

# **Walk thru Davening**

*with Rabbi David Walk*

## **ACTIVE MEMORY**

### **Shabbat Musaf**

This week, as we prepare for Tish'a b'Av, we focus on remembering the lost glory of Yerushalayim. There are so many customs to help us hold the memory of the destroyed Temple. We leave an unfinished square cubit in our homes, we break a glass at weddings, and, of course, all the mourning practices during these Three Weeks. However, I believe that no practice is more poignant than reciting Musaf.

I know that we also say that our daily Shmoneh Esrei prayers are in place of the daily offerings in the Beit HaMikdash, but I don't think we really feel it. Remember, we also say that we're following the lead of our Patriarchs when we pray three times a day. But Musaf! Well, that's clearly connected to the Temple offerings. Its heart is the recitation of the offering as rendered in Sefer Bamidbar (chapters 28-29).

In Shabbat Musaf, we declare: On the Shabbat day: two yearling lambs without blemish, together with two-tenths of a measure\* of choice flour with oil mixed in as a meal offering, and with the proper libation

- a burnt offering for every Shabbat, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its libation (Bamidbar 28:9-10).

However, before that recitation, we have a fascinating paragraph whose first 22 words start with the Hebrew Alphabet backwards. This is, of course, interesting because we have many prayers and Psalms which follow the Alef-Bet. So, why here in reverse? Although there are numerous attempts to fathom the poem, I like the explanation that instead of building up towards a goal, we are counting back to a bygone era, attempting to reconnect with our glorious past.

As with the Tish'a b'Av commemoration this week, we find ourselves yearning for that which we've lost. What's interesting to me is that in the Musaf of the Chagim we specifically mention 'because of our sins we were exiled from Land... and cannot perform our duties'. On Shabbat, however, we just petition God (May it be Your will... to lead us back in joy to our land). I think the reason for this discrepancy is that the major observance of Chag is the pilgrimage to Yerushalayim. While on Shabbat, even though there is an extra offering, the central observances are in the home with the family.

The Pachad Yitzchak suggests that the critical idea in this topsy-turvy paragraph is 'those who love its teachings have chosen greatness'. He says that this means we have chosen the essential (IKAR) over secondary (TAFEL) matters. This careful selection of the truly significant things in life allows us to experience the transcendent affairs of life. This prepares us for the next spiritual step, which is a return to the Temple service.

So, we anticipate the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash and we recite the verses describing the offering, then comes an unexpected statement: Those who observe Shabbat and call it a delight (ONEG) will rejoice (YISMACHU) in Your Kingship. This is a surprise, because in Jewish tradition we normally think of SIMCHA as a Yom Tov requirement, not a Shabbat one.

Rav Moshe Soloveitchik (father of the Rav) explained that the day on which we bring an offering becomes a time of joy. The SIMCHA is from bringing the MUSAFF offering. This explains the normative Ashkenazic custom of only reciting this joyous passage during the MUSAFF AMIDA. Since this prayer's purpose is to recreate the MUSAFF offering we should feel the joy.

The final paragraph of this long middle blessing describes the sublime nature of Shabbat. It's a request for satisfaction, joy, purity and the comforting rest of Shabbat. This special day and its perks are the heritage of our people. It's a sign of our special relationship with God.

This paragraph ends with the blessing: Blessed are You, HaShem, Who sanctifies Shabbat. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik explains that inherent in that statement are two concepts. The most obvious is the description of Shabbat from the Ten Commandments: Remember the Shabbat to keep it holy (Sh'mot 20:8). This 'means only abstention from the daily routine or separation from work'. The Rav goes on to explain that 'in the topical context, the term L'KAD'SHO does not refer to a charismatic quality inherent in the seventh day'. If we only knew about Shabbat from the Ten Commandments, it would only be a technical observance.

But we have another context of Shabbat 'which forms the main motto of the thematic HALACHA with regard to Shabbat would be, I believe, the mysterious passage in B'reishit which concludes the story of creation, 'And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it'

(VAYKADEiSH OTO, Breishit 2:4).

The Rav concludes: A twenty-four hour period was sanctified and hallowed. It has suddenly become a metaphysical entity upon which the Almighty has bestowed a unique endowment, namely, that of blessedness and sanctity (Out of the Whirlwind).

So, there are two identities to our beloved Shabbat. First, a legal one which contains all manner of positive and negative laws. But, more importantly, a magical, mystical, metaphysical one, which transports us to an enchanted 'island in time'. There we can experience things beyond the horizon of our normal, workaday lives. When we recite MUSAF, I believe that part of that adventure is a visit to the Holy Temple, where we rejoice in the service to our Creator and Parent in Heaven. ❤️