

VA'ESCHANAN: TREASURY OF FREE GIFTS

In *Parshas Va'Eschanan*, Moshe beseeches Hashem to enter Eretz Yisrael. Rashi explains that the word "Va'Eschanan" is from the word "chinam", free, citing the *Midrash* that the *tzaddikim* do not ask Hashem for anything they feel deserving of, and instead, they beseech Hashem to give them from His treasury of *matnas chinam*, of "free gifts".

In *Shemoneh Esrei*, we ask Hashem, **אתה דעת חונן לאדם** – we are asking Hashem for *daas*, for understanding, namely, in our Torah learning. Knowing the Torah is the root of all that we can understand. As the Gemara says, "If you have it, you have everything." But we ask Hashem to "bestow" it upon us – **חונן**, to bestow, which is from the word **חִנּוּן** grace and **חִנּוּם** free. We are asking Hashem to give us *daas* as a free gift. This is the concept known as *matnas chinam*, to ask Hashem to bestow us with a "free gift", when we are undeserving.

Moshe Rabbeinu is the one who personifies *daas*, and he also asked Hashem to grant him allowance in to Eretz Yisrael as a *matnas chinam*, when he beseeched Hashem. He did not ask to get into Eretz Yisrael due to his merits, asking instead that Hashem give it to him out of *matnas chinam*, a free gift of Hashem's mercy. The way of *tzaddikim* is that when they ask Hashem for something, they do not ask Hashem to give them something due to their own merits, but because Hashem has a treasury in Heaven called *matnas chinam* in which He grants free gifts not due to any personal merit.

We also find the concept of *matnas chinam* in our own relationship with Hashem. We are called the children of

Hashem, **בנים אתם לה**, and the Gemara says that "No matter how they behave, they are called My children." We are always Hashem's children. Therefore, when we ask Hashem for something, we are not saying we deserve it, but rather, because we are like a son asking his father for something. Let us try to understand what this concept of *matnas chinam* is.

When a person falls to an *aveirah*, he can feel how he is far from Hashem, if he is a bit in touch with any spiritual feelings. If a person is totally entrenched in a materialistic lifestyle, then he is dull to spirituality, and he won't feel anything after he sins. But when one is at least a little bit open to feelings for spirituality, he feels a sense of shame after doing an *aveirah*. He feels how he has become enveloped in the darkness of the *tumah* created from the *aveirah*. He feels that he has become further from Hashem: **עוונותיהם היו למבדילים** - "Their sins divided them." (*Yeshayahu 59:2*).

Yet, a person must also be aware that there is deeper place in his soul in which he is always connected to Hashem, no matter what: **חבוקה ודבוקה בך** - "Connected and attached in You" (recited in the *Hoshanos*). This is the inner place in our soul which always feels and recognizes how we are always **בנים אתם לה** "you are children to Hashem". From this inner place in ourselves we can realize that our bond with Hashem doesn't depend on anything. For we are always the children of Hashem no matter what. Even when we are completely guilty and undeserving, we are still worthy of *matnas chinam* from Hashem.

And, to be more precise, there are lower and higher layers of our soul. The lower area of our soul feels distanced

from Hashem after doing an *aveirah*, but there is a higher area of our soul which can always feel intrinsically attached with Hashem, no matter how *aveiros* one committed. Both of these perspectives are correct, and it is just that we need to live with the balance between these two different perspectives in our soul.

Many people tend to be "either or." Either they are too tense in their *avodas Hashem* and they don't realize how they can always feel close to Hashem, and they enter into despair after falling into *aveiros*, unable to summon an intrinsic connection with Hashem. Others take the opposite extreme: They are too nice to themselves, never feeling any regret after falling into an *aveirah*, because they reason they are always loved by Hashem anyway, so they aren't careful with *halachah*, etc.

We can't live at any of one of these extremes, because that is not the *ratzon Hashem*. If we can't summon our intrinsic connection with Hashem even after falling to an *aveirah*, then we despair and we will fall even more. But if we take the other extreme and we always feel that everything is fine and that Hashem always loves us, then we are not doing His will.

When we ask Hashem in *Shemoneh Esrei* to bestow *daas* upon us, it is a *tefillah* coming from the deeper part of ourselves, the part of us which always feels connected to Hashem, where we ask Hashem for a *matnas chinam*, a free gift, and not because we are deserving due to any actions that we did. We must be able to live paradoxically in our life – we need to always make sure we are living correctly according to *ratzon Hashem*, but at the same time, we must also be aware that our relationship with Hashem is intrinsic and always there. (from *Bilvavi On The Parsha*)

TU B'AV – A LIGHT COMING FROM THE FUTURE

Pesikta states that “*Tisha B’Av* is called a festival”, for it is written, “Call it upon Me a festival.” Furthermore, Chazal explain that the “festival” of *Tisha B’Av* has seven days, just as *Pesach* 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*. The *Mishnah* says (*Taanis 26b*) that *Tu B’Av* was of the greatest festivals for the Jewish people.

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. This is related to the fact that nighttime is the main time for *Torah* study, as the *Rambam* states, that nighttime is when a person acquires most of his *Torah* wisdom. Thus, *Tu B’Av* is a revelation of more *Torah*.

The generation of the desert wasn’t allowed to enter into *Eretz Yisrael* – all except for the tribe of *Levi*. The tribe of *Levi*, whose role was to remain dedicated to *Torah* learning, were not enslaved in *Egypt* either. The *Torah* learning of the tribe of *Levi* represented a point within the exile that stays above the exile even as the exile is taking place. The depth behind why the mourning of *Tisha B’Av* will be turned into joy in the future is because there was always a tribe of *Levi* who were always learning *Torah*, even amidst the very root of the exile. There is always a point within our exile that is “above” the exile.

Taking this further, *Tu B’Av* was a

new revelation: That there is an inner dimension where the *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed. The first two *Batei Mikdash* were destroyed – but only to those who were truly “exiled” from *Eretz Yisrael*. In a sense, they never truly ‘entered’ *Eretz Yisrael*, because even their entry into *Eretz Yisrael* was tainted with sin, and that was the root that paved the way for the destructions of the *Batei Mikdash*.

Sinas chinam destroyed the last *Beis HaMikdash*. The word *chinam* means “free”. If one goes “free” from the sins that caused the destruction of the two *Batei Mikdash* – if he is free from any trace of *sinas chinam* - then he has essentially uncovered the soul’s power of *ahavas chinam* (loving others “freely” without any judgment). 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 which can never be destroyed.

When the third *Beis HaMikdash* will descend from Heaven onto this earth, 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*” – 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 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, revealing the third *Beis Ha-*

Mikdash, it will be revealed that there was never really a destruction to it. How? The third *Beis HaMikdash* has been in Heaven all along, and it will descend from there onto our world. 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.” 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 *sinas chinam* and to leave all of “*Egypt*” behind (leaving behind all traces of exile) and fully “entering *Eretz Yisrael*”, going from the state of separateness from other Jews and entering into the state of absolute unity with *Klal Yisrael* – he is one who reveals an intrinsic connection we have with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. This is what it means to uncover the deep power in our nefesh (soul) known as *ahavas chinam* (non-logical love for others). And that is what 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! The *Beis HaMikdash* was in Heaven all along – it was never destroyed! It is forever! That light shines even now, in our current time, where there the light of the future complete festival can be felt already now, where the *Beis HaMikdash* stands in its fully glory, just as it has been all along.... (02_באב טו)

Q&A – TU B’AV

QUESTION: What is the practical *avodah* on *Tu B’Av* (in retrospect of the above)? How does a person utilize the power of “*ahavas chinam*”?

ANSWER: Firstly one should identify that he has a power of *ahavas chinam* (non-logical love) in the first place. Then one should then focus on this ability and concentrate on it. Finally, one should actualize the potential of this love, on a practical level, by *davening* for others and by doing actions of love for others, from a conscious desire that one wants to expand his power of deep, non-logical love for another (*ahavas chinam*). One can express this love in actions (doing acts of love for another Jew without any reason), though words (*davening* for another out of a deep love for that person), and through thoughts (thinking about how much he loves another Jew without any reason).

QUESTION: Is *ahavas chinam* (non-logical love) on *Tu B’Av* the same thing as “unconditional love”?

ANSWER: No. *Ahavas chinam* is a deeper love than “unconditional love”. The *gematria* of *ahavah* (love) is *echad* (one), as is well-known. There are [altogether] three levels of loving another, from lowest to highest: (1) Conditional love – loving another Jew based on a certain reason, i.e. because of his good qualities. (2) Unconditional love – loving another Jew with a love that doesn’t depend on any factor other than that he is a Jew. 3) *Echad* – Loving another Jew from a sense of being one unit (*echad*) with the other.

QUESTION What is the ultimate solution to *sinas chinam* (unwarranted hatred)?

ANSWER When one agrees that we are all *echad* (one unit), we were all one unit which later become divided into two, and that each Jew is really another revelation of *echad* on the world - that is the inner perspective that repairs *sinas chinam*.

Q&A – SEPARATING FROM THE EREV RAV BEFORE MASHIACH

QUESTION What is our *avodah*, individually and collectively, to prepare for the Geulah?

ANSWER: To become dependent on HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and not in people. To totally separate from the “Erev Rav”, and to live in what the Gemara calls “A clear world you are seeing.”

QUESTION How should we feel personally towards the *medinah* in Eretz Yisrael?

ANSWER: Hashem’s light (His revelation) is clothed and concealed by the “Erev Rav”. If we would be *zocheh*, the light of Hashem would become manifest in the *Beis HaMikdash* and the arrival of *Mashiach*. When we are not *zocheh*, Hashem’s light becomes concealed, through the “Erev Rav”, where everything, good and evil together, is mixed. There is an ongoing cosmic spiritual war between the forces of *Amalek* versus *Yisrael* (the Jewish people), and the “Erev Rav” contains both souls of *Yisrael* and *Amalek* together. It is like the “overturning fiery sword” placed at the entrance to *Gan Eden*, which confuses people when they try to get near it. There is a process of *birur* (clarifying or sorting) by which the mixture of the *Erev Rav* is sorted out and each of its aspects are put in their proper place (with the good being kept and the evil being destroyed), and this sorting process is known as the “light of *Mashiach*.”

QUESTION Is the entire government in Eretz Yisrael comprised of the *Erev Rav*?

ANSWER Part of them is *Erev Rav*, and part isn’t. The control that the anti-religious government has in Israel today is due to the general dominance of *Erev Rav* in the final days, but if we want to say about any person on the government that he is from the *Erev Rav*, each case would have to be judged separately.

QUESTION Is there an obligation for Jews to come live in Eretz Yisrael?

ANSWER The Gemara (*Kesubos 110a*) says that everyone should move out of their country to go live in Eretz Yisrael, and *Tosafos* says, “This is not practiced in our times, because it is dangerous to travel. And *Rabbeinu Chaim* would say that in our times there is no *mitzvah* to live in Eretz Yisrael, because there are many *mitzvos* which apply only in the land of Eretz Yisrael and there are many punishments for those who are lax in keeping them, and we are not able to so careful in keeping them.” According to *Rabbeinu Chaim*, there is both a physical danger and a spiritual danger to go live in Eretz Yisrael, so there is no obligation today to live in Eretz Yisrael. [Even according to the opinions that there is a *mitzvah* today to live in Eretz Yisrael] there is also a dispute if the *mitzvah* is Biblical or Rabbinical in nature, and this is discussed by the Ramban in *Sefer HaMitzvos L’Ramban*, and in *sefer Pe’as HaShulchan*, and others. Now, there is an obligation upon a person to connect himself to *kedushah* (holiness). Therefore, besides for the matter if there is a *mitzvah* or not to live in Eretz Yisrael today, there is still a level of *kedushah* which can only be attained by one who lives in Eretz Yisrael. That is clear and simple. In spite of this, however, the view of *Rabbeinu Chaim* is that if there is any danger in moving to Eretz Yisrael, there is no *mitz-*

vah to go live there. The “danger” he is referring to is the laxity of people in observing the unique *mitzvos* of Eretz Yisrael and the subsequent punishments for those who do not properly adhere to the *kedushah* of Eretz Yisrael. However, there were still some *Gedolim* throughout the generations who risked their lives in order to go to live in Eretz Yisrael. In our times, there is also an additional danger. Our Sages taught that in the final days, before the coming of Mashiach, when we are not yet meritorious of Mashiach’s arrival, the jurisdiction over the land of Eretz Yisrael is given over to the “Other Side”. In the active sense, this means that the wicked souls of the “*Erev Rav*” are in charge of controlling *Eretz Yisrael*. These are very reincarnations of the souls whom Moshe Rabbeinu allowed to convert and be brought up from Egypt. These are the very same souls who later instigated the sin with the golden calf, by convincing the people that Moshe Rabbeinu was no longer with them. They represent an alternative leadership to Moshe Rabbeinu. These are the people who rule Eretz Yisrael in the final days: the heads of the *Erev Rav*. They are called *Erev Rav* from the word *taaruvos* (mixture) which connotes an *iruv rav* (great mixture), a huge and disturbing mixture of all elements within one place. Therefore, one who lives in Eretz Yisrael is in spiritual danger of becoming mixed with the *Erev Rav*, in terms of seeking prestige, money, power, etc. from them. As time goes on, they increase the influences of their great mixture, to the point that every single boundary which our *Gedolim* have built is being trampled upon and uprooted. Their mixture of influences affects all people who live in *Eretz Yisrael*. Making matter worse, a recent organization has allowed millions of non-Jews to come live in Eretz Yisrael. Jews also leave Eretz Yisrael to visit other countries, they mix with the *goyim* there and become influenced by them, and then return to Eretz Yisrael with all of these influences that they bring back. This is all due to the *Erev Rav*’s agenda, which seeks a totally mixed society with every possible influence. They want to incorporate every existing influence into Israel, leaving no foreign culture out. Whereas all countries of *chutz l’aretz* contains the *tumah* of the *goyim*, Eretz Yisrael today uniquely is challenged by the *tumah* of the *Erev Rav*. In order to cover all the details of the disturbing mixture of different secular elements that the *Erev Rav* has so far succeeded in bringing to *Eretz Yisrael*, we would need several thick volumes. But there isn’t enough time to do this, and we would only be destroying precious time, instead of destroying the *Erev Rav*. We are currently found deep in the “50th Gate of *tumah*”, where evil surrounds us from every possible direction, meaning that everything today is affected by the “exile of the *Erev Rav*”. It is proper for every Jew to live in Eretz Yisrael, but only if he totally separates himself from the influences of the “*Erev Rav*” that are here. Certainly, though, before moving to Eretz Yisrael, every person first needs to clarify his personal situation, like if one is needed by many others, or if one is of spiritual influence to others [in such cases, he

should not move to Eretz Yisrael, because others need him]. Also, if raising one’s children in Eretz Yisrael will not be conducive, or if moving to Eretz Yisrael will be too hard of a change for the children, this is also a factor not to move to Eretz Yisrael, and it needs to be carefully thought about. Also, if one cannot make ample livelihood in Eretz Yisrael, one will need to examine how much *bitachon* he really has before coming here. We are hoping and awaiting the *Geulah* that it should come quickly. There is a great spiritual gain to be in *Eretz Yisrael* at a time like this.

QUESTION What is the proper perspective to have towards the Israeli government? Do any of them do good things for the Jewish people, or are they always evil because they are all the reincarnations of the *Erev Rav*?

ANSWER: The “*Erev Rav*” mixes everything within it. Everything in Creation contains a mix of good and evil, and the *Erev Rav* is a more pronounced example of the mixture of good and evil together. There are good parts to anything in Creation, and there is an *avodah* for people who are on a high level to sift through a mixture and see what’s good and what’s bad, what they can take from it and what they should stay away from. But as for all others, who have not yet reached that level, the general *avodah* for most people is to separate entirely from all of the mixture of good and evil. Therefore, most people should not be thinking about them [the Israeli government] at all, because by merely thinking about them, one is already mixing with them. A person should not think or speak about them at all.

QUESTION Are we in the midst of a process that is showing who is from Klal Yisrael and who is from the *Erev Rav*?

ANSWER Yes.

QUESTION Can Internet ever be used in a good way, or it is always bad?

ANSWER It is the *shaar HaNun d’tumah*, the 50th and final level of impurity, where every possible element and influence is mixed together. It is to be understood as the very “head” of the *Erev Rav*.

QUESTION Is Hashem making a separation now between the true *tzibbur* of Klal Yisrael, those who are choosing not to possess Internet-devices in their lives - with those who are choosing to own Internet-devices in their lives, who are separating themselves from the true *tzibbur* that is Klal Yisrael?

ANSWER Yes, but some are doing this simply because they don’t have the clarity to see otherwise. **Before Mashiach comes, they will be awakened, and they will have true *bechirah* (free will) of what they will choose:** If they will choose to separate from all of it, or if they will choose the opposite, *chas v’shalom*. (from the Bilvavi Q & A archives)