



פרשת ואתחנן
מנחם אב תשע"ח

DAILY SIYUMIM

We would like to thank all of those who gave Siyumim over the past 2 weeks in keeping with the Rebbe's Horaa for the month of Av.

Thank you also to all of those who contributed towards the Lechaim and refreshments served at each Siyum.

And thank you to all of those who participated or watched the Siyumim online.

CHOF AV SHIUR

The Kiyor and the pit

All men and bochurim are invited to join the Kollel in marking the Hillula of the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn.

On Tuesday night, כ' מנחם אב, Kollel will host a shiur in the writings of the Rebbe's father combined with a farbrengen and Lechaim.

Learn the esoteric Kabbalistic exposition of Reb Levik on the Kiyor of the Beis Hamikdash and the subterranean pit that it would be lowered into each night.

Tuesday night, 8:45pm in the Lunchroom Beis Medrash.

SHAALOS UTESHUVOS

After a short break, the Sunday morning Shaalos Uteshuvos shiur resumes this week.

This week we will be learning a Teshuvah discussing; Stones from the Kosel, eating on Tish B'av, rebuilding the Beis Hamikdash and more.

9:30am Sunday in the Kollel Beis Medrash



Community Beis Medrash learning

In this Edition

The comfort of NAchamu Nachamu **P.1**

The used of gold in the Beis Hamikdash **P.2**

The comfort of Nachamu Nachamu

This Shabbos is called Shabbos Nachamu, the Shabbos of comfort after the day of Tisha B'av when we mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and the tragic descent of our people into the suffering of golus.

This week's Haftorah is the first of 7 Haftorahs of comfort to the Jewish people in their state of golus and assuring them that Hashem will bring them back to Eretz Yisroel with the Geulah.

It opens with the famous words נחמו נחמו עמי. Hashem tells the Novi Yeshaya "Comfort, comfort My people says your G-d. Speak to the heart of Yerushalayim... for she has received double for all her sins."

Because the Jewish people were punished double-fold for their sins, Hashem comforts them with a double measure of comfort, Nachamu Nachamu.

The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk gives a beautiful explanation of the true comfort that these words provide in times of difficulty;

The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and the ensuing Golus led to great suffering for the Jewish people. For close to 2000 years, we have suffered poverty and oppression, and the taunts of those who mock and denigrate us. A golus of the body.

But there is a spiritual suffering that comes with golus that make it that much more difficult to bear. Not only have we been exiled and suffer physically, we are plagued with the feeling that Hashem has forsaken and abandoned us. Does Hashem still desire our service? Does he still hear our prayers? Perhaps because of our sins He no longer finds favour in our Avodah of Torah and Mitzos and He has pulled away.

Suffering is terrible enough. But to feel that we are going through it alone, without Hashem by our side, is all the more painful.

The first and foremost comfort that a Navi or Tzaddik can give in the time of golus is to reassure us that Hashem is present with us wherever we are. Despite everything, He still desires our Avodah and He still hears all of our prayers. He is present alongside us through everything we experience, close at hand and suffering together with us.

One of the greatest G-dly visions ever experienced was the Nevua of Yechezkel of the Merkava, the Diving Throne with all of its angels. Where did this vision take place? Not in Yerushalayim, not even in Eretz Yisroel. Yechezkel says that he received this vision when "I was amongst the exile by the river Chvar... in the land of the Kasdim (Babylon)".

This vision was a comfort to his fellow Jews in exile. Here, in our place of tears, suffering and banishment, Hashem with His hosts of angels is with us.

We find a similar idea in the very first Exile that the Jewish people experienced, the slavery in Egypt. Before passing away Yosef said "I will die in this land. But פקוד פקוד, Hashem will remember you and take you out of this land". פקוד is in present tense, יפקוד is in future tense.

The term פקוד is used by our sages to describe the union between husband and wife. Yosef was telling the Jewish people that we may feel like we are dying in the suffering of exile, spiritually distant. But we should know that Hashem says that even in golus, He is constantly united with us. He is with us now פקוד, and so too He will be with us יפקוד when He redeems us.

Right now while we are suffering in Golus and Hashem's presence is not revealed, we don't feel or sense this closeness or union. Hashem sends His Neviim and Tzaddikim to comfort us that the reality is not how we perceive it.

The double punishment for their sins refers to the two facets of the pain of Golus; the suffering of the body, our physical travails, and the spiritual trauma of doubts that Hashem is no longer with us, no longer desires us and does not hear our prayers

Hashem sends Yishaya to deliver a double comfort נחמו נחמו, for both of these afflictions.

Usually Neviim conclude their message with נאום ה', "says the Lord". In these words of comfort, Yishaya concludes יאמר אלקיים "says your G-d". Yishaya is consoling us, that despite our sins, despite the fact that we have been punished and sent into golus, Hashem is your G-d. He is with us, helping us through, hearing our prayers and waiting to take us home.

Beis Hamikdash thoughts - The use of gold

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Opulence without waste

It is a Mitzvah to make the Beis Hamikdash as beautiful as possible. Our sages teach that if the community was able to afford it, the entire interior of the Beis Hamikdash should be covered with gold.

In its heyday, the interior walls and ceiling of the Heichal and Kodesh Hakodoshim were plated in gold. All of the gates of Beis Hamikdash (with the exception of Shaar Nikanor) were covered in gold-plate. The sacred vessels, measuring cups and the rakes, spits and shovels were all made of gold. Even the cups used to give water to the animals before being sacrificed, were made of gold.

Beautifulizing the Beis Hamikdash with such opulence is based on the dictum "there should be no sign of poverty in a place of wealth".

The entrance to the Kodesh (the Shaar Hagadol) was 10 Amos wide and 20 Amos tall. The doorway itself was 6 Amos thick. Set at each edge of the doorway was a pair of double doors. Each door was 5 Amos wide and 10 Amos tall. These doors were covered with gold.

The two outer doors would open inwards and cover the thickness of the doorway. The inner doors would swing into the Kodesh and sit against the walls of the Kodesh.

Whilst the rest of the Kodesh was covered in gold, the parts of the wall which would be covered when the inner two doors were open, were left bare. The reason for this is because התורה חסה על ממונם של ישראל, "the Torah has pity for the money of the Jewish people".

Covering this part of the wall with gold would have been an unnecessary expense. When the doors were open, the walls would be covered by the gold of the doors anyway. When the doors were closed, no one was inside to see the exposed walls.

Even when it comes to the Beis Hamikdash, where there is a Mitzvah to beautify it as opulently as possible, the Torah is careful not to make us spend in an unnecessary or wasteful manner. Certainly we should be at least as careful when it comes to other people's money and even our own personal expenditure.

The true purpose of gold

Gold was heavily used throughout the Beis Hamikdash. Gold is a highly precious metal, representing great wealth and glory.

The Midrash teaches that gold is so precious that the world was not worthy to use it. It was only created and placed within our world, to be used in the Beis Hamikdash.

But once gold was created to be used in the Beis Hamikdash, we were given access to use it for our personal, human needs and desires. But the primary purpose for the existence of gold remains for the Beis Hamikdash. Our ability to use it is tangential.

This is a powerful lesson in how we should view everything in the physical world and all of the physical things that Hashem has blessed us with in our lives; health, children, wealth, talents etc.

Hashem created everything for His honour. The purpose for everything we own or are endowed with is to be used in building the Macro-Mikdash of the Dirah Betachtonim, transforming this world into a space where Hashem's presence is revealed.

Everything that was created and everything that we have in our lives, was given to us to use in our service of Hashem. Of course we are able to have personal benefit and use of them as well. But this is incidental to the true purpose of everything that has been created and all that we have been given.

When we think about all of the things that we have been blessed with, before thinking what we can gain and enjoy from having them, we should first reflect on how we are utilising them for the real purpose for which they were given to us.

Teshuvah - a golden experience

In today's post we will present a Kabbalistic understanding of the teaching that the world was not worthy of using gold and it was only created to be used in the Beis Hamikdash.

Silver and gold represent 2 different Sefiros, Divine energies which are expressions of Hashem's light and revelation.

נכסף (silver) is related to the phrase נכסף – נכסף an expression of love or desire. This corresponds to the Sefira of Chesed. Chesed is

the first and hence dominant of the emotional Sefiros with which Hashem created the world – כי אמרתי עולם חסד יבנה. These Sefiros represent the reality of Creation and the light of Hashem present within it. This is why the world was worthy to use silver; to experience this dimension of G-dliness.

Gold corresponds to the Sefira of Binah which is higher than the emotional Sefiros. It represents a level of G-dliness which transcends creation, like gold which is more precious than silver. In the normal order of Creation, the worlds are not worthy to use gold i.e. the experience of this transcendent light. Our spiritual currency is silver, which while less valuable is more 'transactable' and accessible.

But there was one place in the physical where the lofty level of Binah was revealed - the Beis Hamikdash and more specifically the Kodesh Hakodoshim. This is the inner meaning of the idea that gold was only brought into the created reality for the Beis Hamikdash.

In our personal Avodah, Kesef represents the Avodah of keeping Torah and Mitzvos, which like silver (תורת חסד), brings G-dliness into the world from the level of the emotional Sefiros. Binah represents Teshuvah which draws down Hashem's transcendent light to make up for our lackings in Torah and Mitzvos. Teshuvah preceded the world, because it transcends the world. The Baal Teshuvah accesses this deepest level of G-dliness and brings into a reality where it would not otherwise be brought.

Teshuvah is a visit into the Beis Hamikdash, the place gold was created for.

~ Based on Or Hatorah Tetzaveh 1613, Ki Seitzei 947

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