

CHAPTER 7: INTERMITTENT OBSERVANCES □ PARAGRAPH 4

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Holiness is a force unto itself not to be denied; it enters on its own and exits when it wants to. Knowing that, the wise not only submit to its presence, they also do what they can to welcome it in and escort it out again, and to pay homage to it. That's part of the dynamic behind several of the things we do to celebrate Shabbat.

We greet Shabbat at the door, if you will, by lifting a cup of wine to it and celebrating the fact that "on the seventh day G-d completed the work He had done, ... blessed (it) and hallowed it" (see "Kiddush"). We celebrate its spiritual glory in the course of the day by dedicating the luscious foods we eat to it. And we accompany Shabbat out by speaking about and yearning for the ultimate redemption that Shabbat alludes to as we ask G-d to grant us the "light, gladness, joy, and honor" that will be manifest in the course of the redemption, and to "raise the cup of salvations" at last (see "Havdalah").

And we do this all in full recognition of the signal and palpable ways we experience G-d's presence on Shabbat, and in order to honor the One who gave it to us.

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