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תשפ"ד PARSHAS REAIIH BRAZIL RAV

HASHEM'S MUSSAR TO YOU IS NOT ABOUT THORNS

Hashem is placing before us *beracha* and curses. We have the *bechirah* to choose our destiny. The *Medrash* on this *passuk* writes that *Shlomo Hamelech* says in *Mishlei* 3,11 מוסר ה' בני אל תמאס ואל תקוץ בתוכחתו do not despise my son the *mussar*, affliction, sent to you by Hashem and don't **despise your life** because of them (Malbim). *Chazal* comment אל תעשה החוכחות קוציין קוציין. Don't make the admonishments of Hashem despicable, despicable. What is the *Medrash* adding to the simple content of the *passuk*? Secondly, what is the purpose of the double *lashon*?

We suggest that *Shlomo Hamelech* is conveying to us how a *Yid* should perceive himself as the recipient of Hashem's admonishment. The purpose of *tochacha* from Hashem is to communicate to an individual that he requires spiritual correction. The end goal is not punishment but rather to emit from the person a rehabilitation in his behavior and conduct. Even if he sinned so much and triggered Hashem's wrath to the point that He destroyed the *Bais Hamikdash*, nevertheless the purpose of being afflicted is not a proclamation that his relationship with Hashem is now severed and non-existent. Rather Hashem's display of anger to the point of sending us into *galus* is only a *hester panim*, but our bond with Hashem is still intact and never broken completely.

This concept is explained by Rav Tzadok from Lublin who says our *Chachamim* fixed the story of the *Bais Hamikdashos*'s destruction in *Meseches Gittin* which means divorce. The reason being that at that time in history *Am Yisrael* felt divorced from Hashem. However, if one looks closer at the name of the *Perek* where the *Churban* is described he will see that it is in *Nizakin* which means damages. This is to convey to us that the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the following *galus* appeared to be a case of divorce yet the inner reality discloses that the relationship between us and Hashem was only damaged not severed and therefore repairable.

In *Aicha* 1,8 the *passuk* says יתה היתה על כן לנדה ירושלים חטא חטא *Yerushalayim* sinned therefore she went into נידוי banishment. The *Bnei Yissaschar* asks that the term חטא describes a sin that was accidental, in comparison to the word עון which means intended. How could the *Navi* describe *Yisrael's* banishment and *Churban Habayis* as an unintentional sin when they were warned over and over again by the prophets of impending destruction? He answers that the essential *Yid* which is his *neshamah* proclaims that he wants only to serve Hashem and fulfill His wishes. The fact that man will conduct himself unaligned to this ideal is an aberration from his essence and not his true identity. Therefore with an inner microscope examining a person's wayward actions, one will see it was only a mistake from his inner reality.

The *passuk* continues to say על כן לנדה היתה. Here the word נדה does not mean exile but rather a menstruating woman. In the prohibition of forbidden relations is the *Niddah*. The difference is that all the other prohibitions are everlasting except for *Niddah* which is only time limited for a short period. The *Navi* is telling us that since the sin of *Am Yisrael* is deemed in heaven like a שוגג unintentional, therefore the punishment is *galus* like a *Niddah* which is only a time limited separation from her spouse but not a complete "Get".

We can say that his concept is alluded to in the *passuk* (Devarim 23.8) לא תתעב אדומי כי אחיך הוא do not distance an Edomite who comes to covert because he is your brother, a descendant of Avraham.

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The name **אדומי** can also refer to a spiritual record of a constant sinner. For the *passuk* says **אם יהיו חטאיכם** **אם ילבינו כשלג ילבינו** if your sins will be **scarlet red** they will nevertheless turn white like snow if one does *teshuvah* (Shabbos 89b). This is what the *passuk* is relating to us **כי אחיך הוא**. The word **אחי** means a bond, a connection. No matter how much a person sinned it is considered as an aberration from one's true norm and identity which is *neshamah* not the body. As the Sfas Emes writes *Am Yisrael's* true identity is likened to the **כחן גדול** the one flask of oil of Chanukah that can never be defiled for it possesses the seal of the *Kohen Gadol* which refers to the *Pinteleh Yid* – *neshamah*. So even if a *Yid* sinned over a million *aveiros* one must realize that nevertheless he is still miraculously connected with Hashem and therefore he can do *teshuvah* and all his reds will transform into white snow.

This is alluded to in the above words **כי אחיך** because you are still connected. The acronym of these two words are **אחיך אם יהיו חטאיכם כשני (כי) כשלג ילבינו**

The above *mamar* tells us how to perceive and understand at Hashem's chastisement to us being a recipient of discomfort pain and suffering. That no matter how severe the punishment whether of the personal or national level, we still are *echad* one and bonded with Hashem *Echad*. This is hinted in the *Shmah Yisrael* that **ה' אלקינו** that even when we receive the wrath of Hashem and the *Middos Hadin* that almost makes us extinct, we must clearly realize that it is **ה' אחד** that Hashem is still connected and *Echad* with **ישראל**.

Now let us return to the *Medrash* of our *parsha*. There are two letters in the Aleph Beis similar to each other that are enlarged in the Torah. The word **אחד** of **שמע ישראל** and the word **אחר** of **לא תשתחוה לאל אחר**. Since the *dalet* and *raish* are similar to each other the Torah did not want one who reads these words to mix up the letters and the words, for the outcome would be blasphemous. The difference in the shape of the letters is that the letter *Dalet* has a thorn known as a **קוץ** on the right top corner in contrast to the *Raish* where that thorn is visibly chopped off. The *Bnei Yissaschor* writes that even the *gematriah* of the letters relates the same message as their shapes. The letter **ד** is *gematriah* 200 and the letter **ר** is *gematriah* 4. The numerical difference between both of them is 196 the same *gematriah* of **קוץ**.

Am Yisrael belongs to the Hashem **אחד** nation and everyone else belongs to the **אל אחר** the other deity. When one receives heavenly *mussar* even if *chas veshalom* it seems very **severe**, know for sure it wasn't a **severe** from your relationship with Hashem. In other words Hashem was not sending you the **קוץ** from **ה'** **אחד** in order to tell you it's all over for you and Me. It is only a bill to pay back the **damages** in the relationship and to seek the pathway to spiritual rehabilitation. And even if one gets another *clap* which seems even more severe than before he must still realize that his bond with Hashem remains secure. It is only that you did not respond to the first alert so I must send you a bigger red flag. Do *teshuvah* Now!

This is what *Chazal* mean when *they* say don't make Hashem's admonishments **קוצים קוצים**. Don't ever say I have sinned so much I have **no more a life** with Hashem, and therefore can never return to Him. Our *emunah* states It is **never** a time to look for **אל אחר** a new G-d or mission in life. It doesn't matter how many times Hashem sends you reminders, know with deep certainty that each time your **קוץ** is still glued solid on the letter **ד** of **אחד**.

Gut Shabbos,

Rav Brazil