

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

23 Vincent Avenue Chautauqua, NY 14722 T: (716) 357 - 3467 W: www.cocweb.org E: rabbi@cocweb.org

Kabbala and Meditation – Week 3 – 2020

1. 1:1 It is a positive Torah commandment to pray every day, as [Exodus 23:25] states: "You shall serve God, your Lord." Tradition teaches us that this service is prayer, as [Deuteronomy 10:12] states: "And serve Him with all your heart" and our Sages said: Which is the service of the heart? This is prayer.

2. 1:5 They also decreed that the number of prayers correspond to the number of sacrifices - i.e., two prayers every day, corresponding to the two daily sacrifices. On any day that an additional sacrifice [was offered], they instituted a third prayer, corresponding to the additional offering.
The prayer that corresponds to the daily morning sacrifice is called the Shacharit Prayer. The prayer that corresponds to the daily sacrifice offered in the afternoon is called the *Minchah* Prayer and the prayer corresponding to the additional offerings is called the *Musaf* Prayer. (Maimonides, Laws of Prayer)

3. The Sages taught in a *baraita* with regard to waiting before and after prayer: The early generations of pious men would wait one hour, pray one hour, then wait one hour again. This raises the question: Since the early pious men would spend nine hours per day engaged either in prayer or the requisite waiting periods before and after prayer, three hours each for the morning, afternoon, and evening prayers, how is their Torah preserved? There was little time remaining to review their studies. And how was their work accomplished? Rather, because they were pious they merited that their Torah is preserved and their work is blessed.
(Talmud, Berachot 32b)

4. There are three forms of *hitbon'nut* (contemplation, meditation):
 - (a.) Study-meditation: After mastering the concept thoroughly, one meditates on its profundity, until the *intellectual* element shines forth for him.
 - (b.) Meditation before *davening*: This is directed toward sensing the *vitality* of the concept learned, in contrast to sensing the intellectual element emphasized in study-meditation.
 - (c.) Meditation in *davening*: To sense the "G-dly element" in the concept learned.
These three are rungs on the ladder of sensitivity. It is only by G-d's kindness towards us that we may occasionally sense G-dhood spontaneously, without any *avoda* at all. This comes about by virtue of the quality of Ultimate Essential G-dhood¹ within the soul. For *avoda* by one's own efforts, however, these three forms of meditation are essential.
(Hayom Yom, 20 Tamuz)

5. It is written: *They shall make Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell within them.* (Exodus 25:8)
"Within them" means within every one...
For within every one, the core point of the heart's inner essence is a sanctuary for His dwelling (may He be blessed).
The site of the sanctuary remains sacred, even in times of exile and desolation. In Midrash *Sh'mot Raba* Chapter 2, R. Acha says: "The *Shechina* (Divine Presence) never departs from the Western Wall." All the desolation is limited to the buildings. So, too, is the case with the personal sanctuary within each... the foundation is whole, clear and pure, as it is written, *I am asleep but my heart is alert* (*Song of Songs* 5:2). Midrash Raba comments: "I am asleep for *mitzvot*, but my heart is alert for acts of kindness; I am asleep for charities, but my heart is alert to perform them."
Every form of (spiritual) desolation (may G-d rescue us from such) found in the people... is only in those aspects of the people analogous to buildings *above* the foundation. The foundation of the individual sanctuary, however, remains in its holy state. (Ibid, 21 Tamuz)

6. "A man who offers from you an offering to G-d..." (Leviticus 1:1)
The sequence of the words seems incongruous — it should read, "A man from you who offers..."
Underlying the ritual of sacrifices, the ceremonial acts of the *Kohen*, there is the intent of the donor of the offering. The animal offering was symbolic of a greater sacrifice, that of the donor himself.
There is the animal and the divine within men, constantly struggling for domination. The "animal" takes a different form in each person, but universally urges man to earthly pursuits, physical pleasures, as opposed to serving G-d and concern for the soul.
That Torah teaches us that the offering must be "from you," that every man must seek out and recognize clearly his own animal. He must know his feelings and actions for what they are, not disguising faults as virtues, but correcting them. The sacrifice is not the symbol of some incomprehensible; it is to emphasize to man what he must do with himself. The value of the offering is measured not by its costliness, but by how much of himself man offers to his Creator.
(Lekutei Torah, Vayikra – Adapted by Rabbi Zalman Posner, Chabad.org)
7. This is the sanctuary that each person makes in his life, a place where an animal is raised up onto an altar of G-dly fire. It is here that G-d is found in all of His primal essence, dwelling in an ordinary world.
And for this all things were made.
(Be within Stay above)
8. [*G-d told Moses, "The Israelites] must camp around the Tent of Meeting [- Tabernacle].* (Numbers 2:2)
The people's encampment on all four sides of the Tabernacle symbolized how they protected the holy edifice and the Torah that resided in its innermost sanctum. Certainly, the Torah does not need our protection – on the contrary, the Torah and its commandments protect us. However, G-d chose to entrust us with the noble mission of protecting the Torah.
Similarly, we must guard our personal, inner sanctuary – within our hearts and within our homes – from all four sides: from cool spiritual indifference on the cold north; from hot, lustful passions on the warm south; from self-gratification over brilliant accomplishments on the morning east; and from dark despair on the evening west.
(Hitva'aduyot 5745, vol. 4, p. 2103; Reshimot 62 (p. 15); Or HaTorah, Bemidbar, vol. 4, pp. 1360–1361, 1396–1397; Zohar 2:156a; Igrot Kodesh, vol. 6, p. 185. - Translated and Adapted by Moshe Wisnefsky, Chabad.org)

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