

The Maharsha's Incredible Chiddush

When We Enter a Beis Kenesses or a Beis Midrash We Step into the Kedushah of the Third Beis HaMikdash

In the second paragraph of Krias Shema, which appears in this week's parsha, parshas Eikev, we read (Devarim 11, 21): "למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע ה' לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי" "למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע ה' לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי"—in order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land that Hashem has sworn to your forefathers to give them, like the days of the heavens over the earth. Our blessed sages deduce from this passuk that settling in Eretz Yisrael is a segulah for long-life. After all, the passuk explicitly states: "In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land"—which refers to Eretz Yisrael. Notwithstanding, one of the giants of the Talmud, the Amora Rabbi Yochanan, teaches us that synagogues and study-halls, even outside of Eretz Yisrael—in "chutz la'aretz"—are also a segulah for long-life—especially if they are attended regularly, morning and night. Here is the passage from the Gemara (Berachos 8a):

"אמרו ליה לרבי יוחנן, איכא סבי בבבל, תמה ואמר, למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה כתיב, אבל בחוצה לארץ לא. כיון דאמרי ליה מקדמי ומחשבי לבי כנישתא, אמר היינו דאהני להו, כדאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי לבניה, קדימו וחשיבו ועיילו לבי כנישתא כי היכי דתורכו חיי. אמר רבי אחא ברבי חנינא מאי קרא, (משלי ח-לד) אשרי אדם שומע לי לשקוד על דלתותי יום יום לשמור מזוזת פתחי, וכתוב בתריה כי מוצאי מוצא חיים."

They said to Rabbi Yochanan: There are elderly people in Bavel (who have been blessed with long-life). Perplexed, he responded: But it is written: "In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land"—this seemingly excludes "chutz la'aretz." When they explained to him that they get up early and stay up late to go to the Beis-Kenesses, he said: This practice has enabled them to merit long-life. As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said to his sons, "Arise early and stay late and go to the Beis Kenesses, so that your lives should be prolonged." Rabbi Acha bar Rabbi Chanina said: Which passuk teaches us that this is so? (Mishlei

8, 34) "Happy is the man who listens to Me, who comes quickly to My doors every day, to guard the doorposts of My entranceways." And immediately afterwards, it is written: "For he who finds Me find life."

Regarding this passage, there is a well-known elucidation from the Maharsha in Chiddushei Aggadot. Why did the revelation that these elderly people in Bavel rise early and stay up late to go to the Beis Kenesses pacify Rabbi Yochanan? After all, the passuk states that longevity is associated specifically with Eretz Yisrael: "על האדמה"—upon the land. The Maharsha resolves this issue based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Megillah 29a): "עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי" "עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי"—the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash in Bavel are destined to be established as part of Eretz Yisrael.

Thus we learn that synagogues and study-halls—even in "chutz la'aretz"—are endowed with the kedushah of Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, spending time in Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash, early in the day and late in the day, constitutes a segulah for long-life just as dwelling in Eretz Yisrael does. We find explanations similar to the Maharsha's—regarding Rabbi Yochanan's statement—in the commentaries of the Shela hakadosh (Maseches Tamid) and the Kli Yakar (Eikev 11, 21).

The Third Beis HaMikdash Will Be Built from All of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash

In this essay, we wish to present to our esteemed audience an incredible chiddush regarding Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash that has not been adequately publicized. It will illustrate for us the magnitude of the kedushah of these institutions. The Maharsha in Maseches Megillah addresses the Gemara's statement (Megillah 29a): "עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי" "עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי"—the Batei Kenesses and

Batei Midrash in Bavel are destined to be established as part of Eretz Yisrael. We will endeavor to explain why HKB”H will see fit to perform this miracle.

He states the following in the name of the Midrash: **In the future, the Beis HaMikdash will be as large as Yerushalayim in Olam HaZeh, and Yerushalayim will be as large as all of Eretz Yisrael.** In the Midrashim available to us, we find a similar statement in the Yalkut Shimoni (Yeshayah 503): **Yerushalayim is destined to be like Eretz Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael like the entire world.** In the Midrash cited by the Maharsha, however, we find a significant addition—that the third Beis HaMikdash will be as large as all of Yerushalayim. So, we must endeavor to explain why HKB”H will build the third Beis HaMikdash to be as large as all of Yerushalayim.

To explain the matter, the Maharsha states that le’atid la’vo HKB”H will incorporate all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash in the third Beis HaMikdash. This, in fact, is the implication of the Gemara’s statement: **“עתידין בתי כנסיות וּבתי מדרשות שבבבל שיקבעו בארץ ישראל”**. The Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash in “chutz la’aretz” will be established in Yerushalayim, so that the third Beis HaMikdash will be built with them. Therefore, HKB”H will enlarge the third Beis HaMikdash to the size of all of Yerushalayim, in order to incorporate within it all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash from all of the exiles.

Thus, we learn a tremendous chiddush from the Maharsha in Maseches Megillah that he did not reveal to us in Maseches Berachos. Not only do the synagogues and study-halls in Bavel and everywhere outside of Eretz Yisrael possess the kedushah of Eretz Yisrael; they possess the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash that will be built in the near future. For, the third Beis HaMikdash will incorporate all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash that Yisrael prayed in and studied Torah in throughout the thousands of years of galut.

This explains very nicely the Gemara’s (Megillah 29a) elucidation regarding the passuk in the Navi (Yechezkel 11, 16): **“ואהי להם למקדש מעט, אמר רבי יצחק אלו בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות: “Yet, I have been for them a ‘mikdash miat’ (a small sanctuary).”** Rabbi Yitzchak said: **These are the synagogues and study halls in Bavel.** Based on what we have learned from the Maharsha, it is fitting to refer to Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash as **“מקדש מעט”**—small sanctuaries. For, they are destined to be included in the third Beis HaMikdash. Hence, every Beis Kenesses and Beis

Midrash is in fact a **“מקדש מעט”**—an inseparable part of the third Beis HaMikdash.

The Malach HaMaves and the Yetzer HaRa Will Be Eliminated by the Kedushah of the Third Beis HaMikdash

I was struck by a wonderful idea! Based on the Maharsha’s contention that synagogues and study-halls possess a kedushah akin to the third Beis HaMikdash, we can better appreciate the profundity of Rabbi Yochanan’s words. He concluded that the elderly people in Bavel were rewarded with long-life in the merit of going to the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash early and staying there late. Let us refer to what we have learned elsewhere in the Gemara (Succah 52a): **“לעתיד לבוא מביאו הקב”ה: “le’atid la’vo, HKB”H will bring the yetzer hara and slaughter it in the presence of the tzaddikim and in the presence of the reshaim.**

Accordingly, le’atid la’vo when HKB”H slaughters the yetzer hara, the Malach HaMaves will cease to exist. For we have learned in the Gemara (B.B. 16a): **“הוא יצר הרע, הוא מלאך המות, הוא יצר הרע-- he is the yetzer hara, he is the Angel of Death, he is Satan.** Let us explain. The Malach HaMaves came into existence as a result of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” as it is written (Bereishit 2, 17): **“-- כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות” -- for, on the day you eat of it, you will surely die.** Consequently, when the blemish of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” is rectified le’atid la’vo, the yetzer hara—who is the Malach HaMaves—will be slaughtered, and the decree of death plaguing creation will be annulled.

Hence, it is now quite clear why Rabbi Yochanan was pacified upon learning that the people in question rose early and stayed late in the synagogues and study-halls. For, those institutions possess a kedushah similar to the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash, whose appearance will be associated with the termination of the Malach HaMaves. Free from the influence of the Malach HaMaves, those people enjoy long lives.

This explains very nicely what we have learned in another Gemara (Kiddushin 30b): **“תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל, אם פגע בך מגוול זה: “A Baraita of the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael taught the following: If this despicable character engages you, draw him into the Beis Midrash; if he is like a stone, he will dissolve; if he is like iron, he will shatter.** As we have learned, le’atid la’vo HKB”H is going to slaughter the yetzer hara. Therefore, when a person drags the despicable yetzer hara into the Beis

Midrash--that possesses a similar kedushah to the third Beis HaMikdash--it has the power to totally exterminate the yetzer hara: "אם אבן הוא נימוח, אם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ"—reminiscent of the future when the third Beis HaMikdash will be built.

It struck me that we can use this notion to explain why our blessed sages chose to call a place of prayer a "בית כנסת" and a place of Torah-study a "בית המדרש"—emphasizing the term "בית". For, we find the following elucidation in the Gemara (Pesachim 88a): "מאי דכתיב (ישעיה ב-ג) והלכו עמים רבים: 'ואמרו לכו ונעלה אל ה' אל בית אלקי יעקב וגו', אלקי יעקב ולא אלקי אברהם ויצחק, אלא לא כאברהם שכתוב בו ה'... לא כיצחק שכתוב בו שדה...—what is the meaning of the passuk: 'Many nations will go and say, 'Come, let us go up to the Mountain of Hashem, to the House ("בית") of the G-d of Yaakov . . .'? Why specifically the G-d of Yaakov and not the G-d of Avraham and Yitzchak? Not the G-d of Avraham, who called it a "mountain" . . . not the G-d of Yitzchak, who called it a "field" . . . but like Yaakov, who called it a "house" ("בית"). This Gemara is commenting on the fact that the nations, cited by the prophet, refer to the Beis HaMikdash as "the House of Yaakov's G-d"—not mentioning Avraham or Yitzchak. It points out that Avraham referred to the place of the Beis HaMikdash as a "mountain," Yitzchak referred to it as a "field," and only Yaakov called it a "בית"—a "house." Furthermore, we know that the third Beis HaMikdash is associated with Yaakov. Therefore, we can suggest that our blessed sages employed the terms Beis Kenesses and Beis Midrash to allude to the fact that they possess the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash, which is referred to as a "בית".

The Rebuilt Yerushalayim Is like a City that Is United

Continuing our enlightening journey, let us now examine another aspect of the Maharsha's comments in Maseches Megillah (ibid.). Based on what we have discussed, he reconciles a difficulty that perplexed the commentaries regarding the psalm (Tehillim 122, 1): "שיר המעלות לדוד שמחתי באומרים לי בית ה' גלך, עומדות היו רגלינו בשעריך ירושלים, ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחברה לה יחדיו"—A song of ascents by David. I rejoiced when they said to me, "Let us go to the House of Hashem." Our feet stood firm within your gates, O Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim that is built! It is like a city that is united together. Understood simply, when David says: "I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the House of Hashem,'" he is referring to the Beis

HaMikdash. The problem, however, is that the Beis HaMikdash was not yet built in the times of David HaMelech.

Yet, in light of what we have just discussed, the Maharsha provides a sound and legitimate explanation. Even though David was not privileged to build the Beis HaMikdash, he rejoiced when they expressed their desire to go to the Batei Kenesses and the Batei Midrash, which are also houses of Hashem. He says: "Our feet stood firm within your gates, O Yerushalayim," because he could sense in the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash—which will be as large as all of Yerushalayim. Then he proceeds to explain why it will be so enormous: "Yerushalayim that is built! It is like a city that is united together"—the rebuilt Yerushalayim le'atid la'vo will be an amalgamation of all the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash from all of the exiles.

Support for the Maharsha's explanation can be brought from the Midrash's (V.R. 35, 1) elucidation related to the passuk (Tehillim 119, 59): "חשבתי דרכי ואשיבה רגלי אל עדותיך, אמר דוד, רבוננו של עולם בכל יום ויום הייתי מושב ואומר, למקום פלוני ולבית דירה פלונית אני הולך, והיו רגלי מביאות אותי לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות"—"I considered my ways and returned my feet to your testimonies." David said: Master of the Universe, every day I considered and said, "I am going to a particular place and to a particular dwelling," and my feet would take me to Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash. The Midrash teaches us that David HaMelech yearned so intensely to pray in Batei Kenesses and to study Torah in Batei Midrash that his legs took him there automatically. So we see that this agrees perfectly with the Maharsha's interpretation of David's statement: "שמחתי באומרים לי בית ה' גלך"—that the House of Hashem he was referring to was the Beis Kenesses and the Beis Midrash.

As such, it is fitting that we follow in the footsteps of David HaMelech when we enter a Beis Kenesses or a Beis Midrash. On the one hand, we should rejoice that we are entering a place that possesses the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash, capable of bestowing long-life and the ability to defeat the yetzer hara. On the other hand, we should be overcome with fear and reverence, causing us to behave in a manner befitting the kedushah of the place.

David HaMelech the Melech HaMashiach Is Destined to Build the Third Beis HaMikdash

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to expand on the sacred words of the Maharsha and explain

why David HaMelech sensed the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash in synagogues and study-halls, prompting him to proclaim: “שמחתי באומרים לי בית ה' נלך”. Let us refer to Rashi and Tosafos (Succah 41a), who cite the Midrash: “מקדש העתיד שאנו מצפין, בנוי ומשוכלל הוא יגלה ויבוא משמים, שנאמר (שמות טו-יז) מקדש ה'—**the future Beis HaMikdash, which we anxiously await, will come down from the heavens and appear fully built and perfect, as it states: “The Mikdash (Sanctuary), my Master, that Your hands established.”** That being the case, the commentaries wonder how Yisrael will fulfill the mitzvah of building the Beis HaMikdash le'atid la'vo (Shemos 25, 8): “ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם” **and they shall make Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell among them.**

It appears that we can reconcile this difficulty based on a question posed by the Aruch LaNer (Succah 41a) regarding this Midrash. He cites the Rambam's ruling (Hilchos Melachim 11, 1): “המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד—**The Melech HaMashiach will arise in the future and restore the Davidic Kingdom to its former state and original sovereignty. He will build the Sanctuary and gather the dispersed of Yisrael.** So, according to the Rambam, the Melech HaMashiach is destined to build the Beis HaMikdash. The Aruch LaNer conjectures that the Rambam's source is an elucidation in the Gemara (Succah 52b) related to the passuk in the Navi (Zechariah 2, 3): “ויראני ה' ארבעה חרשים. מאן: נינהו ארבעה חרשים, אמר רב חנא בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידא, משיח—**Hashem then showed me four craftsmen.” Who are these four craftsmen? Rav Chana bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida: They are Mashiach ben David, Mashiach ben Yosef, Eliyahu and the righteous kohen.** Rashi explains that all four were craftsmen or carpenters suited to building the Beis HaMikdash. Eliyahu demonstrated his skill with stone when he erected the mizbeiach on Har HaCarmel. The righteous kohen is the son of Noach, who demonstrated his craft while helping his father build the “teivah.”

According to this Gemara, Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef will build the third Beis HaMikdash. This directly contradicts the opinions of Rashi and Tosafos, who cited the Midrash stating that the third Beis HaMikdash will descend from the heavens fully built and perfect. The Aruch LaNer resolves the contradiction logically and intelligently. In truth, the third Beis HaMikdash will be built by human hands—by the two mashiachs. However, after the human

construction has been completed, HKB”H will send down a fiery Beis HaMikdash from the heavens. It will be housed within the earthly, human Beis HaMikdash just like the neshamah is housed within man's physical body.

Now, we have learned in the Zohar hakadosh (Lech Lecha 82b) that David HaMelech himself will be the mashiach: “מלכא חי לעלמין, ואפילו ביומי מלכא משיחא איהו מלכא, דהא תנן מלכא משיחא, אי מן חייא הוא דוד שמיא, ואי מן מתייא הוא דוד שמיא.” Similarly, in his piyut for Hoshanah Rabbah, Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir proclaims: “איש צמח שמו הוא דוד בעצמו” **—a man has sprouted up, Tzemach is his name, and he is none other than David.**

Since David HaMelech is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach, he will be the one to build the third Beis HaMikdash incorporating all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash. This then is the implication of his declaration: **I rejoiced when they said to me, “Let us go to the House of Hashem”**—to the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash; **our feet stood firm within your gates, O Yerushalayim**—because I sensed the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash that I am destined to build encompassing all of Yerushalayim; **Yerushalayim that is built! It is like a city that is united together**—uniting all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash.

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to comprehend David HaMelech's song (Tehillim 30, 1): “מזמור—**a psalm, a song for the inauguration of the Temple, by David.** One again, the Rishonim found this puzzling. How could David sing about the inauguration of the Beis HaMikdash when it wasn't built yet? Therefore, Rashi explains that David was referring to the song that the leviim would sing at the inauguration of the Temple in the times of Shlomo. However, we can suggest that David HaMelech was referring to the inauguration of the third Beis HaMikdash; because he saw via “ruach hakodesh” that he himself was destined to return as the Melech HaMashiach and build it. This explains very nicely why he mentions the resurrection of the dead—“techiyas hameisim”—in this mizmor with the words (ibid. 4): “ה' העלית מן שאול נפשי חייטני מירדי בור” **—Hashem, You have lifted up my soul from the lower world; You have preserved my life from my descent to the grave.**

We Build the Third Beis HaMikdash with Our Tefilah and Our Torah-study

Continuing on along this exalted path, let us explain how the Maharsha's concept—that the third Beis HaMikdash will

incorporate all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash from all of the exiles—goes hand in hand with the notion that the two mashiachs will build the third Beis HaMikdash and HKB”H will send down a Beis Mikdash of fire from the heavens.

It appears that we can explain the matter based on a revelation from the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy”a, in Zera Kodesh (Ki Seitzei). He teaches us that we build the third Beis HaMikdash daily with our Torah-study and our performance of mitzvos. Here are his sacred words:

“על פי מה שפירשתי (שמונה עשרה ברכת ולירושלים עירך) ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין עולם, שבונה ירושלים ה', ובמה בונה אותה, 'בימינו' על ידי הימים שלנו, שבכל יום כשאדם עובד אותו יתברך, הכל לפי מעשיו בונה את ירושלים ובית המקדש, יש בונה ביום אחד שורה שלימה, ויש מניח למשל לבינה אחת, כן בונה האדם מישראל שעובד ה' בכל יום, עד שיהיה נבנה בשלימות במהרה בימינו.

וכן שמעתי מהרב הקדוש מוה”ר אלימלך זצ”ל [מליזענסק זי”ע], שכשעשה עליית נשמה ראה שנושאים את כלי בית המקדש, ואמרו לו שהם אותם הכלים שהוציא הוא מוהגלות, ופעם אחת אמר שנפלה בית טומאה אחד בצורה גדולה מאד, ובכל יום עולים אלפי אלפים בעלי מלאכות בנאים לבנות החומה.

אבל יש לי שומר טוב, שכשהרב מוה”ר יעקב יצחק מלאנצהוט [הוא החוזה מלובלין זי”ע] מתפלל תפילת י”ח מתפילת מנחה, מפיל כל מה שבונים. והבנתי דבריו הקדושים, שמפיל זה על ידי שעל ידי תפילתו בונה חומות ירושלים ובית המקדש, ולפי ערך שבונה חומות ירושלים לפי ערך זה מפיל בהבית הזה של טומאה, כי כשזה קם זה נופל”.

In Shemoneh Esreh, in the berachah “ולירושלים עירך”, we beseech HKB”H to build Yerushalayim **—with our days**. Every day, when a Jew serves Hashem according to his individual abilities, he is contributing to the building of Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash. One person may be capable of laying down an entire row of bricks while another may only lay down a single brick.

On the Walls of Yerushalayim I Stationed Guards

Now, we can deduce from his statement: “שעל ידי תפילתו” -- that although we build the third Beis HaMikdash with our mitzvos and good deeds, the essence of the building comes from the letters of the tefilos we pour out in the Beis Kenesses—lamenting the galut of the Shechinah and yearning for the future geulah--and the letters of the Torah we study in the Beis Midrash.

Support for this fact can be found in the commentary of the holy Alshich on the Navi (Yeshayah 62, 6): “על חומותיך ירושלים: המזכירים את ה' אל דמי הפקדתי שומרים כל היום וכל הלילה תמיד לא יחשו, המזכירים את ה' אל דמי

—upon your walls, O Yerushalayim, have I posted guardians; all the day and all the night, continuously, they will never be silent. “You who remind Hashem, do not be silent! Do not give Him silence, until He establishes and until He makes Yerushalayim a source of praise in the land.” According to the Alshich, HKB”H posted two types of guardians on the walls of Yerushalayim and the heavenly Beis HaMikdash—that HKB”H will bring down from the heavens in the future perfectly formed. Their job is to pray that our transgressions don’t cause their destruction.

The navi identifies the guardians. One category of guardians includes those who: **“All the day and all the night, continuously, they will never be silent.”** These are “talmidei-chachamim”—Torah scholars—who engage in the study of Hashem’s Torah day and night relentlessly. They guard the walls, making sure that they remain strong and intact, so that they will not be destroyed. The second category of guardians includes those who: **“Remind Hashem.”** They rise early and stay up late, always praying to Hashem and reminding Him of His promise (Shemos 20, 21): **“--in every place wherever I permit My name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you.**

Thus, the Alshich hakadosh states explicitly that the mainstay of the building of the third Beis HaMikdash is Torah-study by Torah scholars in the Batei Midrash and praying with proper intent and sincerity in the Batei Kenesses. It is worthwhile including at this point what the great Rabbi Chanoch Henich of Alexander, zy”a, writes in the siddur Lev Simchah regarding the berachah of Nachem on Tishah B’Av:

“ואני אהיה לה נאום ה' חומת אש סביב. שעל ידי שאיש ישראל מתפלל כראוי ואומר דיבורים כראוי וכנכון, עומדים מלאכי השרת ומנסרים מדיבורים שלהם אבנים לבנין בית המקדש, וביותר, אפילו בית המקדש של אש גם כן יבנה על ידי דיבורים של ישראל, וזהו ואני אהיה לה נאום ה', על ידי דיבורים של ה', חומת אש סביב, על ידי שאיש ישראל אומר דיבורים על ידי אש טהור שהוא ביראתו, בזה נעשה לעתיד חומת אש סביב”.

When a Jew prays properly and speaks properly, malachim are on hand who carve out stones from their words for the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. Furthermore, even the Beis HaMikdash of fire will be built using Yisrael’s words and utterances. This is the significance of the statement: “And I will be a wall of fire around her, says Hashem.” When a Jew utters words with pure fervor, with awe and reverence, thus will the surrounding wall of fire be formed in the future.

Let us elaborate based on what the Bnei Yissaschar teaches us in the name of the Sefer Yetzirah (4, 12). The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are called stones; the stones are used to build houses—words. This is implicit in the great Rabbi from Alexander’s comment that the heavenly malachim carve out stones for the construction of the Beis HaMikdash from the words of a Jew’s properly uttered tefilah.

May the Beis HaMikdash Be Built Speedily in our Times

Based on what we have discussed, we can better appreciate the tefilah we utter three times a day at the conclusion of Shemoneh Esreh: **“יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו ותן חלקנו בתורתך—May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d, and the G-d of our fathers, that the Beis HaMikdash be built speedily in our times; and grant us our portion in Your Torah.** Seeing as the third Beis HaMikdash will be built with the tefilah and Torah of klal-Yisrael, it is fitting and beneficial to add this request at the conclusion of the tefilah. We pray that the Beis HaMikdash will be built from the holy utterances of our tefilah, and we add: **“ותן חלקנו בתורתך—that we merit completing the construction of the third Beis HaMikdash by means of our Torah-study, as well.**

This then is the meaning of the statement (Berachos 64a): **“תלמידי חכמים מרבים שלום בעולם, שנאמר וכל בניך למוזי ה' ורב שלום—Torah scholars increase the peace in the world, as it is stated: “And all your sons will be disciples of Hashem, and abundant will be the peace of your sons.” Do not read “your sons” (“בניך”), but rather “your builders” (“בונים”).** As “disciples of Hashem,” they engage in Torah-study regularly and, in effect, build the third Beis HaMikdash. Thus we can conjecture that this is why it is our practice to recite this saying every day at the conclusion of the Shacharis prayers. In this manner, we allude to the fact that all of the letters of the prayers we just uttered represent the stones and building blocks of the third Beis HaMikdash.

Now, this enlightens us as to why HKB”H will incorporate all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash from all of the exiles in the building of the future Beis HaMikdash. Seeing as the third Beis HaMikdash is actually being built every single day from the letters of our tefilos in the Batei Kenesses and the letters of our Torah-study in the Batei Midrash;

therefore, it is only fitting that HKB”H should build the third Beis HaMikdash from these institutions. For, the vital labor performed by Jews in the Beis Kenesses and Beis Midrash during thousands of years in galut was not in vain.

We can now begin to comprehend the magnificence of the third Beis HaMikdash. It will combine both physical and spiritual perfection. Down on earth, Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef will apply their vast wisdom and “ruach hakodesh” to build the structure down on earth with human hands. It will incorporate all of the holy synagogues and study-halls where Jews prayed and studied Torah throughout the years of galut. Then a heavenly structure of fire, complete and perfect, will descend from the heavens, containing all of the letters of Yisrael’s tefilos and Torah-study that ascended to HKB”H with fiery passion. It will enter the third Beis HaMikdash down on earth built from all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash where Yisrael prayed and labored in the study of Torah.

So, when we search for segulos—auspicious practices--to prolong our lives and enhance the quality of our lives, we should know and remember that there is no segulah more beneficial or proven than the one recommended by Rabbi Yochanan. In the merit of rising early and staying up late to be in Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash, we will be blessed with long lives and abundant good, akin to the future geulah. For, as we have learned, they possess a kedushah akin to the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash.

Thus, it is not for naught that the Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah instituted the recitation of the following every morning during Shacharis: **“אשרינו מה טוב חלקנו ומה נעים גורלנו ומה יפה ירושתנו, אשרינו כשאנו משכימים ומעריבים בבתי כנסיות ובבתי מדרשות, ומייחדים שמך בכל יום תמיד ואומרים פעמים באהבה, שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד. We are fortunate! How good is our portion! How pleasant is our destiny! How beautiful is our heritage! We are fortunate that we rise early and stay late in Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash and unify Your name every day, constantly, proclaiming twice a day lovingly: “שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד.”** For, it is in this merit that we are building and completing the third Beis HaMikdash that will be revealed and crafted by Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef, swiftly, in our times. Amen.

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