



Seventh Annual Semikha Ceremony June 17, 2019 Rabbanit Tali Schaum Broder

The Talmud in Berachot page 34b states :

אמר ר' חייא בר אבא לעולם יתפלל אדם בבית שיש בו חלונות שנא' וכוין פתיחן ליה'

R' Hiyya bar Abba says : A person should always pray in a home that has windows, quoting the verse in Daniel (6:11) that says his windows were open facing Jerusalem.

The Shulkhan Arukh codifies this into law and learns from here that just like a home, the beit kneset needs to have windows, also.

The beit kneset, like a home, is a refuge, a sanctuary. It is a place of prayer, of intimacy and of relationship. A place of introspection and reflection.

And yet, we are told that in our most intimate spaces, we are to look out - to see the sky and be reminded of G-d's miraculous world and all that is contained therein; to look out and to see the other - those who are on the outside, and to bring them in; to look out and see a vision of Jerusalem; to dream of what the world can look like and to yearn for its redemption.

The home that gave me my foundation, my family's home - here in Riverdale - was a home steeped in Torah; a home of deep and loving relationships and quiet spirituality, that also looked outward - and brought others in to share Torah, lovingkindness and powerful prayer - always, always yearning for Jerusalem.

And it was here, within this other Bayit, **this** beit kneset, my 2nd home - in this sanctuary with its large glass windows, that I saw a rabbi and community with the values of reaching out to others in compassion; to our fellow Jews and to all inhabitants of this world - Looking outward towards heaven, towards the Jewish community, towards Medinat Yisrael and כל יושבי תבל. In this beit kneset, the question "Am I my brother's keeper?" was answered with a resounding, "yes!"

On a more personal level - these very windows have witnessed my growth - from a toddler singing in the sukkah, to a 6 yr old benching Hagomel after falling from a ledge outside, to becoming a bat mitzvah, to my first public dvar torah, to leaving on aliyah and now to becoming a rabbinic intern and receiving my semikha.

The Torah of my bayit, and this bayit, has become part of me - the Torah of yearning, of compassion, of deep spirituality, of rootedness, of a holistic yiddishkeit. - and so it feels fitting that it is in this space that I am charged with bringing this Torah outward..

It says in the gemara in Menachot that the windows for the Beit Hamikdash, the ultimate bayit, were constructed to be narrow within and broad without. Rashi comments that it was designed as such in order to take the holiness and light from within and to radiate it כלפי חוץ, outwards.

May HaShem grant me, and all of us, the strength and wisdom to spread the light of Torah from within, out into the world.