

# Shabbat Afternoon High

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Shabbat afternoon is the climax of the holy day, the time we can achieve true closeness with God. The *zemirot* (table songs) that we sing at the Third Shabbat Meal reflect our desire and longing to consummate that relationship: *Mizmor LeDavid* (God is my Shepherd) and *Yedid Nefesh* (Soul's Beloved). After disengaging from weekday grind on Friday night, enjoying delicious meals and a refreshing sleep, Shabbat afternoon finds us in full "Shabbat mode," open to experience the true meaning of the day.

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Three tzaddikim passed away on Shabbat afternoon: Moses our teacher, who received the Torah on our behalf; King David, author of Psalms, who personifies prayer; and Joseph, the only one titled "Tzaddik." The tzaddik, by virtue of his morality

and generosity, connects the brain and the heart, Torah and prayer.

Shabbat afternoon is an *et ratzon*, a time of extra Divine favor. It is a time when all that we know (Torah/Moses) and all that we feel (prayer/David) is meant to be awash with the desire to meld into giving to Creation, receiving from the Creator, and giving to His creation (the function of the tzaddik/Joseph).

It is a time to rise and realize what Creation can be before stepping back down into your body, ready to live that promise. It is the time God commits to creating the universe for another week.

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Shabbat is an ideal time for *hitbodedut*. Rebbe Nachman prescribes this practice of private prayer to God every day, but Shabbat lends a special cast to the experience. Shabbat and holidays were made expressly to give us a “day of rest,” a day when making and taking the time to settle our minds would be easier. The extra sanctity of these days adds something to *hitbodedut*, even if you can’t always taste it.

The ultimate goal of *hitbodedut* is *bitul* (self-nullification to God). One setting that is conducive to entering a state of *bitul* is Shabbat. The quiet of Shabbat, provided by refraining from the forbidden activities and ceasing to think of weekday concerns, together with the additional prayers that focus on the greatness of God’s work, produces a great calm and *yishuv hadaat* (settled mind). And Shabbat comes every week.

*Based on “Where Earth and Heaven Kiss”*