



Communal Avos U'bonim

This past Motzai Shabbos over 750 fathers and sons packed the Werdiger Hall for this year's Communal Avos U'bonim, with a live hook-up to the over 150 participants in Sydney.

Nearly an hour of learning was followed by a powerful recitation of Tehillim, a Dvar Torah and the grand raffle. Each boy received a memento water bottle. The atmosphere was incredible and left a strong impression on all.

Avos U'bonim

Perhaps not quite as big, but just as fun, join us this Motzai Shabbos at 8pm in the Mezanine for the weekly Avos U'bonim program and keep last week's momentum going. Learning, hot soup, stories, raffles, snacks and more.

Kollel Evening with Young Yeshivah

On Elul 19 - September 3, Kollel and Young Yeshivah will be joining together for a special Elul Beis Medrash evening of learning.

Get ready for Tishrei with some Chavrusa learning on Tishrei related maamarim and halachos. With refreshments.

Hakhel 5776

Save the date. On Thursday Chol Hamoed Sukkos, the Kollel together with Yeshivah Shule, Chabad Youth, Young Yeshivah, Ohel Devorah and Chabad of Caulfield will be hosting a major family program for Hakhel. Stay tuned for details.



In this Edition

Embracing the Despised Wife **P.1**

Adding Piyutim into Davening **P.2**

Embracing the Despised Wife

If a man has two wives, one beloved and the other despised, and they each bear him sons, the beloved one and the despised one, and the first-born son is from the despised one...

This familiar Mitzvah sounds dramatic; two wives vying for the affection of a common husband and as Murphy's law would have it, the first-born son who is entitled to a double portion of the inheritance is born to the wife less cherished.

The Torah and all of its Mitzvos are eternal. But how is it applicable in our lives today, especially considering that polygamy has been forbidden for over one thousand years!

The Alter Rebbe illuminates this Mitzvah in Likkutei Torah by sharing its deeper inner message.

Each one of us possesses two souls; a beloved soul and a despised soul.

The G-dly soul which desires connection to Hashem is beloved. It is the source of our spiritual commitment to devote ourselves to Hashem and fulfil His Mitzvos. From this soul comes our positive G-dly emotions, qualities and characteristics.

The despised wife is our animal soul. This soul vitalise our bodies and is the source of our primal drives and instincts. Whilst this soul too originates from a place of holiness, it descends into this world and into our psyche as the driver of our self-centredness and pursuit of worldly pleasures. From this soul comes our ability to go against Hashem's and our negative emotions and character traits.

These two souls sit in conflict, each relating to life and purpose in completely different terms. This creates an inner struggle and challenge to be holy and spiritual. But it is for this very reason that the G-dly soul comes into this world. Hashem wants the service of both of these souls.

Like the two wives, each one of them produces offspring, spiritual accomplishments.

The offspring of the G-dly soul are our innate acts of holiness and service of Hashem; Learning Torah, Davening and fulfilling the Mitzvos which bind us to

G-d and foster and feed our sense and craving for spirituality. This is the service of the G-dly soul.

The service of the animalistic soul is not as readily apparent. Like the power of the ox ploughing a field, the spiritual service of the animalistic soul comes from harnessing it and transforming its strengths to redirect them from self-centredness towards a relationship and desire for holiness.

Service of the G-dly soul is more beloved. The sense of spiritual accomplishment and fulfilment through davening and learning comes easier and are more manifest. These activities make us feel more "holy".

But the Torah teaches us that the first-born, the greater and more important achievement comes from the despised wife. It is specifically through working on our animalistic side, to tame its nature and refine its character that our most powerful spiritual accomplishments are achieved.

One great Rabbi commented that it is easier to learn the entire Talmud numerous times, than to change one Middah!

The month of Elul is a month of Teshuvah, spiritual improvement and positive resolutions. We often focus our Teshuvah efforts on the beloved wife; to learn more Torah, to daven with greater Kavanah.

But the despised wife is often neglected, perhaps because of how difficult the task is or because we don't associate or feel how refining our Middos is spiritual. Working on our emotions; anger control, restraining our arrogance and curbing our self-centred desire and narcissism, should be an important part of our Elul program.

This is not to minimise our beloved-wife-resolutions. Torah, Tefillah and Mitzvos are important and should be improved and strengthened during this opportune month. But alongside, with at least as much attention, we must embrace the service of the despised wife too.

Our service of Hashem will then be holistic and all-encompassing, taking us to greater heights as truly spiritual beings and better people too.

Adding Piyutim into Davening

Rabbi Yonason Johnson



On Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, many communities add Piyutim (liturgical poems) to their prayers. Some Kehillos also add Piyutim on special Shabbosim such as the four Parshiyos and to the davening of the Shalosh Regolim.

Customs vary greatly for community to community regarding on which day Piyutim are recited. There are also differences in how many and which Piyutim are said and where they are inserted into the davening.

The Piyutim do not form part of the essential text of the Tefillos but have been customarily added. The Piyutim are inserted into the Chazzan's repetition of the Amidah for Shachris and Musaf and may also be added to the Birchos Krias Shema (blessings before the Shema).

These Piyutim are often referred to as *Yotzros*. Technically this name refers to the Piyutim inserted into the Birchos Krias Shema which begins Yotzer Or. The Piyutim added into the Amidah are referred to as *Krovetz* (an acronym for קול רינה וישועה באהלי צדיקים) or *Krovos*.

The question is whether or not they constitute a hefsek, a problematic interruption in the davening. The Poskim distinguish between where the Piyutim are inserted.

In the Birchos Krias Shema, the Mechaber¹ rules that they do constitute a hefsek and should be stopped. This is the view of the Rambam²

The Ram"o³ however brings the opinion of the Rashba⁴ and Rabbeinu Yonah⁵ that the Piyutim in Birchos Krias Shema are not problematic and are a widespread practise. They argue that it is permissible to add to the middle of these blessings as long as the beginning and end of the blessings remains intact. The Ram"o however does conclude that one who does not say these Piyutim does not lose out.

In Chazoras Hashatz there is greater grounds for reciting Piyutim since in the Amidah one may technically add to each Bracha if it is related⁶.

There is discussion whether one may insert Piyutim into the first three blessings of the Amidah. These are blessings of praise for Hashem and one is not supposed to make personal requests or supplications.

Nonetheless the Poskim permit Piyutim to be inserted into the first three blessings since they are not personal requests but are for the needs of the community⁷.

The Rosh⁸, as quoted in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch brings support for this permissibility from the fact that Rabbi Elazar Hakalir, perhaps the greatest of Paytanim

composed Piyutim to be inserted into the first three blessings of the Amidah. Rabbi Elazar Hakalir was a Tana who lived in Eretz Yisroel in Kiryas Sefer.

The Rosh identifies Rabbi Elazar Hakalir as the son of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. He is called Hakalir according to the Aruch because when he started to learn he was given a cake with pesukim on it as a segulah which enabled his eyes to be opened. Kalir means a small cake in ancient Greek. Others, including the Rashba⁹, suggest that he was the Tana Rabbi Elazar ben Arach.

The Alter Rebbe, based on Shaar Hakavanos of the Ariza"l, writes that there are those who will only recite the Piyutim composed by the early Paytanim such as the Kaliri, as they were composed in the way of truth. It is said that they were composed with Ruach Hakodesh and contain secrets of Torah. The Pri Megadim writes that the Piyutim are called *Krovos* because they draw the hearts of the Jewish people closer to Hashem.

The Alter Rebbe did not include Piyutim in Birchos Krias Shema and was also very select and limited about the Piyutim included in the Chazoras Hashatz for the Yomim Noraim. This is also Shitas Hagr"a. Most communities do not recite Piyutim in the Birchos Krias Shema.

It is recorded that the Baal Shem Tov would not add Piyutim even in Chazoras Hashatz except the Tefillah of Tal, Geshem and the Four Parshiyos¹⁰.

The Chasam Sofer was displeased by the practise in his community to add Piyutim in Birchos Krias Shema but did not nullify the custom. Concerning the Piyutim in the Amidah he writes that they were important and that Gedolei Yisroel would ensure to finish any Piyutim skipped by the Tzibbur after davening¹¹.

Shibolei Haleket writes that it is a Mitzvah to recite the Piyutim¹².

While the Chazzan recites the Piyutim one should follow along reciting it together with the Chazzan. One should certainly not speak during that time and should not even learn. It is preferable not to look into a Sefer without actually reading either¹³.

Pri Chadash warns that the reciting of the Piyutim should not cause one to miss zman Krias Shema and zman Tefillah.

If the Chazzan left out one of the Piyutim and had already concluded the Bracha, the Piyut may not be added in at that or at a later point. It is advisable to recite the omitted Piyut after davening.

An individual davening on their own does not recite any Piyutim¹⁴.

The Piyutim may be said even if one does not understand them. The Rebbe advised Baalei Tefillah to look over the Machzor and learn their meaning.

The Alter Rebbe rules that when Rosh Hashona falls on Shabbos one should not extend davening past Chatzos. On a weekday, one may extend the davening with Piyutim, but not merely with Chazonus and nigunim¹⁵.

On this topic, the Poskim address the ability to change customs of davening. The Alter Rebbe¹⁶ adds that one should not change their family minhogim of Tefillah. This ruling is based on the Ariza"l who explains that there are twelve gates in heaven through which the Tefillos of each tribe ascend according to their minhog.

The Mahari"l¹⁷ records that when he lost a daughter (r"l) he attributed it to having changing the minhag hamokom (custom of the community) regarding the reciting of the Piyutim. The Bach also records how someone who tried to cancel the custom of reciting Piyutim did not live out the year.

The son of Rav Chaim Vital attests that despite his father's opinion against the reciting of the Piyutim, when he served as the Shliach Tzibbur in a community whose custom it was to say them, he did recite them¹⁸. ■

¹ OC 68:1

² Teshuvah Pe'er Hador 64 and 129

³ OC 68:1

⁴ Teshuvos 1:469

⁵ Brachos Perek Ein Omdin

⁶ Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 68:2. See Tur OC 112 and Rosh Brachos 5:21.

⁷ ibid. See Ram"o OC 112:2

⁸ Brachos 5:21. See also Maadanei Yom Tov.

⁹ Teshuva 1:469

¹⁰ Piskei Teshuvos

¹¹ ibid

¹² Mishna Berura 68:4

¹³ Ram"o 68:1

¹⁴ Mishna Berura 68:4

¹⁵ Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 584:6

¹⁶ 68:2 based on the Magei Avraham. Also quoted in the Mishna Berura 68:4. Concerning changing from Nusach Ashkenaz to nusach Ha'Ariza"l which represents the 13th gate which receives all Tefillos, see Igros Kodesh 14:91 and 391.

¹⁷ Seder Yom Hakippurim

¹⁸ Mishna Berura 68:4. See also Shaarei Teshuvah 68:1