

# BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

## Where Do I Start?

Q: Which *sefer* of the Rav does the Rav recommend I should start with? Should I start from the Rav's original *sefarim* [*Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*], or should I start with the Rav's commentary on *Mesillas Yesharim*...?

A: I do not understand, at all, the question. From the time of the giving of the Torah until today, the shelf is full of so many *sefarim*. How did you deal with that until now regarding which *sefarim* to learn?

Q: What I mean to ask is, should I start with "aleph" [the first volume of *Bilvavi*] or should I start with "beis" [the second volume of *Bilvavi*]?

A: If you're starting from "Aleph", start from "Anochi Hashem Elokecha" ("I am Hashem your G-d"). If you're starting from "Beis", start from "Bereishis Bara Elokim." ("In the beginning, G-d created").

Q: I do not understand – what "Bereishis" is the Rav referring to...?

A: The *raishis* (beginning) does not begin with me. That is exactly the point. There is a long journey to take way before these *sefarim*. There are some things to take from the earlier *sefarim* and there are some things you can take from the *sefarim* of our times. But you cannot begin from that point; you must begin from the words of our earlier Sages, and build everything from there.

Q: But their words are too closed (inaccessible) to us.

A: And how do you start learning the works of the earlier sages? Do you start from Rabbeinu Yonah, or Ramban, or the Chovos HaLevovos?

Q17: I am not talking about those *sefarim* – I am talking about your *sefarim*.

A: The question is: from where are you coming, before you got there? After you figure out what comes before these *sefarim*, you can then know from where you should continue. ■ Q & A at the end of the shiur "דרשות 085 דיבור עם השם תשעג"

## Av - Hearing Hashem

### The Month of Av and The Sense of 'Hearing'

The month of Av, as we know, is the root of all tragedy and suffering in our history. There are twelve months of the year, and each month contains a special power. The power contained in the month of Av, as our Sages explain, is the power of *shemiyah* (hearing).

### The Spies' Evil Report Was 'Heard' In The Month of Av

The Vilna Gaon explains that in the month of Av, the *bnei Yisrael* heard the accounting of the Spies about the land of Israel, where the Spies spoke disparagingly about the land. Instead of listening to Yehoshua and Calev's report, who spoke in praise of the land, the *bnei Yisrael* instead chose to listen to the other eight Spies, who spoke negatively about the land.

There is a power to use our ability of hearing for good, and there is a way how our hearing is used for evil. Our Sages explain that our ears contain an extra piece of skin underneath them, so that we can we block out our ears from hearing something evil (*Kesubos 5b*).

During the month of Av, the power of hearing was used for evil, when the *bnei Yisrael* listened to the Spies' report about the land, and they came to cry 'tears in vain'. Because they cried 'tears in vain', Hashem declared that day, the ninth day of Av, as "a day of crying throughout the generations".

When we stood at Har Sinai, we used our power of hearing for good, where we heard the voice of Hashem. This was where our power of hearing was used in the most elevated way possible. But in the month of Av, where we cried futile tears, the ears that heard at Har Sinai were damaged. At Har Sinai, we were freed from all forces of impurity and evil, and we returned to the level of perfection. When we heard the Spies' report and we cried, the month of Av became a month of mourning for all generations to come; it was like a form of death that came to mankind.

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There is personal mourning in each person's life, and there is also mourning on the collective level of the Jewish people, which is when we mourn over the loss of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Let us try to understand, with the help of Hashem, what good listening is, and what evil listening is. Let us see how we can use the power of hearing for holiness - which will merit us to hear the sound of Moshiach's *shofar*.

## ***Hearing and Understanding (Da'as)***

Firstly, we need to know what the sense of hearing is about. The Sages state that there are four senses (contained in the parts of the face): sight, hearing, smell, and speech. What is the essence of the power to 'hear'? We can know what it is by analyzing its opposite. The opposite of a listener is a deaf person (in Hebrew, "*cheiresh*").

The *Gemara* defines a *cheirish/deaf* person as one who is born with the inability to hear and talk. If he can talk, he is not considered to be "deaf" according to the Torah. The *Gemara* also says that a *cheiresh* has no *da'as* (sensible understanding), just like a minor or mentally ill person has no *da'as*. Elsewhere, the *Gemara* says that he has 'weak' *da'as*. But either way, there is something missing from his *da'as*.

Thus, one who can hear, one who has "a heart that listens", is one who has *da'as*. There is an expression in the *Gemara*, "You do not listen to me, you do not understand me." Being a listener doesn't just mean to use your physical ears to listen to the other person. It means to listen with your heart; to have a "*lev shomea*", a heart that listens, or a "*lev meivin*", a heart that understands.

Thus, hearing implies the ability to both hear and talk, and it also includes the ability to have *da'as* (sensible understanding). What is the explanation of this matter?

## ***The Ability To Hear The 'Word of Hashem'***

If we want to understand the essence of any matter, we need to examine where it appears the first time in the Torah. The first time the Torah speaks about the idea of hearing is by Adam *HaRishon*, when he heard the voice of Hashem calling to him in *Gan Eden*.

From where does a person get his power to talk from? It is because Hashem breathes into a person His word - the "*dvar Hashem*" (word of Hashem). Our entire speech gets its vitality from the "*dvar Hashem*" that empower it. The entire Creation is supported and sustained by the *dvar Hashem*.

This is also why the Sages say that we are commanded to always speak words of Torah, and to avoid speaking words of idle chatter. It is because we have to use our power of speech to emulate the *dvar Hashem*, since such speech contains true vitality that comes from Hashem. By contrast, when someone speaks meaningless words, and surely when he utters forbidden speech such as gossip and other forbidden forms of speech, he is speaking words that are empty from vitality.

Man is called "*nefesh chayah*" (a living soul). The *Targum* says that this means that man is a "*ruach memalelah*" (a talking spirit). Thusly, our entire ability to talk is due to the word of Hashem that was breathed into us.

When Hashem created the universe, He created it with ten expressions, but there was no man yet to hear it. Man was created last, and he didn't hear the *dvar Hashem* that said "Let there be light" and "Let there be a firmament." Until we received the Torah at Har Sinai, no one ever heard the actual *dvar Hashem*. For twenty-six generations, no one heard Hashem's voice! Although our *Avos* kept the entire Torah, and there was Torah learning in the yeshivah of Shem and Ever and in the yeshivah in Goshen, there was not yet a revelation of the *dvar Hashem* which a person could hear. Only at Har Sinai did we hear the voice of Hashem.

This is also the depth of the declaration of "*Naaseh V'Nishma*" (We will do, and we will hear), when we stood at Har Sinai. It was because we received a new kind of hearing, a new set of ears - the ability to hear Hashem's voice. The ears we had before we stood at Har Sinai were not the same ears we had after Sinai. The ears we received at Har Sinai enables us to hear the *dvar Hashem*, to hear the Ten Commandments of the Torah, which commands us to speak the words of Torah. Ever since then, a person is able to remember Har Sinai - he is able to connect to the word of Hashem, which he heard at Har Sinai.

The *Gemara* defines a deaf person as one who is born as both deaf and mute; he cannot talk because there are no words which he has ever heard, to talk about. This is true about the physically deaf person - but there is also spiritual deafness (as we will soon explain).

When a person hears a spiritual message, he is connecting to the "*dvar Hashem*" that was heard at Sinai. Every single Jew received that ability. The giving of the Torah was essentially a conversion process to Judaism, and it is also called a birth. The Sages said that a deaf person is one who is born



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deaf and mute, but if he can hear from birth, he is not called a deaf person according to *Halacha*. The birth of the Jewish people, which was at Har Sinai, meant that we were all on the level of hearing from birth. So we were all 'born' with the ability to hear the *dvar* Hashem, and ever since then, we have the ability to speak words of truth: the words of Torah, which is the word of Hashem.

The giving of the Torah at Sinai enabled us to receive a new kind of listening and speaking, in contrast to the person who is born deaf and mute. This ability was only given to the Jewish people, for only the Jewish people stood at Sinai.

It is forbidden to teach Torah to a gentile, nor may a gentile learn it; he is liable to capital punishment if he does so. This is because a gentile doesn't view Torah as the *dvar* Hashem; he only learns it for the sake of knowing its information. But the Jewish people's view towards the Torah is to learn it with the understanding that it is the *dvar* Hashem.

This is what it means to truly "hear". A *lev sho-meia*, a "heart that listens", is a power exclusive to the Jew's soul who stood at Har Sinai. It is spiritual hearing; to hear the voice of Hashem – to hear the *dvar* Hashem in each thing.

Now we can understand what evil hearing is. When a person doesn't hear the *dvar* Hashem in something, he has misused the power of hearing.

### *Hearing Hashem*

Our *Gedolim* would often view the people who told them news as messengers of Hashem to let them hear what they needed to hear. They would hear Hashem talking to them within the information. But even a person who is not a *Gadol* can hear the messages of Hashem through the things he hears, for it is said that every Jew can hear the Heavenly "*bas kol*" (as the *Baal Shem Tov* explains).

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## *Finding The Root of Marital Issues*

The root of problems in marriage can be traced to the beginning point of our problem. When we figure out what our beginning point of marriage is – the reason why we get married – we will be able to then solve problems in marriage. This is because all of the problems are really rooted in that one point. "*A wise person's eyes are in his head*" – when we get to the beginning point, we can see where all the problems began.

If we would know the reason that we got married, **90% of marital problems** would go away on their own. A person who never thinks, though, will wonder after 2 years of being married why he has problems. But a person who does think will already know beforehand what causes problems in marriage, and then he will know how to get to the root of the problems.

The problems are not because the husband and wife clash with each other. It's because something was misunderstood to begin with.

### *Why Do We Live?*

What we really need to think is: "Why do I live?"

This is a point that one needs to think about before he thinks about why he gets married. It is the beginning that comes before the beginning of marriage. The Mishnah in Avos says that 18 years of age is the time to get married. Before that, though, is Torah and mitzvos. We can learn from this that if a person thinks why he has to get married but he doesn't know why he is living in the first place, it's as if he's starting from the middle of the story.

One has to know, clearly, why he is living. There is a goal which we are living for, and we must know that goal. One of the major, central ways to get to the goal of life is, through marriage.

### *Getting Along With Yourself First*

Before marriage, people seek guidance for marriage, how to get along with a spouse. What about first learning how to get along with oneself? Shouldn't that come before learning how to get along with the spouse? Don't you first need to get along with yourself before you can learn how to get along with another?

People think that as long as they get the right *shidduch* and then everything will be fine. A person seeks a wife who will be pleasant to live with, someone who will make his life easier, someone who will help him. But this is all a fantasy. It doesn't happen in any home. Problems then occur in the marriage, and the person is bewildered how this could happen. ■ From the series *דע את משפחתך* To be continued.



### ***The Destruction of The Beis HaMikdash: What We Lost***

Yirmiyahu HaNavi warned Klal Yisrael that if they don't repent, Hashem will come and collect His debt. He said, "Hear, O heavens, and listen, earth." When Klal Yisrael didn't listen to the Navi, it was not only because they didn't repent, but because they lost the ability to listen with their hearts. By refusing to listen to the Navi, they lost their listening heart.

The destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* was because *Klal Yisrael* wasn't listening to what they needed to hear. Hashem speaks to a person all the time, but if someone doesn't hear His voice, he does as he pleases and thus he never repents.

Yerushalayim, and specifically the *Beis HaMikdash*, was the place where the voice of Hashem would go out from to the rest of the world. "For from Zion goes out Torah, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem." The voice of Hashem was heard at the giving of the Torah, and then it was no longer openly heard. But it continues to be heard in the Torah, in the "word of Hashem" - and it was heard in the *Beis HaMikdash*. The *Beis HaMikdash* was a place where a person could always hear the word of Hashem. Whereas the giving of the Torah was only a temporary time to hear the word of Hashem, the *Beis HaMikdash* was a place where it was heard constantly.

Thus, when we lost the *Beis HaMikdash*, we lost that ability to always hear Hashem's word.

### ***The Loss of the Shirah (Song)***

Let us try to understand more what the deep power of "hearing" is. The *Gemara* says that two voices cannot be heard at once. However, the *Raavad* writes that we can hear two tunes at once. This is because *nigun* (tune) is a higher kind of sound than hearing words. A person can also hear the *ta-amim* (sounds) and *nigun* (tune) contained in the Torah, the *shirah* (song) of the Torah, as he hears the words of Torah. In the *Beis HaMikdash*, the *Kohanim* would do the *Avodah*, and the *Leviim* sang the *shirah*; this was together with the "dvar Hashem" that went out from there.

We still have the Torah, even after the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed. What is missing now from the Torah, then? What Torah did we lose with the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*? We lost its inner song, its *niggun*, its *shirah*.

This is the depth of why the Sages wanted to forbid *shirah* after the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed. The *Beis HaMik-*

*dash* was destroyed because of *sinas chinam* (baseless hatred). The *shirah* is the opposite of the concept of *sinas chinam*. Whereas *sinas chinam* causes disparity, *shirah* comes to unify. It's unified sound along with word enables us to hear two sounds at once.

In addition to the reason of *sinas chinam*, the *Beis HaMikdash* was also destroyed because of *lashon hora* (evil gossip). *Lashon hora* is also a kind of speech that causes disparity. *Lashon hora* is at its name implies - it is 'lashon ra', evil speech, because it is not true speech. It is far removed from the concept of *shirah*. One who speaks *lashon hora* about his friend is not unified with him and separates himself from him. He is missing the *shirah* of the Torah.

It is forbidden to hear *shirah* during the Nine Days, and the depth of this is because we lost the *shirah* of the Torah. We are missing the true *shirah*, and thus it is forbidden for us to take our minds off this loss - that is why we cannot listen to music during these days.

A *cheirish* (one who is born both deaf and mute) has no *da'as*, because he cannot connect to others. He doesn't hear and he doesn't talk to others, so he cannot connect with others. Thus he has no *da'as*. If he can hear others or if he can talk to others, he is not considered by *Chazal* to be "deaf" according to *Halacha*, because he can at least connect to others.

### ***Our Avodah: Hearing The Word of Hashem In Everything***

Now we can better understand what our *avodah* is during these days. The destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* was rooted in the fact that *Klal Yisrael* heard the Spies' evil report. In addition, *Klal Yisrael* didn't listen to the prophets who warned them of the impending destruction. The *avodah* of these days is thus to access and regain the power of *shemiyah*, inner listening.

Our ears heard the word of Hashem when we stood at Har Sinai, and this ingrained in us the power to hear the word of Hashem in each thing. One can hear the *dvar* Hashem in each thing he hears. In this way, everything that a person hears can bring him to the state of oneness with Hashem.

When one doesn't hear the word of Hashem in each thing, and instead he simply hears the events of the world without connecting it to the *dvar* Hashem, he is listening to this "world of disparity" (as it is called by our Sages), instead

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of listening to the *dvar* Hashem. He hears the sounds of This World, not Hashem. This will also cause his own words that he speaks to be disconnected from the *dvar* Hashem.

But if one hears the *dvar* Hashem in each thing that he hears, he hears His one voice in everything. He only hears “one” voice alone. When he hears that “one” voice, he will find that his speech only can speak of only “one” thing....

### In Conclusion

May we merit from Hashem that the impurity and blockages be removed from our ears, that instead of hearing the nonsense of this world, we should instead hear the word of Hashem. When we are hearing the word of Hashem, we can then speak of one thing alone, a kind of speech will unify all of *Klal Yisrael* and transform us into one unit again. And through this we will merit, with the help of Hashem – may it come speedily in our days - the rebuilding of the complete *Beis HaMikdash* and the coming of *Mashiach*. Amen. ■ Translated from the original hebrew shiur: אב - שמייעה 006 מוהות - ראש חודש -

*The First Step* we need to do is not to do wrong things to others. This is not yet *Ahavas Yisrael*. In order to achieve *Ahavas Yisrael*, in order to do good for others, we should not do inconsiderate things to other people. Only by being considerate to others in the first place can a person come to doing good for others out of love.

On a deeper note, to “do” good doesn’t necessarily have to mean doing physical acts of kindness for another person. A person can “do” good with one’s very heart. This we can see by the following phenomenon.

Let’s say two people who never met each other in their life are suddenly informed that they are long-lost brothers. Suddenly, these two strangers will be filled with an enormous love for each other. What can we learn from this?

It shows us that the love present in the Jewish people is a real, existing force within us that can always be accessed – if we choose to.

Although we are speaking about increasing our *achdus* to each other – our sense of unity with one another -- our *Avodah* here is not to “become” one with each other. All of us already are one! Every Jewish soul, all of us, have the same root; we are all essentially one unit. So what it is that we have to do? All we need to do is remove the obstacles holding us back from our natural love toward each other, thus revealing the already present love.

**“What is Hated to You, Do Not Do Unto Others”** The *Gemara* states, “Rabbi Akiva said, “What is hated to you, do not do unto others, for it is written, “And you shall love your fellow like yourself.”

What is Rabbi Akiva saying? That a person shouldn’t kill or steal? That we shouldn’t cause others pain? Although it is definitely true that we shouldn’t cause others pain, this cannot be what Rabbi Akiva was coming to say. A person shouldn’t cause pain to others regardless, even if he doesn’t mind if someone else would do it to him. What doesn’t bother one person may still bother another person, and one may not do something to another that is bothersome even if he himself isn’t bothered by it. So what does it mean that you shouldn’t do to others what you yourself do not want done to you? What does it have to do with you?

Rabbi Akiva is coming to tell us an entirely new idea. Simple human decency requires that we shouldn’t cause pain to others; that is not new to us. ■ From the series דע את עמך. To be continued.

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ספר המספיק לעובדי השם - יום א' 12:45  
עצלות - הדרכה מעשית - יום ד' 16:30  
אנציקלופדיה - מחשבה - יום ד' 20:30

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### *A Time To Dread?*

Sometimes our soul cringes at the very thought of the Nine Days – and especially when one thinks about Tisha B'Av. Our soul might not feel like entering such a place, and even before beginning the Nine Days, a person wishes it would be over already. It's only normal that when you feel sadness in the air and when people are walking around depressed, that you can't wait for these days to finally end.

On a superficial level, a person doesn't enjoy the Nine Days simply because we don't like to suffer, and because we would rather be happy instead. But let's examine this a bit deeper.

### *Are the Nine Days As “Depressing”*

Man contains contradictory aspects like sadness and happiness which are two opposite aspects of our soul. We cannot live based on either one of these emotions alone. If a person leans too much towards one of these extremes, it will cause problems.

The Rambam says that one must generally take the middle path, not an extreme path. One must make sure to remain centered between the two extremes.

During the Nine Days, a person feels that the sadness of these days is pushing him away from the little bit of joy and vitality that he has. He feels forced into the *avodah* of the Nine Days. He knows that he is “obligated” according to *Halacha* to mourn, and he does so without question, but deep down, he doesn't really want to.

The difficulty that people have with the Nine Days is rooted in the fact that there is a misconception about the Nine Days. People think that these days take away our *simcha*, and that these are

days in which we must only feel *atzvus* (sadness).

But this is a misunderstanding!

If a person only has *atzvus* during the Nine Days, he surely cannot survive, because it feels like nothing but suffering. I am not talking about true *atzvus*, but the minimal feeling of *atzvus* that any person with a little bit of fear of G-d can feel during these days.

Firstly, we must understand that in general, people don't have *simcha* during the rest of the year and are living a very routine type of life. As soon as the Nine Days arrive, the little amount of *simcha* that people do have is removed, and thus a person feels like he is left with nothing. That is why he finds the Nine Days to be so “depressing.”

### *How Did Yirmiyahu Write Eichah?*

As is well-known, Yirmiyahu *HaNavi* wrote *sefer Eichah*. There is a famous question asked: The Sages state that all of the books of the prophets were composed with *Ruach HaKodesh* (the holy spirit), and in order to receive *Ruach HaKodesh*, the prophet had to be in a state of joy. How then could Yirmiyahu write *Eichah*, the saddest book of our history, which he was surely not happy to write about? How could the *Ruach HaKodesh* have rested upon him amidst his great sadness?

### *Joy and Sadness At Once*

The depth behind this matter is, because our soul can contain opposite emotions of joy and sadness together.

The Nine Days are not here to take away all of our happiness. If our happiness goes away during these days, it shows that we aren't really happy during the year. If we have true happiness during the rest of the year, even the Nine Days and Tisha B'Av cannot take away our

happiness. There is more of a focus on sadness during these times, but the joy doesn't have to go away completely.

In fact, if a person has true *simcha* during the rest of the year, he can have a degree of *simcha* even on Tisha B'Av.

Of course, it does not seem that these are days that can provide us with any joy. But from a deep perspective, we can feel both sadness, and joy, during these days yet be at peace with the contradictory emotion.

### *Defining Sadness and Joy*

Sadness (*atzvus*) is when we focus on what we are missing, and by contrast, joy (*simcha*) is about what we have. No one has everything, and no one is missing everything. One who feels connected to what he has, is able to feel *simcha* – and someone who connects to that which he doesn't have, will feel *atzvus*.

For example, many people have a lot, but they are not happy, because they are not connected to what they have; and conversely, many people have little, yet they are happy. Why? Because they don't allow themselves to become absorbed in the fact that they don't have certain things, and this spares them the pain that comes from agonizing over what they are missing. It essentially saves them from the sadness.

### *Deriving Vitality From Life & Death*

Both joy and sadness are forms of *chiyus* (vitality). The verse from Koheles, “*And the living shall take to heart*” shows us that even sadness can provide us with *chiyus*. When one only experiences sadness in his life, he cannot survive! But if one is connected to both joy and sadness in his life, he can gain *chiyus* from each of these emotions.

How can a person gain *chiyus* from sadness? When one has pain and suffering,

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## VITALITY FROM MOURNING

and he cries, he is calmed. He finds that he gets *chiyus* from crying and he feels renewed. How indeed does crying give a person *chiyus*? Simply speaking, it is because he has released the pain, so he feels better now. This is certainly true. But the depth of this is because crying reveals the *chiyus* in the emotion of sadness.

Crying can turn the normally debilitating emotion of sadness into a vitality-giving experience. (Tears are a form of water, and water nourishes and provides vitality.)

When we cry on Tisha B'Av, it seems that we are simply crying over what we are missing. But the depth is because this crying gives us *chiyus*.

One who is not connected to these words simply has a superficial perspective towards the Nine Days. The Nine Days to him are depressing: we can't wear fresh clothing, we can't eat meat, and it seems that all we have during these days is sadness and mourning. From a superficial perspective, he does not feel vitality at all!

But when one lives and experiences the meaning of the destruction [of the Holy Temple,] he actually gains *chiyus* from the sadness of this time. The Sages expressed a rule, "A dead person cannot feel."<sup>1</sup> One who can "feel" has *chiyus*. [and conversely, when one does not "feel," it means that the person has no *chiyus* – he is "dead"]. When one truly *feels* what is missing, one experiences its loss in one's life, and along with this feeling of loss and pain comes a certain *chiyus*.

It is hard at first to understand this concept, but it is reality.

### Experiencing Life

To give an example, if a child is niftar G-d forbid, the parents grieve, because they feel the loss; they are living and experiencing the situation. They are connected to what they are missing and thus they feel the sadness of it. But the 3 year old child in the home doesn't know what's going on, so he doesn't cry, because he is not **connected** to

1 Shabbos 13b

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## The Power of Emunah/Believing

The first part of this principle is to "believe in the existence of the Creator." What does it mean to "believe" in this - to have "*emunah*" in it, as opposed to having *daas* (knowledge) of it, or to feel it? What does it mean to be a *maamin* (believer)?

Man has the ability of *hargashah*, to feel and sense things. There are five physical senses, which can feel things. However, feeling is but the external use of *hargashah*. The inner use of *hargashah*, its core, is called *daas* (knowledge). The power of *emunah* (faith), though, is above the senses. This does not mean that *emunah* is something which we cannot feel and something which is not known. That does not define *emunah*. Rather, *emunah* is to believe that there is a reality that there is a Creator. Just like you have the ability to feel and just like you have the ability to know, so can you "believe", in the reality of the Creator.

When you use your physical senses, this is one kind of recognition. You hear something, and you recognize it through hearing it. You smell something, and you have a certain recognition of it. You taste something, and that is a different way to recognize it. You touch something, and that is another way of recognition.

When you know something, that is an entirely different kind of recognition than physically sensing it, because your intellect brings proof that the thing must exist, so you recognize the reality through your ability of *daas*.

But the root of all ways to recognize something is through the power of *emunah*, to believe. *Emunah* is about recognizing realities. With *emunah*, you believe in the existence of the Creator – meaning that you *recognize* the reality of the Creator, through your *emunah*. It is the root of all recognition.

Your mental abilities, which are called *chochmah* (wisdom), *binah* (contemplation), and *daas* (understanding) – and the physical senses which branch out from these, which are hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch – are all but branches of recognition. The power itself to recognize reality is called *emunah*.

An external definition of *emunah* is that if something cannot be physically sensed, one can still believe that it exists. But that is not the actual definition of *emunah*! *Emunah* means that I can recognize its existence, because I am recognizing it through my *emunah*. It means to recognize the intrinsic existence of something, as opposed to recognizing its branches and garments. ■

From the series שלוש עשרה העיקרים. To be continued.



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what is happening.

When one is already living the joy of life, he can also deeply mourn. When one knows what deep joy is – the fact that we can experience life – he can know what mourning is and experiences it. But if one is not anyways in touch with the joy of life, he is not connected to his own life in the first place, so he will not be able to mourn either.

We are all alive, *Baruch Hashem*. But how many people have *simchas hachaim* (joy of life)? Most people are lacking *simchas chaim* – because they lack *chiyus* in their life. Not everyone is living their life! When one only has superficial joy in his life, he only has joy when he acquires various new things, like a new house or a new suit. But true joy is to experience the fact that we are alive; to be happy with our very existence.

The very first time that the Torah mentions *simchal*/joy is with regards to the joy of Adam and Chavah's bond in *Gan Eden*. Thus, the joy between Adam and Chavah in *Gan Eden* represents the root lesson of the entire concept of *simchal* joy. Adam said of her, "This is the bone of my bone."<sup>2</sup> Chavah is also called "mother of all living."<sup>3</sup> The connection is that being "alive" is when we recognize our existence and we are joyous from that alone – as opposed to deriving our main joy from things that we acquire.

Thus, when one is already joyous with his own life – when he appreciates the mere fact that he is alive – he will know how to be sad. Why? Because he experiences what *chiyus* is and experiences sadness at the loss of *chiyus*.

When someone's parents die, understandably, he is sad. But why is he sad? Usually, it is because he misses the pleas-

ant memories of his father or mother. He misses their smile or the jokes they would say, etc. But what about the fact that the life of their parent has ended? Does anyone have sadness over this when their parent dies...?

The true feeling of sadness and mourning [over a parent's death] is to feel sad at the fact that his/her life has gone [not about how it relates to me personally].

Imagine a case where a little girl's father is *niftar*, G-d forbid, and she reacts to the news by saying, "Now there will be no one to buy me presents anymore!" The little child isn't feeling the actual loss. She is feeling a loss over something external, which certainly pains her, but she isn't feeling the actual loss of her father's life. Even when someone gets older and supposedly matures, and they lose a parent, the reaction is not that much different than a child's. The child is upset about the loss of the dependency in the relationship, not about the actual loss of life.

In order to know what sadness is, one must know what joy is, and in order to experience the sadness of mourning, one must know and appreciate what life is. When one experiences life, he can then have joy in life, and when he encounters a loss of life, he experiences its' sadness.

### **The Loss of The Beis HaMikdash**

*Chazal* explain that it is better to go to a house of mourning than to a wedding, for it is written, "And the living shall take to heart."<sup>4</sup> A house of mourning is where they talk about the loss of life – and it is a place that gives a person even more *chiyus* than a joyous occasion.

Thus, it is the loss of life which enables us to feel sadness. The *Beis HaMikdash* was called "*beis chayeinu*," the "house of

*our life*." When we lost the *Beis HaMikdash*, what did we lose? We lost many things – we lost a lot of heavenly protection, *siyata d'shamya* – but those were all just the branches of the loss. What we really lost was the **essence** of our life. We lost our very life itself, for it was the source of all life. The destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* that we mourn about is essentially to mourn the loss of our nation's source of life.

### **Appreciating Our Life**

When one is happy with life, he can be happy in any situation. However, if one is not happy in every situation that occurs, it is a sign that he is not happy with his very life.

In order to truly mourn, one has to be in touch with the depth of his life. Many people only feel this deep part of themselves when they encounter situations in which they feel like their lives are in danger, and then they appreciate what it is to be alive. But to our chagrin, this power in the soul is only accessed in such rare occurrences, and it is not accessed on a more regular basis as it should be.

When someone is in a near fatal car accident, they came to the point of realizing that nothing else matters as much as simply being alive. They become grateful to just be alive, and they truly feel that everything else in life is futile, for there is so much to be thankful for. Then, three days later, they are back to normal again, unchanged....

The ability to appreciate one's very life is an ability that we really need to be in touch with on a more regular basis, not only on rare occasions of our life. It is the one ability that enables us to experience our own life and to know that true happiness is when one is happy with the mere fact that one is alive. When one is in touch with this place in

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<sup>2</sup> Bereishis 2:23

<sup>3</sup> Bereishis 3:20

<sup>4</sup> Kobeles 7:2





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## VITALITY FROM MOURNING

himself, he doesn't need anyone or anything else to make him happy. He gets it all from within himself, with just knowing and appreciating that he is alive.

### *The Loss of Life*

When the *Beis HaMikdash* existed, the Sages explained that one would feel the *Shechinah* there and be atoned for his sins. This was the meaning of how it was our "*beis chayeinu*." It put us in touch with our life. Thus, the Torah came forth from the *Beis HaMikdash*. "For from Zion comes forth the Torah, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem,"<sup>5</sup> because Torah is called "*Toras Chaim*," "Torah of life." The Torah is the root of our life, thus it fittingly came from the *Beis HaMikdash* - the source of our life.

What did we lose when we lost the *Beis HaMikdash*? We lost the meaning of our life. All other things we lost were but branches. The root loss was the fact that we lost our source of life. When mourning over the *Beis HaMikdash*, we must know what we are missing. Therefore, we must know what "life" is – so that we can know what an absence of life is. We must know what kind of a life we are missing, now that we are missing the *Beis HaMikdash*.

Rav Hutner said that in order to eulogize someone, he has to be on a higher spiritual level than him, in order to truly recognize whom he is talking about, so that he can feel a personal loss. How do we mourn the *Beis HaMikdash*, then, if we don't feel like something is missing from our own lives? In order to feel that we are missing it, we need to reflect on how it was the source of our life, and then we will feel the *Beis HaMikdash* as a personal loss. Then we will be able to mourn over it.

### *Vitality Through Crying*

Now we can proceed to understand the following. When one loses something he owned and is upset, even if he cries over it, his crying doesn't

5 *Yeshayahu 2:3*

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In most cases where a young boy or girl has left the fold of *Yiddishkeit*, it was because the parent and child did not have a deep, soul connection with each other. Many parents do not know how to develop such a bond with their children, and the truth is that it requires a lot of individual guidance. But one thing everyone must know is that if the child does not have this soul connection with his parents, or with at least one of them, he is like an orphan in his parents' lifetime.

A soul connection with the child means that the parent can have heart-to-heart conversations with the child, speaking from his own soul to the child's. This does not mean that they have to talk about problems with each other. Instead, they should mainly be having deep reflections about life together, and of how to deal with life. If a child does not have such a relationship with his parent, he will usually not have the inner strength or the mental energy to deal with life and its many difficulties.

There is no need to wait until the problems come in order to deal with the issues. In the approach here, we are not trying to heal the problems. Instead, we are explaining the ideal path to begin with, to enable our child to have a healthy soul, to have the emotional and mental stamina to stay firm and be like a strongly built ship that can ride through the waves of life.

Understandably, this path will not mean guaranteed success. But we must do our part, and in addition, we must pray and cry to G-d about our children, that they should be healthy in their souls, that they be able to rise on the spiritual ladder of growth that ascends to G-d.

Many parents are busy. The father may be studying Torah all day, and the mother is busy with work and with shopping, making sure that the house has all its needs. But they must know, clearly, that it is impossible to raise a child in the right way unless we have constant soul conversations with him; sometimes the conversations can be shorter, and sometimes they are longer, but there must be heart-to-heart conversations.

Each day, a parent must try to sense and feel the child's soul, like when he comes home after his Torah learning session, and to again sense what's going on inside the child as he observes his child in the home. Obviously, this should not be done in a pressurized manner. The point is to create and nurture a soul connection with the child. For this reason, a parent must constantly have conversations with the child throughout the day – conversations that are **meaningful** - and the point is to feel what's going on at the moment in the child's soul. ■ From the *sefer* נספח ילדיך - נספח קצה-קצה. To be continued.



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come from a deep place in himself. He cries over something external and that is why his crying is external. We know that there are different degrees of crying. Sometimes people cry a little and sometimes there are situations where we cry more.

When do we cry more intensely? When we lose something that's more connected with our being. When we cry from the source of life in ourselves, it is deep crying, and such crying will give us life, because it is a crying that is connected to our own life, so it is **vitality-giving**.

The destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* meant that our source of *chiyus* left. The *Beis HaMikdash* provided us with *simcha*. If so, we lost our connection to life through *simcha*. But we can still become connected to the meaning of life, because there is another way.

Now that the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, our connection to life is through crying over its loss!

But it is not just a mere superficial act of crying. It is a crying that connects us to life. Just as *simcha* connects us to our life, so can crying connect us to life. This is stated in the verse, *"And the living shall take to heart."*<sup>6</sup>

### Getting 'Chiyus' From The Nine Days

This is the depth of the mourning of the Nine Days. It is not merely mourning. If one simply views these days as days of mourning, he has a superficial perspective, and he gains no *chiyus* from these days; he'd prefer not to go through it. But if one connects to the source of the mourning, he can reveal the *chiyus* in it, and then he can really feel the mourning.

To illustrate, when one goes to a pay a *shiva* call, he can get inspired and gain

<sup>6</sup> *Kobeles 7:2*

new meaning towards his life. One who can't get *chiyus* from it just sees sad people there and he wishes he could leave. But when one knows how to get *chiyus*, he will deliberately go the *shiva* house.

The Nine Days are days that show a person where he can get *chiyus* from. It is a time that shows a person that there can be *chiyus* even from sadness. Without that *chiyus*, a person feels no connection to these days.

But in order to be connected to it, as we said, one must be connected to life itself.

When one doesn't have *simchas chaim* (the joy of life) he doesn't know how to mourn! He has no *chiyus* in life and so he has no *chiyus* when he thinks about death and mourning!

### Deriving Vitality From Death & Loss

The Sages revealed that Tisha B'Av is the day where *Moshiach* is born [after *chatzos* (noon)].

The times we live in today are a full realization of the curse of death upon mankind. There is a deathlike existence in the world today – there is very little real life to be found. Most people aren't living life – they are living off various acquisitions of life. But as we explained here, there are two sources of life. There is a vitality-giving life that comes from joy, and there is a vitality-giving life that we can gain from sadness – which the Nine Days can serve to reveal to us.

The holy *sefarim* revealed that one can "pursue" Hashem during these days just as intensely as Jerusalem was "pursued" by her enemies on this day. There are two time periods to search for Hashem and attain closeness with Him:

1) the days of Tishrei are the beginning of Creation and are the root of life in Creation, thus it is the time of "Seek

*Hashem where He is found.*"<sup>7</sup>

2) A different path in time that leads us to Hashem is the month of Av. Here we can reach Hashem even when there is no life: even when there is death and mourning. The *Beis HaMikdash* is destroyed, our main source of *chiyus* has gone, but we can still gain *chiyus* from this sadness and thereby become very close to Hashem.

What is this new kind of *chiyus* we can gain from Tisha B'Av? When one is alive, he can be happy from the fact that he's alive. Can a person be happy if he's dead? It is written, *"Serve Hashem with joy,"*<sup>8</sup> which seems to imply that we can only be joyous as we serve Hashem when we are alive.

But can a person be happy when he's about to die, and his soul will be given to Hashem? It would seem that death is not a time at all for any vitality or joy.

Yet, a person can be happy even as he's dying. He can realize that death is simply a removal of his body, where his soul will be going to a different room, as the holy *sefarim* describe. There is really no such thing as death! Death is merely a removal of garments. A person never really dies.

### Death: The Revelation of Our Eternal Life

"The eternity of Yisrael does not lie."<sup>9</sup> There can be a *chiyus* (vitality) derived even from death! When there is *death*, there is no joy derived from *life* – but there can be *joy* derived from *death*. How? It is because death reveals to a person his eternal life, his real life, where he is only a soul with no body.

<sup>7</sup> *Yeshayahu 55:6*

<sup>8</sup> *Tebillim 100:2*

<sup>9</sup> A statement of Rebbi Nachman of Breslev

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## VITALITY FROM MOURNING

A superficial person lives only by his actions alone. A deep person lives his feelings, and a deeper person lives the reality of the knowledge in his thoughts. An even deeper person can feel joy at the very fact that he is alive. And, finally there is the deepest level where a person can feel vitality even from the fact that he will die one day, because he knows that death will mean his eternal life.

This deep level is the message behind the Nine Days – even the absence of life can provide us with vitality. Thus, a person can attain great closeness with Hashem during these days in a palpable way.

### 'Serving Hashem With Joy' In The Nine Days

When the Nine Days are viewed simply as sad days which provide us with no vitality, we might think that it is impossible to “serve Hashem with joy”<sup>10</sup> during these days. But we know that this can't be true, because the Nine Days are part of our *Avodas Hashem*, and all *Avodas Hashem* must be with *simcha*, for the rule is “Serve Hashem with joy.”

If we have no *Beis HaMikdash*, we can get *chiyus* from sadness, as we explained. And on a deeper level, we can get *chiyus* from thinking about the eternal life which awaits us, which is contained in the very idea of death and loss of life.

### Connecting To Eternity

Recently, I was listening to a tape of a speaker whom I had a close relationship with. He was *niftar* recently.

As I was listening to his words, I thought to myself: he is very much alive. I was thinking: Did he die, or is he alive? He is very, very alive. A part of him has gone, but in essence, he is as alive as ever, as his words continue to talk to me on the tape.

He has simply left this world and he has gone to another. But he is alive, not dead.

*10 Tehillim 100:2*

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## Gehinnom On This World

*Chazal* say that as the pit was swallowing Korach and his followers, the children of Korach did *teshuvah*, and a place above *Gehinnom* (hell) was formed where they ended up and where they continue to sing *shirah* today. We see from this a concept that there can be a place formed within *Gehinnom* that is **separate** from *Gehinnom*.

We must know that the world we are found in is really a *Gehinnom*.

One who hears this the first time might not be used to such harsh terminology, but this is the true definition. It is a very precise description. This is the reality which we are in. If a Torah scholar commits sins, G-d forbid, he goes to *Gehinnom*. What does he do there? He continues to sit and learn Torah. In this world too, one can learn Torah, but that doesn't change the fact that this world is still a place of *Gehinnom*.

It is *Gehinnom* due to many reasons. Most of the world lives a life of *hefker* (anarchy) - and as the *Gemara* says, a slave prefers to be *hefker* from any servitude. The whole lifestyle today is *Gehinnom*! As soon as a person wants to "stand up" and say something truthful, he is despised. The Sages predicted that in our era, those who fear G-d will be despised, the wisdom of Torah scholars will be regarded as rotten, and the truth will be very concealed (*Sotah 49a*).

If someone doesn't realize that the reality of the world right now is *Gehinnom*, he has already fallen into *Gehinnom* - and he probably thinks that he's in *Gan Eden*....

This is the truth, this is reality. This is not an extreme opinion – it is describing reality of the world we live in. It is a world of total *hefker* – anarchy.

### Separating From The World Each Day

Within this world of *hefker*, though, we can still have some time of the day where we are separate from the *Gehinnom* around us. We need to have time every day where we feel totally separate from the world. The purpose of this time is not to learn Torah; rather, the point is to be separate from the world, and from there, to be able to continue learning Torah.

### The Spiritual Danger of Bein HaZemanim

We will soon be entering a time where we are more involved with the world outside. So how do we conduct ourselves? We must realize that entering the outside world doesn't enable us to survive

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As a result of sin, where man was told “*On the day you eat from it, you shall surely die,*”<sup>11</sup> and therefore man tends to think that he will “die.” This all comes from the perspective of sin.

But the deeper perspective, which was before the sin, was that there is no such thing as death. This deep perspective is still in our soul. The *Beis HaMikdash's* destruction showed us that there is really no such thing as the “death” of *Klal Yisrael* since our existence is forever.

We can now understand with greater depth how Yirmiyahu was thus able to write *Eichah* with joy, as he thought about destruction. How? Because there is a deep place in the soul which feels the unending joy of our existence. It is the G-dly light deep in the soul which connects man to the place of eternity.

This deep point is especially accessible on Tisha B'Av. The deep *chiyus* one can receive is when one realizes the fact that we are connected to eternity. This is the deep source of joy that can be accessed on Tisha B'Av. This is not an intellectual fact, but a perspective of the soul. When one is connected to that place, he receives the true consolation over Jerusalem.

### ***The Birth of Moshiach***

The Three Weeks come to a climax on Tisha B'Av, after *chatzos* (noon), when we rise from the ground, because it is the time of the “birth of *Moshiach*.” The depth of this, in simple words, is that even as the fire of destruction is burning in front of us, we are still connected to our eternal life.

This is the depth of how a person can become close to Hashem during these days. But it can only happen if a person gains *chiyus* from his life, when he lives and experiences his feelings and

thoughts, and he is happy with the very fact that he lives. A person who lives with this perspective doesn't fear death; because there is no such thing as “death” to him. Death is the opposite of life; when a person knows he is always connected to an eternal life, he has no concept of death, and thus he does not fear death. He knows that he will always be alive. This is the meaning of what is written, “*May the soul of My Master be bound with the Rock of life.*”<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Depth of Our Consolation***

This is our deep consolation. The prayer we say in “*Nachem*” in *Shemoneh Esrei* is a prayer of consolation. What is the consolation about? Simply speaking, our consolation comes from the fact that in the future Hashem will rebuild the *Beis HaMikdash*. This is true, but it is deeper than that. The Sages say, “*One who mourns over Jerusalem, will merit to see it in its rebuilding.*”<sup>13</sup> When one mourns properly over the *Beis HaMikdash*, he sees beyond death and destruction since he is connected to eternity. He gains *chiyus* from mourning over it. But even more so, he realizes that our life is really endless and that there is really no such thing as “death.”

We must definitely realize that the loss of the *Beis HaMikdash* didn't make us lose our G-dly spark. Our G-dly spark is eternal. This is the true consolation and merits one to have the rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

The third *Beis HaMikdash* will come to the world, but there is also a private *Beis HaMikdash* in one's soul.<sup>14</sup> There are those who have built the first and second *Beis HaMikdash* in their souls, but sadly, it has been destroyed within themselves, just as the first and second

*Beis HaMikdash* which were built and then destroyed. But there are those who have merited to build the third *Beis HaMikdash* in their souls, and it is a permanent achievement, just as the third *Beis HaMikdash* is eternal. These are people in the world who have merited to have Hashem's presence dwell in their hearts. Once Hashem's presence is revealed in the heart, He is there forever.

Our deep consolation is when we connect to the endless aspect of ourselves which we can experience now already. Hashem is forever, He renews the Creation every moment, and one can be connected to that eternity and derive *chiyus* from this. The *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed – but what was destroyed? In the words of the Sages, “Hashem poured out His wrath on sticks and stones.”<sup>15</sup> Its structure is gone, but its inner light is forever. The holiness of the *Beis HaMikdash* still stands, according to some opinions in our Sages. The holiness of its stones is gone because its stones have gone, but the holiness of the site remains intact forever, because its essence can never be destroyed.

The *avodah* of these days is thus two-fold. One part of our *avodah* is that we must connect to the meaning of the destruction, and we can even gain *chiyus* from this, as we explained. But we can also realize that the *Beis HaMikdash* is eternal because the place of the *Beis HaMikdash* is forever holy. This is the deeper *chiyus* we can derive from these days, and this also connects us to the future redemption.

The words here are describing a place in the soul that one must strive to reach. They are describing an experience of life. There are chambers within our soul (“*chadrei halev*”) where we can

<sup>12</sup> *Shmuel* 25:29

<sup>13</sup> *Yeshayahu* 66:10

<sup>14</sup> See *Nefesh HaChaim* – *Shaar Aleph*

<sup>15</sup> *Kiddushin* 31b

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go deeper and deeper into ourselves. There is true joy in the soul, and one can derive *chiyus* from there. And a person can even derive *chiyus* from the deep sadness of the soul over our current situation. If a person goes yet deeper, he can reach the point where he understands that even sadness and death are vitality-giving, for death represents our eternal life. That is the deep point that can be reached through the mourning of Tisha B'Av.

### *How Do We Look At Life After Tisha B'Av?*

After Tisha B'Av is over, what does a person do? Most people go back to life as usual, just as they were living before the Three Weeks. Once it is *chatzos* on Tisha B'Av, it feels like the mourning is over; some people don't go to a court case until Elul, to wait until the bad *mazal* of Av passes. But for the most part, people return to routine after Tisha B'Av ends....

But it is almost the month of *Elul*. The word "*Elul*" is equal in *gematria* (numerical value) to the word "*chaim*" (life). What kind of *chaim* do we have in Elul? It is a *chaim* that we can reach through the month of Av. The *chaim* we can receive in Av is to realize our eternal aspect.

In Elul, the books of life and death are open. It is a time of judgment. If we view death as merely the cessation of life, then there is much to fear, because it feels like death is looming over the horizon. However, if we realized that death is really a revelation of our eternal life in the month of Av, as we mourned [for the *Beis HaMikdash*], then we evade death since our life is really endless. Only a good life awaits us.

This perspective is gained precisely through Tisha B'Av: the revelation of our eternal life, contained in the concept of death. For at the very climax of the destruction, *Moshiach* is born – the revelation of an eternal existence.

May Hashem help us that these words become actualized in our own life, that our own personal souls should all feel these words, and that all of *Klal Yisrael* merits the rebuilding of the third *Beis HaMikdash*, speedily in our days, *Amen*. ■ Translated from the original hebrew shiur *בין המצרים 1004* which appears in the english *sefer: Bilvavi on the Holy Days*

spiritually, at all. It is almost impossible to keep Torah and *mitzvos* when you are so out there in the world. We can't say it's totally impossible, but it is almost impossible.

The world out there totally contradicts the Torah. It contradicts *halacha*, simply speaking - we are not referring to high spiritual levels. We are talking about the basics. Involvement in the outside world (and even the parts that are officially less connected with the outside world) doesn't allow a person to keep Torah and *mitzvos*; it is a total contradiction to our Shulchan Aruch.

The first difficulty we face is because we are going into a time where we are having more involvement with the world. Even if one learns many hours in the *beis midrash* [during *Bein HaZemanim*], if his soul is connected to the outside world, this itself is a painful situation. If one doesn't feel that pain, it means that he didn't he didn't acquire what he was supposed to acquire during the *zman* (season) spent in yeshiva. The very fact that we have to be more involved with the outside world should feel painful to anyone.

### *Surviving Spiritually: by Disconnecting*

What indeed should one do about it?

There was a place above *Gehinnom* formed for the sons of Korach. In other words, even within *Gehinnom* itself, there is a place where one can be apart from *Gehinnom*.

In practical words, there is an inner place in our soul, where one can disconnect from all that goes on in the world. This is not referring to certain actions that one must do, nor is it referring to "talking in learning" or "thinking in learning". It means to acquire a place in the soul where one disconnects, and he does not feel anything that goes on in his surroundings. This is the inner advice that can help a person survive the spiritual dangers of a time where we leave yeshiva and we enter the outside world.

Each person needs to have inner place in his soul he can go to, a private place in himself, where there is only Hashem in his world, and he feels no one else there. One must be able to connect to this place in himself and thereby disconnect from the surroundings. In fact, all of the exertion in Torah we are involved with during our time in yeshiva is meant so that we can be able to enter this inner place in ourselves, where there is nothing except you and your Creator - where you are alone with Him.

### *Becoming Spiritually Sensitive To The Situation*

If one doesn't feel the painful situation of reality today, he doesn't know where he is. He does not recognize the situation right now.

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### *The Seven Day Festival*

*Chazal* state in *Pesikta* that “*Tisha B’Av* is called a festival”, for it is written, “Call it upon Me a festival.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, *Chazal* explain that the “festival” of *Tisha B’Av* has seven days, just as *Pe-sach* and *Succos* have seven days.

When does the “seven-day festival” of *Tisha B’Av* conclude? Seven days after *Tisha B’Av*, it is *Tu B’Av* (the fifteenth day of the month of *Av*). Thus, the “festival” begins with *Tisha B’Av* and ends with *Tu B’Av*.

Regarding *Tu B’Av*, *Chazal* state in the *Mishnah* that it was one of the greatest festivals of the Jewish people, a day in which the daughters of *Jerusalem* would go out wearing borrowed white clothing, when they would say, “Choose for yourself a mate, for the sake of Heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus, *Tu B’Av* is certainly a festival, as we see from the *Mishnah*; and *Chazal* are teaching us in the *Pesikta* that this festival actually begins with *Tisha B’Av*.

### *The Birth of Moschiach*

Let us reflect here a bit, with *siyata d’shmaya*, into the days between *Tisha B’Av* and *Tu B’Av* which are like a period of “*Chol HaMoed*.”

*Chazal* state that *Tisha B’Av* is the day of the birth of *Moschiach*. Just as there was a festival in which the Jewish people were born, celebrated on the day when they left *Egypt* (i.e. *Pesach*), so is there a festival which celebrates the day of the birth of *Moschiach* [the festival of the future redemption].

This will be the future festival of *Tisha B’Av*.

1 *Eichah* 1:15

2 *Taanis* 26a and *Bava Basra* 121a: “There were no greater festivals for the Jewish people than *Yom HaKippurim* and the fifteenth of *Av*.”

### *The Sin of the Spies*

Let’s reflect more into the words of the *Gemara*, so we can better understand these days.

At the end of *Tractate Taanis*<sup>3</sup>, *Chazal* list five tragedies of *Tisha B’Av*, the first being that the Spies gave a bad report about *Eretz Yisrael* and the people cried since it was decreed on the ninth of *Av* that the generation of the desert would not enter the land.

It is clear that because of this, even their entry into the land of *Eretz Yisrael* needed a *tikkun* (correction). They entered it with their faith dampened by the report of the Spies, and this was the root of their eventual exile from the land of *Eretz Yisrael*. When they were exiled from *Eretz Yisrael*, they left amidst destruction, just as they entered it amidst a state of ruination.

Thus, the root of *Tisha B’Av* is in the sin of the generation of the desert when they became discouraged from the report of the Spies. *Eretz Yisrael* is called *Eretz Tovah*, the “good land”, but the generation of the desert was called *dor raah*, “bad generation”, because they were not spiritually fit to enter the land. This ruination occurred on *Tisha B’Av*, and it was the first tragic event which took place on this day. The second tragic event which took place on *Tisha B’Av*, many years later, was the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

### *The Roots of The Future Joy*

Let’s reflect. *Chazal* state that *Tisha B’Av* will be turned into a complete festival. If *Tisha B’Av* began with the sin of the Spies’ report, how will this be turned into a festival? How can such a sin be transformed into a reason for celebration? If the root of the ruination began with the sin of the Spies, then the correction for the sin must

3 *Taanis* 30b

be somehow contained in this event as well. Where is a hint that that this event will be turned into good for us?

There are several ways how we can see the correction for the sin of the Spies, which is contained in the very event which brought about devastation.

One way how we can see it is that the decree upon the generation not to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, as a result of the Spies’ report, did not include *Yehoshua* and *Calev*, who did not sin with the Spies. Since *Yehoshua* and *Calev* merited entering *Eretz Yisrael*, there was already a root that this sad episode will be transformed to good in the future, because it was a symbol that the entry of the people into *Eretz Yisrael* contained a rectified aspect. In this way, the eventual destruction that would come to the *Beis HaMikdash* was therefore not a complete destruction. That is the hint that *Tisha B’Av* will become a festival.

The *Gemara* gives several reasons for the festival of *Tu B’Av*.<sup>4</sup> According to one reason, it was the day when the people in the generation of the desert stopped dying, after the decree not to enter the land was given. As long as people were dying, the *Shechinah* left *Moshe*. When the people stopped dying, the *Shechinah* returned to *Moshe*. Simply, the *Gemara* is saying that it was because the *Shechinah* returned to *Moshe*. What is the depth of this joy?

The *Beis HaMikdash* was a place of prayer for all the nations. *Calev* and *Yehoshua* were saved from the decree on the generation, in the merit of prayer. *Moshe*’s prayer for *Yehoshua* was that he shouldn’t be influenced from the Spies, and *Calev* himself prayed by the graves of the forefathers in order to be saved from their influences. Therefore, in their merit, the *Beis HaMikdash* was never completely destroyed. They en-

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4 *Bava Basra* 121a



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tered the land due to prayer, and therefore “the house of prayer for all the nations” did not become totally destroyed.

Thus, the *Shechinah* which returned to Moshe was also in the merit of Yehoshua and Calev who were saved due to prayer and didn't take part in the sin of the Spies. In their merit, there will be a future *Beis HaMikdash* – the house of prayer for all the nations. That meant that even after there will be destruction of the first and second *Beis HaMikdash*, there will be a third *Beis HaMikdash* that will be forever, which will be a house of prayer for the entire world. Since Calev and Yehoshua didn't sin, they did not have a part in the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, and this contains an aspect of an eternal *Beis HaMikdash* in their merit.

Who else didn't die, due to the sin of the Spies? The *Gemara* says that those younger than 20 or older than 60 weren't part of the decree to die in the desert. What is the depth behind the fact that those younger than 20 and those older than 60 weren't part of the decree? We find that when the Jewish people were counted in the desert, those younger than 20 and those older than 60 were not part of the count. The Sages state that “Blessing does not settle, only upon something unseen by the eye.” When something is counted, it has been ‘seen’, so blessing cannot settle upon it, because blessing can only descend upon something which cannot be seen.

Thus the decree wasn't on those younger than 20 and older than 60, because they could not be affected by *ayin hara*, since they weren't counted. Those who were decreed to die in the desert were part of those who were called the “bad generation” who could be affected by *ayin hara*.

In summation, one of the roots of how Tisha B'Av will be a festival in the future is due to the prayers of Calev and Yehoshua, and another reason is because there were people younger than 20 and older than 60, who didn't die in the desert along with the rest of the generation. In either case, we see that there were those in the generation of the

(Cont'd on page 16)

On the other hand, if he is aware of the painful situation, he might fall into despair, realizing that he is surrounded by *Gehinnom*. And then he might give up and just get used to it, making peace with the situation....

The truth is that we cannot totally escape the *Gehinnom* we are in on this world until the day of death. The only issue is how much of a *Gehinnom* our life is and what kind of *Gehinnom* it will be; it is in our hands to lessen the degree of the *Gehinnom* in our life.

As long as a person remains oblivious to this reality that the world is *Gehinnom*, he won't feel the need to separate from it. He has learned to make peace with it and he feels like he can live with it. But this is a very callous and superficial attitude towards life.

If one sees reality as it is, he realizes that he lives in a world which is entirely *hefker*. Surely the Torah makes it mark on people, but the actual perspective which people are living life with is an attitude of *hefker*. To adapt to such a reality causes us inner suffering.

Compare this to walking by a chicken coop that is full of 50 chickens. Is anyone prepared to live in there? No person can handle such a thing. It is unbearable for anyone to live there. So too, the reality around us is really impossible to live in. It is too much suffering to anyone who is a bit sensitive to the spiritual. Anyone who lives a bit of a spiritual life sees this world as a contradiction to his life. The world outside of us totally contradicts our inner and spiritual side to life; there is no resemblance. They are, literally, “worlds apart”.

I hope that you are getting the inner point of these words. It is essentially about how we view life. We must see the outside world as a total contradiction to our inner world. The problem is not simply that there's not enough Torah and *mitzvos* being performed in the outside world. It is a far deeper issue than that. To define the problem as only that would be totally ignoring our inner world. The point is because the life found on the outside world is in total contradiction with our inner world.

### *Reflecting Each Day During Bein HaZemanim*

To internalize these words, one needs to seclude himself and reflect, deeply, into these words. One needs to reflect during specially set aside times for reflection, as well as learning Torah for several hours alone. This enables one to reach an inner place in himself. In this way, even when a person has to be involved with the world, he is able to keep returning to this serene place in his soul.

To practically work on this, one can take a particular Torah

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desert who weren't part of the decree, who were allowed the entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, and this showed that the entry to *Eretz Yisrael* contained an aspect of completion. This paved the roots of the eternal *Beis HaMikdash* of the future, when Tisha B'Av will be turned into a festival.

### ***The Tribe of Levi***

The tribe of Levi merited to leave Egypt and also enter *Eretz Yisrael*. They also were not part of the decree, and therefore they were not a part of the reason for the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

What was the merit of the tribe of Levi? Not only did they merit to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, but they were never part of the exile in Egypt to begin with. All the rest of the Jewish people were in Egypt and did not enter *Eretz Yisrael*, and this was a subtle way of being 'left behind' in Egypt. Since they were still "in Egypt" (demonstrated by their sin with the golden calf) they were not on the spiritual level to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. But the tribe of Levi was never in the exile of Egypt, and their entry into *Eretz Yisrael* was because they were never in Egypt.

The tribe of Levi were spread out in *Eretz Yisrael* and they did not have a portion in the Land of their own. They didn't either take part in the sin of serving the golden calf. On a deeper level, they knew what their real *avodah* was which was entirely different than any of the other tribes.

The root of all the exiles was Egypt. Then there were the exiles of Babylonia, Persia-Media, and Greece. Now there is the exile of Edom/Rome [Western society], which contains the exile of Yishmael, and within it, the exile of the "Erev Rav" [the Mixed Multitude].<sup>5</sup>

5 For more on "exile of the Erev Rav", refer to *Rav's Erev Rav Talks*

But the tribe of Levi was never part of the root of the exile, which was in Egypt. This reveals that there is always a point even within exile that **isn't** part of the exile.

The entry of the tribe of Levi into *Eretz Yisrael* showed that there is always a tribe of the Jewish people which is not part of the exile. The tribe of Levi whose role is to remain dedicated to learning Torah, whether they were in Egypt or in *Eretz Yisrael* is not part of the exile. This does not mean that they weren't part of the exile at all, but to a certain extent, they were not part of the exile, because they weren't in bondage there. This shows us that even within exile, there is a point which isn't part of the exile and which remains apart from it.

### ***The Revelation of Tu B'Av***

Now we can better understand what the "festival" of Tu B'Av is.

The *Gemara* explains that from Tu B'Av and onward, the sun begins to weaken, so the daytime is decreased and the nights become longer, and from then on, a person can increase his Torah study.<sup>6</sup> This is related to the fact that night time is the main time for Torah study, as the Rambam states,<sup>7</sup> that nighttime is when a person acquires most of his Torah wisdom. Thus, Tu B'Av is a revelation of more Torah.

This connection between Tu B'Av and increased time for Torah learning is also related to the connection between Tu B'Av and the tribe of Levi, as explained above, who merited to enter *Eretz Yisrael* because they were never in the exile of Egypt since they only learned Torah. It is written, "For from Zion comes forth Torah, and the word of Hashem, from Jerusalem."<sup>8</sup> The To-

6 *Taanis* 31a

7 *Rambam Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:13

8 *Yeshayahu* 2:3

rah comes forth from *Eretz Yisrael*, and Yerushalayim specifically, due to the merit of the tribe of Levi, who always learned Torah, even amidst the root exile, Egypt. The Torah in *Eretz Yisrael* is in their merit, and this is the depth behind why the mourning of Tisha B'Av will be turned into joy in the future – it is because there was always a tribe of Levi who were always learning Torah, even amidst the very root of the exile.

### ***The Rectification of the Idol of Michah***

The Jewish people had to cross the *Yam Suf* in order to enter into *Eretz Yisrael*, and the depth of this is that they had to cross over into *Eretz Yisrael* by leaving behind completely any influences from Egypt. Crossing the *Yam Suf* was supposed to be a complete separation of the Jewish people from Egypt, so that they could be spiritually fit to enter into *Eretz Yisrael* on the other side. But most of those who crossed the sea didn't merit entering the land of *Eretz Yisrael*, and this was because they were carrying "the idol of Michah" with them, which was brought from Egypt.

This idol of Michah that they brought with them was the root of all the disasters (the sin with the golden calf, the sin of the Spies, the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*) that would occur later.

We mentioned earlier the words of the *Pesikta*, which teaches that the festival Tu B'Av begins with Tisha B'Av, making it a seven-day festival. What is the root of a seven-day festival? Pesach and Succos each have seven days. On Pesach, specifically on the seventh day of Pesach (*shvii shel Pesach*), the Jewish people crossed the sea. But on this great day, when they crossed the sea so that they could leave behind Egypt, receive the Torah 50 days later, and soon enter into *Eretz Yisrael*, the idol of Michah was with them.

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Their bringing of the idol of Michah with them as they crossed the sea was the root of all the sins of the generation of the desert, which ultimately led to all sins afterwards, and which lead to the decree to die in the desert and not to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. The sin with the Spies was only the outcome of this, but the root of the ruination began on the seventh day of Pesach, when they crossed the sea with the idol of Michah. So it was this event which prevented them entering *Eretz Yisrael* later on.

The “festival” of Tu B'Av came along and turned this decree into joy. How so? The Mishnah states “There were no greater festivals for the Jewish people than Tu B'Av and Yom Kippur.”<sup>9</sup> What is the connection between Tu B'Av and Yom Kippur? Yom Kippur was when the sin with the Golden Calf was rectified. On Tu B'Av, their sin with the idol of Michah was rectified, similar to the rectification of the sin with golden calf. The idol of Michah was present before the golden calf, so the idol of Michah was the root of their sin with the golden calf.

Thus, Tu B'Av, which rectified their sin with the idol of Michah, was a rectification of the root of the sin with the golden calf. Whereas Yom Kippur rectified the sin with the golden calf in the active sense, Tu B'Av rectifies the *root* of the sin with the golden calf - the idol of Michah.

### *Revealing the Power of True Love*

Now we can understand better about the “seven-day festival” that lasts from Tisha B'Av through Tu B'Av.

Tisha B'Av is about destruction and separation, whereas Tu B'Av is about connection. [On Tisha B'Av, we mourn the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, which caused us to be separated from the true, *Eretz Yisrael* of old, and which was also caused by separation, the sin of baseless hatred which was prevalent then.] However, on Tu B'Av, the girls of Jerusalem would go out and look for a marriage partner, and they would call to others to choose wisely whom they should marry. This personifies connection.

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<sup>9</sup> *Taanis 26b, Bava Basra 121a*

thought and keep thinking about it throughout the day. But the point is to enter a deeper and deeper place within oneself. Just as a house contains several rooms, and there can be doors within doors that lead to other doors, so are there rooms within the soul, where one can go deeper and deeper within himself. It takes hard work to get there, but we must know that without it, it is impossible to spiritually survive this world.

Each person, on his own level, is already in touch with the deepest part of himself. Each person needs to reveal it more and become more connected to it throughout this month. When we are in yeshivah, it is not as necessary to do this, because we are protected from the outside world. But when it's *Bein HaZemanim* and we go out into the world, we are in spiritual danger, so we must become more in touch with the inner place in ourselves.

To illustrate, when you *daven Shemoneh Esrei* and you know that you had a good *davening*, you feel like you are going deeper into yourself. That depth you have reached really needs to be accessed more often throughout the day; you need to live it. Obviously there is always more depth that can be reached. But the point is that you can live and be in that deep place in yourself you have accessed – as opposed to mere temporary inspiration.

Some people think that *Bein HaZemanim* is about making sure to learn every day, or learning *Shemiras HaLashon* all day, or to listen to speeches and receive inspiration about *shalom bayis* (marital peace) so that one should be able to avoid getting into domestic disputes in the home on *erev Chag*. Something is missing here. This is a totally superficial approach. It means that a person will be living totally superficially and then to try to somehow survive and to make the damage as least as possible.

There is no way to get by life successfully if we remain on the superficial side of life, especially in this generation we live in. What we have explained here is not ‘advice’ – it is an inner way to live.

Practically speaking, in order to actualize these words, take the time every day and meditate on the inner place in yourself, and protect it, by returning to it in your thoughts, throughout the day. To illustrate, a person knows that he comes home to his house at the end of the day, no matter what he has gone through that day. Our true ‘house’ is actually our own inner world. The real place of refuge exists in a deep part of ourselves. You can keep returning to it throughout the day. When you have access to this place in yourself, your physical body can be involved with this world yet your soul remains in this place of refuge. This enables you to live on this world yet be separate from it at the same time.

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In simpler terms which apply to the soul, Tisha B'Av reveals the soul's power of "hatred", whereas Tu B'Av reveals the soul's power of "love". The "seven day festival" that spans Tisha B'Av through Tu B'Av begins with revealing the soul's force of "hatred" – represented by the day of Tisha B'Av, where we mourn the destruction of Jerusalem [and of our 'hated' state] - and ends with the soul's force of "love", represented by the day of "Tu B'Av".

### ***The Absolute Level of Unity***

Chazal state that "Holiness (*kedushah*) begins with separation and ends with unity, [whereas] the Other Side of evil (the *Sitra Achara*) begins with unity, but ends with separation." We began this exile with separation, spread out among the nations throughout the world - but we end with Tu B'Av, a state of unity. The borrowed white clothing which was worn on the day of Tu B'Av (in the times of the *Gemara*) was to show the unity (*achdus*) amongst everyone, to reveal the point of equality (*hishtavus*) amongst everyone, which was reflected in the fact that everyone wore the same thing.

The festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succos do not begin with separation, but with unity. These three festivals begin with the exodus from Egypt, when there was unity. These festivals, which commemorate the exile from Egypt, ended in separation, when we became separated from *Eretz Yisrael*.

However, the 'festival' of Tisha B'Av, which ends on Tu B'Av, begins with separation and ends with unity. It starts from destruction and separation, the tragic day of Tisha B'Av, and ends with Tu B'Av, a day of the absolute level of *achdus*, unity.

The depth of this is because Egypt, which the root of the "world of separation" (*alma d'piruda*), is called *Mitz-*

*rayim*, which is from the word *meitzar* (confines), from the word *tzaar* (pain), which implies narrowness and separation. The three festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succos commemorate our exodus from Egypt, which was the place of separation. In contrast, Tu B'Av, as we explained here, commemorates the eventual entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, which is the place of unity. It symbolizes the fact that the Jewish people left a place of separation, Egypt, in order to enter into a place of unity, *Eretz Yisrael*. The fact that the people left Egypt to enter *Eretz Yisrael* was a way of leaving behind the *alma d'piruda*, the "world of separation" to enter into the dimension of absolute *achdus*/unity.

Pesach, Shavuot and Succos are called *shalosh regalim*, which means "three feet", but just as a person with three feet will not be able to walk properly and get to his goal, the three festivals do not bring a person to his ultimate goal. Only the "festival" of Tisha B'Av, which ends with Tu B'Av, is the festival that ultimately leads one to entering *Eretz Yisrael*.

Thus, Tisha B'Av is the "festival of the future". The festivals we have now – Pesach, Shavuot and Succos - commemorate the exodus of Egypt. But we haven't yet fully entered *Eretz Yisrael*, because the entry into the land of *Eretz Yisrael* was incomplete and it contained sin, and therefore our joy was not yet complete.

The "festival" of Tisha B'Av, which will in the future end with the "festival" of Tu B'Av, is the festival that celebrates a true entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, which will be eternal.

Thus, the Sages said there were no better festivals for the Jewish people than Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av. The depth of Tu B'Av is because it is a joy that celebrates the time when we will all enter *Eretz Yisrael* [cleansed from sin] and

we will stay there forever, never again being exiled from it.

### ***Never Destroyed***

Thus, since Tu B'Av is a celebration about the fact that there is always a point within our exile that is not part of the exile, it is a revelation that the *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed.

The first two Holy Temples were destroyed only to those who were "exiled" from *Eretz Yisrael*. They never truly 'entered' *Eretz Yisrael* due to the sins which caused the destructions of the Holy Temples, including the sin of baseless hatred.<sup>10</sup>

If one is free from the sins that caused the destruction of the two Holy Temples, then he has uncovered the soul's power of *ahavas chinam* (loving others freely without judgement).

If one has merited to truly "enter" *Eretz Yisrael* by uncovering the power of *ahavas chinam*, then one is "in the state" of the third *Beis HaMikdash*, which is eternal and can never be destroyed.

When the third *Beis HaMikdash* will descend from Heaven onto this earth<sup>11</sup>, there will be a revelation that the first two *Batei Mikdash* were never actually destroyed, and that the entire destruction was nothing but a dream.

This is the depth of what we will express in the future, "*Then, we were like dreamers*"<sup>12</sup> – that this exile is really one long nightmare which we will arise from, and we will realize in the future that it was all a 'dream'. The *Beis HaMikdash* is 'destroyed' only in our dreamlike state - but when we come out of this long sleep-like state, it will

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<sup>10</sup> See *Yoma 9b*

<sup>11</sup> See *Rashi to Succah 41a*

<sup>12</sup> *Tehillim 126:1*



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be revealed that there never was a 'destruction' in the first place!

The *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed!

When *Moshiach* comes, speedily in our days, and he reveals the third *Beis HaMikdash*, he will reveal that there was never a destruction, because the third *Beis HaMikdash* has always been in Heaven, where it will indeed descend from.

Thus, the actual *Beis HaMikdash*, the one that is forever which has always been Heaven – which we know as “the third *Beis HaMikdash*” - was never actually destroyed.

This is the deeper meaning of “All who mourn Jerusalem, will see it rebuilt.”<sup>13</sup> One who mourns it properly will see it 'rebuilt' in its time in the sense that for him, the *Beis HaMikdash* was never destroyed.

This is essentially the “festival” of the seven days between Tisha B'Av and Tu B'Av. One who merits to leave behind the state of baseless hatred, and to leave all of “Egypt” behind, and to fully “enter *Eretz Yisrael*”, to go from the state of separation to the state of absolute unity - is one who reveals the level the depth of the verse “*Bone of my bones*” [which refers to the intrinsic connection we have with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, described as our connection with His *atzmuyus*, His essence, (as it were).

This is to uncover the soul's power of true *ahavas chinam* - and this, itself, reveals how the *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed.

When the festival of Tisha B'Av is revealed in the future, it will not just be a festival 'from then onward'. Rather, it will reveal **retroactively** that Tisha B'Av had been a festival all along!

That light shines even now, in our current time, in these days, where there is a light of the future complete festival, where the *Beis HaMikdash* stands in its fully glory, just as it has been all along.... ■

Translated from the original hebrew shiur: באב 002 מתשע טו באב עד טו באב מועד תשעג

13 *Taanis 30b*

This is a concept which at times you may strongly identify with at times, and at other times, it will feel like some high and lofty spiritual level. But you should know that this is the way we must live, and there is no other way to get by this world.

There are many ways that can get you to this point, which are brought in the words of our Sages, and there is no one way for everybody. But the common denominator is that all people, in order to survive spiritually on this world, need to access this point - the deep place in the soul where one lives alone from the rest of the world. It is a person's inner home and refuge, where the windows and doors are closed to the outside and there is not even a ray of sunlight from the outside coming in.

Understandably, we have a family to take care of, and we must get along with others. But there are two sides to our life. There is a part of us which relates to others and lives with others, and there is a part of ourselves which is alone and private, and it can be separate and secluded from others.

*Bein HaZemanim* is a time to protect that which we have gained from during the *zman*, by having quiet time to enter deeper into ourselves. One can try setting aside an hour, two hours, or three hours (whatever he can do) and to enter deeper into himself.

### ***In Conclusion***

I hope these words have been understood properly, and that it should be clear that *Bein HaZemanim* should be seen as a tool to return to our real “home”: to the inner “home” in the soul. This is the inner kind of life for one who searches for it and he doesn't want his Torah to become like torn pieces to him. It is to have an orderly kind of life deep within the soul.

There are surely other external things which can protect our spirituality, but those things are only enough to make sure that our level [of *Yiddishkeit*] doesn't become too cold; it keeps us luke-warm. But those external things do not enable us to really keep it strong.

If the words here have spoken to you, try to actualize them on your own level, according to how you have understood them. ■

Translated from the original hebrew shiur: דרשות 114 הכנה לבין הזמנים תשעז

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