

"My Shabbosos you shall observe and My Sanctuary you shall revere." (26:2)

We may question this seemingly repetitive statement and its juxtaposition to the *pasuk* dealing with idol worship. *Rashi* explains that the *Torah* is adjuring the Jewish slave who is sold to a gentile not to assume that since he is subservient to a gentile, he may engage in whatever heathen practices his master advocates. If this is the case, why does the *Torah* specifically emphasize *Shabbos* observance and reverence for the Sanctuary ?

In response to these questions, *Horav Moshe Feinstein, z.l.*, offers a novel lesson to be derived from this *pasuk*. As a result of his servitude to a gentile master and ensuing exposure to a pagan society, the Jewish slave might conceivably learn to serve Hashem as the gentile serves his deities. The gentile focuses his religious observance while at his place of worship, but at home his faith is not as essential. The gentile is "image and symbol oriented," while the Jew is "G-d oriented." True, we hold our Sanctuary in the highest esteem, but that is only because Hashem, our G-d, has instructed us to do so. Our house of worship is but another place which serves as an avenue for expressing our devotion to Hashem. The Jew is implored to serve Hashem in his home, the marketplace, everywhere he finds himself. Reverence for the synagogue is important, but *Shabbos* observance takes precedence.

As *Horav Feinstein* notes, *Klal Yisrael* have endured for almost two thousand years without the *Bais Ha'Mikdash*, and we are still considered to be observant Jews. To divest oneself of the ritual and practice of Judaism while maintaining an insipid devotion to the "edifices" which are visited semi- annually -- to ignore the law and its spirit, while attempting to carry on various traditions without their real character and meaning -- is nothing more than a prosaic attempt at religious observance. This assimilationist approach to Judaism will, as has been demonstrated throughout history, bear no fruit and transmit no legacy. What is "lifeless" from its inception can obviously not survive.