

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

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FAMILY SIDDUR STUDY: LESSON PLAN 7

WHEN WE MET LAST TIME WE TALKED ABOUT לְכָה דוֹדֵי.

- That's the part of the קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת, the first service on Friday night, when we consciously welcome Shabbat.
- Remember, that's what קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת means—welcoming Shabbat.
- You may also remember that at the end of לְכָה דוֹדֵי, when we sing the last verse, we rise and bow two times when we sing “בְּאֵי בָּלָה, בְּאֵי בָּלָה”.

THIS TIME WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF BOWING THAT WE DO IN THE SERVICES AND WHY AND HOW WE DO THEM.

- First we're going to demonstrate the three types of bowing.
- Then we're going to talk about *why* we bow.
- And finally, everyone is going to have a chance to practice the three types of bowing.

SO LET'S START WITH THE THREE TYPES OF BOWING:

- First, there's a simple bow from the waist—this is the kind of bow we do at the end of לְכָה דוֹדֵי or for the קוֹרְבָנוּ, the call to prayer, which we'll be talking about in the next week or two.
- Then there's the bow in which one first bends the knees, then bends forward while straightening the knees, then stands up—this is the kind of bow we do during the עֲמִידָה, the standing prayer, which is said silently on Friday night; and
- Finally, there's the “triple-bow” from the waist—after three steps back, first bowing to the left, then to the right, and then forward, followed by three steps forward—which we do at the end of the קְדִישׁ, when we're saying the words, “עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹמִים.”

LAST WEEK WE TALKED ABOUT SOME OF THE REASONS WE BOW IN THE SERVICES.

- 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.
- But what does it mean to show respect for a greater power?
 1. One way we can think of it is that when we bow our heads, we're saying to ourselves that we're ready to change our thoughts and attitudes—to change our minds—so that we're thinking about what will be required of us to be fair and kind in all our dealings with other people.
 2. When we bow our knees, it's a way of saying we're not only going to change our thinking, but we're also going to change our behavior—we're going to *become a blessing*.
 3. The word for the knee and the word for blessing have the same root, **ג-ר-ך**, which is not surprising because it's the knee joint that lets us move ahead, allowing us to walk a different path in life and become better people, which is the way we become a blessing.
- Incidentally, whenever we're praying the word Adonai and bowing at the same time, like the **בְּרַכּוֹ** or **עֲמִידָה**, we always want to be upright by the time we say “Adonai.”
- Now, everyone, please come up and form a line to practice the three types of bowing.

WE'RE GOING TO MOVE ON NOW TO PAGE 22, AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, IN THE SIDUR.

- Can anyone tell us who is an **אָבֵל**, a “mourner”?
- In Judaism, **אָבֵלִי** are the close relatives of someone who has died:
 1. Husband or wife
 2. Parents
 3. Children
 4. Brother or sister
- There are many things we do in Judaism to help **אָבֵלִי**, because they feel very bad about losing someone they loved.
- One of the things we do comes during the **שְׁבַת קִבְלַת שָׁבוֹת** service:
 1. When **אָבֵלִי** come to services, we ask God to comfort them.
 2. If you look on the bottom of page 22, you'll see the line in Hebrew that reads: **הַמָּקוֹם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׁאֵר אָבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.**

3. In English: “May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.”
- What’s the word that’s used for God here?
 1. It’s **הַמְּקוֹם**, which ordinarily means “the place”—but when used as a name of God, it means the “Omnipresent One.”
 2. What does the word “omnipresent” mean?
 3. It means the one who is accessible in *every* place.
 4. ***Does that mean that if we’re hiking, God is in the rocks, so we can find God there; or if we’re boating, God is in the waves, so we can find God there?***
 5. No, God is not in the rocks or in the ocean.
 6. But we can call on God no matter where we are or how bad we feel, because God is accessible to us everywhere.
 - ***Why do you think we ask God to comfort the people who are in mourning?***
 1. We actually want God to help them, so we ask for God’s help.
 2. We want to let them know that we understand they’re in pain, so maybe they don’t feel quite so alone.
 3. And we want to let other members of the congregation know that someone is mourning the loss of a loved one and needs support.
 - That’s why, when we get to this point in the **שְׁבַת קִבְּלַת שְׂבָת** service, we ask if there are any **אַבְּלֵי** present.
 - Let’s slowly read that line in Hebrew and English several times, so you’ll be able to say it and comfort a mourner when the time comes—which is a kind thing to do: **יִנְחָם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אַבְּלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם**—May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.