

## The Incredible Idea from Rabbi Bloch the Rosh Yeshivah of Telz ztz"l hy"d Tishoh B'Ov Is Referred to as a "Moed" because We Assemble with HKB"H due to the "Churban" just as on All of the Moadim

Day after day, and week after week, beginning with Shivah-osor B'Tamuz, we approach the final and most difficult day of the "Bein HaMetzorim". On Shivah-osor B'Tamuz the walls of Yerushalayim were breached and our enemies entered the city; on Tishoh B'Ov both the first and the second Batei HaMikdosh were destroyed. On this tragic day, we mourn deeply over the "churban" by fasting—like on Yom Kippur starting from the evening—and by submitting to the five forms of self-deprivation—just like on Yom Kippur; however, on this day of mourning we also refrain from the joy of engaging in Torah study and we are also prohibited from sitting on regular chairs until midday.

It is only fitting that we examine a phenomenon that occurred on Tishoh B'Ov, precisely when Yisroel's enemies broke into the Beis HaMikdosh and entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim. There is no holier place for all of Yisroel. Other than the Kohen Godol on Yom Kippur, a Jew was not allowed to enter the Kodesh HaKodoshim.

Yet, due to our countless sins, it was decreed that the two Batei HaMikdosh be destroyed. In the Gemoreh (Yuma 9b), Chazal reveal to us the reasons for each respective "churban". The first Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed as a result of the three cardinal sins—idolatry, immorality and murder. The second Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed because of "sinas chinom"—baseless hatred. Thus, the Gemoreh teaches us: **ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות, עבודה זרה גלוי** "ערייות ושפיכות דמים"—that "sinas chinom" is considered just as significant a transgression as the three cardinal sins.

In this essay, we wish to examine the unbelievable sight that was revealed to Yisroel's enemies upon entering the Kodesh HaKodoshim on Tishoh B'Ov. The event is described in the Gemoreh (Yuma 54b) as follows: **אמר ריש לקיש בשעה שנכנסו נכרים להיכל ראו כרובים המעורין זה בזה, הוציאו לשוק ואמרו, ישראל הללו שברכתן ברכה וקללתן קללה יעסקו בדברים הללו, מיד—הזילום שנאמר (איכה א ח) כל מכבדיה הזילוה כי ראו ערותה—**

Reish Lakish said: When the "goyim" entered the Sanctuary, they saw the "keruvim" embracing one another. They took them out to the marketplace, and they said, "These Jews—whose blessing is a blessing and whose curse is a curse—should be involved in these matters?! Immediately, they debased them as it says (Eichoh 1, 8): "All who once respected her debased her, for they saw her nakedness".

### When Yisroel Ascended for the Festival the "Poroches" Would Be Rolled Back for Them

The Shitah Mekubetzes (B.B. 99b) presents an issue that baffled one of the Rishonim, the Ri Migash, a student of the Rif's. We learned in the Gemoreh (Yuma 54a): **אמר רב קטינא, בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל מגללין להם את הפרוכת ומראין להם את הכרובים שהיו מעורים זה בזה, ואומרים להם ראו חיבתכם לפני המקום כחיבת זכר ונקבה**—Rav Ketina said: When the people of Yisroel would ascend on the festival, the kohanim would roll up the "Poroches" for them, and show them the "keruvim" which were joined together in an embrace. They would say to them, "Behold your fondness before the Omnipresent, like the fondness of a male and a female".

This display was meant to reflect on the relationship between HKB"H and the congregation of Yisroel—which is compared, as it were, to that of a man and wife. In fact, HKB"H betrothed Yisroel by means of the Torah—as it says (Shemos 19, 10): **וקדשתם היום ומחר**—Moshe is instructed to prepare the people for entering into this hallowed relationship with HKB"H. The Midrash explains (D.R. 3, 12):

**אין כותבין שטרי אירוסין ונשואין אלא מדעת שניהן והחתן נותן שכר, וממי למדנו מהקב"ה בשעה שקידש לישראל בסיני, דכתיב (שמות יט ז) ויאמר ה' אל משה לך אל העם וקידשתם היום ומחר, ומי כתב השטר הזה משה, מנין שנאמר (דברים לא ט) ויכתוב משה את התורה הזאת, ומה שכר נתן לו הקב"ה, זיו הפנים דכתיב (שמות לד כט) ומשה לא ידע כי קרן עור פניו.**

According to the Midrash, we learn the customs of betrothal and marriage from the manner in which HKB”H betrothed Yisroel at Sinai. Moshe wrote the marriage document, as it says (Devorim 31, 9): Moshe wrote this Torah. As his compensation, HKB”H rewarded Moshe with facial radiance and splendor.

Consistent with this approach, the possuk states (Shemos 19, 17): **“ויוצא משה את העם לקראת האלקים מן המחנה ויתיצבו”**—**“בתחתית ההר”**—Moshe brought the people forth from the camp toward G-d, and they stood under the mountain. Rashi comments that the words **לקראת האלקים** indicate that the Shechinah went out to greet them as a bridegroom goes out to greet his bride. In this same vein, the possuk in Yeshayah states (62, 5): **“ומשוש”**—**“חתן על כלה ישיש עליך אלקיך”**—and like a bridegroom’s rejoicing over his bride, so will your G-d rejoice over you. Thus, we see that the joining of the “keruvim” in an embrace in the Beis HaMikdosh alludes to the incredible union between HKB”H and the congregation of Yisroel. Rabeinu Bachayei elaborates on this point in parshat Terumah (Shemos 25, 18):

**“ועשית שנים כרובים זהב. ועל דרך הפשט שנים כרובים זכר ונקבה היו, להודיע כמה ישראל חביבין לפני הקב”ה כחיבת זכר ונקבה... וצריך שתתבונן במאמרם זה, כי היו הכרובים כצורה הזו למשל נמרץ, להעיד על הפלגת הדביקות שבין הקב”ה לישראל בלא שום אמצעי, כי הוא יתעלה בדד ינחנו לישראל, ואין עמו אל נכר כשאר העובדי גלולים אשר חלק להם שרים של מעלה... ועוד טעם אחר כדי שנתעורר בתפילותינו ובכל שאר העבודות, שלא נשים אמצעי בין הקב”ה ובנינו, שמן הטעם הזה הונחה לפני ולפנים במקום השכינה, הוא התל שהכל פונים בו לתפילה.”**

The simple understanding is that the “keruvim” were a male and a female, representing the intimacy of the relationship between HKB”H and Yisroel and how dear they are to him. This symbolism attests to the fact that this relationship does not involve an intermediary. Additionally, this conveys the message that our prayers and our service should be directed to HKB”H directly, without an intermediary. This is why they were placed in the inner-sanctum, in the place of the Shechinah—the Divine Presence—toward which everyone directs their prayers.

### The Contradiction Concerning the Position of the “Keruvim”

The Gemoreh (B.B. 99a) poses a contradiction between various pesukim concerning the way the “keruvim” were positioned. One possuk states (Shemos 25, 20): **“ופניהם איש אל”**—**“אחי”**—indicating that they faced one another. Another possuk states (Divrei HaYamim II 3, 13): **“ופניהם לבית”**—indicating that they faced eastward toward the Heichal and not toward each other. The Gemoreh resolves the contradiction as follows: **“לא”** **קשיא כאן בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום, כאן בזמן שאין ישראל**

**“עושין רצונו של מקום”**—there is no difficulty; one possuk refers to times when Yisroel are compliant with the will of Hashem, whereas the other possuk refers to times when Yisroel are not compliant with the will of Hashem (miraculously facing the Heichal to remind them of their obligations to Hashem).

In other words, when Yisroel comply with Hashem’s will, all of their efforts are directed toward HKB”H. As it were, HKB”H reciprocates by facing them like a mirror image. To reflect this situation, the “keruvim” faced each other adoringly: **“ופניהם”** **“איש אל אחיו”**. On the other hand, when Yisroel do not comply with the will of Hashem, they turn their faces away so as not to face HKB”H. In reciprocal fashion, so to speak, HKB”H turns His countenance away from them. To reflect this situation, the “keruvim” down below adopt a similar attitude: **“ופניהם”** **“לבית”**—rather than facing each other, they face the Heichal.

Now, the Ri Migash’s bewilderment is understandable. For, the Gemoreh stated that when the “goyim” entered the area of the Kodosh HaKodoshim, they found the “keruvim” facing one another and joined in an embrace. Clearly, the reason for the “churban” was that Yisroel were noncompliant with the will of Hashem. If so, it seems unimaginable that the “keruvim” would have been facing each other in an embrace.

The Shitah Mekubetzes presents the Ri Migash’s explanation for this seemingly incomprehensible phenomenon. The position of the “keruvim” at the time of the “churban” was a miracle designed to illustrate to the non-Jews the extent of HKB”H’s love for Yisroel:

**“ופריק רבינו הרב ז”ל, ששניהם בשורה אחת הן עומדים כדכתיב בקרא, וזה שהיו מעורים זה בזה כזכר עם נקבה בשעה שישראל עולים לרגל בלבד, והיה מעשה נס להראות חיבת ישראל לפני המקום כחיבת זכר עם נקבה, אבל בשאר ימות השנה לא היו מעורים, ובשעה שנכנסו עכו”ם להיכל נמי היו מעורים במעשה נס, כמו שהיו מעורים בשעה שעולים לרגל, להראות לעכו”ם מה היתה חיבת ישראל לפני המקום.”**

Throughout the regular year, the “keruvim” were not joined together in an embrace. Only on the festivals, however, did they join miraculously in order to demonstrate Hashem’s love for Yisroel—like the love between a man and a woman. This phenomenon also occurred when the “goyim” entered the Heichal in order to demonstrate Hashem’s love for Yisroel to them.

### HKB”H Wished to Demonstrate His Love for Yisroel Even at the Time of the “Churban”

At first glance, it appears that the Ri Migash is saying that HKB”H performed this miracle to demonstrate to the non-Jews Hashem’s love for Yisroel during the time that the Beis

HaMikdosh still stood. That position is problematic and untenable. What benefit would have been served by providing such a demonstration for the non-Jews?

We must suggest, therefore, that the Ri Migash is conveying a much more significant message. Rather, the “keruvim”’s intimate embrace was intended to illustrate that HKB”H still loves Yisroel even during times of “churban”. In truth, it is a father’s nature to have tremendous love for his son; however, when a father is forced to punish his son in order to teach him a vital lesson, his love is intensified—due to his compassion at witnessing his son’s suffering. Nonetheless, he conceals his love and compassion for his son’s own good. Furthermore, the fact that he is unable to express his love for his son due to the imposed punishment, causes those concealed emotions to well up inside him and intensify.

Precisely for this reason did HKB”H cause the “keruvim” to miraculously embrace one another when the “goyim” entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim at the time of the “churban”. He wished to demonstrate that even at the time of the “churban”, at Yisroel’s most difficult hour, HKB”H’s enormous love for Yisroel yet persisted deep within Him—as represented by the inner sanctum of the Kodesh HaKodoshim. Despite this enormous love, He was forced to punish Yisroel in order to return them to the proper path.

### The Joining of the “Keruvim” Represented the Birth of the Neshomeh of Moshiach ben David

A source for this incredible idea can be found in the writings of the Bnei Yissochor (Tamuz-Av 3, 1), where he cites the holy Maggid Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritsch, zy”a. Based on the Yerushalmi (Berachos 2, 4) and the Midrash (Eichoh Rabbah 1, 51), the great Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz, zy”a, adds that Moshiach ben David’s birth is on Tishoh B’Ov precisely because HKB”H’s love intensified immeasurably at the time of the “churban”. As a result of this great love that HKB”H, so to speak, was forced to conceal, He introduced the remedy prior to the ailment; He introduced the neshomeh of Moshiach ben David, who would come and redeem us from all of the “goluyos” and would build the third Beis HaMikdosh.

From the combination of the holy words of the Maggid of Mezritsch and Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz, zy”a, we reach an incredible and invaluable conclusion. When the “goyim” entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim at the time of the “churban” on Tishoh B’Ov, HKB”H miraculously caused the “keruvim” to face one another. For, at that very moment, HKB”H introduced the neshomeh of Moshiach ben David into the world.

Having given the matter much thought, I would like to add an idea of my own to help better understand the Ri Migash’s answer: **“ובשעה שנכנסו עכו”ם להיכל נמי היו מעורים במעשה נס, כמו שהיו מעורים בשעה שעולים לרגל, להראות לעכו”ם מה היתה חיבת ישראל לפני המקום”**—when the “goyim” entered the Heichal they found the “keruvim” embracing just as they did at the times of the festivals; this was meant to demonstrate to the non-Jews the extent of Hashem’s love for Yisroel. This is difficult to comprehend in light of the Gemoreh’s depiction of the events that followed. According to the Gemoreh, the “goyim” proceeded to take the “keruvim” out to the public marketplace to ridicule and scorn them—as it is written: **“כל מכבדיה הזילוה”**—all who once respected her disparage her. So, what purpose was served by this miracle aimed at demonstrating Yisroel’s beloved status to the “goyim”, seeing as they were not convinced by this demonstration?

It would appear that HKB”H devised this spectacle knowing full well that they would laugh and ridicule what they beheld, and that they would proceed to take the “keruvim” out of the Kodesh HaKodoshim while still embracing one another. This was intended to demonstrate to all of Yisroel, who stood outside of the Beis HaMikdosh, that even at the time of the “churban” Yisroel are still very dear to HKB”H. Had the “goyim” not shown their contempt by taking the “keruvim” outside, they would have been consumed in fire along with the rest of the Beis HaMikdosh. In that event, HKB”H’s tremendous love for Yisroel would not have been revealed.

### Tishoh B’Ov Is Called a “Moed”

Following this path of enlightenment, let us proceed to explain this miraculous phenomenon involving the “keruvim” with its practical message for each and every one of us. Concerning Tishoh B’Ov, we find a blatant contradiction. On the one hand, it is a day of fasting and mourning over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdosh. On the other hand, it is referred to as a “moed”, a festival. The possuk states (Eichoh 1, 15): **“קרא עלי מועד”**—he proclaimed a “moed” against me. In fact is for this very reason that we do not say Tachanun on Tishoh B’Ov—as stated in the Shulchan Oruch (O.C. 559, 4): **“אין אומרים תחנון בתשעה באב ואין נופלים על פניהם משום דמקרי מועד”**.

Concerning this subject, we find a fascinating idea presented by Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak Bloch, the Rosh Yeshivah of Telz, ztz”l. This idea was often told over in his name by his outstanding and gifted pupil, Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, the Rosh Yeshivah of Telz in Cleveland, ztz”l. (Rabbi Bloch was murdered ruthlessly by the cursed Nazis, yimach shemom, on the twentieth of Tamuz 5701, Bein HaMetzorum, sacrificing his life for the sake of Heaven; may Hashem avenge his death.)

He addresses the concept of “moadim”—the term the Torah uses to refer to the festivals. The word “moed” stems from the word “התוועדות”—as we find in the possuk (Shemos 25, 22): “ונועדתי לך שמה”—it is there that I shall arrange audience with you. Thus, the festivals are days on which we refrain from all types of work and matters of this world and we meet with HKB”H—they are “moadim”.

Ideally, we are to assemble and meet with HKB”H on the Shabbatot and festivals of the year out of joy and gladness—“sasson v’simchah”—such as on Pesach, Shavuot and Succot. Nevertheless, even on days of strict judgment and severity, such as Tishoh B’Ov—the day that both of the Batei HaMikdosh were destroyed—we are still obligated to meet privately with HKB”H. Rather than meeting with Him out of joy, on Tishoh B’Ov we meet with Him in acknowledgement of the veracity of His judgment. Hence, Tishoh B’Ov is also referred to as a “moed”, and as such is a day on which we do not recite Tachanun. In light of this recognition and acknowledgement, our calamity and sorrow are diminished and we remain with the brilliance of His light and understanding. This is Rabbi Bloch’s wonderful insight.

These words apply so aptly to the great teacher who taught them (Chagigah 14b): “נאה דורש ונאה מקיים”. For, Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak, ztz”l, merited sanctifying his life to Hashem and assembling with HKB”H even during the tragic days when divine judgment was in full force. Rav Gifter his devoted student relayed the following:

Three weeks before the end of Yeshivas Telz in Lithuania, and the murder of all of its faculty and student body, the Nazis took the men to a town called Rayan, where they were forced to perform degrading labor for long hours. The Rav, Rav Avrohom Yitzchak, tried to continue learning, following the same yeshivah schedule that the yeshivah had kept to when it was in session. The Rav even recorded his Torah thoughts at this time of peril!

On the 19th day of Tammuz, a Gestapo officer arrived with a sword in his hand and coldly informed them that their days on earth were numbered. The men were lined up in rows, and the Germans began to beat them. They were forced to run, but they were weak and the ground was muddy. They kept slipping and falling. And with each fall, they absorbed more and more blows from the Nazis’ metal truncheons. The Germans struck at them mercilessly as they tried to shield themselves and maintain their balance.

Bloodied and beaten, covered in mud, they all somehow returned to their hut. Exhausted and in pain, the Rav lifted his hands toward Heaven, and called out, “Ribbono Shel Olam –

grois bist Du, un grois zenen Deine maasim – Al-mighty G-d, You are great and so are Your actions!” Then, since he was too weak to read on his own, the Rav’s daughter (who later became Rebbetzin Chaya Ausband), read to him the section of the laws of Kiddush Hashem from the Rambam. He had to prepare for the final avodah – to die al Kiddush Hashem.

On Tuesday, the twentieth of Tamuz, his last day on earth, the police arrived at five a.m. and commanded them all to go out to work. The noble Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak, understanding immediately what this meant, washed his hands and recited his confessions, “vidui”. He went out prepared to sacrifice his life in the name of Heaven. After several minutes, the gun shots of the murderers rang out. The voice of Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak yet echoes from the grave: “שמע ישראל ה’ אלקינו ה’ אחד”. Fittingly, he lived what he preached; he convened privately with HKB”H even in the midst of the horrible days of Hashem’s strict judgment. May Hashem avenge their blood.

### Maharal of Prague: “Moadim” Derives from the Word for Meeting

Let us now expand on this wonderful insight of the holy Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak Block, ztz”l, hy”d. The idea that the festivals are referred to as “moadim” because on those days we gather collectively and individually with HKB”H actually comes from the Chidushei Aggadot of the Maharal of Prague. Addressing the Gemoreh’s statement (Makkos 23a): “כל המבזה את המועדות – כאלו עובד עבודת כוכבים”—anyone who belittles the festivals is likened to one who worships idols—he writes the following:

“כי המועד הוקבע שיהיו חוגגים אל השי”ת ועובדים עבודתו יתברך, והוא נקרא מועד מלשון ונועדתי לך, כי השנים שהם מתחברים ומתוועדים יחד נקרא מועד, וכן הרגל הוא שיהיה השי”ת מתוועד עם עמו ומתחבר להם, ומי שמבזה את המועדות כאלו אינו רוצה בחיבור הזה ומתדבק באחר, ולכך אמרו במסכת בבא בתרא (דף נד.) כשהיו ישראל עולים לרגל היו מגביהין להם הפרוכת והיו מראים להם [את הכרובים מעורים זה בזה], כי עליותם לרגל הוא עצם החיבור שנקרא מועד”.

In other words, we are commanded to ascend to Yerushalayim for the festival three times a year to be seen with HKB”H. We learn this from the possuk (Shemos 23, 17): “שלוש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך אל פני האדון ה’”—three times during the year, all of your male members shall appear before the Lord, Hashem. We see that on the days of the festivals, we assemble and meet personally with HKB”H in the Beis HaMikdosh. For this reason, the festivals are known as “moadim”—deriving from the word “hitva’adut”, meaning a meeting or an assembly. Hence: “כל המבזה את המועדות”— anyone who belittles the

festivals—indicates that he is not interested in meeting with HKB”H. Consequently, it is considered: **כאילו עובד עבודת** “כוכבים”—as if he worships idols.

This explains beautifully why the Maharal quotes Rav Ketina’s statement: **בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל מגללין להם את הפרוכת, ומראין להם את הכרובים שהיו מעורים זה בזה, ואומרים להם ראו חיבתכם לפני המקום**—when Yisroel would ascend to the festival, they would roll up the “Poroches”, and show them the “keruvim” that were joined with one another in an embrace. They would say to them, “Behold your fondness before the Omnipresent, like the fondness of a male and a female”. As we have established, the purpose of going up to Yerushalayim for the festival was to have a personal audience with HKB”H on the three “moadim”. Therefore, on those occasions, the kohanim would roll up the “Poroches” to indicate that the people had merited meeting and having an audience with HKB”H. This point was demonstrated by the sight of the two “keruvim” facing and embracing one another.

We can explain the matter of rolling up the “Poroches” as follows. During the weekdays, a person is overly occupied with mundane, worldly issues. As a result, an iron curtain is formed, chas v’shalom, separating the person from HKB”H. Yet, when Yisroel went up on the festival, “they would roll up the “Poroches” as a symbolic gesture to remove any barriers existing between Yisroel and HKB”H. Then they would see the remarkable “keruvim” joined together and would understand and appreciate the loving relationship that they enjoyed with HKB”H.

Hence, Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak Bloch’s insight is all the more fitting. Tishoh B’Ov is referred to as a “moed”, because we convene with HKB”H and acknowledge clearly the truth and justice of His decrees. This meeting is all the more significant, because we convene with Him despite the difficult circumstances. Instead of distancing ourselves from Hashem and His Torah in the aftermath of the “churban”, on Tishoh B’Ov we gather to mourn our great loss and to acknowledge that His decree was just. We ourselves, due to our countless transgressions, caused the “churban” and the difficulties that followed.

Additionally, we assemble with HKB”H in prayer and supplication—requesting forgiveness for all of our sins. We yearn with great anticipation for the future “geulah” and the third Beis HaMikdosh. Then and there we will be able to meet with and relate to HKB”H more directly once again. Thus, it is quite fitting to refer to Tishoh B’Ov as a “moed”. Out of mourning and distress over the “churban”, HKB”H’s and Yisroel’s joy related to the “moadim” grows and flourishes. Yisroel’s relationship with HKB”H is firm and immutable no matter what the circumstances.

## The Twenty-one Days of “Bein HaMetzorim” Are the Source of the Twenty-one Festival Days

Based on what we have learned, we can better appreciate the teaching of the Ohev Yisroel (Pinchos), authored by the great Rabbi from Apta, zy”a. He provides us with an explanation for why the Torah reading for the first Shabbes of Bein HaMetzorim, during most calendar years, is from parshas Pinchos. In parshas Pinchos, all of the holidays and festivals of the year are itemized. He explains that the twenty-one days extending from Shivoh-osor B’Tamuz until Tishoh B’Ov are in fact the source for all of the holidays and festivals—which also add up to twenty-one days. Here is what he writes:

**“אמנם יש לומר בהעיר לב ושום שכל, דאלו הכ”א יום שבין י”ז בתמוז לט’ באב הם מקוריים ושרשיים לכל המועדות של השנה שהם בכללם גם כן כ”א יום, היינו שבת וראש חודש, ז’ ימי הפסח, יום חג השבועות, ב’ ימים של ראש השנה, יום הכפורים, ח’ ימי חג הסוכות, וסימנך (תהלים עג א) א”ך טוב לישראל, ואלו הכ”א יום שבין המצרים הם מקוריים ושרשיים להם.”**

He counts twenty-one days of joy and celebration as follows: Shabbos (1), Rosh Chodesh (2), seven days of Pesach (9), Shavuos (10), two days of Rosh HaShoneh (12), Yom Kippur (13), and eight days of Succos (21). He brings an allusion from the possuk in Tehillim (73, 1): **א”ך טוב לישראל--א”ך** is good for Yisroel. The word **א”ך** possesses a numerical value of twenty-one. Then he adds that the twenty-one days of Bein HaMetzorim are the source for these twenty-one days of celebration listed in parshas Pinchos.

Now, let us try and understand his meaning when he states that the twenty-one days of Bein HaMetzorim are the source for the twenty-one holidays. Based on our previous discussion, we can suggest an explanation. The holidays are known as “moadim”, because they are days on which we assemble and meet with HKB”H. In truth, the days of Bein HaMetzorim are similarly days on which we seek audience with HKB”H; however, we do so because of “churban” and enforced justice rather than out of joy and celebration.

So, this is the Ohev Yisroel’s message. Anyone who merits getting close to Hashem and meeting with Him during the twenty-one days of the Bein HaMetzorim—recognizing without a doubt the justice of His decree—will merit that these seemingly dark days will be the source and foundation for the twenty-one joyous days of the “moadim”. He will merit having an audience with HKB”H not only out of “churban” and “judgment” but also out of joy and celebration.

This explains very nicely the Gemoreh's statement (Taanis 30b): **"כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה בשמחתה"**—all who mourn over Yerushalayim will merit and see her in her time of joy. For he who mourns the fact that he is unable to meet with Hashem in the Beis HaMikdosh on the "moadim" because of the "churban" of Yerushalayim, demonstrates his yearning to be with HKB"H even during times of "golus" and strict justice. Surely, he will merit meeting personally with HKB"H, reveling in the joy of the "geulah", in the third Beis HaMikdosh.

### What Remains for HKB"H in This World Is But Four Cubits of Halocheh

I have been inspired with a wonderful idea. I would like to explain why HKB"H benevolently arranged for the "goyim" to remove the "keruvim" from the Kodosh HaKodoshim and display them in the marketplace while they were still joined together. As the Gemoreh depicted (Yuma 54b): **"בשעה שנכנסו נכרים להיכל ראו כרובים המעורין זה בזה, הוציאו לשוק ואמרו, ישראל הללו שברכתן ברכה וקללתן קלה יעסקו בדברים הללו"**—When the "goyim" entered the Sanctuary, they saw the "keruvim" embracing one another. They took them out to the marketplace, and they said, "These Jews—whose blessing is a blessing and whose curse is a curse—should be involved in these matters?!

Let us recall what we have learned in the Gemoreh (Berachos 8a): **"מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ד' אמות"**—since the day that the Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed, HKB"H has nothing in His world but four cubits of halocheh. We can explain this idea as follows. The purpose of the Beis HaMikdosh is for HKB"H to rest His Divine Presence upon Yisroel. It is written (Shemos 25, 2): **"ועשו לי מקדש"**—they shall build me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. So, as a consequence of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdosh, the Shechinah has departed.

Notwithstanding, whoever engages in Torah study, merits that the Shechinah rests upon him. We have learned in the Gemoreh (Berachos 6a): **"שאפילו אחד שיושב ועוסק בתורה"**—even if one sits alone and studies Torah, the Shechinah is with him. Now, we can interpret the Gemoreh in the following manner: **"מיום שחרב בית המקדש"**—from the day that the Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed and the holy Shechinah has been absent—**"אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ד' אמות של הלכה"**—HKB"H has had to suffice with resting his Shechinah on individual Torah scholars.

Let us elaborate on this notion. Even in the Beis HaMikdosh, HKB"H united and bonded with Yisroel between the two "keruvim" atop the "aron". That is where the two "luchot" of the covenant containing the entire Torah were housed. The possuk states explicitly (Shemos 25, 21): **"ונתת את הכפורת על הארון מלמעלה ואל הארון תתן את העדות אשר אתן אליך, ונועדתי לך שם ודברתי אתך מעל הכפורת מבין שני הכרובים אשר על ארון העדות"**—you shall place the "kaporet" (the lid) on the "aron" from above, and into the "aron" you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. It is there that I shall arrange audience with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the "kaporet", from between the two "keruvim" that are on the "aron" of the testimony.

So, we see that while the Beis HaMikdosh stood, HKB"H bonded with Yisroel between the two "keruvim" that faced one another in the merit of Torah study. In this light, it is clear why our blessed sages stated: **"מיום שחרב בית המקדש"**—since the day that the Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed and HKB"H no longer communicates with Yisroel from between the two "keruvim" atop the "aron"—**"אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ד' אמות"**—**"של הלכה בלבד"**—all that remains for HKB"H in this world is a mere four cubits of halocheh. In other words, places of Torah study have had to replace the two embracing "keruvim" as the place where HKB"H unites and bonds with Yisroel.

We now stand enlightened and can understand why HKB"H arranged for the "goyim" to take the two "keruvim" while still embracing out to the marketplace. In truth, those wicked perpetrators intended to mock Yisroel. Nonetheless, HKB"H wished to relate a crucial message to every member of Yisroel. It is essential to realize that even after the "churban", His fondness for Yisroel has not ceased. Moreover, if until that time Yisroel met with HKB"H in the Beis HaMikdosh—as symbolized by the two "keruvim"—thereafter He would meet and bond with them wherever they lived and engaged in Torah study.

With this understanding, we can better appreciate why Tishoh B'Ov is considered a "moed". It is true that due to our multitude of sins, the Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed and HKB"H no longer meets and joins with Yisroel between the two "keruvim". Notwithstanding, we still meet and bond with HKB"H outside the confines of the Beis HaMikdosh wherever Torah study is conducted. In this merit, we will once again be privileged to assemble and meet personally with HKB"H at the time of the future "geulah" in the third Beis HaMikdosh—may it be built swiftly, in our days. Amen.