

## ***ACHAREI- KODESH KODASHIM PURE, PRISTINE HOLINESS***

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The first chapter of Parshas Acharei tells us of the unique service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. One time a year, the Kohen Gadol would enter the *kodesh kodashim*, the holiest inner chamber, put on white linen garments and do his special once-a-year rituals there. This was a major part of bringing about atonement for all of Am Yisroel and ultimately, the entire world.

The concept of a separation between holy and holy of holies has already been introduced. In describing the layout of the Ohel Moed, we are told in Shemos 26:33-34 that the *paroches*, curtain was to separate the areas and that the aron, containing the original tablets was to be placed in this area designated as holy of holies. This same layout was to be used later in the Bais Hamikdash. When Am Yisroel was in the desert, the place of Hashem's *shechina*, divine presence was contained in the western part of the Mishkan wherever Am Yisroel went. Once the Bais Hamikdash was built, the resting place and revelation this *shechina* was established on Har Hamoriah and never transferred to any place else. Nevertheless, this mountain, Har Hamoriah, was destined for holiness from the very beginning of time. It simply took Am Yisroel as a whole nation to formally establish Har Hamoriah and the area of the *kodesh kodashim* to be this place for the *shechina*.

According to our Mesorah Adam, Kayin, Hevel and Noach brought korbons in the place that later became the site of the Bais Hamikdash. This is codified by the Rambam in Hilchos Bais Habchirah 2:2. It is also part of our Mesorah that Dovid and Shlomo built the altar in the very same place where Avraham bound Yitzchak. Furthermore, the Rambam codifies in Hilchos Bais Habchira 7:15-16 that the kedusha of Yerushalayim is eternal. He explains that the holiness of Yerushalayim is based on the presence of the *shechina* which can never disappear. Enemies can destroy the physical buildings but not the holiness. [Actually the Rambam's position is a matter of dispute in the Gemarah as to whether or not the divine presence remains once the Bais Hamikdash is no longer there. The Rambam goes with the view that the *shechina* is indeed everlasting. This is all the more true of the place of the *kodesh kodashim*. But even according to the other view, the holiness of the place is technical but its history and role in our times past remain since the final Bais Hamikdash will be in the same original place.]

This *kodesh kodashim* is the place we all face when we daven. In the Gemara Brachos 30a it is stated and in Shulchan Aruch 94:13 it codified as halacha the concept of facing the proper direction ' If one is outside of Eretz Yisroel, one should pray facing Eretz Yisroel as it is stated in Melachim I 8: 48 'they should pray to Hashem the way of their land'. In Eretz Yisroel one prays facing Yerushalayim. One who is in Yerushalayim should face the Bais Hamikdash. One who is in the Bais Hamikdash should face the *kodesh kodashim*. In the *kodesh kodashim* one should face toward the *kapores*, the cover of the ark upon which the *keruvim*, angel-like figures were fashioned. So all are facing

point and aiming their hearts in one direction. One who is blind or does not know how to figure out directions should direct his heart to his father in heaven.' Rav Avin and some say Rav Avin understand this entire concept from Shir Hashirim 4:4 which states, 'your neck is like the tower of Dovid built for *talpiyos*. The commentaries on Shir Hashirim discuss various meanings of the word *talpiyos*. In the context of this Gemara, though, it is understood to mean the point that all are turning to. The Maharsha comments that the verse is referring to the Jews who have been exiled to enemy lands and forced to be far from the holy places. Nevertheless, physical limitations do not stop them from directing their hearts to the places that are dear to them. Furthermore, the Maharsha writes that the Bais Hamikdash is like a neck meaning that is in the upper part of Eretz Yisroel just as the neck is in the upper part of the body. We see from this entire discussion the concept of all of the prayers of all of Am Yisroel being united in one place, the *kodesh kodashim*.

The Ahavas Sholom of Kossov discusses the *kodesh kodashim* and the fact that Aharon entered there only once a year. The *kodesh kodashim* is a place of pure pristine holiness. In order to enter, one must be properly purified and at one with Hashem and Klal Yisroel. This type of unity can only be achieved through great effort. Even Aharon Hakohen, the epitome of love and Chesed, could only enter on Yom Kippur which was the time of purity, holiness and unity between Am Yisroel and Hashem. Even Aharon could not go *bchal eis*, at all times. However, Moshe Rabbeinu, as the Selah points out, did achieve the status of *bchol eis*. We read in Koheles 9:8 At all times, *bechol eis*, your garments should be white and your head should not lack oil. Moshe Rabbeinu was the epitome of human perfection and oneness between self Am Yisroel and Hashem. This is what we strive for during the period of the counting of the Omer. As we go through the seven sefiros, emanations of the seven weeks we try to purify ourselves from the impurity of Mitzrayim to the way Yaakov Avinu the *ish tam*, the perfect one. Though we cannot reach the levels of these personalities such as Moshe Rabbeinu and Yaakov Avinu, we must nevertheless strive to achieve our highest levels possible that Hashem has set for us and fulfill the missions that Hashem has intended for us as individuals and for our communities.