



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL SHABBOS

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Kiddush

We organized along both sides of the road, a long and continuous line of tanks. At 22:00 - when we hadn't received the order to enter the city - I reached out to the command to ask if there were changes to our orders. The response was for us to continue to wait and to be prepared for immediate entrance. Suddenly, two tank crewmen appear and, in their hands, two bottles of wine. This is, after all, Shabbat! And the most reasonable thing to do at this exact moment is to say the Kiddush over the wine and bless the Shabbat. The tension and fears from the anticipation are growing more intense by the minute, but those two bottles of wine start making their way from tank to tank. Each unit within its tank says the Kiddush, answers "amen", pours wine into the bottle's cap, swallows, and passes the bottle on to the next tank. Those were, I believe, the most moving moments of my life. At that moment, I thought of the miracle of the pitcher of oil from Chanukah and compared it to this bottle of wine which managed to suffice for this long line of tanks and the teams within them. In those moments of tension and excitement, Kiddush was the thing that managed to unite this random group of soldiers, a true cross-section of Israeli society really—city-dwellers and kibbutznikim, religious and secular, right wing and left wing. (Moshe Feller, from: From You to You- the Book of Shabbat]

While this account was written during the Second Lebanon War, it's a story which has recurred repeatedly over the course of the last few months in Azza. Friday night Kiddush has a certain power to it. No matter where one is and what circumstances one is in, as the Kiddush is recited, the Kedusha of Shabbos takes hold. What are we actually doing when we recite the Kiddush?

We begin by saying the words:

יּוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי. וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צָבָאָם: וַיְכַלּוּ
אֱלֹקִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיִּשְׁבֹּת
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

The sixth day....The sky and the ground were finished being created. On the seventh day, Hashem had completed all the work which He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had done.

These words of וַיְכַלּוּ are so important that we actually say them three times on Friday night - once in the Shemoneh Esrei of Maariv, once in the Chazan's brief repetition, and a third time, at home as we recite the Kiddush. The **Avudraham** explains that when we recite these words, we are actually giving עדות (testimony) to all of mankind that Hashem created the entire world. Because we are giving testimony, ideally one should stand while reciting these words and if possible, should do it in the company of at least one other person.

But to take it one step further, **Gemara Shabbat 119b** states –

אמר רב המנונא - כל המתפלל בערב שבת ואומר "ויכולו" מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו נעשה שותף להקב"ה במעשה בראשית!

Rabbi Hamnuna says – whoever davens on Friday night and says “ויכולי”, it’s considered as if he has become partners with Hashem in creation.

This is astounding! How do we become partners in creation by reciting ויכולי? The *Chofetz Chaim* explains that the whole purpose of the creation of the world was for man to appreciate what Hashem has done for Him. If no one recognizes the beauty and intricacy of the world, then there is no point in creation.

We actually find this idea in the story of creation. The Torah (בראשית ב:ה) tells us on Day 6 וכל שיח השדה טרם יהיה בארץ וכל עשב - השדה טרם יצמח כי לא המטיר ה' אלהים עליהאץ *The bushes and grass has not yet sprouted because Hashem had not caused it to rain since there was no man to work the land.* **Rashi** asks - How can this be? We know that all the vegetation was created on Day 3! He answers - על פתח קרקע עמדו - it waited at the opening of the ground and only begin to really sprout on Day 6. Why? Because man was not created yet, and there was no one yet who could appreciate the importance of Hashem's creation of rain. From Hashem's perspective, only once man was created was there any reason to create rain and for the grass and plants to come up. And so we see that our testimony and appreciation of Hashem's creation, in actuality, transforms us into partners in the creation process.

After giving testimony to the creation of the world, we then make the Bracha over the cup of wine. But we don't end there. We then go on to talk about how Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim and chose us to be His people.

כי הוא יום תחלה למקראי קדש וזכר ליציאת מצרים. כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים

ושבת קדשך באברה ובציון הנחלתנו:

Shabbos is the first of the holidays which was instituted to remember the Exodus from Egypt. For You chose us and separated us from the other nations and gave us the holy Shabbat with love and good will.

This is based on **Gemara Pesachim 117b** where it says שזכיר יציאת מצרים בקידוש - that we are obligated to make mention of Mitzrayim in the Kiddush. But why is this? We're celebrating Shabbat, not Pesach. Why bring in the Exodus from Egypt? What does that have to do with Shabbat?

The **Kuzari** (1:11) explains that Yetziat Mitzrayim was in actuality a “modern-day” proof of Creation. The world was created a long time ago when none of us were around. So we don't have actual proof of what happened and even if we agree that Hashem created the world, it's possible to say that Hashem created the world and then left it. But when Hashem put into action all of the amazing miracles of the 10 plagues and the splitting of the sea, the entire nation and the entire world saw with their own eyes Hashem's ability to control nature and that Hashem is still actively involved in what happens in this world.

Additionally, we mention Yetziat Mitzrayim because it was at the time of the Exodus that Hashem selected us to be his chosen people. And He gave Shabbat as a special gift to us to remind us of this fact. מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנזי ושבת שמה ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל (Gemara Shabbat 10b) So while on a cosmic level Shabbat is celebrated to commemorate the creation of the world, on a national level we celebrate Shabbat to remind us that Hashem chose us to be His nation.

Finally, we close the Kiddush with the bracha אתה ה' מקדש השבת *Blessed is*

Hashem who sanctifies the Shabbat. In this one act of Kiddush, we have succeeded in recognizing that Hashem is the Creator of the world, understanding that He continues to be actively involved in our lives, and appreciating that He has specifically chosen us to be this nation. It's no wonder the Kiddush is held in such high regard, ushering in a special sense of kedusha no matter where one is, be it Lebanon, Azza, or in the comforts of home. ■



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