

Parshas Moad. We'll begin with a beautiful essay written by R' Chaim Yosef Kofman in the Torah Tavlin (5776), on the pasuk: בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אֶהְרֶן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּכַפֵּר בֶּן בָּקָר לְחֻטָּאת וְאֵיל לְעֹלָה. Parshas Moad describes the entire עבודה of the כהן גדול on יום כיפור. It seems strange that the pasuk which introduces this whole process begins with the word בְּזֹאת, meaning "with this." It could have just said, יָבֵא אֶהְרֶן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ, or וידבר. ה' אל משה לאמר, זה יעשה אהרן. Why begin with the word בְּזֹאת?

There is a famous vort from ונתנה תוקף, on the words we say loudly: וְתִשְׁבְּחָה וְתִפְלְאָה וְצִדְקָה מִעֲבִירֶיךָ אֶת רֵעַ הַגֹּזֵרָה. In every מחזור, above the three words of וְתִשְׁבְּחָה וְתִפְלְאָה וְצִדְקָה, you'll see three small words printed: צום, קול, and ממון. If you haven't noticed them until now, go take a look - it's right there. The מפרשים explain that each of those three words has a גימטריה of 136. Add them up -  $136 + 136 + 136 = 408$ . The word זֹאת also has the exact גימטריה of 408. The תורה is teaching us something here: before the כהן גדול comes into the קודש in the המקדש on יום כיפור, he needs to come בְּזֹאת - with this. What is "this"? These three things: צום, קול, ממון. תשובה, תפילה, צדקה. That's what he brings with him. That's what gives his עבודה the power to be effective, to save כלל ישראל from גזירות רעות.

R' Kofman writes that this applies not only to the כהן גדול, but to every single one of us. We recently started saying שבעה עשר, which tells us that the world stands on three things: תורה, עבודה, and גמילות חסדים - which align beautifully with what we just said: צום can represent עבודה, קול corresponds to תורה, ממון is גמילות חסדים or צדקה. Every Yid has to integrate these three pillars into his life so that when ראש השנה and יום כיפור come, our תפילות can be answered. That is בְּזֹאת - with these elements totaling 408, every Jew can come before Hashem and plead. Not just the כהן גדול, every single Yid. As דוד המלך says in תהילים: אִם תִּקְוֶה בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בֹטֵחַ - This is what I'm going to depend on. After 120 years, when we come before the כהן גדול and are asked if we are worthy of entering עֶדֶן, we will say בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בֹטֵחַ, we have to trust in our צום, קול, and ממון. With that, we can be זוכה to a good שנה, a heartfelt תפילה, and a favorable דין. This message is not only appropriate for the ימים נוראים, but also now, during the months of ניסן and אייר - ספירת העומר and פסח - and really throughout the entire year. Even though this leining falls at the opposite end of the year from the ימים נוראים, as I've mentioned before, the entire year is unified through the תורה. It's all part of one seamless connection.

Parshas Kedoshim - we have two פרשיות this week. From פרשת קדושים, I'd like to quote again from Torah Tavlin (5776), from R' Guttman of Ramat Shlomo. He comments on the pasuk (19:30): אֶת שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ. This is a pasuk that, because of our familiarity with the words, we might rush over and miss an enormously powerful lesson. אֶת שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ - "We keep Shabbos," we say. "I do that already." וּמִקֹּדְשֵׁי תִירָאוּ - What does that really mean? אֲנִי ה' - Hashem says, "Pay attention! What am I really saying here?"

R' Guttman raises a powerful question: What will it be like when משיח comes, and we go to the בית המקדש, to the בית השלישי? Hashem will bring down the בית השלישי in a burst of fire. The כהנים will do the עבודה. The לויים will sing their songs. We'll come and bring קרבנות. What kind of experience will that be? Here is where it's appropriate to use a word which I tell all the קינדרלעך to only use when it really fits. That word is awesome. This will be the real awesome - not the נרישקייט people use that word for today. Real יראה, real שמחה. We'll feel it in our hearts and in our souls.

R' Avraham Pam told a moving story about the קדושה of the בית המקדש. He taught that the קדושה of a בית הכנסת has the same קדושה as the בית המקדש. The way we feel and the way we conduct ourselves when we walk into a shul should reflect that. That's how we'll prepare ourselves for when הקדוש ברוך הוא brings down the actual מקדש.

Rav Pam described to his תלמידים his first and only experience going to the כותל, during his one trip to ארץ ישראל. He went to daven at the כותל on Friday night. But before that, he prepared himself - he made proper



הכנות, he reflected, he contemplated, he got himself ready. But when he arrived at the כותל, he was shocked. He heard people talking casually. "So when did you get here?" "Where are you staying?" "What airline did you take?" He thought he was back in Boro Park! He couldn't believe that people were shmoozing at the holiest site in the world like it was a regular street corner.

And isn't that the case with so many of us?

For the rest of his trip, he couldn't bring himself to go back to the כותל. He davened instead at the shul in קרית צאנז. He told his תלמידים, "If we continue like this, we'll bring the same shmatas - our same casual behavior - right into the בית השלישי. We have to train ourselves to properly honor a בית הכנסת. Then we'll truly understand what the קדושה of the בית המקדש is."

The סמ"ק, the ספר מצות קטנות, writes that a shul is a miniature בית המקדש. The קב הישר says that the walls of a shul are so holy, people used to kiss them. The שכינה is there.

We have to appreciate that. We must learn to respect and honor the place where we daven. Even just thinking about it once can make a difference. We shouldn't talk in shul. The רבנים are constantly pleading with us not to talk in shul. So let's listen. One מנהג of mine, which I've tried to keep over the years - almost always - is this: when I have my תפילין on, I try not to speak at all. Unless it's a real emergency, I don't speak with my תפילין on. It's a good practice to start. Train yourself not to talk when wearing תפילין, and let that carry over to every time you enter a shul. In the זכות of this pasuk וּמִקִּדְשֵׁי תִירָאוּ, may the גלות finally end, and may we merit to come together with משיח צדקנו to the אמן, בית המקדש במהרה בימינו!

