

Mattos

Spiritual Destruction

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The Yearly Destruction of the Beis HaMikdash

With the help of Hashem, a few words about these days [*Bein HaMitzarim*, the Three Weeks which culminate with the Nine Days and Tisha B'Av]. The words of our Sages are well-known: "Anyone who doesn't have the *Beis HaMikdash* built in his lifetime, it is as if it was destroyed in his lifetime."¹ This means that every year that the *Beis HaMikdash* isn't rebuilt, it is as if it has been destroyed again. It was destroyed once, the very first time it was destroyed, and every year the destruction continues, more and more.

When the period of mourning of *Bein HaMitzarim* arrives, when the month of Av enters, until today, in which our house of G-d has been destroyed, it is destroyed again each year. Each year, it is razed again from the foundation, in a more dramatic way than the year before. The spiritual light provided by the *Beis HaMikdash* which existed continues to weaken with each passing year, with the more it is destroyed, each year. This is not only because another year has gone by that we have become more distant from it. It is more than that. Another destruction takes place each year that it isn't rebuilt. There is fresh reason to mourn the *Beis HaMikdash* each year.

In order to mourn over it and relate to it as it stood, we need to know the implication of the verse, "*I dwell amongst them*"². On an inner level, this verse means that a person is able to have a sense of the revelation of the *Shechinah* within him. When one senses the revelation of the *Shechinah*, he can merit a resemblance of the *Beis HaMikdash* within him, and then he can recognize what is within him and then he can know what he is missing.

In contrast, when a person does not have any sense for the *Shechinah* dwelling within him, he does not know that "*The rock of my heart and my portion is G-d, forever*"³ and that "*Hashem is the heart of Yisrael*"⁴, as the Sages state. When this level is not revealed in a person, and it only remains as a dormant force, a person cannot visualize the level that was the *Beis HaMikdash*, and when that is the case, how can one mourn, over something which he has never seen?

When a person knows what revelation of the *Shechinah* is – when he can sense Hashem's presence in his heart and he feels it openly, he has a recognition of his own personal *Beis HaMikdash* within , and from this he can know what the general *Beis HaMikdash* was. Of course, the private *Beis HaMikdash* within a person is not the complete *Beis HaMikdash*, because it is only on a private level and not on the collective level. But it still resembles the *Beis HaMikdash*, so a person who has revealed it within him has a connection to the concept of the *Beis HaMikdash*. But if a person is not on that level, how can he mourn the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*?

Certainly, a person can reflect into the words of the Sages, who described the qualities of the *Beis HaMikdash* and its spiritual benefits, and what life looked like with the *Beis HaMikdash*, and what spiritual level the people were on, when it stood. When a person pictures it, he is able to feel pain at what is no longer here. This is a superficial imagery, and it comes from knowledge on an external level, where a person can know it on an intellectual level and reflect into it, and then internalize this knowledge in his heart.

¹ *Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1*

² *Shemos 25:8*

³ *Tehillim 73:26*

⁴ *Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:2*

An additional way to relate to is by reflecting into the destruction taking place in our own times, which transpires in every generation. We have to understand that when the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, everyone witnessed it, from the greatest person to the smallest person. But when it comes to knowing what we are missing in its absence, not everyone mourns it on the same level.

Since every person is on a different spiritual level, even in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* there was a different level of its revelation, for each person. When it was destroyed, this had a different effect on each person, and not everyone experienced it on the same level. In our own situation which we are in now, where the *Beis HaMikdash* continues to be in a state of destruction, this concept is also true. The amount of how much each person understands, feels, and recognizes the destruction, is a matter which is felt differently by each person.

In order to reflect into the modern-day destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* in our own times, one needs to reflect into what is taking place on our inside, as well as on our outside, and through this, he can come to recognize the depth of the destruction which we are found in now – until the time when the *Beis HaMikdash* will be rebuilt, speedily in our days.

Summary of The Three Ways Of Contemplating The Destruction

In summation, there are three ways to contemplate the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

The first way, which is the most ideal, is through sensing Hashem's presence within, which gives a picture somewhat of a picture of the *Beis HaMikdash*, one that is truthful. This is a truest way to mourn Jerusalem.

A second way, as mentioned, is when one reflects into the words of the Sages, in their depth and through visualization of their words, about what was and what we are missing. This is implied by the verse, "*On this, our hearts are sick.*"⁵

A third way is to reflect on the destruction in our own times, what we are missing now, where we are found in, in the depth of exile.

We shall reflect here into the third approach, with the help of Hashem: to reflect about our current situation we are found in, to recognize reality. The words here are from a place of simplicity, from simply recognizing the reality, and not exaggerations. They are being said with precision.

The Breach To Kedushah In Our Times

The destruction which takes place in times, which can be clearly seen in our generation, has many facets to it. But we should understand the basis of it, and then its branches, of the depth of the destruction that exists in our times. It is: the fact that the power of *kedushah* (holiness), the parameters of *halachah*, feelings for truth, and inner life – have become basically concealed.

Even more than this, the awesome depth of the *tum'ah* (spiritual defilement) has descended onto the world, and it is the depths of the reality of the destruction. The inner layer of all this *tum'ah* is the fact that all of the definitions of the Torah have become unclear to a person. Every *halachah*, and every fence which protects *halachah*, which

⁵ *Eichah* 5:17

protects the entire *Klal Yisrael* throughout the generations, has become trampled upon, as if they can be done away with.

Tum'ah has descended into the depths of the souls of people. The definitions of the Torah no longer awaken a person with the same intensity as in previous times. This indifference to the Torah manifests as an apathetic attitude in which anything can be trampled upon and removed. Understandably, those who throw off the yoke of Torah do so openly, but even those who aren't throwing off the yoke of Torah are slowly removing it.

A sensible person understands that the entire look of *Yiddishkeit* which we see today is only a matter of time, that if *chas v'shalom* the *Beis HaMikdash* isn't rebuilt soon, every point will be removed. Nothing will stand in its place. Certainly, this doesn't mean that people will start eating *chometz* on Pesach. But the inner attitude of people has become concealed, to the point that the only external guidelines remain, without the inner fire which is needed for a life of truth and holiness.

As a result of this, there is nothing holy which remains in place. On this, we can cry over deeply: “*My eyes, my eyes, spill with water.*”⁶ We need to understand that the entire world of holiness thrives on keeping its boundaries. When almost all of the boundaries have been broken, everything becomes open [to *tum'ah*].

Any sensible person understands that even a few years earlier, 10 or 20 years ago, no one could have guessed that the world would look like it is today. A person could swear that it doesn't make sense that the *bnei Torah* look like this today. But this is the reality. We aren't speaking about those who don't keep Torah and mitzvos, and we are not speaking of those who keep half, or a third, or a quarter, of the Torah, which are in the category of *beinonim*, as the Chazon Ish called it. We aren't speaking about those who are outside of our own camp. We are speaking about the middle [mainstream] crowd! We aren't speaking here of any one extreme group, but of the “middle” camp.

We can give several examples from our world. Speaking about the world of action takes a person outward, but this is the depth of exile [so we must speak about it, in order to understand the depth of exile we are in].

Examples of How The Tum'ah Has Penetrated Into The Once Sheltered Torah World

We all remember how it used to be that when a person wanted to hear a *shiur*, a Torah lecture, he had a tape recorder or a CD player. The world has advanced a lot since then, but look what the world has come to today. How the world got there, is irrelevant at this point.

Let us look at what it is now. The use of the media today was first used by Torah observant Jews for the purposes of *kiruv*. They started all kinds of websites, for the purposes of drawing our brethren closer. But any sensible person understands that this was not *kiruv rechokim* (drawing close those who are distant). Rather, it was *richuk kerovim* (distancing those who were already close) – it distanced those who were already close to *Yiddishkeit*.

Even in the most Chareidi places, they have a website, and they advertise their websites in the Chareidi papers. It doesn't matter what, it doesn't matter who – it is the same reality. Now, if one doesn't have any sensibility, he will say that this is only relevant for those who have it for *parnassah* (livelihood) needs, and they got a special *heter* (Rabbinic permission) for it. But to say such a thing either stems from smallness of the mind, or from cold indifference of the heart.

⁶ *Eichah* 1:16

It is clear and simple. The path that this is leading towards is very understandable, for anyone who has eyes to see. In essence, the filthiest word that there is in the world – the Internet – is sitting in the midst of most Chareidi homes. It is clear. True, there is a small group of *avreichim* who have some *daas* and they are not involved in this. But it still does not make sense that every week, there are advertisements in the papers which almost all of them are reading, again and again and again. Everything is falling apart!

Does anyone think that the signatures which are being signed contain a proper signature? Any Rav in *Klal Yisrael* who examines the situation can say it clearly, that perhaps it's better than the what takes place in the outside world, but everything, all of these "*hechsherim*" (kosher certifications) are the absolute *churban* (destruction) of *Klal Yisrael*, an absolute *churban*!!

There is no way for the world of Torah to remain, if reality continues in this way. There is no way. If they do remain, it would be a miracle. Can the *tzibbur* community of Torah really remain like this? It cannot happen, because of all the *tum'ah* (defiled). Understandably there are degrees of *tum'ah* for each person, each according to his own level. But it has penetrated into our own camps. It started from *kiruv rechokim* purposes, and then it began to extend further than that, and it has penetrated more and more inward, to the point that *avreichim* are signing that they will only have "closed" [filtered] Internet. This is a "closed" *Gehinnom*! Simple!

If anyone thinks that these words are an exaggeration, he must know that all of these things have brought everyone, the entire generation, into the lowest depths of the *Sh'eol* (the abysses of defilement).

The Dire Direction Of This Generation

We need to understand that the generation is comprised of two parts.

The part which we are traversing now is exactly the path that was traversed before the Holocaust. It is exactly that path. Understandably, there are differences, but the path is the same path. The end of this generation will be either one of two extremes. Either, *chas v'shalom*, there will be a return to what happened then – or, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* will have compassion on everyone and take us out of the *tum'ah*, in His compassion, and skip over the attribute of judgment. But if not, it will be the same end [as the generation of the Holocaust]. It will be the same end!

There is no other way for the reality to continue in this generation. Chazal said that in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, there was not a roof which didn't contain an idol on it. Every home had one. We must understand that this is exactly what is happening today. It cannot be that there can be a "*hechsher*" on this, it cannot be! Anyone who already recognized this before understands that such a thing is insensible. It is like trying to make idol worship kosher.

Again, the intentions of those who want to make things "kosher" today are doing so with the intention of minimizing the filth of today. But what has it caused? It has caused that those who would have used these things anyway have become limited in what they could do, but slowly, it caused even those who were sheltered have been influenced. It is advertised in the weekly papers, week after week, everything with a kosher "*me'ushar*" symbol, and only for the purposes of *parnassah*, and only for those who need it. Each person has three *Rabbonim* who permitted it from him, and the like. It is impossible to have a *Klal Yisrael* when everything is built on *heterim* and *heterim*. It is all a destruction!

The Fallacy of Getaways

We can give another example. A few years ago, advertisements sprung up, on a regular basis, of taking trips and excursions outside of Eretz Yisrael.

Where did this start? It started from great Rabbonim who journeyed to the grave of the Vilna Gaon, and understandably, they had the purest of intentions. But what did such trips slowly extend to include?

Someone I know once told me several years ago that such trips are only for the “non-mainstream” crowd, and that it will not lure *avreichim*. I told him these words: “*Shotah, shotah, shotah* (fool, fool, fool)! You are only seeing it in a small way. It will penetrate further than this, until even philanthropists from outside of the country will donate money for this cause, to enable *avreichim* to go on these vacations. They will sponsor trips for *avreichim* to vacation outside of Eretz Yisrael.”

What has the situation turned into day? I hope that most of you don’t know. What has the situation become? Here, in our own city – not in another place. The Kiryat Sefer that was around 20 years ago, and the Kiryat Sefer of today, is not the same Kiryat Sefer. Perhaps the name of the city didn’t change, but it is not the same city. A new city has come here. Any sensible person understands this, even about our city here. We are talking even about the most safeguarded places in the world. This week someone said to me that the wives of *avreichim* are taking trips outside of Eretz Yisrael.

Will you say that only the non-mainstream crowd is being lured? No, we are talking about people in the middle. Those sitting here are more interested in living truthfully. How it can be that each week, newspapers are given out and every home is reading them, the young boys and girls are reading them, in which at least 20 different places are advertised? How they are enjoying this reading material, reading and reading and reading it, and yet we want them to grow?! And it’s all with a *hechsher* of Rabbonim...who are these Rabbonim?

Everyone is being coaxed, things keep continuing this way and it is snowballing, until a time will come where someone who doesn’t take vacations to outside Eretz Yisrael will be deemed from the weird ones. Going on trips outside of Eretz Yisrael is not just an issue of leaving Eretz Yisrael, which is a halachic concern and which certainly is complex. It has opened up a person to the entire world! This is all a destruction!

The Spiritual Challenges of The Workplace Today

The Jewish nation needs *parnassah*, everyone needs *parnassah*, so people need to go to work and there will be *parnassah*. It is clear to any sensible person – if someone doesn’t see it, he is totally blind – that it’s true, there aren’t enough jobs available, and more business opportunities need to be opened up – which draws people into the outside world. But slowly a person is drawn outside, in the world out there.

There are those who know: **How much illicit relationships were committed this past year? How many divorces in this past year, in the Chareidi world?** From these stories alone that are told, may Hashem have mercy! Even if a person would learn Torah all day and teach about fear of G-d to his children, even then, he is still very much in spiritual danger. But the inner inspiration has gone and weakened. The exit into the outside world has increased.

We are found in a world where one gets married, with assistance from Heaven, and he learns Torah, and his wife needs to earn livelihood so she goes to work somewhere, and eventually she leaves and goes further and further into

the world out there, in stages, until the world of Torah, and the outside world, have become mixed into each other....

The concept of segregating men and women from each other today, which was once a clear-cut concept, is no longer that clear. It used to be that even if a woman had to write her name somewhere, she would use her initials. Today, there's no problem with writing the full name. New rules have taken over in the last few years. Today, a woman can work in any kind of job. There is even a movement amongst Chareidi women to run for Knesset. Did you think this won't happen? It will also happen. Even men do not have to be there, but that is a separate issue.

The point which we need to understand is that people are living their lives in a way that mimics the non-religious. People find several Rabbonim who can give them "*heterim*" for all kinds of things, and when they find a *heter*, they want to take it further. If someone thinks that what we are saying here is an exaggeration, or from a negative perspective, he simply doesn't understand where he is found.

The Government's Attack On Chinuch In Eretz Yisrael

If one has a young daughter in kindergarten [in Eretz Yisrael today], he may not know what is happening there. They are slowly emptying out the education system from any *kedushah*. Anyone who is aware of the reality today knows who's in charge of the educational system today. There is a debate if the young children should say "Modeh Ani" in the beginning of the day. That is what they are up to today. Yes, the Rabbonim are fighting it. But that is what it has come to. They are debating if the main education in kindergarten should be centered around the weekly *Parshah* or not. There are many wonderful people who are trying to fight this new educational system, from all angles, but where are we found today?!

Any sensible person must understand one thing. The generation is destroyed! It is already destroyed! It is not about what will happen, the generation is already destroyed, and that is where we are found. Certainly every person has the free will to close himself off in the world of Torah, but his children are still open to the world, and he must deal with whatever will present itself.

This is the modern-day destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. There was never as much destruction as in today's generation. **The entire Torah world has been destroyed in our times**, and it is the depth of the power of evil which HaKadosh Baruch Hu has brought down into the world. No one is to be blamed for it - it is just the depth of the power of evil which Hashem has brought down into the world.

Understandably, each sect will find it comfortable to blame the issues on a different sect, and place different groups on different sides, but where are we found, practically speaking? We are found in a place where all of the proper boundaries between Jew and gentile, between the Torah world and the outside world, have been toppled. They have become completely trampled upon, almost totally!

Jeeps At The Kever Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai?!

Several weeks ago I was by the tomb of Rashbi in Meiron. There were some Jeeps that came by. Who is coming with Jeeps to Meiron?! The Jeeps were open, and there were seminary girls in them. All of the girls arrived on top of open Jeeps, and they were laughing. This is how they came to the tomb of Rashbi – in a bunch of Jeeps.

Is this an isolated incident? If only it were. It was not a coincidental incident that is happened, it represents a reality in which everything has fallen apart, totally. What's the problem, where is it written in *Shulchan Aruch* that it's prohibited to ride in an open Jeep and laugh? The truth is that this it is written there. This is a world in which everything has become so *hefker*, so carefree. It is simply *hefker*. We won't even talk about the lack of modesty, the attire, and all the terrible stories.

We need to understand that just as in the generation of the *Beis HaMikdash*, everything was *hefker* and there was idol-worshipping in every home, in our own times as well, in our generation, all of the homes which have filtered Internet is a form of idol worship, which is destroying the generation. That is only the root, but the branches extend in all directions.

Our Yiras Shomayim Is Endangered Today

The *tum'ah* has made its way into all directions, and it is trying to uproot everything. Simple. This is the modern-day destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* which we are found in – to anyone who opens his eyes, who can see where we are found in, whose heart can bleed over the situation. If one wants to run away from the reality today, either he will think that the words here are only talking about certain extremes, or about certain directions where this has all gone to. No! This is the reality!!

In the generation such as ours which we are found in, to raise children properly is in the category of a miracle. It is an absolute miracle. The Chofetz Chaim said this even before the Holocaust. In our generation, it is a total miracle, to raise children properly.

In the *Selichos* we recite, **מה יעשה הבן ולא יחטא**, “What should the child do and not sin?” But now we can add: What should the *father* do, in today's times, so that he shouldn't sin? What can anyone do in our times so that he shouldn't become cooled off each day from his *yiras shomayim*, from being connected to the Torah, from a life of truth, from closeness to Hashem?

One must desire, truly, to live a life of *kedushah*! One must recognize and know the depths of *tum'ah* which he is found in, in our generation, and then he can become afraid and tremble, at every moment, that he shouldn't fall into the depths of *She'ol*, to the depths of the “50th Gate of Impurity”. In all the generations, it was difficult to mourn the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. In our generation, the destruction is before our eyes, day after day, hour after hour, and it can be seen as long as one doesn't close his eyes from it.

In Conclusion

If one remains attached to the Torah and he is not pulled after the influences of the environment today, he is praiseworthy, and he will have it all good.

“Anyone who mourns Jerusalem will merit to see it rebuilt.”⁷ May we merit with the help of Hashem that all of the influences of the environment which we have spoken about here should all go up in flames, so that the day will come when we will actually sense the coming of the righteous redeemer, Amen, and Amen.

⁷ *Taanis 30a*