

Tisha B'Av with Sir Isaac Newton

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On July 5th 1687, Isaac Newton first published his Principia Mathematica. In it he detailed the law of universal gravitation, simply known as gravity. This publication is regarded to this day, as one of the most important works in the history of science.

Approximately 120 years later, Rebbe Nachman explained how this theory contains the basis for the creation of man, the role of the Tzaddik, the Holy Temple, the Land of Israel, and other key elements of life.

Can you imagine how amazed scientists would be, to find out that Isaac Newton in fact helped unearth one of the greatest spiritual teachings of all time, and with it the reason for

all mankind. It is no wonder why every Jewish mother wants their son to be a famous scientist!

In Likutei Moharan I 70, Rebbe Nachman describes how everything is attracted to its source, being Hashem and Godliness. This draw remains forever, much as gravity never ceases. On the other hand there are forces, albeit transient, which attempt to drive a person away from this connection. The goal of these dark forces is to exert enough pressure on us to forget what we were created for in the first place. None of us are strangers to the myriad of distractions that we all face in life.

The Tzaddik is a prime example of the holy attracting force. He is described in the Torah as being the foundation of the world, the dust that draws and sustains everything. This force was attained by the Tzaddik being extremely humble, considering himself as the dust of the earth. He nullifies himself to Hashem, thus obtaining this attraction. In order for us to be attached to this force, we must attempt to attach ourselves to the Tzaddikim, as well as to see to it that we act with humility.

Another illustration of this attracting force is the Land of Israel, and specifically the Holy Temple. The Temple was a means of drawing closer to Hashem, as well as being a source for bounty in this world. (The word Mishkan, also has its roots in the word moshech, to draw in.) The destruction of the Temple came about from the evil opposing forces, those desperate to pull us away from true life.

On Tisha B'Av we mourn the destruction of our Holy Temple, and our exile from the Land. For most of the day we lower ourselves and sit on the floor, pondering what we have lost and asking Hashem to bring it all back. In order to achieve this, Reb Nosson explains that by sitting on the floor we exhibit our humility and allow the force of gravity to bring us closer to the source of all creation – Hashem.

A look at the calendar shows us that amazingly July 5th 1687 was only 4 days before Tisha B'Av of that year. Sir Isaac Newton could perhaps not have chosen a more appropriate time to publish his theory to the world.

(Based on Likutei Halachos, Yom Tov 5)