



WINE & BEER HALACHA EVENING

A group of 40 young men and women came together for an evening exploring some of the Halachos governing the production, Kashrus and consumption of beer and wine.

Zev Meltzer, a frum Jew and a commercial beer brewer, gave an outline of how beer is made and what are the key ingredients.

Rabbi **Doobie Lisker** gave the Halachic side, addressing various issues which may impact the Kashrus of beer. He also touched on the Halachos of consuming alcohol in non-Jewish establishments.

Rabbi **Mendel Serebryanski**, an experienced wine producer, spoke about the process of making wine and some of the Kashrus issues.

Rabbi **Michoel Stern** explained the background on the prohibition of Stam Yaynam, the status of Yayin Mevushal and practical issues which may arise in the domestic setting with non-Mevushal wines.

DAILY BEIS HAMIKDASH THOUGHT

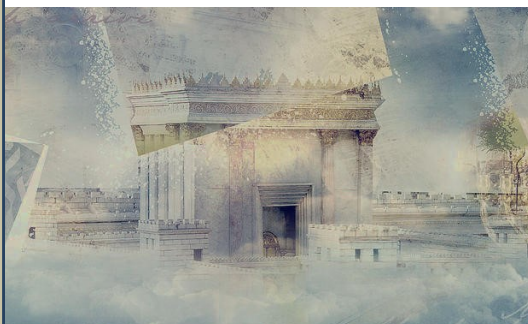
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אין בית המדרש בלא **חידוש** Chiddush



In this Edition

Retrieving a swallowed soul **P.1**

Beis Hamikdash Thoughts **P.2**

Retrieving a swallowed soul

This year, Parshas Pinchas is the first Shabbos of the Three Weeks. For the Haftorah we substitute the usual Haftorah with the Haftorah of Mattos, the first of the three Haftaros of retribution.

The last Posuk of the Haftorah reads 'קודש ישראל לה' ראשית תבואתו כל אוכליו יאשמו Hashem, the first of His grain. All who devour him will bear guilt...'

In Likkutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe gives a deep explanation of the inner meaning of these words.

Yisroel is holy to Hashem: Every Jew is called Yisroel. he name Yisroel was given to Yakov after his wrestle with the angel of Eisav because "you have striven with Elokim... and prevailed." Yisroel refers to the Neshama which prevails over the concealment of the animalistic soul and its desires. Concealment is associated with the Divine name Elokim, the dimensions of G-dliness which are hidden within Creation.

In contrast, the level of Yisroel which prevails over Elokim, is "holy to Hashem" - connected to the name י-ה-ו-ה which relates to transcendent levels of G-dliness. Through keeping Torah and Mitzvos, the Neshama draws these transcendent revelations of G-dliness into the world of Creation.

The first of His grain: Like a seed that is planted in the ground, the Neshama descends down into this world. Just as one plants a seed for the abundant produce that will grow, the Neshama generates abundance in the form of the additional G-dly light that it draws down through its service of Hashem.

All who devour him: This does not refer to the enemies of the Jewish people who seek to destroy us from without. Rather it refers to one who "devours" their own G-dly soul, their Yisroel. When we allow the negative drives of our animalistic soul to become dominant, our G-dly soul becomes swallowed up and unable to shine within us. This happens when we succumb to anger, arrogance and worldly desires.

יאשמו: What can we do when our Yisroel, the light

of our Neshama is swallowed up? How can it be restored? The Novi teaches יאשמו, that they shall bear their guilt. The word יאשמו can also imply that they should bring a *Korban Asham*. A *Korban Asham* had to be brought for the sin of *Me'ilah*. *Me'ilah* is the misuse of holy items or property that was consecrated, for one's own personal benefit.

Someone who committed *Me'ilah* and misused holy property, had to repay its principal value and add an additional *Chomesh*, literally one fifth.

Halacha calculates this fifth as being one fourth of the principal, so that the value of the *Chomesh* is a fifth of the combined value of the principal and *Chomesh*. For example, if the consecrated item was worth \$80, the *Chomesh* would be \$20, which is one fifth of the \$100 total. The *Chomesh* is calculated as being "outside" or beyond the principal.

When one allows their Neshama (which is holy to Hashem) to be swallowed up by their animalistic self, they have committed an act of *Me'ilah*. Compensating for this misuse requires paying a spiritual *Chomesh*.

There are four lower levels of the Neshama which parallel the four Kabbalistic worlds. These levels of the Neshama are actualised and expressed in keeping Torah and Mitzvos on a day-to-day basis. They correspond to the four letters of Hashem's name ה-ו-ה-י, to which the Neshama is connected.

When a person's Yisroel is swallowed up, they committed *Me'ilah* on these four levels. They were not strong enough to prevail over the animalistic soul and they alone are no longer sufficient. One needs to reach deeper and access the fifth and deepest level of the Neshama, its essential bond and absolute unwavering devotion to Hashem, the Yechida.

The Yechida is our source of strength and Mesiras Nefesh to overcome all obstacles and challenges to our service of Hashem. When our Yechida is activated, our animalistic soul and its desires evaporate, redeeming the lower dimensions of our conscious soul and bringing us to true Teshuvah, return to Hashem.

The Daily Beis Hamikdash Thought

While the Jewish people were in exile in Bavel, Hashem instructed the prophet Yechezkel to teach them the details of the design of the Beis Hamikdash. Yechezkel challenged Hashem, “how are they capable of making the Beis Hamikdash while they are in exile? First let them leave their exile and then I will tell them!” Hashem responded “just because My children are in exile should the construction of My home be neglected?”

Exile represents a state of spiritual lowliness, darkness and distance from Hashem. When we feel disconnected we can feel that we are not capable or worthy of serving Hashem through davening or learning. “How is it possible for me to be involved in making a resting place for Hashem when I am not in a good place myself?”

Hashem’s answer teaches us that no matter how low you may feel, or what situation you find yourself in, He wants you. Despite your darkness, you have the ability to draw Hashem into your life, to build a home for Him and actualise His desire to live within us.

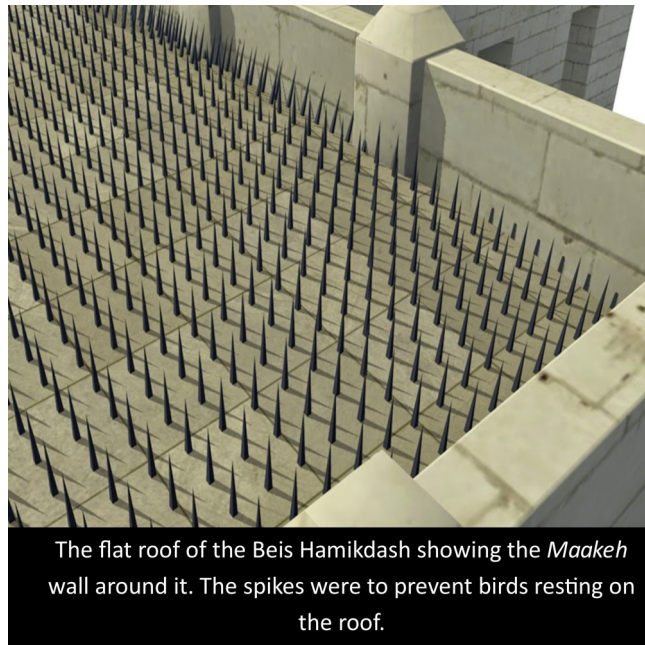
Fence of your ego

The Heichal, the actual building of the Beis Hamikdash, stood over 100 Amos (50 metres) tall. The top few Amos of height included a Maakeh – a 3 Amah (1.5 metre) wall to fence off the flat roof.

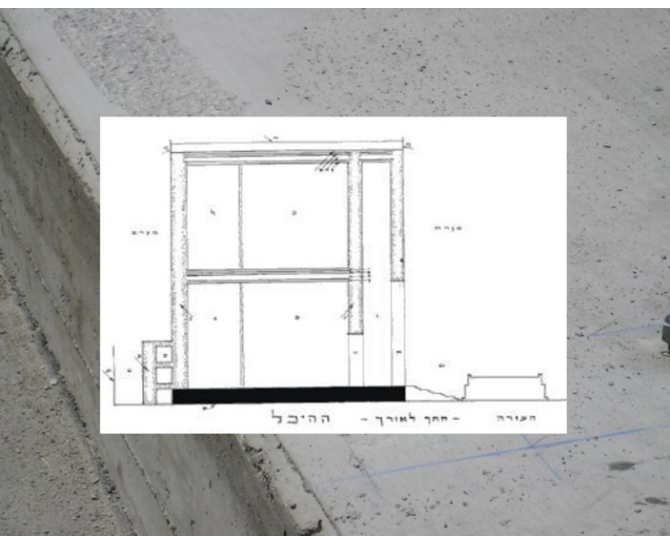
This was to keep the Mitzvah of fencing our roofs to prevent someone from falling off and coming to harm. The Mitzvah applies to the roof of the Holy Temple as it does to the roof of a private home.

The roof, the highest point of a building, represents arrogance and feeling ‘tall’. The Mystics explain that arrogance is the ultimate source of all spiritual deficiencies and can lead a person to spiritual free-fall. Making a fence around the roof alludes to curbing one’s feelings of arrogance and developing an attitude of humility.

Like the Maakeh atop our private homes, we certainly need to humble ourselves and avoid arrogance that comes from our personal worldly success, qualities and achievements. The Maakeh on top of the Beis Hamikdash teaches us that we need to take equal care to make sure that our spiritual accomplishments don’t feed our egos either.



The flat roof of the Beis Hamikdash showing the *Maakeh* wall around it. The spikes were to prevent birds resting on the roof.



The Beis Hamikdash was built on a solid foundation called the *Otem*. The *Otem* was 6 Amos (approx. 3 metres) thick and supported the weight of the structure

Our Unshakeable Foundation

The bottom 6 Amos (3 metres) of the Beis Hamikdash structure was the foundation. It was called the “*Otem*”, coming from the Hebrew term *Atum* which means filled up. It was a completely solid base on which the weight of the Beis Hamikdash stood.

The foundation of the building is usually not visible. It does not have the same beauty and decoration as other aspects of a building and it is sometimes completely taken for granted.

But it is the most important part of the building. The beautiful structure, with all of its features and decoration, would not be able to stand without the hidden, plain, foundation.

When the earth shakes and the winds blow, the stability of the building depends on the strength of the foundation.

The deepest level of our Neshama is called *Eisan*, meaning strength. Like the foundation of a building, the essence of our Neshama lies hidden and we rarely sense it on a day-to-day basis. But it is the source of our strength when our world is shaken by crisis or challenge.

The *Eisan* of our Neshama is our unbreakable bond with Hashem. This is the foundation that carries and supports the beautiful structure of the lives that we build. When we face life’s challenges, we just need to dig deep and uncover the infinite strength and faith that lies inside of us.