

Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and his students

WHY WE SHOULD CRY

By Ozer Bergman

"For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears. Any comforter who might revive my spirit is far from me. My children are forlorn, for the enemy has prevailed" (Lamentations 1:16).

Rebbe Nachman taught: The past is gone; our Holy Temple has burned down. Now, when God anticipates returning to us and rebuilding the Temple, it's only right that we shouldn't cause any delay. We should take care to rise at midnight to mourn the Temple's destruction.



Tisha B'Av, the Ninth of Av, is upon us and again many of us wonder: What are we crying about? One simple answer comes from this story:

A chassid came to Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. "Rebbe, the Code of Jewish Law says that one should rise at midnight to lament the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple). What if one doesn't feel that pain?" The Kotzker answered in his typical, laconic style: "Let him mourn his own destruction."

The Kotzker's immediate message is that one who doesn't understand what the Beit HaMikdash means, and doesn't feel its absence, needs to work on his own Jewish sensitivity. True, none of us has been to the Beit HaMikdash in this lifetime. So what? Plenty of Jews who were born well after the Destruction did *learn to feel it*. Even if it was easier for them than for us to *learn to feel it*, we can also *learn to feel it*. It takes practice, and practice takes time. Here (in bold type) is part of an elegy written by Reb Yaakov Emden (1697-1776). A contemporary "translation" follows (in plain type).

Oy! The Shekhinah is in exile. My marriage is hell.

Oy! The Torah has been set afire. The depth of Torah wisdom is inaccessible to me.

Oy! Tzaddikim die and leave us. I don't have a personal connection with a rabbi that I trust and respect.

Oy! God's reputation and Torah are disgraced. The media and people insult God

and Jews. I am often too weak and ashamed to live as Jewishly as I want.

Oy! Jewish enemies have too much power. The Land of Israel and its inhabitants are in danger. Anti-Semitism festers and lurks around the world.

Oy! Too many Jewish children don't learn Torah. So many Jewish children never even learn that they're Jewish, let alone *aleph-bet*. So many who go to yeshivah are mis-taught.

Oy! All Worlds of Creation are in pain. All levels of human existence, physical, emotional and spiritual, are out of whack. There's poverty, disease, murder, war; emotional abuse, anxiety, lack of dignity; confusion, fear, purposelessness, etc.

Oy! The holy Patriarchs and holy Matriarchs suffer. Their investment of years and tears of suffering and humiliation, of physical and spiritual toil to form a nation dedicated to the Divine mission, is in constant jeopardy. Thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of their offspring—past and present—failed, or never had a chance, to contribute to that mission.

Oy! The Mashiach is in pain. Mashiach is not just an incredibly gifted tzaddik/teacher with extraordinary talents and abilities. He is us, 600,000 souls contained in one human being. Our pain is his pain. Our mistakes (some call them "sins") hurt us/him. They delay his arrival and make his job that much harder. (Sorry for laying on the guilt, but I'm as much at fault as you, maybe more.)

Oy! The Beit HaMikdash is destroyed. The lifeline between Heaven and Earth is not there. The ladder allowing us to climb closer to God has been kicked away and broken. The channels of bounty have been diverted, clogged or put out of service altogether. The "tree" in whose shade each piece of Creation and all of Creation can come to peace and harmony, true fulfillment and destiny, suffers sore neglect.

May we be privileged to witness Mashiach's arrival, soon, swiftly, in our lifetime. Amen.

*a gutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!*

—Based on *Likutey Moharan* II, 67

SIDEPATH

Rebbe Nachman teaches: *Chatzot* [i.e., the practice of rising at midnight to lament the destruction of the Temple] has the power of redemption. It can sweeten harsh decrees (*Likutey Moharan* I, 149).

At the time of *Chatzot*, great Lovingkindness descends from Heaven (*Likutey Halakhot, Hashkamat HaBoker* 1:14).

Just as the Exodus from Egypt began at *chatzot*, so too, the Final Redemption will take place at *chatzot*. This teaches us that the Redemption we await will come due to the merit of those who rise for *Chatzot* (ibid., 1:15).

PARASHAH PEARLS

By Chaim Kramer

1:1 These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel

The Tzaddik Speaks For Everyone

When an exceedingly great tzaddik speaks, his words are apropos to all of Israel, and each individual can find himself in his words (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #290).

1:11 May God, the Lord of your fathers, add on to your numbers a thousand times

The Difference Between Moses' and Joab's Blessings

The Jews said to Moses, "Why do you bless us only a thousandfold? Do you wish to limit our numbers?" (*Yalkut Shimoni, Shmuel* 24, #165).

Kabbalistically, the *sefirah* of Chokhmah represents "thousands," Binah represents "hundreds," Ze'er Anpin represents "tens" and Malkhut represents "ones." Moses did want to bless the Jews with great numbers, as God had promised Abraham (Genesis 22:17), but he also wanted them to attain the greatest level possible—that of Chokhmah. Once a person attains Chokhmah, he transcends all limitations and can be subsumed in Godliness. However, Moses knew that the ultimate objective is to draw

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the great light of Chokhmah into the lower levels.

The Midrash points out that Joab's blessing was in a way greater than Moses'. Moses blessed the Jews that they should increase a thousand times, but Joab blessed them, "May God add on to their numbers as they are, and again as much and many more than a hundred times" (II Samuel 24:3) (*Yalkut*, *ibid.*). Joab meant that the Jewish numbers should double, then that number should double, and then that number should increase 100 times! Number-wise, Joab's blessing seems to surpass Moses'. But Joab was actually conferring a different type of blessing: that after the Jews attain the level of "thousands," they would be able to draw the great light of Chokhmah into the lower levels and benefit from it (LH VII, p. 19a).

1:12 How can I carry your troubles, your burdens and your controversies all by myself?

The Three Who Said, "Eikhah—How?"

Three people said, "Eikhah—How?": Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Moses saw the Jews at their greatest height, Isaiah saw them as they were falling, and Jeremiah saw them at their lowest point (*Yalkut*, *Devarim* #801).

Moses perceived the difficulties in inculcating the Jewish people with a true sense of justice. Though he established a system of judges and courts, he well knew the problems of sustaining such a system and lamented, "Eikhah? How can I carry your troubles all by myself?" Isaiah observed the Jews after their sense of justice had been corrupted and exclaimed, "Eikhah? How is it possible that the city of justice [Jerusalem] has become a harlot?" (Isaiah 1:21)—for a perverse sense of justice leads to immorality. Justice continued to deteriorate until the Temple was destroyed, causing Jeremiah to lament, "Eikhah? How the city that was so full of people sits alone!" (Lamentations 1:1). The rectification of the destroyed Temple and, by extension, our sense of justice, will take place upon the coming of the Mashiach, who will judge righteously (LH VII, p. 13a).

1:21 God your Lord has placed the land before you. Go up and take possession

One Should Never Give Up His Desire To Do A Mitzvah

What should a person do if he desires to do a mitzvah, but cannot? For example, he wants to travel to the Holy Land, but he cannot find an available flight, or he lacks the funds, or it's a time of war, and so on. The answer is that he must never give up the desire to do the mitzvah. If he remains steadfast, the opportunity will present itself (see LH II, p. 160).

1:22 Then all of you approached me and said, "We will send men before us to spy out the land"

A Person Should Always Seek Advice

The spies did not ask Moses for advice (see Rashi on Deuteronomy 1:23). This was their principal error. Before proceeding on a serious task, a person should always ask advice from many people. And asking advice of a tzaddik is considered the equivalent of asking many advisors (LM I, 143).

KITZUR L" M WEEKLY

14 — To Draw Peace (*continued*)

13. Each person must be sure to achieve this "peace in his bones" to the fullest degree—in other words, true peace should exist between his body and his soul. Then he will certainly not wish to have any involvement in the affairs of this world, and he will only be interested in acting for the sake of his soul. Furthermore, all of his prayers will be solely in order to connect his soul [to its source]. Even when he says those parts of the prayer service that deal explicitly with physical needs, such as "Heal us" and "Bless us [in our livelihoods]" [in the *Amidah* prayer], and [prayers that deal with] other physical needs, his intention will not be for the sake of his body at all, but rather for the "livelihood" and "healing" of his soul. For in truth, when a person is rectified in the spiritual realm, he is automatically rectified in the physical realm as well, and God provides him with all his needs freely and in great abundance. But a person's intentions in his prayers must be solely for the sake of his soul.

14. We sometimes see that there are tzaddikim who undoubtedly have rectified everything about themselves spiritually, yet they do not receive abundance in the physical realm. This phenomenon occurs only due to

factors connected with the reincarnation of souls, as explained in the holy *Zohar* (II, 216) and the *Tikkuney Zohar* (#69).

15. The words of the prayers rectify strife and bring about "overall peace," or peace in all the worlds.

16. A person should accustom himself to pray for everything he lacks—be it livelihood or children or if he has a sick person [in his home], God forbid, and he seeks a cure. In all these cases, a person's primary strategy should be solely to pray to God. A person should believe in God, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, is good for everything—be it healing, livelihood and everything else—and the essence of a person's efforts [in obtaining what he needs] should be directed toward the Holy One, Blessed be He. One should not chase after all kinds of stratagems, since most of them are totally ineffective; and even for the tiny fraction of them that are effective, a person does not know about them or is unable to find them. But calling out to the Holy One, Blessed be He, is good and effective for everything in the world—and this method is always available, since God is always available.



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