

ב"ה

# הלכות בית הבחירה

## HILCHOS BAIS HABECHIRAH

### THE LAWS OF THE HOLY TEMPLE



**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

**THE ALEPH INSTITUTE**

*Hyman & Martha Rogal Center | 5804 Beacon Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15217 | 412-421-0111 | [AlephNE.org](http://AlephNE.org)*

# HILCHOS BAIS HABECHIRAH

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Hilchos Bais Habechirah Torah Studies Course.

This short certificate course is intended to be studied during the three weeks of mourning, which begin on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz (the day the outer city wall of Jerusalem was breached) and end on the 9th of Av (the date of the destruction of both Holy Temples). It is said that every generation which does not witness the rebuilding of Bais Hamikdash (the Holy Temple) should consider itself as if it is witnessing its destruction. Learning the laws pertaining to the Beis Hamikdash is a way for us to grapple with this tremendous loss that ushered in centuries of exile.

The course consists of two parts: *Tisha B'Av* and *Hilchos Bais Habechirah*. *Tisha B'Av* explains the nature of the day and the laws associated with its observance, while *Hilchos Bais Habechirah* describes in detail the structure and appearance of the Bais Hamikdash, along with the laws pertaining to it. The course includes a set of questionnaires - 6 sheets in total - which consist of one sheet for *Tisha B'Av* and 5 for *Hilchos Bais Habechirah*. Please study the provided material, complete and return the worksheets to The Aleph Institute for grading, and prepare yourself for the exam.

Your closed-book exam will comprise a selection of 20 questions drawn from the worksheets. Please ensure you arrange for a proctor who can administer the exam for you. Upon passing the exam with a grade of 70% or higher, the Aleph Institute will issue a certificate of course completion bearing your name.

May our studies deepen our understanding and connection to the sanctity of the Bais Hamikdash, and may we merit to see its rebuilding speedily in our days.

With blessings,

**Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel**

Executive Director, The Aleph Institute

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*Please note that in order to enroll in the course we need to have your information on file. If you are not currently a member of the Aleph Institute, you must submit a completed membership application (see attached) with at least one working phone number for a family member or rabbi who can confirm your Jewish background. We must have your completed application for enrollment. If you are already a member you may disregard the application.*

# TISHA B'AV

Tisha B'Av (Hebrew: תשעה באב), or the Ninth of Av, is an annual fast day that falls in July or August. Its name denotes the ninth day (Tisha) of the Jewish month of Av. The day is considered the "saddest day in Jewish history". When the ninth of Av falls on the Shabbat, the observance is pushed off until Sunday the tenth of Av (though that day is still referred to as Tisha B'Av). Tisha B'Av will occur on the following days of the Gregorian calendar:

The fast commemorates the destruction of both the First and Second Jewish Holy Temples. The two tragic events occurred 656 years apart on the same date.

Three other fasts were established in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, in the events surrounding the destruction of the first Temple in 4438 (423 BCE): the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tevet, when the siege of Jerusalem began; the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, when the first breach was made in the wall of Jerusalem; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Tishrei, known as the Fast of Gedaliah, the day when Gedaliah (the last leader of the Jews in the Land of Israel at the time) was assassinated.

## THE FIVE CALAMITIES

According to the Mishna<sup>1</sup>, five specific events occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av that warrant fasting:

1. The twelve scouts sent by Moses to observe the land of Canaan returned from their mission. Two of the scouts, Joshua and Caleb, brought a positive report, but the others spoke disparagingly about the land which caused the Children of Israel to cry, panic and despair of ever entering the Land. For this, the spies were punished immediately by G-d, and the rest of the generation was banned from entering the Land. Because of the Israelites' lack of faith, G-d decreed that for all generations this date would become one of crying and misfortune for their descendants.

2. The First Temple (built by King Solomon) and the Kingdom of Judah were destroyed by the Babylonians,

led by Nebuchadnezzar, in 4438 (423 BCE), and its Jews were sent into the Babylonian exile.

3. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 3830 (70 CE), scattering the inhabitants and commencing the Jewish exile from the Holy Land.

4. Following the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the razing of Jerusalem occurred the next year. According to the Talmud in Tractate Taanit, the destruction of the Second Temple began on the ninth and was finally consumed by the flames the next day, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Av.

5. Shimon Bar Kochba's revolt against Rome failed in 3895 (135 CE). As a result, Shimon Bar Kochba was killed, and the city of Betar (in Israel) was destroyed.

## CHRONOLOGY

Mishnah Ta'anit 4:6

*"Five misfortunes befell our fathers ... on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av... On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, it was decreed that our fathers should not enter the [Promised] Land, the Temple was destroyed the first and second time, Betar was captured and the city [Jerusalem] was ploughed up."*

Zechariah 7:3

*"...Should I weep in the fifth month [Av], separating myself, as I have done these so many years?"*

Kings II 25:8-9

*"In the fifth month<sup>2</sup>, on the seventh day of the month ...came Nebuchadnezzar... and he burnt the house of the G-d..."*

Jeremiah 52:12-13

*"In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month... came Nebuchadnezzar... and he burnt the house of the G-d..."*

Talmud Ta'anit 29a

*"How then are these dates to be reconciled? On the seventh the heathens entered the Temple and ate therein and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth and towards dusk of the ninth they set fire to it, and it continued to burn the whole of that day... How will the Rabbis then [explain the choice of the 9<sup>th</sup> as the date]?"*

<sup>1</sup> Taanit 4:6

<sup>2</sup> The fifth month being Av

*The beginning of any misfortune [when the fire was set] is of greater moment."*

## SCHEDULE

### OTHER CALAMITIES

Over time Tisha B'Av has come to be a Jewish day of mourning not only for the mentioned events, but also for later tragedies. There is a custom of assigning Tisha B'Av as the date on which wars affecting Jews began or expulsions and persecutions of Jews occurred. Regardless of the exact dates of these events, for many Jews, Tisha B'Av is their designated anniversary, and these themes are reflected in liturgy composed for the day.

### LAWS OF TISHA B'AV

Tisha B'Av starts at sundown<sup>3</sup> and lasts till the following nightfall. On Tisha B'Av we abstain from:

1. Eating and drinking. Anyone over Bar/Bat Mitzvah fasts, including pregnant and nursing women. Exceptions can be made in case of illness. A rabbi should be consulted.
2. Bathing or washing. Exceptions are made for soiled hands, upon exiting the restroom, and for the morning ritual handwashing (however, this day only the fingers are to be washed)
3. Applying lotions or creams
4. Wearing shoes that contain leather
5. Marital relations
6. Regular Torah study (this prohibition begins from midday on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Av)

Nothing should distract from the mourning: Do not greet a friend with "hi" or "good morning"; Do not go on strolls or outings; If possible, take the day off work.

<sup>3</sup> Jewish dates are considered from nightfall to nightfall, not from midnight to midnight. However, as we are unsure as to the exact status of twilight (from then the sun starts setting until it goes completely under), twilight is considered a part of both the preceding day and the coming day, and we observe the stringencies of both days during this time. The 9<sup>th</sup> day of Av, therefore, begins at sundown of the preceding evening, and ends at nightfall on the

### Before Tisha B'Av

Eat the final meal shortly before sunset. A meager meal, which includes a boiled egg (a traditional symbol of mourning) and a piece of bread, dipped in ashes. Eat the meal while seated on the floor or a low stool. (Tip: Have a full meal earlier on, in preparation for the fast.)

### Tisha B'Av Night

Finish eating by sunset. The lights are dimmed in the synagogue and the Ark's curtain removed. The Scroll of Eicha (Lamentations) is read in synagogue during the evening services.

### Tisha B'Av Day

No Tallit or Tefillin for the morning prayers, and most of the morning is spent chanting or reading Kinot, most bemoaning the loss of the Temples and the subsequent persecutions, but many others referring to post-exile disasters. These later Kinot were composed by various poets (often prominent rabbis) who had either suffered in the events mentioned or relate received reports.<sup>4</sup> In many Sephardic congregations the Book of Job is read on the morning of Tisha B'Av. After the prayers we recite Kinot (elegies).

We don the Tallit and Tefillin for the afternoon prayers, making sure to say the Shema while wearing them. After nightfall, before breaking the fast, we ritually wash our hands.

### Other Restrictions

Torah study is forbidden on Tisha B'av (as it is considered an enjoyable activity), aside from sad texts such as the Book of Lamentations, the Book of Job, portions of Jeremiah and chapters of the Talmud that discuss the laws of mourning.

From the final meal (immediately before the fast) until midday of Tisha B'Av, it is customary to sit on low

9<sup>th</sup> of Av. For exact Halachic times for your location, please visit [AlephNE.org/TishaBAvTimes](http://AlephNE.org/TishaBAvTimes).

<sup>4</sup> Important Kinot were composed by Elazar HaKalir and Rabbi Judah HaLevi. After the Holocaust, Kinot were composed by the German-born Rabbi Shimon Schwab and by Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, leader of the Bobov Chasidim.

stools or on the floor, as is done during Shiva (mourning). If possible, work is avoided during this period. Electric lighting may be turned off or dimmed, and Kinot recited by candle light. Some sleep on the floor or modify their normal sleeping routine, by sleeping without a pillow, for instance. Refrain from greeting each other or sending gifts on this day. Old, unusable prayerbooks and Torahs are often buried on this day.

### **The Days Preceding Tisha B'av**

The days leading up to Tisha B'Av are known as The Nine Days. We refrain from eating meat during all or

part of this period, and some refrain from pleasurable activities such as going to music concerts or swimming. In the three weeks before Tisha B'Av, we do not cut the hair or shave. Weddings are not held during this period.

### **Following Tisha B'Av**

Although the fast ends at nightfall, it is customary to refrain from eating meat and drinking wine until noon of the following day. According to tradition, the Temple burned all night and most of the day of the 10<sup>th</sup> of Av.

The laws of Tisha B'Av are recorded in the Shulchan Aruch (the "Code of Jewish Law") Orach Chayim.

From the ashes of the destroyed Temple will rise an incomparably magnificent edifice. Exile will give birth to redemption. It is a tradition that our redeemer will be born on Tisha B'Av. It is a day of anticipation and hope.

**“One who mourns Jerusalem will merit seeing her happiness.”  
- Talmud, Ta’anit 30b**

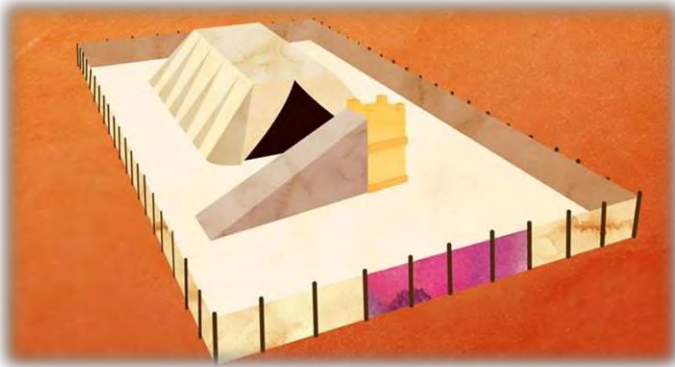
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## LAWS OF THE HOLY TEMPLE

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson of sainted and blessed memory, instructed that we learn the laws pertaining to our Holy Temple during the mourning period of the destruction of the Temple, between the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av.

### INTRODUCTION

After the Exodus from Egypt in 2448 (1313 BCE), G-d commanded the Jewish people to construct a Tabernacle, a “portable” temple to be used during their travels through the desert. Upon arriving in the Holy Land, the Tabernacle was kept in Shiloh, in the territory of the Tribe of Ephraim, for several hundred years. The centerpiece of the Tabernacle, however, the Ark, was not always kept in the Tabernacle while in Israel. In 2928 (833 BCE) King Solomon began construction of the First Temple on Mount Moriah, or the Temple Mount; construction lasted for seven years, whereupon the Ark was moved to the Temple.



A DRAWING OF THE TABERNACLE

The First Temple was destroyed on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av in 3338 (423 BCE) following a two-year siege by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon

Construction on the Second Temple began in 3391 (370 BCE), but was only completed in 3412 (349 BCE), with the permission of the Persian king, who then ruled the Holy Land. Independence was regained by the Hasmoneans, led by Judah the Maccabee, in 3622 (139

BCE), and the Temple rededicated. In 3700 (61 BCE), however, independence was lost to the Roman Empire,



THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON מנחם מענדל שניאורסון

who, in 3725 (36 BCE), installed Herod as the client king. Despite being an evil king responsible for the deaths of many people, including numerous rabbis and several of his own sons, Herod undertook a magnificent refurbishment of the Second Temple. He constructed a massive, raised platform measuring 37 acres, using Jerusalem limestone; the stones used in building the Temple Mount weighing hundreds of tons each.

In 3826 (66 CE) the Jews of Judea rose up in revolt against the Roman rulers, following decades of oppression. They expelled the Roman forces from Jerusalem and began preparing for the inevitable Roman counterattack. This came in the form of a massive Roman army, led by future-Roman Emperor Vespasian, and his son Titus. They destroyed the Jewish communities of the Galilee (northern Israel) and swept around south to Jerusalem. After a brutal siege lasting several months, the Romans broke into the Temple Mount on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, 3830 (70 CE), destroying the Second Temple and massacring Jewish men, women, and children throughout Jerusalem.

### HAR HABAYIT - THE TEMPLE MOUNT

During the time of King Solomon’s Temple, the mountaintop of Mount Moriah was 500 x 500 cubits, while in the Second Temple, the Temple Mount was approx. 1600’ by 1000’.



A SCALE MODEL OF THE SECOND TEMPLE AND JERUSALEM, AS THEY APPEARED SHORTLY BEFORE THEIR DESTRUCTION IN 3830 (70 CE)

The focal point of the Temple Mount was the Temple in the center. The mountaintop included several other buildings, including a Study Hall, a lounge for Temple Priests, a weapons room (in case of invasion), and a repair room for maintenance work. On the eve of Shabbat, a Shofar (ram's horn) was cited from the top of the Temple Mount to alert the people of Jerusalem.

The Temple Mount had four points of entry: To the South were two gates, called "Chulda"; to the West was a gate called "Kiphonus"; to the North was a gate called "Tadi"; and to the east was a gate named "Shushan". Herod's extended Temple Mount platform added three additional gates to the west.

#### **Chuldah Gates (South)**

These were the main gates used to access the Temple Mount; one gate was used for entrance, and the other to exit. The Prophetess Chuldah would sit in this area during the final years of the First Temple, admonishing the Jewish women to better observance. When these gates were rebuilt for the Second Temple, they were named for her.

#### **Kiphonus Gate (West)**

This gate led, through a tunnel, to the top of the Temple Mount. Near the outside of this gate was a magnificent garden with many types of roses, which were used in the

Temple sacrifices; hence the name Kiphonus ("rose garden" in Greek).

#### **Tadi Gate (North)**

Tadi Gate (from the Greek word for "high") had a triangular shape, differing from the other gates, which were rectangular. The top of the gate was thus higher than the rest of the gates.

#### **Shushan Gate (East)**

When the Persian King Darius II gave the Jews permission to complete the construction of the Second Temple, they named the eastern gate (either as a tribute, or upon Darius's demand) Shushan, the name of the Persian capital.

Engraved onto the wall outside the Shushan Gate were two markings indicating the length of a cubit.

One marking was to the right of the gateway, one to the left. The marking on the wall to the right was half a "fingers' width" (Etzbah) smaller than a true cubit. The marking on the left wall was a full "fingers' width" larger than a true cubit. Workers, who were paid in lengths of wood, were paid according to the smaller marker. When measuring a piece of wood for Temple use, they'd measure it according to the larger marking. Whoever pledged a length of inexpensive material to the Temple would measure it according to the larger

marking, while those who pledged a length of expensive material, such as a precious metal, would use the smaller marker.

### EZRAT NASHIM - WOMEN'S COURTYARD

The women's courtyard contained a balcony reserved for women who came to view the Simchat Bet Hasho'eva (Rejoicing of the Water Drawing Ceremony) which was held in this courtyard during the festival of Sukkot. To the North and South of the Ezrat Nashim (women's courtyard) were stairways leading to the Women's Balcony.

Originally, the women assembled in the courtyard and the men danced and sang outside. Since the women were unable to have a good view from inside the Women's Courtyard, they would pass beyond the doors into the area. The mingling of men and women during a sacred celebration is not permitted. To remedy the situation, balconies were erected to provide a viewing area for the women.

Chambers were built in the corners of this courtyard for various Temple needs: A) Lishkat HaNezirim - Chamber of the Nazarites; B) Lishkat HaEtzim - Chamber of Wood; C) Lishkat HaMetzora'im - the Chamber of the Metzora's; and D) Lishkat HaShemanim - the Chamber of Oils.

#### Lishkat Hanezirim - Chamber of the Nazerites (A)

A Nazarite is one who takes an oath that he will not cut his hair or drink wine (or any grape product) for a specified amount of time. The Torah requires a Nazarite to bring 3 Karbanot (sacrifices) in the Temple after fulfilling his pledge. One of these sacrifices, the "Shelamim" offering was cooked in this chamber. The Nazarites then had their hair clippings tossed into the fire over which the "Shelamim" offering was cooking.

#### Lishkat HaEtzim - Chamber of Wood (B)

The wood used for the service of the Bet Hamikdash (i.e., for the altar) was stored in this room. In addition, elderly priest, or priests otherwise unfit for the temple service, would examine the wood for worms here. If any

were found, the wood would be deemed unfit for temple use. Rotting wood would also be disposed of.

The Talmud records the following incident: It once happened that priests were sitting and sorting wood in this Chamber, when one of them noticed that a floor tile was loose. He realized that this led to the secret tunnel



THE TEMPLE; SOME OF THE CHAMBERS ARE NOTED

in which the Holy Ark was hidden.<sup>5</sup> The priest, who had discovered the hidden place of the Ark, sought to crack open the tile with his hatchet, when suddenly fire issued forth and consumed him. This was taken as an omen that the Ark should remain hidden.

#### Lishkat HaMetzora'im - Chamber of Metzora's (C)

A Metzora is someone who suffers from Tzara'at (commonly mistranslated as leprosy) - an illness inflicted by G-d as a punishment for certain misdeeds.

After the Metzora was cured, he was required to come to the Temple and immerse himself in a ritual bath

<sup>5</sup> The Ark had been hidden during the time of Yeshayahu (Isaiah) towards the end of the First Temple era. When the Jews returned from the seventy-year exile, the Ark could not be found. Tradition

says that there was to be no Ark during the Second Temple era.

situated in this room. Afterwards, he would bring sacrifices that would complete the purification process.

### **Lishkat HaShemanim - Chamber of Oils (D)**

In this chamber the oil, wine, and flour needed for sacrificial purposes were stored. When one wanted to offer a sacrifice that required these ingredients, he was required to buy them here.

The purchaser would first go to the Chamber of Receipts and tell the attendant the type of meal offering he needed. After paying for it, the attendant would hand over a receipt listing his purchases. The receipt would be taken to this chamber and the attendant here would dispense the required amounts of oil, wine, and flour.

### **Sha'ar Nikanor - Nikanor's Gate**

The Nikanor Gates led from the Ezrat Nashim to the Azarah. At the western end of the Women's Courtyard were fifteen semi-circular steps. Each was half a cubit high and half a cubit deep. On occasion, the Levites sang as they stood on these steps.

Near the base of the steps, built into the western wall of the Women's Courtyard, were two doors that led underneath the Azarah, which was built on higher ground than the Women's Courtyard. The doors led into

a single large underground chamber called the Chamber of Instruments. Here the Levites conducted choir rehearsals and stored their instruments.

The doorway atop the fifteen semi-circular steps led into the Azarah. The first eleven cubits along the eastern side of the Azarah was called the Courtyard of the Israelites. The gateway atop the fifteen steps that led into the Courtyard of the Israelites were called the Upper Gate. Each of the brass door was 5 cubits by 20 cubits, and it was polished to a bright shine.

### **The Story of Nikanor's Gates**

Nikanor was a wealthy Jew living in Alexandria, Egypt who sponsored the doors for the gate. He hired craftsmen in Alexandria to create the two brass doors.

As these doors were being sent by ship from Egypt to Judea, a storm broke out. The crew was forced to cast one of the two brass doors into the sea. When the danger continued, the crew decided to toss the second gate out as well. Hearing their plans, Nikanor declared that if they throw out the door, they should throw him out as well. His self-sacrifice called for a miracle and the storm subsided. When the ship docked, the door cast overboard was miraculously found floating in the harbor.

All the Temple doors were plated with gold except the Nikanor gate. The rabbis wanted the people to see the "miracle doors" in their pristine form. In addition, the brass finish had the appearance of fine gold.

The heavy doors required twenty men to open them. The Nikanor Gate was opened only on the Sabbath, festivals, and Rosh Chodesh (the new month). If the Jewish king was present in the Temple, the doors were also opened in his honor. On all other days, smaller gateways (to the left and right of Nikanor Gate) were used.

## **NORTHERN CHAMBERS (E)**

This roofed building contained 3 separate chambers; Lishkat Hagolah - the Chamber of the Well; Lishkat Hagazit - the Chamber of Hewed Stone; and Lishkat Parhedrin - Chamber of the High Priest (Kohen Gadol).

### **Lishkat Hagolah - The Chamber of the Well**



A SCALE MODEL OF NIKANOR'S GATE

A water wheel located in this chamber supplied a quick drink for the thirsty Kohanim (priests). The Jews who returned from the exile (Golah) dug this well.

### **Lishkat Hagazit - Chamber of Hewed Stone**

This chamber, built with hewed stone, served as the home of the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court). Since it was forbidden to sit in the Azarah, the building was built halfway in the Azarah (where the judges would be allowed to sit) and halfway in the Cheil and had entrances from both sides.

### **Lishkat Parhedrin - Chamber of the High Priest (Kohen Gadol)**

Seven days before Yom Kippur, the High Priest would leave his mansion and family in the upper city of Jerusalem and take up residence in this chamber. He would be instructed in the Yom Kippur service by members of the Sanhedrin and by the priestly scholars. Parhedrin were government officials appointed for 1-year terms. This room was so named because during most of the Second Temple era, the High Priest who resided in this room was changed from year to year.

## **SOUTHERN CHAMBERS (F)**

This building complex also consisted of three chambers; Lishkat Hamelach - the Salt Chamber; Lishkat Haparvah - The Parvah Chamber; and Lishkat Hamadishin - the Rinser's Chamber.

### **Lishkat Hamelach - The Salt Chamber**

This chamber was used to store and prepare the salt necessary for the Korbanot (sacrifices). It was necessary to sprinkle salt on all the Korbanot offered on the Altar. They would also sprinkle the Ramp to the Altar with salt to prevent slipperiness on rainy days.

### **Lishkat Haparvah - The Parvah Chamber**

Here they would salt and process the animal hides of the Korbanot. On the roof was a Mikvah (ritual bath) constructed for the exclusive use of the High Priest on Yom Kippur. Some say that the man who built this chamber dug a tunnel beneath the Kodosh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies) so that he could observe the High Priest's services there on Yom Kippur (only the High Priest is allowed in the Kodosh Hakodashim, and only once a year). When he was discovered, he was executed in this chamber, which was later named after him.

### **Lishkat Hamadichin - The Rinser's Chamber**

Here they would rinse and clean the internal organs of the Korbanot. Although these animals were offered on

the Altar - and not meant for human consumption, they were nevertheless rinsed and cleaned as a gesture of respect and reverence to G-d.

### **Mizbe'ach Ha'Chitzon - The Outer Altar**

This Altar served a variety of uses. The top was used to burn the various sacrifices offered in the Beit Hamikdash. The walls of the Mizbe'ach were used for the "Zerikat Hadam" (sprinkling the blood of certain sacrifices) as established by the Torah. It was accessed by a series of ramps, built on its southern side.

The Altar was made of small stones, lime, pitch, and glazing. The stones were perfectly smooth, with no nicks or scratches that could be detected with the thumbnail. These stones were never touched by metal, because metal is believed to shorten the life of man, and the Altar represents the lengthening of life. The Outer Mizbe'ach consisted of three platforms stacked to form a square pyramid.

To the south of the Mizbe'ach stood a large ramp, which enabled the Kohanim (priests) to ascend to the Altar's roof. There were also two smaller ramps that led to a ledge which surrounded the Altar. This ledge was called the Sovev - "around" as it was possible to circle the Altar using this ledge. (There was an additional ledge lower down, but it did not completely surround the Altar).

### **The Red Line**

The blood of certain sacrifices was spilled on the upper part of the Altar's wall, while the blood of the other sacrifices was poured onto the lower half. To separate the two levels, a red band ("Chut Hasikrah"), surrounded the Mizbe'ach at mid-height. To further emphasize this border, there was a floral design above the red line. On top of the southwestern corner of the Yesod (the base), two drains were carved. The blood remaining from the 'spilling of the blood' service was poured into these drains.

### **Makom Hama'aracha - The Place of Arrangement**

Three stacks of lumber were arranged on the Altar's platform: The largest was used for burning the animal sacrifices; one for the burning of the Ketoret, offered twice daily on the small Mizbe'ach (Mizbe'ach Hazahav); and wood lit by the Kohanim to perform the Mitzvah of igniting the Altar every morning.

In the center of the platform was a large pile of ash that accumulated from the remains of sacrifices. It was called 'the Apple' because of its fruit-like appearance.

### **The Cornerstones**

The Altar had four cornerstones which were hollow and open to the top. Their dimensions were a cubit by a cubit, and five handbreadths high. There were also two basins built onto the southwestern portion of the platform. They were used on the festival of Sukkot for the Water Drawing ceremony.

### **The Butchering Area**

North of the Altar was the Butchering Place where the sacrificial animals were slaughtered and butchered. It included:

#### **The Eight Columns**

In the northern section of the Butchering Place were eight small columns. Resting on each column was a block of cedar wood with nine hooks attached to it. The slaughtered carcass of the sacrificial animal was hung on these hooks in order to remove the skin and butcher the animal.

The hooks were set into the northern side of the wood, three on the eastern side, and three on the southern side. There were no hooks on the western side, so that the priest did not have to turn his back to the Holy of Holies as he was butchering the animal.

#### **The Eight Tables**

Nearby were eight tables that served several purposes. The meat was washed on these tables before it was cooked and eaten by the priests. The animal parts offered on the Altar also had to be washed. The tables kept the carcass from touching the ground as it was being butchered. These tables could fold so they could be moved around as needed.

#### **The Twenty-Four Hoops**

North of the Altar were twenty-four hoops set into the ground. During the earlier years of the Second Temple, the priest would make a slit in the animal's forehead before slaughtering it. The painless incision caused blood to flow, distracting the animal.

The High Priest Yochanan abolished the practice, lest it might be thought that the slit constituted a blemish, and

the Temple was offering blemished animals. He decreed that hoops be set into the ground, and the animal's head be inserted to keep it steady.

### **Shaar Hamayim - Water Gate (and its adjacent chambers)**

During the festival of Sukkot, the Kohanim drew water from the Shiloach Brook, and brought it through this gateway. The water gate was open only during the festival.

#### **Mikvah - The Ritual Bath**

Above the water gate was a Mikvah, a ritual purifying bath. It was used only once a year, by the High Priest on Yom Kippur. On that Holy Day, the High Priest immersed himself five times in a Mikvah. The first immersion was done here. This Mikvah was above the water gate, and may have contributed to the Gate's name.

The water gate took its name as well from the narrow stream of water that flowed from beneath the foundations of the Heichal, across the courtyard, and out through the Water Gate.

#### **Lishkat Avtinus - The Avtinus Chamber**

To the right of this gateway (inside the Azarah) was a chamber called the Lishkat Avtinus. In this room, the incense that was offered on the golden Altar was compounded. The chamber was named after an illustrious family of spice makers. They knew of a certain ingredient, which, when added to the incense, made the smoke rise in a straight column. They refused to divulge the name of this ingredient lest others use it for idol worship.

During the Second Temple period, the High Priesthood was sometimes a political appointment based on reasons other than merit. Often the priest was unable to read Hebrew. It was in this Chamber of Avtinus that he was taught how to present the special Yom Kippur incense offering, which was burnt in the Holy of Holies.

In Addition to the Water Gate, the Southern side of the Temple also had several additional gateways: Sha'ar Habechorot - Gate of the Firstborn; Sha'ar Hadelek - The Firewood Gate; Sha'ar Haelyon - The Upper Gate.

### **Sha'ar Habechorot - Gate of the Firstborn**

Sacrifices are divided into two types: those of greater and those of lesser sanctity. Those of greater sanctity had to be slaughtered north of the Altar. Those of lesser sanctity could be slaughtered anywhere in the Azarah, even in the southern area.

The firstborn offering was one of the more common sacrifices of lesser sanctity and was therefore brought into the Temple through a southern gate -- to indicate its relative unimportance. Some say that when Abraham brought Isaac, his firstborn, to be sacrificed upon the mount he walked over this area.

### **Sha'ar Hadelek - The Firewood Gate**

The forests of Jerusalem were located west of the Upper City. The wood was cut down and brought in through the Kiphonus Gate, the only gate on the western side of the Temple wall to lead directly onto the Temple Mount. The wood could not be brought in through the western gates surrounding the Azarah, because those gates were narrow and small. The wood had to be carried around to the southern part of the Azarah and brought in through one of those gateways, which was called the Gate of the Firewood. The firewood from the Wood Chamber was also brought into the Azarah through the Gate of the Firewood.

### **Sha'ar Haelyon - The Upper Gate**

The upper gate - not to be confused with the Nikanor Gate that was also called the Upper Gate - was the highest point on the Temple Mount.

### **Beit Hamoked - The Hearth**

The largest building in the Azarah was the Heichal, which will be discussed later. The second largest was the Hearth. This dome-covered structure was the sleeping quarters for the priests who performed the services.

According to most opinions, it was half-inside the Azarah and half-outside. It had four rooms connected with the structure. Some say that the side rooms were outside the building. Others say that the four side rooms were inside the building, one room in each corner.

The Hearth itself served as a dormitory. The walls were lined with great stone steps. Some sources say the priests slept on these steps, while others maintain that

the sleeping quarters were built into the wall, like cubicles or coops. The priests would climb the steps to their respective cubicles, the elder priests slept above, and the younger ones slept on the floor.

In the middle of the floor was a tile one cubit by one cubit. It could be raised by lifting a hoop set into it. Underneath was a chain, to which were attached the keys to the gates. One of the priestly officials would take the keys after the Temple doors were locked at night, place them on the chain, and sleep atop the tile.

Four rooms were connected to the Hearth:

### **Lishkat Lechem Hapanim - Chamber of the Showbread**

The twelve "showbreads" used for the Shulchan were baked here every Friday. On Shabbat the new showbreads replaced the older ones which were later eaten by the Kohanim in this room.

### **Lishkat Hachosamot - The Receipt Chamber**

When one needed oil, wine, or flour for his sacrifice, he purchased special tokens ("receipts") in this chamber. With these tokens he would pick up his order from the chamber of oils. This room also contained the stones of the Mizbe'ach defiled by the Greeks.

### **Lishkat Hatela'im - The Sheep Chamber**

This chamber was used as a barn for the sheep offered as "daily sacrifices". The sheep were checked for blemishes and imperfections twice a day, for a four-day period prior to being sacrificed

### **Lishkat Bet Hamoked - The Hearth Chamber**

This was a chamber that led to another hearth underground used by Kohanim who were not ritually pure. A Mikvah (ritual bath) and restrooms were also located in this underground chamber.

Other Gates leading to the Northern side of the temple included the Sha'ar Hanitzutz - Gate of Sparks and the Sha'ar Hanashim - The Women's Gate.

### **Shaar Hanitzutz - Gate of Sparks**

In front of this gate was a small courtyard surrounded by columns, which supported a balcony upon which Kohanim from the priestly guard stayed watch at night. The sun's rays shining between the columns appeared to be flickering sparks, giving the gate its name. The gate

was also called Gate of Yoachim because it was from this very spot that King Yoachim was led into exile by Nebuchadnezzar in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

### **Sha'ar Hanashim - Women's Gate**

Women were required to bring a sacrifice after giving birth, and on other occasions. They would stand in this gateway while their sacrifice was being offered. This gateway was narrower than the other gates on the north side.

### **Ulam - The Entrance Hall**

This entrance hall, which led to the inner sanctuary, was called the Ulam. It is described by most commentaries as 100 cubits from north to south, 100 cubits high and 11 cubits from east to west. It was one story high. Inside, chains were suspended from the ceiling to the ground, this way young Kohanim could inspect the walls and windows for repairs - by climbing the chains. Beams of cedar connected the front and back walls and served as braces to keep the high walls from toppling.

### **Chamber of the Knives**

At the northern and southern ends of the Ulam were two rooms called the Beit Hachalifot - Chamber of Knives. The slaughtering knives were kept here in lockers set into the wall. The dull or defective knives were kept in the southern room, where they were sharpened or repaired. Knives suitable for use were stored in the northern room.

### **Small Gates**

In the southwest and northwest corner of the Ulam were doors 8 cubits high. Since all Korbanot (sacrifices) had to be slaughtered opposite "the door of the Heichal" - as described in the Torah - these two doors were built so that slaughtering done anywhere in the Azarah would be "opposite the door".

### **The Great Doorway**

The doorway to the hall was 20 cubits wide and 40 cubits high and was the largest doorway in the Temple. Above the doorway were five great mahogany beams set into the face of the building, each carved with ornate designs. The bottom beam was set directly above the doorway and was 22 cubits long, extending beyond the doorway 1 cubit on each side.

So, it was with the other beams up to the fifth beam, which was 30 cubits long. Set between the beams were rows of stones projecting from the wall to further enhance the appearance of the entrance. The large doorway had no doors, but rather a large curtain of the finest linen with fringes and gold flowers embroidered on it.



### **Yachin and Bo'az**

Flanking this entrance were two large copper columns. Each was 18 cubits high, 12 cubits in circumference, 2/3 of a cubit thick and had a capital on top, measuring 5 cubits high with carvings of flowers and lilies.

The right pillar was called Yachin, representing the kingdom of David. The left pillar was called Boaz after the ancestor of David.

### **Ta'im - The Small Offices**

Along the northern, western, and southern outside walls of the Kodesh (Inner Sanctuary) and Holy of Holies were a series of small offices. These offices were not used for storage, their only purpose was to serve as an additional divider for the Inner Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies.

There were fifteen offices to the north and fifteen to the south, five per floor. There were eight small offices to the west, three at the bottom level, three atop them, and

two atop them. The height of the three stories of offices covered about half the height of the outside walls. The remaining height had windows set into the walls to allow light to enter. The holy of Holies had one window in the back wall, 8 cubits high.

Steps in each office led to the floor above and the floor below. Doors led into the adjacent offices. The bottom level of offices was built alongside the foundation, not above it.

### **The Offices' Entrance**

The Ulam (Entrance Hall) had doors that led into the first office along the northern wall and into the first office along the southern wall. The door leading to the first southern office was never opened by any priest. However, on the Sabbath, festivals, and at the moment the new moon appeared, the door would open by itself.

Since the first floor of offices was located at the foundation level, these two doors in the Hall must have led into the first office on the second floor.

### **The Northern Door**

To allow a person to stand in the Hall and open the door leading into the first northern office, an opening was located in the lower part of the door. The priest of Levite had to bend down, insert his hand through the opening, and, with a key, unlock the door from the inside. Inside that office was another doorway leading into the Kodesh. That door unlocked in a more conventional way. Once inside the Kodesh, the Kodesh doors could be unlocked. The locks to these doors were on the inside of the doors.

### **The Ramp**

The first northern office had a door in its northern wall, which led to the bottom of a ramp. The ramp led up to the roof of the western offices. One could walk along that roof, headed south, until he came to the southern side of the Heichal.

There was another ramp along the southern side of the Heichal, on the roof of the southern offices, which led to a door into the chamber above the Kodesh. Only workmen who had to do repair work went into the upper chamber.

### **The Cistern**

Behind the southern wall of the southern offices was a cistern. The water that flowed off the roof of the Heichal ran into that cistern.

### **Kodesh - The Inner Sanctuary**

The doorway of the Kodesh was 10 cubits wide and 20 cubits high. Over the doorway was a carving of a golden Menorah donated by Queen Helena, a convert to Judaism. The morning service could not begin before sunrise. The Temple was surrounded by high walls, and it was not possible to see the rising sun, so a priest had to be sent outside to see if it was time for the service to begin.

After Queen Helena donated the Menorah, it was no longer necessary to send a priest outside the Temple. As the sun rose in the east it shone against the menorah and the reflected light was cast into the Azarah. The priests then knew that the morning service could begin.

### **The Doorway**

The doorway was 6 cubits thick and had four doors. The doors were made of olive wood overlaid with gold. Carved in the gold were angels, palm trees, and flowers. The front walls of the Heichal and the doorposts were 6 cubits thick.

Two doors were set at the front of the 6-cubit doorway, and two doors were set at the rear. The front two doors opened inward and folded against the inner wall of the doorway. The rear doors also opened inward and folded against the wall.

In front of the doors was a curtain that could be raised and lowered. When the High Priest was in the Kodesh, the curtain was lowered to afford him privacy.

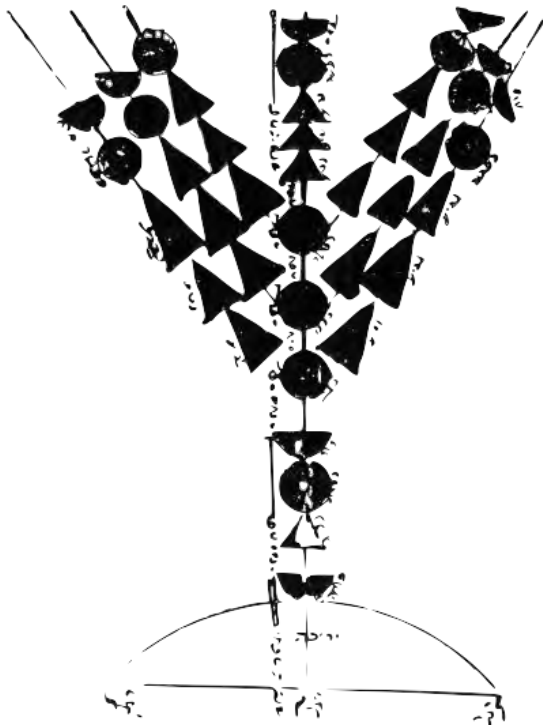
### **The Windows**

The windows of the Kodesh were 20 cubits high and consisted of long narrow openings in the walls. The openings were wider on the outside than on the inside. In a private dwelling, window openings were narrow on the outside and wide on the inside to cause the light to spread inside. The rabbis viewed the Heichal as the "light source" of the world, so the windows were constructed thus to spread the light outward.

The Kodesh was 40 cubits long, 20 cubits wide and 40 cubits high. The walls were paneled with wood and overlaid with gold, except for the places the doors covered when they were open. Engraved in the gold were palm trees, vines, flowers, and angels.

**The Holy Vessels**

Near the northern wall of the Kodesh was the Shulchan (Golden Table). It was placed in an east-west orientation. On the Table were the twelve showbreads and two spoons filled with frankincense. There were the other golden tables in the Kodesh; five north of the Golden Table, and five to the south. These were to enhance the beauty of the Golden Table.



A SKETCH OF THE MENORAH BY THE JEWISH SAGE RAMBAM (MAIMONIDES) IN THE 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The Menorah was placed with a north-south orientation near the southern wall of the Kodesh, though some say it was placed with an east-west orientation. There were ten other menorahs in the Kodesh. Five were placed north of the Menorah, and five were placed to the south. These, too, were from ornamental purposes. In the center of the Kodesh was the Golden Altar. The Menorah, Altar, and Table were placed within the inner half of the Kodesh. The Altar was slightly off to the east.

In the First Temple, a wall 1 cubit thick separated the Kodesh from the Holy of Holies. In that Temple the ceiling was only 30 cubits, the Second Temple had a height of 40 cubits between floor and ceiling. A wall 1 cubit thick could not be erected to the 40-cubit height. They did not want to make a wider wall so as not to diminish any area of the Kodesh or the Holy of Holies.

It was decided to build the Kodesh a full 40 cubits long and the Holy of Holies a full 20 cubits. A neutral space of 1 cubit would be placed between them and marked off by two curtains. One curtain was placed between the end of the Kodesh and the beginning of the cubit space. The other curtain was placed between the end of the Kodesh and the beginning of the cubit space. The other curtain was placed between the end of the cubit space and the beginning of the holy of Holies. The outer curtain was folded back on its southern side and the inner curtain folded back on its northern side.

The curtains were never opened except during festivals, when they were rolled back so that the people could see the carvings of the angels on the wall. The angels in the carvings were embracing, which represented the love of G-d to the children of Israel.

**Kodesh HaKodashim - Holy of Holies**

The Holy of Holies, as its name implies, was the most sacred part of the entire Temple. Entry was forbidden except on Yom Kippur when the High Priest entered the Inner Sanctuary. Its dimensions were 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 40 cubits high. The floor, walls, and ceiling were plated with gold, as was the Kodesh.

In the Holy of Holies was a rock that protruded above the ground to a height of 3 fingerbreadths. The rock was first uncovered by King David and the prophet Samuel.

Some say the rock was in the very center of the Holy of Holies; others say it was near the western wall of the Holy of Holies, and still others maintain that it was near the curtains separating the Kodesh and the Holy of Holies.

The Ark (which contained the tablets with the Ten Commandments) rested upon the rock during the First Temple era. During the Second Temple there was no Ark. Some say it was captured by Nebuchadnezzar; others say it was hidden beneath the rock; and still

others say that it was hidden below the Wood Chamber in the Women's Courtyard. There was another floor level above the Kodesh and Holy of Holies whose dimensions and decorative work were exactly like the chambers below, but with no curtains separating the floor above the Kodesh from the floor above the Holy of Holies. Instead, stone blocks projected from the wall itself to mark the division between the two sacred areas.

The floor of the chamber above the Holy of Holies had trapdoors surrounding the walls of the room. A large box supported by a rope, could be lowered through any trapdoor down into the Holy of Holies. Workers who had to repair the walls of the Holy of Holies were lowered through the trapdoors into the chamber below. Their view of the Holy of Holies was completely blocked off except for the portion of the wall to be repaired.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְלֵקְיָא וְתָנוּ,  
 שִׁבְנָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ,  
 וְתֵן חֵלְקֵנוּ בְּיִרְתְּךָ.

**May it be your will, Lord our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers,  
 that the Holy Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days,  
 and grant us our portion in Your Torah.**

# Worksheet 1

1. What is the title given to Tisha B' Av, which describes the nature of this day?

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2. Name the two main tragedies of this day, which we commemorate annually?

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3. How did Tisha B' Av come to be the day of mourning for all generations?

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4. Why did the Rabbis choose the 9th of Av?

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5. Name the 6 restrictions of Tisha B' Av?

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6. What is the traditional food of mourning?

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7. What kind of study is permitted on this day?

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8. Name some of customs associated with Tisha B' Av.

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9. Which texts compose the Tisha B' Av religious service?

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10. What is the thought of comfort that we retain as we focus on our mourning for 25 hours?

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## Worksheet 2

1. Who built the First Temple, and where did he build it?

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2. How many points of entry were there to the Temple mount?

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3. Which gate was called "Chuldah" and why?

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4. Which gate was called "Kiphonus" and why?

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5. Which gate was called "Tadi" and why?

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6. Which gate was called "Shushan" and why?

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7. Why was there a need for a women's balcony?

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8. What did the priests discover in the Chamber of Wood?

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9. What was the Lishkat Hashemanim used for?

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10. Describe the purification process for the Metzorah.

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## Worksheet 3

1. Who was Nikanor and which part of the Holy Temple commemorates him?

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2. How did he merit this honor?

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3. When was the part of the Temple named for Nikanor used?

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4. How were the Northern and the Southern Chambers subdivided?

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5. What is Lishkat Hagazit? What took place there?

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6. What is Lishkat Hagolah? Who constructed it?

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7. What is Lishkat Parhedrin? What was it used for?

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8. What else was the salt used for, other than the sacrifices?

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9. What is the story behind the building of Lishkat Haparvah?

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10. Why were the Korbanot animals cleaned and rinsed out, if they were not intended for consumption?

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# Worksheet 4

1. What were the various uses of the Great Altar?

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2. What was the Mizbeach HaChitzon (Great Altar) made of?

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3. What was "The Apple"?

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4. How were the 8 tables used?

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5. Why was the practice of painless incision on the animal's forehead abolished?

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6. What is a Mikvah? How is it used?

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7. Who were the Avtinus family? Why would they not disclose the secret incense ingredient?

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8. How would certain High Priests use the Lishkat Avtinus in the Second Temple period?

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9. Which gate was the firewood brought into the Azarah from? Why didn't they just use the closest gate to Jerusalem's forests?

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10. What were the two types of sacrifices and how were they handled differently from each other?

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## Worksheet 5

1. Describe the appearance of the Hearth.

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2. What was its purpose?

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3. Which four chambers were connected to the Hearth?

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4. What gave the Shaar Hanitzuz this name? And what was its other name?

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5. When was the Shaar Hanashim used?

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6. Why did the Ulam have chains hanging down from the ceiling?

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7. Why were the Small Gates built in the southwest and northwest corners of the Ulam?

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8. What were the Yachin and Boaz?

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9. Where were the small offices located? What was stored in them?

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10. How would a priest get into the Kodesh through the Northern Door?

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## Worksheet 6

1. Who was Queen Helena and what did she donate to the Holy Temple?

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2. How did the Kohanim determine the time to begin the morning services?

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3. Why were the windows of the Kodesh narrow on the outside and wide on the inside?

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4. What was inside the Kodesh near the northern wall?

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5. Where was the Menorah situated? Why were there other menorahs?

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6. How were the Kodesh (the Holy) and the Kodesh Hakodashim (the Holy of Holies) separated?

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7. Who was allowed into the Kodesh Hakodashim?

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8. What was inside the Kodesh Hakodashim?

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9. What are some of theories behind the disappearance of the vessel which was inside the Kodesh Hakodashim?

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10. How could the repairs be made in the Holy of Holies if entering was forbidden under the penalty of death?

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