

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

A Sichah from Maran Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita* . **Shemos 5783**

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Last week was Asarah b'Teves, the beginning of the Churban, when the Romans first besieged Yerushalayim. Why was there a Churban? Because there were sins, as it states (*Yoma* 9b), "Why was the first Beis HaMikdash destroyed? Because of three things that occurred then: *avodah zarah*, *gilui arayos*, and *shefichus damim*. During the time of the second Beis HaMikdash, Klal Yisrael was involved in Torah and mitzvos and *gemillus chasadim*, so why was it destroyed? Because of *sinas chinam*."

After the Churban of the First Beis HaMikdash, there were only seventy years of *galus Bavel*, and then the Beis HaMikdash was rebuilt. Let's take a good look at the difference between the two exiles. Why was the Churban after the first Beis HaMikdash only seventy years, and the Churban of the second Beis HaMikdash is still continuing to this very day?

The reason is written explicitly in the same Gemara, "The first ones, their sin was revealed, and their end was revealed. The later ones whose sin was not revealed, their end was not revealed [either]." That is, during the period of the first Beis HaMikdash's destruction, their sins were revealed and they knew what they have done wrong. They knew they had committed the three cardinal sins, which are revealed, known sins. Since they knew what their sins were, they were able to do teshuvah. Throughout the seventy years of *galus Bavel*, they did teshuvah and rectified the sins. After they had rectified their sins, there was no longer any reason for the Churban, and they were *zocheh* to second Beis HaMikdash.

### Unsensed Sinas Chinam

But during the second Beis HaMikdash, their sin was not revealed. And we must explain this — how is this possible? We know that their sin was *sinas chinam* — the Gemara tells us explicitly — so how can it be called "unrevealed"?

The answer is that while Chazal revealed their sin, telling us that their sin was *sinas chinam*, even relating the episode with Kamtza and Bar Kamtza as an example, the truth is that only Chazal were aware of this. **The people themselves who were acting with *sinas chinam* had no idea that they were sinning. They didn't feel they were sinning, because when a person hates someone else, he is sure that his hatred is justified. As such, he doesn't consider his hatred "*sinas chinam*," baseless. He thinks his hatred is fair. He's sure that he is a tzaddik, that his fellowman is a *rasha*, and that there's a reason for his hatred. He doesn't feel that he's sinning at all.**

That's why during the second Churban Beis HaMikdash, which was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*, the sin was not

rectified and the people continued their sinful ways. Because they didn't even realize that they were sinning or that they had to correct their behavior. It was only during the first Beis HaMikdash that they were aware of their sins, that they had transgressed the three cardinal sins — *avodah zarah*, *gilui arayos*, *shefichus damim* — the yetzer hara was extremely powerful in these areas. (Afterwards, the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah begged for Heavenly mercy to nullify and weaken this yetzer hara, as it states in *Yoma* 69.) Since they were aware of their sins, they knew what had to be corrected, and they did teshuvah and rectified their wrongdoing. And thus, they were *zocheh* to the building of the second Beis HaMikdash — because if you know what you did wrong, you can do teshuvah. But if you are not aware of your sin, how can you teshuvah?

### Concern About an Unknown Unintentional Sin

I've already mentioned that we can explain a *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (38:19) based on this. The *pasuk* states: "**For I will relate my intentional sins (*avon*), I will be concerned about my unintentional sins (*cheit*).**" This means: I know and understand that I have intentional sins and I'm doing teshuvah for them, because when you know what your sins are, you know what to do teshuvah for; but I am worried about my unintentional sins, because I don't know what they are, and I don't even know that I sinned. Since I don't know what the sins are, how can I do teshuvah? After all, I don't even know that what I've done is a sin, and that's why I'm concerned and worried!

In any case, when it comes to *sinas chinam*, the sinner has no idea that he has sinned, because he doesn't realize that it's a sin. He thinks his hatred is justified; it's not "*chinam*," and that's why "their sin was not revealed." That is, it wasn't revealed to the sinners themselves, and since they don't know what their sin is, they did not do teshuvah. And that's why the Churban is continuing.

Of course, certainly not every single person is negligent and sinful in *sinas chinam*. *Baruch Hashem*, there are many tzaddikim, *bonei Torah*, but there is still a *tzibbur* of people who are harboring *sinas chinam*. The truth is, all Yidden naturally have good *middos*, as Chazal say (*Yevamos* 79a) that there are three signs in this nation: *rachmanim*, *bayshanim*, and *gomlei chasadim*. This is also the meaning of "*Atah bechartanu m'kol ha'amim*, You have chosen us from all the other nations" — Hashem, You have made us into "chosen" people and You have given us these attributes of *middos tovos* and this is Klal Yisrael's natural *teva* — while this is all true, there are also *negi'os*, **personal biases**, that can lead to hatred.

And this is the reason for the Churban Beis HaMikdash. If the sin would have been rectified, the Beis HaMikdash would have been

rebuilt already, Mashiach would have come, and we would have the third Beis HaMikdash.

If so, we have to think about this: what can we do, what is the *eitzah* to correct this sin?

### The Eitzah — Esek HaTorah and Mussar Sefarim

The truth is, Chazal said (*Kiddushin* 30b), “I created the yetzer hara, I created the Torah as a *tavlin* (lit. spice), an antidote, against it.” The yetzer hara persuades a person to sin, and the *eitzah* against it is “*Torah tavlin*” — the Torah gives a person power to overcome the yetzer hara.

*Lichorah*, there is a yetzer hara specifically against learning Torah. The yetzer hara does not want us to learn Torah, so how is it possible to learn if the yetzer hara is persuading us not to learn?

The answer is because the Torah is a “*tavlin*.” Just as a spice adds flavor to food, there’s a good taste and special sweetness to Torah. *Divrei Torah* are interesting and enticing; it makes no difference what part of Torah — *halachos* and *aggados* — all Torah is very interesting, and the yetzer hara simply cannot disturb us or persuade us to stop, because it is so interesting and it draws the learner in! We are *osek baTorah* and want to continue, we don’t want to stop because Torah is a “*tavlin*”! It’s delicious! And HaKadosh Baruch Hu created this *eitzah* against the yetzer hara — and against *sinas chinam*, which is also from the yetzer hara.

The first *siman* in the *Mishnah Berurah* states that the Torah that works best as a *tavlin* against the yetzer hara is *Toras hayirah*, *divrei Torah* about *yiras Shamayim*. That’s why we must learn *mussar*. There are many *sefarim* that discuss *yiras Shamayim*: *Shaarei Teshuvah*, *Chovos HaLevavos*, *Mesillas Yesharim*, *Orchos Tzaddikim* and also *Pele Yoetz* and many other *sefarim*. *Baruch Hashem*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu took care of us so that we should do teshuvah and He gave us a lot of *sefarim*, *Toras hayirah*, which are the antidote against the yetzer hara.

*Toras hayirah* also has a flavor, just like a spice. There’s a flavor to *yiras Shamayim*! When someone acquires more and more *yiras Shamayim*, he is happier, it’s a known fact. I’ve told stories about married men who started learning *mussar* every day, and their families were able to feel the difference. They said the atmosphere at home changed, it became much more pleasant, because *yiras Shamayim* gives over a very pleasant feeling! And this is the antidote against the yetzer hara, *Toras hayirah*, *sifrei yirah*, that give those who learn from them a good flavor and a very pleasant feeling.

### Rectifying the Sin of the Churban through Good Middos

Strengthening our good *middos* is the way to rectify the sin of the Churban, and acting with good *middos* is a *mitzvas aseil* (*Devarim* 28:9) of “*v’halachta bidrachav*, and you shall go in His ways.” Chazal said (*Shabbos* 133, and more): “Just as He is merciful, you shall be merciful too, just as He is gracious, you shall be gracious too.” This is how one fulfills the mitzvah of *v’halachta bidrachav* — by acting with the Thirteen

Attributes of Rachamim: *Keil*, *Rachum*, *v’Chanun* etc. A person must be similar to Hashem in this manner.

When were the Thirteen Attributes of Rachamim mentioned in the Torah? What was being discussed there? It was written after the Cheit haEigel, when Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem to forgive Klal Yisrael, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu told him to recite the Thirteen Attributes of Rachamim, and then it states (*Shemos* 34:9), “And You shall forgive our iniquity and our sin and thus secure us as Your possession.” The forgiveness is the result of Middas HaRachamim; when we merit Middas HaRachamim, there is forgiveness for our iniquities and sins. “Iniquities” are intentional sins and “sins” are unintentional, and Moshe Rabbeinu was asking HaKadosh Baruch Hu to forgive both our iniquities and sins. Because he had the *zechus* of Middas HaRachamim, he was also asking for forgiveness for intentional sins.

Now, after the Cheit HaEigel, HaKadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe Rabbeinu (*Ibid.* 32:10), “And now leave Me alone, and I will let My anger rage among them and I will devour them, and I will make you into a great nation.” According to Middas HaDin, Hashem’s “raging anger” and “devouring” should have been present. Middas HaDin was demanding annihilation, *Rachmana litzlan*, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu said “I will make you into a great nation.” That is, My promise to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov will be fulfilled through Moshe Rabbeinu; Klal Yisrael will continue through him. But Moshe Rabbeinu begged for *rachamim*, using the *nusach* of the Thirteen Attributes of Rachamim, and asking HaKadosh Baruch Hu: “And You shall forgive our iniquity and our sin” — utilize Middas HaRachamim and forgive us for our intentional sins as well.

In Shemoneh Esrei we ask Hashem, “*Selach Lanu*, Forgive us our Father, for we have sinned (unintentionally), pardon us our King for we have committed intentional sins.” We ask forgiveness for both the intentional and unintentional sins.

### The Brachah of Hashiveinu

First we ask to do teshuvah: “**Hashiveinu, Return us, our Father, to Your Torah, and bring us near, our King, to service of You.**” That is, we are requesting *siyatta d’Shemaya* for teshuvah. The yetzer hara is cunning and persuasive and one needs power to overcome it. We need *siyatta d’Shemaya* to strengthen our yetzer tov, like we ask every day in *Birkos HaShachar*: “And attach us to the yetzer hatov.”

And this is what we mean when we ask: “*Hashiveinu Avinu l’Torahsecha*.” While asking for help with teshuvah, we use the word “**Avinu**,” our Merciful Father. Hashem loves Klal Yisrael, as the Navi says (*Malachi* 1:2), “I have loved you, says Hashem.” Due to His love, HaKadosh Baruch Hu helps us do teshuvah, He ensures that we have *siyatta d’Shemaya* for teshuvah, as well as *hisorerus* through an *Itrausa d’l’Eila* to do teshuvah. It’s all because of His love!

And then we add another request, using the word “**Malkeinu**.” “Bring us close, our King, to service of You.” We ask for help even from the aspect of *Malchus*, because the King is concerned about his nation’s welfare and wants to help them. After all, it’s the king’s job to take care of his nation, as the

Rambam writes in *Hilchos Melachim* (3:6), that the king is the “heart” of the nation and wants to help them. How can he help them? If the nation serves him, they are giving the king power.

And that’s why we ask: “And bring us close, our King, to **serve You**.” Because when one serves a king, he is giving the king the opportunity to bestow of his goodness on the people, and the king wants bestow goodness on his subjects, but he must have the opportunity to do so — and through their service of him, the nation gives the king power. That’s what we mean when we ask: “and bring us close, our King, to service of you.” We are asking for *siyatta d’Shemaya* for *avodas Hashem* — not only because we love Him as sons, but also due to the aspect of *Malchus*, because HaKadosh Baruch Hu our King wants to bestow goodness on us. So we are asking for *siyatta d’Shemaya* to serve Him, and thus we will be giving Him the power to bestow goodness on us.

In our request, we use two terms: *Avinu* and *Malkeinu*, because there are *madreigos* in Klal Yisrael. There’s the *madreigah* of Avinu, as Klal Yisrael are like sons, and there’s the *madreigah* of Malkeinu, like slaves. And during the Yamim Noraim we mention: “אם כבנים, אם כעבדים” — If we are like sons, or if we are like slaves,” even if we are like slaves, the Master gives his slave food and makes sure he keeps up his strength so the slave will be able serve him. We also ask, “Return us, our Father — and bring us close our King,” we are asking to be *zocheh* to *siyatta d’Shemaya*, both due to the aspect of love as well as the aspect of royalty.

### The Brachah of Selach Lanu

Then in the *brachah* of Selach Lanu, we once use both “*Avinu*, *Malkeinu*.” We say: **Forgive us our Father, and pardon us our King**. We connect “*Avinu*” with unintentional sins, and “*Malkeinu*” with intentional sins. The Abudraham explains: “He connects unintentional sin with ‘Father,’ and intentional sin with ‘King,’ because a father views his child’s intentional sins as if they were unintentional sins, and it will be easy for him to forgive them, just as it’s easier to forgive unintentional sins than those committed intentionally. Regarding a king, he considers the nation’s unintentional sins as sins committed intentionally, as it states (*Mishlei* 29:4), ‘A king establishes the country with justice.’ Therefore, we say to the king: ‘For we have sinned intentionally,’ because intentional sin is graver than unintentional sin.”

In a father-son relationship, because a father loves his son, it’s a father’s nature to overlook his son’s intentional sins and believe that if his son did something against him, it was a mistake; the son is not to blame. He does not get angry at his son — to the contrary, he judges his son favorably, saying that he made a mistake. A king-nation relationship, on the other hand, is not like this. If the nation and the king’s servants defy his will, the king does not conclude that they made a mistake; he punishes them severely, as if the misdemeanor was intentional.

That’s why we ask: “Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned unintentionally,” and “pardon us our King for we have sinned intentionally.” The level of forgiveness each person needs is individual; it depends on his *madreigah*. If we are on the *madreigah* of sons, we ask: “Forgive us our Father” —

HaKadosh Baruch Hu, please forgive us **for we have “sinned unintentionally,”** because sons’ intentional sins are considered mistakes.

Even if we aren’t on the level of sons, and we are merely on the level of servants, we ask Hashem to forgive us “**for we have sinned intentionally,**” because even a slave can beg the king for mercy and say that he’s sorry and regrets his sins. With *Middas HaRachamim*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is a Forgiving King, even when it comes to intentional sins, as it states: “And forgive our intentional sins and unintentional sins.”

### Hashgachah Over Klal Yisrael in Galus

We still have not been *zocheh* to the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash and we are still in *galus*, but we see special *hashgachah* from HaKadosh Baruch Hu over Am Yisrael even during *galus*.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 69) cites the *pasuk* that Moshe Rabbeinu said (*Devarim* 10:17), “הקל הגדול הגיבור והנורה אשר לא ישא פנים וגו’, The great, mighty, awesome G-d Who will not show favor etc.,” meaning, this is HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s *hanhagah* with Klal Yisrael. Each of these descriptions denotes something else: *Gadol* (great) refers to His attribute of doing good, as Rashi states in the beginning of *Parshas VaEschanan* on the *pasuk*, “For You have begun to show Your greatness” — this is Your *middah* of goodness. *Gibbor* (mighty) is the attribute of *Gevurah*, *middas hadin*, and *Nora* (awesome) is even more powerful, and there are a number of explanations.

The Gemara goes on to say: “Yirmeyahu came and said, ‘Gentiles are running amok in His house, where is His awesomeness?’ And he did not recite ‘*nora*.’ Daniel came and said, ‘Gentiles are subjugating His sons, where is His mightiness?’ And he did not recite ‘*gibbor*.’ Until Anshei Knesses HaGedolah came and returned ‘*atarah l’yoshnah*,’ restored the crown to its former state, and they established the *nusach* of our *tefillah* to include Moshe Rabbeinu’s previous descriptions, “הקל הגדול הגיבור והנורה.” They said, ‘*Adaraba*, this is His mightiness, for He overcomes His will and acts with tolerance toward the wicked. This is His awesomeness, for if not for the awesomeness of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, how could one nation exist among all the other nations?’”

We see special *hashgachah pratis* that Am Yisrael survives among all the other nations, one sheep among seventy wolves (see *Esther Rabbah* 10:11), and they exist! It’s been thousands of years since the Churban, we don’t have our own country, we’re scattered throughout the Galus, “*mefuzar u’meforad bein ha’amim*,” and we’re alive; we’re surviving. Rav Yaakov Emdin discussed at length how we see through this HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s special *hashgachah* over Am Yisrael.

The Chovos HaLevavos (*Shaar haBechinah*, end of chap. 5) writes further that reality has proven that throughout the years of *galus*, sometimes the Jews have lived on higher standards than the non-Jews. During some eras, Jews were money-lenders, and lent money, with interest, to non-Jews, and the non-Jews accepted this. The non-Jews needed the Jews’ help! And these Jews do not have a “state,” they’re scattered all over the world, but they maintained their Yiddishkeit and did not intermingle among the nations. This is due to Hashem’s special

*hashgachah pratis* over Am Yisrael that they should not intermingle and get lost, and it's in the *zechus* of *esek haTorah*.

### Esek HaTorah Supports Am Yisrael

This is the meaning of the following words: “אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים, Who has chosen us from all the nations.” **HaKadosh Baruch Hu made us chosen, special. Through what? Through the Torah! The rest of that brachah is “ונתן לנו את תורתו, and He has given us His Torah.”** It's well known when Yidden were not involved in Torah, there was intermarriage in those places, *Rachmana litzlan*. ***Esek haTorah* is the only thing that gives us strength and a happy, fortunate life.** *Esek haTorah* with *yiras Shamayim* — as we mentioned earlier from the *Mishnah Berurah* about “*Toras hayirah*” — is what gives a Yid strength to hold his own even in *galus*.

Scattered all over the world, without any country or any armed forces, we are surviving, and living happy lives — even living on a higher standard than the non-Jews! Such a miracle and such *hashgachah pratis* over Am Yisrael! And it's all from the *koach* of Torah.

We thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu for this, for choosing us, for making us chosen, for giving us His Torah, and also for the fact that Klal Yisrael have special, good *middos*. Chazal said, “There are three signs in this nation: they are *rachmanim*, *bayshanim*, and *gomlei chasadim*.” This is the nature of every single Jew, regardless of his level of Yiddishkeit. Every Yid, no matter what spiritual *madreigah* he's on, is naturally not like

the other nations. His nature and personality are different from those of non-Jews.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu watches over us with *hashgachah pratis* that we should have happy, fortunate lives, so we can continue our lives with Torah, *avodah*, and *gemillus chasadim*! Because when a person has a happy life, he has the strength to continue performing *maasim tovim*.

### Beg for Mercy for Klal Yisrael

*Baruch Hashem* we were *zocheh* to this, and *halevai* that all Klal Yisrael should merit. Not everyone has such happy, fortunate lives. But we beg Hashem for mercy on all Klal Yisrael when we daven, and say “*Hashiveinu*, Return us,” in the plural form — and there is progress, little by little. Why do we ask for mercy? Because it can help! And like Rav Yisrael Salanter said, “It's tried-and-true that davening for *ruchniyus* helps.”

And it all depends on us, on every single one of us. It depends on our level of *kavanah* in davening when we say “*Hashiveinu l'Torasecha*,” “*v'karveinu la'avodasecha*.” What do we have in mind? How much *kavanah* do we have, and how much do we care? It's a *madreigah*. It's not easy to care about another person that he should do teshuvah, it's not easy to be pained about someone else's condition. If would really feel pain over this, there would be different results. Hashem should have *rachamim* that we all attain the spiritual *madreigos* that we need to attain!

### Rabbeinu shlita's Address in the Shiur Yomi after Hearing of Rav Shimon Ba'adani zt"l's Petirah

We received word of the Gaon Rav Ba'adani zt"l's *petirah*. He was an *adam gadol* who had an extremely positive influence on the *tzibbur*. A *hashpaah* of Torah, *yiras Shamayim*, and *middos tovos*. A very great *hashpaah*. And now that is lacking. *Chaval al d'avdin*. The *hashpaah* of an *adam gadol* is lacking, and we need *siyatta d'Shemaya* that his influence should carry on. May *Shamayim* have mercy on the *tzibbur* that the *hashpaah* continue, *b'ezras Hashem*.

But the *tzibbur* has to strengthen themselves, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?”! If there is no *mashpia*, every single person must be *mashpia* on himself! And there are *mussar sefarim*; there are many *mussar sefarim* — if you learn them, you will be influenced. May *Shamayim* have *rachamim*.

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The *sichos* are transcribed and translated from a weekly *va'ad* in Rav Gershon Edelstein's home.