



פרשת דברים
מנחם אב תשפ"א

BEIS HAMIKDASH EVENING

Last Motzai Shabbos we hosted our annual Beis Hamikdash evening with a large crowd in attendance.

Yudi New made a Siyum on Mesechta Yoma based on a Sichah of the Rebbe.

Rabbi Mottel Krasnjanski gave an in-depth explanation on the some of the arguments related to the Aron.

Rabbi Yonason Johnson spoke about the dimensions of the Heichal and the importance of a strong foundation as it applies in our Avodas Hashem.

Participants enjoyed a fresh Melave Malka spread.

CHOF AV LEARNING

To celebrate the Hilulah of the Rebbe's father, we will be hosting a Chassidus learning evening for Anash. Thursday night Av 20 - July 29. Save the date.

DAILY SIYUMIM

As per the Rebbe's directive, we will continue to host daily Siyumim through until the 15th of Av.

Siyumim will be broadcast live on Zoom. Details will be sent our via email and WhatsApp after Tisha B'av

DOR LEDOR LEARNING

We encourage all boys to learn over Shabbos and on Tisha B'av (permissible materials)



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Conceiving the soul of Moshiach

The two Keruvim which stood on top of the Aron Hakodesh reflected the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people.

When we were faithful to Hashem and kept His Torah and Mitzvos, the Keruvim would face one another. This was a physical display of Hashem's love and closeness towards the Jewish people. But when we were not following in Hashem's way, the Keruvim would turn their backs on each other, showing a distance and displeasure.

The Gemara describes how when the non-Jews entered to destroy the Beis Hamikdash, they found two Keruvim intertwined in an intimate embrace, like the deep love between husband and wife. They ridiculed the Jewish people for what they understood to be an immodest image.

(Since the Aron had already been hidden, these were other decorative Keruvim and not the Keruvim from the Aron cover).

The fact that the Keruvim were not just facing one another but were embracing, illustrating an incredibly powerful love and closeness. And when did this take place? As the Temple was being destroyed and the Jewish people were about to be sent into exile because of their terrible sins.

How could it be that at this time the Keruvim were in the most intimate of positions?

This question was posed to the Maggid of Mezritch by his Talmidim.

The Maggid responded quoting a Halacha from Yoreh Deah, based on the Gemara Yevamos. The halacha obligates a man to spend intimate time with wife before leaving on a journey. The reason for this obligation is because the time of separating is a time of heightened love and closeness which should be required.

The relationship of Hashem and the Jewish people is likened to that of a husband and a wife.

During Golus, Eicha describes the Jewish people as

being like a widow. Our sages explain that the intent is that we are not truly widowed, but rather we are "like a widow", like a woman whose husband has left to travel overseas.

On one level of this relationship, the sins that brought about the Churban created a deep fracture. The cosmic marriage was threatened. Hashem's presence departed, the Jewish people were being exiled from the marital home and the marital home itself was going to be destroyed.

Yet, hidden in the Holy of Holies at this very moment, before 'leaving on a journey', Hashem's deep love for his bride shone deeper than ever. Hashem was fulfilling His own Halacha to spend intimate time with the Jewish people before leaving.

Because of our sins there had to be a separation. But this fracture was only on the external level of our relationship. Hashem's eternal, essential and deepest love for the Jewish people is always there, and this love was revealed in those moments.

The Kabbalists teach that the greater the love between husband and wife at the time of conception, the more lofty the Neshama that is drawn down.

We have a tradition that on the day of Tisha B'av, at the moment of the Churban itself, the Neshama of Moshiach was born. The Neshama of Moshiach is the most lofty Neshama that has ever existed.

Reb Pinchas of Koritz explains that this Neshama was conceived through the deep spiritual union embodied in those Keruvim and the deep love that it represented.

After conception, hidden inside the womb, the fetus grows and develops, finally emerging to a state of revelation at birth.

The conception of Geulah began nearly 2000 years ago in the privacy of the Holy of Holies. Ever since, it has been developing and growing as we draw closer to its birth. The Geulah is now long overdue and ready to emerge.

The Beis Hamikdash Thought

Parts of the daily Seder HaAvodah

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Glowing coals and burning incense

The coals for burning the Ketores

When burning the Ketores (incense), the Kohen who was selected by lottery, would bring a panful of glowing coals from the outer sacrificial altar. These coals would be placed on the golden surface of the incense altar. The Ketores would then be sprinkled onto the coals, giving off their fragrance and cloud of smoke as it burned.

The external sacrificial altar represents the Avodah of refining our animalistic side, like the physical animal which would be elevated through the fires of the altar. We elevate our selfish impulses and behaviours and our material desires through the consuming fires of love of the G-dly soul, aroused by meditation on Hashem's greatness in prayer.

Like the wood on the altar, what is left after this rectification are the glowing coals. In a glowing coal, the coarse wood has been consumed by the fire. The fire permeates the coal so that the fire and the coal become one.

The incense altar, as discussed previously, represents the essence of the soul and its desire for and oneness with Hashem. This is a far loftier experience than the conscious emotions of the Neshama and its involvement in refining our animalistic soul.

However, the coals on which the Ketores was burned on the inner altar had to come from the outer altar.

Refining our animalistic side is a prerequisite to attaining the deeper oneness of the Ketores. It is specifically through the Avodah of elevating our animalistic soul that our G-dly soul can then achieve its own elevation.

A sacrifice that is completely consumed

The Korban Olah

After offering the incense, the designated Kohanim would take the limbs of the Korban Tamid and cast them onto the fire of the primary pyre on the Mizbeach.

The Korban Tamid was an Olah – where the entire animal was burned on the Mizbeach. This is in contrast to a Chatas or Shelamim offering, where only parts of the Korban were burned on the Mizbeach and rest would be eaten by the Kohanim and/or the owners.

The offerings which were not completely burned represent a yearning for G-dliness that is tinged with a sense of self and our personal spiritual aspirations; the desire for personal understanding of G-dliness or the spiritual rewards of Gan Eden.

Since one does not completely transcend their sense of self, one's devotion will be limited and a degree of separation will remain. Like the Chatas which is not completely burned, this Avodah will not be able to completely burn away the negative desires and thoughts of our animalistic self, which can re-emerge at a later time.

The Olah which is completely consumed, represents a complete surrender to Hashem and His will. This is a total and selfless surrender (Bittul) to Hashem, where one does not seek spiritual reward or fulfilment, delight or understanding. The self does not matter. All that matters is Hashem.

This love is encapsulated in the verse "Whom else do I have in heaven and having You I want no one on earth." These fires completely burn away our negative thoughts and desires.

Olah means to rise up and Tamid means constantly. When we retain a sense of self in our service of Hashem, we may have our ups of spiritual successes. But we are still liable to fall. But with absolute surrender that comes from the essence of the soul, we will be an Olah Tamid – a constant state of elevation.

Expressing emotion through song

The song of the Leviim

While the wine was being poured for the Nesachim, the Leviim would sing the Shir Shel Yom. Each day of the week had its own unique Psalm which would be sung as the Song of the Day. The singing was accompanied by musical instruments.

Music is described as the quill of the heart, because it has the power to evoke a deep emotional response within us. Song brings our emotions from the hidden recesses of the heart to a state of revelation and expression.

Serving Hashem is supposed to be an emotional experience. In Davening we should feel both a sense of awe and a deep love towards Hashem. Chassidus emphasises the place of Nigunim in prayer as a way to help us reach this experience.

There were different instruments used in the Temple orchestra. The sound of some of the instruments evoke feelings of joy and love. Others, like the shrill of the Shofar, inspire feelings of awe and trepidation.

Above all, song is an expression of joy. The Avodah in the Beis Hamikdash represents our service of Hashem. When we serve Hashem, be it in Torah study, prayer or keeping a Mitzvah, it must be with joy and with a singing heart.

The occasional and the ordinary

The order of the Tamid and the Musaf

On Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh and Yomim Tovim, a Korban Musaf was brought. Musaf means additional, because it was offered in addition to the daily Tamid. The Musaf varied in the number and type of animals offered, depending on the day.

The Musaf was brought only after the morning Tamid had been completed. This is related to a Talmudic principle that when one has the option to perform an action that is more frequent and one which comes less frequently, precedence is given to that which is more frequent.

The Tamid was brought every single day of the year whereas the Musaf was only brought on specific special days.

The Musaf represents the novel and occasional. The Tamid represents the ordinary, regular and mundane.

That which is unique always seems more special and exciting. In our relationships we celebrate special events and milestones. Spiritually, we view Shabbos and Yomtov as the ultimate spiritual experience.

The message of the order of the Tamid and the Musaf is that whilst the novel brings a heightened excitement, it is the simple day-in day-out actions that is the bedrock of our relationship with Hashem and with others.

The Musaf-moments are only supplemental. They can never replace the primary building blocks of consistent and dependable daily moments of connection.