



פרשת מטות מסעי
מנחם אב תשפ"א

BEIS HAMIKDASH EVENING

The community is invited to join us on Motzai Shabbos for our annual Beis Hamikdash evening, combined with the Siyum on Mesechta Yoma in the Daf Hayomi.

Siyum with Yudi New followed by Rabbi Mottel Krasnjanski and Rabbi Yonason Johnson speaking about the Beis Hamikdash

Complete with a light Melave Malka. \$5 suggested donation

Shabbos Mattos-Masei July 10
8:30pm start. אור לב' מנחם אב

For men, women and children

DAILY SIYUMIM

In fulfillment of the Rebbe's directive, join us each night after 8:30pm Maariv for a Siyum Mesechta, starting this Sunday night. (Shabbos Siyumim will take place after Maariv minyan).

The Siyum will be followed by a shiur in the Rambam's Hilchos Beis Habechira.

DAILY BEIS HAMIKDASH WHATSAPP

Sign up to receive the Daily Beis Hamikdash Thought. This year's 'Thoughts' will be on the theme of the Daily Avodah, drawing life-lessons from the daily service performed in the Beis Hamikdash

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The Battle of Achieving Unity

Parshas Matos describes the war against Midian. This would be Moshe's final campaign before passing away. On the literal level, the war against Midian comes as revenge for having caused Bnei Yisroel to sin by worshipping Baal Peor.

Chassidus reveals that there is a much deeper dimension to this story, one that is applicable in our own lives and especially during the 3 weeks.

In Kabbalah, the nations that we were commanded to fight against, each represent a different negative character trait. Midian represents the evil of Sinas Chinam (baseless hatred). The word Midian is related to the word Madon meaning strife.

Hashem tells Moshe that the war against Midian is to take vengeance on behalf on Bnei Yisroel against Midian. Moshe says that the war is to take vengeance on behalf of Hashem against Midian. The Kelipah of Sinas Chinam is an enemy of both Hashem and the Jewish people.

Kedusha is defined by Achdus. Hashem is one and His name is one. When the Jewish people have Achdus, Hashem's Kedusha rests amongst us.

Sinas Chinam causes separation and divisiveness amongst the Jewish people. When there is a lack of Achdus, it causes separation in Hashem's name and causes Hashem's presence to depart.

How do we fight Midian? Sinas Chinam comes because of arrogance. Arrogance causes us to feel threatened by others and to be intolerant of differences. We fight the war against Midian with humility. Humility is the key to achieving peace and unity.

Our sages taught that because the sins of the Rishonim was revealed, their Keitz, the end of their exile, was also revealed. Because the sin of the later generation was no revealed, their Keitz, the end of their exile was not revealed.

The sins that brought about the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash were serious Aveiros; idolatry, murder and forbidden relations. Yet, the exile to Bavel lasted only 70 years before the Jewish people could return to Eretz Yisroel and rebuild the Beis Hamikdash.

In contrast, the second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed on account of the seemingly less serious sin of Sinas Chinam. Yet, the exile that ensued continues to this day, lasting more than 19 hundred years.

The punishment of Golus is for us to reflect on the sins that brought it about. When we do Teshuvah and rectify the cause of Golus, the Golus is no longer required and we merit Geulah.

When the sins are obvious, such as those of the first Temple era, it is easier to do Teshuvah and make amends, because we can easily recognise that we have acted wrongly.

When it comes to Sinas Chinam, it is not so easy for us to recognise our wrongdoing. We justify our dislike or intolerance for others. There is always a reason that entitles us to our feelings of dislike. We may even justify that our intolerance of others has a holy motivation.

In essence, the Rebbe Rashab describes that the dislike comes from Sinas Chinam that stems from our own arrogance. The reasons we give come as post-facto justifications.

Because we justify our Sinas Chinam, we are less inclined to recognise it for what it is and are therefore unable to make amends and do Teshuvah.

If Sinas Chinam stems from arrogance and ego, the key to achieving Achdus and Ahavas Yisroel is through humility.

Moshe was the most humble of all men whoever lived. This is why the war against Midian was to be Moshe's final and culminating accomplishment before passing away.

We are entering the month of Av, a time when our mourning for the Beis Hamikdash and ensuing Golus becomes more heightened. Rosh Chodesh Av is the Yartzheit of Aharon Hakohen, who embodied the epitome of Ahavas Yisroel.

The message of Parshas Matos is that if we want our Keitz to be revealed and for the Golus to end, we need to face up to the insidious enemy of Sinas Chinam. Armed with humility, its time to destroy the inner Midian once and for all.

The Beis Hamikdash Thought

The order of preparing the candles of the Menorah

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

One of the steps in the order of the morning Tamid was Hatavas Haneiros. According to the Rambam, this refers to the lighting of the Menorah. The lighting was performed twice each day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

Other authorities maintain that the Hatavas Haneiros in the morning was the cleaning out of the Menorah cups and preparing them with new wicks and oil to be lit in the evening. The Menorah was only lit once each day in the afternoon.

When the Menorah was prepared (or kindled according to the Rambam) in the morning, not all seven lamps were done at once.

The Kohen who was tasked with preparing (or lighting) the Menorah would first do only five of the lights. A different part of the Avodah would then be performed and only afterwards would the Kohen complete the Hatavah of the remaining two candles.

According to the Chachamim, the Avodah that made the separation between the five candles and the two was the offering of the Ketores.

According to the order of Abba Shaul (as taught by Abaye), the Ketores was only offered after all of the candles had been prepared. In his view, the Avodah that separated between the preparation of the candles of the Menorah was the application of the blood of the Tamid to the corners of the Mizbeach.

Every detail in the Torah is eternal and whilst in the absence of the Beis Hamikdash the physical Avodah cannot be performed, the Avodah as it applies in our personal spiritual lives remains.

This is alluded to in the source of the Mitzvah to build a Mishkan, which literally reads "build for me a sanctuary and I will dwell within *them*" - within each one of us.

The dispute between Abba Shaul and the Chachamim also has its spiritual message.

In Chassidus, Ketores represents the essence of the soul and its desire for and oneness with Hashem. The word Ketores is related to the Aramaic Ketar - meaning a knot that binds two distinct entities together. With this desire, the Neshama seeks to transcend the

world and cleave completely to Hashem.

The Menorah reflects the conscious levels of the soul, which are very much within the world. The seven branches represent the seven Middos, the emotions of the soul. These are the emotions that come from our intellectual understandings.

The emotions themselves are divided into two groups; the first five Middos are the primary emotions of the Neshama, which are used for its own Avodah. The final two Middos, Yesod and Malchus refer to the soul's ability to interact with and influence the world around it.

The ultimate objective is that the experience of oneness from the essence of the soul (the Ketores) not remain detached from the world and isolated in moments of spiritual upliftment.

We need to permeate our conscious day-to-day living (the Menorah) with the absolute awareness, connection and surrender to Hashem of the soul's essence; not only in the holy activities of our lives (the five Middos) but also in our day-to-day worldly involvements as well (the final two Middos).

This is the opinion of the Chachamim that the offering of Ketores must take place in the midst of preparing the Menorah.

Abba Shaul's position is based on the belief that drawing down the essence of the soul (the Ketores) into our daily, mundane, conscious living (the seven lamps of the Menorah) is a very lofty Avodah. We are not all capable of reaching such great heights, certainly not on a sustained basis.

Rather, the Avodah that is placed in between the preparing of the Menorah, is the offering of the blood of the Tamid sacrifice.

The Korban, coming from an animal, represents our Animalistic soul. The blood, which is the life force of the animal, represents the passionate desire of the Animal soul.

The Animalistic soul itself is not intrinsically bad. Its strong desires can be harnessed and redirected in a positive way towards G-dliness. Through this we fulfil the directive of the Shema as explained by the sages, to love Hashem with both of our inclinations.

Draining the blood from the animal represents removing our passion and excitement from its expression in selfish, material desires.

Pouring the blood on the Mizbeach teaches us that our passionate desire and enthusiasm can and should be channelled towards the service of Hashem.

In the Korbanos in our daily prayers, we recite the order of the Tamid in accordance with Abba Shaul, "*the preparation of the five candles preceded the blood of the Tamid and the blood of the Tamid preceded the preparation of the two candles*".

Even though this is not the Halacha, we read this passage because it is the clearest orderly description of the daily Avodah found in Shas.

In the Yom Kippur Musaf, when we describe the Avodah of the Kohen Gadol in the Beis Hamikdash, the order follows the opinion of the sages "*He would enter to prepare the five candles and to offer the morning Ketores and to prepare the two remaining candles*".

In the physical observance, the Halacha can only accord with one opinion. But the spiritual message of each opinion remains.

Our primary daily Avodah, reflected in the daily prayers, is to focus on curbing the desires and negative character traits of our Animalistic soul - the order of the Avodah as described by Abba Shaul.

But at certain times, like the day of Yom Kippur when the essence of the soul is revealed, we can connect to its powerful devotion to Hashem and harness its energy to infuse our daily lives. And so on Yom Kippur, the order follows the sequence of the sages.

The order of Abba Shaul was taught by Abaye. Abaye was an orphan and the name by which he is referred to is an acronym for the verse יתום בך ירוחם יתום - "In You orphans find compassion". Abba Shaul can mean to "seek" or borrow a father.

During Golus, we are all like orphans, exiled from the table of our Father whom we seek. In Golus we are incapable of reaching the lofty Avodah as reflected in the order of the sages.

Consciously living with the essence of the soul revealed and expressed in everything that we do is the experience of Geulah.