



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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Lack of Unity Led to the Destruction of the Beit HaMikdash

"מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם" (יומא ט:).

The Second Beit HaMikdash, which stood during a period where the nation was engaged in the study of Torah, in the performance of mitzvot and in acts of loving kindness- why was it destroyed? Because there existed "sinat chinam" (unwarranted hatred among the people)! (Yoma 9b).

From the gemara cited above it appears that the main reason for the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash was *sinat chinam*. We can appreciate that not treating others with respect is unjustifiable behavior, but why would such a severe punishment, such as destroying the Beit HaMikdash be warranted? Is there a direct connection between this transgression and the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash?

The main purpose of the Beit HaMikdash is to create an environment in which the Shechinah could dwell. As we are informed when directed to erect the Mishkan "Make for me a Temple and I will dwell in their

midst" (Shemot 25:8). However, the Shechinah does not dwell among Am Yisrael when there is discord. The Sefer Haredim (citing the Zohar) derives from a pasuk in Iyov (23:13) והוא באחד ומי ישיבנו (*But He is One, and who will answer Him*) – that God only dwells among Am Yisrael when they are united as one – אחד.

When we were instructed to build the Mishkan, each individual had to contribute an equal share. The rich could not contribute an abundance and the poor could not contribute a deficiency. Everyone's contribution was identical to instill a feeling of uniformity. Only in that cohesive and integrated community could the Shechinah reside.

In addition, when Moshe commanded the people to build the Mishkan it was done

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in a communal manner – יקהל משה את כל – עדת ישראל – The nation was assembled as a congregation! When the Mishkan was inaugurated as well the same verb is used:

ואת כל העדה הקהל אל פתח אהל מועד (ויקרא חג)

The nation was assembled as a congregation!

When Shlomo inaugurated the First Beit HaMikdash the same term is used: יקהלו – אל המלך שלמה כל איש ישראל (מלכים א חב). The repetitive use of the word יקהל to congregate or assemble is required when both the Mishkan and Mikdash are dedicated because without Am Yisrael coming together as one – the Shechinah is unable to reside in the Temple or among the nation.

Now we can understand the connection between the transgression of *sinat chinam* and the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Hatred causes a rift among the people. If the

nation is divided, God is unable to reside within their midst and so there is no purpose for a Mikdash.

God despises when Jews are hostile to each other, like a parent who gets upset when his children fight. Sometimes the parent reaches a stage where he states: “I had enough, I am leaving” and he removes himself from their presence to let them work things out among themselves. When Am Yisrael is divided, Hashem takes a similar approach.

May we take it upon ourselves to be more respectful of others and to avoid unnecessary conflicts and disputes. To take positive measures to instill a feeling of togetherness among not only our friends but those who may have a *hashkafa* or opinion that differs from ours. It is in our hands to correct the mistake that led to our exile. May we be *zoche* to merit a *geula shlema* in our time. ■


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