



## **“I will place a tzara’as lesion upon a house in the land of your heritage” House Lesions Symbolize the Churban of the Beis HaMikdash Revealing the Love Concealed within Its Walls**

Next Shabbas, we will read from the Torah the double parshiyos of Sazria and Metzora. Three different categories of lesions and afflictions are described in these parshiyos: (1) Lesions that affect human beings, (2) lesions that affect clothing and (3) lesions that affect houses. In this essay, we will focus on the unique topic of house lesions described in parshas Metzora (Vayikra 14, 33): **“וידבר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן לאמר, כי תבואו אל ארץ כנען: וישא אלהים את עיניו אל אהרן ואל משה ואל כל בני ישראל ויאמר אליהם: ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחוזתכם.”** Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying: **“When you arrive in the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I will place a “tzara’as” affliction upon a house in the land of your possession.”**

Chazal reveal a fascinating fact in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 71a): **“בית המנוגע לא היה ולא עתיד להיות, ולמה נכתב דרוש וקבל שכר”**— **an afflicted house never was and never will be. So, why was it written? Expound it and be rewarded.** In reality, it is very unlikely for the conditions required to declare an afflicted house “tamei” to exist, as the Gemara explains:

**“דתנן רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון אומר, לעולם אין הבית טמא, עד שיראה כשתי גריסין על שתי אבנים, בשתי כתלים בקרן זוית, ארכו כשני גריסין ורחבו כגריס”**

We learned in a Mishnah: Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon says: **A house never becomes tamei (due to tzara’as) until a lesion the size of two “gris” is seen on each of two stones located on two walls that form a corner (and the lesion is contiguous on both of them). Thus, the length of the lesion must be at least two “gris” and its width at least one “gris” (a ¾ inch square bean).** Hence, the reality of finding lesions of this

size on two stones on two adjacent walls is unlikely. Perforce, the Gemara concludes that the entire subject of house afflictions was written in the Torah solely for the purpose of **expounding and being rewarded.**

Notwithstanding, we find a contradictory point of view in Rashi’s commentary: **“And I will place a ‘tzara’as’ affliction”— this is to inform them (Yisrael) that afflictions come upon them (the houses), because the Emorim hid treasures of gold in the walls of their houses throughout the forty years that Yisrael were in the midbar. As a result of the affliction, he (the Yisrael) will break down the house and find them.** The source for Rashi’s comment is an elucidation by the divine Tanna Rashbi in the Midrash (V.R. 17, 6): **“And I will place a tzara’as affliction.” Rabbi Chiya taught: Was this good news for them that afflictions were coming upon them? Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai taught: When the Cana’anim heard that Yisrael were approaching them, they proceeded to hide their money in the houses and in the fields. HKB”H said, “I promised their forefathers that I will bring their children into a land full of abundant good, as it states (Devarim 6, 11): “Houses filled with every good thing.” What does HKB”H do? He induces afflictions in a person’s house; the person tears it down and he finds a treasure in it.**

So, how does this coincide with what we learned above: **“An afflicted house never was and never will be. So, why was it written? Expound it and be rewarded”?** We cannot simply say that Rashbi’s statement in the Midrash disagrees with the Gemara’s statement that an afflicted never existed. After all, the

Gemara proves its point by citing the ruling of Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rashbi; and it is highly unlikely that Rabbi Elazar would dispute his father's statement. Furthermore, this suggests that Rashbi also concurs that an afflicted house never existed. That being the case, what lesson are we to learn from the hypothetical, imaginary notion that the Emorim hid golden treasures in the walls of their homes?

## The Passage Alludes to the House of HKB”H

To begin with, let us explain the concept of: **“Expound and be rewarded.”** We will refer to the passage in the Midrash on this week’s parsha (V.R. 17, 7). There, Chazal expound the entire passage of afflicted houses in relation to the churban of the Beis HaMikdash:

**"I will place a "tzara'as" affliction upon a house in the land of your possession": This refers to the Beis HaMikdash, as it states (Yechezkel 24, 21): "Behold, I am profaning My Mikdash, the pride of your strength." "The one to whom the house belongs will come," this refers to HKB"H (Chagai 1, 9): "Because of My House that is in ruins." "And he will inform the kohen," this refers to Yirmiyah, as it says (Yirmiyah 1, 1): "Of the kohanim who were in Anatot." "Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house," this refers to the filth of avodah-zarah . . . "The kohen shall instruct, and they shall clear the house," (Melachim I 14, 26): "He took away the treasures of the House of Hashem." "He shall demolish the house," (Ezra 5, 12): "And he destroyed this House"; "they shall take it outside the city," (ibid.) "and he exiled the people to Bavel." This could imply forever; hence the Torah teaches: "They will take other stones." As it states (Yeshayah 28, 16): "Therefore, thus said Hashem G-d: Behold, I am laying a foundation stone in Tziyon—a sturdy stone, a precious cornerstone."**

Based on this passage, we can propose an interpretation of the following passuk (Vayikra 14, 48): **”ואם בוא יבוא הכהן וראה והנה: ויטהר הכהן את הבית ויטוח את הארי היטוח אחרי היטוח את הבית כי נרפא הנגע.”** **If the kohen is to come and look and behold—the affliction has not spread in the house after he has plastered the house; then the kohen shall declare the house to be pure, for the affliction has healed.** Now, according to the Zera Kodesh (Ki Seitzei), the third Beis HaMikdash is being built daily with the mitzvos and good deeds we perform. The reshaim, however,

come and destroy what the tzaddikim have built with their iniquities. Then, the tzaddikim rebuild what was destroyed.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 39a) teaches us that HKB”H is considered a kohen. For, the passuk says (Shemos 25, 2): **“וַיִּקַּח—לי תרומה—they shall take to Me a terumah**—in other words, the people are being instructed to give Hashem terumah, since He is a kohen. This then is the interpretation of the passuk: **“If the kohen is to come and look”** refers to HKB”H, Who is referred to as a kohen. **“And behold—the affliction has not spread in the house after he has plastered the house”**—in other words, the affliction and defect has not spread in the heavenly Beis HaMikdash, because they performed teshuvah and repaired their blemishes. **“Then the kohen shall declare the house to be pure, for the affliction has healed”**—as a result, HKB”H will prepare the third Beis HaMikdash to bring it down to Yisrael.

In this vein, we can interpret the continuation of the text very nicely. How will HKB"Ha purify and cleanse the third Beis HaMikdash of the damage caused to it by Yisrael's iniquities? Let us refer to the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh at the beginning of parshas Metzora (Vayikra 14, 9). He explains that the two birds that are part of the purification process for human afflictions allude to the future geulah that will be effectuated by Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. The Shela hakadosh provides a similar explanation (Maseches Pesachim). On this basis, we can interpret the pesukim as follows (ibid. 49):

**“ולקח לחטא את הבית שתי צפרים”**—to cleanse the house, he shall take two birds—the birds allude to Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David; **“ועץ ארז ושני תולעת ואזוב”**—and cedarwood, a tongue of crimson wool and hyssop—these items allude to the three Avos. The **cedarwood** represents Avraham, of whom it is said (Yehoshua 14, 15): **“The biggest man among the giants.”** The **tongue of crimson wool--“ושני תולעת”**—represents Yaakov, in keeping with the passuk (Yeshayah 41, 14): **“אל תירא יעקב”**—fear not, O worm of Yaakov. (Translator’s note: The word **“תולעת”** which appears in both pesukim is associated with Yaakov.) **Hyssop** represents Yitzchak whose midah is “gevurah.”

**”וַיִּשְׁחַט אֶת הַצִּיפור הָאֶחָת אֶל כָּל חֶרֶשׁ עַל מַיִם חַיִּים”**—he shall slaughter the one bird into an earthenware vessel over **running water**. This alludes to Mashiach ben Yosef, who will be

killed to atone for Yisrael's transgressions, as explained in the Gemara (Succah 52a). **"וְחִיטָּא אֶת הַבַּיִת בְּדָם הַצִּיפור וּבְמִיָּם הַחַיִּים וּבְצִיפור"**—he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the running water, and with the live bird, with the cedarwood, with the hyssop, and with the crimson tongue of wool. This teaches us that the merits and strengths of Mashiach ben Yosef, Mashiach ben David and the three Avos are united. **"וְשִׁילַח אֶת הַצִּיפור הַחַיָּה אֶל מַחוּץ"**—he shall set the live bird free toward the outside of the city upon the open field. Mashiach ben David will be sent to gather in all of Yisrael's outcasts from the four corners of the earth. **"וְכִיפֹר עַל הַבַּיִת וְטָהַר"**—thus he shall provide atonement for the house, and it shall be purified. And the third Beis HaMikdash will be built swiftly, in our times.

### The Slaughtered Bird Is a Tikun for Baseless Hatred and Lashon HaRa

It is worthwhile adding an important point based on the following Gemara (Yoma 9b): **"מִקְדָּשׁ רִאשׁוֹן מִפְּנֵי מָה חָרַב, מִפְּנֵי שְׁלֹשָׁה: דְּבָרִים שֶׁהָיוּ בוֹ, עֲבוּדָה זָרָה וְגִילּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת וּשְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים... אֲבָל מִקְדָּשׁ שֵׁנִי שֶׁהָיוּ עוֹסְקִין בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת וּגְמִילוּת חֲסִדִּים מִפְּנֵי מָה חָרַב, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיְתָה בוֹ שְׁנֵאת חֲנָם, לְלַמְּדָךְ שֶׁשְׁקוּלָה שְׁנֵאת חֲנָם כְּנֶגֶד שְׁלֹשׁ עֲבִירוֹת, עֲבוּדָה זָרָה גִילּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת וּשְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים."** The first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because the people were guilty of the three cardinal sins—avodah zarah, immorality and murder. These sins were not prevalent during the times of the second Beis HaMikdash; the people of that period engaged in Torah-study and performed mitzvos and acts of kindness. The second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of "sin'as chinam"—baseless hatred. This teaches us that "sin'as chinam" is equivalent to the three cardinal sins.

The Chafetz Chaim teaches us that due to their "sin'as chinam," they were prone to speak lashon hara. They would not have been punished for the mere negative thought alone. He substantiates this assertion from the Gemara's conclusion that "sin'as chinam" is equivalent to the three cardinal sins. Additionally, apropos lashon hara, we learn (Arachin 15b): **"תֵּנָּה: כְּנֶגֶד שְׁלֹשׁ עֲבִירוֹת, עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, דְּבִי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל, כָּל הַמְסַפֵּר לְשׁוֹן הָרַע מִגְדִּיל עֲוֹנוֹת"**. **A Baraisa was taught in the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael: Whoever speaks "lashon hara" proliferates iniquities equivalent to the three (cardinal) aveiros—idol worship, immorality and murder.** Thus, it is apparent that the reason "sin'as chinam" is equivalent to the

three major aveiros is because it results in the speaking of "lashon hara," which is equivalent to those aveiros.

Now, we are familiar with Rashi's explanation regarding the rationale for the afflicted person—the metzora—to bring two birds for his purification and atonement: **Since afflictions come as a result of "lashon-hara," which is an act of verbal twittering; therefore, for the sake of his purification, birds were required that twitter incessantly with a chirping sound.** This rationale also applies to the purification of afflicted houses. As explained, they allude to the churban of the Beis HaMikdash due to the sin of "sin'as chinam." Hence, two birds are brought, representing Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David; the one that is slaughtered symbolizes the death of Mashiach ben Yosef, to atone for the "sin'as chinam" that was the underlying cause of the lashon hara that led to the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash.

Additionally, we can explain why the death of Mashiach ben Yosef atones for "sin'as chinam" and lashon hara based on a teaching in the Mishnah (R.H. 29a): **"זֶה הַכֹּלל כָּל שֶׁאִינוֹ מַחֲוִיב בְּדָבָר—אִינוֹ מוֹצִיא אֶת הָרַבִּים יְדֵי חֻבַּתָּן"**—this is the general rule: **Anyone who is not obligated in a particular matter cannot cause the public to fulfill their obligation.** The Ba'al Shem Tov hakadosh, zy" a, explains the implication of this principle by dint of allusion. A tzaddik's role in this world is to motivate Yisrael to perform teshuvah and draw them closer to their heavenly Father. The tzaddik cannot accomplish this mission, however, without falling himself to some degree with respect to the matter Yisrael needs to amend. By elevating himself and correcting his own shortcoming, he is able to elevate Yisrael along with himself. Thus, we can interpret the Mishnah as follows: **"זֶה הַכֹּלל כָּל שֶׁאִינוֹ מַחֲוִיב בְּדָבָר"**—a tzaddik who is free of guilt and does not share Yisrael's flaw to some degree-- **"אִינוֹ מוֹצִיא אֶת הָרַבִּים יְדֵי חֻבַּתָּן"**—is unable to rid the public of their transgressions.

Along these lines, we find a pertinent passage in the Midrash Tanchuma (Vayeishev 7): **"וְכֵן בְּיוֹסֵף לֹא הִגִּיעוּהוּ כָּל אוֹתָן: הַצְרוֹת, אֲלָא עַל לְשׁוֹן הָרַע שֶׁסִּיפֵר עַל אָחָיו, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיְבֹא יוֹסֵף אֶת דְּבָרָם רָעָה אֵל אָבִיהֶם."** The same is true of Yosef. All of his suffering was due exclusively to the lashon hara he spoke about his brothers, as it states (Bereishis 37, 2): **"And Yosef would bring evil reports about them to their father."** We see that Yosef was guilty of lashon hara. Therefore, Mashiach ben Yosef is qualified to



atone for Yisrael for the churban of the Beis HaMikdash, which was precipitated by “sin’as chinam” that caused them to speak lashon hara.

**"Its interior inlaid with love from  
the daughters of Yerushalayim"**

Based on this line of reasoning, we can now address Rashbi's elucidation. He asserted that HKB"H afflicts houses with "tzara'as": **Because the Emorim hid treasures of gold in the walls of their houses throughout the forty years that Yisrael were in the midbar. As a result of the affliction, he (the Yisrael) will break down the house and find them.** Let us introduce a passage in the Midrash related to the churban Beis HaMikdash (Eichah Rabbasi 4, 15): **It is written (Tehillim 79, 1): "A psalm to Assaf: O G-d! The nations have entered into your inheritance..." This is what they said to Assaf: "HKB"H destroyed the Heichal and the Mikdash, and you are sitting around and composing songs?" He (Assaf) replied: "I am rejoicing that HKB"H poured out His wrath upon wooden beams and stones rather than upon Yisrael."**

At first glance, this Midrash is quite baffling. After all, we have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 105b): **”המקרע בגדיו בחמתו”**—**”והמשבר כליו בחמתו והמפזר מעותיו בחמתו יהא בעיניך כעובד עבודה זרה”**—**if one tears his garments in his anger, breaks his utensils in his anger, or scatters his money in his anger, you should view him as one who is worshipping avodah-zarah.** That being the case, it seems inconceivable that HKB”H, so to speak, had to find a pretext for taking out His wrath on the physical structure of the Beis HaMikdash in order to spare Yisrael.

We have explained the matter several times in the past based on the passuk (Shemos 25, 8): **"וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וּשְׁכֵנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם"**—**they shall make Me a Mikdash, so that I may dwell among them.** The Alshich hakadosh notes that the term **"מִקְדָּשׁ"** is in the singular. That being the case, the passuk should have said: **"וּשְׁכֵנְתִּי בְתוֹכוֹ"**—**so that I may dwell within it**—also in the singular—rather than **"בְּתוֹכָם"**—in the plural. He reconciles the discrepancy by explaining that initially the goal was to have HKB"H dwell within every individual Jew, and then have His Shechinah extend from them to the Beis HaMikdash. The resulting kedushah in the Beis HaMikdash would then be enormous, because it would emanate from all of Yisrael. Thus, we interpret the passuk as follows: **"They shall make me a**

**Mikdash,”** but the ultimate goal is **“so that I may dwell among them”**—within every individual Jew.

In keeping with this notion, the Alshich hakadosh interprets the passuk as follows (Shir HaShirim 3, 9): **”אפריון עשה לו המלך: שלמה מעצי הלבנון, עמודיו עשה כסף, רפודתו זהב, מרכבו ארגמן, תוכו רצוף. Shlomo HaMelech (some translate this as a reference to HKB”H, the King, Who is the quintessence of shalom) made himself a palanquin of the trees of Lebanon. Its pillars he made of silver, its couch of gold, its curtain of purple, its interior inlaid with love, from the daughters of Yerushalayim.** In other words, HKB”H rested His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash in the merit of the sincere love of every individual member of Yisrael, who brought his contribution with pure, immense love.

The text raises the question: Does HKB”H need to rest on a couch made from the trees of Lebanon? Does he need to be surrounded by articles made of gold, silver and purple cloth? To which it answers: **“Its interior is inlaid with love, from the daughters of Yerushalayim”**—HKB”H does not desire or seek material wealth or opulence; He desires and seeks the love and sincere desire of every Jew; that is what lined the walls of the Beis HaMikdash.

Prior to the churban, Yisrael sinned and behaved improperly thinking erroneously that the ultimate goal and purpose was for HKB"H to rest His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash. With that mindset, they felt they could act as they pleased; then, afterwards, they could simply offer a korban in the Beis HaMikdash to appease HKB"H. Hence, the navi admonishes them (Yirmiyah 7, 9):

הֲגַב רָצַח וְנָאֵף וְהִשְׁבַּע לְשֹׁקֶר וְקָטַר לְכַעַל וְהָלַךְ אַחֲרֵי  
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יֵדְעָתֶם, וּבָאתֶם וַעֲמַדְתֶּם לִפְנֵי בַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא שְׁמִי  
עָלָיו וַאֲמַרְתֶּם נִצַּלְנוּ, לְמַעַן עֲשׂוּת אֵת כָּל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה." Can one steal,  
murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely and burn incense to the Baal and go after the gods of others that you never knew, and then come and stand before Me in the Temple, upon which My name is proclaimed, and say, "We are saved!"—in order to continue committing all these abominations?

Now, this enlightens us as to why HKB”H vented His wrath upon the wooden beams and stones of the holy structure. He did not do so, chas v’shalom, like a human being seeking someplace to alleviate and release his anger, and to punish Yisrael for their transgressions. In fact, the opposite is true! HKB”H wished

to teach us that He does not wish to rest His Shechinah in a mere structure of wood and stones, devoid of the kedushah and essence of Yisrael. He wants to dwell within the hearts of Yisrael. To emphasize this point, He destroyed the spiritually bereft Beis HaMikdash and spared the sinful people of Yisrael. He also wished to demonstrate to them the tremendous love concealed within the confines of the Beis HaMikdash; through that love, they would be able to connect with HKB"H even in galus, after the churban.

This explains very nicely a teaching in the Gemara (Berachos 8a): **מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא "ד"אמות של הלכה בלבד" —since the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, HKB"H only has four cubits of halachah in His world.** Yes, the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and, as a consequence, the Shechinah abandoned the premises. Nevertheless, anyone who studies Torah and is occupied with the four cubits of halachah possesses the capacity to reveal the very same love that permeated the walls of the Beis HaMikdash as per the description: **"Its interior is inlaid with love, from the daughters of Yerushalayim."** This is a tremendous consolation to HKB"H in the aftermath of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

### The Goyim Removed the Keruvim from the Beis HaMikdash

I would now like to propose to our royal audience an explanation for a fascinating phenomenon that occurred at the time of the churban. According to the Gemara (Yoma 54b), when the goyim entered the Kodesh HaKodashim on Tishah B'Av: **ראו כרובים המעורין זה בזה, הוציאו לשוק ואמרו, ישראל: הללו שברכתן ברכה וקללתן קללה יעסקו בדברים הללו, מיד הזילום שנאמר כל 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 (Eichah 1, 8): "All who once respected her debased her, for they saw her nakedness."**

The Shitah Mikubetzes (B.B. 99b) presents a question in the name of one of the Rishonim, the Ri Migash.

He finds this account perplexing in light of a passage elsewhere in the Gemara (ibid. 54a): **בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל**

**מגללין להם את הפרוכת ומראין להם את הכרובים שהיו מעוררים זה בזה, ואומרים: להם ראו חיבתכם לפני המקום כחיבת זכר ונקבה." When the people of Yisrael would ascend on the festival, the kohanim would roll up the "parochet" 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."**

The Gemara (B.B. 99a) poses a contradiction between various pesukim concerning the way the "keruvim" were positioned. One passuk states (Shemos 25, 20): **"ופניהם איש אל אחיו"**—indicating that they faced one another. Another passuk states (Divrei HaYamim II 3, 13): **"ופניהם לבית"**—indicating that they faced eastward toward the Heichal and not toward each other. The Gemara 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 passuk refers to times when Yisrael are compliant with the will of Hashem, whereas the other passuk refers to times when Yisrael are not compliant with the will of Hashem (miraculously, in the latter situation, they faced the Heichal to remind Yisrael of their obligations to Hashem).

In other words, when Yisrael 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. In this situation, the "keruvim"—reflecting the relationship between HKB"H and the congregation of Yisrael—faced each other adoringly: **"ופניהם איש אל אחיו"**. On the other hand, when Yisrael 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 Gemara stated that when the "goyim" entered the Kodesh HaKodashim, they found the "keruvim" facing one another and joined in an embrace. Clearly, the reason for the "churban" was that Yisrael were noncompliant with the will of Hashem. If so, it seems unimaginable that the "keruvim" would have been facing each other in an embrace. Thus, the Ri Migash explains that at the time of the churban, a miracle occurred. The "keruvim" faced each other in an intimate embrace to illustrate to the goyim HKB"H's enormous love for Yisrael even during times of churban and galus.

## HKB"H Wanted to Reveal the Love that Was Concealed within the Walls of the Beis HaMikdash

In keeping with our current discussion, let us embellish the explanation of the Ri Migash. I would like to explain why HKB"H arranged for the goyim to remove the "keruvim" from the Beis HaMikdash while they were embracing each other. In reality, those reshaim meant to mock Yisrael. HKB"H, however, wished to convey a vital message to every Jew. The purpose of the churban was to reveal the great love that exists between HKB"H and Yisrael, which had been concealed in the walls of the Beis HaMikdash and was ultimately forgotten by Yisrael.

Therefore, at the time of the churban, HKB"H arranged for the goyim to take the "keruvim" out of the Beis HaMikdash while they still embracing one another. Thus, Yisrael would witness this phenomenon and would understand that even after the churban that enormous love between HKB"H and Yisrael persisted. Through Torah-study, within the four cubits of halachah, even in the absence of a Beis HaMikdash, that love could be revealed.

We now have cause to rejoice! We have shed some light on the profound words of the divine Tanna, Rashbi. He explained the reason for house afflictions as follows: **Because the Emorim hid treasures of gold in the walls of their houses.** As we learned from the Gemara, house afflictions never really materialized; the passage was included in the Torah, so that we would expound on it and be rewarded. As we have learned, the entire passage of house afflictions can be elucidated as relating to the churban of the Beis HaMikdash. The churban was a consequence of Yisrael forgetting the great love that was concealed within the walls of the Beis HaMikdash. This was due to the forces of tumah embodied by the Emorim. To remedy this situation, HKB"H destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. Thus, He revealed to Yisrael the treasure troves of love that are present everywhere Yisrael establish a place of Torah-study, the virtual four cubits of halachah. This is the message conveyed by the statement: **"Since the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, HKB"H only has four cubits of halachah in His world"**—these places of study truly contain and recreate the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash!



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