

Infusing the Mundane with the Holiness of Shabbos

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Walls are powerful structures, in their presence and in their absence. A wall creates a barrier that constrains movement from one side to the other, while the lack of a wall, or opening, allows for continuity. Both functions have important ramifications and one must be judicious when it comes to building, or not building, walls.

On the Biblical level, an area bounded on three sides by walls creates a halachically recognized distinct area known as a reshus hayachid, a private domain. Separate from the reshus harabim, the public domain, one is permitted to carry within the reshus hayachid on Shabbos. The three walls are commensurate with Hashem's holy name, Y-H-V-H, which is comprised of three unique letters, Y-H-V. Just as the reshus hayachid is the unification of all within it, so is it symbolic of the domain of Hashem, where there is only Hashem's yichud, oneness – unity. However, the fourth side, as represented by the second H – reflective of emunah, faith –

remains wide open, welcoming all who wish to enter Hashem's holy domain to do so through the portal of emunah.

According to our oral halachic tradition, the Torah sheba'al peh – which also connotes emunah, emunas chachamim – faith in our rabbis – we are taught that one must construct a vertical and horizontal beam on the open side in order to permit carrying in this reshus hayachid. The side can remain open to allow entry, but not without a cautionary marker. This indicator reminds us that although transfer during the weekday between the two domains is permitted, it is not permitted on Shabbos. To experience the holy oneness of Hashem on Shabbos, the True Reshus Hayachid, one must abandon performing the many diverse activities, melachos, of the weekday associated with the reshus harabim.

The workweek is permeated with k'dusha from the Shabbos that preceded it, and the following Shabbos is likewise powerfully enhanced by the quality of the workweek preceding it. It is important to remember to utilize each day of the weekday, both in prayer and action, to prepare for Shabbos, as the weekday is the specific time for transferring the best of what the reshus harabim has to offer, spiritually and physically, into the reshus hayachid. Doing so ensures that we will have all we need to fully maximize the potential of Shabbos as we pass through that open side of emuna Friday afternoon, and the beams around the doorway remind us that our work is done for now.

(Based on Likutey Halachos, Choshen Mishpat, hilchos shutafim b'karka 2)