

Darkei HaChizuk

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

A Sichah from Maran Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita* .Parashas Matos-Mas'ei 5782 496

Churban — Led to a Lack of Kedushah

We are now in the period of Bein HaMetzarim, the Three Weeks, which began with Shivah Asar b'Tammuz. Chazal say (*Taanis* 26b), "Five things occurred to our ancestors on 17 Tammuz." One of them was that the "city wall was breached." That was the beginning of the Churban.

What is the Churban? What are we missing due to the Churban Beis HaMikdash? We lack the *hashpaah* of *kedushah*! The Beis HaMikdash would be *mashpia* sanctity on all of Klal Yisrael. Indeed, Chazal tell us (*Menachos* 86b) that the Beis HaMikdash had *chalonei shekufim atumim*, "transparent, sealed windows" — transparent from the inside and sealed from the outside. Rashi explains that generally when people make windows, they make the windows narrower on the outside and wider on the inside so that sunlight will come through the windows into the house. In the Beis HaMikdash, however, it was the opposite. The windows were narrow on the inside and wider on the outside, because the *hashpaah* of *kedushah* emanated from within the Beis HaMikdash outward, to the entire world. When the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, we lost the *hashpaah* of its *kedushah* on the entire Jewish nation.

The Purpose of Fast Days

That's why Chazal instituted fast days; four fast days to commemorate the Churban: Shivah Asar B'Tammuz, Tishah B'Av, Tzom Gedaliah, and Asarah B'Teves. These are all mentioned in *Navi* (*Zechariah* 8:19), "*Tzom harevi'i, tzom hachamishi, v'tzom hashvi'i, v'tzom ha'asiri.*" *Tzom harevi'i* is 17 Tammuz, which is the fourth month, *tzom hachamishi* is 9 Av, *tzom hashvi'i* is Tzom Gedaliah — when Gedaliah ben Achikam was killed and the last remnants of Klal Yisrael still in Yerushalayim after the Churban were destroyed — and *tzom ha'asiri* is 10 Teves, when the siege around Yerushalayim began.

What's the reason for fast days? Why did Chazal institute them? The Rambam writes (*Hilchos Taaniyos* 5:1) that fast days are "to arouse the hearts to open the pathways of teshuvah." Fasting will wake people up to get involved in doing teshuvah. The Churban occurred because of certain sins that were prevalent in those days, but we are also perpetuating those sins. That's why the Churban is still continuing. In order to bring back the Beis HaMikdash, we

have to rectify those sins. If we continue transgressing those very same sins, that's why we still don't have the Beis HaMikdash.

Churban and Sins Are Connected

Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Yoma* 1:1), "In every generation that the Beis HaMikdash is not rebuilt, it's as if they caused its destruction." It doesn't say every "person," it says every "generation." Even if there are *tzaddikim* that do not perpetuate these *aveiros* and they are not guilty of the continued Churban, the generation, the majority of the *tzibbur* is continuing to transgress these sins. They are guilty; they are causing the continuation of the Churban. If the generation would have enough *zechuyos*, the Beis HaMikdash would have been rebuilt already. After all, the sins caused the Churban, so if those sins are no longer being committed, we would have a Beis HaMikdash! But the sins are still being committed, so if the Beis HaMikdash is not rebuilt, it's as if it's being destroyed, and the generation is guilty of failing to rectify these sins.

In the "*V'Hu Rachum*" prayer, we recite the *pasuk* from *Daniel* (9:16), "For due to our sins (*chata'einu*) and due to our ancestors' iniquities (*avonos*), Yerushalayim and Your nation are a mockery to all those surrounding us." The choice of words teaches us something. As we know, *cheit* is an unintentional sin, and *avon* is an intentional sin. We must understand why our sins are called "*cheit*, unintentional," while our ancestors' sins are called "*avon*, intentional."

Unintentional Sins Can Continue the Churban

I heard an explanation: The Churban took place due to our ancestors' sins, which were intentional — because the Attribute of Mercy would not have allowed a Churban if the sins were unintentional. An accidental sin is not severe enough to cause a Churban. However, our ancestors' sins were *b'meizid*, performed intentionally. During the first Beis HaMikdash, it was the three cardinal sins, and during the second Beis HaMikdash, it was the sin of *sinas chinam* (*Yoma* 9b). And this sin was not transgressed by mistake. That's why the Churban took place. However, in order to merit the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, we need many more *zechuyos*, so even if our sins are unintentional, these accidental sins will prevent the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash!

That's why because of "our sins (*chata'einu*)" and "our ancestors' iniquities (*avonos*)," Yerushalayim and Your nation are a mockery. In our ancestors' days, in the days of the Beis HaMikdash, *middas hadin* was only able to punish them with a Churban since their sins were intentional (*avonos*). If the sins had been unintentional, *middas harachamim* would have protected them. They could have done teshuvah, brought a *korban*, and atoned for their sin. Unintentional sins cannot bring about a Churban. However, once the Churban happened already, lack of intentional sin is not enough to bring back the Beis HaMikdash — we cannot have even unintentional sins, because a higher *madreigah* is necessary to merit the Beis HaMikdash.

A Mishkan in Every Person's Heart

We find a similar idea at the inauguration of the Mishkan. The *pasuk* states (*Shemos* 25:8), "Make for Me a Mikdash and I will dwell in your [you, plural] midst." "Make for Me a Mikdash" is referring to the Mishkan, as Chazal say (*Shavuos* 16b), "The Mishkan is called Mikdash," and the purpose of the Mishkan is "I will dwell in your midst."

Chazal tell us (cited in the Alshich) that the *pasuk* does not say "I will dwell in his midst," it says, "in your midst" in the plural form, hinting that each and every person will have a Mishkan in his heart. This means that the Beis HaMikdash (and the Mishkan was the first Beis HaMikdash) will be *mashpia* a *hashpaah* of the Shechinah. Shechinah is *emunah* — a tremendous spiritual *madreigah* of *emunah* — in the heart of every single person. When the Beis HaMikdash is standing, it is *mashpia kedushah* on every single person. That's the meaning of "and I will dwell in your [plural] midst."

Mishkan Led to Hashraas HaShechinah

When the Mishkan was set up, how did Klal Yisrael merit this great *madreigah* of *hashraas haShechinah*? Rashi says (*Vayikra* 10:3, citing the Gemara *Zevachim* 115b) that it was due to the *hisorerus* prompted by Nadav and Avihu's death. Nadav and Avihu brought a foreign fire before Hashem — they had only good intentions, they did it *l'shem Shamayim*, based on their own considerations and understanding that it was necessary for *hashraas haShechinah* in the Mishkan.

During the Chanukas HaMizbeach, the Nesiim attained a high level of *ruach hakodesh* and they also brought up special *korbanos*, based on what they knew through *ruach hakodesh*. They brought "one spoon weighing ten shekels of gold filled with *ketores*." Here, *ketores* is singular. *Ketores* is a *korban tzibbur* and is brought on the inner *mizbeach*, but here individuals brought *ketores* on the outer *mizbeach*. So too, "one young goat for a *chata*" — this is referring to a *chata nedavah*, a non-compulsory sin-offering. A *chata* is only brought for a type of sin that, if committed intentionally, is punishable by *kareis*. A *chata* is not used for a *nedavah*. If they brought a *chata nedavah*, it means that they understood through their *ruach hakodesh* that these

korbanos were needed in order to effect *hashraas haShechinah*.

At first, Moshe Rabbeinu refused to accept their *korbanos*. He waited to hear from Hashem (*Rashi* to *Bamidbar* 7:10), and Hashem indeed told him, "One *nasi* every day shall bring their *korbanos* for the Chanukas HaMizbeach" (Ibid. 7:11). Hashem told him that each *nasi* should bring a *korban* on his set day. This was a *horaas sha'ah*, a one-time manner of doing something that way, issued by Hashem — revealed through *nevuah* to Moshe Rabbeinu. Hashem told him that the *nesiim* should bring up a *korban* of something that is usually not brought. And the *nesiim* understood this on their own, due to their high level of *ruach hakodesh*. They understood what Hashem wanted.

Nadav and Avihu also brought up an individual *ketores* and had only the best intentions *l'shem Shamayim*, because they thought it was necessary for *hashraas haShechinah*. However, they brought up the *ketores* on their own without first consulting with Moshe Rabbeinu and that's why they died.

Hisorerus Led to Hashraas HaShechinah

Their death led to a tremendous *hisorerus*, which brought about *hashraas haShechinah* in the Mishkan. Indeed, the *pasuk* states (*Vayikra*, ad loc.) that when Nadav and Avihu died, Moshe Rabbeinu told Aharon, "This is what Hashem was referring to when He said, 'I will become sanctified through those who are close to Me.'" Rashi explains, "When did He speak? [It states:] 'And I will arrange meeting there with Bnei Yisrael and it will become sanctified with My glory' (*Shemos* 29:43). Don't read it '*bichvodi*, with My glory,' read it '*b'mechubadai*, with My honorable ones.'" That is, even while the Mishkan was being constructed, Hashem told Moshe that the Mishkan will be sanctified through "My honorable ones," which refers to the *gedolei hador*, Hashem's honorable people. They are the most honorable people; through them, the Mishkan will become sanctified and the Shechinah will rest upon it.

Moshe Rabbeinu told Aharon, "I knew that the Mishkan would be sanctified through Hashem's honored ones. I thought it would be through me or you, but now I see that they are greater than me and you." At first, Moshe Rabbeinu thought that he or Aharon are the "honorable *gedolei hador*" that Hashem was referring to. He was aware of his position as *gadol hador* and he thought that Hashem meant that either he or his brother Aharon would die, and that would bring about a great *hisorerus*, which would lead to *hashraas haShechinah* in the Mishkan.

Chazal said (*Zevachim* 115, cited in Rashi in *Vayikra*) that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu exacts strict judgment on *tzaddikim*, Hashem is "*misyarei, misaleh u'miskaleis*, feared, exalted, and praised." The death of *tzaddikim* causes a tremendous *hisorerus*; the entire *tzibbur* takes greater *madreigos* upon themselves. "*Misyarei*" refers to *yiras Shamayim*, a high level of *yiras haromemus*, while "*misaleh*

u'miskaleis" refers to great levels of *ahavas Hashem*. The *din*, strict judgment, in *tzaddikim* brings this about.

Moshe Rabbeinu thought it would occur through him or Aharon HaKohen, but it turned out to be Nadav and Avihu. By their deaths, they merited raising the Klal Yisrael to an uplifted spiritual level and to bring about *hashraas haShechinah* in Klal Yisrael. The *pasuk* states (*Vayikra* 9:24), "And a fire emanated from before Hashem... and the entire nation saw, sang praises, and fell on their faces." A fire came down from the Heavens and they were *zocheh* to *hashraas haShechinah* in the merit of the *hisorerus* caused by Nadav and Avihu's deaths.

Rectifying the Churban — A Demand on Bnei Torah!

This shows us that in order to be *zocheh* to *hashraas haShechinah*, we need to be on a very high spiritual *madreigah*. So too, in order to bring about the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, which is a place of *hashraas haShechinah*, we need special *zechuyos*; the generation must be worthy of it, we must be a "*dor zakai*." And every single person can tip the scales.

There is a tremendous amount of people who are not connected to Yiddishkeit. We know that the Chazon Ish *zt"l* said, and wrote in his *sefer* (*Yoreh Deiah siman 2*) that nowadays, our distant brothers are *shogegim*, unintentional sinners, and are like *tinokos shenishbu*, because they never received a proper education. They never had *mechanchim* to set them on the right path. While there are some *kiruv* organizations, they cannot reach the entire generation, and those who are lost are *shogegim*. Unintentional sins still prevent the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, but they are not aware of this and they haven't reached that *madreigah*, so what can they do?

The Brisker Rav *zt"l* said that the main claim is on *bnei Torah* — they already know what's expected of them, they are *baalei madreigah*! The main demand is on them, they have to reach higher *madreigos* and they have to advance more in *ruchniyus* in order to be *zocheh* to *ruchniyus* and the Beis HaMikdash's *hashpaah* of *kedushah*.

Any generation that does not see the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash in its days, it is as if it has been destroyed in its days. That's because the generation caused the continuation of the Churban by continuing the same sins. As we said, even unintentional sins hold back the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. But **who can rectify this? Bnei Torah!** The *maaminim*, the believers! The Yidden who believe *b'emunah sheleimah*, as we declare in the Rambam's Thirteen Ikrei Emunah, "I believe *b'emunah sheleimah*." It hinges on the *maaminim*, those who have *emunah*. **They must actively strengthen their *emunah*, more and more! And this is *l'maaseh*; it pertains to every step we take. We must incorporate *emunah* into our daily lifestyle.**

How do we do this? What's the *eitzah*? We've already spoken a lot about this; the way to do it is by learning *mussar sefarim*. Hashem has given Am Yisrael the opportunity to be *zocheh* to *ruchniyus*, and we have *mussar sefarim*: *Shaarei Teshuvah*, *Chovos HaLevavos*, *Orchos Tzaddikim*, *Mesillas Yesharim*, and more, such as *Peleh Yoetz* which is a wonderful *sefer*, and many more *mussar sefarim* that give readers *chizuk*.

Torah, Avodah, and Gemillus Chasadim

What is the *chizuk*? Which areas should we work on strengthening? There are three specific areas which are incredibly broad principles, as Chazal say (*Avos* 1:2), "The world stands on three matters: Torah, *avodah*, and *gemillus chasadim*."

"Torah" is *esek haTorah* — it should be *b'sheleimus*. Each person is charged according to his abilities and *kochos*, based on the possibilities available to him and his personal situation, to fill his time with Torah! I believe the Chafetz Chaim *zt"l* writes in his *sefer Toras HaBayis* just how to do so. He gives *eitzos* and practical suggestions how to use one's time wisely. He shows how to organize one's daily schedule in the best manner so that every free moment will be utilized for *esek haTorah*.

"Avodah" is *emunah* and davening with *kavanah*. You don't need any special *kavanos*, just simple meaning of the words. (See *Mishnah Berurah* 98:1.)

I've already told you about someone who always became very emotional and cried during the Yamim Noraim *tefillos*. But as the years passed by, he stopped crying. This bothered him, and he went to ask an *eitzah* what he should do about his lack of crying. He was told not to do anything, not to make any preparations for a tearful *tefillah*. He was told not even to think about it, the only thing he should think about during davening is the meaning of the words. He followed this advice, and that year, he cried copiously during the *tefillos*! Every single word in the *machzor*, especially on Yamim Noraim, is a *tefillah* for *ruchniyus* and *kevod Shamayim*, so if a person says these words calmly, with *yishuv hadaas*, he'll simply start to cry. This is "*avodah*." It's not simple, but on the Yamim Noraim, there is a special *hashpaah* and *siyatta d'Shemaya* for it.

"*Gemillus chasadim*" refers to matters *bein adam la'chaveiro*. This applies not only to real actions, it also pertains to innermost thoughts, such as judging others favorably, *dan l'kaf zechus*. Indeed, Chazal say (*Avos* 1:6), "And judge every person favorably."

Judging Favorably Within Your Heart

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 127b) relates a story of a person who worked as a laborer for three years. When it was time for him to go home, it was erev Yom Kippur, and he asked his employer for his wages. His employer told him that he doesn't have any money. The worker asked to be paid

instead with fruit, or land, or the like. Again, the employer told him that he doesn't have that either. Now, the worker saw clearly that his employer did have those assets, but he judged him favorably and found all sorts of far-fetched reasons for his behavior and excuses in his favor. He came to the conclusion that his employer really did not have anything to give him. In the end, he found out that he was right; his employer really could not give him his wages for those very same reasons he had thought of. After Yom Tov, his employer came to his house and gave him everything, because by then, he had possession of his assets once more.

This is an example of "*kaf zechus*" in real time, involving a real *nisayon*. There's an easier type of *kaf zechus* and that is if you see a random person and have some criticism about him or something he's doing, you must judge him favorably then as well!

We've already mentioned what the Ramban wrote in his *Iggeres HaRamban*, "You shall view each person as if he is greater than you... think in your heart that you are more culpable than he is, and he has more merits than you. For if he sins, he sins unintentionally, but you sin intentionally." You must consider each person as greater than you, even if you perform many *maasim tovim* and even if he has many *aveiros*. In any case, it could be that he is sinning by mistake, and you sin on purpose, because you received a Torah education and you know more than he does. You make mistakes, but you are considered an intentional sinner because you could have been more careful and you weren't. That's why he's greater than you — his sins are unintentional and yours are intentional.

This is called to be "*dan l'kaf zechus*," judging favorably — it should be like this in your heart! If you see someone and have some criticism about him, judge him favorably and tell yourself that he didn't know any better and he sinned unintentionally. Tell yourself that he didn't receive proper *chinuch* and he doesn't understand. Tell yourself that he didn't learn *mussar* properly so it's not his fault that he's

acting this way. This is how you should judge favorably in your heart. Even if you don't verbalize your negative feelings about him, it's important that everyone act with "*kaf zechus*" even in his heart, judging every single person favorably inwardly. This is a *madreigah*, but it's the right, true thing to do, and one merits tremendous *zechuyos* for doing so. This type of behavior is not *sheker*, because there truly is always a way to judge favorably.

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This behavior of Torah with *sheleimus*, and *emunah* with *sheleimus*, and *bein adam la'chaveiro* with *sheleimus* are the three pillars the world stands upon: *Torah, avodah, gemillus chasadim*. As we mentioned, *gemillus chasadim* is *middos tovos* and *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho* — that's the feeling you should have in your heart, love him as yourself even in your heart! Don't be suspicious of him; judge him favorably. All these matters are *zechuyos*, and in order to be *zocheh* to the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, we must be involved in these three matters. The way to do so is by learning *mussar sefarim*, which remind a person how and what he should be doing. There are many *mussar sefarim*, and *baruch Hashem, Shamayim* has given us the opportunities to be *zocheh* to rectify the sin that caused the Churban.

Yehi ratzon that *Shamayim* should have mercy on us so that every single Yid in Klal Yisrael will be *zocheh* to become what his true essence is. After all, we have *middos tovos*; this is what differentiates us from all other nations. Chazal say (*Yevamos 79a*) that there are three signs in our nation: We are merciful, bashful, and we perform *gemillus chasadim*. These are special, unique *middos* found only in the Jewish people. May we be *zocheh*, with *siyatta d'Shemaya*, that every single Yid's behavior will be in line with the true essence of Am Yisrael.

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the Kroll Family, Los Angeles
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