

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Devarim - T"V



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Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Devarim - T" B

<i>Shabbos Chazon</i>	4
Happiness on Shabbos.....	9
<i>Chumash Devarim</i>	10
Chodesh Av	12
<i>Emunah</i>	12
Benefits of Yesurim.....	15
Ultimate Good	18
Hashem Carries our Package	23
The Partner	27
<i>Hishtadlus</i>	29
<i>Sinas Chinam</i>	31
<i>Lashon Hara</i>	35
<i>Ahavas Yisrael</i>	37
Daven for Mashiach	46
The Necessity of Tefillah.....	52
Daven Yourself	54

Torah Wellsprings

Devarim - T"V

Shabbos Chazon

This Shabbos is called Shabbos Chazon because the *haftarah* begins with the words חזון ישעיהו, "Yeshayahu's vision." This prophecy is about the sins of the Jewish nation, the destruction of Yerushalayim, and exile.

Why do we name a Shabbos after such sad events? As the Kedushas Levi (*Eichah* (ד"ה וְאָמַר אֶבֶר אֵיכָה)) asks, "Why is this Shabbos called Chazon? It is not praise for Yisrael!"

The Bardichover Rav *zt"l* (*Drushei Tzemech Tzaddik, Eichah*) answers that the Shabbos is called Chazon, vision because on this Shabbos, Hashem shows every Yid how it will be when the third Beis HaMikdash is built.

He explains it with a *mashal*:

A king gave an expensive set of clothing to his son, but his son, the prince, wasn't careful and ripped and soiled the clothing.

The king ordered another set of clothes, but the prince ruined that one, too.

The king ordered a third set of royal clothes; he showed it to his son and said, "When I see that you are responsible and you won't soil or rip your clothing, I will present you with these special garments."

Once a year, the king took out the beautiful clothes and showed them to his son. At these times, he said to his son, "When 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 us, "This can be yours. When you are ready, I will give it to you."

The Ohev Yisrael writes, "ל אשר שבת חזון הוא יותר, גדול במעלה מכל שבתות השנה", "One can say that Shabbos Chazon is the greatest Shabbos of the year."

How can this be? It would seem that it is the lowest Shabbos of the year, during the Nine Days, moments before the destruction of the holy Beis HaMikdash. Furthermore, according to halachah, certain acts of mourning are observed on Shabbos Chazon. So how can this Shabbos be the greatest Shabbos of the year?

Before answering, the Ohev Yisrael asks another question. He writes, "I was asked to explain the Midrash that says, לא היה יום

מעוד לישראל כיום שנחרב בית המקדש, 'There wasn't a holiday for Yisrael like the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed.' This Midrash is a wonder (מודרש פליאה)"

So, in review, we have two questions:

(1) How can Shabbos Chazon be the highest Shabbos of the year?

(2) How can we call the day of destruction "A great holiday?"

We add a third question:

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 99.) says that the two keruvim in the Beis HaMikdash would face one another when Yidden served Hashem. However, when Yidden did not serve Hashem, the *keruvim* turned away from each other. It was a miracle because they were gold figures, but they had a life source, and they moved on their own, in accordance with the connection

between Hashem and the Jewish nation.¹

Chazal (*Yoma* 54:) say, "When the goyim entered the Kodesh Kadoshim, they found the *keruvim* embracing each other!"

The *rishonim* ask, at that time, when the nation was guilty of the three cardinal aveiros: idolatry, murder, and adultery, the *keruvim* should be looking away from each other! Because Chazal say, when the Yidden aren't doing Hashem's will, the *keruvim* look away from one another. So why were they facing each other and even embracing each other

moments before the churban Beis HaMikdash?

The *Ohev Yisrael* answers this question with the Gemara (*Yevamos* 62: ד"ב ל"ד) that says that love between people increases before a 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 before a separation.

We now understand (1) why Shabbos Chazon is the greatest Shabbos of the year. (2) Why the Midrash calls the day of the destruction the greatest

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

yom tov. (3) And we understand why the keruvim were facing each other before the Churban. It was moments before the separation, and that's when love is the strongest.

The holy sefarim teach us that Hashem's strongest expression of compassion manifests itself when *din* turns into *rachamim*, which means when His harsh judgment (punishments and difficult times) transforms into love, forgiveness, and compassion. This is the reason that *shalashudes* time is a time of immense *rachamim*. In the afternoon, when *din* and harsh justice are present during the weekdays, and on Shabbos, the *din* turns into *rachamim*, compassion.

The Yid HaKodosh zt'l says that during the Three Weeks, the entire weekday is a time of *din*. Therefore, the Shabbosim of the Three Weeks are very holy. The entire Shabbos becomes like *shalashudes* time.

A hint to this idea is found in the Lecha Dodi, רב רב רב, לך שבת בעמק הבכא עמק (הבכא), the Shabbosim are the greatest (רב לך שבת). This explains why Shabbos Chazon is a very high and holy Shabbos - the loftiest Shabbos of the year.

As we wrote above, the Midrash says that the greatest holiday for the Jewish nation was when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed. (And we wrote the Apter Rav's explanation, that the holiday was the intense love before the separation.) Others explain that the holiday is because the destruction saved the Jewish people from annihilation.

As the Chasam Sofer *zy'a* (*Drashos*, 7 Av, p.326) writes, "If I weren't afraid, I would say that Tisha b'Av is a happy day because we survived... [As *Chazal* said, 'Hashem poured His anger out on wood and stone so that we could survive']... The crying and the mourning on Tisha b" Av

are for the *new* tragedies each year. Because due to our many sins, the curses and the *tzaros* become more significant each day... We should be praising Hashem on Tisha b'Av. This is the reason Tisha b'Av is called *mo'ed* (a holiday)."

There is a beautiful answer from Reb Yonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* on why the *keruim* faced each other before the Churban: He proves that the day the Babylonians entered the Beis HaMikdash was Shabbos. On Shabbos, he explains, Hashem's love toward us is complete. Therefore, on Shabbos, the *keruim* always faced each other.²

It isn't difficult to prove that the Babylonians came

to the Beis HaMikdash on Shabbos. Because the Yerushalmi (*Taanis* 4:5) writes that the Babylonians entered the Beis HaMikdash on *rosh chodesh Av*. Further, Chazal tell us that Tisha b'Av of that year was on Sunday. So, if Tisha b'Av was Sunday, *rosh chodesh* was on Shabbos.

This year is a good example. Tisha b'Av falls on Sunday, and *rosh chodesh Av* was on Shabbos. This is how it was at the year of the destruction.

And since it was Shabbos when they entered the Beis HaMikdash, it shouldn't surprise us that the *keruim* faced one another.

2. The Ramban (*Bamidbar* 28:2) writes, "The *mussaf* 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 peace."

This Ramban is of kabbalistic, but it seems that the intention is that on Shabbos there are no sins. Therefore a *korban chatas* isn't required.

Happiness on Shabbos

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* said: Some people think that being happy on Shabbos is a *madreigah* for tzaddikim, and not applicable to the average person. Because what connection does an average person have with Shabbos? But they are mistaken. As Rebbe Bunim expressed it, "If you are *mechallel* Shabbos, you are *חייב מיתה*. Therefore, just as you are associated with the severity of desecrating the Shabbos, so too are you associated with the joy of Shabbos.

A chassid was traveling to be with Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa for Shabbos, but he encountered some delays, and he only arrived after Shabbos.

Rebbe Bunim was glad that he arrived after Shabbos, because this person was always sad, and Rebbe Bunim strived to be happy on Shabbos.

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

Shabbos honors her guests. Sometimes the guest is *rosh chodesh* (Shabbos-rosh chodesh), sometimes it's a *yom tov* that falls on a Shabbos, etc., and Shabbos honors her guests. When the guest is *rosh chodesh*, Shabbos gives the guest the *haftarah* and the *mussaf*. When the guest is *yom tov*, Shabbos gives it all the *tefillos*. When the guest is Yom Kippur, Shabbos gives this very holy guest its *seudos*, too. But when Tisha b'Av is the guest, Shabbos tells Tisha b'Av to wait until the next day. (Because when Tisha b'Av falls on Shabbos, we observe the fast on Sunday.) Shabbos doesn't welcome this guest, because on Shabbos, one must be happy.

Shabbos is a day of joy, as it states, *וביום שמחתכם* and Chazal (*Sifri* 19) explain, *ביום שמחתכם אלו השבתות*. Therefore, rejoice on Shabbos and even on Shabbos Chazon.

Eat good foods, sing *zemiros*, daven well, and make it a special day.

The Tiferes Shlomo writes that the Shabbosim of *galus* are even happier than the Shabbosim when the Beis HaMikdash stood because that is all we have left. It is a moment of respite from the *galus*. This is hinted at in the *pasuk*, אִי תִרְצֶה הָאָרֶץ אֶת שַׁבְּתוֹתֶיהָ, "Then [in *galus*] the Shabbosim will be desired..." As the Tiferes Shlomo writes, כִּי בְּזִמְנֵי בֵּיהֶמ"ק לֹא הָיוּ שַׁבְּתִים טוֹבִים כְּאַלֶּה, "When the Beis HaMikdash stood, there weren't such good Shabbosim as there are now."

It states (*Vayikra* 19:30), אֶת שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּמִקֹּדְשֵׁי תִירָאוּ, "Keep my Shabbos and fear my Beis HaMikdash." The *pasuk* juxtaposes Shabbos with the Beis HaMikdash. The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* explains that this means, if you keep Shabbos, it is considered as if the Beis HaMikdash is still standing.

Chumash Devarim

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

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

Also, the Shlah (*Va'eschanan*) writes, "Why do we have to seek *mussar sefarim*? The entire *Mishnah Torah (sefer Devarim)* is filled with *mussar*." It is the *mussar* that Moshe Rabbeinu told Bnei Yisrael before his *petirah*.

The Kotzker *zt'l* also taught the benefits of studying *Chumash Devarim*. He based his lesson on the Gemara (*Yevamos* 4.), אפילו למאן, דלא דריש סמוכים בעלמא במשנה תורה דריש 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 that "Even Reb Yehudah, which means a 'Reb Yid,' a simple Jew – who isn't close to Hashem Hashem throughout the year he can become סמוכים, close to Hashem when we read *sefer Devarim*."³

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 "every Yid" is literal. Moshe Rabbeinu addressed this *Chumash* to every Jew, even to the Yidden who live centuries

and millennia after his demise. In *sefer Devarim*, Moshe is speaking to us.

Chazal say Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest *navi*. All *nevi'im* say, כה אמר ה', "Hashem said like this," while Moshe said, וזה הדבר, "This is what Hashem said."

This means Moshe had a clearer vision of prophecy, and he could repeat Hashem's messages with greater clarity.

Rebbe Tzaddok HaKohen offers another explanation. He explains Moshe said his *nevuah* right when he received it. As he spoke with the nation, he would tell them וזה הדבר, this is the prophecy I am receiving right now for you. Following this explanation, we can explain that Moshe didn't speak to us three thousand years ago. Moshe speaks to us

3. This *Chumash* also has the *tochachah* in it. The Sfas Emes said, "One should take the תוכחה and bring it תוך תוך, deep into his heart".

today, and he tells us, יהוה הדבר אשר צוה ה' Hashem is saying to you right now. We receive these messages when we study the *parshiyos* of *sefer Devarim*.

Chodesh Av

People think Av is a month of suffering. However, the translation of אב is "father," which signifies Hashem's compassion on us, like a loving father who has compassion on his children.

Furthermore, the *mazal* of Av is אריה, a lion, which, according to the *Zohar* (see *Zohar Chodosh, Yisro* 31), signifies *chesed*.

Av is a month of compassion and kindness. As the Kedushas Levi writes, "Hashem Yisbarach destroyed the Beis HaMikdash, and we are in *galus*, but it surely is all for Klal Yisrael's benefit. Hashem will have compassion on us, and He will rebuild the Beis

HaMikdash, and it will be even more magnificent than before. That which presently appears to be negative is all for Yisrael's benefit."

The Kedushas Levi says that it is hinted at in the *pasuk* (*Eichah* 3:10), דב ארב הוא לי, אריה במסתרים, "He was like a bear in ambush...like a lion in hiding."

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

Emunah

Moshe Rabbeinu says in this week's *parashah* (3:15) ולמכיר נתתי את הגלעד, "To the family of Machir [the son of Menashah] I gave him the [mountain of] Gilaad [as his inheritance]."

We will explain this *pasuk* (בדרך רמז) with two approaches:

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* told his chassidim that they shouldn't study the

Arizal's *sefarim* before they merit *giluy Eliyahu*. Years later, people saw the Ruzhiner Rebbe's grandson, the Husiatener Rebbe *zy'a*, studying the Arizal's *sefarim*. People were saying, "Apparently, he saw Eliyahu HaNavi, because his grandfather said that one has to see Eliyahu before learning these *sefarim*!"

The Husiatener Rebbe told them that he didn't see Eliyahu HaNavi. He explained, "My grandfather was speaking for his generation. At that time, one had to see Eliyahu HaNavi before studying the Arizal's *sefarim*. Today, anyone who believes that *ואתה מושל בכל*, Hashem rules over everything that happens, he is worthy of learning kabbalah."

In other words, the Husiatener Rebbe is saying that in our generation, belief in Hashem is equivalent to seeing Eliyahu HaNavi. As Rebbe Tzaddok HaKohen *zy'a*

said, *ולמכיר*, when one recognizes Hashem, *נתתי את*, *הגלעד*, I will send him Eliyahu HaGiladi; for this person deserves to see 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 you the following sign: *גלעד*. The translation of *גיל* is happiness. His happy disposition, even when matters aren't going his way, is his *עד*, testimony, that he believes in Hashem. It is evident that he believes that everything is for the good.

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

are *gematriya* 13, the same as אחד. Together they are *gematriya* הוי"ה אחד.

The root of all sins and *tzaros* (for which we fast) is the *eigel* (the Golden Calf). The *eigel* came about because we lacked *emunah*. The rectification is to recognize הוי"ה אחד, that everything happens through Hashem's *hashgachah*.

It states (1:32), ובדבר הזה, אינכם מאמינים בה' אלוקים "With this matter, you don't believe in Hashem your G-d." The Bnei Yissaschar

(*Igra d'Kalah*) explains that in the desert, Hashem performed many miracles for the Jewish nation (the *mon*, the well, the clouds of glory). The pasuk says, ובדבר הזה, when you believe in Hashem because of these wonderful gifts, אינכם מאמינים, that isn't belief. That is דעת, knowing Hashem because due to all these kindnesses and miracles, one sees clearly how Hashem is taking care of him. *Emunah* is to believe in Hashem even when we don't see His kindness, and to believe nevertheless that everything is for the good.⁴

4. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* told the following about his rebbe, Reb Noson Adler *zt'l*:

"When I came to my rebbe [Reb Noson Adler *zt'l*] for the first time in the town of 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 tell 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 didn't see such joy on him, not even when he davened on Simchas Torah. Throughout the year, on Shabbos, Reb Noson Adler would take the *aliyos* of *kohen* and of *maftir*, and on the Shabbos of the *shiva* (which was פרשת וירא), he didn't change his custom. When he said the *haftarah*, one tear fell from his eye, and he caught it in his hand.

Benefits of Yesurim

A benefit that comes from yesurim is that it saves us from Gehinom. Each minor pain in this world saves us from immense suffering in the next world. Isn't that something to be happy about?

Reb Yaakov Galinsky *zt'l* repeated the following story. He heard it from the rav of the city where this episode took place:

Ten Yidden in Russia were accused of doing illegal business. The punishment was either exile to Siberia or execution, and due to *Eisav sonei le'Yaakov* (anti-Semitism) the judges chose to impose the death sentence.

After the judges announced this dreadful verdict, a high-ranking priest entered the courtroom and announced to the ten prisoners, "I will offer you a chance to live, and I will give you five days to think it over. Whoever converts to Christianity will be pardoned. He can return home as if nothing happened."

The prisoners were placed in ten different cells, so they couldn't influence each other to remain strong in their *emunah*.

The priest also told the rav of this city about his *generous* offer. He figured the rav would convince them to convert to

But then he got a hold of himself, and he didn't show any more sign of distress. Since then, he never mentioned his daughter's name, and he didn't have another child" (*Likutei Teshuvos, Michtavim* 9).

He didn't allow himself to be sad because he believed that it was *bashert*, and therefore, certainly for the good, regardless of whether we understand it or not.

Christianity to save their lives.

On the fifth day, the rav told his community to gather in the beis medresh. "We will daven for our ten brothers, that they keep strong and that they should pass this difficult test. They shouldn't exchange eternal life for a gain in this passing world."

After heart-rending *tefillos*, the rav lit nine candles *li'luy nishmos* the nine men who certainly chose death rather than conversion. He didn't take a tenth candle because one of the accused was a young orphan who only had a mother. The rav figured that he certainly wouldn't pass the test and leave his mother alone in the world.

The mother, watching from the women's section, saw the rav only prepare nine candles. She stood up and exclaimed, "Please light a candle for my son, too. I'm certain he will also be *moser nefesh*. Right now,

my only hope is that my son shouldn't fail the test, and he should remain with his *emunah*..."

The rav lit the tenth candle.

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

The mother of the tenth victim was overjoyed that her son didn't abandon his faith, not even for a short moment. Everybody saw this woman's joy, and they understood that her intense love for Yiddishkeit was passed down to her son, and that is what enabled him to pass this difficult test.

This story is repeated as a lesson in *chinuch*. Because when parents love Yiddishkeit, it passes over to their children.

This story is also a reminder that life in this world is temporary, and *ruchniyus* is eternal. In this

story, ten people chose the eternal world, over a fleeting, passing world. We should remember the passing nature of this world when we are undergoing hard times and remember that hardships are for our benefit, to make us worthy of earning Olam HaBa. A moment of hardships in this world prepares us for the endless pleasures in the world to come. And as the Rebbe of Kotzk *zt'l* said, "The entire world isn't worth one *krechitz*."

It states, אשרי העם יודעי תרועה. The *Noam Megadim* explains that תרועה comes from the word רעה, bad. The *pasuk* is saying: "Fortunate is the nation יודעי תרועה, who knows that even the bad is for their benefit."

Another positive aspect of afflictions is that it rouses us to do *teshuvah*.

Consider the following *mashal*, told by the Dubno Magid *zt'l*:

A child was ill, and doctors told the parents that they couldn't permit their child to sleep for the next hour. Because if he falls asleep, he might never wake up.

The parents spoke to the child to keep the child awake. The child was tired, and his eyes were slowly closing, so the father took away the pillow. It is hard to sleep without a pillow. They spoke with the child some more, and when the child was about to fall asleep again, the father quickly took the child and placed him on the cold floor. The child couldn't understand why his father was torturing him. He didn't know that it was for his benefit.

The child began falling asleep again, and the father started hitting the child.

It seemed cruel, but it was kindness to keep the child awake.

The *nimshal* is that Hashem sends us reminders, so that we don't fall asleep in *galus* and forget our purpose in life. If the reminders don't rouse us to improve, the signals become more pronounced.

Consider one more *mashal*:

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

Friend sent His hand through the window..."

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

Ultimate Good

Often, we misjudge what happens to us. We think that the good life experiences are good for us, and that the bad experiences are bad for us. But it isn't always so.

We will give some examples:

Let's say someone wins a ten-million-dollar lottery. He thinks this is good. What could be bad about it?

But now he has enemies because many people think he should help them more. He is also always busy; he hardly has time to learn a blatt Gemara. He used to live a tranquil, simple life, but that doesn't exist anymore. Also, the sudden wealth brought a spirit of arrogance to him and to his

children, which isn't good for them in a spiritual sense.

He curses the day he won the lottery. He thought it was good, but he discovered that it wasn't so.

Now we will show how a bad experience can be for

his benefit. For example, someone lost his job. He has a large family to support and no income. He thinks this is terrible. But he finds a far better source of parnassah. Now he knows that losing the first job was the best thing that could have happened to him.⁵

5. The following stories should remind us not to be upset when bad times come because something good will 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 around the streets. It was obvious that he was lost and couldn't find his way. Reb Shlomo Pinchas approached him, "Tzaddik, how can I help you?"

The *bachur* told him, "I live in Monsey, and I go to yeshiva there. For the summer, my yeshiva is in a summer camp at 441 Sckunemunk Rd, Monroe. I had to go back to Monsey for a doctor's appointment because I was having pain in my arms. The doctor didn't find anything wrong with my arms, and I took a taxi back to the camp. The driver didn't know where 441 Sckunemunk Rd. is, so he dropped me off on the corner of Sckunemunk 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 searched the address on his GPS, but it didn't show up. After some investigation, he learned that Sckunemunk 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 the

reason they didn't find it on the GPS. They were searching in Monroe, but this address was in another town.)

But, apparently, Sckunemunk isn't an easy road to follow, and they still couldn't find #441.

The *bachur* said, "Every morning, we use the *mikvah* on Koritz St. 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 go, and soon they arrived at the camp. Reb Shlomo Pinchas was never in this area before. He was impressed by the camp's old, large building with a beautiful lake in the background.

The next day, the *bachurim* of that yeshiva went boating in the lake, and one of the boats turned over. Four *bachurim* fell into the water. Three of them swam to shore, but one *bachur* couldn't. Hatzalah of Monroe received the call, and they were told that the lake was at 441 Sckunemunk Rd. The Hatzalah volunteers didn't know where this address was, but Reb Shlomo Pinchas (who is a Hatzalah member) was able to direct them. They saved the *bachur* just in time.

Who was that *bachur*? It was that *bachur* Reb Shlomo Pinchas helped the day before. His arm hurt, so he was unable to swim ashore. Had Hatzalah arrived a minute later, there would be no one to save...

The taxi driver's mistake, dropping him off in the wrong place, proved to be for the *bachur*'s benefit. Hashem was preparing the salvation for the next day.

The next Shabbos, the *bachur* said the brachah הַגּוֹמֵל in *beis medresh*.

Many times, we think something is bad, but it is all good. With time, we understand why it was the best thing.

A *chasunah* was taking place in Bnei Brak at a time when there were many demonstrations going on in Eretz Yisrael. Due to these demonstrations, there was a lot of traffic, and the musicians were unable able to get to the wedding in time.

Therefore, the Rambam (*Pirush HaMishnayos, Brachos* ch.9) says we shouldn't be too happy when good things happen, and we shouldn't be overly sad when bad occurs because we don't know what will come from them. The good might be bad, and the bad might be good. Only time will tell.

The Mishnah (*Brachos* ch.9) states:

חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם
שמברך על הטובה, "One must
praise Hashem for the bad,
just as he praises Hashem
for the good." The *brachah*

הטוב והמטיב is recited when good things happen to a person and דיין האמת when bad things happen. Both *brachos* should be said with the same degree of happiness.

The Rambam (*Pirush HaMishnayos, Brachos* ch.9) explains, "When bad things happen to you, be happy and at peace. Don't be angry. Say the *brachah* דיין האמת with happiness, just as you would say the *brachah* הטוב והמטיב... Wise people understand the logic of this concept, and even if the Torah didn't obligate them to thank Hashem for the

There was another wedding hall in the same building, and one of the *baalei simchah* kindly connected the cables, so that the music playing at their *chasunah* could be heard at the *chasunah* where the musicians didn't show up.

Now, as customary, when the *chasan's rosh yeshiva* entered the hall, the band began playing ימים על ימי מלך תוסיף. At this same time, in the other hall, a great-uncle was dancing with the *chasan*. He thought that this song was being played especially for him. He had a check prepared for the *chasan* for five hundred shekel. (That was the amount he always gave at relative's weddings), but due to the great honor he received, he promptly ripped up that check and wrote out another one for fifty thousand shekels. It was clear to all that the "problem" proved to be for their benefit.

bad, they would understand to do so on their own. This is because many things appear good initially, but they are terrible in the end, and vice versa. Therefore, the wise shouldn't feel startled and lost when they undergo hardship, because one doesn't know what will come from them. Also, you should not be overly happy when something good happens to you because you don't know if this goodness will be forever..."

The Mishpat Tzedek⁶ (*Avos* 5) writes, "It is an error to think that matters are bad because what you think is bad is actually the foundation and the root for

the good that will follow. Therefore, it states (*Tehillim* 118:21) אודך כי עניתני, 'I praise You because You afflicted me. ותהי לי לישועה, and the affliction became my salvation.' And it states (*Shoftim* 10:15), והטוב בעיניך עשה, 'Do what's good in Your eyes.' Because a person prays to Hashem that he should get this or that, thinking that this will be good for him. But it isn't always so. Therefore, we pray, 'Ribono Shel Olam, do what You know is best.'..." We don't know what is good for us. So, we pray והטוב בעיניך עשה, "Do what You know is best." Our scope of vision is limited, and only Hashem knows what's best for us.⁷

6. The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* loved this *sefer* and held it in high regard. Also, the Steipler *zt'l* advised *yungerleit* who were going through hard times to study this *sefer*, so they will know that Hashem's ways are just, and learn to accept every situation with love.

7. It states (*Tehillim* 42:8-9), ובלילה שירה עמי תפילה לקל חיי. The Malbim explains that when it is dark and there are *tzaros*, even then I sing to Hashem because I am certain that good will come soon afterwards.

In the desert, the Yidden were told about the giants who lived in Eretz Yisrael, and they began to cry. They thought that going to Eretz Yisrael was bad for them.

But was it bad for them? On the contrary, it was the best thing for them. There was nothing to fear because Hashem fought the wars for them, and they inherited the holy Land, Eretz Yisrael.

But the nation thought that their coming to the land was a bad thing, so they cried. As it states (*Bamidbar* 14:1), ותשא כל העדה ויתנו, "את קולם ויבכו העם בלילה ההוא", "The entire nation raised their voices, and they cried that night."

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." Every year, on Tisha b'Av, we cry for the two Batei Mikdash that were destroyed on this day.

So, the Churban came because we cried for no reason. And the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt when we recognize that everything is for the good.

Hashem Carries our Package

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

In what way were they *apikorsim*?⁸

The translation of משאכם is "your heavy loads," and

8. Literally, an *apikoros* is someone who doesn't respect the *chachamim*. Moshe was complaining that he can't handle alone all their disrespect (see Rashi).

we can explain that it alludes to those who think that they carry the responsibilities of life all by themselves. This way of thinking is *apikorsus* because Hashem carries our load. We aren't alone.

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

A poor man was walking down the road, carrying a heavy package on his shoulders. The king saw him from his chariot and offered him a ride. The poor man was glad to come aboard. However, even as he sat in the wagon, he continued to carry the

heavy bag on his shoulders. The king asked him why he doesn't put his bag down. He replied, "Honorable king. I'm so thankful you are 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. You may as well put your bag down.

Hashem gives *parnassah*, heals the sick, makes *shidduchim*, etc. If we feel that *we* have to carry the load alone, that is *apikorsos*.⁹

9. Someone is riding a train and he is pushing the wall with all his strength.

"What are you doing?" someone asks.

"I am helping push the train so it will go quicker."

"The train doesn't need your help!" replies the other.

That is how we appear when we think Hashem can't manage on His own, and that without our work, He can't give us *parnassah*.

There was a insane person who would stand in the middle of the street every day, directing traffic. With his arm motions, he showed the cars at the intersection whether they should stand still, turn

השלך על ה' יהבך, throw your load on Hashem (*Tehillim* 55:23), because He is anyways taking care of you.

As the HaMaspik L'Ovdei Hashem (Rabbeinu Avraham ben HaRambam *zt'l*, *Bitachon* 8) writes, "To think that *hishtadlus* brings *parnassah* is כפירה נסתרת (a concealed heresy). Some people claim that they believe that it is Hashem who gives *parnassah* and poverty, life and death, illness and health, but deep in their heart, they think that *parnassah* is really dependent on the amount of *hishtadlus* they do, and that *refuah* is dependent on

the quality of the medications or doctors. Thinking so is *kefirah*, *apikorsus*. Dovid HaMelech said about such people, שנאתי השומרים הבלי שוא ואני אל ה' בטחתי, 'I hate those who trust in foolishness. I trust in Hashem.'"

We are commanded to do *hishtadlus*, but everything is from Hashem. He carries all our packages and arranges all our needs.

The Midrash (*Eichah Pesichta* 24) states that at the time of the Churban, when many Yidden, *rachamana litzlan*, were being savagely murdered, the *avos* came before Hashem and davened. "Avraham Avinu

right, left or forward. But this was all for nothing, because there were traffic lights at this intersection.

Once, he had a heart attack, and while he was riding in an ambulance to the hospital he became very worried. He explained, "Who knows how many accidents are happening now, since I am not in the street, directing traffic!"

We are similar, because we think our deeds are needed, and nothing will happen without us. When actually, we are in Hashem's hands, and Hashem is taking care of us.

said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, 'Ribono shel Olam, you gave me a son when I was a hundred years old, and when he grew up and became wise, You told me to offer him as a sacrifice. I acted cruelly, and I didn't have compassion for my son. I bound him to the *mizbeiach*. Won't you remember that merit? Won't you have compassion on my children?'

"Then Yitzchak said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, when my father told me אלקים יראה בני [and hinted that I would be sacrificed] I didn't protest. I allowed him to bind me on the *mizbeiach*, and I stretched out my throat to the sword. Won't you remember that? Won't you have compassion on my children?'

"Then Yaakov Avinu said, 'Ribono Shel Olam, I lived 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 going to the slaughter! I raised them like little chicks; I suffered so much to raise them. I worked so hard to raise them my entire life. Won't you remember all that and have compassion on my descendants?'"

Avraham and Yitzchak spoke about their *mesirus nefesh* at the *akeidah*, and Yaakov spoke about his *mesirus nefesh* to raise his family. Apparently, *mesirus nefesh* to raise a family is as great as the *mesirus nefesh* of the *akeidah*.

The Nesivos Shalom *zt'l* repeated this Midrash to a father, complaining that it was hard for him to support his family. The Nesivos Shalom explained, "Struggling to raise a family is the greatest deed, and it can be compared to the *mesirus nefesh* of the *akeidah*. But you don't need to worry. You do your *hishtadlus*, and Hashem

will help that everything will work out in the end."

The Partner

Someone passed a large field and saw many workers working in groups of two. One person was digging a hole, and the other one was filling it up with earth again.

He approached a pair of workers and asked them, "What is the purpose of what you are doing?"

They replied, "We usually work in groups of three: One digs a hole, a second puts in a sapling, and the third covers the hole with earth so the sapling will grow. But today, the group that plants the saplings didn't show up. So we decided to continue with our jobs. Just because that group didn't show up doesn't mean we shouldn't do all that we can do."

This is how it appears when we try to do

something without the primary partner. Hashem is our partner in everything we do. We can't do anything on our own. Without the primary partner, all work is futile.

A businessman had an important meeting scheduled for during the Nine Days. This was an important meeting, and if it went well, he would earn a lot of money.

He called Reb Moshe Feinstein *zt'l* and asked if he may shave during the Nine Days to look presentable at the meeting. Reb Moshe ruled that it is forbidden.

But he didn't listen. He was afraid that his unshaven face would hurt his prospects of landing the deal.

The meeting was going well; they were about ready to sign an agreement. But then one of the non-Jewish participants at the meeting asked, "Prove to us that

you are trustworthy and reliable."

The Yid explained that he is a moral, religious Jew, and the Torah mandates good business ethics; therefore, they can trust that he is honest.

"You're a Jew?" the businessman interrupted him. "I know that Jews don't shave during this time of year. Where is your beard? I see you aren't loyal to your religion, so how can we trust you to be honest in business?"

The deal fell through.

This is what happens when one tries to do business while ignoring the primary Partner.

It states in this week's *parashah* (1:32), ובדבר הזה אינכם מאמינים בה' אלוהיכם, "With this matter, you don't 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 that his *parnassah* can't come any other way, he doesn't believe in Hashem. Because Hashem can provide *parnassah* in many ways.

Someone told Rebbe Hershele of Lisk zt'l that a competitor opened a store near his shop, and he is worried that he will lose his *parnassah*.

Rebbe Hershele Lisker told him the following *mashal*:

There was a person who owned a chicken, and every day he threw breadcrumbs into the coop.

One day, he bought another chicken, and placed it into the same coop. The first chicken was worried that his new neighbor would eat up all the food. So, it pecked at the newcomer and ripped out its feathers.

The owner watched this and thought to himself, "chicken! Why don't you understand? I know that

there are two birds in the coop, and I will put in a double portion, so there will be 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 greater portion. He will make certain there is enough for both of you. There is no reason to worry."

Hishtadlus

The requirement to do *hishtadlus* is mentioned in this week's *parashah*, as it states (*Devarim* 2:7), כי ה' אלקיך, ברוך בכל מעשי ידיך "Hashem your G-d blesses you with

everything you do." The words בכל מעשי ידיך imply that you have to do, and then Hashem will grant you success. As the *Yalkut Shimoni* (808) on this *pasuk* teaches, "Perhaps Hashem will send you blessings even if you sit idle and do nothing? The *pasuk* says, ברוך בכל מעשה ידיך, 'Hashem... will bless everything *you do*.' If one does, he receives Hashem's blessing. If one doesn't do, he will not receive Hashem's blessing."¹⁰

But it isn't the *hishtadlus* that helps. Hashem gives *parnassah* to those who make *hishtadlus*.

As the *Mesilas Yesharim* (ch.21) writes, "Technically,

10. The next words of the *pasuk* are, ידע לכתך. The *Yalkut Shimoni* explains, "לכתך is like the word לכלוך, dirt. ידע לכתך for Hashem knows the filth you go through to earn your *parnassah*." This refers to the great tests people go through to earn their *parnassah*. How, indeed, does one pass these tests?

The solution is, ה' אלקיך עמך, know that "Hashem is with you" at the workplace. If you will remember that, לא חסרת דבר, you will be able to pass all tests.

a person could do nothing, and the decree [of how much *parnassah* he will earn] would materialize if it weren't for the קנס, tax, that was placed on all mankind, בועת אפיך תאכל לחם, 'By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.' Due to the decree of the Exalted King, everyone must do *hishtadlus* for his *parnassah*. It's like a tax¹¹ that all humanity must pay, and it is a tax that no one can escape... But it isn't that the *hishtadlus* helps. It is an obligation. After he did *hishtadlus*, he fulfilled his obligation, and Heaven's blessings can come. He doesn't need to spend all of his days seeking *parnassah*."

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

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

"Can I have a meal?"

The neighbor immediately understood what happened but decided to take advantage of this poor man. He said, "Certainly, you can have a meal, but you first need to do some work for me."

The neighbor gave him some hard work to do around his house, and when it was finished, he said, "You did well; now you can get your reward. Go next door; a good meal awaits you there."

11. Based on this *Mesilas Yesharim*, Reb Eliyahu Desler *zt'l* taught, someone who does too much *hishtadlus* is likened to a merchant who already paid his taxes, yet he runs after the tax collector to give him more money.

The poor person still didn't realize that these two homes belonged to two different people. As he ate, he commented, "I worked hard, but it was worth it."

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

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

The host replied, "You worked for free, and you're eating for free."

This story explains the essence of *hishtadlus*. We can work in one place and earn *parnassah* in another. Because it isn't the work that brings *parnassah*. That's a tax on mankind, a detail that needs to be filled before one is eligible for *parnassah*. It is Hashem who gives *parnassah*.

The Chazon Ish zt"l sent Reb Shalom Shwadron zt"l on a trip to London to raise money for Pe'ilim (a *kiruv* organization).

Reb Shalom didn't succeed in raising much money in London.

The Chazon Ish showed Reb Shalom a check for five hundred dollars (which was a lot of money at the time), and he said, "I received this check from a baal tzedakah in Brazil for Pe'ilim. You did *hishtadlus* in London and the *yeshuah* came from a Yid in Brazil."

There is no connection between *hishtadlus* and the results. One does *hishtadlus*, and Hashem sends the *yeshuah*.

Sinas Chinam

Moshe broke the *luchos* (שבירת הלוחות) on the 17th of Tamuz. As we know, one of the *luchos* discusses mitzvos למקום, between man and Hashem (such as keeping Shabbos, believing in Hashem, etc.). The other one addresses the mitzvos בין אדם, להבדילו, between people (such as not to steal and not to kill).

We can explain that שבירת הלוחות means the two *luchos* were broken into two. People only wanted to keep the laws of *ben adam lamakom*, but they didn't want to keep the laws of *ben adam lechaveiro*, as they didn't think it was so important.

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba* 20:12) states, "Why is Aharon's *petirah* written after the Torah tells us that the *luchos* were broken (see *Devarim* 10)? It is to tell us that Aharon's demise was troubling for Hakadosh Baruch Hu just like when the *luchos* broke."

We can explain this Midrash as follows:

Aharon HaKohen taught the nation to be אודה שולם ורודף שולם, to increase peace. When Aharon was *niftar*, people were less cautious. The ideal of *ben adam lechaveiro* was not so important to them anymore. That is שבירת הלוחות, when the *luchos* were divided into two parts. People were

keeping the laws of *ben adam lamokom* and not the laws of *ben adam lechaveiro*. We must mend the broken *luchos*. This is accomplished when the laws of *ben adam lechaveiro* take a prominent place in our *avodas Hashem*.

Baron Rotchild z'l prepared a large *kiddush* one Shabbos morning in honor of a family *simchah*. Many people came, including several rabbanim, and all they saw on the table was wine and *bechers* (Kiddush cups). "Could they make Kiddush without eating *mezonos*?" people wondered.

Soon, the dilemma was resolved. Baron Rothchild made Kiddush and then said a *mezonos* on the *becher*, because the *becher* itself was made from *mezonos*.

Then Baron Rotchild honored Reb Chaim Ozer zt'l to make Kiddush. Reb Chaim Ozer held the cup in his hand for a few moments, contemplating deeply, and then he made

Kiddush. Later, people asked him what he was thinking about before Kiddush. He explained, "Generally, the *brachah* of *mezonos* precedes the *brachah borei pri hagafen*. By Kiddush, we make *hagafen* first. In order not to shame the *mezonos* (that it lost out on its right to have the first *brachah*) some people cover the *mezonos* before Kiddush. I was thinking, 'How can I make Kiddush and say *borei pri hagafen* while holding the *mezonos* in my hand? Even according to those who don't cover the *mezonos*, it seems wrong to hold *mezonos* in one's hand and make a *borei pri hagafen*. Isn't that embarrassing the *mezonos*?

But then I thought, 'More important than not embarrassing the *mezonos* is not to embarrass my

fellow man. If I don't make Kiddush, the Baron will be embarrassed. So, I made Kiddush..."

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

The Gemara adds, "During the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed. Therefore, the date when their *galus* will end was revealed. [The *navi* told them that in seventy years, they will return to Eretz Yisrael.] However, during the second Beis HaMikdash, their sins weren't revealed. Therefore, the end of this *galus* is also hidden."¹²

12. Rashi explains that by the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed. This means people were transparent; they didn't conceal their true selves. Everyone knew who was a *tzaddik* and who was a *rasha*. They were revealed, therefore, it was revealed

Rebbe Yohonoson Eibshitz *zy'a* (*Yaaras Dvash* 7) explains the Gemara as follows: "During the first Beis HaMikdash, their sins were revealed." This means their sins were told to them by the *navi*. They knew the reason for the exile and what they had to do to improve. Because the *pesukim* in *navi* clearly reveal that they were being punished for *avodah zarah*, *giluy arayos*, and *shefichus damim*. They knew what their sins were, so they knew how to improve. Therefore, it didn't take them all that long to improve their ways.

Seventy years later, they returned to Eretz Yisrael.

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

to them that after seventy years they will return to Eretz Yisrael. But by the second Beis HaMikdash, *resha'im* pretended they were *tzaddikim*, and no one knew who was a *tzaddik* and who wasn't. They were concealed and unrevealed, therefore, the end of the *galus* was concealed as well.

13. The Arizal created a *hesger*, an exclusive, compound, for his ten primary students, and he taught them there the secrets of the Torah. He warned them that they must be very cautious from *machlokes*.

But one Friday, two women got into a fight about some matter,

Lashon Hara

The Chofetz Chaim explains that when the Gemara says the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*, it

also means *lashon hara*. *Sinas chinam*, alone, wouldn't destroy the Beis HaMikdash. Rather, it was the *aveirah* of *lashon hara* that destroyed the Beis HaMikdash.

and then their husbands got involved. Their shouts could be heard from the distance.

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

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

It states in this week's *parashah* (1:12), איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם משאכם וריבכם. The Imrei Noam explains, איכה, Moshe told the nation that matters that are related to the Churban and the redemption, אשא לבדי, I will take full responsibility, on my own. Your job is טרחכם משאכם וריבכם, to get rid of *sinas chinam*.

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

Chazal (*Eiruchin* 15:) says that *lashon hara* is just as severe as the three cardinal sins, עבודה זרה, גלוי עריות, ושפיכות דמים, idol worship, adultery, and murder. The Meor Einayim (*Chukas*) explains that when a Yid speaks *lashon hara*, he gives life to the goyim, who do these aveiros.

Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* once came to a city, and after davening, the people in the beis medresh honored him with a *lechayim*. He refused to drink. He said, "When a Yid stabs his fellow man in beis medresh (by speaking *lashon hara*), this results with a goy stabbing a Yid." Later they heard that a goy stabbed a Yid in their city. The Rebbe perceived it with his *ruach hakadosh* and attributed it to people not being careful with *lashon hara* in the beis medresh (heard from the Rebbe of Narol *zt'l*).

The Kli Yakar (*Shemos* 3:2) writes, "This is the primary reason for the *galus*: It is

because of the hatred and jealousy that is among us, and in this regard, the Jewish nation is worse than all other nations. They speak *lashon hara*..."

Yom Kippur night, shortly after the Holocaust, the Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l* said the following *dvar Torah*: (*Devarim* 32:18-19) צור ילידך 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 He doesn't forgive, מכעס בניו ובנותיו, if someone hurts His children."

The graduating class of a girl's high school in Monsey (class of תשע"ז) gathered to figure out why they weren't finding their *shidduchim*. Six girls were engaged while still in school, but all the others weren't, and it was already a year a half after their graduation!

They decided that it could be that they hurt one (or more) of their teachers. They appointed two girls to call all the teachers and ask forgiveness in the name of the entire class.

The originator of this idea became a *kallah* a few days later. The phone call to suggest her *shidduch* came a day after she arranged the program of asking forgiveness. A couple of days later, a few more *shidduchim* were completed.

Ahavas Yisrael

Good *middos* are all interconnected. Some tzaddikim focused on perfecting one particular trait, and when they attained perfection in that trait, they attained excellence in all other good attributes.

For example, 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 focuses so much on that *middah*. He replied, (a) Perfection in that *middah*, alone, greatly purifies a person. (b) Together with excellence in that *middah* comes perfection 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 the 613 mitzvos," because all mitzvos, and all good *middos* are connected. Therefore, perfection in one generates perfection in all aspects of *avodas Hashem*.

Another tzaddik who practiced this was the Chidushei HaRim *zt'l*. He toiled for seventeen years, with all his might, to attain an *עין טובה*, a good eye. He said that no one ever acquired this trait so perfectly as he had.

An aspect of *עין טובה* is to see solely the good in others. When the Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* became a

chassidic Rebbe he had to see the faults in people (to be able to help them), and that bothered him a lot.

The Chidushei HaRim writes, "During [the Three Weeks] one must eradicate *sinas chinam* and all aspects of רע עין, an evil eye. Even if he doesn't look down at anyone but also doesn't focus on their good, that itself is already *sinas chinam*. Chazal tell us, 'A generation that the Beis HaMikdash isn't built, it is like it was destroyed in that generation.' With an טוב עין the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt."

There was a woman who took care of her ill husband with devotion for several years. The great *dayan* of Yerushalayim, Reb Meir Brandsdorfer *zt'l*, would call her from time to time 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."

Another aspect of עין טובה is the attribute of generosity, to give to others.

In 1940/ת"ש, Reb Shaul Yedidyah of Modzitz *zt'l* fled from Modzitz to Vilna, to escape the war. On *Shabbos* he led a *tisch*, and Litvishe people came in to listen to the Rebbe's beautiful, trademark singing. When the Rebbe handed out *shirayim*, it seemed strange to the Litvishe people present, as they never saw this custom before. The Rebbe said, "Don't make fun of this custom. If more people practiced this custom, there would be no war."

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

The Shem MiShmuel
(*Behaloscha* תר"ע ד"ה ולכפר)

writes, "The attribute of a good eye can purify a person [from all his sins]."

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 each other and honor each other.'"¹⁴

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

One day his wife told him that she wants to donate a kidney to help someone on dialysis. Her husband tried to dissuade her but she insisted that 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 said to the Skverer Rebbe, "The ill patient needs the kidney as quickly as possible, but our child's *chasunah* is coming up... Should we do the operation now, or shall we wait until after the *chasunah*?"

The Rebbe told them if the doctors say she will be well and recover in time for the *chasunah*, she can go ahead with the procedure.

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

Shulchan Aruch (554:20) states, אין שאלת שלום לחבירו בתשעה באב, "One mustn't greet his friend on Tisha b'Av." But why not? The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. Wouldn't Tisha b'Av be an ideal time to greet our fellow man and to increase peace?¹⁵

To answer this question, we begin with the following Gemara (*Gittin* 58.):

"There was an apprenticed carpenter who

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

"[When she arrived at his home], the apprentice detained her 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

The doctors began the standard battery of tests to verify that she is a healthy candidate to be a donor and they discovered that she had a tumor right beneath one of her kidneys, and the tumor was pressing on a primary artery that sends blood to the heart.

She thought she was saving another person's life, but she saved her own. If the tumor remained undetected, it could have blocked the blood circulation. It was likely she wouldn't live to see her child's wedding. Because of her *ahavas Yisrael* her life was saved.

15. 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 this be done after Tisha b'Av?"

Reb Refael replied, "On the contrary, Tisha b'Av is the best time for increasing peace. The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. Restoring peace will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash."

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 couldn't pay his debt, so the apprentice said, 'Work for me, and you will pay off your debt with your work.'

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

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

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

The Gemara responds, "The [problem was they] followed the laws literally, and never went beyond the letter of the law."

They failed to take the spirit of the law into account. Instead, they only

focused on what is explicitly prohibited or permitted, and that isn't sufficient.

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

The answer is, Tisha b'Av, we seek true peace, not lip service. Throughout the year, people smile at their fellow man, greet each other, but in their hearts, they don't necessarily care about one another. Tisha b'Av, we take a break from greeting our fellow man, we reassess, and we 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.

The city of Brisk wanted the Beis HaLevi (Reb Yosef Dov Soloveitzik *zt'l*) to be their rav, but the Beis HaLevi turned down the 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. Will you turn them down?"

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

About this episode, the Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* said, "The Beis HaLevi didn't want to turn down 25,000 Yidden. If thousands of Yidden will yearn and request for Moshiach, Moshiach won't want to turn them down, either. It seems that Moshiach is waiting for us, but we aren't waiting for him."

How do we train ourselves to wait for Moshiach?

One way is to recognize that all troubles that we endure are because of the galus.

The Midrash tells us, "There was a woman who lost her young son, and she cried for him every night.

Rabban Gamliel heard her cries, and this roused him to cry and 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* are because of the Churban Beis HaMikdash. He heard her crying for her son, and he realized that her tears and all the tears shed by Yidden throughout this bitter galus are a result of the Churban.

A primary reason to yearn for the Beis HaMikdash is for the *ruchniyus* that we are missing.

The Tiferes Shlomo (מסעי) (ד"ה א"י כן מטה השני) writes, "To properly mourn for Yerushalayim, think about how much holiness we

lack. We don't have a Beis HaMikdash and *kohanim* doing the service. We aren't close to Hashem as we used to be..."

Our cries and our mourning will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash. As it states (*Tehillim* 147), בונה ירושלים ה', "Hashem builds Yerushalayim," and it is written in the present tense. (It doesn't state that Hashem *will* build Yerushalayim in the future.) Because Hashem is rebuilding Yerushalayim right now, with our tears.

As the Chasam Sofer *zy'a* explains: We are mourning and crying over the Beis HaMikdash for two thousand years. Hakadosh Baruch Hu takes all those tears and mourning, and He builds with them the third Beis HaMikdash in heaven - brick by brick, stone by stone. When it is completed, it will come down from heaven.

The Gemara (*Makos* 24) relates:

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

They asked, "Why are you laughing?"

Reb Akiva replied, "Why are you crying?"

They said, "The place upon which is written, והזר והקרב ימות (that only *kohanim* may

go there, and anyone else will die) and now foxes are prancing about it, shouldn't we cry?"

Reb Akiva replied, לכה אני מנצח, "That is exactly why I'm laughing..."

From Reb Akiva's words, לכה אני מנצח it seems he was laughing *because* they were mourning.

Rebbe Yisrael of Tchortkov *zt'l* explains that he was happy that Yidden were mourning over the Churban, because those tears will build the third Beis HaMikdash.¹⁶

16. When we mourn for Yerushalayim, we experience a taste of the redemption.

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

"Merits seeing" (זוכה ורואה) is in present tense because he merits to experience the joy of the redemption even now, in *galus*.

Therefore, at a *chasunah* we say the *brachah* שוש תשיש, praying for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. The Sfas Emes *zt'l* explains that in *galus*, the joy of the *chasunah* isn't complete. We want to make the joy complete, so we mourn and pray for the redemption. With our mourning and our tefillos, we pick up on the joy of the future,

The Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (Rabba 20 ד"ה פעם אחת) writes that the nations פרים 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 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. We can learn from this how great is the reward for Yidden who mourn and weep for Yerushalayim.

There was a city whose residents were waiting for Moshiach to come. So they hired someone to stay awake every night, and if Moshiach arrives in their town in the middle of the night, he would blow the

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

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

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

The man replied, "No way! I want to stay at my post! If I go collecting with you, it is a good position for a few years, but what will I do when I become old? It will be hard for me to go around. But in this position, I'll have *parnassah* forever!"

and then the joy of the *chasunah* is complete.

This story illustrates how people wait for Moshiach, but deep in their hearts, they don't expect it to happen. We have to genuinely wait for Moshiach, and in that merit, Moshiach will come speedily in our days, amen.

Daven for Mashiach

Tefillah is essential to merit the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. The two Batei Mikdash were destroyed because there wasn't enough tefillos (as we will discuss), and the third Beis HaMikdash will be built with tefillos.

The Tiferes Shlomo (מסעי) (ד"ה א"י כן מטה השני) writes, "A person should think about how...due to our many sins, the holy land is under Arab control... This should break a Yid's heart, and he should shout out to Hakadosh Baruch Hu... If Yidden desire the land and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem will

quickly accept their tefillos. Because the Beis HaMikdash is already built and ready in heaven. We only have to request that it come down... Therefore, the Beis HaMikdash is called דביר ביתך (in the *brachah* 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 quickly."

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

And it states (*Eichah* 1:2), ודמעתי על לחיה, "her tears were on her cheek." The Yaaras Dvash explains that the bitter tears that were shed by the Churban Beis HaMikdash were because of לחיה, the cheek. The Gemara (*Chulin* 134:) says that לחיה, cheeks, represents

tefillah.¹⁷ Thus, the bitter Churban was על לחיה, because people weren't davening.¹⁸

And even after the Churban, tefillos would have prevented them from going to galus. The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni Yirmiyahu* 327) tells that when the Jewish nation was, על נהרות בבל, on the banks of the Babylon River, in route to galus, Yirmiyahu left them, and everyone began to cry bitterly. They said, "Rebbeinu Yirmiyahu! Will you leave us?"

Yirmiyahu told them, "I testify by heaven and earth that if you had cried just once when you lived in

Yerushalayim, you wouldn't be sent into exile."

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

Nevuzradan followed Nevuchadnezzar's counsel. When he brought the Jewish nation into exile, he didn't let them rest. He did so, to prevent them from

17. The Gemara explains that one gives the cheeks of an animal to a *kohen* (and the arm and the stomach, of the animal, too, called זרוע לחיים), to represent that Pinchas took a sword in his arm (זרוע), he prayed with his cheek (לחיים), and he killed Zimri and Kozbi at the קיבה, as it states, ואל האשה אל קובתה.

18. The Yaaras Dvash explains that we mourn primarily for the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash. (The second Beis HaMikdash was a respite, a break in the long *galus*, but the primary destruction was the first one.)

davening. His soldiers cut off the limbs of anyone who stopped walking.

Even Nevuchadnezzar *harasha* understood that Yidden have the power to thwart their decrees with their *tefillos*.

The second Beis HaMikdash was also destroyed because Yidden didn't pray 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, *יִצְמִיתֶם ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ*, "Hashem will demolish them [the enemies of the Jewish nation]," (*Tehillim* 94) but they didn't yet say 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 *יִצְמִיתֶם ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ*, "Hashem will demolish

them," the two Batei Mikdash wouldn't be destroyed. The *tefilos* would have stopped the Churban.

The Gemara (*Gittin* 56) states that Bar Kamtza advised the Roman king to send a *korban* to Yerushalayim and see whether they sacrificed it. "If they don't sacrifice it, that will be your proof that the Jews are rebelling against you."

The king sent an ox to be offered as a *korban*.

On the way to Yerushalayim, Bar Kamtza cut the ox's upper lip (or, according to another opinion, he maimed its eye), making the ox unsuitable for a *korban*.

When the *korban* arrived at the Beis HaMikdash, the *chachamim* in the Beis HaMikdash said that they should sacrifice it, its *mum* notwithstanding. They explained that it was a matter of *pikuach nefesh*. They knew that the king sent it, and the entire

Jewish nation was at risk if they don't sacrifice it.

Reb Zecharya ben Avkulas disagreed. He said, "If we bring this *korban*, people will say it is permitted to sacrifice a *korban* with a *mum*."

The *chachamim* came up with another idea. They suggested that they kill Bar Kamtza, so he won't return and tattle on them.

Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas disagreed again. He said, "If we kill Bar kamtza, people will say that whoever makes a *mum* on a *korban*, he is killed."

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

Reb Yochanan concluded: ענותנותו של רבי זכריהו בן אבקולס שרפה את היכלנו והגלה אותנו מארצנו, "Reb Zecharyah ben

Avkulas's humility destroyed our house, burned the *heichel*, and exiled us from our land."

The Meor Einayim (*Gittin*) asks:

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

2) The halachah is that one transgresses all *halachos* of the Torah to save a Yid's life. It seems they should have offered the *korban* or killed Bar Kamtza to save the Jewish nation. Why was Reb Zecharyah so concerned about halachos being forgotten at this time when the lives of so many Jews were at stake?

The Meor Einayim answers that Reb Zecharyah was the *gadol hador*. The proof is that all the other scholars immediately accepted his opinions. He

also had *ruach hakodesh*. He knew with his *ruach hakodesh* that the Churban was imminent, and Reb Zecharyah understood that nothing could be done to change that decree. Even if they bring the *korban*, or if they kill Bar Kamtza, the Churban will occur. Therefore, Reb Zecharyah figured that they may as well be cautious with the halachos because the Churban will happen regardless. At least, the halachos of the Torah won't be forgotten.

Now, why didn't Reb Zecharyah tell the *chachamim* what he knew with his *ruach hakodesh*, that the Beis HaMikdash would be destroyed, regardless of what they do? He should have told them, "You're right. It's *pikuach nefesh*, and the entire nation is at risk. However, I know through *ruach hakodesh* that the Churban will occur anyway. Therefore, let us at least uphold the

halachos." Why didn't he tell them that?

The answer is, Reb Zecharyah was humble, and he didn't want to tell them that he possesses *ruach hakodesh*.

But since he didn't tell them that he knew with *ruach hakodesh* that there would be a Churban, the *chachamim* didn't daven that the Churban shouldn't occur, and they didn't rouse people to *teshuvah*. Had they davened and brought people to *teshuvah*, they would have revoked the decree, and the Churban wouldn't have occurred. Thus, ultimately, it was Reb Zecharyah's humility that caused the Churban.

Following a slightly different approach, we can explain, "Reb Zecharyah ben Avkulas's humility destroyed our house, burned the *heichel*, and exiled us from our land," because although humility is one of the most important traits, there is also a

negative form of humility. That is when one doesn't believe in his ability to daven, and in his importance before Hashem.

Reb Zecharyah knew with his *ruach hakodesh* that the Beis HaMikdash would be destroyed, but he didn't believe that he and Klal Yisrael have the ability to annul the decree with *tefillos*. He was exceedingly humble, and he didn't appreciate his own greatness or the greatness of Klal Yisrael and their close relationship with Hashem. This misplaced

humility caused him to lack recognition of the potential of tefillah, which ultimately resulted in the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.¹⁹

Now that we've seen that the destruction of both Batei Mikdash came about because they didn't pray, we understand that tefillah will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash.

We've been davening for Moshiach for a long time, and we must know that each tefillah brings us closer to redemption. Each

19. Yirmiyahu HaNavi told Tzidkiyahu HaMelech (*Yirmiyahu* 38: 17-18), "Hashem says, if you will go out to the officers of the king of Bavel [to make a peace treaty with them] the city [Yerushalayim] will not be burned, and you and your family will live. But if you will not go to them, this city will be conquered...they will burn it in fire, and you will not survive."

The Rebbe of Kamarna *zy'a* asks, since the decree for the destruction of Yerushalayim was already sealed in heaven, how could Tzidkiyahu's going out to the officers of Bavel help?

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

tefillah helps. And very soon, the redemption will come.

The Necessity of Tefillah

For all our needs, we need tefillah.

The Chofetz Chaim (*Likutei Amorim* 10) writes, "All the many *tzaros* that befall us in *galus*, they are all because we aren't shouting out to Hashem with our prayers. If we davened, our *tefillos* would be answered."

The Midrash (*Shemos Rabba* 38:4) states, "When your forefathers were enslaved in Egypt, didn't I save them with *tefillah*? As it states (*Shemos* 2:23), ויאנהו בני ישראל מן העבודה ויעקו Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Bnei Yisrael, 'Be cautious with tefillah because there is nothing greater. It is

greater than all *korbanos*.... Even if a person isn't worthy that I should answer his prayer and to do *chesed* with him, since he prayed a lot, I will do *chesed* with him."

In *galus*, *tefillos* are even more important than in the days when the Beis HaMikdash stood. As the Rokeach writes, "From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't give goodness and kindness to Bnei Yisrael without tefillah."

The *haftarah* of Tisha b'Av describes the Churban. Among the descriptions, it states (*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 seem to be a trivial matter when we discuss the devastation of the Churban.²⁰

20. A Holocaust survivor was telling the story of how his life was

We can explain that the *pasuk* is saying that now, after the Churban, even fruit doesn't grow on trees without *tefillah*. When Shlomo was king, it was, איש תחת גפנו ואיש תחת תאנתו, "each person sat under his vine and fig tree" (*I Malachim* 5:5). By the influence of the *korbanos*, everyone had grapes, figs, and all their needs. But now, after the Churban, everything comes solely with *tefillah*.

The Yaaras Dvash (*Drush* 5) writes, "The *avodah* of *tefillah* is all we have left in *galus*, because we can't bring *korbanos*. One should pray with humility, without

rushing, and with concentration. Fortunate are those who cry and have a broken heart when they daven, for such *tefillos* will certainly be answered. What can we rely on in *galus* and what will protect us, if not *tefillah* that emanates from the depths of the heart?'

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

saved. He related that he jumped out of a moving train, and ran for safety. Someone asked him, "Was it hot that day, or was it cold?"

The Holocaust survivor replied, "I see you don't understand: Did I even think about the weather? What difference does it make? My life was saved!"

Discussing the weather when someone's life was saved seems irrelevant. Similarly, when we talk about the Churban, a time when so many people died, the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, and the Yidden went into exile, adding that there were no fruits on the trees, seems irrelevant.

"However, if one prays tearfully and with concentration, his tefillah will elevate all the *tefillos* of many years ago that were weak and didn't have the strength to go up. With his *tefillah* with *kavanah* and his tears, those *tefillos* will go up, and they will bring us goodness and blessings."²¹

Daven Yourself

Someone told Rebbe Yechiyel of Gustenin *zt'l* his problems and requested that the Rebbe daven for

him. The Rebbe asked, "What about you? Did you daven?"

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

The Rebbe replied, "I say the Gemara is saying two things: (1) ילך אצל חכם, he

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

The Tiferes Shlomo (*Likutim, Tehillim*, 109) asks, Aharon also stopped a *mageifah*. As it states (*Bamidbar* 17:12), ויתן את הקטורת וכפר על העם ויעמוד בין, המתים ובין החיים ותיעצר המגיפה, "He placed the *ketores* and atoned for the nation. He stood between the deceased and the living, and the plague ceased." So why wasn't Aharon also rewarded with a reward that is forever, as Pinchas was?

The Tiferes Shlomo answers, "Aharon...brought *ketores*... Pinchas... thought, 'What will the generations after me do when there aren't *korbanos*? How will Bnei Yisrael survive then?' Therefore, he prayed. That is something that can be done in all generations... Therefore, he was rewarded with a reward that is 'forever.'"

should go to a *chacham* and ask the *chacham* to daven for him. (2) ויבקש עליו רחמים, he should pray for himself, too." Because everyone has the power of tefillah, and we should utilize it.

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

For it is a very great thing to have tzaddikim daven for you, but don't forget that you also have the power of tefillah. The Noam Elimelech (end of האזינו) writes, "Behold even the tzaddikim... can draw down your *parnassah* with their pure words. Certainly,

this will happen when *you* pray from the depths of your heart to the Creator." This means, each person, when he prays from the depths of his heart, has the power of tefillah, greater than the tefillah of tzaddikim who daven for him.²²

A granddaughter of Reb Hillel Kalimaya *zt'l* survived the Holocaust and Aushwitz. She said that on Tisha b'Av, the Nazis forced them to sit on sharp stones and had them listen to a musical concert in order to break their spirit, not allowing them to even mourn on Tisha b'Av. This woman was upset by this *chilul Hashem*. She prayed, "Hashem, don't answer me for my honor,

22. Someone told his problems to the Kotzker *zt'l*. The Rebbe asked, "Do you daven?"

The man replied, "I have so many problems, I'm not able to daven."

The Kotzker said, "So why did you tell me all your other problems? Your inability to daven is your greatest problem! You should have told me about that problem first."

and not for the honor of your nation. Answer me for Your own honor, which is being desecrated by the goyim. I pray that it should begin to pour."

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

and everybody returned to their barracks.

She said that this gave her a lot of *chizuk*. She saw that even there, in Auschwitz, Hashem listened to her tefillos.

May we be zoche to see the rebuilding of the third Beis HaMikdash and the final redemption speedily in our days.

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