

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

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FAMILY SIDDIR STUDY: LESSON PLAN 6

UNTIL NOW WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE PSALMS, THE SONGS WE BELIEVE WERE WRITTEN BY KING DAVID, THAT ARE IN THE קַבֵּלַת שַׁבָּת SERVICE.

- קַבֵּלַת שַׁבָּת is the first service on Friday night, when we welcome the שַׁבָּת.
- If we read the words and think about them, the Psalms help us to stop focusing on all the things that have happened to us during the week and to begin thinking and feeling about God and שַׁבָּת.

THE NEXT PRAYER IN THE SIDDIR, לָכֵה דוֹדִי ON PAGE 21, IS NOT A PSALM.

- It was composed about 500 years ago (by R' Shlomo HaLevi Alkabetz), long after King David wrote the Psalms.
- Someone please read the first line in the Hebrew for us.
- לָכֵה דוֹדִי לְקַרְאֵת כְּלָהּ in English says, “Come my Beloved to meet the Bride.”
- **So who is “my Beloved” and who is the “Bride”?**
 1. Our Beloved is God!
 2. And the “bride” is שַׁבָּת!
- **But why might we think of שַׁבָּת as a bride?**
 1. Because our tradition teaches that when God created שַׁבָּת to be as beautiful as a bride, God told the Bride that Israel—the Jewish people, all of *us*—would be her husband.
 2. It's a way of saying that all of the Jewish people are married to Shabbat.
- And just like any married couple, we are to take care of one another: we keep and honor and protect שַׁבָּת, and, as you'll come to see, it does the same for us.
- ***But why do you imagine the first line of this prayer says, “Come my Beloved to meet the Bride?”***
 1. We want God with us, in our heart, when we welcome the שַׁבָּת.
 2. When we sing לָכֵה דוֹדִי, it's a very special time in the Friday night service.

3. It's the time when we think of oneself, with God, welcoming the Shabbat—or maybe not?
 4. Because if we're really welcoming Shabbat, we're saying that we're actually ready and willing to be the best person we can be, at least to be kind and fair to everyone.
 5. So when we sing לְכֹה דוֹדֵי, either we really mean it when we welcome Shabbat—that we're going to be the best we can be—or we're just fooling ourselves and other people.
- All of the Psalms that we've sung up to now have given us a chance to get ready to welcome the תּוֹשֵׁבֵת, so that we genuinely mean it when we sing בָּלָה לְקִרְאת כְּלָה—Come my Beloved to meet the Bride.

WE DO SOME UNUSUAL THINGS WHEN SINGING THE LAST VERSE OF לְכֹה דוֹדֵי.

- Does anyone know what they are?
 1. First, we stand;
 2. Second, we face the door; and
 3. Third, we bow.
- *Why do we do these things? Anyone know?*
- We stand up in the services and bow to show love and respect for God and Torah.
 1. Standing shows our love because when we stand and bow we kind of wake up, we pay more attention to what we're doing.
 2. Bowing shows our respect—it's kind of like the movies about kings who lived a long time ago; when they come into the room, everyone bows to show their respect for the king's power.
 3. When we stand and bow we're more likely to remember that this is the time when we decide whether or not we're truly going to welcome the Shabbat.
- *But what about facing the door—why do we do that?*
 1. It's like we're in a play, but the play is meant to teach us something very important.
 2. We act as if the תּוֹשֵׁבֵת Bride, all the beautiful things about the תּוֹשֵׁבֵת, are about to enter the sanctuary at the front door.
 3. So we stand to greet the bride.
 4. And at that moment we decide whether we're going to be the best person we can be this תּוֹשֵׁבֵת—no less than the fairest and kindest.
 5. And if we decide to be the best person, then all the beautiful things about תּוֹשֵׁבֵת really do come into the congregation at that moment.