

Darkei HaChizuk

ארבעה צריכים חיזוק (ברכות לב:) - שיתחזק אדם בהם תמיד בכל כהו (רש"י)

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Caution Prevents Danger

The coronavirus is still around, and it's a dangerous illness that can *mamesh* put one's life in danger, *Rachmana litzlan*. But there are ways to be careful, and for those who follow the health precautions, the coronavirus is not considered a *sakanah*. But if people aren't careful, it is literally life threatening.

Beginning of the Churban — the Broken Wall

We are in middle of the Three Weeks, from Shivah Asar B'Tammuz until Tishah B'Av, and we adhere to *minhagim* of *aveilus* during this time. For example, no haircuts, no weddings.

The reason we start with these *minhagim* already from Shivah Asar B'Tammuz is because that was the beginning of the Churban. The wall around Yerushalayim was breached and the enemies entered the city — this was the beginning of the Churban. Simply speaking, once the city walls were breached, the enemies could come in and destroy the Beis HaMikdash, so that's why it's considered the beginning of the Churban.

However, it is possible to add something more. The very fact that non-Jews entered Yerushalayim is already a *churban*, because Yerushalayim is Ir HaKodesh, a sacred city; there's *kedushah* in it, the *kedushah* of Yerushalayim. When the *goyim* entered Yerushalayim, they desecrated the *kedushah*. This is Churban Yerushalayim — they desecrated the city's holiness.

Minhagei Aveilus: to Solidify Our Feelings

In any case, since Shivah Asar B'Tammuz, when the wall was breached, is the beginning of the Churban, we start *minhagei aveilus* then.

The Gemara doesn't mention these *minhagim*; they only became accepted in later generations. The Gemara does speak about *minhagei aveilus* from Rosh Chodesh Av (*Taanis* 26b): *M'shenichnas Av mima'atim b'simchah*, "We decrease joy with the onset of Av." The Gemara also prohibits taking haircuts and doing laundry during the week of Tishah B'Av, but there is no mention in the Gemara of *minhagei aveilus* from Shivah Asar b'Tammuz till Rosh Chodesh Av.

However, it seems that if even according to the Gemara there are no physical *minhagei aveilus*, there should certainly be *aveilus in our hearts* from Shivah Asar B'Tammuz. After all, the purpose of *minhagei aveilus* is to solidify the feeling of *aveilus* in our hearts. These *minhagim* weren't instituted during the earlier generations because they had *aveilus* in their hearts even without the *minhagim*. *Bein hamitzarim* is a time of Churban, so automatically, their hearts were full of *aveilus* and *tzaar* over the Churban.

Their *tzaar* was so great — indeed, it's told about someone who lived shortly after the Churban, who stuck a knife in his stomach due to his great pain and *tzaar* over the Churban. As a result, the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 180:4) writes that it is customary to cover knives during Birkas HaMazon. The *Mishnah Berurah*, citing Rabbeinu Simchah, explains: "Because once someone was reciting '*Boneh Yerushalayim*' and he remembered the Churban HaBayis and stuck a knife in his stomach." When this man recited *Rachem na al Yerushalayim...* he was so pained that he stabbed himself.

This is how acutely they felt the *tzaar* of the Churban! Therefore, there was no need for *minhagei aveilus* in earlier generations, because they had pain and mourning in their hearts even without the physical reminders. But as the generations passed, these feelings weakened, and it was necessary to add *minhagei aveilus* from Shivah Asar B'Tammuz in order to remember and be pained over the Destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

From Rosh Chodesh Av and onward, these *minhagim* aren't mere customs; they are a halachah written in the Mishnah: *M'shenichnas Av mima'atim b'simchah*, "We decrease joy with the onset of Av." This is also meant to solidify our feelings of *aveilus*. During the week of Tishah B'Av, there are additional *halachos* — all with the same purpose: to strengthen our feeling of *tzaar* over the Churban.

The Beis HaMikdash: An Influence of Kedushah

It is fitting to think what the *aveilus* is about and what the *tzaar* is. What are we missing because of the Churban Beis HaMikdash? In the Beis HaMikdash, the windows were "clear and sealed" (*I Melachim* 6:4), and Chazal say (*Menachos* 86b): "Clear from the inside, and sealed from the outside. I do not need light." When people make windows, they make it wide inside and

narrower outside, so that light from outside will light up the house inside. But the Beis HaMikdash was the opposite: “My windows are clear and sealed” — wide on the outside and narrower on the inside, because the Beis HaMikdash shines its influence outward, and the Beis HaMikdash illuminated and influenced *kedushah* on the entire world.

Sons Exiled from Their Father’s Table

We cannot imagine the feeling of *kedushah* that was present then, because we didn’t live during the time of the Beis HaMikdash. However, just to get an idea, let us contemplate Chazal’s statement (*Berachos* 3a): From the time of the Destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, every day a *bas kol* intones, *Oy lahem labanim she’galu me’al shulchan aveihem*, “Woe unto the children who have been exiled from their Father’s table.” After the Churban, Klal Yisrael were compared to sons who had been supported by their father, but subsequently banished from his home.

Let us imagine: a father and his sons, sitting at the same table and eating together. Their father supports them and they have no financial worries, they get everything from their father. Not only that, they’re together with him, what a pleasure! Suddenly, the sons are exiled from their father’s table. Now there’s no table, they don’t see their father, they’re in exile. Their father doesn’t support them anymore or give them whatever he normally would provide them with. They have no connection to their father. What a change! This is tremendous *tzaar*. And this is the *mashal*.

The *nimshal* is the Churban Beis HaMikdash. During the time of the Beis HaMikdash, Klal Yisrael were “supported at their father’s table.” They received their *hashpa’ah* from HaKadosh Baruch Hu through the Beis HaMikdash, a *hashpa’ah* of *kedushah*. *Kedushah* is such a pleasant, wonderful thing, *l’hisaneg al Hashem*! This is the greatest pleasure possible in his world! And now that the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed, it is lacking! This is what we are pained about and mourning over.

Pain and Worry over the Churban

It says in *Shulchan Aruch siman aleph*, “It is proper that every *yarei Shamayim* should be pained and concerned over the Churban Beis HaMikdash.” That’s what’s proper, every *yarei Shamayim* should be pained and concerned over the Churban. Every person should feel the pain, to be pained, and also to worry. “Be pained” means to be in pain over what we are missing now, that the Beis HaMikdash is missing, and “be concerned” means to worry about the future — what will be in the future. That’s how it should be: pain and concern over the Churban.

The *Mishnah Berurah* cites the *Shelah*: “He should recite “*Al naharos Bavel*” at every meal, and on Shabbos and

other days when *Tachanun* is not recited, he should say “*Shir Hamaalos b’shuv Hashem*.” This is because one is supposed to be pained and worried, but when a person eats, he naturally feels good. In order not to forget the Churban, he must say *Al naharos Bavel*, which is *tefillah* and *tachanunim* (prayer and supplication) over the Churban. It’s like *aveilus*, it strengthens the feelings of pain over the Churban.

When we don’t say *Tachanun*, we say *Shir Hamaalos*, which mentions the joy we will have when the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt: “When Hashem returns the captives of Tziyon, we will be like dreamers. Then laughter will fill our mouths...” We mention just how much we are waiting and hoping for the *geulah* and the Beis HaMikdash.

Torah and Tefillah Should Be with Joy

The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that even though we must be pained and worried about the Churban Beis HaMikdash, our Torah and *tefillah* must be conducted with joy.

That is, Torah study must be with happiness, even though there is a Churban. In any case, these are the *halachos* of Talmud Torah. Chazal say (*Avos* chap. 6) that the Torah is acquired with 48 acquisitions, and one of them is joy. That is how it should be. **This is a halachah of Torah, to learn with joy, Torah with joy, for Torah makes people happy.**

In the same vein, *tefillah* also must be done with joy. What is *tefillah* with joy? The *Mesillas Yesharim* (chap. 19) quotes a Midrash: When you daven, your heart should be joyous for you are davening to the King Who has no match.” That is, *tefillah* is a great joy: a person merits speaking to the King, and the King hears him and wants to hear him. **The fact that the King wants to hear me is a great *simchah*; even though it’s *tachanunim* (supplications), I still have the *zechus* to talk to the King!** The King hears what I’m asking, the praises and the supplications, and He listens.

Feel the Lack of Yerushalayim; See Its Joy

Whoever is pained over the Churban merits, as Chazal say (*Taanis* 30b), “Whoever mourns over Yerushalayim merits to see its [future] joy.” They learned this from the *pasuk*, “Rejoice with Yerushalayim and exult over her all those who love her; rejoice with her a rejoicing, all who mourn over her.” One who mourns over Yerushalayim merits witnessing her joy, but a person who does not mourn over Yerushalayim will not witness its future joy.

The truth is, this is understandable. If a person mourns over Yerushalayim, it means he misses Yerushalayim and he is pained over its destruction. Since he is in pain, he is pitiable, and Heaven has mercy on him and gives

him whatever he needs. But if someone isn't pained, and doesn't feel that anything is lacking, and doesn't mourn over Yerushalayim because it's fine for him the way it is now, why would he need Yerushalayim? Therefore, he does not see its joy.

Good Middos Rebuild the Ruins of Yerushalayim

Chazal say (*Berachos* 6b), "Whoever makes a *chasan* and *kallah* happy, it is as if he built one of the ruins of Yerushalayim." We must understand what the connection here is. Why is making a *chasan* and *kallah* happy considered like building a ruin of Yerushalayim?

It seems that the explanation is that the Churban was the result of *sinas chinam* and *bad middos* (see *Yoma daf* 9), and the Churban is still continuing because *sinas chinam* is continuing — the *middos* haven't improved and people aren't fulfilling *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* properly. However, when a person gladdens a *chasan* or *kallah*, this is *ahavas habriyos*. He wants the *chasan* to feel good, and he is fulfilling the mitzvah of *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* (as the Rambam writes in *Hilchos Avel*, chap. 14). This is the rectification of *sinas chinam*, and therefore it is considered as if he rebuilt one of the ruins of Yerushalayim.

The Gemara says it is as he rebuilt "one" of the ruins of Yerushalayim, and the reason for this is because even though he personally has *ahavas habriyos*, there are many others who don't. Most of the *tzibbur* do not fulfill *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* properly, and the Churban is still present because of them. He personally is not to blame for the continued Churban, however, just as the Tannaim, Amoraim, and tzaddikim surely aren't to blame — they have already rectified the sin of the Churban. In the same vein, anyone who rectifies the sin

of the Churban with *ahavas habriyos* and good *middos* is considered as if he built "one" of the ruins of Yerushalayim. He is not considered to blame for the Churban.

Our Portion in Your Torah — Through the Beis HaMikdash

We daven and hope that we merit *siyatta d'Shemaya* and the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt speedily in our days. The next part of that request is "And place our portion in Your Torah." That is, it is written (*Eichah* 2:9), "Her king and her ministers are among the nations; there is no Torah." Since the Beis HaMikdash is in ruins, the Torah is also lacking, because the Beis HaMikdash has an influence on Torah, it brings about an increase in Torah, and when the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt speedily in our days, then there will be Torah — "place our portion in Your Torah." One needs to merit this.

Whoever mourns over Yerushalayim merits to see its [future] joy; whoever cares about and is pained over the Churban has *zechuyos*, rights, to the Beis HaMikdash. He is *zocheh* and receives an influence of *kedushah*, as was in the time of the Beis HaMikdash. [Elsewhere, Rabbeinu added that it says *zocheh v'ro'eh*, "merits and sees," in the present tense, because in the merit of his pain and aveilus over the Churban, he is *zocheh* to that influence of *kedushah* right away.]

Yehi ratzon that we merit *siyatta d'Shemaya* to receive the *hashpa'ah* of *kedushah* that was present when the Beis HaMikdash stood.

Cry Over the Churban!

The *Mishnah Berurah*, at the end of *siman* 551, writes in the name of the Arizal, "During these days, after midday, he should mourn and cry for about half an hour." If something doesn't hurt, we don't cry, all we can do is pretend we are crying, but that is not the mitzvah. We must feel the pain, to look deeply and take it to heart, until we spontaneously begin to cry.

Let us take a deep look at ourselves. Does it really hurt us so much that we're moved to tears? We are very far from this! The reason is because we are sick in our souls, our souls don't feel the pain. Just like if someone is paralyzed, he does not feel physical pain, even if people hit him, it doesn't hurt him. He is paralyzed and cannot feel. The same is true with our souls, if we have an illness of the soul and our souls are paralyzed. We don't feel these *hergeishim*.

In the previous generations, they felt the *tzaar* of the Churban. I personally saw an *adam gadol* davening during the Three Weeks. Whenever he said the word “Yerushalayim” in his prayers, his voice was weepy, he felt such pain over the Churban.

Gedolei Olam were known for their deep pain over the Churban. The Maharil Diskin lived in Yerushalayim near the Kosel HaMaaravi, but he never went to the Kosel. He was afraid that he wouldn't be able to bear it once he was there. It's also well known that the Chazon Ish once went to the Kosel, and then became sick. It took him two weeks to get back to himself. Being at the Kosel aroused such pain and *tzaar* in him that it simply made him sick.

My father learned in Slabodka by Rav Baruch Ber. He told us that he remembered how Rav Baruch Ber would cry on Tishah B'Av. He wept bitterly in pain over the Churban, because he felt that it was lacking! Someone on a high level of *emunah* feels that it hurts him, and it naturally causes him to cry. It's not artificial, it comes spontaneously, he naturally is moved to tears.

I also remember when we came to Eretz Yisrael from Chutz LaAretz. The first time we came to the Kosel HaMaaravi, my father *zt"l* burst into tears when he saw the Kosel! He felt the lack, and he painfully remembered the Churban.

These people were on a high *madreigah* in *emunah*; they cared about the lack of *kedushah*.

(From Rabbeinu's *sichos*)

Dedicated by
the Kroll Family, Los Angeles
להצלחת בניהם ובנותיהם
בתורה וביראת שמים

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