



פרשת ויצא

כסלו

תשע"ט

### YUD DALED KISLEV

This year marks 90 years since the wedding of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin in 5689.

The Rebbe's parents were unable to attend the wedding, but in his letters leading up to the Chasuna, the Rebbe's father shares his deepest Brachos with his son and future daughter-in-law.

All men are invited to join a special shiur with **Rabbi Yonason Johnson** delving into one of these letters, in which the Rebbe's father explains the Kabbalistic significance of the wedding date.

Wednesday אור לי"ד כסלו 8:30pm in the lunchroom.

### SHABBOS AFTERNOON SHIUR

This week's Shabbos Afternoon Shiur will be on the topic of **Stealing from Parents**

Given by **Rabbi Binyomin Cohen** Between Mincha and Maariv in the Yeshiva Shule.

### DOR LEDOR

Dor Ledor continues this week. 6:30pm Shabbos afternoon in the ORZ Mezzanine.

### SHAALOS UTESHUVOS

All men are invited to join the Sunday morning Shaalos Uteshuvos shiur.

This weeks we will be exploring contemporary Chanukah Shaalos. 9:30am in the Kollel Beis Medrash with Rabbi Y. Johnson



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## Do your morning step-aerobics

The imagery of Yaakov's dream of the ladder ascending to the Heavens is a powerful motif.

The Midrash says that the *Sulam* (ladder) represents the ramp of the Mizbeach. The fragrance of the Korbanos reaches the Heavens and the angels going up and down are the Kohanim.

The Zohar teaches that the *Sulam* is Tefillah - davening, which replaces the Korbanos that we are no longer able to bring. In Hayom Yom, the Rebbe elaborates on this idea and how it is reflected in the motif of Yaakov's ladder.

The ladder in Yaakov's dream had 4 steps. So too, our daily Shachris Tefillah had 4 specific phases. The Torah specifies that the ladder was rooted on the ground, but its top reached the Heavens. Each phase of davening raises us further off the ground and brings us closer to G-dliness.

The beginning of Davening is Hodu, and before that, Modeh Ani. Both are phrases of *Hodaah*. *Hodaah* means to acknowledge and acquiesce to something, even if we do not understand it ourselves. Before we have even begun trying to meditate on the greatness of Hashem with our minds and heart, we surrender ourselves to Hashem with a simple acknowledgement of the truth of His existence.

The next phase of davening is Pesukei Dezimra, where we are starting to meditate on Hashem's greatness. The purpose of meditation (*Hisbonenus*) with our mind, is to develop feelings of love of Hashem and an emotional desire to connect to Him. Since Pesukei Dezimra are descriptions and praises of Hashem's greatness within Creation, this is a more 'external' level of *Hisbonenus*.

The Shema is a deeper level of awareness and understanding of Hashem where we connect to His absolute oneness; how He infinitely transcends Creation and how everything is like nothing before Him. This *Hisbonenus* awakens the deep love and yearning of the Neshama for Hashem.

Finally we reach the pinnacle of Davening, the Shemoneh Esrei. This is the top of the ladder that takes us to the very Heavens. During Shemoneh

Esrei we stand before Hashem like a servant in the presence of their master. This represents a state of absolute surrender - Bittul, where we completely lose awareness of anything other than Hashem, even an awareness of self.

The rest of davening is the climb back down the ladder, drawing down all of the spiritual powers and inspiration as we prepare to face the world during the day that lies ahead of us.

Now we can appreciate why davening first thing in the morning so important.

Our Neshama descends down into this world with a mission, to serve Hashem and reveal His presence within the physicality of the world.

But the Neshama is encloded within the confines of a body and an animalistic soul. The body and animalistic soul live an 'earthly' life, lived in pursuit of material success and physical desires. In contrast, the Neshama seeks to live higher; a spiritual life connected to and focused on Hashem.

Chaza"l describe the state in which we wake up in the morning before having davened, as having one's soul in their nose. Chassidus explains that this is because the Neshama is not yet revealed within our entire being and consciousness. When we first wake up, our physical, more animalistic side is dominant. In this confinement, how is the Neshama able to accomplish its mission?

Davening serves as the ladder through which we lift ourselves up to reveal our Neshama and bring it into the front of our consciousness. Each phase of davening lifts us higher and higher, rising above the 'earthliness' of our pre-davening state to the pinnacle of an absolute union with Hashem.

Like a daily work-out for the body, davening strengthens the Neshama. We can then go out and engage with the world; in our workplaces etc. with our Neshama and our G-dly purpose in the forefront of our minds. After completing our daily spiritual step-program we have the strength to overcome all of the obstacles and challenges and to bring that G-dliness into everything that we do.

# Respecting our Shules - Part 1

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

On his journey to Charan, Yaakov spends the night on Har Habayis. He dreams of a ladder ascending to the Heavens, with angels going up and down. The Gemara (Chullin 91a) explains that the angels went up and gazed on the “Image of Man” above and then went down to gaze at Yaakov, the image of man below. According to the Gemara, the angels wanted to harm Yaakov and so Hashem stood above him to protect him.

Iyun Yosef on Ein Yaakov explains that the angels wanted to harm Yaakov because he had slept on Har Habayis. The halacha is that one may not sleep in a place that is designated for prayer such as a Beis Hakeneses. Certainly it was forbidden to sleep on the site of the Beis Hamikdash, the gateway to Heaven.

This is why the Torah tells us that Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said ‘surely Hashem is in this and I did not know!’. He understood that this is why the angels in his dream sought to harm him. Had he known that “Hashem is in this place”, he would not have slept there.

Iyun Yosef references Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 151, the Halachos of Kedushas Beis Hakeneses. Below we will present a selection of Halachos recorded in that Siman.

## Respecting the Kedusha of a Shule

A Beis Kneses is referred to as a Mikdash Me’at, a miniature Sanctuary<sup>1</sup>. Just as there is a Mitzvah to have reverence for the Beis Hamikdash on account of the One Who dwells there, so too one must treat a Beis Hakeneses or Beis Medrash with reverence<sup>2</sup>.

According to some authorities<sup>3</sup>, having awe for the Beis Hakeneses is a Mitzvah Deoraisa. Most authorities maintain that the sanctity of a Beis Kneses is Derabbanan<sup>4</sup>.

One may not act in a Shule in a manner of *Kalus Rosh* – light headedness and frivolity<sup>5</sup>. The Sefer Mitzvos Katan<sup>6</sup> writes that because people act with Kalus Rosh in a Shule, these Shules are transformed into houses of Avodah Zarah.

## Proper Speech

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>7</sup> rules that one may not speak idle conversation or jest in a Shule. This refers even when the Tzibbur is not davening. The Zohar<sup>8</sup> speaks very harshly about one who speaks mundane chatter in a Shule; that they are shaming the Shechina and prolonging the Golus<sup>9</sup>. Magen Avraham records that the Arizal<sup>10</sup> was careful to not say anything other

than Tefillah in a Shule. He would not even say words of Mussar lest it lead to speaking mundane matters.

Mishna Berura<sup>11</sup> writes that even speaking about matters of Parnasa is forbidden in a Beis Kneses. The Mishna Berura continues that certainly one must take care not to speak Lashon Hara, Rechilus or word of Machlokes in Shule. Such speech is forbidden always. When it is done in a Holy place, one is also insulting the presence of the Shechina; just like one cannot compare one who sins in private to doing so in the palace of the king<sup>12</sup>.

Aruch Hashulchan<sup>13</sup> notes that nowadays people are seemingly lax in these Halachos, sitting after davening to Shmooze in Shule. He seeks to justify this practise based on the view of the Ramban<sup>14</sup> that if the Shule is built with express condition<sup>15</sup> to allow so, one may do certain necessary mundane activities in the Shule which could include certain conversations such as business and the like<sup>16</sup>.

## Entering the Shule

A person should not enter a Shule for personal needs other than davening or other Mitzvah purpose. If one needs to enter the Shule to call a friend or other similar purpose, they should say/learn some Pesukim or teaching of Mishna or Halacha and only then call their friend<sup>17</sup>. Alternatively one may ask another person to share a teaching, or may even sit down for a few moments as just sitting in a Shule is a Mitzvah.

One may not enter a Shule or Beis Medrash to take shelter from the rain or sun.

If a Shule or Beis Medrash has multiple entrances, one may not use it as a short-cut<sup>18</sup>. Mishna Berura<sup>19</sup> writes that the leniency of sitting or learning something in Shule also works in this case. Many Acharonim<sup>20</sup> argue, maintaining that this ‘heter’ is limited to the case of entering a Shule to call someone.

## Eating in Shule

The Shulchan Aruch rules that one may not eat or drink in a Shule<sup>21</sup>, even for a snack<sup>22</sup>. Talmidei Chachamim and their students may eat even a meal in a Shule or Beis Medrash<sup>23</sup>. Poskim write that anyone learning in Shule, even for a short amount of time, may have tea, coffee and a snack if required. The rationale is that if they were not able to eat or drink in the Beis Medrash, this would force them to pause their learning.

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>24</sup> rules that if it is for the needs of the Shule, one may eat or sleep there. This would include guards and the like. Similarly

one may eat in Shule for other Mitzvah purposes. Magen Avraham<sup>25</sup> qualifies that this does not apply to meals, even a Seudas Mitzvah, where there is likely to be *Kalus Rosh* (and drunkenness<sup>26</sup>).

The Mishna Berura writes that the custom is to be lenient to celebrate Siyumim in Shule with a meal. This is the basis for those who are lenient and allow Seudos Mitzvah to be held in a Shule or Beis Medrash<sup>27</sup>, such as a Shalosh Seudos or Melave Malka or serving Lechaim and Mezonos on a Yartzeit. It is also the basis for holding a Seudah / farbrengen in a Shule or Beis Medrash in honour of a Tzaddik’s Yartzeit and the like where Yidden gather to hear words of Torah and Chassidus and sing songs in praise of Hashem.

If the Shule or Beis Midrash was built with a stipulation permitting eating drinking, there is more grounds for leniency to host other Seudos Mitzvah<sup>28</sup> such as a Bris, Pidyon Haben, Barmitzvah or Sheva Brachos or even a Shalom Zachar and Shabbos Kiddush in the Shule or Beis Medrash. In all cases, one should take care that the behaviour and conduct is befitting for a holy place.

1. Yechezkel 11:16

2. Mishna Berura 151:1

3. Yereim 324, Chayei Adam 17:6, Rav Pealim 2:20 and others.

4. See Sdeh Chemed Klalim Maareches Beis 43, Ma-harsham 1:10, Pri Megadim 151 M.Z. 1. Divrei Chaim 1:3 and others. Pri Megadim writes that the obligation to treat a Shule with awe could be Biblical if it is because of a Neder – communal vow.

5. Megillah 28b, Shulchan Aruch 151:1

6. Siman 11 quoted by Magen Avraham 151:1

7. ibid

8. Vayakhel 2:205b

9. Chid”a in Pesach Enayim writes that it would be better not to come to Shule at all then to come and speak mundane matters.

10. Shaar Hakavanos 5:1

11. 151:2 based on Pri Megadim 151 Eshel Avraham 1.

12. See there for a continuation of his words how such gatherings can create fires of Machlokes, leading to cursing, public embarrassment and physical blows, even in the presence of the Sefer Torah itself.

13. 151:5

14. Megillah 26b. This is a Machlokes Rishonim – see Beis Yosef 11 who follows the view of Tosfos and the Rosh that such a condition only helps to allow such activities in a Shule once it has been destroyed.

15. In Chitz Laaretz, the presumption in Halacha is that Shules were built with such a stipulation in mind.

16. See Shaar Hatziyun 20 that such a condition does not allow completely idle chatter

17. Shulchan Aruch 151:1

18. Shulchan Aruch 151:5

19. Biur Halacha לעשות ד”ה

20. Shiurei Tahara 2:28, Or Sameach on Hilchos Tefillah 11:10

21. 151:1

22. Aruch Hashulchan 151:2. See however Biur Halacha who writes that snacking may be permissible.

23. Shulchan Aruch and Ram”o ibid

24. 151:4

25. 151:5

26. Pri Megadim Eshel Avraham 5

27. Ketzos Hashulchan 29:12

28. See Igros Moshe OC 1:45