

Praying for the *Beis Hamikdash*

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Chapter One: The obligation to entreat Hashem to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* and reveal His Kingship in the world; the ultimate Redemption is dependent upon *Bnei Yisrael's* prayers and supplications; the essence of prayer; the manifold benefits and blessings that *Bnei Yisrael* reaped from the *Shechina* in the *Beis Hamikdash*; the nation's tragic loss in the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*; the Jewish soul connection to Hashem Yisborach.

Part I

- A. *Rashi* in *Hosheah* 3:5 quotes Chazal, “Yisrael will not see a good sign until they restore the kingdom of the heavens and the kingdom of the House of Dovid and the *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple).”
- B. *Shmuel* A Ch. 8 relates of *Bnei Yisrael's* request to Shmuel *HaNavi* to anoint a king for them. Verse 7 states: “And Hashem said to Shmuel, ‘Listen to the voice of the nation, to all they tell you, for it is not you whom they despise, but Me that they despise for ruling upon them.’”
- C. *Melachim* A 12:16 states: “And all of Yisrael saw that the king had not listened to them. And the nation returned a message to the king saying, ‘What need do we have in Dovid? Nor [do we have] an inheritance in the son of Yishai. To your tents, Yisrael! Now see to your own house, Dovid! And Yisrael departed to their tents.’”
- D. *Hosheah* 3:5 relates, “Afterward, *Bnei Yisrael* shall return and seek Hashem, their G-D, and Dovid their king; and they shall come trembling to Hashem and His goodness in the end of days.”
- E. *Midrash Shmuel Parshah* 13 on *Shmuel* 8:7 above teaches: “Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai learned that the words ‘despise’ used in the verse reveal that Hashem told Shmuel that Yisrael are destined to despise three things in the days of Rechavam, and these are they: The kingdom of heavens, the kingdom of Dovid, and the *Beis Hamikdash*.” [He learns this from the verse in *Melachim* 12:16.]

Midrash Shmuel likewise states: “Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said, ‘*Bnei Yisrael* will never see a sign of blessing in the world until they return and beseech for those three things’ [which he infers from the verse in *Hosheah*]. How is it written? ‘Afterward, *Bnei Yisrael* shall return and seek Hashem, their G-D—this is the kingdom of heavens; ‘And Dovid their king,’—this is the kingdom of Dovid; ‘And they shall come trembling to Hashem and His goodness in the end of days’—this is the *Beis Hamikdash*.”

- F. This *Midrash* is cited by the following sources:
 1. *Yalkut Shimonii, Shmuel* Ch. 106
 2. *Rashi, Hosheah* 3:5
 3. *Minchas Shai, Melachim* A 12:16
 4. *Shibolei Haleket* Ch. 157
 5. *Beis Yosef, Orach Chaim* Ch. 188, end of p. 245

6. Ibid, *Prisha* Paragraph 4
 7. [Chiddushei Haga'os on the *Tur* notes that this *Midrash* is also cited by *Rashi* in *Hosheah* 3:5.]
- G.** *Gemara Megilla* 17b, 18a states: “Upon this, the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* instituted the blessing ‘Es Tzemach Dovid’ in the *Shemone Esrei* prayer following the blessing, ‘Binyan Yerushalayim.” This is based on the verse in *Hosheah*.
- H.** The *Midrash* and many other sources affirm that Yisrael’s ultimate Redemption is contingent upon *Bnei Yisrael* praying to Hashem to restore His Kingship to the world, restore the House of Dovid and rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*.
- I.** The *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* instituted many a prayer and blessing regarding the final Redemption and rebuilding the *Beis Hamikdash*. *Shemone Esrei* includes several blessings, and even *Shemone Esreis* of *Shabbos* and holidays, which omit the majority of ‘request blessings’ include a prayer for Hashem to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*. The added portion of ‘*Retzeh*’ in *Shabbos* Grace likewise includes mention of the end of days. *Mussaf* prayer of *Shabbos*, *Rosh Chodesh*, the Three Festivals, and especially *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* include many lengthy prayers entreating Hashem to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* and allow us to serve him completely as in the days of old. Throughout history, our sages have spilled their hearts in sincere prayer that Hashem accept our collective entreaties and restore his Kingship to the world eternally.
- J.** *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* Ch. 1:3 states: “It is fitting that every G-d fearing person shall grieve and be distressed because of the destruction of the *Beis Hamidkash*.”

The very first paragraph in the Vilna Gaon’s *Sefer Ma’ase Rav* instructs that one is obligated to rise at midnight in order to recite *Tikkun Chatzos* which is mostly comprised of mournful prayers and supplications for the *Beis Hamikdash* to be rebuilt.

- K.** One who does not regularly recite *Tikkun Chatzos* should peruse the *Ma’ase Rav* in order to garner appreciation for the absolute necessity of seeking opportunities to beseech Hashem to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* even during his regular prayers or at any other time.
- L.** *Gemara Bava Basra* 60b teaches: “The Rabbis taught that when the Second *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, the Pharisees of Yisrael argued that they should not eat meat nor drink wine. Rabbi Yehoshua accosted them and said, ‘My children, why are you not eating meat, and why are you not drinking wine?’ They asked him [perplexed], ‘How can we eat the meat which they offered upon the Altar which is now destroyed; and how can we drink wine that was poured on the Altar which is now destroyed?’ He told them, ‘If so, then bread you shall not eat either, as the *Minchah* offering has been annulled. Perhaps we can eat fruit? But fruit we cannot eat as the *Bikkurim* have been annulled. Water we will not drink, as the Pouring of the Water has been annulled.’ They were silent. He told them, ‘My sons, come and I will tell you not to mourn totally. We cannot, as the verdict was already sealed; and we

may not mourn too much. It is impossible that they will decree something upon the public that the majority cannot uphold.” [See *ibid.*]

Indeed, Rabbi Yehoshua’s words seem to allude that the idea of abstaining from meat and wine is an appropriate step, yet cannot be instituted as the majority of the nation could not abide by this directive. Notwithstanding, this *Gemara* does emphasize the extent of pain that every Jew must feel in his heart and that he must conduct his life in a way that allows him to mourn the *Beis Hamikdash*.

- M. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* Ch. 580 states: “Some opinions maintain that one must fast every Monday and Thursday because of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the Torah that was burned and for the terrible desecration of Hashem’s Holy Name. And in the future, Hashem will transform these days into times of joy and celebration.”

Mishnah Brurah *ibid* Paragraph 16 adds: “One who is unable to [recite *Tikkun Chatzos* at night] should pray during the day for these things.”

In this day and age, the sages rule that the vast majority of Jews fall under the category of ‘One who is unable, [to fast],’ as described by the *Mishnah Brurah*. Moreover, he adds, if people would fast too often, it would interfere with their service of Hashem. Notwithstanding, the above *Halacha* emphasizes that a Jew’s grief and suffering upon the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* should be so intense that he would certainly fast every Monday and Thursday were he capable of doing so! Yet, as the majority cannot fast so frequently, the *Mishnah Brurah* teaches, ‘In any case, one should devote one’s prayers during these times to the concepts mentioned by the *Shulchan Aruch*. This is especially true when prayer is recited in lieu of a sacrifice, and one must pray from the depths of his heart and with spiritual arousal.

Part II

- A. Prayers and supplications for the restoration of the *Beis Hamikdash* should encompass two aspects:

1. *Longing to fulfill the mitzvos in the Torah that can only be performed when the Beis Hamikdash is complete.* Most significantly, one must focus on the essential mitzvah, “And they shall build me a Temple, and I shall dwell in their midst.” Other *mitzvos* encompass the numerous sacrifices and offerings including the *Tamid* sacrifice, *Mussaf* sacrifices, and the High Priest’s *Yom Kippur* service which granted atonement to the nation, as well as the incredible bounty that *Bnei Yisrael* drew from the opportunity to perform these *mitzvos*.
2. *Longing for the Divine Presence to dwell once more in the Beis Hamikdash.* The famous verse in *Parshas Trumah* states: “And they shall build me a Temple, and I shall dwell in their midst.” Commentaries highlight the adjustment from singular to plural as the verse states ‘in *their* [*Bnei Yisrael*’s] midst,’ instead of ‘in *its* [*Beis Hamikdash*’s] midst.’ Indeed, the Divine

Presence that dwelled in the *Beis Hamikdash* caused *Shechina* to enter into the body and soul of every Jew, which inspired added holiness and G-dly radiance in each and every individual.

Reflecting upon the *Shechina* is central to our collective yearning for the *Beis Hamikdash* to be rebuilt. Indeed, *Rashi* in *Parshas Shemini* states that before the *Shechina* revealed itself in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), *Bnei Yisrael* complained to Moshe, “All the toil and labor that we bothered to invest in building the *Mishkan*, what was it for?”

[Many commentaries ask how *Bnei Yisrael* could have described their endeavors to build the *Mishkan* as a ‘toil’ and ‘bother,’ when it had been an express *mitzvah*? Indeed, the commandment to build the *Mishkan* was directly linked to the conclusion of the verse, “And I shall dwell in their midst.” Hence, *Bnei Yisrael* were complaining that they had not merited fulfilling the *mitzvah* completely, as Hashem’s Presence did not yet dwell amongst them.]

- B.** The Vilna Gaon writes (*Likutim*, end of *Biur HaGr”a* on *Safra D’tzniusa* p. 38 column 1): “When the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, this caused a removal of the *Shechina* from the *Beis Hamikdash*.” [Gemara *Rosh Hashanah* 30a describes that the *Shechina* had already absconded prior to the destruction. See section below which presents this debate; although the *Shechina* had already absconded from the *Beis Hamikdash*, a significant portion of its Presence still remained, and it was this final portion that was totally eliminated during the destruction.]

As the *Shechina* departed the *Beis Hamikdash*, a portion of the G-dly radiance which is contingent upon the *Shechina* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, likewise departed all Jewish souls. Although a significant portion of *Shechina* still remains within us until this very day, it is less than that which existed in previous eras when *Shechina* had abounded within all Jewish souls.

The Vilna Gaon expands that there is also a marked difference between Jewish souls that lived before and after the destruction, to the extent that it resembles the disparity between a living person and a dead person. Indeed, a living person possesses a soul within his body, a soul that nourishes, sustains and causes the body to function. A dead person is a body without a soul, without force and vigor to control the body’s actions. The same is true of the *Shechina*. The *Shechina* that dwelled in the heart of every Jew thrived from the force of the *Shechina* in the *Beis Hamikdash*; it nourished them, sustained them and impelled them to act. Thus, the removal of the *Shechina* from their souls that followed the removal of *Shechina* from the *Beis Hamikdash* resembled a person’s soul exiting his body permanently and severely weakening the powers of the soul. (See *ibid* for complete discussion.)

- C.** The *Ramchal* in *Sefer Adir Ba’Marom* poetically describes, “The soul is a G-dly light that comes from Hashem Yisborach.” He presents a parable of rays of sunlight that draw their essence from the sun but have no substance unto themselves, as their entire existence is founded in the sun. Similarly, the very essence and existence of the Jewish soul are its connection to Hashem Yisborach, which is also why the soul yearns perpetually to draw ever nearer to Him.

This is as Dovid *Hamelech* inscribed in *Tehillim* 42: "As a deer desires for the water brook, so my soul will desire for You, Hashem. My soul thirsts for G-D, for the Living G-D; when will I come and see the Face of G-D?" The more a Jewish soul is connected to Hashem Yisborach and the more the Jew senses this vital connection, the greater vigor and power the soul will acquire, as written in *Parshas Va'eschanan*, "And for you, who cling to Hashem your G-D, there is life always."

- D. The *Shechina* dwells in the soul of each and every Jew always, in every situation and every generation since the beginning of time, albeit its Presence was stronger and more intense during the era of the *Beis Hamikdash*. As the *Shechina* created a keen impression on the heart of every Jew of that era, it increased vigor and life to their souls. This automatically intensified their yearning to draw ever nearer to Hashem and stimulated a precious cycle of spiritual growth and aspiration. In contrast, as the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, prompting an aspect of *Shechina* to depart Jewish souls, all Jewish souls were collectively weakened and their passionate yearning to draw nearer to Hashem subsided as well, thus instigating a vicious cycle of spiritual degeneration.

This is the essence of 'soul demise.' Just as the soul's departure from the corporeal body signifies physical death; so too, the *Shechina*'s departure from the soul is tantamount to 'soul death.'

- E. Notwithstanding, although we are deeply pained and lost because of the destruction of our *Beis Hamikdash* and the departure of the *Shechina* from within us, each and every Jew must still endeavor to his maximal abilities to draw nearer to Hashem and strive to experience the life and vigor described in the verse, "And for you, who cling to Hashem your G-D, there is life always." The conclusion of the verse, '*always*,' emphasizes that, though the *Shechina* was once the most compelling force within Jewish souls, it continues to rest its Presence within them until today, albeit in a weaker form.
- F. Mourning the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and expressing one's longing and prayer for its future rebuilding binds a person to the radiance of the *Beis Hamikdash* and endows his soul with the spiritual radiance unique to the House of Hashem. It is this indescribable radiance that grants increased life and vigor to one's soul. Although the radiance acquired through prayer is less potent and incomplete relative to the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it is still inordinately powerful and endows a Jew with an extraordinary connection to Hashem.
- G. As aforementioned, one's prayers to Hashem to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* must encompass the two aspects mentioned above: The desire to merit fulfilling the *mitzvos* associated with the *Beis Hamikdash* which we are presently unable to perform, and the desire to merit absolute *Shechina* in our souls as a product of the *Shechina* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. While praying for the latter, one must simultaneously beseech Hashem to bequeath him a deeper soul-connection to His Holy Presence now, until the *Beis Hamikdash* is rebuilt.

Our loss is tremendous; it cannot be encapsulated in words. We must feel deeply pained that we no longer merit our *Beis Hamikdash* and thus fail to achieve the ultimate soul-connection to Hashem that every Jewish soul should rightfully own. The current state of Jewish souls is truly appalling when compared to the lofty spiritual entities that Hashem fashioned them to be.

H. The blessings recited after reading the *Haftara* entreat, “Have mercy on Zion, for it is the house of our life.” The Vilna Gaon expounds that just as the soul is the spiritual Light sustaining the body; so the *Shechina* is a spiritual Light sustaining the soul; and the resting place of the *Shechina* is the *Beis Hamikdash*. [Despite the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and partial departure of the *Shechina*, the location of the *Beis Hamikdash* still retains immeasurable holiness, which is why it is forbidden to enter it in a state of impurity. This is affirmed by the *Rambam* in *Hilchos Beis HaBechira*, the *Magen Avraham* and *Mishnah Brurah* who unanimously state: “They sanctified the site of the *Beis Hamikdash* for the period of the first *Beis Hamikdash* and eternally thereafter.”]

Indeed, as the *Beis Hamikdash* is the “house of our life” and the soul is “our life,” it is clear that every Jew must intensify and improve his desire for the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*—our one and only home.

- I. This chapter has presented a basic description of the connection that binds the Jewish soul to Hashem Yisborach in order to clarify the concept of the *Shechina* dwelling in the Jewish soul. It is vital that every Jew internalize the knowledge that he harbors a permanent soul-connection to Hashem Yisborach, as this is one of the key foundations to spiritual growth. Indeed, an appreciation of this soul-connection is that which inspired leading sages in every generation to achieve spiritual greatness in Torah and service of Hashem.
- J. The responsibility of each and every Jew is to seek out those paths that will motivate and inspire him to yearn for and reinforce his soul-connection with Hashem Yisborach, each person on his individual level and according to the spiritual capacities that he was granted. Some people merit enhancing their soul-connection by spilling their emotions in prayer; others by learning Torah for extended periods of time and/or with intense concentration, and still others by fervently reciting chapters of *Tehillim*. Every Jew is an individual, an entire world owning unique capacities and strengths; and every Jew must conduct a genuine search of his soul in order to discover the unique key that will intensify his soul-connection to Hashem. This is a life-long process, a never-ending journey that leads one to attain ever loftier spiritual heights. It is a journey that expands one’s spiritual strengths and leads one to the pinnacle of success in the study of Torah and service of Hashem.

Chapter Two: The pain and tears that Hashem sheds upon the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and exile of His Chosen People.

- A. *Sefer Yirmiyahu* 13:17 states, “And if you shall not hear it, My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and My Eye shall weep sore and run with tears, for Hashem’s flock has been carried away captive.”
- B. *Gemara Chagiga* 5b elucidates the verse above: “Rav Shmuel bar Eini said from Rav, ‘The Holy One Blessed Is He has a place, and it is called, ‘A secret place’; and it is there that He weeps.’”
- C. The verse states that Hashem weeps because of ‘pride.’ The *Gemara* teaches, “What is ‘pride?’ Rav Shmuel bar Yitzchak taught, ‘Because of *Bnei Yisrael*’s pride that was taken from them and given to idol-worshippers. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said, ‘Because of the pride of the Kingdom of heaven.’”
- D. The *Gemara* ibid adds, “What is the meaning of the words, ‘My Eye shall weep sore?’”

The above verse employs the word ‘weeping-tears’ three times. “Rabbi Elazar said, ‘Three weepings—why? One for the first Temple; and one for the second Temple; and one for Yisrael who were exiled from their land.’ Another explanation is, ‘One because of annulled Torah study.’” This last explanation for Hashem’s third weeping maintains that *Bnei Yisrael*’s exile is included in the phrase, “For Hashem’s flock has been carried away captive.” Indeed, there can be no worse annulment of Torah than when the flock—Yisrael—has been taken captive and exiled among the nations.

- E. It must be stated that the ‘tears shed by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*’ are not actual tears, as Hashem possesses neither corporeal body nor physical form. Similarly, the verse referring to Hashem weeping in a ‘secret place,’ cannot be taken literally either, as Hashem is Present everywhere, at all times. However, we must appreciate that Hashem and His Heavenly Court endure deep pain, mourning the destruction of His holy, beloved *Beis Hamikdash* and the exile of His Chosen Nation—both due to their spiritual and physical consequences.
- F. *Gemara Brachos* 3a states: “Rabbi Yosi taught, ‘I was once walking along the way and I entered one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Eliyahu, may he be remembered for good, came to me and stood by the entrance and waited until I finished praying. After I finished praying, he told me, “My son, what voice did you hear in this ruin?” I answered him, “I heard a *bas kol* wailing as a dove and saying, ‘Woe is to the children in whose sins I have destroyed My House and burned My Hall, and I exiled them amongst the nations.’” He said to me, “On your life and the life of your head, it is not saying this just at this time; behold, it says so thrice each and every day. And not only this, but also whenever Yisrael enter synagogues and houses of study and respond, ‘Amen! Yehei Shmei Rabba mevorach (May the Name of Hashem be blessed),’ Hashem proclaims, ‘Lucky is the King Who is praised in His House. So, what is for a Father Who exiled His sons? And woe to the children who were exiled from the table of their Father.’” [This episode

is the first instance in the *Gemara* in which Eliyahu reveals himself. *Gemara Sanhedrin* notes that Eliyahu *HaNavi* appeared frequently to Rabbi Yosi.]

- G.** *Midrash Rabba* on *Megillas Eichah*, introductory Letter 24 poignantly describes the intense and acute anguish that *Hakaddosh Baruch Hu* suffers because of the exile and destruction of His Temple.

Chapter Three: Cited from *Gemaras Rosh Hashanah* and *Megilla* regarding the exile of the *Shechina* and an explanation of these *Gemaras*.

Part I

- A. *Gemara Rosh Hashanah* 30a states: "Rabbi Yehuda bar Idi said, Rabbi Yochanan said, 'The Divine Presence traveled ten journeys. [Rashi elucidates, 'To depart from Yisrael when they sinned.']. And these are they: (1) From the *Kappores* [cloth that covered the Ark in the Holy of Holies] to the *Kruvim* [Cherubs that also rested on the Ark]; (2) from the *Kruvim* to the threshold; (3) from the threshold to the courtyard; (4) from the courtyard to the Altar; (5) from the Altar to the roof; (6) from the roof to the wall; (7) from the wall to the city; (8) from the city to the mountain; (9) from the mountain to the desert; (10) and from the desert it ascended and sat in its place."
- B. There are several versions of this *Gemara*:
 - 1. The Vilna Gaon cites 'roof' before 'courtyard,' instead of after the 'altar.'
 - 2. The *Gemara* mentions that the *Shechina* also traveled from one *Kruv* to the other, although *Haga'os HaBach* erased this and *Mesores HaShas* cites the *Ein Yaakov* which concurs with the *Bach*, offering proof that the additional 'one *Kruv* to the other,' would mean that there had been eleven journeys, unless the final journey—the ascent—is not included in the 'ten journeys.' Commentaries also query as to the difference between traveling from one *Kruv* to the other? They reply that the *Right Kruv* was more significant than the left.
- C. *Gemara Megilla* 29a states: "Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai teaches, 'Come and see how beloved are *Bnei Yisrael* to *Hakaddosh Baruch Hu*, as the Divine Presence accompanied them to every place they were exiled. They were exiled to Egypt; the *Shechina* was with them. [Shmuel A 2:127 states:] 'Behold I was exiled to the house of your father when they were in Egypt.' They were exiled to Babylon, the *Shechina* was with them, as written, [Yeshaya 43:14, see *Minchas Shai* ibid] 'On your behalf, I was sent to Babylon.' And also when they are destined to be redeemed, the *Shechina* will be with them, as written, [Parshas Nitzavim 30:3], 'And Hashem your G-D will return your captives.' The Torah does not use the proper form of the word 'v'heishiv—He will return them,' but the word 'v'shav—and He, Himself, will return.' This teaches that *Hakaddosh Baruch Hu* will return with them from the exile."
- D. It would seem that these two concepts are contradictory. *Gemara Rosh Hashanah* states that the '*Shechina* ascended to its Place,' whereas *Gemara Megilla* writes that the '*Shechina* was exiled together with *Bnei Yisrael* to Babylon.'

Indeed, this query can be resolved with the understanding that the *Shechina* encompasses many aspects and spiritual levels. Thus, a part of the *Shechina* was exiled together with the nation, while another aspect ascended heavenward. [See *Ohr HaChaim*, *Parshas Vayigash* 46:4 regarding his commentary on *Brachos* 6a.]

- E. *Midrash Rabba* on *Megillas Eichah*, Introduction Letter 24 states that the *Shechina's* departure to the heavens occurred at the time when the *Beis Hamikdash* was burning—see there. According to the above explanation, this would refer to one aspect of the *Shechina* only.
- F. The basis of all holiness in the *Beis Hamikdash* was the *Shechina* which dwelled there always; and it seems that an aspect of this *Shechina* remains on the original site of the *Beis Hamikdash* until this very day. This also clarifies the concept of the intrinsic holiness of the *Beis Mikdash*, as the *Rambam* in *Hilchos Beis Habechira*, *Magen Avraham* and *Mishnah Brurah* in *Orach Chaim* Ch. 561 rule that one who steps upon the site of the *Beis Hamikdash* is punished due to the holiness that remains there. It is also possible that the basis for this ruling is *Chazal's* famed statement, “The *Shechina* has never departed from the Western Wall” (see *Midrash Rabba*, *Shmos Parsha* 2 Ch. 2; *Shir Hashirim Rabba* Ch. 2:9).

This statement also differs from the teachings of *Chazal* in *Gemaras Rosh Hashanah* and *Megilla*, which both relate that the *Shechina* did indeed flee the site of the *Beis Hamikdash*. However, this too can be resolved according to the opinion that explains the *Shechina* as encompassing many aspects, each of which currently rests in a different place.

- G. In order to delve deeper into this concept, it is important to acquire a clearer understanding of the concept of the *Shechina* resting its Presence. Indeed, it is known that Hashem Yisborach is Omnipresent—both within the world and without—at all times, as described the *Zohar*, “Hashem surrounds all the worlds and fills all the worlds, and there is no difference in His Existence from one time to another.”

The meaning of this statement is that there is a G-dly radiance that works actively and constantly to join the souls of *Klal Yisrael* to Hashem Yisborach; and this G-dly radiance is often referred to as the *Shechina*. This is how the *Shechina* is present in several places simultaneously, including the heavens and exile, as described above.

- H. The concept of this G-dly radiance is extremely profound, abstract, and cannot be aptly encompassed in words. One who aspires to achieve deeper understanding of this lofty concept should study *Ramban*, *Parshas Vayigash* Ch. 46:1. In this section, the *Ramban* cites the *Rambam* in *Moreh Nevuchim* Vol. 1 Ch. 27 and presents his argument. [Perhaps, these two opinions can be resolved according to the concept of the Eternal, Infinite Light that is clothed within the *Sefiros*.]
- I. See *Biur HaGr"a* on the Introduction to *Tikkunei Zohar* (in *Sha'am* printing, p. 2a) *Tikkun* 6 (*Sha'am* printing, p. 22b) and *ibid Biur HaGr"a*. Also see *Leshem Shvo V'Achlama*, *Klalim* Vol. 1 p. 16 column 2 which cites the Vilna Gaon. Also see *Sefer Kabbalas HaGr"a* Vol. 1 in the brief explanation to *Biur HaGr"a* on *Tikkunei Zohar* *ibid*.
- J. Thrice each day, we recite the blessing ‘*Bone Yerushalayim*’ in *Shemone Esrei*, beseeching for the restoration of the *Shechina* to its original place of holiness in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The word ‘*Shechina*’ is explicitly mentioned in the conclusion of the blessing, ‘Who returns His Presence to Zion.’

In his *Sefer Pe'as HaSadeh*, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Doueck relates in his personal biography that he always focused intensely upon the conclusion of this blessing. Once, the passion of his fervent prayers, tears and yearning for Hashem to restore His Presence to the *Beis Hamikdash* caused him to faint as he recited these words.

Obviously, the primary dwelling place of the *Shechina* is the *Beis Hamikdash*, as described by the verse in *Parshas Terumah* 25:8, “And they shall make for me a Temple, and I will dwell in their midst,” as the Presence of the *Shechina* is directly linked to the site of *Beis Hamikdash*. [See above Ch. 1 Part II for expanded elucidation of this verse.]

Part II

- A. *Sefer Yirmiyahu* 2:8 states, “The Priests did not say, ‘Where is Hashem?’ and those who grasp the Torah did not know Me.” In this prophecy, Yirmiyahu rebukes his generation for failing to seek Hashem. It is necessary to delve deeper into this message in order to understand the exact point of *Bnei Yisrael*’s failing. Indeed, there is no actual commandment for the priests to ask, ‘Where is Hashem,’ so why were they reprimanded for this?
- B. Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik of Brisk explains that this verse is associated with *Gemara Rosh Hashanah* 30a (as quoted in Part I above) which relates that the *Shechina* had fled the *Beis Hamikdash* even prior to the destruction. Sadly, the priests of that generation, who were men of extremely lofty spiritual stature, sensed this but did nothing to prevent it.
- C. Thus, the Prophet Yirmiyahu castigates the priests for being idle when the holy *Shechina* departed the *Beis Hamikdash*. He rebukes them for failing to rend the heavens with their prayers that Hashem restore His *Shechina* to the *Beis Hamikdash* and repent wholeheartedly in thoughts, words and action in order to merit the return of the *Shechina*.
- D. *Gemara Taanis* 29a further enhances this message. The *Gemara* states, “The Sages taught that when the first *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, groups and groups of priests-in-training gathered together with the keys to the Sanctuary in their hands, and they ascended to the rooftop of the Sanctuary and they cried, ‘Master of the World, since we have not merited being faithful guards, let these keys be relayed to You; and they tossed the keys heavenward, and a part of a hand appeared and received it from them. Then they jumped and fell into the fires. [This episode is very perplexing, as the Torah strictly prohibits suicide; yet this is not the place to expound upon this issue.] And upon them, Yeshayahu *HaNavi* lamented of the mountain that everyone look upon [Jerusalem], ‘Why have you all ascended to the rooftops? A city filled with sounds of people, a bustling city, a joyful district; [and now] your fallen have neither perished from sword nor from war. And also of Hashem, it says, “He wrecks the walls and cries to the mountains.”’”
- E. Hence Yirmiyahu *HaNavi* rebukes the priests for failing to ask, “Where is Hashem?” The priests of the era possessed profoundly spiritual souls that afforded them clear understanding that without the *Shechina* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, they have nothing for which to live. If so, they should have certainly appreciated that the *Beis Hamikdash* blazing was only the final stage of the

destruction. The true agony should have commenced with the *Shechina*'s departure from the *Beis Hamikdash*. As explained in Part I above, which cites Gemara Rosh Hashanah, the purpose of building the *Beis Hamikdash* was to create a resting place for the *Shechina* in our midst, as commanded in *Parshas Terumah* 25:8, "And they shall make for Me a dwelling place; and I shall dwell in their midst." *Rashi* in *Parshas Shemini* 9:23 elucidates, "Before the *Shechina* dwelled in the *Mishkan*, Yisrael said to Moshe, 'For what was all this work that we bothered to toil, if the *Shechina* did not rest its Presence here?'" If *Bnei Yisrael* were truly so devastated by the lack of *Shechina* in their midst; they should have been similarly crushed when the *Shechina* departed. Moreover, instead of sacrificing themselves into the inferno when the *Beis Hamikdash* was finally destroyed, they should have rent the heavens with tearful prayer and beseeched Hashem to restore the *Shechina* to His House; and perhaps, the *Beis Hamikdash* would have never been destroyed.

- F. In the second half of the verse, Yirmiyahu rebukes the Torah scholars, "And those who grasp My Torah did not know Me." Indeed, even the scholars of the era who studied Torah diligently failed to learn with feelings of connection to Hashem Yisborach. See the *Bach* on *Tur*, Orach Chaim Ch. 47 which describes one's obligation to learn Torah with the goal of connecting one's soul to Hashem Yisborach and drawing bounty from Hashem onto one's soul. It was the absence of this longing for a closer spiritual connection with Hashem that prompted the exile and subsequent destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

It is interesting to note that Yirmiyahu employs the phrase, 'Those who grasp Torah' to describe the Torah scholars. Indeed, the essence of the mitzvah of Torah study is that the soul of every Jew is a spiritual Light, and the Torah is a vast spiritual Light. When a Jew learns Torah, these two G-dly lights unite and create a boundless energy and spiritual force. However, when one learns Torah without aspiring to connect to the Light of Torah or draw his soul nearer to Hashem, then the union of these two Lights is severely impaired.

Yirmiyahu thus referred to the Torah scholars of that period derogatorily as 'men who grasp Torah.' Indeed, these scholars did not unite with the Torah or become one with it; they merely associated themselves with the Torah. It was as if they held it in their hands, but failed to absorb it and become one with its holiness.

It was during this period that the Sages instituted the Blessings upon the Torah which entreat that we should become '[People] who know Your Name and learn Your Torah for its sake.' [The text if these blessings was composed by the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah*, as related by *Gemara Brachos* 33a; and many Sages rule that the essence of the blessing is actually a *mitzvah d'oraysa*. (See *Mishnah Brurah* Ch. 47.) Interestingly, although the blessing regards the study of Torah, the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* preceded the request that we shall be '[People] who know Your Name' to that of 'And who learn Your Torah.' This emphasizes that knowing Hashem is a prerequisite to learning Torah and ensures that scholars approach the Torah with the clear appreciation that they are learning Torah in order to further enhance their soul connection with Hashem Yisborach.

G. *Gemara Brachos* 8a relates, “From the day that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, Hashem has nothing in His world but the four *amos* of *Halacha*.” This *Gemara* prompts many a query, yet this section will focus solely upon the *Gemara*’s emphasis upon the four *amos* of *Halacha*. Indeed, this is actually a reference to the other *Gemara* that explains the verse, ‘And they shall make for Me a Temple—a place where Hashem’s Presence will settle in this world. Moreover, Torah study likewise attracts the *Shechina* to settle amidst the nation. Chazal thus employ the term ‘four *amos*’ to refer to a place where the *Shechina* can settle, as ‘four *amos*’ is the minimal Halachic specifications of a place.

The above highlights that just as the *Shechina* is absolutely vital to the *Beis Hamikdash*, so it is to Torah, and especially Torah learned since the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Indeed, it is Torah that completes the *Shechina*’s presence in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Chapter Four: Cited from *Tikkunei Zohar* regarding a Jew's obligation to feel the anguish of the heavens that resulted from the exile of the *Shechina*; a Jew's obligation to repent and pray to rectify this tragedy, as he yearns to accord honor to the heavens and convey pleasure to Hashem Yisborach.

- A. *Tikkunei Zohar Tikkun 6* states: "Woe unto the people with whom Hashem is bound; and with whom the *Shechina* is also bound. And it says of them, 'Someone who is jailed cannot escape.' The way that they are liberated is with repentance; and this is in their hands, for there are fifty gates of repentance corresponding to the fifty times it says, 'Yetzias Mitzrayim' (Exodus from Egypt) in the Torah. The verse, 'Vayif'en ko vacho—And he turned here and there,' alludes to this. [The numerical equivalent of the Hebrew words *ko* and *cho* are twenty-five, the sum of which is fifty.] These are the fifty letters used to proclaim Hashem as One every day; twenty-five letters in the first recitation of '*Shema*', and twenty-five letters in the second recitation of '*Shema*'. [The verse continues,] 'And he saw that there was no man' who awakens himself through them... Have we no shame that there is nobody to cry out in repentance, that the *Shechina*, which is so distanced from us, should return to us, and all the kindness that they do, they do for themselves."
- B. The above describes the *Shechina*'s anguish, as people do not identify with the intense pain and suffering that Hashem feels while the *Shechina*—a G-dly radiance that dwells amongst *Bnei Yisrael*—remains partially severed from Him. *Tikkunei Zohar* adds that it is an obligation for every Jew to strive to rectify this loss by repenting wholeheartedly to Hashem, learning Torah, praying earnestly and fulfilling the essential *mitzvos* of *tefillin*, *tzitzis* and *Kri'as Shema*.
- C. The *Zohar* likewise laments that people are too frequently absorbed in their own mundane thoughts and activities rather than focusing upon the distress and grief that Hashem feels because of the exile of His *Shechina*.
- D. The *Zohar* painfully expresses that even when people do readily engage in Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos*; their focus and motivation are usually for themselves as opposed to the sake of heaven or the lofty goal of rectifying the great loss in our world. Similarly, when people pray, their prayers revolve around their own selfish needs, aspirations and desires as opposed to the Will of Hashem and lofty purposes of creation.

Chapter Five: Methods that help a Jew experience the pain that the heavens suffer because of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and exile of the *Shechina*; commentary on Tehillim 137 which describes the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and exile of the nation; recommendations in serving Hashem.

Part I

- A. The above chapters primarily discuss two topics: The first is the intense tragedy and Hashem's indescribable pain upon the destruction of His *Beis Hamikdash* and the exile of His *Shechina* and nation; the second is a Jew's obligation to experience this pain and pray for the *Beis Hamikdash* to be rebuilt and the *Shechina* to return to its resting place.

Unfortunately, many are those who yearn to fulfill this obligation, but lack the means and ability to do so. They strive to sense the intense pain and void; they long to arouse themselves to pray that Hashem's Honor shall be restored to the world and that the *Beis Hamikdash* be rebuilt; and they aspire to eliminate any ulterior motives. Yet, not always do they succeed in shedding even a tear on behalf of Hashem and His Honor.

- B. This chapter will present two practical methods to attaining these intense feelings of loss and pain on behalf of the *Shechina* and praying sincerely, with earnest supplications on behalf of the heavens:
- C. The first method abides by the general concept of serving Hashem: A Jew must reflect upon his purpose in the world, as the *Rambam* described at length in *Hilchos Teshuva* Ch. 10, "The proper way is that his service [of Hashem] should be in order to convey pleasure to Hashem Yisborach." There, he presents numerous points and methods that allow a Jew to merit this lofty spiritual level. (See *Rambam* ibid for complete essay.)
- D. The second method that allows a Jew to sense the grief of the heavens is as written by the *Biur HaGr'a* to *Sefer Yetzira* Ch. 1:6 p. 9 column 4. He explains that the G-dly radiance called *Shechina* harbors an intense pull to Hashem Yisborach with vast supernatural forces that surpass the laws of nature [since the forces of the Upper Worlds greatly exceed those of the lower worlds and the *Shechina* itself derives from the Upper World.] He also describes that the *Shechina* dwells in the souls of *Bnei Yisrael* and is the force that motivates each and every Jew to yearn for Hashem Yisborach, albeit the intensity of this desire depends upon the extent of the *Shechina*'s connection with the soul in which it rests.
- E. See *Ohr HaChaim*, *Parshas Acharei Mos* and *Ohr Hachaim*, *Parshas Bechukosai* regarding these lofty concepts.
- F. The above underscores that every Jewish soul encompasses the *Shechina* within it, albeit there are times when this relationship is stronger and more intense than others. When the connection between *Shechina* and soul is profound and strong, then the soul receives lofty powers from the *Shechina* which draws a Jew nearer to Hashem Yisborach.

- G.** The connection between soul and *Shechina* allows the soul to absorb qualities of the *Shechina* which automatically impels the person to partake in the intense suffering of the *Shechina*, which is so very distanced from Hashem Yisborach and exiled together with the Jewish nation. The more a Jew intensifies his soul's union with the *Shechina* within it, the more he will sense the *Shechina*'s suffering.

There are many ways and means of enhancing the connection between soul and *Shechina*. Foremost is learning Torah, praying earnestly, performing *mitzvos* and avoiding *averios*. Moreover, when a person senses hislahavus (profound exhilaration) in his connection to Hashem, this feeling endows him with special powers to bind that moment of exhilaration to Hashem Yisborach [which creates a long-term effect that can be sensed much thereafter]. In fact, there are many who acquire those coveted experiences of yearning and suffering for the *Shechina* only during moments of exhilarated connection with Hashem Yisborach.

Part II

- A.** *Tehillim* Ch. 137 exemplifies the intense spiritual connection binding the Jewish soul to Hashem Yisborach and the Jewish nation to their Father in heaven via the *Beis Hamikdash*: "Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and also wept as we recalled Zion. Upon the willows in the midst thereof, we hung our violins, for there our captors required of us a song, and those who took our spoils required of us mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' 'How can we sing the song of Hashem in a foreign land?' If I forget thee, Jerusalem, my right hand shall forget its strength. My tongue will stick to my pallet if I do not remember you, if I do not place Jerusalem above my chief joy."
- B.** There are four courses of Torah study: The simple explanation, allusion, interpretation, and mystical secrets of Torah.

The above verses in *Tehillim* can be defined according to the mystical secrets of Torah as follows: Every Jew, without exception, harbors a profound, intrinsic connection to Hashem Yisborach, a bond that is so fierce that it cannot be encapsulated in words. This union is the most powerful force that the soul owns, more compelling than any force in the world. (See above Part 1:4.]

- C.** Tragically, there are many Jews who cannot sense this intrinsic union to Hashem and believe that they are not truly connected to Him. The reason for this is because their entire being is absorbed in materialism and mundane activity. They are swathed in the outer trappings of their souls and the negative forces that surround them, and they fail to penetrate to the most profound depths of their own souls.
- D.** Song and music are profoundly spiritual concepts. For many, song is an energy that emerges from the deeper recesses of their soul. In this day and age, it is exceedingly rare for a song to emanate from the deepest levels of the soul, albeit it usually derives from a deeper area than the regular soul level.

E. The ‘Song of Zion,’ which the Babylonians ordered their Jewish captives to sing was an utterly lofty melody, one that inspired the spiritual union of Hashem with Yisrael. It was a song that was sourced—and also touched—the innermost levels of the Jewish soul. The Babylonians wanted to intone that poignant melody not for the sake of Hashem and the soul-connection with Him, but in relation to mundane activities.

F. Thus, their Jewish captives responded, ‘How can we sing the song of Hashem in a foreign land?’ Indeed, they could not bear to desecrate the depth of Jewish soul melodies by relating them to mundane activities; these were beautiful, stirring melodies that could be used only to enhance one’s spiritual connection to Hashem.

G. The verse continues, ‘If I do not place Jerusalem above my chief joy.’ The teachings of *Kabbalah* divide man and the lofty aspects that represent him into two primary categories:

1. Top-down: This category defines man in accordance with the significance of his organs, the highest level being the head, which is referred to by the *sefiros* as *Kesser, Chochmah, Binah* and *Da’as*.
2. Outside-in: This category defines man according to the aspects of his soul, from the outermost trappings to his innermost soul. The first level is *Nefesh*; second is *Ruach*; third is *Neshama*; fourth is *Chaya*; and fifth is *Yechida*. [An acronym for these five layers is NRNCY.]

Sefer Nahar Shalom, written by the *Rashash*, states that the activities that man performs while in a state of inner *hislahavus* (spiritual exhilaration) operate on a much deeper level, on the spiritual level called *Yechida*. This is why Dovid *HaMelech* wrote, ‘If I do not place Jerusalem.’ Indeed, Jerusalem is the place that fosters connection between the Jewish soul and Hashem; it is the home of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

‘Upon my chief joy.’ In Hebrew, the text is ‘*Al rosh simchasi*.’ The word *rosh*, in translated here as ‘chief,’ yet its literal meaning is ‘head.’ Indeed, activities that occur in the highest place—man’s head and brain; and in the deepest level—the *Yechida* aspect of his soul,’ can only transpire when there is true *simcha*, true joy and celebration. [The *Arizal* notes that the verse is written as, ‘*al rosh simchasi*—upon my chief joy,’ in order to highlight that there is still a loftier spiritual level than man’s mind and head.]

H. The above lesson can be applied to daily life. Indeed, if one finds that he harbors negative thoughts and desires in the deeper levels of his heart, he should realize that these reflections are emanating from the misdeed of ‘singing the song of Hashem in a foreign land.’

The strength of the connecting force that binds a Jew to Hashem is rooted in extremely holy, lofty source that enters the world solely in order to forge a more intense bond between Hashem and His people. However, like the Jewish people who were driven by their captors to the riverbanks of Babylon, this force too was taken captive by the forces of evil in the world and exploited for evil purposes. Thus, if one believes that he harbors this type of strength within, he should appreciate that it is a favorable sign. Indeed, the root of his soul bears fantastic strength that can allow him to unite fully with Hashem Yisborach, the only hindrance being that his

strength is now being abused by the forces of evil. Moreover, his connection to evil relates to *Chazal's* message in *Gemara Sukkah* 52a, ‘Anyone who is greater than his friend; his [evil] inclination is stronger than his.’ Thus, a Jew must strive to garner all his strengths and direct them all intensely toward Hashem Yisborach while breaking away from his connection to evil. This double effort will allow him to attain the loftiest spiritual levels imaginable. The *Nefesh HaChaim Shaar C* and *Ibn Ezra's* commentary on the Torah describe that it is with this *dveikus hamachshava* to Hashem Yisborach that man receives strengths and spiritual powers that surpass the laws of nature. (See *Ibn Ezra, Parshas Shmos* Ch. 3:15; *Parhsas Va'era* 6:3; *Parshas Ki Sisa* 33:21; *Parshas Chukas* 20:8. To further understand these concepts, see *Divrei Yaakov, Topics in Shas* as quoted in the booklet *In the Ways of Ascent* Ch. 10.)

The ideal means of escaping the pitfalls of negative thoughts and being drawn toward evil is to channel the force that derives from the soul's connection along its natural course—directly to Hashem Yisborach. A person must empty his soul into its Upper Source—Hashem Yisborach. And it is this that will grant life, vitality and true powers to the soul, as eloquently expressed in *Parshas Va'eschanan*, “And to you, who cleave to Hashem your G-D, there is life always!”

Chapter Six: Prayers and entreaties on behalf of the heavens are accepted; feeling the anguish of the *Shechina* draws the final Redemption ever nearer; praying on behalf of the heavens initiates the fulfillment of one's personal prayers; focusing on conveying pleasure to Hashem Yisborach; the inestimable potency of prayer that can transform any situation to good—personal and collective.

Part I

- A.** Several printings of the *Nefesh HaChaim* include a lecture that Rav Chaim Volozhin once relayed during the Ten Days of Repentance. Toward the end of the speech, he stated, “If we would only focus upon the pain of the *Shechina* in our prayers and supplications, then we would surely merit that our prayers would be answered, and we would rejoice with the final Redemption. Yet we are guilty, as we do not place the pain of the *Shechina* upon our hearts; rather, we ask only for our own needs and livelihood, which is why we do not merit redemption, and merit only a meager bounty of livelihood in order to sustain our bodies instead. Yes, we are formed solely of material; and we cannot fathom the spiritual pleasure that we will enjoy in the future. Thus, the *Shechina* must disguise itself as the angel of the nation to which Yisrael is subjugated, so that they will survive and merit being slightly rescued from the idol worshippers.” (See *ibid* for complete essay.)
- B.** *Nefesh HaChaim Shaar B* Ch. 11-12 expounds at length upon the importance of a Jew focusing on his prayers and directing his thoughts and entreaties to the goal of increasing the honor of heaven. (See *ibid* for complete essay.) He cites the words instituted by *Chazal* as part of the special prayers that we recite during the High Holy Days when we beseech for Hashem’s Honor to be restored to the world: ‘Rule upon the entire world with Your Honor and elevate Yourself upon the land with Your eminence.’ Indeed, the High Holy Days are the deciding factor for the coming year—both individually and collectively. Thus, *Chazal* instituted that these special prayers be recited during the High Holy Days—the most critical days of the year—to signify that our most profound and intense yearning is that Hashem’s Kingdom be restored to its previous Glory.
- C.** Certainly, one is also obligated to pray for his personal needs as well. In fact, the *Rambam* in *Hilchos Tefilla* Ch. 1. rules that prayer is one of the imperative *mitzvos* in the Torah; and it is wrong for one to ignore his personal needs while praying singularly on behalf of Hashem’s honor.
- D.** The Chazon Ish once divulged that if he would not pray to Hashem to grant him shoes, then it would constitute a serious lack in his service of Hashem. He explained that were he to merit attaining a spiritual level upon which he would not care at all whether he wore shoes, then perhaps he would be exempt from this prayer. However, given that he did care to own shoes and took the time and energy to earn money in order to purchase them; he must appreciate that those shoes—like everything other gift in this world—come only from Hashem, and that He is our Only Address in prayer.

E. *Nefesh HaChaim Shaar B Ch. 11* shares that when a Jew prays for his own personal needs or because of his own personal suffering, even if it unrelated to the desecration of Hashem's Name; it is praiseworthy to simultaneously reflect upon conveying pleasure to Hashem Yisborach. *Mishnah Sanhedrin 46a* relates that when a Jew suffers pain, they suffer pain in the heavens as well (see there); and one may thus pray to remedy that pain that the heavens endure on his behalf.

Nefesh HaChaim Ch. 12 comments elucidates *Gemara Brachos 73a*: "One who includes the heavens in this suffering; they double his livelihood." Indeed, one who prays to Hashem to grant his personal needs while simultaneously beseeching Hashem to alleviate the suffering of the heavens, merits double salvation.

F. It is important to emphasize that a Jew must be cognizant of his own spiritual level. If ever he feels aroused to tears while beseeching for his needs or to allay his personal suffering, he should intensify his prayers at that time. Indeed, the deeper the source of a heartfelt prayer, the higher it ascends in the heavens. It is more common for a person to attain the loftiest levels of prayer while beseeching for his own personal needs, as these touch him on a deeper level. Thus, prayer for one's personal needs can potentially catapult a Jew to a much higher level than prayer for a lofty concept that he cannot fully grasp or relate to or that does not touch him to the same extent.

G. People face many challenges, problems and issues that must be overcome and resolved. Some challenges are spiritual, while others are physical or material concerns that create other spiritual issues. Often the key to resolving these difficulties and surmounting the challenge is heartfelt prayer. Obviously, if one would avoid praying for his personal salvation due to his intent to pray solely on behalf of the heavens; then he would remain forever entrapped in his troubles and would never be capable of overcoming various challenges in life.

Part II

A. Prayer harbors inordinate power to instigate boundless salvations, both on a personal and national level. Chapters in Jewish history and generation-old miracles attest to the potent force of prayer which successfully transformed dire, formidable situations of despair and certain death to wondrous instances of salvation and joy.

Shmos Ch. 2:23-24 states that the Exodus from Egypt itself was initiated with prayer: "And they cried; and their shouts ascended to Hashem from the labor; and Hashem heard their wailing, and Hashem recalled his covenant, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov."

Shmos Ch. 3:7: "And I heard their cries from their oppressors."

Shmos Ch. 6:5: "And also I heard *Bnei Yisrael*'s groaning, as Egypt oppresses them, and I recalled My covenant."

Devarim 26:7: "And we cried out to Hashem, the G-D of our fathers; and Hashem heard our voice, and He saw our suffering and our toil and our terrible pressures."

Shmuel A 12:8: "When Yaakov descended to Egypt, *Bnei Yisrael* cried out to Hashem; and Hashem sent Moshe and Aharon; and they redeemed your fathers from Egypt and settled you in this place."

The above verses all indicate that *Bnei Yisrael's* sincere prayers to Hashem heralded their redemption from Egypt. (Several of these verses are also mentioned in the *Mussaf* prayer of Rosh Hashanah.)

Hashem pledged to Avraham that He would redeem his children from a 400-year exile, yet *Bnei Yisrael's* heartrending cries and entreaties instigated an early, swift redemption. The original decree ordained that *Bnei Yisrael* would suffer under Egyptian exile for 400 years, yet the nation's poignant prayers caused Hashem to count the 400 years from the time of Yitzchak's birth; and *Bnei Yisrael* remained exiled in Egypt for but 210 years (see *Shmos* 12:40, *Rashi*).

- B.** The Spitting of the Sea also transpired as a result of *Bnei Yisrael's* heartfelt prayers. *Shmos* 14:10 vividly describes the miraculous event of the Splitting of the Sea: "And Pharaoh approached; and *Bnei Yisrael* raised their eyes; and behold, Egypt is pursuing them. And *Bnei Yisrael* were very afraid; and *Bnei Yisrael* cried out to Hashem."

At this historic moment, an entire nation faced threat of imminent death. Locked between the sea and a furious enemy nation, their only choice was prayer. *Bnei Yisrael* turned in desperate plea to their Father, and their heartfelt cries rent the heavens. It was at that moment that *Bnei Yisrael* witnessed one of the greatest miracles of all times, as the Red Sea split before them, manifestly contradicting the very laws of nature.

- C.** *Shmuel A* 12:8 states that it was only in the merit of prayer that *Bnei Yisrael* merited redemption from Egypt and settling in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The subsequent verses relate: "And they forgot Hashem their G-D; and He sold them into the hands of Sisra, army general of Chatzor, and into the hands of the Philistines and into the hand of the King of Moav; and they fought against them. And they cried out to Hashem and said, 'We sinned as we abandoned Hashem, and we worshipped idols. And now, Hashem, deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You!' And Hashem sent Yeruba'al (Gideon) and Bedan (Shimshon) and Yiftach and Shmuel; and He delivered you from the enemies surrounding you, and you sat in security, and you feared Him..."

- D.** The above verses reveal that the many miracles that *Bnei Yisrael* merited throughout history, including those which transpired during the wars in *Sefer Shoftim* and *Sefer Shmuel*, resulted from their heartfelt prayers. (These prayers were linked with a deep-seated commitment to repent fully and return to Hashem, as quoted above, 'We sinned... And now, save us from the hands of our enemies and we will serve You'.)
- E.** Many a tale in *Tanach* relates of individuals who merited extraordinary miracles and salvation in the merit of heartfelt, tearful prayer.

Perhaps the most famous example is the prophetess Chana, mother of Shmuel *HaNavi*, who spilled her heart in poignant prayer in what became known as *Tefillas Chana* (Chana's Prayer). It was this hour of earnest supplication that rent the heavens and blessed her with a son as

remarkable as Shmuel *HaNavi*, whose spiritual stature and prophetic powers earned him the status of *Rabban shel Nevi'im* (Teacher of the Prophets). Indeed, the only prophet in history to surpass him was Moshe Rabbeinu who merited speaking face-to-face with Hashem. (See *Kisvei Ha'Ari*, *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh* 1b; *Sha'ar Hagilgulim*, Preface 22 36a; beginning of *Shmuel A*, which describes that Shmuel *HaNavi* was of the greatest of all prophets, second only to Moshe *Rabbeinu*; and the prophetic powers of all the prophets who followed him were drawn from his spiritual strength. Prior to the era of Shmuel *HaNavi*, heavenly barriers blocked the bestowal of prophecy to the lower world; yet Shmuel overcame these barriers and unleashed a bounty of prophecy. Thus, with her prayers, Chana not only merited a son as spiritually great as Shmuel *HaNavi*, but she also indirectly restored prophecy to the world, as well.

- F. In *Shmuel A* 1:15, Chana describes her prayer to Eli *HaKohein*: "And I spilled my soul before Hashem."

Chana's prayers rose passionately from the depths of her heart until they burst out in tearful entreaty. Her prayer, by definition, was a 'spilling of the heart.'

The Jewish soul derives from an exceedingly lofty, holy place, directly beneath Hashem's Throne of Honor. When the soul descends to the lower world and fuses with the corporeal body, it still maintains its spiritual connection to Hashem, albeit in a far weaker form than the intense connection that previously existed. During times of prayer—when one is directly communicating with Hashem Yisborach—the soul regains this connection to Hashem as it overflows in its craving to cleave to its Upper Source—Hashem.

- G. In *Sefer Ma'ase Ish Toldos* Vol. 7 p. 19, the Chazon Ish emphasizes that focused prayer harbors the potential to annul any evil decree. He would often comfort the brokenhearted with the assurance, "Hashem awaits your prayers!" [Although in most cases, it is also necessary to take physical action to bring about results; one must, first and foremost, place his belief and trust in Hashem and pray from the bottom of one's heart.]
- H. *Igros Chazon Ish* describes prayers as a '*matte oz*'—a staff of strength,' a powerful tool that he can exploit to change his path in life. This lesson can be applied to daily life, as people who face a specific challenge in life often feel that that the problem engulfs their very being, their entire life. Thus, every Jew must be aware that prayer harbors the potency to transform every aspect of life; prayers and supplication to Hashem Yisborach can change one's entire world.

It is possible that the Chazon Ish's metaphor for prayer, a staff of strength, alludes to the Splitting of the Sea, a miracle that resulted from *Bnei Yisrael*'s heartfelt prayers but was executed by Moshe *Rabbeinu*'s staff, as written in *Parshas Beshalach* 14:16: "And, you, raise your staff and stretch out your hand upon the sea and split it." Verse 19 continues, "And Moshe stretched out his hand upon the sea..." Verse 26 describes the water returning full-force upon the Egyptians: "And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Stretch out your hand upon the sea, and the waters will return.'" Verse 27 continues, "And Moshe stretched out his hand."

- I. *Sefer Ma'ase Ish* describes an experience of intense connection with *Hakaddosh Baruch Hu*. Page 14 relates, "He was still in that apartment when I visited him. It was early in the night; and he sat

there in the yard, absorbed in staring at the night sky. I discovered him in a state of awe and *dveikus*; his eyes were streaming with many tears, and he did not sense that we were standing there beside him for a long time.”

- J. Page 15 adds, “And he would regularly tell me when there was a thorny section in the *Halacha*, ‘Nu, will we be up all night? [to learn and toil in Torah all night long, until we understand it.] For, how can I climb onto my bed until I find a place of understanding in the complete Torah of Hashem?’ And I heard this from him many a time.”
- K. See *ibid* for inspirational anecdotes.

Chapter Seven: Compilation of topics as listed in previous chapters:

Part I
Verses in Tehillim

- A. *Tehillim* 132 begins, “A song of Ascent. Remember, Hashem, for Dovid all his afflictions, how he swore to Hashem and vowed to the Mighty One of Yaakov. ‘Surely, I will not come to the Tabernacle of my house; surely I will not rise onto my bed. Surely I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for Hashem, a Dwelling Place for the Mighty One of Yaakov.’”
- B. *Gemara Brachos* 3b elucidates that Dovid *Hamelech* abstained from sleep to a dangerous degree (see there for expanded explanation and commentaries) in order to fulfill his personal vow that he would neither rest nor slumber until the *Beis Hamikdash* would be built; and the *Beis Hamikdash* was never built in his lifetime.
- C. According to the verse above, Dovid’s vow also included abstaining from entering his own home, although he must have surely done so at some point in time. *Rashi* elucidates that his words ‘Until I find’ refer to the actual site of the future *Beis Hamikdash*, as opposed to the actual building. [The *Malbim*, however, maintains that Dovid’s vow applied until the *Beis Hamikdash* was fully built; see there to resolve the question of how Dovid entered his home during his lifetime.]
- D. *Tehillim* 84:3 states: “My soul longs and faints for the Courts of Hashem; my heart and flesh will cry to a Living G-D.” *Rashi* elucidates: “Longs and desires for the Courts of Hashem as they were destroyed; and upon the exile, he said, ‘My heart and soul will cry—pray—because of this.’”

Part II
Points from Contemporary Sefarim

- A. The *Shl”a* relates that the *Maggid* (Angl) who appeared to the *Beis Yosef* said, ‘If you could only grasp one in the millions and billions of agonies that the *Shechina* suffers, you would have no joy in your heart and no laughter in your mouth when you recall this.’ (See there for complete message.)
- B. Rav Yaakov Emdin, zt”l, wrote in *Siddur Beis Yaakov* in the Laws Pertaining to *Tisha B’Av* Vol. 6 Letter 16 regarding the obligation to mourn the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*: “In my opinion, this is the most obvious and compelling reason for the many destructions and atrocities that we have suffered in the exile, in all places; we have been chased by our necks, and never left alone, as the mourning has disappeared from our hearts.”
- C. Rav Yehonasan Eibschitz wrote in *Sefer Ye’aros Dvash* regarding the month of *Elul* and the blessings, ‘*Binyan Yerushalayim*’ and ‘*Tzemach Dovid*,’ that one must weep ceaselessly, as it is the very purpose of our life.

D. The *Alschich*'s poem in *Tikkun Chatzos* states, "In the House of Israel, I have witnessed an outrage; there is no one who places this on his heart..." (See there for complete text.)

Conclusion

- A. To conclude, it is apt to cite the words of *Chazal* in *Maseches Taanis* 30b and *Bava Basra* 60b: “All who mourn Jerusalem will merit seeing in her joy, as written, ‘Rejoice for Jerusalem and exult in her all who love her; delight with her in joy all who mourn for her.’ [This verse is quoted from *Yeshaya* 66:10 and is read as the *Haftara* on *Rosh Chodesh*.]

Talmud Yerushalmi on the above states that Yeshaya apparently prophesied these words on the final day of his life, shortly before he was killed as described in *Maseches Yevamos* 49b. [This is also cited by *Rashi* in *Taanis* 26b. See also *Divrei Yaakov* in *Bi'urei Aggados* on *Taanis* ibid.]

- B. *Kabbalah* teaches that one who genuinely mourns the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and beseeches Hashem to rebuild it can also merit an aspect of the indescribable spiritual radiance of the *Beis Hamikdash* even in this day and age of exile. As expressed in Chapter 1 of this booklet, the spiritual radiance of the *Beis Hamikdash* surpasses anything that one can fathom, as it is a radiance that derives from the *Shechina* itself. The *Shechina* that was present in the *Beis Hamikdash* automatically led to the *Shechina* dwelling in the heart of each and every Jew and also forged an intense spiritual connection between every Jew and *Hakaddosh Baruch Hu*. Although the absolute realization of this connection can only be experienced and achieved when the *Beis Hamikdash* is rebuilt, a Jew can merit drawing a minute aspect of this bond whenever he mourns and expresses his inner longing for the *Beis Hamikdash* through prayer. And of course, the extent to which one grieves upon the destruction and implores Hashem to rebuild His House is the extent to which he will merit forging a deep, permanent connection with Hashem Yisborach.

Glossary

<i>Amos</i>	Handbreadths
<i>Anshei Knesses HaGedolah</i>	Great Assembly
<i>Aveira/os</i>	Sin(s)
<i>Bas kol</i>	Heavenly voice
<i>Beis Hamikdash</i>	Holy Temple
<i>Bnei Yisrael</i>	People of Israel
<i>Chazal</i>	Sages
<i>Dveikus</i>	Cleaving to Hashem
<i>Eretz Yisrael</i>	Land of Israel
<i>Hakaddosh Baruch Hu</i>	The Holy One Blessed Is He
<i>HaKohein</i>	The Priest
<i>Halacha</i>	Jewish Law
<i>Hamelech</i>	The King
<i>Hanavi</i>	The Prophet
<i>Hislahavus</i>	Spiritual exhilaration
<i>Kappores</i>	Covering of the Holy Ark
<i>Klal Yisrael</i>	People of Israel
<i>Kruvim</i>	Cherubs
<i>Mishkan</i>	Tabernacle
<i>Mitzvah/os</i>	Commandment(s)
<i>Mitzvah d'oraysa</i>	Commanded by the Torah
<i>Rosh Chodesh</i>	First of the Month
<i>Sefarim</i>	Holy works
<i>Shabbos</i>	Sabbath
<i>Shechina</i>	Divine Presence
<i>Shemone Esrei</i>	Silent Prayer
<i>Simcha</i>	Joy
<i>Tanach</i>	Holy Scriptures
<i>Yetzias Mitzrayim</i>	Exodus from Egypt