

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Devarim - T"B



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Torah Wellsprings - Devarim - T"V

Emunah

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* advised his chassidim not to study kabbalah before they merit *giluy Eliyahu*. Years later, people saw the Husiatiner Rebbe *zy'a*, a grandson of the Ruzhiner, studying kabbalah. They assumed he merited to see Eliyahu HaNavi because his grandfather said one must see Eliyahu before learning these *sefarim*!

But the Husiatiner Rebbe told them that he hadn't seen 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 is worthy of learning kabbalah."

In other words, in our generation, believing in Hashem is equivalent to seeing Eliyahu HaNavi.

It states in this week's *parashah* (3:15) ולמכיר Rebbe Tzadok HaKohen *zy'a* explained, ולמכיר, for those who recognize Hashem (they know that Hashem created the world and that everything happens by Hashem's hashgachah pratis), to him נתתי את הגלעד, I will send him Eliyahu HaGiladi. Due to his emunah, he deserves to meet with Eliyahu HaNavi.

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zt'l* explained the *pasuk* as follows: למכיר, to recognize whether a person believes in Hashem, נתתי, I give the following sign: גל-עד. Happiness is the testimony. (גל or גיל) means happiness, and עד is testimony. גלעד means that a person's happiness is a sign and testimony that he believes in Hashem.

When a person believes in Hashem, he will always be happy. Whatever happens to him, he knows it is for the best and not by chance. He isn't worried about the future because he trusts Hashem to help him. Additionally, what greater joy is there than to speak and to serve Hashem, the King and Creator of the world? For these reasons, when one has emunah, he will have joy. If a person is sad, and yet claims that he has emunah, his disposition testifies against him. However, גל-עד, one's happiness is testimony to his emunah.

This week's *parashah* describes the miracles and wonders that Hashem performed for the Jewish nation in the desert. For example, it states (1:31) ובמדבר אשר ראית אשר נשאך ה' אלקיך כאשר ישא איש את בנו בכל הדרך אשר הלכתם 'עד באכם עד המקום הזה, "And in the desert, where you have seen how Hashem, your G-d, has carried you as a man carries his son, all the way that you have gone until you have come to this place."

The following *pasuk* states, ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלוהיכם, "With this matter, you don't believe in Hashem your G-d." The Bnei Yissaschar (*Agra d'Kalah*) explains that when people see *mann* coming down from heaven to feed the nation, water pouring from a stone to quench their thirst, and clouds of glory surrounding them to protect them, they don't have to believe in Hashem. They know Hashem. They see His presence in their life. Therefore, the Torah says, ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלוהיכם, this isn't called emunah. Emunah is to believe in Hashem even when we don't see His kindness and life is hard. To believe, even then, that everything is from Hashem and for the good.²

1. Literally, the *pasuk* means, "To the family of Machir [the son of Menashe], I gave the Gilead [as an inheritance]."

2. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Likutei Teshuvos, Michtavim* 9) relates the following about his rebbe, Reb Noson Adler *zt'l*:

The Churban happened as a result of a lack of emunah in Hashem. Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Patilch *zt'l* (a grandson of Rebbe Uri of Strelisk *zy'a*) discusses the dates of the four fast days. They are the 17th (of Tamuz), the 9th (of Av), the 10th (of Teves), and the 3rd (of Tishrei). These dates are gematria 39, the same gematria as הוי"ה אחד. These fasts are to reestablish our emunah in הוי"ה אחד, and in the zechus of our emunah, the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt.

Benefits of Yesurim

It states (Tehillim 89:16) אֲשֶׁר־יָדָעַי תְּרוּעָה. The *Noam Megadim* explains that the word תְּרוּעָה comes from the word רָעָה, bad. The *pasuk* is saying, "Fortunate is the nation יָדָעַי תְּרוּעָה, who knows that even the bad is for their benefit." And therefore, they can be happy and praise Hashem for what appears to be bad, too, because they believe it is for their good. As the Mishnah (*Brachos* ch.9) states, חַיִּיב אָדָם לִבְרֹךְ עַל הָרָעָה כְּשֶׁם שֶׁמִּבְרֹךְ עַל הַטּוֹבָה, "One must praise Hashem for the bad just as he praises Hashem for the good."

The Rambam (*Pirush HaMishnayos*, *Brachos* ch.9) writes, "When bad things happen to you, be happy and accept it with a good heart. Don't be angry and upset. Say the *brachah* דִּיין הָאֵמֶת with happiness, just as you would say the

brachah הַטּוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב [with happiness, when good things happen to you]. The wise understand the logic of this concept."

The Rambam (which we will quote shortly) explains that sometimes we think something is very good, and afterwards, we discover how much bad came from it. And vice versa, there are times when bad things occur, and later, we find out how good it was for us. Therefore, there is no reason to be extra happy when good things occur and there is no reason to be super upset when bad things occur, *r'l*. When things happen, we don't yet know what will come from it. All we can do is to trust in Hashem that He is leading us in the best way, and to praise Him for every situation.

We quote the Rambam: "Even if the Torah wouldn't obligate us to thank Hashem for the bad, the wise understand to do so on their own. This is because many things appear good initially but are very bad in the end. The wise don't feel startled and lost when confronted with hardships because one doesn't know what will come from them. You also shouldn't be overly happy when something good happens because you don't know if this good will be forever."³

"When I came to my rebbe [Reb Noson Adler *zt'l*] for the first time when I arrived in Boskovitz, he had two children – a young son and a twelve-year-old daughter. He loved his daughter immensely because of her good deeds...it is impossible to list all her praises. But due to our many sins, she was *niftarah*. Nevertheless, Reb Noson didn't cry. He accepted Hashem's decree with joy. I never saw such joy on him, not even when he davened on Simchas Torah. Throughout the year, on Shabbos, Reb Noson Adler would receive the *aliyos* of *kohen* and *maftir*, and on the Shabbos of the *shiva* (which was פרשת וירא), he didn't change his custom. When he recited the *haftarah*, one tear fell from his eye, and he caught it in his hand. But then he took hold of himself and showed no more signs of distress. Since then, he never mentioned his daughter's name and didn't have additional children."

3. The following stories remind us not to get upset when something doesn't work out because only good can come from it. I heard the following story from the *baal hamaaseh*, Reb Shlomo Pinchas Shwimmer *shlita* of Monroe, N.Y.

One evening, Reb Shlomo Pinchas saw a sixteen-year-old *bachur* wandering the streets. It was obvious that he had lost his way. "Tzaddik, how can I help you?" Reb Shlomo Pinchas asked.

The *bachur* replied, "I live in Monsey and learn in yeshiva there. During the summer, my yeshiva goes to a camp at 441 Schunnemunk Rd, Monroe. I just returned from Monsey, where I went to see a doctor because I was experiencing pain in my arm. The doctor found nothing, so I took a taxi back to camp. The

driver couldn't find 441 Schunnemunk Rd, so he dropped me off on the corner of Schunnemunk Rd. and Bardichov St. I don't know where to go from here."

Reb Shlomo Pinchas said, "Come in, I'll drive you there." Reb Shlomo Pinchas entered the address in his GPS, but it didn't show up. After some investigation, he realized that Schunnemunk Rd. is a very long street, and the address the *bachur* was looking for was far down the street, over in Highland Mills. (That is why he didn't find it on the GPS. They searched in Monroe, but this address was in another town.)

But Schunnemunk isn't easy to follow, and they couldn't find #441.

The *bachur* said, "Every morning, we use the *mikvah* on Koritz St. Please take me there because from there I know a shortcut to the camp."

When they arrived at Koritz St., the *bachur* showed Reb Shlomo Pinchas where to drive, and soon they arrived at the camp. Reb Shlomo Pinchas was never in this area before. He was impressed by the camp's old but large building with a beautiful lake in the background.

The next day, the *bachurim* went boating on the lake. One of the boats flipped over, and four *bachurim* fell into the water. Three swam to shore, but one *bachur* couldn't return. By the time friends pulled him to shore, he had lost consciousness. Hatzalah of Monroe received the call for help, and they immediately dispatched emergency personnel to go to 441 Schunnemunk Rd. The Hatzalah volunteers couldn't figure out how to get to the camp, but Reb Shlomo Pinchas (a Hatzalah member!) was able to direct them. They saved the *bachur* just in time.

It was the *bachur* Reb Shlomo Pinchas had helped the previous day. His arm hurt, so he didn't have the strength to swim ashore. Had Hatzalah arrived a minute later, there would be no one to save. The following Shabbos, the *bachur* benched *הגמל* in public, thanking Hashem for the miracle.

This story teaches that even when something seems bad, it is really for the good. The taxi driver dropped the *bachur* off at the wrong place, and the *bachur* was lost. But this problem saved his life the very next day. There are many similar stories, and they occur to every person. Sometimes, something seems terrible, and a lot of good comes from it.

A *chasunah* was scheduled in Bnei Brak, but the musicians didn't show up! The musicians lived in Yerushalayim, and on the night of this *chasunah*, many *hafganos*, demonstrations, were going on in Yerushalayim. The roads were blocked, and they couldn't reach the *chasunah*.

The *chasunah* hall in Bnei Brak was connected, wall to wall, with another hall. The *baalei simchah* celebrating in the other hall kindly connected the cables, so the music playing at their *chasunah* could be heard at the *chasunah* where the musicians didn't show up.

At the hall with the live music, the band was playing the renowned song *ימים על ימי מלך תוסף*, customarily played when the rosh yeshiva dances with the chasan. At that time, a great-uncle danced with the chasan in the other hall. He thought this song was being played in his honor and was very pleased. He had prepared a five-hundred-shekel check for the *chasan*. (That was the amount he gave at the *chasunos* of all his relatives.) But due to the honor he received, he ripped up that check and wrote another one for fifty thousand shekel. It became apparent that the "problem" proved to be a "solution."

Here is another story: Someone with a large family worked as a bus driver. He didn't like his job, and the wages were meager, but it put food on the table to feed his family. One day, he was involved in an accident, and his license was revoked. He lost his source of income. How would he support his family?

He always enjoyed art but never had the time or courage to devote himself to it. Now, he had a lot of extra time and a dire need to earn *parnassah*, so he picked up a paintbrush and began painting.

Each of his paintings sold for \$5,000. He was successful beyond expectation.

Now, he works in art, a job he enjoys, and earns far more money than before. He discovered that what he thought was bad for him was a blessing in disguise; losing his bus driver's license was the best thing to happen to him.

Mishpat Tzedek⁴ (Avos 5) writes, "We are mistaken when we think that what we are going through is bad. This that you think is bad will become the root of all the good that will follow. About this, it states (*Tehillim* 118:21) וְאֹדֶךְ כִּי עֲנִיתִי וְתָהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה, 'I praise You because You afflicted me, and the affliction became my salvation.' And it states (*Shoftim* 10:15), וְהַטִּיב, 'Do what's good in Your eyes.' Because a person thinks he knows what is good for him, and he davens for those matters, but it is possible that it isn't really good for him. Therefore, we pray, 'Ribono Shel Olam, do what You know is best.'" Our vision is limited; only Hashem knows what's best for us, and we pray to Hashem that He give us what He knows we need.

It states (*Tehillim* 42:9), וּבְלֵילָה שִׁירָה עָמִי תְפִילָה לְקָל, ח"י. The Malbim explains, "ובלילה", also at night [which represents] before [Hashem's kindness comes to me]... even then שִׁירָה עָמִי, I sang to Hashem for His kindness, תְפִילָה לְקָל, ח"י, and I prayed for Hashem's kindness... because I knew that despite all the hardships, Hashem's kindness will arrive after the tzaros."

Eizor Eliyahu (from Reb Eliyahu Lerman zt'l, a student of the Kotzker zt'l) writes, "Hashem only bestows good and kindness on Bnei Yisrael. However, before the good comes, sometimes hardship and troubles must precede it, for this is Hashem's way so that the good that will come after it will be in the best manner. When one doesn't understand this, he thinks that Hashem, chas v'shalom, is doing bad to him, but it isn't so.

He writes that this is alluded to in the Haftarah of Shabbos Chazon (*Yeshayah* 1:2-3) בָּנִים גָּדַלְתִּי וְרוֹמַמְתִּי וְהֵם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי יָדַע שׁוֹר קוֹנָהוּ וְחִמּוֹר אָבוֹם, בעליו ישראל לא ידע עמי לא התבונן, "Children I have raised and exalted, but they have rebelled against Me. An ox knows his owner, and a donkey his master's trough, but Yisrael

doesn't know, My people don't comprehend." What don't the Jewish people know, and how did they rebel against Hashem? He explains that they don't know that everything is for the good. They think that Hashem wants to do bad to them. They don't realize that this is a preparation for much more and much better that will be coming.

It states in this week's parashah (1:27) וּתְרַגְּנוּ בָּאֱהָלֵיכֶם וּתֹאמְרוּ בְּשִׁנְאָת ה' אוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָתֵת אוֹתֵנוּ בְּיַד הָאֱמֹרִי לְהַשְׁמִידֵנוּ, "You spoke lashon hara in your tents and said that Hashem hates you and therefore He took you out of Mitzrayim to give you over to the hands of the Emorites..."

Bnei Yisroel cried and panicked, but there was nothing to fear. Hashem fought the wars for them, and they inherited the Holy Land, Eretz Yisrael.

The Gemara (*Taanis* 29) states, "That night was Tisha b'Av. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'אתם בכיתם בכיה של חנם ואני קובע לכם בכיה לדורות, 'You cried for no reason; I will give you a reason to cry for all generations."

The Yidden in the desert cried and were afraid to enter Eretz Yisrael, but there was nothing to fear. Because they cried for no reason, we cry in every generation. Their crying for no reason resulted in the churban, and now we have a reason to cry. As we are discussing, many times, people cry for no reason. They think life isn't good, are upset with their lot, and don't believe everything is for their best. They should remember what crying for no reason caused and train themselves to believe that even what appears terrible at first, is for our good.

As well, the Yesurim of the Churban were for our Benefit.

The Chasam Sofer zy'a (*Drashos*, 7 Av, p.326) writes, "If I weren't afraid, I would say Tisha

4. The Steipler Gaon zt'l advised *yungerleit* going through difficult times to study *sefer Mishpat Tzedek*, so they would know that Hashem's ways are just and that we should accept every situation with love. The Beis Yisrael zt'l also loved this *sefer* and held it in high regard.

b'Av is a happy day because we survived... [As *Chazal* say, 'Hashem poured His anger out on wood and stone so we could survive']. We should be praising Hashem on Tisha b'Av [for this salvation]. This is the reason Tisha b'Av is called *mo'ed* (a holiday). The crying and the mourning are for the *new* tragedies that happen every year. Because of our many sins, the curses and the *tzaros* become worse each day..."

The brother of the Maharal (Reb Chaim zt'l, Igros HaTiyul) notes that throughout Eichah, the name אלקים, the name of harsh judgment, isn't used. Instead, the name הו"ה, the name of compassion, is written. This teaches us that even the churban was an act of Hashem's mercy to save the Jewish nation.

When the Jewish nation believed the report of the *meraglim* and were afraid to go to Eretz Yisrael, they said (1:27) בשנאת ה' אותנו, "Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim because He hates us." The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 16:2) writes that this claim had consequences. Since they said that Hashem hates them (Yirmiyahu 12:8) על כן שנאתיה, therefore, Hashem hated them, r'l.

The Sfas Emes explains, "Hashem was acting solely for our benefit, but since they said Hashem hates them, this caused Hashem to hate them."

We learn from this: (a) everything Hashem does is for our benefit. (b) It is a grave aveirah to suspect that Hashem hates us and is acting against our best interests. (c) If we say Hashem hates us, this can cause it to happen, chalilah.

Hashem loves us and seeks our good. We must believe that, and then we will see how everything is for our good.

Yesurim Prepare us for the Next World

The Dubno Magid zt'l told the following mashal:

The doctors in the hospital instructed the parents of a sick child to do everything they could to keep their child awake. They warned that if the child falls asleep within the next hour, he might never awaken, r'l.

The parents spoke to their young child to keep him awake, but the child was tired, and his eyes were closing. The child's father took the pillow away from under the child's head and talked to him some more. It was uncomfortable for the child, but this helped him stay awake.

When he was about to fall asleep again, the father placed the child on the cold floor. The young child didn't understand why his father was doing this to him.

Even on the floor, the child began falling asleep again, so the father hit him. "Why is he hitting me?" the child thought. "Why does he want to torture me?" But it wasn't torture, and it wasn't cruel. It was the greatest kindness. It was saving the child's life.

The Dubno Magid explains that one of the purposes of yesurim is to arouse us to teshuvah. The yesurim are wake-up calls that we should improve our ways. If we don't wake up, the yesurim might become more painful. It is Hashem's compassion, so we don't sleep in galus and forget our purpose in life.⁵

5. Consider another mashal:

A father gets home late at night and finds the front door locked. He knocks on the door and the windows, but the family is fast asleep. One of the windows is slightly open, and a child is sleeping near the window. The father takes a pole and pokes the child. He wants the child to wake up and let him in. The child cries, and soon, the entire household is awake and alarmed. "Who is outside their home, trying to hurt them?" Had they known that the person poking them was their father, who only wanted to come inside to be with them, they would open the door for him. This is hinted at in the words (*Shir HaShirim* 5:4), דודי שלח ידו מן החור,

Two Types of Crying

The sin of the miraglim is discussed this week. In parashas Shlach, when talking about the miraglim, the Torah writes (Bamidbar

14:1), ותשא כל העדה ויתנו את קולם ויבכו העם בלילה ההוא, "The entire community raised their voices and shouted, and the people wept on that night." The Torah emphasizes that they raised their voices and shouted. Reb Shlomo

"My Friend sent His hand through the window..."

Hashem is calling us, and it is always for our good.

Reb Yaakov Galinsky *zt'l* repeated the following story. He heard it directly from the Rav mentioned in the story:

A group of ten Yidden in Russia were accused of engaging in illegal business. If found guilty, the punishment would be either exile to Siberia or execution. (Most likely, it would be execution, considering the Russian judge's antisemitic leanings.)

After the judges announced their verdict – execution – a high-ranking priest entered the courtroom and said to the prisoners, "I will give you a chance to live. If you convert to Christianity, you will be pardoned. You can return home like nothing happened. Think it over. I will ask you for your decision in five days from now."

The Russians knew that when Yidden are together, they strengthen each other in their emunah, so they separated the prisoners, placing them into ten private cells. Each prisoner was alone, and the priest and others came to them to try to convince them to convert. They explained that this was the only way they would be saved.

The only Yid allowed to visit the prisoners was the rav of the city. The rav arrived at the jail to see the prisoners. However, the priest was there, waiting for the rav. The priest assumed the rav would be on his side. What could be better than to save the lives of these men? He asked the rav to convince the men to accept the offer and convert to Christianity *r'l*.

When the fifth day arrived, the rav told the community, "Let's gather and daven for our ten brothers that they remain strong and pass this difficult test. They shouldn't exchange eternal life for life in this fleeting world."

After heart-rending *tefillos*, the Rav lit nine candles *l'iluy nishmos* the nine men who certainly chose death over conversion. He didn't light a tenth candle because one of the accused was a young orphan who only had a mother. The rav figured that this young man wouldn't pass the test and leave his mother alone. He also didn't want to distress the poor mother, the widow, with the thought that perhaps her son had died.

The mother, watching from the women's section, stood up and announced, "Light a candle for my son, too. I'm certain he will be *moser nefesh*. My only hope is that my son should pass this test and remain with his *emunah*."

The rav lit the tenth candle.

Shortly afterward, a *shaliach* from the court arrived and reported that all ten men were killed *al kiddush Hashem*.

The mother rejoiced over her son's sacrifice. Everybody watched this woman's joy and understood that her intense love for Yiddishkeit was passed down to her son, empowering him to pass this difficult test.

Reb Yankel Galinsky told this story as a lesson in chinuch. When parents show their love for Yiddishkeit, this love will be passed down to the children. Another lesson is the awareness of what is truly important in life. A moment of life in Olam HaBa is more pleasurable than the entire Olam HaZeh.

The story is also a lesson on the benefit of yesurim. One of the benefits of yesurim is that it frees us from tzaros in the next world. All yesurim in this world are worthwhile when they save us from yesurim in Olam HaBa.

Kluger zt'l says that their main aveirah was that they raised their voices.

According to this explanation, their aveirah wasn't that they cried or worried. A person is only human, and it is natural to be concerned and afraid. Their aveirah was that they raised their voices and cried. Reb Shlomo Kluger explains that when a person cries silently, he is worried, but he feels that there is hope. Weeping loudly shows that he thinks that all hope is gone, and all that is left to do is to mourn the loss. Because they lost all hope, it was considered to be an aveirah. This is also implied in this week's parashah, as it states (1:34), וישמע ה' את קול דבריכם, "Hashem heard the sound of your words, and He became angry..." Hashem was angry with the loud cries – the fact that they had lost hope.⁶

It states (Devarim 14:1-2) בניכם אתם לה' אלקיכם לא תתגודדו ולא תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלקיך, "You are children of Hashem, your G-d. You shall neither cut yourselves nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For you are a holy people to Hashem, your G-d..."

The Ramban writes, "The pasuk is saying that you are a holy nation, Hashem's chosen nation... It isn't proper for you to cut yourselves or to cause baldness due to death, even if someone died young. The Torah doesn't forbid crying, because by nature, a person will cry when a loved one leaves or travels a distance, even when alive..."

The Ramban clearly tells us that crying is permitted. The problem is when it becomes excessive. The Ramban quotes the Gemara (Moed Katan 27:) באסרם להתאבל על נפש יותר מדא', that one may not mourn for a dead too much."

A few years ago, at the end of a shivah, a Rav showed his family a milk bottle and told them to look at the expiration date. He explained to them, "When the expiration date arrives, we stop drinking the milk because that is when it begins to spoil. The same is true with mourning. There is a time for crying, but when the shivah is over, if we continue crying excessively, it is like spoiled milk. There is a time and place for everything, and the time for crying and intense mourning has passed."

6. One Chol HaMoed Succos, Rebbe Shlomo Leib Lenchana zt'l led a *tish* and shared with his chassidim the following idea: "The entire world isn't worth a *krechitz*. Our destiny is Olam HaBa. Therefore, we shouldn't be upset when we lack worldly matters; they are trivial. We should keep our focus on the goal, on Olam HaBa."

Just then, a bench collapsed from the weight of the many people standing on it. Some of the chasidim fell and were injured, and the Rebbe was also injured from the incident. The Rebbe emitted a *krechitz* from the pain.

One of the chassidim asked, "Why is the Rebbe *krechitzing*? Didn't the Rebbe say this world isn't worth a *krechitz*?"

The Rebbe replied, "True, the world isn't worth a *krechitz*, but when it hurts, one shouts and *krechitzes* from pain." The Beis Yisrael of Gur zt'l repeated this story and explained that it is a natural reaction to *krechitz* and shout when in pain. But even then, his mind and intellect should remember that this world isn't so important that we should moan over it. Feelings remain feelings, and when one is in pain, he shouts; nevertheless, deep in his heart, he should remember that it is all for the good. When a father brings his son to the dentist, he expects his son will cry during the treatments. The father isn't upset at his son for crying because it is natural for a child to cry when in pain. But if the son says to his father, "Why did you bring me here? Why are you doing this to me?" the father will get upset. The son should trust that everything his father does is for his benefit

Similarly, although we can cry and moan when we are worried or in pain, chalilah, we must never say or think that our situation is bad for us. We must know, at least intellectually, that everything is for our good.

The Klausenberger Rebbe zt'l lost his wife, and eleven children in the Holocaust hy'd, r'l. He said (Tehillim 33:9) **כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי הוּא** צוה ויעמוד, the Ribono Shel Olam Who commanded that the tzarah should come, He also commanded ויעמוד, that we should pick ourselves up from the mourning and move on with life.

It states (Bereishis 27:34) **וַיִּצְעַק צַעֲקָה גְדוּלָּה וּמְרָה עַד** מאוד, "[Eisav] cried out an exceedingly great and bitter cry." He shouted bitterly because Yaakov received the brachos. Surprisingly, the Midrash (Esther Rabba 8) states that Yaakov was punished for causing Eisav this anguish. Years later, Yaakov's descendant Mordechai shouted bitterly due to Haman, Eisav's descendant, as it states (Esther 4:1) **וַיִּצְעַק זַעֲקָה גְדוּלָּה** וּמְרָה, "He cried a loud and bitter cry."

However, we can ask that by Eisav it says he shouted **עַד מְאֹד**, an exceedingly bitter scream, whereas it doesn't state **עַד מְאֹד** by Mordechai's shouting. It seems that the punishment wasn't equal.

The answer is that a Yid never shouts bitterly **עַד מְאֹד**. His anguish is always limited because he knows that Hashem is in charge.

It states (Tehillim 119:8) **אֵל תַּעֲזִיבֵנִי עַד מְאֹד**. Dovid davened that Hashem should never take away his emunah until he feels that the tzaros are **עַד מְאֹד**, exceedingly great, beyond what he can endure.

I heard from a tzaddik that the earth is round, without corners, so a person should never feel he got to "the end of the world." No matter what trouble he is going through, there is always hope.

Everything is from Hashem

In the Kovno ghetto, Reb Mordechai Pegrimansky zt'l gave chizuk to a group of his friends who were very worried and frightened. Naturally, they were worried. Their lives and the lives of their families were at stake twenty-four hours a day.

Reb Mordechai said that he can prove to them that Hashem is protecting them, and

therefore, they should rely on Him and be happy. He said, "Do you agree that the SS soldiers hate us and want to kill us?"

They all agreed to that. There was nothing to debate. They knew that too well.

"Do you also agree that if they kill us, no one will punish them or even ask them why they did so?"

His friends agreed once again. It was indeed so.

Reb Mordechai Pegrimansky said, "The SS soldiers saw us today. Why didn't they kill us? What could stop them from pulling the trigger? It must be that Hashem said 'No.' They can't do anything without Hashem."

The entire group of friends survived the war and said they always remembered Reb Mordechai's lesson. It gave them chizuk throughout those difficult times.

With a bitter heart, Reb Michael Ber Weissmandl zt'l came to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rayatz zt'l, and told him how he had prepared a plan that would save thousands of Yidden from the Holocaust, but cruel people stopped him and foiled his plans.

The Rayatz gave him a piercing look and asked, "And Who did all of this?"

Reb Michael Ber said that these words changed his entire outlook. He was angry at the people who stopped him and ruined his plans, and suddenly, he remembered that everything is in Hashem's hands.

In the midst of the Holocaust, some managed to escape Europe and reach Eretz Yisrael. At a Rabbinic gathering, one of the survivors discussed the atrocities taking place on European soil. With a bitter heart, he shouted, "The Germans are doing all of this, and He remains silent."

Reb Issar Zalman Meltzer zt'l immediately stood up and said, "The Germans are doing

this?! He is doing!" Everything is from Hashem, and for reasons only He knows.

This is as it states (Eichah 3:37) מִי זֶה אָמַר וְתִהְיֶה ה' "Who said and it occurred if Hashem didn't command." Rashi explains that we can't say that the Churban happened by chance because the good and the bad are from Hashem.

There was a narrow river, called נחל זר, between the desert and Eretz Yisrael, but the Yidden couldn't cross it without Hashem's help. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 19:24) states that this brook, זר, was wide as זרת, an amah. "But they couldn't cross over it for thirty-eight years until Hashem said (2:13) ועתה קומו "And now get up and go over the Zered Brook." And it states (2:14) והימים אשר הלכנו מקדש ברנע עד אשר עברנו את נחל זר שלושים ושמונה שנה, "The days that we traveled from Kodesh Barneia until we crossed Zered Brook were thirty-eight years." This is because without Hashem's help, one cannot pass over a river as narrow as an amah. On the other hand, with Hashem's help, one can cross the sea.

Hishtadlus

We are obligated to do *hishtadlus*, and a main source for this is this week's parashah. The Yalkut Shimoni (808) states, "Perhaps Hashem will send you blessings even if you sit idle and do nothing? The pasuk says (2:7), כי ה' אלקיך ברוך בכל מעשה ידיך, 'Hashem your G-d has blessed you in all that you do.' If a person does, he receives Hashem's blessing. If he doesn't, he will not receive."⁷

The Mesilas Yeshtarim (ch.21) explains the purpose of *hishtadlus*, "Technically, a person could do nothing, and the decree [of how much *parnassah* he will earn] would take place if it weren't for the קנס, tax, that was placed on all mankind, בועת אפיק תאכל לחם, 'By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.' Due to the decree of the Exalted King, everyone must do *hishtadlus* for his *parnassah*. It's a tax⁸ that all humanity must pay, and it is one that no one can escape. But it isn't the *hishtadlus* that helps. It is an obligation. After one did *hishtadlus*, he fulfilled his obligation, and Heaven's blessings can come. He doesn't need to spend all of his days seeking *parnassah*."

HaMaspik L'Ovdei Hashem (Rabbeinu Avraham ben HaRambam zt'l, Bitachon 8) writes, "To trust that *hishtadlus* brings *parnassah* is כפירה נסתרת (concealed heresy). This is because although he says he believes in Hashem, deep in his heart he thinks *parnassah* depends on how much *hishtadlus* he does, and that *refuah* depends on doctors and medicine. Dovid HaMelech said about such people, שנאתי, 'I hate those who trust in foolishness. I trust in Hashem.'"

In this week's parashah, Moshe Rabbeinu says (1:12), איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם משאכם וריבכם, "How can I carry all your disputes all by myself?" Rashi says משאכם means they were *apikorsim*.

In what way were they *apikorsim*, and why does משאכם mean that they were *apikorsim*?

A translation of משאכם is "your heavy loads." This alludes to those who think they

7. The next words of the *pasuk* are, ידע לכתך. The Yalkut Shimoni writes, "לכתך is similar to the word ללכלך, dirt. ידע לכתך Hashem knows the filth you must endure to earn your *parnassah*." This refers to the great tests people encounter trying to earn *parnassah*. How, indeed, does one pass these tests?

The answer is עמך, know that "Hashem is with you" at the workplace. If you will remember that לא חסרת דבר, you will pass all tests.

8. Based on this *Mesilas Yeshtarim*, Reb Eliyahu Dessler zt'l taught that someone who does excessive *hishtadlus* can be compared to a merchant who already paid his taxes yet runs after the tax collector to give him more money.

carry the heavy load of life all by themselves. This is *apikorsus* because they are not alone. Hashem carries the load together with them.

To explain, we share the following popular *mashal*:

A poor man was walking down the road while carrying a heavy package on his shoulders. A king, riding by in his chariot, offered him a ride. The poor man climbed into the wagon but continued carrying the heavy package. The king asked him why he didn't put his bag down. The poor man replied, "Honorable king. I'm thankful to you for taking me in your wagon. I don't want to trouble you to carry my bag too."

The king replied, "I'm carrying your package, regardless, because you and your package are on the wagon. So, you may as well put your bag down."

People are similar. Hashem carries them and supplies them with all their needs. If they feel *משאכם*, that they need to carry their needs on their shoulders, that is *apikorsus*.

It states in this week's *parashah* (1:32), *ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלוהיכם*, "In this matter, you do not believe in Hashem, your G-d." The Rebbe of Stretin (*Degel Machenah Yehudah*) *zt'l* explains that if a person thinks his *parnassah* will come *בדבר הזה*, specifically in *this way*, and not in any other way, he doesn't believe in Hashem because Hashem can provide *parnassah* in many ways.⁹

9. Someone complained to Rebbe Hershele of Lisk *zt'l* that a competitor opened a store near his shop and is worried that it will hurt his *parnassah*.

Rebbe Hershele Lisker responded with the following *mashal*:

A person owned a chicken, and every day, he threw some breadcrumbs into the coop.

One day, he bought another chicken and placed it in the coop. The first chicken, worried that the "newcomer" would eat all the food, pecked at the new chicken and ripped out its feathers.

The owner watched this and thought to himself, "Chicken! Why don't you understand? I know two birds are now in the coop, and I will put in a double portion, enough for both of you."

Rebbe Hershele Lisker *zt'l* explained, "Hashem gives *parnassah*. And now that two people have the same business, Hashem will send a bigger portion. He will provide for both of you. There is no reason to worry."

Someone saw partners working in a field; one dug holes in the ground, and the other filled those holes with earth again.

He asked them, "What are you doing? What is the purpose of digging holes if you immediately fill them?"

They replied, "We usually work in groups of three. One digs a hole, the second puts in a sapling, and the third covers it with earth. Today, the partner that usually places the sapling into the earth didn't show up, but we figured that just because he isn't here doesn't mean we shouldn't do our job."

This story reminds us that we have a Partner with everything we do. We can't do anything on our own. We make *hishtadlus*, but all work is futile without Hashem, the primary Partner.

A businessman had an important meeting scheduled in the Nine Days. He asked Reb Moshe Feinstein *zt'l* whether he may shave his beard to look presentable at the meeting.

Reb Moshe ruled that shaving is forbidden during the Nine Days. A business meeting does not make it permitted.

But the businessman feared his unshaven face would ruin his chances of closing the deal, so he shaved.

The meeting went well initially. They were about to sign a contract when one of the non-Jewish businessmen asked, "How do we know that we can trust you? Can you prove to us your honesty in business?"

The Midrash (*Eichah Pesichta* 24) quotes the tefillos the Avos prayed at the time of the Churban. Avraham Avinu said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Ribono shel Olam, when I was one hundred years old, you gave me a son. When he was a thirty-seven-year-old scholar, You told me to sacrifice him, and I bound him on the *mizbeiach*. Won't You remember that merit? Won't You have compassion on my children?"

Yitzchak Avinu said, "Ribono Shel Olam, when my father hinted to me that I would be sacrificed, I didn't protest. On the contrary, I allowed him to bind me on the *mizbeiach*. I stretched my throat out to the sword. Won't

You remember that merit? Won't You have compassion on my children?"

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

Avraham and Yitzchak spoke about their *mesirus nefesh* at the *akeidah*, and Yaakov

The Yid replied, "You don't have to worry. I am a religious Jew, and I follow the Torah. The Torah mandates stringent business ethics, so you can trust me."

"You're a Jew?" another non-Jewish participant interjected. "I know Jews don't shave this time of year. But you are clean-shaven. If you aren't loyal to your religion, how can we trust you will be honest in business?"

The deal fell through. This is an example of what occurs when one tries to do business while ignoring the primary Partner.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov *zt'l* told the following story:

A generous baal tzedakah served hot, satisfying meals to anyone who came to his door. A poor person heard about this and went there to receive a meal. However, he accidentally knocked on the neighbor's door.

"Can I have a meal?" he asked.

The neighbor immediately understood what occurred and decided to take advantage of the situation. He answered, "Certainly, you can have your meal, but first, you must do some work for me."

The neighbor gave him hard work around his house, and when he finished, he said, "You did well. Now you can receive your reward. Go next door. A good meal awaits you there."

As he ate, he commented to the host, "It was hard work, but it was worth it."

The host asked him, "Where did you work hard?"

He answered, "In your house, next door."

The host understood what happened and corrected him. "You worked for free, and you're eating for free."

This story teaches us the essence of *hishtadlus*. We work in one place and earn *parnassah* from another. It isn't the work that brings parnassah. Work is a tax that must be paid to be eligible to receive parnassah. After we do *hishtadlus*, Hashem sends parnassah.

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* sent Reb Shalom Schwadron *zt'l* on a trip to London to raise money for Pe'ilim (a *kiruv* organization). Reb Shalom wasn't successful on that trip and didn't make much money in London. When he returned, the Chazon Ish showed him a five-hundred-dollar check (a princely sum in those days) and said, "I received this check from a baal tzedakah in Brazil for Pe'ilim. You did *hishtadlus* in London, and the *yeshuah* came from Brazil."

spoke about his *mesirus nefesh* to raise his family. From here, we see that *mesirus nefesh* to raise a family is as great a sacrifice as the *akeidah*.

The Nesivos Shalom *zt'l* repeated this Midrash to a father complaining about how hard it was for him to support his family. The Nesivos Shalom explained, "Raising a family is the greatest deed and the supreme sacrifice. It is comparable to the *mesirus nefesh* of the *akeidah*. But don't worry. Do *hishtadlus* and Hashem will help that everything will work out."

Chumash Devarim

The Yid HaKadosh of Peshischa *zt'l* studied *Chumash Devarim* every day of the year and encouraged his chassidim to do the same. He said, "There isn't a better *mussar sefer*!" (*Shem MiShmuel*, Devarim 5675; *Pri Tzaddik*, Devarim ¹⁰ד"ה אלה.)

The Shlah (*Va'eschanan*) writes, "Why do we seek *mussar*? The entire *sefer Devarim* is filled with *mussar*."

Chazal (*Yevamos* 4.) say, אפילו למאן דלא דריש סמוכים בעלמא דהא ר' יהודה בעלמא לא דריש ובמשנה תורה דריש. The Kotzker *zt'l* said סמוכים means to be close to Hashem. The Gemara is hinting, "Even Reb Yehudah, a 'Reb Yid,' a simple Jew – who is distant from Hashem throughout the year can become סמוכים, close to Hashem when he reads *sefer Devarim*."

The first *pasuk* of *sefer Devarim* states, אלה, הדברים אשר דיבר משה אל כל ישראל, "These are the words that Moshe spoke to every Yid." The Chozeh of Lublin *zy'a* explains that אל כל ישראל, "to every Yid" is literal. Moshe Rabbeinu addressed this *Chumash* to every Yid, including the Yidden living thousands of years later. In *sefer Devarim*, Moshe

speaks to us and teaches us the *mussar* we need to hear.

Chazal say Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest *navi*. All *nevi'im* say, כה אמר ה', "Hashem said *like this*," while Moshe said, ז"ה הדבר, "This is what Hashem said." This means Moshe had a clear vision of prophecy and could repeat Hashem's messages exactly as Hashem said them. Rebbe Tzaddok HaKohen *zt'l* explains that Moshe said his *nevuah* the moment he received it. As he spoke to the nation, he would tell them ז"ה הדבר; this is the prophecy that I am receiving for you *right now*. The Torah is eternal, and therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu's *mussar* is for us, as well. Moshe speaks to us today, and he tells us, ז"ה הדבר אשר צוה ה', this is what Hashem is saying to you right now. This is the message that you have to hear, right now, so you can improve your ways. We can receive these prophecies and discover the lessons and messages that apply to us when we study the *parshiyos* of *sefer Devarim*.

Shabbos Chazon

This Shabbos is called Shabbos Chazon because the *haftarah* begins with the words חזון ישעיהו, "Yeshayahu's vision." Nevertheless, the name is surprising because why should we name the Shabbos after the *haftarah* that discusses the *churban*? As the Kedushas Levi (*Eichah* ו'ה ואומר אבד) asks, "Why is this Shabbos called Chazon? It isn't praise for Yisrael!"

The Kedushas Levi answers (*Drushei Tzemech Tzaddik*, *Eichah*) that חזון means a vision, and on this Shabbos, Hashem shows every Yid the vision of how the world will appear when the third Beis HaMikdash is built.

The Kedushas Levi tells the following *mashal*:

A king granted his son a present, a gift that befits a prince. It was an expensive set

10. The Satmar Rebbe *zy'a* said, "When people travel to their summer homes, it is hard to carry along many *mussar sefarim*. But they take along a *Chumash Devarim*, which is sufficient because *Chumash Devarim* is the best *mussar sefer*."

of clothing, but the prince played outdoors and ripped and soiled the clothing.

The king ordered another set of clothes, but the prince also ruined those.

The king saw that his son was too young to wear these expensive clothes. So, he ordered a third set of royal clothes, and he told his son, "When you mature and I see you can take care of your clothing, I will give it to you."

Once a year, the king would take out the beautiful clothes and show them to his son. He did this so his son would desire the clothes, improve his behavior, and then be granted the clothing. The king would tell his son, "When I see that you are responsible and ready, I will give you the clothes."

This is what occurs each year on Shabbos Chazon. Hashem shows us the third Beis HaMikdash and what life will be like at that time, and Hashem tells us, "I am showing you the future era, so you will desire it and yearn for it. When I see you are ready, I will give it to you."

The Tzaddikim of Bobov zt'l would advise to bring in Shabbos early on Shabbos Chazon, to turn some more of the mourning into a time of joy.

The Ohev Yisrael writes, "לֹא אֲשֶׁר שֶׁבַת חֲזוֹן הוּא, יוֹתֵר גָּדוֹל בְּמַעֲלָה מִכָּל שִׁבְתוֹת הַשָּׁנָה", "There is reason to say that Shabbos Chazon is the greatest Shabbos of the year." He adds that when Shabbos Chazon falls on Tisha b'Av, it is even greater.

We would think that Shabbos Chazon is the lowest Shabbos of the year. How can this Shabbos be the greatest Shabbos of the year?

The Gemara (*Yevamos* 62: הויצא לדרך) says that the love between people increases before separation. The Ohev Yisrael explains that at the time of the Destruction, the love between Hashem and the Jewish nation was at its peak, as it was a moment before a separation. This is the specialness of this Shabbos, greater than all Shabbosim of the year. It is a time of closeness with Hashem.

The Midrash says, "לֹא הָיָה יוֹם מוֹעֵד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּיּוֹם, שֶׁנִּחְרַב בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ", "There wasn't a holiday for Yisrael like the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed."¹¹ Ohev Yisrael explains that this is because of the closeness with Hashem that we experienced during this bitter time of separation.

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 99.) teaches that when Yidden served Hashem, the *keruvim* in the Beis HaMikdash faced one another. When Yidden didn't serve Hashem, the *keruvim* turned away from each other. It was a miracle because they were gold figures, and they moved on their own, in accordance with the connection between Hashem and the Jewish nation.¹² Chazal (*Yoma* 54:) say, "When the goyim entered the Kodesh Kadoshim, they found the *keruvim* embracing one another!" The *Rishonim* ask, at this time of the destruction, when the nation was guilty of the three cardinal aveiros: idolatry, murder, and adultery, the *keruvim* should have been turned away from each other! Why were they facing and embracing one another?

11. Some explain that this is because Hashem poured out His wrath on wood and stone, and our lives were spared.

12. Reb Chaim Volozhiner (*Nefesh HaChaim* 1:8) writes, "It is known that one *keruv* represents Hashem and the other the Jewish nation. The degree of closeness and connection of the Jewish people to Hashem — or *chas veshalom* the opposite — could miraculously be observed by the positions of the *keruvim*. When the eyes of the Jewish nation were turned to Hashem, the *keruvim* faced each other. But if the Jewish nation turned away or turned slightly to the side, that would immediately be mirrored by the *keruvim*. If *chas veshalom*, they turned away entirely, the *keruvim* would completely turn away from each other."

One answer can be that it was a sign of the love that precedes separation.

Reb Yonason Eibshitz zt'l answers that the goyim came into the Beis HaMikdash on Shabbos, and on Shabbos, Hashem's love to us is always perfect.¹³ We know it was Shabbos because the Yerushalmi (*Taanis* 4:5) says the Babylonians entered the Beis HaMikdash on *rosh chodesh Av*, and Tisha b'Av was on Sunday. So, if Tisha b'Av was Sunday, *rosh chodesh* was on Shabbos. This is the reason the keruvim were seen embracing.

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zt'l said: Some people think being happy on Shabbos is a *madreigah* for tzaddikim and not applicable to the average person. Because what connection does a regular person have with Shabbos? But they are mistaken. If someone is *mechalel* Shabbos, he is חייב מיתה. So, just as he is associated with the severity of desecrating the Shabbos, he is also connected with the joy of Shabbos.

A chassid was traveling to be with Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa for Shabbos, but he got delayed and only arrived after Shabbos. Rebbe Bunim was glad he arrived after Shabbos because this person had a tendency to be sad, and Rebbe Bunim wanted to be happy on Shabbos.

When the man arrived, Rebbe Bunim told the following *vort*:

Shabbos honors her guests. When the guest is *rosh chodesh* (Shabbos rosh chodesh), Shabbos honors her guest and gives her the

haftarah and the *musaf*. When the guest is *yom tov*, Shabbos gives it all the *tefillos*. When the guest is Yom Kippur, Shabbos also gives away the Shabbos seudos. But when Tisha b'Av is the guest, Shabbos tells Tisha b'Av to wait until tomorrow. Shabbos doesn't accept this guest because Shabbos is a day of joy.

It states, וימים שמחתכם "The day of your happiness," and Chazal (*Sifri* 19) say that this refers to Shabbos. Therefore, rejoice with Shabbos. Eat tasty foods, sing *zemiros*, daven well, and make it a special day. Do so every Shabbos, including the Shabbosim of the Three Weeks, and even on Shabbos Chazon. And we should say "especially on Shabbos Chazon," because the Ohev Yisrael calls it the greatest Shabbos of the year.

Waiting and Mourning

A group of people spoke with the Brisker Rav zt'l about the tzaros the Jewish nation was suffering, and someone said, "We need Moshiach to come quickly to save us."

One of the men present whispered, "Moshiach isn't coming so fast."

The Brisker Rav got very upset. He called this man to another room and said, "How can a Yid say such a thing?"

The Brisker Rav took out a Rambam and read to him, "Whoever doesn't believe in Moshiach and doesn't await his arrival, not only doesn't he believe in the Nevi'im – he doesn't believe in Moshe Rabbeinu's Torah as well."¹⁴

13. The Ramban (*Bamidbar* 28:2) writes, "The *musaf* of Shabbos doesn't have a *korban chatas* like all other holidays. This is because Kneses Yisrael is like Hashem's spouse, and everything is peaceful."

This Ramban is kabbalistic, but the intention is that there are no sins on Shabbos; therefore, a *korban chatas* is unnecessary.

14. There was a city whose residents eagerly awaited the coming of Moshiach. They hired someone to stay awake every night, and if Moshiach arrived in middle of the night, he would blow a shofar and ring bells to wake everyone to go out and greet Moshiach.

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

Reb Shmuel Vosner zt'l notes that the Rambam begins his sefer (יד החזקה) with the obligation to believe in Hashem, and he concludes the sefer with our belief in Moshiach, and in between these two beliefs, he writes all the halachos of the Torah. This teaches us that the entire Torah is dependent on these two beliefs.

The Jewish community of Brisk wanted the Beis HaLevi zt'l to be their Rav, but the Beis HaLevi turned down their offer. Representatives from Brisk came to the Beis

HaLevi and pleaded, "Twenty-five thousand people live in Brisk, and they all want you to come be their Rav. Will you turn them all down?"

Immediately, the Beis HaLevi agreed to accept the position in Brisk.

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l said about this episode, "The Beis HaLevi didn't want to turn down 25,000 Yidden. If thousands of Yidden yearn and request for Moshiach, Moshiach will certainly not turn them down."¹⁵

After everyone calmed down from the false alarm, the *meshulach* told the night watchman, "I see you are talented. Come with me, and we will collect money together."

The man replied, "No way! I am staying at my post! If I go collecting with you, I will have a good source of income for a few years, but what will I do when I get old and it becomes too hard for me to go around? But in this position, I'll have *parnassah* for many years!"

This story illustrates how people wait for Moshiach; deep in their hearts, they don't expect him to come anytime soon. We must genuinely wait for Moshiach, and in that merit, Moshiach will come speedily in our days.

15. Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt'l studied in the Ksav Sofer's yeshiva in Pressburg, and he repeated an episode that shows how the simple people of that city sincerely anticipated the coming of Moshiach.

A woman asked her friend, "What did you prepare for lunch today?"

She replied, "*Beblach* (beans)."

"And what are you planning to cook for tomorrow?"

"Sha sha! *Al tiftach peh l'Satan*. [Don't imply that tomorrow will be a regular day]! But if *chas veshalom*, Moshiach doesn't come, I'll cook noodles."

This demonstrates how to wait for Moshiach. Every day, we should hope this will finally be the greatly anticipated day Moshiach will come.

Waiting for Moshiach is an obligation. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 31) teaches: "When a person is brought for judgment [in heaven], they ask him if he waited for Moshiach."

Shaarei Teshuvah (118) writes, "When one says לישועתך קוינו כל היום in *Shemonah Esrei*, he should think, 'I am from the people who wait for Moshiach,' because after one's passing, he will be asked whether he waited for Moshiach. Mahar'i Tzemech writes, 'In addition, [when I say these words] I have in mind that I am awaiting Hashem's salvation to save us from all bad encounters that can occur every day and every moment. I often found this to be very beneficial...'"

The Midrash tells us, "There was a woman who lost her young son and cried over him every night. Rabban Gamliel heard her cries, which roused him to mourn for the Churban. He cried so much until his eyelashes fell out. When Rabban Gamliel's students discovered what was happening, they arranged for that woman to move out of the neighborhood."

Why did this woman's tears rouse Raban Gamliel to cry for the Churban? Perhaps it is because all *tzaros* result from the Churban Beis HaMikdash. He heard her crying over her son and remembered the source of all her troubles: the Churban Beis HaMikdash.

Rebbe Nochum Chernobyler zt'l once stayed at the home of a simple couple. At midnight, Reb Nochum cried and mourned for the Churban Beis HaMikdash. The simple man asked Reb Nochum why he was crying so much and if there was anything he could do to help him. Reb Nochum replied that he was crying over the Churban and asked his host, "Don't you also want Moshiach to come and return us all to Yerushalayim?"

The simple man replied, "I'm not certain. Let me ask my wife about that."

After consulting with his wife, he returned and told Reb Nochum that his wife said they couldn't go to Yerushalayim because who would care for their hens and livestock if they moved to Yerushalayim?

Rebbe Nochum told him, "But we suffer from the goyim all the time. Wouldn't it be better to leave and go to Yerushalayim?"

Once again, the simple Yid said he would ask his wife's opinion. He returned and said, "My wife says that Hashem should take the goyim to Yerushalayim."

This story illustrates for us and reminds us that the mourning has left our hearts, and we don't even know why we mourn.

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 and *kohanim* doing the avodah. We aren't close to Hashem as we used to be."

Reb Shimshon Pincus zt'l (Galus v'Nechamah p.147-151) writes, "If someone isn't able to mourn and cry during Bein HaMetzarim for the Churban Beis HaMikdash and Galus

HaShechinah, he should sit on the floor and cry bitterly about his personal churban which is that he is unable to cry and that he doesn't care and cannot associate with the mourning over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash."¹⁶

The Yaavatz zt'l (Siddur Beis Yaakov, Tisha b'Av, 6:16) writes, "If our only sin were that we aren't mourning sufficiently for Yerushalayim, that would be reason enough to cause the galus to continue. In my opinion, this is the most logical and obvious cause for all the tzaros we encounter in galus. We never have respite from the Goyim, wherever we live. And this is because the mourning has left our hearts."¹⁷

Reb Yonoson Eibshitz zt'l (Yaaras Dvash vol.1, p.253) writes, "We don't feel the Churban. We are like a fool that doesn't feel his pain. Some tzaddikim had a complete understanding and recognized the dire loss caused by the Churban. If we understood how much we lost, how much perfection we lack, etc., we wouldn't want to eat or drink. We would roll in the earth from distress."

A member of our chaburah says that four years after his wife passed away, r'l, his sixteen-year-old daughter told him, "I feel bad for my younger siblings. Before Mother was niftarah, I was old enough to appreciate her love, and I know what I'm missing now. But the younger siblings hardly know their mother's love; they don't know what they are missing."

The father broke out in tears and said he now understands the meaning of galus in our times. We have lost so much due to the Churban, yet we have no idea what we lost!

16. Reb Shimshon Pinkus writes that at a levayah, only family members and close friends of the niftar cry. Similarly, during these days of mourning, those close to Hashem mourn and cry, but those who feel detached from the whole matter don't. He writes, "We can measure one's attachment to Hashem by the extent that he mourns over the Beis HaMikdash."

17. During the Nine Days, as they walked home from the Kosel Maaravi, Reb Shlomke of Zvhil zt'l asked his shamesh, Reb Elyah Roth zt'l, "Did you see? Even the stones of the Kosel were crying!"

Building Yerushalayim with Tears

Our mourning and our tears will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash. The Shlah HaKadosh (Masechta Taanis, Ner Mitzvah, #33) writes that we don't mourn on Shabbos because mourning builds the Beis HaMikdash, and it is forbidden to build the Beis HaMikdash on Shabbos.

It states (*Tehillim* 147), בונה ירושלים ה' נדחי ישראל, יבנה "Hashem builds Yerushalayim, He will gather in the dispersed of Yisrael." The Chasam Sofer *zy'a* (Drush 7th Av, 5599) asks that it seems that the pasuk should state in the future tense בונה ירושלים ה', "Hashem will build Yerushalayim." Why is it written in the present tense, בונה ירושלים, that Hashem is building the Beis HaMikdash now?

Chazal tell us that the third Beis HaMikdash will come down from heaven fully built up (see Rashi on Rosh Hashanah 30. ד"ה ל"צ). Hashem is building the Third Beis HaMikdash in heaven, and the construction materials are our tears and mourning. For two thousand years, we have mourned and cried for the Churban. Hakadosh Baruch Hu takes all those tears and mourning, and He builds the third Beis HaMikdash in heaven with them, brick by brick, stone by stone. When it is completed, it will come down from heaven.

The Gemara (*Makos* 24) says:

Rabban Gamliel, Reb Elazer ben Azaryah, Reb Yehoshua, and Reb Akiva traveled to Yerushalayim. When they came to Har HaBayis, they saw foxes coming out of the Kodosh Kodoshim. Rabban Gamliel, Reb Elazer ben Azaryah, and Reb Yehoshua cried. Reb Akiva laughed.

They asked R' Akiva, "Why are you laughing?"

Reb Akiva asked, "Why are you crying?"

They said, "The place about which is states והור הקרב יומת (that only *kohanim* may go there and anyone else will die) has foxes prancing about it. Shouldn't we cry?"

Reb Akiva replied, לך אני מצחק, "That is precisely why I'm laughing." Reb Akiva explained to them that when he saw the actualization of the prophecies of the destruction, he felt reassured that the prophecies of redemption would transpire.

From Reb Akiva's words, לך אני מצחק it seems that he was laughing *because* they were mourning.

Rebbe Yisrael of Tchorikov *zt'l* explains that he was happy that Yidden were mourning over the Churban because those tears would build the third Beis HaMikdash.

This is as the Zohar (vol.2 p.12:) tells us, "The redemption of Bnei Yisrael depends solely on crying."

Benefits of Mourning

Many benefits come from mourning. Reb Chaim Palagi (Moed l'Kol Chay, Av, #61) writes, "When one mourns for the Churban Beis HaMikdash, his sins are forgiven, he will live a long life, his children won't die in his lifetime, and his children will live long."

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* (Imrei Pinchas 404) says, "Tisha b'Av atones for sins because people are very broken. This is why after Tisha b'Av, we feel slightly similar to how we feel after Yom Kippur."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* said that those who cry for the Churban merit good children. (Therefore, as one mourns, it is an auspicious time to daven for your children's success in Torah and yiras Shamayim.)

The Kav HaYashar (ch.93) writes, "I received a true kabbalah: Whoever is always distressed about the galus HaShechinah will merit the crown of Torah."

Reb Yehudah of Asad *zt'l* would save the tears that fell from his eyes at Tikun Chatzos and give them to bachurim at risk of being drafted into the army. This segulah helped them (Toldos Shmuel, as told by the testimonies of Reb Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky *zt'l* and others).

Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (*Rabba* 20 ד"ה פעם אחת) tells that the nations פרס and מדי came to the

world as a reward for Koresh because he cried and mourned when the goyim destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. According to the Chofetz Chaim's zt'l calculation, Koresh was seven years old at the time of the Churban. A child of seven doesn't fully understand the devastation of the Churban. Nevertheless, he cried, and he was rewarded for his tears. How great will be the reward for the Yidden who mourn and weep for Yerushalayim!

Psikta d'Rav Kahana (ch.25) writes that Hashem swears, "Whoever waits for My kingdom [which will be revealed when Moshiach comes] I will testify for him for his benefit."

Mourning

It states (Divrei HaYamim 1, 16:27) עוֹז וְחֵדוּהַ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ, "Might and joy are in His place." Hashem resides in a place of joy. The Chasam Sofer zt'l (Drashos 7th of Av, 5560, p.307) writes that Tisha b'Av is an exception. Hashem mourns and cries on this day, and we should mourn and cry together with Him. "Hashem resides with joy, and Chazal say that Hashem doesn't reside in places where there is sadness. Nevertheless, Tisha b'Av is called יוֹם מַר, a bitter day. Therefore, it is proper for all the bitter and broken people to cry and mourn on this day when Hashem is also mourning. If they do so, their mourning will go up to a very high place. Although they don't see it, their mazal sees, and they will hear the voice of Hashem crying together with them... Chazal say, 'In every generation, one must consider himself as if he was exiled from Yerushalayim.' This year's mourning shouldn't be the same as last year's and years before it. Each year has its unique set of distress and challenges we should mourn. This is as it states in the Kinos (#24) על חורבן בית, "For the Churban Beis HaMikdash... I will mourn and eulogize each year anew."

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l (Imrei Pinchas 378, 380) writes, "On this day, keviyachol, Hashem is crying. Therefore, when a person is also at

this place [of mourning], he is protected [because he is with Hashem]. Laughing on Tisha b'Av is סַכְנַת נַפְשׁוֹת, dangerous because when one is with the king, he is protected, but when he is distant from the king, he doesn't have protection. And on this day, the Shechinah is keviyachol sitting on the earth [and the only way to connect and be with Hashem is through mourning]."

The Avodas Yisrael (Avos 3:1) describes the avodah of the Three Weeks and Tisha b'Av with a mashal:

A father dropped diamonds into the garbage and asked his son to search the trash, find them, and clean them. It was a challenging and repulsive job. The son certainly would receive a great reward for doing this for his father, more significant than if he would serve his father in other ways. This describes the avodah of the Three Weeks and Tisha b'Av. It is a low time, a difficult period, but the avodah is very precious. The Avodas Yisrael concludes, "What a person can rectify on Tisha b'Av, which is a low day, he cannot rectify even on Simchas Torah."

Surprisingly, Shulchan Aruch (559:4) states, "We don't say tachanun or selichos on Tisha b'Av because it is called *moed*, a holiday." It states (Eichah 1:15) קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד, that Tisha b'Av is a *moed*, a holiday. The question is, how can Tisha b'Av be called a holiday?

Reb Mordechai Gifter zt'l answers (quoting his Rebbe, hy'd) that מוֹעֵד means a gathering place (like אָהֶל מוֹעֵד). Yomim tovim are called Moed because on yom tov, we *gather* and *connect* with Hashem through joy. Tisha b'Av is called *moed*, because we connect to Hashem through our mourning.

On Tisha b'Av, we read מְגִילַת אֵיכָה, and the word אֵיכָה is repeated at the beginning of many of its chapters. Furthermore, many of the kinos that we say on Tisha b'Av begin with the word אֵיכָה. In the Torah, Hashem asks Adam HaRishon, אֵיכָה, "Where are you?"

Zera Kodesh (Devarim ד"ה במדרש ג') explains that throughout galus, Hashem asks אֵיכָה,

"Where are you?" Hashem searches for us, wondering why we are so distant from Him. He searches until He finds us as it states (Hoshea 9:10) *מֵצָאתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, "I found Yisrael." And when Hashem finds us, He sees that throughout the galus we were also constantly searching for Him. We were always asking, *אֵיךְ מְקוֹם כְּבוֹדוֹ לְהַעֲרִיצוֹ*, "Where is Hashem so we can exalt Him?"

Hashem and Bnei Yisrael search for each other until they unite. There are times when we merit that unity. On Tisha b'Av, we unite through mourning; on yom tov, we connect through joy.

Mourning and Joy

We cry and mourn bitterly these days, but it doesn't necessarily need to be with sadness.

We quoted above the Chasam Sofer *zy'a* (*Drashos*, 7 Av, p.326), who says, "If I weren't afraid, I would say Tisha b'Av is a happy day because we survived..." Hashem poured out His wrath on stones and wood so that we can survive.

Whenever we merit to meet Hashem, it is reason for great joy.

Rebbe Shmelke of Nikolsburg *zy'a* tells a *mashal*:

A king had to flee from his kingdom. He came to a distant land and stayed at the home of one of his loyal friends. The king noticed that his host was sometimes sad and other times happy. The king asked him, "Are you happy or sad?"

The host replied, "I'm both. I'm sad and mournful that you had to leave your palace, and I'm also happy because the king is in my home."

The Gemara (Shabbos 30:) says, *אֵין הַשְּׁכִינָה שׁוֹרָה*, "The Shechinah doesn't reside unless there is happiness." A *navi* needs to be in a state of happiness to receive his prophecy. So, how did Yirmiyahu HaNavi receive the *nevuah* of Megilas Eichah, since he was certainly crying and mourning as he received this prophecy? The Chazon Ish (Maaseh Ish, vol.4 163, and some say it is from the Brisker Rav *zt'l*) answers that it must be that one can mourn and cry and be happy at the same time.

Furthermore, mourning results in happiness. *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 554:25) states, *וְכָל הַמֵּתְאֵבֵל עַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם זֹכֶה וְרוֹאֶה בְּשִׂמְחָתָהּ*, "Whoever mourns for Yerushalayim merits seeing its joy." The Meforshim (Sfas Emes, Kedushas Levi, and others) explain that *זֹכֶה וְרוֹאֶה*, "merits and sees," is written in the present tense because due to his mourning, he merits to experience the joy of the redemption even now.

At a *chasunah* we say the *brachah* of *שׁוּשׁ תִּשִּׁי*, when we daven for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. The Sfas Emes *zt'l* explains that due to the Churban, the joy of the *chasunah* isn't complete. We complete the joy of the *chasunah* when we mourn for Yerushalayim. The mourning draws down to us a scent of the joy of rebuilding Yerushalayim, and now the joy of the *chasunah* is complete.¹⁸

Daven for Mashiach

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* (Imrei Pinchas 380-381) writes, "On Tisha b'Av, when we sit on the floor and daven, we can accomplish with tefillah everything we need. If someone lacks something, a good time for tefillah is on Tisha b'Av, when we sit on the earth."

18. Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l* said that in Kelm, they emphasized the word *כָּל* in the phrase *כָּל הַמֵּתְאֵבֵל עַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם*, "Whoever mourns for Yerushalayim merits seeing its joy..." *כָּל*, everyone, even those who committed severe aveiros and don't deserve to witness the joy of Yerushalayim when it is rebuilt. Nevertheless, mourning sanctifies and purifies; because they mourned, they will merit to see its joy (Beis Kelm, p.396).

Obviously, at this time, we should daven for Moshiach. This is the most important tefillah.¹⁹

The Tiferes Shlomo (מסעי ד"ה א"י כן מטה השני) writes, "A person should contemplate 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 desire the land and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem will quickly accept their tefillos. 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 רצה in 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 Mabit (Beis Elokim, Shaar HaTefillah ch.17) writes that our tefillos for Moshiach has greater potential to be answered than the tefillos of generations ago because we are nearer to the time of the geulah. "It is easier for the tefillos of the people of the later generations, who are closer to the time of the redemption, to be answered, more than the tefillos of previous generations," and this is for two reasons:

(1) We are closer to the geulah, so our tefillos can accomplish more than the tefillos of years ago.

(2) All tefillos of the past two thousand years are still present and join with our tefillos. So, it isn't solely our tefillos but the tefillos of all the generations that go up before Hashem.

The Yaaras Dvash (*Drush 5*) teaches that the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because people weren't davening.²⁰ As it states (*Tehillim 14:4*), ה' לא קראו, "They didn't pray to Hashem." Furthermore, it states (*Eichah 1:2*), ודמעתה על לחיה, "Her tears are on her cheek." This pasuk can also be read, "Her tears are because of her cheek." This refers to the tears of the Jewish nation that came because of the Churban. The tears came because of 'cheek,' which represents tefillah (see *Chulin 134:*). Thus, the bitter Churban was על לחיה because people didn't daven. They didn't daven that the Churban shouldn't occur.

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni Yirmiyahu 327*) says that when the Jewish nation was על נהרות בבל, on the banks of the Babylon River, enroute to galus, Yirmiyahu left them, and everyone began to cry bitterly. They said, "Rabbeinu Yirmiyahu! Will you leave us?"

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

A wealthy person sent his five sons to study Torah overseas. One of them, Reuven, became very ill. The doctors determined that only one cure was available, an extremely costly cure.

The brothers replied, "Money isn't a problem. We will write a letter to our wealthy father, and he will send us money."

This is the letter the oldest brother wrote:

"Dear father, kindly send us a large sum because Shimon's eyeglasses broke, and he needs a new pair. Levi's clothes are old and worn, and Yehudah owes 450 dinars and must pay the debt. Also, send money for Reuven because he is dangerously ill, and the treatment costs a fortune."

When the father received the letter, he was disappointed. He said, "How did my foolish son confuse the order of this letter? He should have written about Reuven first because that is the more important matter."

The Dubno Magid said that this is how it appears when people daven for many things, and then, as an afterthought, they daven for Moshiach. Davening for Moshiach should be our first and primary tefillah.

20. The Yaaras Dvash explains that we primarily mourn 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.)

Yirmiyahu told them, "I testify by heaven and earth that if you had cried just once when you lived in Yerushalayim, you wouldn't have been sent into exile."

Even Nevuchadnezzar *harasha* understood that Yidden had the power to thwart the decree of exile with their *tefillos*, and therefore, he made attempts to prevent them from tefillah. The Midrash (*Eichah Rabba* 5:5) states, "The evil Nevuchadnezzar told Nevuzaradan, 'Their G-d accepts *teshuvah*. If they pray, Hashem will save them. Therefore, don't let them stop walking [as you lead them into galus], not even for a moment, so they won't have the peace of mind to call out to Hashem.'" Nevuzaradan followed Nevuchadnezzar's advice. When he brought the Jewish nation into exile, he didn't let them rest. His soldiers cut off the limbs of anyone who stopped walking.

So, we see that even Nevuchadnezzar *harasha* understood the power of tefillah, and that it had the potential to prevent the Churban.

We have sources that also the second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because Yidden didn't daven to prevent it.

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, *יְצַמִּיתָם ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ*, "Hashem will demolish them [the enemies of the Jewish nation]" (*Tehillim* 94:23), but they hadn't yet said those words and that's when the goyim seized the Beis HaMikdash. The same happened by the

second Beis HaMikdash." It seems that had the Levi'im said *יְצַמִּיתָם ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ*, "Hashem will demolish them," the two Batei Mikdash wouldn't have been destroyed. Their *tefillos* would have stopped the Churban.

The Meor Einayim also teaches that tefillah could have prevented the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash. The Gemara (*Gittin* 56) tells that Bar Kamtza told the Roman king that the Jewish nation was rebelling against him. To prove it, he advised the king to send a korban and to see whether the Jews accepted it.

Bar Kamtza made a blemish on the animal, disqualifying it for a korban. The chachamim in the Beis HaMikdash wanted to sacrifice the king's korban despite the *mum* (blemish). They said that they should bring the korban for the sake of peace so the king wouldn't be angry with them. But Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas argued not to sacrifice it because "people will think that a korban with a *mum* could be brought as a korban."

The chachamim came up with plan B: They would kill Bar Kamtza so he wouldn't be able to tell the Roman king that they didn't bring the korban. Once again, Reb Zecharyah advised against it. He explained, "People will think that whoever brings a korban with a *mum* is killed."

The chachamim accepted his views. The korban wasn't sacrificed, and Bar Kamtza survived. He reported back to the king, resulting in the churban Beis HaMikdash.²¹

21. The Gemara (*Gittin* 55) relates that Bar Kamtza was invited to a party in error. When the host noticed him dining at his celebration, he thought, "I wanted to invite Kamtza, my friend. I hate Bar Kamtza; I don't want him here."

The host asked Bar Kamtza to leave. Bar Kamtza pleaded that he let him stay. He even offered to pay him for the entire meal, but the host unceremoniously ejected him. Bar Kamtza said, "There were rabbanim at the meal. Why didn't they speak up in my defense? Apparently, they consented to me being treated that way; I will slander them to the king."

The Gemara (*Gitten* 57) says, *בא וראה כמה גדולה כחה של בושה שהרי סייע הקב"ה את בר קמצא והחריב את ביתו ושרף את היכלו*, "Come and see [from this story] the power of shame. Hakadosh Baruch Hu helped Bar Kamtza, and He destroyed

The Gemara concludes, "Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's humility destroyed our house, burned the *heichal*, and exiled us from our land."

The Meor Einayim (*Gittin*) asks:

1) Was it Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's humility that caused the destruction? It seems that it was his excessive caution in halachah that caused the Churban.

2) It is permitted to transgress most *halachos* of the Torah to save a Jew's life. So why didn't they offer the *korban* with the *mum* or kill Bar Kamtza to save the Jewish nation?

The Meor Einayim answers that Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas was the *gadol hador*. The proof is that his position was accepted by all scholars. Being a *gadol*, he also had *ruach hakodesh*, and with his *ruach hakodesh* he knew that the Churban was imminent and that nothing could be done to change that decree. This is why Reb Zecharyah

didn't allow them to sacrifice the *korban* with the *mum*, and he didn't allow them to kill Bar Kamtza. Logically, it made sense to do one of these options to protect the Jewish nation from the king's wrath, but he knew it wouldn't help. The Churban would occur, regardless. With his *ruach hakodesh*, he knew that the Churban was decreed and finalized in heaven. He decided that he should at least preserve the continuation of the Torah. So, he told the *chachamim* that they shouldn't bring the *korban* with a *mum*, so people wouldn't think bringing a *korban* with a *mum* is permitted. And he said that they shouldn't kill Bar Kamtza, so people shouldn't think that for bringing a *korban* with a *mum*, one is *chayav misah*. He understood that the Churban would occur no matter what they did, so they might as well make sure that the Torah wouldn't be forgotten.

But Reb Zecharyah didn't tell the *chachamim* that he had *ruach hakodesh*, and he

His house [the Beis HaMikdash]..." all because of the shame that Bar Kamtza endured.

Let this be a lesson to be cautious with the honor of our fellow man. The Gemara connects this episode to the *pasuk* (Mishlei 28:14) אשרי אדם מפחד תמיד ומקשה לבו יפול ברעה, "Fortunate is the man who is always afraid, but he who hardens his heart will fall into evil." Rashi explains, מפחד תמיד, "He is aware and fears the consequences of his actions, and therefore distances himself from aveiros."

Chazal (*Gittin* 55:) say, אקמצא ובר קמצא חרוב ירושלים, "Yerushalayim was destroyed because of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza." We understand the connection between the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and Bar Kamtza. He slandered the Jewish nation and roused the wrath of the Roman emperor. But how did Kamtza cause the Churban?

The Maharsha writes that perhaps Kamtza was the father of Bar Kamtza.

Following this approach, we can explain that Kamtza, the father, also bears responsibility for the Churban because had he trained his son Kamtza to pursue peace, to forgive and forget, and to remain silent during a *machlokes* and when humiliated, Bar Kamtza would have reacted very differently when he was offended. So Kamtza is also responsible for the Churban.

Yirmiyahu HaNavi told Tzidkiyahu HaMelech (*Yirmiyahu* 38: 17-18), "Hashem said, if you go out to the officers of the king of Bavel [to make peace with them] the city [Yerushalayim] will not be burned, and you and your family will live. But if you do 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 that humility has the power to annul harsh decrees. If Tzidkiyahu had surrendered humbly, it would have protected Klal Yisrael, and the Beis HaMikdash would have been spared.

knew that the Churban was imminent. But why didn't he? He should have told them, "You're right, it's *pikuach nefesh*, and we should do whatever we can to avoid the king's wrath. But I know with my *ruach hakodesh* that it anyway won't help. The Churban will occur no matter what we do. Therefore, let us at least preserve the halachos." Why didn't Reb Zecharyah tell them this?

This was because of Reb Zecharyah's humility. He didn't want to reveal to them that he had *ruach hakodesh*.

The Meor Einayim writes, "This is the meaning of ענותנותו של רבי זכריה בן אבקיילוס החריבה, 'The humility of Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas destroyed...' If it weren't for his humility, he would have told them about the Churban, 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."

The Meor Einayim teaches that if he had told them what he knew with *ruach hakodesh*, the *chachamim* would have davened that the Churban shouldn't occur, and they would

rouse people to do *teshuvah*, and this would have saved them. But he didn't want to tell them what he knew with *ruach hakodesh*, and this caused the Churban.

For our purposes, we see another source that the Churban could have been prevented with tefillos. Teshuvah and tefillah are always effective. They would have prevented the Churban.

Following a slightly different approach, we can explain that Reb Zecharyah didn't believe he had the power of tefillah. He also didn't believe that others have the power of tefillah, which is why he didn't feel it was necessary to tell them to daven to prevent the Churban. This is an example of a negative form of humility. It is when one doesn't believe in his strengths. This misplaced humility resulted in the Churban.

The *haftarah* of Tisha b'Av describes the Churban. Among the descriptions is (Yirmiyahu 8:13) אין ענבים בגפן ואין תאנים בתאנה, "There are no grapes on the vines, there are no figs on the fig tree." Why is this mentioned? Lacking fruit seems trite and trivial when we discuss the Churban.²²

22. A Holocaust survivor told the story of his survival. He related how he jumped out of a speeding train headed to the camps.

Someone listening to the story asked him, "Was it a hot or cold day?"

The survivor replied, "I see you don't understand. My life was saved! What difference does it make whether it was hot or cold? I was saved!"

When someone's life was at stake, the subject of the weather seemed irrelevant. Similarly, when we discuss the Churban, it seems irrelevant to mention that there were no fruits on the trees.

Incidentally, Pesach is in the spring, so we can remember Hashem's kindness in taking us out of Mitzrayim when the weather was pleasant for travel. When we praise Hashem, we shouldn't forget even the smallest detail.

A granddaughter of Reb Hillel Kalimaya *zt'l* survived the Holocaust. She said that on Tisha b'Av, in Auschwitz, the Nazis forced them to sit on sharp stones and listen to a musical concert. They did this to break their spirit, robbing them of the *luxury* of mourning on Tisha b'Av. This woman was upset by the *chilul Hashem*. She prayed, "Hashem, don't answer me in my honor nor the honor of Your nation. Answer me for Your honor, which the goyim are disgracing. I pray that it should begin to pour."

The skies were clear, but shortly after this *tefillah*, dark clouds rolled in, and it began to pour. The musicians ran for cover, and everybody returned to their barracks.

The *pasuk* says that after the Churban, even fruit won't grow without *tefillah*. When Shlomo was king, it was (*I Malachim* 5:5), **אִישׁ תַּחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ וְאִישׁ תַּחַת גְּרָפְיוֹ**, "Each man under his grapevine and under his fig tree." Because of the *korbanos*, there was much bounty, and everyone had grapes, figs, and all their needs. But now, after the Churban, everything comes solely through *tefillah*.

The Rokeach writes, "From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't give kindness to Bnei Yisrael without *tefillah*. "The Chofetz Chaim (*Likutei Amorim* 10) writes, "All the many *tzaros* that befall us in *galus* are because we aren't shouting out to Hashem with our prayers. If we daven, our *tefillos* will be answered."

The Midrash (*Shemos Rabba* 38:4) states, "When your forefathers were slaves in Mitzrayim, didn't I save them when they davened to Me? Therefore, be cautious with *tefillah* because there is nothing greater than *tefillah*. It is greater than all the *korbanos*. Even if a person isn't worthy that I should do *chesed* with him, if he prays a lot, I will do *chesed* with him."

We should daven for the geulah, and very soon, the redemption will come.

Sinas Chinam

The two Batei Mikdash were destroyed because of aveiros, but the aveiros of these two eras weren't the same. The primary aveiros of the first Beis HaMikdash were *avodah zarah*, *giluy arayos*, and *shefichas damim*. The second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*.

There were other differences between the aveiros of these two eras.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 9) states that one of the differences is that "the first Beis HaMikdash, their aveiros were revealed, and therefore,

the date when the *galus* would end was revealed to them. In the second Beis HaMikdash, their sins weren't revealed, and therefore, the end of the *galus* was not revealed."

Rashi explains that by the first Beis HaMikdash, people were transparent; they didn't conceal their true selves. Everyone knew who was a *tzaddik* and who was a *rasha*. They were "revealed," and therefore, it was revealed to them that after seventy years, they would return to Eretz Yisrael (see *Yirmiyahu* 29:10). But by the second Beis HaMikdash, there were *resha'im* who pretended to be *tzaddikim*. No one knew who was a true *tzaddik* and who wasn't. They were concealed. Therefore, the end of the *galus* was hidden from them. They weren't told when Moshiach would come.

Rebbe Yohonoson Eibshitz *zy'a* (*Yaaras Dvash* 7) explains the Gemara in another way. He explains the Gemara, that "during the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed," that this means the navi told them the reason for the exile. The *pesukim* in *navi* reveal the reason they were being punished, that it was 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 long to improve their ways. Seventy years later, they returned to Eretz Yisrael.

But during the second Beis HaMikdash, their sins weren't revealed. There were no *nevi'im* during that era to tell them the cause of their punishment. Although the *chachamim* told them that the destruction was caused by *sinas chinam*, it was hard for the people to accept it because *sinas chinam* doesn't seem to be a severe aveirah. They didn't know the reason for their punishment, so it was harder for them to do *teshuvah*.

It is still hard for us to recognize the severity of *sinas chinam*, which is the reason

She said that this episode gave her much *chizuk*. She saw that Hashem listened to her *tefillos* even in Auschwitz.

nearly two thousand years have passed, and we haven't yet been redeemed.

The fifth of Av is the yahrtzeit of the Arizal, and he very much encouraged ahavas Yisrael. Before the tefillah, the Arizal said that one should accept on himself the mitzvah of *ואהבת לרעך כמוך*, to love his fellow man as himself.

Towards the end of the Arizal's short life, the Arizal created a *hesger*, an exclusive compound in Tzfas for his ten primary students, where he taught them the secrets of the Torah. He warned them to avoid *machlokes*.

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

Before Shabbos, the Arizal with his students walked out of Tzfas to be *mekabel* Shabbos in the fields (as this was their weekly custom). The Arizal was usually 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 your king will die' (*Shmuel* 12:25), and I understand this to mean that I am going to die together with some of my students. And it's all because of the *machlokes* that occurred today. As long as there was peace among you, the Satan couldn't enter our secluded compound."

Less than a week later, on the fifth of Av, the Arizal and five of his students were *niftar*.²³

The Chofetz Chaim explains that *sinas chinam*, alone, wouldn't destroy the Beis HaMikdash. When the Gemara says the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam* it refers to the severe aveirah of *lashon hara* (a byproduct of *sinas chinam*). It was *lashon hara* that destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. Chazal (*Eiruchin* 15:) say that *lashon hara* is just as severe as the three cardinal sins, *עבודה זרה*, *גלוי עריות*, *ושפיכות דמים*, idol worship, adultery, and murder.

The Kli Yakar (*Shemos* 3:2) writes, "The primary reason for the *galus* is their hatred and jealousy. In these regards, the Jewish nation is worse than all other nations. They speak *lashon hara*..."²⁴

23. It states in this week's *parashah* (1:12), *איכה אשא לבדי מרחכם משאכם וריבכם*. The Imrei Noam explains, *איכה*, Moshe told the nation that for matters related to the Churban and redemption, *אשא לבדי*, I will take full responsibility. Your job is *מרחכם משאכם וריבכם*, to avoid *sinas chinam*.

Also, in this week's *parashah*, the *trop* over the words *אחינו המסו לבבינו* (*Devarim* 1:28) are *אחיו ואחיו*. The Beis Aharon *zy'a* explains: If there is a *תלישה קטנה*, a minor breach, *אחינו*, in the friendship, *אחיו ואחיו*, the dispute will grow greater and larger, and *המסו לבבינו*, our hearts melt. Therefore, the solution is to avoid even the smallest conflict.

24. Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* once said, "When a Yid stabs (*שטעכט*) his fellow man in a beis medresh by speaking *lashon hara* on him, this results in a goy who stabs a Yid." He said that when he came to visit another city. After the tefillah, they wanted to honor with a *l'chaim*, but he refused to drink, saying that there was *lashon hara* in the beis medresh, which resulted in a goy murdering a Yid, *r'l*. Later they heard that a goy had stabbed a Yid in their city (heard from the Rebbe of Narol *zt'l*).

One Yom Kippur night, shortly after the Holocaust, the Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l* said the following *dvar Torah*: (*Devarim* 32:18-19) *צור ילדך תשי*, people forget all the kindness that Hashem does for them, *א"ל מחוללך* and Hashem forgives them for that (from the word *מחולל*). However, *וירא ה' וינאץ*, "Hashem becomes angry and doesn't forgive, *מכעס בניו ובנותיו*, when someone harms His children."

The graduating class of a girl's high school in Monsey (class of תשע"ז) gathered to figure out why they were having such a hard time finding *shidduchim*. Only six girls were engaged (they got engaged when they were still in school), but all the others were single, and it was already a year and a half after graduation! They thought

Ahavas Chinam

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk zt'l toiled for at least twenty-five years to acquire perfection in one particular *middah*. His students asked him why he focused so much on that *middah*. He replied, (a) Perfection in one *middah*, alone, greatly purifies a person. (b) When one attains excellence in one *middah*, he automatically attains perfection in all other good *middos*.

All good *middos* are connected. Therefore, some tzaddikim focused on perfecting a single character trait, and when they attained perfection in that trait, they attained excellence in all other good *middos*.

A hint to this concept is the Chazal (Midrash, *Mishlei* 1) "If one keeps one mitzvah perfectly, it is like he kept all 613 mitzvos." This is because all mitzvos and all good *middos* are connected. Perfection in one area generates perfection in all aspects of *avodas Hashem*.

For seventeen years, the Chidushei HaRim zt'l toiled with all his strength to attain an עין טובה, a good eye. He said that no one ever acquired this trait as perfectly as he did.

One aspect of עין טובה is to see only the good in others. When the Chidushei HaRim zt'l became a chassidic Rebbe, he had to see the faults in people (in order to help them), which bothered him immensely.

The Chidushei HaRim writes, "During [the Three Weeks], one must eradicate *sinas*

chinam and all aspects of a bad eye. Even if he doesn't look down at anyone, if he doesn't focus on their good, it can be considered *sinas chinam*. Chazal tell us, 'A generation that the Beis HaMikdash isn't built up is like it was destroyed in that generation.' With a good eye, the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt."²⁵

A woman dedicatedly cared for her ill husband for several years. Reb Meir Brandsdorfer zt'l (a renowned dayan from Yerushalayim) would call her occasionally to give her *chizuk*.

Once, *erev Shabbos*, he asked her, "Do people help you, or is everything on your shoulders?"

She told him that kind people help her.

Reb Meir said, "Do me a favor, when you light *Shabbos lecht*, tell Hakadosh Baruch Hu the people who help you because there is nothing more beloved to Hakadosh Baruch Hu than when people say good things about His children."

In 1940/ש"ס, Reb Shaul Yedidiah of Modzitz zt'l fled from Modzitz to Vilna to escape the war. On *Shabbos*, he led a *tisch*, and the Litvishe people in the area came in to listen to the Rebbe's beautiful, trademark singing. When the Rebbe handed out *shirayim*, it seemed strange to them. They had never seen this custom before. The Rebbe said, "Don't make fun of this custom."

that perhaps they had harmed one of the teachers. They appointed two girls to call all the teachers and ask for forgiveness in the name of the entire class.

A few days later, the originator of this idea became a kallah. A couple of days afterward, a few more *shidduchim* were finalized.

25. The Shem MiShmuel (*Behaloscha* תר"ע ד"ה ולפני) writes, "The attribute of a good eye can purify a person [from all his sins]."

One year, on Tisha b'Av, Reb Refael of Barshid zt'l was busy helping a couple restore their shalom bayis. People asked Reb Refael, "Is this the right time for this? Can't you take care of this after Tisha b'Av?"

Reb Rafael replied, "On the contrary, Tisha b'Av is the best time to restore shalom bayis. The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*, so shalom will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash."

If more people would practice it, the war wouldn't be."

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 so others will have. If people would practice this, this war wouldn't happen."

Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (Rabba 28) writes, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells Bnei Yisrael, 'My beloved children...what do I ask from you? Only that you should love one another and honor one another.'"²⁶

Shulchan Aruch (554:20) states, אין שאלת שלום, להכבירו בתשעה באב, "One mustn't greet his friend on Tisha b'Av." But why not? The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. It seems that Tisha b'Av is the ideal time to greet one's fellow man and increase love and peace.

To answer, we quote the following Gemara (*Gittin* 58):

"There was an apprenticed carpenter whose eyes desired his boss's wife. Once, his boss, the carpenter, needed a loan. The apprentice said, 'Send your wife to me, and I will give her the money.'

The apprentice detained her in his home for three days. The carpenter came and asked, "Where is my wife?"

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

"What should I do?"

"I suggest 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 could not pay his debt, so the apprentice

26. The following story is an example of *mesirus nefesh* for the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisrael* and the benefits that can be earned from it. I heard the story from the *baal hamaasah*, a respected rav in America who is involved in *kiruv rechokim*.

One day, his wife told him that she wanted to donate a kidney to help someone on dialysis. Her husband tried discouraging her, but she insisted she wanted this *zechus*.

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.

The husband asked the Rebbe, "The sick patient needs the kidney as quickly as possible, but our child's *chasunah* is coming up soon. Should we do the surgery now or wait until after the *chasunah*?"

The Rebbe told them that if the doctor says she will recover in time for the *chasunah*, she should proceed with the surgery now.

They consulted with the doctor, and he agreed to speed up the prep stages and do the transplant as quickly as possible so that the mother would be back on her feet in time for her child's *chasunah*.

The doctors began with the standard battery of tests to confirm that she was a healthy donor candidate. During one of the tests, they discovered that she had a tumor right beneath one of her kidneys, pressing on a primary artery that sends blood to the heart. Had the tumor gone undetected, it could have blocked the blood circulation. She thought she was saving another person's life, but she saved her own. Because of her *ahavas Yisrael*, her life was saved.

said, 'Work for me, and you will pay off your debt with your work.'

"The apprentice and his new wife ate while the carpenter served them. As he poured them drinks, his tears fell 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 an aveirah in this story. He married the carpenter's wife after she was divorced. Yet, because of his deeds, the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed. "From this, we learn that there are aveiros that aren't written explicitly, yet they are extremely grave and despised by Hashem. They are worse than the cardinal sins."

An example of this concept is the Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 30:), which 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 failed to consider the spirit of the law as well. They only focused on what is explicitly prohibited or permitted, and that isn't sufficient. A person can commit terrible aveiros, r'l, and it isn't an excuse that the aveirah isn't written explicitly in the Torah.

Now, let's return to our question. We want peace on Tisha b'Av, so why don't we greet people on Tisha b'Av?

The answer is that on Tisha b'Av, we seek true peace, not lip service. Throughout the year, people smile at their fellow man and greet one another, but they don't necessarily care about them in their hearts. On Tisha b'Av, we take a break from greeting our fellow man, reassess, and strive to reach a higher level. We want to go beyond the letter of the law, beyond what's commonly expected, and to develop genuine peace and love among Yidden.

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