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Collected thoughts
from
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Devarim T"ב



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Parshas Devarim

Chumash Devarim

Every day of the year, the Yid HaKadosh of Peshischa zy'a would study a little bit from *Chumash Devarim*, and he encouraged his chassidim to study *Chumash Devarim* too. "There isn't a better *mussar sefer*," he said. (See *Shem MiShmuel, Devarim* תרע"ה and *Pri Tzaddik, Devarim* ר"ה אלה).

Belashon tzachus, the Satmar Rebbe zy'a said, "In the summer people travel to their summer homes, and it's hard for them to carry along many *mussar sefarim*. But they take along a *Chumash Devarim*, and that is sufficient, because *Chumash Devarim* is the best *mussar sefer*."

Also, the Shlah (*Va'eschanan*) writes, "Why do we have to seek *mussar*. The entire *parashah*, and the entire *Mishnah Torah* (*sefer*

Devarim) is filled with *mussar*." It is the *mussar* Moshe Rabbeinu told Bnei Yisrael before his *petirah*.

One of the methods for expounding on *Chumash* is *smuchim*. *Smuchim* is to seek meaning and halachic derivatives when two seemingly unrelated *pesukim* are juxtaposed in the Torah. The Gemara says, "Even Reb Yehudah, who doesn't study *smuchim* [throughout the Torah] he studies them in *sefer Devarim*."

The Rebbe of Kotzk zy'a explains (following the path of *remez*, hints): Reb Yehudah represents a Yid (a "Reb Yid"). Even a Yid who isn't close [*smuchim*] to Hashem the entire year, can become close to Hashem when he studies *Chumash Devarim*, because this *Chumash* will arouse him to *emunah, bitochon*, fear and

love of Hashem, and all good *middos*.¹

The first *pasuk* of *sefer Devarim* states, אלה הדברים אשר דיבר משה אל כל ישראל, "These are the words Moshe spoke to all Yisrael." The Chozeh of Lublin *zy'a* explains that "all Yisrael" is literal. Moshe Rabbeinu said this *Chumash* to each Yid, for all generations. When we learn *Chumash Devarim*, Moshe Rabbeinu is speaking directly to us, inspiring and urging us to serve Hashem.²

Hayashar Vehatov

Shulchan Aruch (554:20) states אין שאלת שלום לחבירו בתשעה באב, "One mustn't greet his friend on Tisha b'Av."

This rouses a question. The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. Tisha b'Av should be an ideal time to greet our fellow man, to increase peace. So why is greeting others on Tisha b'Av forbidden?

The Gemara (*Gittin* 58.) tells us:

"A carpenter's apprentice desired his carpenter's wife. Once, the carpenter needed a loan. The apprentice said, 'Send your wife to me and I will give her the money.'

"The apprentice kept her in his home for three days.

The carpenter came and asked, "Where is my wife?"

1. This *Chumash* also has the *tochachah* in it. The Sfas Emes said, "One should take the תוכחה and bring it תוך תוך, deep into one's heart".
 2. Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen taught: Chazal say Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest *navi*. All *nevi'im* would say כה אמר ה', "Hashem said *like this*," While Moshe would say, זה הדבר, "This is what Hashem said." Generally, this means Moshe had a clear vision of prophecy, and he could repeat Hashem's words exactly as Hashem said it. Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen has another explanation. He explains Moshe said his *nevuah* right when he received it. As he spoke with the nation, he would tell them זה הדבר, this is the prophecy I am receiving right now.

"I gave her the money and sent her back right away. But I heard that some youth accosted her on the way."

"What should I do?"

"I recommend you divorce her."

"But her *kesubah* is very large, [and it will cost me a lot of money to divorce her]."

"I'll lend you the money."

The carpenter divorced his wife, and the apprentice married her.

When the loan was due, the carpenter wasn't able to pay his debt, so the apprentice said, 'Work for me, and you will pay off your debt with your work.'

"The apprentice and his new wife were eating while the carpenter served them. As he poured them drinks, his tears dropped into their cups. That is when the decree for the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash was sealed in heaven."

The Yaavatz (Reb Yaakov Emdin *zt'l*) notes that the apprentice didn't transgress any of the cardinal sins of the Torah. He married the carpenter's wife solely after she was divorced. Yet, because of this story, the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed. "From this we derive with certainty that there are sins which aren't written explicitly, yet they are extremely grave and are despised by Hashem. They are worse than cardinal sins."

Sometimes Hashem's will isn't explicitly stated, but one understands it on his own, and one must be cautious. At times, these can be the most severe sins.

The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 30:) states "Yerushalayim was destroyed because they ruled by the laws of the Torah."

The Gemara asks, "Which laws should they follow, if not the laws of the Torah?"

The Gemara responds, "The [problem was they] followed

the laws literally, and never went beyond the letter of the law.”

They never took into account the spirit of the law. They only focused on what is explicitly prohibited or permitted, and that isn't sufficient.

It states (*Devarim* 6:18), ועשיה והישר והטוב, "You shall do the correct and the good." The Ramban (*Devarim* 6:18) writes, "After the Torah tells us to keep all the mitzvos, the Torah requires us to do הישר והטוב, 'the correct and the good.' ... This is an important

principle, because it is impossible for the Torah to teach each detail. Such as: How to deal with friends and neighbors, how to do business, and how to establish community laws. But after the Torah tells us many laws, such as the prohibition against speaking *lashon hara*, taking revenge, holding a grudge...to stand up for the elderly, and the like, the Torah tells us in general terms: ועשיה הישר והטוב, everything one does should be correct and upright, according to the principles of the Torah."³

3. The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 44.) states, "The One who punished the generation of the Flood will punish the one who doesn't keep his word." The Gemara is referring to someone who paid money for a product, and before he makes a *kinyan* [legal acquisition] he changes his mind and wants to back out of the deal. It might be technically permitted to back out of an agreement, but it is still improper — it isn't *hayashar vekatov* — and therefore, the Gemara tells us, he receives the above-mentioned curse.

Once again, the curse is: "The One who punished the generation of the Flood will punish the one who doesn't keep his word." Why is the generation of the Flood used as an example?

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 31) states, "This was the ways of people in the era of the Flood. When they saw someone carrying a basket filled with beans, a person came along and stole less than the value of a *prutah*. Then another person came and took less than a *prutah*... The court couldn't obligate anyone to pay for it, because each person took so little..."

The Gemara (*Avodah Zorah* 25) calls *Chumash Devarim* ספר הישר because of the *pasuk*, ועשית הישר והטוב, which is stated in *Chumash Devarim*. There are nearly two hundred mitzvos in *Chumash Devarim*, yet the entire *Chumash* is called ספר הישר because of this one mitzvah! Why? This demonstrates the significance of this mitzvah. It is our obligation to grasp the spirit of the laws and to understand Hashem's will, even when it isn't explicitly stated.

After seeing these ideas, we return to our question: Why is it forbidden to greet our fellow man on Tisha b'Av? Shouldn't we be greeting people this day, to increase peace?

The answer is: Certainly, the goal of Tisha b'Av is to increase peace and harmony — but we want genuine peace, harmony, and brotherhood, not just 'lip service.' If our goal is

to keep the 'letter of the law,' it might be sufficient to greet one's friend, smile and say *shalom aleichem*, and that would be enough. But we want more than a superficial, shallow level of peace. We want genuine caring and love between people. Therefore, greeting one's friend isn't sufficient; we want much more than that. We need to sit on the floor and contemplate what this is all about, and sincerely improve our interactions with our fellow men.

Bitachon

Derech Pikudechah (from the Bnei Yissaschar ז"ל) discusses the mitzvos of the Torah, and explains that each mitzvah has sub-divisions.

The sub-divisions aren't the prohibition itself, but are based and understood from the message the mitzvah teaches us.

They found a loophole in the law, but what they did was corrupt. Likewise, when one backs out of a deal, it is technically permitted, nonetheless he is acting improperly. It isn't *hayashar vehatov*.

In reference to the prohibition of רציחה, murder, (34, *dibbur* 4) the Bnei Yissaschar writes, "A derivative of murder is to eat and drink...without considering whether it's healthy for you or whether it will harm you. [This is a subdivision of murder, because the foods weaken you, and that is like a partial death. As *Chazal* say, מה לי קטלא פלגא מה לי קטלא כולא, what's the difference whether it's a total murder or a partial murder]...

"Also, if a person is worried and distressed when it isn't a mitzvah to feel that way, that also weakens him. [Therefore, worrying is an offshoot of the prohibition to murder. In a way, he is weakening and murdering himself with his worries]..."

Instead of worries, we'd be

wise to follow the path of *emunah* and *bitachon*, and to live worry-free, with trust in Hashem.

A king, riding in his coach, offered a ride to a poor man who was walking along the roadside, carrying a heavy package. The pauper was happy to come aboard. But even when the pauper sat in the wagon, he didn't put his bag down. The king asked him why he is still carrying his bag. He replied, "I'm so thankful you are taking me. Why should I trouble you to carry my bag too?"

The *nimshal* is, Hashem carries us and all our needs. Why do we carry our worries with us? We don't have to worry, because Hashem is taking care of all our needs.⁴

4. The Dubno Magid *zt'l* told the following *mashal*:

A delivery man brought a package to someone. Before opening it, the person said, "It's not my package."

"How do you know? You didn't open it!"

"I'm expecting a lightweight package. You're carrying a heavy package, so I know it isn't mine."

In this week's *parashah*, Moshe says that there are among Klal Yisrael משאכּם (1:12). Rashi writes, "This tells us they were *apikorsim*..."

How does משאכּם imply they were *apikorsim*?

משאכּם means a load. When one feels he must carry the load of life, and that everything is entirely up to him, that's *apikorsus*. We must certainly do our *hishtadlus*, but we don't need to worry. Hashem is carrying us and all our needs.⁵

The *nimshal* is, *avodas Hashem* should be pleasurable. It shouldn't feel like a heavy burden. It states (*Yeshayah* 43:22) ולא אתי קראתי יעקב כי יגעת בי ישראל. The Dubno Magid explains: Hashem says, "You weren't calling me, Yaakov, if you feel that *avodas Hashem* is a burden." That isn't the Torah that Hashem intended for us.

5. The Midrash (*Eichah Pesichta* 24) states that at the time of the

Churban, when many Yidden, *rachamana litzlan*, were being savagely murdered, the *avos* came before Hashem and davened. "Avraham Avinu said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, 'Ribono shel Olam, you gave me a son when I was a hundred years old, and when he became wise and was thirty-seven-years old You told me to bring him as a sacrifice. I acted cruelly; I didn't have compassion on him. I bound him myself. Won't you remember that merit? Won't you have compassion on my children?'

"Then Yitzchak spoke and said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, when my father told me יראה לו השה לעולה בני [and hinted that I would be sacrificed] I didn't protest. I willingly let myself be bound on the *mizbeiach*. I stretched out my throat to the sword. Won't you remember that? Won't you have compassion on my children?'

"Then Yaakov Avinu spoke and said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, I was in Lavan's house for twenty years, and then I met with Eisav and he wanted to kill my children. I was *moser nefesh* to save them. And now, their descendants are in the hands of the enemy like sheep going to the slaughter! I raised them like chicks; I suffered so much to raise them. My entire life, I worked so hard to raise them. Won't you remember all of that and have compassion on my descendants?'"

We see from this Midrash the greatness of raising children. Avraham and

Dovid HaMelech said every *צרה* there's a *פק"ד*, (*Tehillim* 131:2), *אם לא שויתי, ודוממתי נפשי כגמול עלי אמו כגמול עלי נפשי*, "I am like a nursling who nurses from his mother..." The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* taught from this *pasuk* that one should trust in Hashem like an infant who trusts in his mother. The baby is certain his mother will feed him and care for all his needs. This is the feeling of security we should have with our *bitachon* on Hashem.

One translation of *פקד* is salvation (as in *ה' פקד את שרה*). The letters *פק"ד*, in the *alef beis*, come before the letters *צ"ה*. The Shlah HaKadosh *zt'l* says this implies that before

every *צרה* there's a *פק"ד*, salvation. As the Gemara (*Megillah* 13:) says, "Hashem doesn't smite Yisrael before He creates the *refuah* first." Therefore, there's no reason for worries. For every problem, the solution is already in place. Trust in Hashem and you will see it.⁶

Daven for Moshiach

The Mesilas Yesharim (19) writes, "One should constantly be davening for Bnei Yisrael's redemption and for the revelation of Hashem's honor. Perhaps one will ask, 'Who am I, and why am I important that I should daven for the *galus* and for Yerushalayim? Could

Yitzchak spoke about the *akeidah*, and Yaakov spoke about how he was *moser nefesh* to raise his family. Apparently, that claim is as great as the *akeidah*.

The Nesivos Shalom *zt'l* repeated this Midrash to a father who was complaining that it was so hard for him to raise money to support his family. The Nesivos Shalom explained to him, "Struggling to raise a family is the greatest deed – comparable to the *mesirus nefesh* of the *akeidah*. The main thing is that you shouldn't worry. Do your *hishtadlus*, and Hashem will help that everything will work out."

6. Reb Yechezkal Levinstein *zt'l* said, Hashem supports animals, and gives them their food. Certainly, Hashem will provide for human beings, and certainly for Yidden. There's no reason to be worried.

my *tefillos* gather the dispersed and bring the redemption?' The answer is, the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 37) states, 'Adam was created alone so everyone should say, 'The world was created just for me.' Hashem has pleasure when His children daven to Him about this matter. Even if their requests aren't answered — because the time hasn't yet come, or for any other reason — they did what they should, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu is happy about that."

We must know that our *tefillos* do make a difference. If we will daven for Moshiach, we can merit it.

The Midrash (*Eichah Rabba* 5:5) states, "The evil Nevuchadnezzar told Nevuzradan, 'Their G-d accepts *teshuvah*... If they pray, Hashem will save them. Therefore, don't let them stop walking, even for a moment, so they won't have the peace of mind to call out to Hashem."

Nevuzradan followed Nevuchadnezzar's counsel. When he brought the Jewish nation into exile, his soldiers amputated the limbs of anyone who stopped walking along.

We see that even Nevuchadnezzar was aware that Yidden could thwart the exile with their *tefillos*. Because when Yidden pray, Hashem answers their *tefillos*.

Chazal (*Taanis* 29) teach, "When the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed it was *erev Tisha b'Av, Motzei Shabbos*... The Levi'im were singing *shirah*... They were up to the words, *ה' אלקינו יצמיחם*, "Hashem will demolish the [enemies of the Jewish nation]," (*Tehillim* 94) but they didn't yet say those words, and that's when the gentiles seized the Beis HaMikdash. The same happened by the second Beis HaMikdash." It seems that had the Levi'im said *ה' אלקינו יצמיחם*, "Hashem will demolish them," the two Batei Mikdash

wouldn't be destroyed. This *tefillah* would have prevented the Churban. With *tefillah*, we could have prevented the Churban, and with *tefillah*, we can bring the salvation.

The Gemara (*Gittin* 56) states: To prove to the king that the Yidden were rebelling, Bar Kamtza advised the king to send a sacrifice to Yerushalayim and to see whether they sacrifice it. On the way to Yerushalayim, Bar Kamtza mutilated the ox's upper lip (or, according to another opinion, he blemished its eye) which made the ox unsuitable for a *korban*.

The *chachamim* realized that if they don't sacrifice it, Bar Kamtza would tell the king, and the king would take that as evidence that the Yidden are rebelling. (He wouldn't know that it was because of the *mum*.) This could have placed the lives of the entire Jewish community at risk, therefore the *chachamim* wanted to sacrifice the *korban* even with its *mum*.

Reb Zecharya ben Avkulas disagreed. He said, "People will say it is permitted to bring a *korban* with a *mum* on the *mizbeiach*." He recommended they don't sacrifice the *korban*, so the laws of the Torah won't be forgotten or misconstrued.

The *chachamim* advised that Bar Kamtza be killed, so he won't tattle on them.

Once again, Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas vetoed the idea. He explained, "People will say, 'Whoever places a *mum* in a *korban* is killed.'"

The *chachamim* accepted Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's views. The *korban* wasn't sacrificed and Bar Kamtza wasn't killed. Bar Kamtza reported the incident to the king, and that led to the Churban.

Reb Yochanan concluded: ענותנותו של רבי זכריה בן אבקולם שרפה את היכלנו והגלה אותנו מארצנו, "Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's humility destroyed our house,

burned the *heichel*, and exiled us from our land."

The Meor Einayim (*Gittin*) asks:

1) It seems it was Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's caution that caused the Churban. Why does Reb Yochanan call it 'his humility'?

2) Bar Kamtza was planning to tell the king the Yidden didn't offer up the king's *korban*. It was a situation of *pikuach nefesh*. The halachah is, one transgresses the entire Torah to save a Yid's life. They should have sacrificed the *korban* (or killed Bar Kamtza) to save the Jewish nation. Why was Reb Zecharyah so concerned about halachos being forgotten at this time, when so many Jewish lives were at stake?

The Meor Einayim answers, Reb Zecharyah knew with his *ruach hakodesh* that there will be a Churban, and he understood that there was

nothing could be done to change that decree. Reb Zecharyah figured, they may as well be cautious with the halachos, because the Churban will happen regardless.

The Meor Einayim writes:

"The *chachamim* accepted Reb Zecharyah's opinion. This means that Reb Zecharyah was the *gadol hador*... We also conclude that Reb Zecharyah had *ruach hakadosh* and he knew that the Beis HaMikdash will be destroyed... For nothing overrides *pikuach nefesh*, especially when the lives of all of Klal Yisrael were at stake... Why didn't Reb Zecharyah agree that the *korban* should be sacrificed for the sake of peace? It must be that Reb Zecharyah saw with his *ruach hakodesh* that the decree was sealed. He reckoned we should at least prevent the Torah from being misconstrued...

"Why didn't Reb Zecharyah tell the *chachamim* directly that according to his vision

nothing will help annul the decree? He should have explained that their attempts [to maintain peace with the king] would fail [because the decree for the Churban was sealed in heaven] and they may as well focus on preserving the Torah. The answer is, he was humble, and he didn't want to reveal to them that he has *ruach hakodesh*. This is the meaning of, ענותנותו של רבי זכריה, בן אביקלום החריבה, 'The humility of Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas destroyed...' For if it weren't for his humility, he would have told them; they would have davened; done *teshuvah*; beseeched Hashem to have compassion on them; and the decree would be rescinded. Thus, it was Reb Zecharyah's humility that caused the destruction. He didn't want to reveal [that he has *ruach hakodesh*]."

In conclusion (for our discussion) we see the Yidden had the ability to annul the decree with their *tefillos* and

teshuvah. Because Yidden have the strength of *tefillah*, and when they pray and beseech Hashem, Hashem hears them, and grants them their wishes.

Following a slightly different approach, we can explain "Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's humility destroyed our house, burned the *heichel*, and exiled us from our land," because although humility is one of the most important traits, there is also a negative kind of humility. That is when one doesn't believe his *tefillos* can make a difference.

Reb Zecharyah knew with his *ruach hakodesh* that the Beis HaMikdash will be destroyed, but he didn't believe that he and Klal Yisrael have the ability to annul that decree with *tefillos*. He didn't appreciate the greatness of Klal Yisrael and their close relationship with Hashem. He didn't tell them about the imminent Churban, because he didn't believe they could

change it. This misplaced humility destroyed the Beis HaMikdash.⁷

The Yaaras Dvash (*Drush 5*) teaches that the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because people weren't accustomed to turning to Hashem in prayer, to request all their needs. As it states (*Tehillim 14:4*), ה' לא קראו, "They didn't pray to Hashem."

And it states (*Eichah 1:2*), ודמעתי על לחיה, "The tears were on her cheek." The Yaaras

Dvash explains, דמעתי, bitter tears that were shed by the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash; על לחיה, was because they didn't daven (see *Chulin 134*: that לחיה, cheeks, represents *tefillah*).

And now that we know the destruction came about because they didn't pray, we understand that *tefillah* will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash.⁸

The Tiferes Shlomo (מסעי ד"ה) (א"י בן מטה השני) writes, "Every Yid must yearn with all his

7. Yirmiyahu HaNavi told Tzidkiyahu HaMelech (*Yirmiyahu 38*: 17-18), "Hashem says, if you will go out to the officers of the king of Bavel [to make a peace treaty with them]...the city [Yerushalayim] will not be burned, and you and your family will live. But if you will not go to them, this city will be conquered...they will burn it in fire, and you will not survive." The Rebbe of Kamarna zy'a asks, since the decree for the destruction of Yerushalayim was already sealed in heaven, how could Tzidkiyahu's going out to the officers of Bavel help?

The answer is, humility annuls all harsh decrees. If Tzidkiyahu surrendered humbly before the officers of Bavel, it would have protected Klal Yisrael, and the Beis HaMikdash wouldn't be destroyed.

8. The Yaaras Dvash explains that we mourn primarily for the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash. (The second Beis HaMikdash was a respite, a break in the long *galus*, but the primary destruction was the first one.) We proved that the first Churban happened because they weren't davening. As the primary Churban is the first one, we understand that improving *tefillah* will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash.

heart for Eretz Yisrael and for its holiness. As it states (*Tehillim* 122:6) שאלו שלום (in the *brachah* of *Shemonah Esrei*) 'Pray for peace in Yerushalayim...' and it states (*Yermiyahu* 30:17) ציון דורש אין לה, 'It is Zion, and no one is asking for her.' The Gemara (*Succah* 41.) writes, 'This means one must ask for her.' Yearning causes the redemption to happen, speedily in our days. A person should think about how...due to our many sins, the holy land is under Arab control... This should break a Yid's heart, and he should shout out to Hakadosh Baruch Hu... If Yidden will desire the land and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem will quickly accept their *tefillos*. Because the Beis HaMikdash is already built and ready in heaven. We only have to request that it come down...

Therefore, the Beis HaMikdash is called דביר ביתך (in the *brachah* of *Shemonah Esrei*) from the word דיבור, speech. We have to ask Hashem to build the Beis HaMikdash... And this will bring the redemption quicker..."

The Necessity of *Tefillah*

The Rokeach writes, "From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't give goodness to Yisrael without *tefillah*."⁹

The *haftarah* of Tisha b'Av describes the Churban. Among the descriptions it states (*Yirmiyahu* 8:13) אין ענבים, "There are no grapes on the vines; there are no figs on the fig tree...." This *pasuk* is difficult, because lacking fruit seem to be a trivial matter to mention,

9. The *Midrash Tanchumah* (*Vayeira* 1) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Bnei Yisrael, 'Be careful with *tefillah*, because there is nothing greater. *Tefillah* is greater than the *korbanos*... Even when the person doesn't deserve, I should answer his *tefillos*...nevertheless, because of his many *tefillos*, I will do *chesed* with him..."

when discussing the mass murders and devastation of the Churban.

We therefore suggest that the *pasuk* is saying that in the post-Churban era, even fruit doesn't grow without *tefillah*. When Shlomo was king, it was *איש תחת תחתו ואיש תחת תחתו*, "each person sat under his vine and fig tree" (*I Malachim* 5:5). By the influence of the *korbanos*, everyone had grapes, figs and all their needs. This *pasuk* is saying that after the Churban, everything comes solely through *tefillah*.

The Yaaras Dvash (*Drush* 5) writes, "The *avodah* of *tefillah* is all we have left in *galus*, because we can't bring the *korbanos*. One should pray with humility, bowed, without rushing, with concentration. Fortunate are those who cry

and have a broken heart, for such *tefillos* will certainly be answered. What can we rely on in *galus*, and what will protect us if not *tefillah* that emanates from the depths of the heart?'

"Woe to us, for it states (*Eichah* 3:44), *סכות בענן לך מעבור*, תפילה, 'A cloud obscures your *tefillah*, preventing the *tefillos* from going up.' This cloud is formed from forbidden speech, primarily from speaking during davening.

"However, if one prays with tears and with concentration, his *tefillah* will elevate all the *tefillos* of many years ago that were weak and didn't have strength to go up. With his *tefillah* with *kavanah* and with tears, those *tefillos* will go up and they will bring us goodness and blessings."¹⁰

10. Pinchas stopped a *mageifah* with his *tefillos*, as it states (*Tehillim* 106:30-31), *ויעמוד פנחס ויפלל ותיעצר המגיפה ותחשב לו לצדקה לדור ודור עד*, "Pinchas stood up and prayed and the plague ceased. He was accredited for this good deed forever."

The Tiferes Shlomo (*Likutim*, *Tehillim*, 109) asks, Aharon also stopped a

Daven Yourself

Someone told Rebbe Yechiyel of Gustenin ז"ל his problems and requested that the Rebbe daven for him. The Rebbe asked, "Did *you* daven?"

The man replied that he wants the Rebbe should pray for him, as the Gemara (*Bava Basra* 116.) states, כל שיש חולה בתוך ביתו ילך אצל חכם וילמד ויבקש עליו רחמים "If someone has an ill person at home, he should go to a *chacham*, so the *chacham* should pray for him."

The Rebbe replied, "I say the Gemara is saying two things: (1) ילך אצל חכם, he should go to a *chacham* and ask the

chacham to daven for him. (2) ויבקש עליו רחמים, he should pray for himself, too."

The Meiri explains the Gemara as follows: ילך אצל חכם וילמד הימנו דרכי תפילה ויבקש רחמים, "One should go to a *chacham* to learn from him the paths of *tefillah*."

For although it is a very great thing to have tzaddikim daven for you, don't forget that you also have the power of *tefillah*. You should daven for yourself. In fact, the Noam Elimelech says, since your *tefillos* will come forth from the depths of your heart, your *tefillos* can be even more influential than the *tefillos* of tzaddikim.

mageifah. As it states (*Bamidbar* 17:12), ויתן את הקטורת ויכפר על העם ויעמוד, "He placed the *ketores* and atoned for the nation. He stood between the corpses and the living and the plague ceased." So why wasn't Aharon also rewarded forever, as Pinchas was? The Tiferes Shlomo answers, "Aharon...brought *ketores*... But Pinchas...thought, 'What will the generations after me do when there aren't *korbanos*? How will Bnei Yisrael survive then?' Therefore he prayed. That is something that can be done in all generations... Therefore he was rewarded for all generations, forever."

The Noam Elimelech (end of *האוינו*) writes, “שאל אביך” pray to Hashem, your Father, for *parnassah*. ויגיד, this means to draw. Hashem will draw down to you...your *parnassah*... If you will ask, ‘How will I know that my *tefillos* will be answered?’ The answer is, וקניך ויאמרו לך, behold even the *tzaddikim* (called *zekeinim*)...have the ability to draw down your *parnassah* with their pure words. Certainly, this will happen when you will pray from the depths of your heart to the Creator.”

Someone told his problems to the Rebbe of Kotzk *zt'l*. The Rebbe asked, "Do you daven?" The man replied, "Believe me, I have so many problems, I'm not able to daven."

The Kotzker said, "So why did you tell me all your other problems and leave out your main problem? If you can't daven, that's your greatest problem. You should have told me about that problem first."

A granddaughter of Reb Hillel Kalimaya *zt'l* was a Holocaust survivor. During the war, she was separated from her family and deported to Auschwitz. On Tisha b'Av, the Nazis had all prisoners sit on sharp stones, and forced them to listen to music, to break their spirit, and to prevent them from mourning on Tisha b'Av. This woman was very pained by the *chilul Hashem*. She prayed, “Don't answer me for my honor, and not for the honor of your nation. Answer me for Your own honor, which is being disgraced by the goyim. I pray it should begin to pour.”

The skies were clear, but shortly after this *tefillah*, dark clouds covered the sky and it began to pour. The musicians ran to store their musical instruments, and everybody returned to their barracks.

She said that this gave her a lot of *chizuk*, for she saw that even there, in Auschwitz, Hashem was with her and listened to her *tefillos*.”

Sinas Chinam

The Gemara (*Yoma* 9) states the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *avodah zarah, giluy arayos, and shefichus damim*. The second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*, vain hatred.¹¹

The Gemara adds, "In the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed. Therefore, it was revealed to them when their *galus* will end. In the second Beis HaMikdash, their sins weren't revealed. Therefore, it wasn't revealed to them when this *galus* will end."¹²

11. The Vilna Gaon asks: Is hatred ever for *nothing*? Isn't there always a reason? Someone must have embarrassed him, harmed him, or did something else to anger him, so why is it called *sinas chinam*?

The answer is, whatever occurred, it was destined. Nothing happened without Hashem's decree. So there's never a valid reason for hatred. It is always *sinas chinam*.

There's another explanation why hatred is called *sinas chinam*. We will explain it with an analogy:

A matchstick burns for about ten seconds before it goes out. If you place the match on a pack of tissues, the fire will burn for about a minute or so before going out. If you place clothing there, it will take even longer before the fire dies down. Now add a lot of wood, and the fire will burn for a long time.

When someone insults you, and you are angry, that might not yet be *sinas chinam*. Your hard feelings are understood. But the anger and the hatred should cool off after a short while. By tomorrow everything should be forgotten. The problem is people don't let go of their hard feelings. They speak about what happened, they rehash the episode in their minds, and they seek reasons to justify their anger. There is no reason to do so. That's *sinas chinam*, which destroyed the Beis HaMikdash.

12. Rashi explains that by the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed. This means people were transparent; they didn't conceal their true selves. Everyone knew who was a tzaddik and who was a *rasha*. Therefore, it was revealed to them that after seventy years they will return

Rebbe Yohonoson Eibshitz zy'a explains, "By the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed" means their sins were told to them by the *navi*, and they knew what they had to do to repent. The *pesukim* in *navi* clearly state they were being punished for *avodah zarah*, *giluy arayos*, and *shefichus damim*. They knew what their sins were, so they knew how to improve. Therefore, it didn't take them all that long to improve their ways, and seventy years later, they were back in Eretz Yisrael.

"But in the second Beis HaMikdash, their sins weren't revealed." There weren't *nevi'im* in that era to tell them the cause of their punishment. Although the *chachamim* told them that the destruction came because of *sinas chinam*, it is hard for people to accept that, because *sinas chinam* doesn't appear to be a severe sin. Since they didn't know the reason for their castigations, it was harder for them to do *teshuvah*. Nearly two thousand years have passed, and we aren't redeemed yet.¹³

to Eretz Yisrael. But by the second Beis HaMikdash, *resha'im* pretended they were *tzaddikim*, and no one knew who was a *tzaddik* and who wasn't. Their ways were concealed and unrevealed, therefore, it wasn't revealed to them when the *galus* will end.

13. The Arizal created a *hesger*, an exclusive community compound, for his primary students, where he taught them the secrets of the Torah. He warned them to be very cautious from *machlokes*.

But one Friday, two women got into a fight about some matter and their husbands got involved. Their shouts could be heard from the distance.

Later that evening, the Arizal left the city limits of Tzfas to be *mekabel* Shabbos with his students (as this was their weekly custom). Generally, the Arizal was extremely happy at this time, but this week he appeared sad. Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* asked him about this, and the Arizal replied, "I heard the *samach mem* (Satan) say, גם אתם גם מלככם תספו, "Also you and also your king will die" (*Shmuel* 12:25), and I understand that it means I

Now that we know the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*, we understand that the redemption will come when we increase unconditional love among us.¹⁴

am going to die, together with some of the students. And it's all because of the *machlokes* that happened today. As long as there was peace among you, the Satan couldn't enter our secluded compound..."

And that is what happened. Less than a week later, on the fifth of Av, the Arizal and five of his students were *niftar*.

The following story has different versions, but we will repeat it as Reb Yisrael Salanter *zy'a* would tell it:

Eliyahu HaNavi came to the Arizal and said, "Come with me to Yerushalayim, and we will bring Moshiach."

The Arizal said, "I first need to tell my wife, so she won't worry about me." When the Arizal returned, Eliyahu HaNavi wasn't there anymore. The opportunity was lost.

Reb Yisrael Salanter said, the Arizal realized Eliyahu HaNavi may not be there when he returned. But he also understood that he mustn't cause his wife distress under any circumstances, even if the *geu'lah* was at stake.

14. The following story is an example of *mesirus nefesh* for the mitzvah *ahavas Yisrael*, and the benefits that were earned from it.

I heard the story directly from the *baal hamaasah*, who is a respected rav in America, and is also involved in *kiruv rechokim*. One day his wife told him she wants to donate a kidney to someone suffering from kidney disease and is undergoing dialysis. Her husband was against the idea, but she insisted that she wanted this *zechus*, so they went to the Skverer Rebbe *shlita* and sought his counsel.

The Rebbe told the husband to respect his wife's wishes because it is a great mitzvah to save a life.

The husband asked, "When should she have the operation? I know the ill patient needs the kidney as soon as possible, but our child's *chasunah* is coming up..."

The husband wanted to push off the procedure until after the *chasunah*. His wife, however, had *rachmanus* on the person suffering and wanted to have it done before the *chasunah*.

In this week's *parashah*, the *trop* (cantillation) over the words, אָחִינוּ הַמָּסוּ לִבֵּינוּ (Devarim 1:28), is תְּלִישָׁה קְטַנָּה (Devarim 1:28), is תְּלִישָׁה קְטַנָּה. The Beis Aharon z'y'a explain: If there is a תְּלִישָׁה קְטַנָּה, a small breach, אָחִינוּ, in the friendship, וְאִזְלָא, the dispute will grow greater and larger, and הַמָּסוּ לִבֵּינוּ, our hearts melt. Therefore, the solution is to be vigilant and avoid even the minutest dispute.¹⁵

The Rebbe told them to discuss it with the doctor. If he says she will be better in time for the *chasunah*, she can go ahead with the procedure.

They consulted with the doctor, and he agreed to speed up the prep stages, and do the transplant as quickly as possible so the mother can recuperate in time for her child's *chasunah*.

Kidney donors undergo a series of tests to verify they are healthy candidates and their organs are suitable for transplanting. The doctors began taking the standard battery of tests, and the doctors discovered she had a growth right beneath one of her kidneys. The growth was pressing on a primary artery that sends blood to the heart.

If they wouldn't have done those tests, it is likely the growth would eventually block the blood flow to her heart and her life would be in danger. It is doubtful she would have lived to see her child's wedding. Because of her *ahavas Yisrael* her life was saved.

(She was disqualified as a donor. However, just then another compatible donor was found, so the patient had the transplant, as originally planned.)

15. Reb Y. Kletzky of Yerushalayim goes to America each year to serve as a *chazan* for the *yomim nora'im*. One year, there was a *machlokes* between the *gabai* and one of the *mispalelim* (in the beis knesses where Reb Kletzky was *chazan*), and despite people's attempts to make peace between them, no one succeeded.

This man (who was in the *machlokes*) had two older, single children, around thirty-years-old. Every year he bought the honor of פְּתִיחַת הָאָרוֹן לְנַעֲיָלָה, opening the *aron kodesh* for *Ne'ilah*, and he with his two sons would stand in front of the *aron kodesh* throughout *Ne'ilah*, hoping that the gates of heaven would open for them. He paid whatever price necessary, to buy this merit. However, this year, because of the *machlokes*, the *gabai* didn't want to sell it to him.

For seventeen years, the Chidushei HaRim *z't'l* toiled with all his might to acquire an *עין טובה*, a good eye. He said no one ever attained 'a good eye' as well as he had.

A primary aspect of *ayin tovah* is to see people's good side, and to avoid seeing their faults. The Chidushei HaRim

said that when he became a Rebbe and chassidic leader, he had to know the level of each chassid, in order to help them. This caused him immense anguish, because he was forced to see the faults of Yidden.

The Chidushei HaRim writes, "During these days [the Three

What did the *gabai* do? He gathered his friends before Rosh Hashanah, and sold all the *aliyos* and *kibudim* of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. When it was time for opening the *aron* for *Ne'ilah*, it was already sold to someone else.

When Reb Kletzky, the *chazan*, began the quiet *shemonah Esei* of *Ne'ilah*, this man began to speak loudly, complaining that he was slighted and tricked, and his *chazakah* (yearly custom) was taken away from him.

Reb Kletzky says he wanted to calm him, and to speak up in his honor, but he was already in the middle of the *amidah*.

After Yom Kippur, Reb Kletzky came to his home and said, "As *chazan*, I'm responsible that the *tefillos* of the beis knesses go up. But due to what happened today, I'm afraid the *tefillos* didn't go up. I beg you, forgive him." The man didn't forgive, and he said that he doesn't forgive the entire beis knesses, because none of them stood up for him.

Reb Kletzky found a solution. He said, "The primary reason you want to open the *aron* for *Ne'ilah* is because you want *shidduchim* for your two children. Be *mevater*. Forgive them. In this merit, by next year, they will both be married."

"I forgive them" the man exclaimed.

Later that year, Reb Kletzky called the *gabai* and asked what happened with that person. The *gabai* replied, "He stopped coming to our shul long ago. However, I heard that in the winter both of his children were married..." This is the reward for those who forgive and seek peace.

Weeks] a person should strive to eradicate the trait of *sinas chinam*. He should uproot any עין רע... With an עין טוב the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt." 16

The Third Party

It states in this week's *parashah* (*Devarim* 2:7) כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בֵּרַכְךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ, יָדַע לַכְתֹּךְ... "Hashem your G-d blesses you with everything you do. He knows your ways... You didn't lack anything."

The *Yalkut Shimoni* (808) on this *pasuk* teaches, "Perhaps Hashem will send you blessings even if you sit idly and do nothing? The *pasuk* says, בֵּרַכְךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ, 'Hashem...will bless

everything you do.' If one does, he receives Hashem's blessing. If one doesn't do, he will not receive."

The next words of the *pasuk* are יָדַע לַכְתֹּךְ. The *Yalkut Shimoni* explains, "לַכְתֹּךְ is like the word לְכֹלֶךָ, dirt. יָדַע לַכְתֹּךְ for Hashem knows the dirt and distress you go through to earn your *parnassah*." This is referring to the struggles and toil people go through to earn their *parnassah*.

The solution is, ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ עִמָּךְ, remember "Hashem your G-d is with you." Hashem is helping you earn *parnassah*. If you will remember that, לֹא חָסַרְתָּ דָבָר, nothing will be lacking.

16. In ת"ש/1940, Reb Shaul Yedidyah of Modzhitz ז"ל fled from Modzhitz to Vilna, to escape the war. On Shabbos he led a *tisch*, and Litvishe people came in to listen to the Rebbe's beautiful trademark singing. When the Rebbe handed out *shirayim*, it seemed strange to the Litvishe people present, as they never saw this custom before. The Rebbe said, "Don't make fun of this custom. If more people would practice this custom, this war wouldn't happen."

The Rebbe explained, "*Shirayim* means that even when a plate of food is before you, you don't keep it all for yourself. You give away from your own to others. If people would practice this, this war would never happen."

Many workers were working in a field in groups of two. One dug a hole and his partner filled it up with earth again. A bystander didn't understand why they were digging holes and then filling them up again. He asked one of the workers for an explanation.

The worker replied, "We usually work in groups of three. One digs a hole, the second plants a sapling, and the third fills the hole with earth again. But today, the people who plant the saplings didn't show up. We decided that despite their absence, we should at least do our part..." The *nimshal* is, there are three partners in the creation of man: two parents and Hashem. We shouldn't try to do anything without the third partner. All work is fruitless when the third and primary partner isn't there.

Someone asked Reb Moshe Feinstein *zt'l* whether he may shave his beard during the Nine Days. He told Reb

Moshe, "I have an important business meeting coming up, and there will be non-Jews at the meeting. They will not respect my unkempt, scabby beard from the Three Weeks. I'm afraid that if I don't shave, the deal may not go through."

Reb Moshe told him that he was forbidden to shave his beard.

But the man was afraid that his shabby appearance would jeopardize the deal, so he shaved anyway.

The meeting went well. When they were about to close the deal, one of them asked, "How can we know that you are trustworthy?"

He said, "You don't have to worry about that. I'm a religious Jew, and the Torah obligates us to deal honestly in business. Our word is a word..."

"You're a Jew?" the man interrupted him. "So where is your beard? I know that during these weeks, Jews

don't shave their beard. I see you aren't loyal to your own religion, how can we trust you to be honest in business?" and the deal fell through.

This is how it appears when one tries to do business, while ignoring the third, primary Partner. Hashem is our true source of *parnassah*, and we will only succeed when the third Partner is with us.

Eliyahu HaNavi

The Torah says (3:15), ולמכיר, הגלעד. Using the approach of *remez*, Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zt'l* explained the *pasuk* as follows: למכיר, to recognize whether a person believes in Hashem, נהתי, I give the following sign: עד-גל, the joy is the testimony. גיל, his happy disposition under all circumstances, even when matters aren't going his way, is an עד, testimony that he believes in Hashem, and that he believes everything is for the good.

Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen of Lublin *zt'l* explained the *pasuk*

in the following way: ולמכיר, to the person who recognizes Hashem and believes everything occurs by Hashem's *hashgachah pratis*, נהתי את הגלעד, I will send him Eliyahu HaGiladi. He is on a high level, deserving to be visited by Eliyahu HaNavi.

Rebbe Yisrael of Rizhin *zy'a* told his chassidim that they shouldn't study the Arizal's *sefarim* before they merit *giluy Eliyahu* (seeing Eliyahu HaNavi). Years later, the Rizhiner Rebbe's grandson, the Husiatener Rebbe *zy'a*, was seen learning these holy *sefarim*. People were saying, "Apparently he saw Eliyahu HaNavi. How else could he learn kabbalah *sefarim*?"

The Husiatener Rebbe told them that he didn't see Eliyahu HaNavi. He explained, "My grandfather was speaking for his generation. At that time, one had to see Eliyahu HaNavi before studying the Arizal's *sefarim*. Today, anyone who

believes, ואתה מושל בכל, that Hashem rules over everything, and everything happens by Hashem's *hashgachah*, is worthy of learning kabbalah."

In other words, the Husiatener Rebbe was saying that in our generation, to believe in Hashem is equivalent to seeing Eliyahu HaNavi. As Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen zy'a said, ולמכיר, when one recognizes Hashem, נתתי את הגלעד, I will send him Eliyahu HaGiladi; for this person deserves to meet Eliyahu HaNavi.¹⁷

Goodness in Concealment

People think Av is a bad month, a month of suffering. However, the translation of אב is "father," which signifies

Hashem's compassion on us, like a loving father. The *mazal* of Av is אריה, a lion, which signifies *chesed* (see *Zohar Chodosh, Yisro* 31). So, Av is a month of compassion and kindness. As the Kedushas Levi writes, "Hashem Yisbarach destroyed the Beis HaMikdash and we are in *galus*, but it surely is all for Klal Yisrael's benefit. Hashem will have compassion on us, He will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash, and it will be even more magnificent than it was before. That which presently appears to be negative...is actually all for Yisrael's benefit..."

The Kedushas Levi says that it is hinted at in the *pasuk*

17. Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Patilch *zt'l* (a grandson of Rebbe Uri of Strelisk *zy'a*) said: There are four fast days (associated with the Churban) and when we calculate the *gematriya* of their calendar dates, they equal הוי"ה אחד. The 17th of Tamuz and the 9th of Av are *gematriya* 26, the same as the *gematriya* of Hashem's holy name הוי"ה. The 10th of Teves and the 3rd of Tishrei are *gematriya* 13, the same as אחד. Together they are *gematriya* הוי"ה אחד.

The root of all sins and *tzaros* (for which we fast) is the *eigel* (the Golden Calf). The *eigel* is that we lacked *emunah*. The rectification, therefore, is to know הוי"ה אחד.

(Eichah 3:10) רב ארב הוא לי
 אריה, "He was like a
 bear in ambush...like a lion
 in hiding."

"A bear in ambush signifies
 the *galus*. But we must know
 that it is really אריה, kindness,
 במסתרים, in concealment."

It says in *Tehillim*, אשרי העם
 יודעי תרועה. The *Noam
 Megadim* explains that תרועה
 comes from the word רעה,
 bad. The *pasuk* is saying:
 Fortunate is the nation יודעי
 תרועה, who knows that even
 the bad is for their good. It is
 goodness in concealment.

The Chasam Sofer zy'a
 (*Drashos*, 7 Av, p.326) writes,
 "If I wasn't afraid, I would say
 Tisha b'Av is a happy day,
 because we survived... [As
Chazal said, Hashem poured
 His anger out on wood and
 stone, so we could survive]...
 (The crying and the mourning
 are for the new tragedies that
 happen each year. Due to our
 many sins, the curses and the
tzaros become greater each
 day...) We should be praising

Hashem on Tisha b'Av. This is
 the reason Tisha b'Av is called
Mo'ed (holiday)."

The Magid of Dubno gives the
 following *meshal*:

Doctors told the father of an
 ill child that he must keep his
 child awake (for some hours),
 because if the child falls
 asleep, he won't ever wake up.

The father removed the pillow
 from under his child's head,
 hoping this would prevent the
 child from falling asleep. But
 the child became accustomed
 to this minor discomfort, and
 began dozing off. The father
 then placed the child on the
 floor. After a few minutes, the
 son became accustomed to
 this too, and started to fall
 asleep. The father then began
 hitting his son. At first, he hit
 his son lightly, and when the
 son became accustomed to
 those slaps, the father beat
 him harder....

The *nimshal* is Hashem gives
 us reminders so we don't fall
 asleep in *galus* and forget our

purpose in life. If the reminders don't prevent us from sleeping, the signals become more pronounced. But we should never think the suffering means Hashem doesn't love us, *chas veshalom*.¹⁸

Shabbos Chazon

This Shabbos is *Shabbos Chazon* whose literal translation means, "Shabbos for Seeing." The Kedushas Levi *zt'l* explains that on *Shabbos Chazon* Hashem shows us the future Beis HaMikdash and the era of Moshiach.

The Kedushas Levi gave the following *mashal*:

A king ordered an expensive

suit for his son. But the boy wasn't careful, and the suit became ripped and stained. The king ordered another suit. The prince wasn't careful again, and this suit also tore. The king ordered yet another suit, but this time, he didn't give it to him. Occasionally the king would take out the royal clothing and tell his son, "When I see you can take care of your clothes, I will give it to you."

Hashem gave us the first Beis HaMikdash, and then the second, but we weren't careful with them, and they were destroyed. Hashem built a third Beis HaMikdash — it is prepared and ready in heaven. On *Shabbos Chazon* Hashem

18. Consider the following *mashal*:

A father comes home late at night and finds the front door locked. He knocks, but the family is fast asleep and no one hears him. He sees that one of the windows is open, so he takes a long pole and pokes one of the sleeping children with the stick. The child begins to cry, and soon the entire household is awake and alarmed. "Why is there someone outside trying to hurt them?" If they knew that the person poking them is their father, and he only wants to come inside to be with them, they would open the door quickly. This is hinted at in the words (*Shir HaShirim* 5:4), דודי שלח ידו מן החור, "My Friend sent His hand through the hole..."

shows us the third Beis "See, when I see you are ready HaMikdash, and He tells us, for it, I will give it to you." 19

19. The Dubno Magid zt'l has a similar *mashal* regarding Shabbos:

A king asked a tailor to sew clothing for his son, and he asked that it be ready by a certain time. When the due date arrived, the tailor apologized, "I'm sorry, I finished some of the clothing, but I haven't yet finished the outer garment."

The king was upset. He was hoping the entire wardrobe would be ready. But he didn't show his distress to the tailor. He said, "It's fine. We'll come by later to pick up the suit."

But the prince was impatient. "Please let me wear the clothing that's done. They look so beautiful; I want to wear them now."

The king agreed.

But his son played outdoors while wearing the expensive, royal clothing, and they got dirty and ruined. Now the king was glad the outer garment wasn't ready, because otherwise, that would have gotten ruined too. The king gave his son the outer garment, and warned him that he shouldn't ruin it like he ruined the other set of clothing.

The *nimshal* is, Adam HaRishon sinned on the sixth day of Creation, thereby he soiled the six days of the week. Hashem is happy Adam didn't sin on Shabbos, so Shabbos remains a pure day. Hashem warns us to be careful with the holiness of Shabbos, so we don't sully this holy day, as well.

Hashem calls Shabbos מתנה טובה a good present (*Shabbos* 10). Every person has a different definition of 'good'. Ask a wealthy man to describe goodness, and it is likely you will hear something very different than when you ask a pauper the same question. If Hashem says Shabbos is good, we can be certain that it is good, as good and as wonderful as can be.

The Gemara says, מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנזי ושבת שמה, "I have a good present in My treasury, it is called Shabbos...." The Yesod HaAvodah explains that Hashem didn't take Shabbos out of His treasury to give it to us. On Shabbos, Hashem brings us up to His treasury room, to experience Shabbos there.

The Ohev Yisrael writes: "ל:י אשר שבת הזון הוא יותר גדול במעלה מכל שבתות השנה, "There is room to say *Shabbos Chazon* is greater than all Shabbosim of the year. The Midrash says, לא היה יום מועד לישראל כיום שנחרב בית המקדש, 'Bnei Yisrael never had a holiday like when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed.' People asked me to explain this מדרש פליאה, wondrous Midrash..."

The Ohev Yisrael explains it with the Gemara (*Yevamos* 62), which says love increases before a separation. When the Beis HaMikdash was being destroyed, there was about to be a separation between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. This increased their love, and it was like a יום מועד, a holiday. *Shabbos Chazon* is the greatest Shabbos of the year, because there is immense love on this Shabbos. It is the love before the separation. The Ohev Yisrael concludes, ובפרט כשחל, "This is especially so when Tisha b'Av

is on Shabbos," as it is this year.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 55:) states, "When the gentiles entered the Holy of Holies, they found the *keruvim* embracing each other." This is surprising, for the Gemara (*Bava Basra* 99.) tells us that when the Jewish nation performs Hashem's will, the *keruvim* faced each other, and when they sinned, the *keruvim* turned away from each other. This was a time of sin; why were the *keruvim* facing each other?

According to the Ohev Yisrael the explanation is this was a moment before separation, when love is strong. That immense love was demonstrated by the *keruvim*.

Reb Chaim Volozhiner (*Nefesh HaChaim* 1:8) writes, "It is known that one *keruv* represents Hashem and the other one represents the Jewish nation. According to the degree of closeness and connection of the Jewish

people to Hashem — or *chas veshalom* the opposite — it was miraculously and wondrously seen by the positions of the *keruvim*. If the eyes of the Jewish nation were turned to Hashem, the *keruvim* faced each other. But if the Jewish nation turned away, or if they turned slightly to the side, that would immediately be seen by the positions of the *keruvim*. If, *chas veshalom*, they turn entirely around, the *keruvim* would suddenly turn away from each other and be back to back." But at the time of the Churban they faced each other, because the love between Hashem and the Jewish nation increased before their separation.

Someone, who was prone to bouts of sadness, was planning to be with Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* for Shabbos. But there were delays in his trip, and he only arrived on *motzei Shabbos*. Rebbe Bunim said, "Shabbos honors her guests. When the guest is Rosh Chodesh, Shabbos honors her

guest and gives Rosh Chodesh the *haftarah* and *mussaf*. When Yom Tov is Shabbos's guest, Shabbos honors this prestigious guest, and gives all its *tefillos* to Yom Tov. When Yom Kippur is Shabbos's guest, Shabbos gives away its meals, too. But when Tisha b'Av falls on Shabbos, Shabbos doesn't honor this guest at all. Tisha b'Av is pushed off until the next day."

Rebbe Bunim was implying he was glad his sad guest came after Shabbos and not on Shabbos. Shabbos is, יום שמחתכם, a day of joy. Shabbos and sadness don't go together.

Working for Free

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov *zt'l* told the following *meshal*: A poor person heard about a generous, wealthy person who gives free meals. He went there to enjoy a meal, but accidentally knocked at the neighbor's home. When the neighbor heard he came for a meal, he immediately understood the pauper's

mistake, and decided to take advantage of the situation. As he had some chores that needed to be done around his house, he told the pauper, “Certainly, you can have your meal, but first you have to work for me a little.”

After working hard, the stingy neighbor told him, “For your reward, go next door. There's a good meal awaiting you.”

While eating the hot meal, he said, “I worked hard, but it was worth it.”

The host asked him, “Where did you work hard?”

He answered, “In your home, next door.” (He still thought both homes were under the same ownership.)

The host said, “You worked for free and you are eating for free.”

The *nimshal* is we do *hishtadlus* for *parnassah* and we think there is a connection between the work we put in and the results. Actually, there isn't. We eat for free, and we work for free.

By the Chazon Ish's direction, Reb Shalom Shwadron *zt'l* traveled to London to raise money for Pe'ilim (a *kiruv* organization). Reb Shalom didn't make much money in London, and when he returned to Eretz Yisrael, he went to the Chazon Ish's home to tell him how it went.

Before he said anything, the Chazon Ish gave him a check for five hundred dollars (which was a lot of money at the time) and said “I received this check from Mr. Berkowitz of Brazil. I immediately earmarked it for Pe'ilim. You did *hishtadlus* in London, and the *yeshuah* came from a Yid from Brazil.”

The lesson is, there doesn't have to be a direct connection between *hishtadlus* and the results. One does *hishtadlus*, and Hashem sends the results.

As the Mesilas Yesharim (ch.21) writes, “Technically, a person should be able to do nothing at all, and the decree [how much *parnassah* he will

earn] would take place. If it weren't for the קנס, obligation, that was placed on all mankind, בועת אפך תאכל להם, 'By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.' Due to the decree of the Exalted King, everyone must do *hishtadlus* for his *parnassah*. It is like a tax²⁰ that all humanity must pay and from which no one can escape... But it isn't that the *hishtadlus* helps. It is an obligation. After he did *hishtadlus*, he fulfilled his obligation, and there is place for Heaven's blessings to come. He doesn't need to spend all of his days seeking *parnassah*." Once again, this is because there isn't a connection between *hishtadlus* and *parnassah*. *Hishtadlus* is a tax we all must pay, and Hashem sends the *parnassah*.

The *HaMaspik L'Ovdei Hashem*, written by Rabbeinu

Avraham ben HaRambam *zt'l* (*Bitachon* 8) writes, "To trust that *hishtadlus* brings *parnassah* is covert *apirkosus* (כפירה נסתרת). With his mouth he says he believes in Hashem Who gives *parnassah* and poverty, life and death, illness and healing, but in the depths of his heart he thinks his *parnassah* is dependent on the amount of *hishtadlus* he does, and that his *refuah* is dependent on medicines and doctors. Thinking so is *kefirah*, heresy. Dovid HaMelech said about such people, שנאתי השומרים הבלי שוא ואני אל ה' בטחתי, 'I hate those who trust in foolishness. I trust in Hashem.'"

It states in this week's *parashah* (1:32), וברבר הזה אינכם, מאמינים בה' אלוקיכם, "With this matter, you don't believe in Hashem your G-d." The Rebbe of Stretin (*Degel*

20. Based on this *Mesilas Yeshtarim*, Reb Eliyahu Desler *zt'l* taught, someone who does too much *hishtadlus* can be compared to a merchant who already paid his taxes, and yet he runs after the tax collectors to give them some more money.

Machenah Yehudah) זת'ל explains that if a person thinks his *parnassah* will come בדבר הזה, solely through a particular means, and that his *parnassah* can't come any other way, he doesn't believe in Hashem.²¹ Because a Yid must believe that Hashem can give him *parnassah* in any way.

For example, if he runs a restaurant, he must believe that even if a competitor opens up another store on the same street, hope remains. Because his restaurant never brought him *parnassah*, only Hashem, and Hashem can send him *parnassah* other ways, too.

Someone told Rebbe Hershele of Lisk זת'ל that a competitor

opened up a shop near his shop, and he is worried he will lose his *parnassah*. Rebbe Hershele told him this story: A man owned a chicken and every day he threw into the coop enough food for the chicken to eat that day. Then the man bought another chicken and he put the chicken into the coop, together with the first chicken. The first chicken was afraid his "competitor" would eat up all his food, and there wouldn't be anything left for him. So, he pecked at the newcomer, and ripped out its feathers.

But all this anger and concern was for nothing. The owner knows there are two chickens in the coop. He will certainly

21. The Bnei Yissaschar (in *Agra d'Kala* (ד"ה ובדבר אלקיכם, "In this matter, you don't believe in Hashem your G-d." The chapter is telling how Hashem cared for the Jewish nation in the desert, with miracles and wonders. The *pasuk* clarifies, ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלקיכם, if you believe in Hashem because of all this, that isn't called *emunah*. *Emunah* is to believe in Hashem even when we don't see miracles, and there are troubles and suffering. "When one believes in Hashem solely when Hashem has immense compassion on him, it isn't called *emunah*, because everything is clear. That isn't belief."

throw in a double portion of chicken feed, so both of them will have enough. Similarly, we don't have to worry about competitors, because Hashem will send enough *parnassah* for each of them.

Benefits of Mourning

The Chasam Sofer explains that mourning in itself builds up Yerushalayim and constructs the Beis HaMikdash. He teaches this lesson from the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 147, which we say in *psukei d'zimrah*): בונה ירושלים 'ה, "Hashem builds Yerushalayim." It's written in the present tense, because even in the present, Hashem is building Yerushalayim. Each time we mourn for the Beis HaMikdash, we are rebuilding it.

The Chasam Sofer *zy'a* explains that for two thousand years, we mourn and cry over the Beis HaMikdash. Hakadosh Baruch Hu takes those tears and mourning, and builds with them the third Beis HaMikdash in heaven, brick

by brick, stone by stone. When it's completed, it will come down from heaven.

The Gemara (*Makos* 24) tells:

Rabban Gamliel, Reb Elazer ben Azaryah, Reb Yehoshua and Reb Akiva...were traveling to Yerushalayim. When they came to Har Tzofim and saw Yerushalayim from the distance they ripped their clothing.

When they came to Har HaBayis, they saw foxes exiting the Kodesh Kodoshim. Rabban Gamliel, Reb Elazer ben Azaryah, and Reb Yehoshua cried, and Reb Akiva laughed.

They asked, "Why are you laughing?"

Reb Akiva asked them, "Why are you crying?"

They said, "The place upon which is written, והור הקרב ימות (that only *cohanim* may go there, and anyone else will die) and now there are foxes prancing about it, shouldn't we cry?"

Reb Akiva replied, לִכְרֹאֲנִי מִצְחָק, "That is exactly why I'm laughing... Because until I saw the fulfillment of Uriyah's prophecy [who foretold the destruction of Yerushalayim (*Michah* 3:12)] I was afraid Zecharyah's prophecy [regarding the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash – *Zecharya* 8:4] wouldn't materialize. But now that I see Uriyah's prophecy fulfilled, it is certain Zecharyah's prophecy will be fulfilled too." They told him עֲקִיבָא נִחְמַתְנוּ עֲקִיבָא נִחְמַתְנוּ, "Akiva, you consoled us. Akiva, you consoled us."

Let's focus on the conversation: Rabban Gamliel, Reb Elazer ben Azaryah, and Reb Yehoshua told Reb Akiva that they were crying and mourning because they saw foxes running on the temple mount, and Reb Akiva replied לִכְרֹאֲנִי מִצְחָק, "that is precisely why I'm laughing." It seems he was happy *because* they were mourning.

Rebbe Yisrael of Tchortkov

zt'l explains he was happy Yidden were mourning, because tears and mourning build the third Beis HaMikdash.

The Midrash tells us, "There was a woman who lost her young son and she cried for him every night. Rabban Gamliel, who lived nearby, heard her cries. Her cries caused him to remember the Churban, and he cried until his eyelashes fell out. When Rabban Gamliel's students discovered what's happening, they arranged for that woman to leave the neighborhood."

We can explain that this woman's tears, and essentially all *tzaros* of exile, are the result of the Churban Beis HaMikdash. If it weren't for the Churban, all these tragedies wouldn't be. Therefore, her crying aroused Rabban Gamliel to cry for the Churban, because her tears, and all sorrow, are the result of the Churban.

זוכה ורואה, "Merits and Sees..."

At a *chasunah* we mourn for Yerushalayim, and we say the *brachah* שוש תשיש, praying for its rebuilding. One might ask, why should we mourn the Churban at a wedding? Isn't it more appropriate to make the *chasunah* a time solely for joy?

The Sfas Emes *zt'l* explains that in *galus*, the joy of the *chasunah* isn't complete, because we don't have a Beis HaMikdash. We want to make the joy complete, so we mourn and pray for the redemption. Thereby we pick up on the joy of the future, and the joy of the *chasunah* becomes complete. Because as one mourns and yearns for Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash, he draws a scent of the joy of the era of Moshiach.

Therefore, *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 554:25) states, וכל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה, בשמחתה, "Whoever mourns for

Yerushalayim merits and sees its joy..." זוכה ורואה is in present tense. Due to his mourning, he merits even in the present to experience the joy of the redemption.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Drashos* p.32, Erev Yom Kippur, beginning of תק"ם) teaches, when one aspires for the Beis HaMikdash, he is already there. As it states (*Tehillim* 122), שמחתי באומרים לי, בית ה' נלך, "I was happy when I heard people say, 'let's go to Hashem's House.'" The result [of their yearning] was, עומדות, היו רגלינו בשעריך ירושלים, "Our feet were standing in the gates of Yerushalayim." It was like they were already there.

The Tiferes Shlomo (מסעי ד"ה) (א"י בן מטה השני) writes, "To properly mourn for Yerushalayim, think about how much holiness we lack. For we don't have a Beis HaMikdash, *cohanim* who serve there; we don't have the closeness to Hashem as we used to have. By thinking

about these matters, one becomes close to Hashem even now..."

The Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (*Rabba* 20 ד"ה פעם אחת) writes that the nations פרם ומדי came to the world as a reward for Koresh, who cried and mourned when the goyim destroyed the Beis HaMikdash.²²

The Chofetz Chaim ז"ל made a calculation that Koresh at the time was seven-years-old. A child of seven certainly doesn't fully understand the devastation of the Churban. Nevertheless, he cried, and his tears were rewarded. We should learn from this how much reward will go to a Yid who mourns and cries for Yerushalayim.

The city of Brisk requested the Beis HaLevi (Reb Yosef Dov Soloveitzik ז"ל) to be their rav. Initially, the Beis HaLevi

refused. Representatives from Brisk came to the Beis HaLevi and pleaded, "Twenty-five thousand people live in Brisk, and they all want you to come. Will you turn them all down?" Immediately, the Beis HaLevi packed his bags, and went with them to Brisk.

At that time, the Chofetz Chaim ז"ל said, "If the Beis HaLevi didn't want to turn down twenty-five thousand people, certainly, if multitudes will be yearning and asking for Moshiach, Moshiach won't turn them down. Apparently, he is waiting for us, but we aren't waiting for him."

There was a city whose residents were waiting for Moshiach to come. They hired someone to be awake every night, and told him that if he sees Moshiach coming to their city in the middle of the night, he should blow shofar and

22. See (Ezra 1) that Koresh helped rebuild the second Beis HaMikdash. This was his reaction, due to his distress over the Churban. (*Yeshuas Yaakov*).

ring bells and wake everyone up, so they could all go out to greet Moshiach.

Once he saw someone coming, and he thought it was probably Moshiach. He blew the shofar and rang the bells. The entire city woke up. But it soon became clear that it was a *meshulach* who came to collect funds.

The *meshulach* said to this man, "I see you are a talented person. Come with me, and we

can collect money together."

The man replied, "No way! I want to stay at my post! If I go collecting with you, it is good for a few years, but what will I do after that? At this position, I have *parnassah* for years..."

This story illustrates how people wait for Moshiach, but deep down, they don't expect it to happen. Our goal is to genuinely wait for Moshiach. Through our yearning and waiting, Moshiach will come, speedily in our days, amen.

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