



A collection of Torah  
thoughts produced by  
Kollel Menachem

# חידוש

אין בית המדרש בלא

## Chiddush

פרשת ואתחנן  
מנחם אב תשע"ז

### BEIS HAMIKDASH EVENING

Last Motzai Shabbos the Kollel hosted our annual Beis Hamikdash evening. Over 100 men and women came out for an enjoyable evening of learning.

Rabbi **Aryeh Knapp** spoke about the layout of the Beis Hamikdash and how it parallels the spiritual worlds. Rabbi **Mendel Lipskier** spoke about the unique name of the Lishkas Haeitz.

A delicious Melave Malka spread of soups, salads and bagels completed the evening.

The evening was sponsored by Rabbi & Mrs S.M. Klugant לע"נ ר' מנחם מענדל בן אברהם.

### SIYUM HARAMBAM

The Kollel together with Yeshiva Shule invite all men to join us in celebrating the completion of Sefer Kinyan in the daily Rambam cycle. A special Shalosh Seudos will be held this Shabbos afternoon after Mincha in the Lunchroom.

### SHAALOS UTESHUVOS

Coming from Tisha B'av, this weeks topic will be whether one is allowed to go up onto Har Habayis nowadays since the destruction of the Temple. 9:30am in the Kollel Beis Medrash, for men.

### NIGHTLY SIYUMIM

We would like to thank all of those who prepared siyumim as well as the sponsors who dedicated the refreshments.



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## Saying Shema in the darkness of night

The first passage of Shema comes from Parshas Vaeschanan. The Mitzvah requires us to recite the Shema twice each day; בשבכך ובקומך, in the evening and in the morning.

The Avodah of Krias Shema is to crown Hashem as King over the world and reveal His oneness within all existence. This Avodah is reflected in the word אחד; We have to reveal Hashem's oneness (א) in the 7 Heavens and the earth (ה) and the four directions that define our world (ד).

In Shema we surrender ourselves with Kabbolas Ol to His Kingship and to live our lives in His service.

Because this Avodah is the essence of Yiddishkeit, it is the first Mitzvah discussed in Shas (the Oral Law).

מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין - *from when do we begin reciting the Shema at night?* The Mishna discusses the timeframe when one can fulfil the Mitzvah of reciting the evening Shema, presenting the opinion of three sages.

Like each day comprises night and day, throughout our lives we experience phases of night and phases of day. In each of them, we must say Shema.

Daylight represents those times when we have spiritual clarity and illumination. We feel connected and inspired. The light of Hashem shines openly in our lives.

Night is when this light is not present. We face spiritual darkness and confusion, lacking inspiration and struggling to feel connected.

And so the Mishna asks, how can one read Shema in the evening? When we are in a state of daylight it seems so much easier to surrender ourselves to Hashem and live with the purpose of revealing His oneness. But what about those times when we experience spiritual darkness in our lives? How then can we "recite Shema"?

Hashem does not give us a challenge that we cannot overcome. The fact that the Torah gives us this Mitzvah is because our Neshama possesses a powerful inner strength. With this strength we can over-

come the spiritual challenges that we may be facing and surrender ourselves to serving Hashem.

But how far can this strength carry us?

Rabbi Eliezer teaches that one may only say Shema during the first third of the night. He defines בשבכך as the time when most people are still wake but are preparing to go to sleep. We may be experiencing "night", but as long as we have not yet "fallen asleep", there is hope for "Shema". Once a person falls asleep spiritually, Rabbi Eliezer says that they are incapable of reciting "Shema".

Rabbi Eliezer was a disciple of the school of Shammai who was known for his strictness. Shammai represents a standard for the spiritual elite.

The Chachamim rule that one may only recite the evening Shema until midnight. Even after one has "fallen asleep", as long as the darkness is not so strong, one can still say "Shema". But once the first half of the night has passed and the darkness becomes more intense, one can no longer recite Shema.

The Chachamim represent the majority. For most people, once the darkness grows too strong, the Avodah becomes too difficult to achieve.

The final opinion is the most lenient. Rabban Gamliel allows one to fulfil the Mitzvah of the evening Shema all the way until dawn. He defines בשבכך as the entire time when most people are asleep.

The darkest part of the night is just before dawn. Even if a person has "fallen asleep" and even when the spiritual darkness that they face is at its greatest intensity, Rabban Gamliel teaches us that we can still overcome it and say "Shema".

Rabban Gamliel was the *Nosi Hador*, the leader of all of Klal Yisroel. A *Nosi* cannot cater only to the elite. Nor can a *Nosi* focus on what is good for the majority. A *Nosi* bares responsibility for every single Jew irrespective of their spiritual standing; to give them hope and to reveal within them the spiritual strength to connect to Hashem and live "Shema".



## Lowering the wall

All of the walls surrounding Har Habayis were built very tall with the exception of the wall above the gate on the Eastern wall which was built lower than the others. Why?

A person who became impure through contact with the dead could only be purified with the ashes of the Parah Adumah. The Parah Adumah was slaughtered and burned on Har Hazeisim to the East of the Beis Hamikdash.

Even though the Parah Adumah had to be slaughtered and burned outside of Yerushalaim on Har Hazeisim, the Kohen had to face and be able to see the doorway of the Heichal. The Eastern wall was built lower to give the Kohen an unobscured view all the way into the Kodesh.

Spiritual death is disconnection from Hashem – the source of life. The Kohen leaving the Beis Hamikdash to prepare the Parah Adumah represents the sacrifice of leaving one's own spiritual comforts to bring purity to those who need it.

When a person leaves their environment of holiness for the purpose of connecting others to Hashem, it may seem that they are moving away. In truth, Hashem lowers all the walls and barriers, giving us unhindered access to the deepest level of connection.

Anticipating the Churban, Shlomo Hamelech built deep, winding tunnels underneath the Beis Hamikdash. Here the Aron would be hidden so that it would never be lost or destroyed. Like the Aron, the essence of our soul is untouchable.

## The untouchable Aron

Anticipating the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, Shlomo Hamelech built winding passageways deep under the Temple floor. Here the Aron would be hidden so that it would never be destroyed or taken captive.

The Aron was absent from the Kodesh Hakodashim in the second Beis Hamikdash, but its presence and influence was there from deep below the surface.

Unlike the rest of the Beis Hamikdash which was completely destroyed and the other Keilim which were plundered, the Aron was untouched by the destruction.

Inside the Aron were the Luchos, with the words of the Aseres Hadibros carved into stone. Unlike written letters, where the ink and paper are ultimately separate, carved letters are one with the stone into which they are cut.

The Aron represents the essence of the Neshama. At the outer levels of our soul, we become connected to Hashem like ink on paper through the Mitzvos that we do, through our feelings and meditation. At our essential core, like the letters on the Luchos, we and Hashem are one.

The destructive forces of our animalistic soul may attack our inner Beis Hamikdash, eroding our outer levels of connection. But deep inside of us and ever present, our Yechida, our essential oneness with Hashem, is untouchable.



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## Three zones of holiness

The forerunner to the Beis Hamikdash was the Mishkan. The design of the Mishkan is the prototype for the basic layout of the Beis Hamikdash.

The Beis Hamikdash, like the Mishkan, comprised of three main areas; the Azarah (courtyard), the Kodesh and the Kodesh Hakodashim.

Chassidus explains that each soul has three "garments" or vehicles of expression; thought, speech and action. Through these "garments" the soul expresses her deeper feelings and ideas. The three zones within the Beis Hamikdash parallel these three tools of expression.

Action, like the outdoor courtyard is the outermost expression of the soul. It is an extremely physical expression in terms of its impact on the world and those around us.

Speech communicates our deeper feelings and ideas to others. Whilst speech is a physical expression and outward communication, it is not as physical as action and is more closely connected to us. Like the Kodesh, speech as an expressions sits between action and thought.

Like the Kodesh Hakodoshim, our innermost "garment" are our thoughts. Our thoughts are private and allow us to clarify and better understand our feelings and ideas for ourselves. They are hidden to others. Thought is the most spiritual of the three "garments".

Like the Mishkan, the Beis Hamikdash comprised 3 main areas; the Azarah, the Kodesh and the Kodesh Hakodoshim. These three zones reflect the three "garments" through which we express our souls; thought, speech and action.

These "garments" can also be used to express our animalistic self. The inner Beis Hamikdash requires us to transform our three "garments" so that they manifest and express the presence of Hashem within us, the light of our Neshama.