with which you struggled, an act of Chesed that you performed, an effort that you made toward holiness and growth. In this way, we can cultivate Temple consciousness, and create a realm of revealed good and completion in our Nefesh.

This acceptance of the essential goodness in ourselves and others is like the Nachas Ru’ach, the good

pleasure and acceptance of the Shechinah brought about by our offerings. This is a sure way to create a Shabbos that is a Mikdash in soul.