

# DIRECTION NOT PERFECTION

by Rabbi Label Lam

"Any generation in which the *Beis HaMikdash* is not rebuilt in its days, it is considered as if they destroyed it." -*Talmud Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1*

If the *Beis HaMikdash* is not built in our days then we are considered as the destroyers. We have a very tall order to fill! It seems if we are not part of the solution we are a party to the problem. Practically and realistically, how can we be expected to do this? How can we approach this enormous task? Let us take guidance and consolation from two powerful and relevant ideas from the sainted Chofetz Chaim.

In one of his smaller Seforim *Zecher L'Miriam* he gives three pieces of advice about how to bring Moshiach and ultimately contribute to the building of the *Beis HaMikdash*. 1) Do Teshuvah (Return from however low you may have fallen). 2) Respect the small sliver of the Mikdash – the Shul and Study Halls by acting with decorum and proper respect there. 3) "Whatever your hand attains to do with **your (KOACH) strength**, do; for there are no deeds, no calculations, or knowledge or wisdom in the grave, where you are going." (Koheles 9:10) Based on this verse from the wise King Solomon he recommends that people do whatever they are able to do and then some but no one is expected to exceed his or her abilities. If you learn a Perek of Mishne daily, learn two. Do **what you can do**, according to **your unique capabilities**.

The second notion of the Chofetz Chaim is with regard to the wording of the statement of the sages, that the *Beis HaMikdash* is not built **in** his days. The Prefix of - B'Yameinu- can also be read "with our days". Three times a day we request when stepping back from prayer, "May it be YOUR will ... that the *Beis HaMikdash* should be build speedily (B'Yameinu) in our days! Now we learn that it can also mean -with the time we have, by living productively.

The first thing though, is to begin and not to begin big! Just begin! The Talmud says, "Tofasta Meruba Lo Tofasta!" – "If you grab too much you hold nothing." However, "Tofasta Muat Tofasta"- "If you grasp a little you have something!"

My wife and I were strolling one Sunday in our rather modest block and we noticed that the neighbors around the corner had made extraordinary changes in the appearance of their house. There was this lovely bay window filled with ornaments and a Chinese garden with lollipop trees and a well manicured lawn that the husband was cutting with mustache scissors.

My wife asked his wife who was standing out front surveying the progress, "Arlene, lovely

improvements! What inspired all this?" She answered shyly, "Well, actually I just needed to replace two broken tiles in the bathroom." She paused there and glared at us as if to say, "Don't you get it?" We stared back at her curiously. So she continued.

"We couldn't find the exact matching color so we redid all of them. Then the wallpaper looked ugly and old in contrast so we did that too. The medicine cabinet seemed decrepit in comparison and so we replaced it. The bathroom became the nicest room in the house but when we walked out into the hallway the rug looked so shoddy that we decided to pull- it up and polish the floors.

Then the front window was a dull match for the shiny new floors. We decided to go deep pocket and install bay windows. When we looked out from the bay windows we noticed how unkempt the lawn had become so we called a Guido the gardener and he created this lovely designer garden!" How did this all begin? By replacing just two tiles in the bathroom! We need only start, and establish a **direction not perfection**.