

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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TISHAH B'AV

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

WHY WE WEEP

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Part I. A Time for Weeping

Hashem Weeps in Secret

When our Sages tell us that we have to weep on Tisha B'Av, we have to know that it's not merely the weeping of a nation, of people; actually we are weeping along with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hashem is בוכה ומבכה – *He cries because He wants us to cry along with Him* (Eicha Rabbah 1:23). And so it pays to study the weeping of Hashem, to understand what He's weeping for.

And so we listen to the declaration of Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself about the exile of His people: במסתרים תבכה נפשי – *In secret places My soul weeps, because of the pride* (Yirmiyahu 13:17). It means that מקום יש להקב"ה ומסתרים שמו – *Hakadosh Baruch Hu has a secret place called mystarim, a mysterious place, and He goes there to weep for His nation in Exile* (Chagigah 5b).

Now, that requires some understanding. What does that mean, 'He weeps'? Hashem goes to His bedroom and closes the door to cry in secret? No, of course not. And so to understand this concept we have to first put all the cards on the table and say that we are not capable of actually describing

any properties of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. כִּי גָבְהוּ שָׁמַיִם מֵאָרֶץ כִּן גָּבְהוּ דַרְכֵי מִדְרָגְתֵיכֶם וּמַחְשַׁבְתֵי מַמְחָשְׁבֵיכֶם – *His thoughts are way higher than anything we could ever understand* (Yeshayah 55:9).

And yet, even though it's impossible for us to speak about Him in any precise way, He has given to men certain forms of speech which they can use to describe Him; descriptions that teach us what to think, how to think along with Divine attitudes.

The Happy One

Now, among these descriptions is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in constant *simchah*. עוֹז וְחֵדוּהָ בְּמִקְוֵמוֹ – *Strength and joy is in His place*. That's what the Gemara (Chagigah 5b) says, that בְּבֵיתִי בְּרָאִי, in His outside chambers, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is strong in His ways and happy always. He is *kulo seichel* – perfect wisdom, after all, and wisdom and happiness are synonymous. Like the *seforim* say אֵין שְׂמֵחָה כְּהִתְרַת הַסְּפָקוֹת – *when things become understandable that's the biggest simchah*. And because everything is perfectly clear to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, He is described as living in constant joy.

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Now if that's the case that Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself is always **עוֹ וְהוֹדוּהָ**, that He's always happy—and that's the truth—so what does it mean that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to weep? What does it mean that when Hashem sends us out into Golus He retires away to a hidden place where He weeps?

Two Attitudes

The answer is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't want to demonstrate any weakness, any sadness in public. After all **הַצּוֹר תָּמִים פְּעֻלוֹ** – He is perfect in all of His ways. Even when sending us out into Exile everything is being done with perfect wisdom; it's all under control and so there's nothing to cry over.

So what does it mean 'Hashem cries in secret'? It's intended as a figure of speech to teach us that there's a separate attitude that He wants us to understand of Him. Although fundamentally we have to picture Him always as perfect *seichel*, as strong and full of joy but we have to know also that **בַּמְסַתְרִים תִּבְכֶּה** – in a secret place He is weeping for us. In His **בְּתֵי גִזְאֵי**, in His inner chambers, He cries for us. In addition to our fundamental understanding of Hashem's intrinsic perfection of *seichel* and happiness, we have to take our own minds into a separate compartment of thought and picture Him as weeping in secret for us.

Why Are You Crying?

Now what's the sadness for? Why does Hashem retire to a secret chamber and weep? He's **בוֹכָה וּמְבַכָּה** – He wants us to cry along with Him, and so we have to understand, what are we weeping about?

So Hashem says **בַּמְסַתְרִים תִּבְכֶּה נִפְשֵׁי מִפְּנֵי גִוָּה** – “I'm crying because of the pride, the pride of the Am Yisroel that was lost. **מִפְּנֵי גִאוֹתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּטְלָה מֵהֶם**. **וְנִתְּנָה לְעוֹבְדֵי בּוֹכָבִים** – Because of the pride that was taken away from them and given to idolaters” (Chagigah *ibid.*).

Once upon a time, when the Jew lived in Eretz Yisroel, he knew he was an aristocrat; it was to him *sine qua non*. After all it was stated in his charter, in the Tanach, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu recognized him of all the nations and called him 'My son'. **בְּנִי בְּכוֹרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – “You're My chosen people,” Hashem said, “My beloved son.”

To Live With Pride

Again and again it's stated in our ancient charter. And because we lived only according to its charge – no other books meant anything to us – so we were a very proud nation. Every Jew was happy to demonstrate who he was. We lived as **גִּבְרִים**, proud of our chosenness. Actually proud!

Only what happened? When, because of our sins, we were driven into Exile among the nations of the world, so to a great extent that pride went lost. Instead of that confidence, that *gaavah* in being the choicest of mankind, a nation with a Divine function, we began to forget who we are.

Here is an American Jew; his last name used to be Cohen – it means 'a priest of Hashem'. But the name has been metamorphosed by means of his cringing before the gentiles and now it's C-O-N-E, like an ice cream cone. To the American Jew an ice cream cone sounds better than C-O-H-E-N which means a Priest of the Most High. And for that Hashem weeps; for His nation's pride that went lost.

Or the poor woman whose hair is covered up and she's wearing a long dress. It's hot outside and she has sleeves down to her knuckles. She should be proud. She's carrying aloft the banner of a chosen woman. And yet as she walks down the block she keeps her head down; her face is flaming because the modern women – dressed in nothing but their pocketbooks – are pointing at her and snickering, “Look at that old-fashioned one.” She's a *tzaddeikes*; she's a suffering righteous woman

but for that Hashem cries too – **מִפְּנֵי גְּוָה**, for a pride that has gone lost.

Rediscovering Our Pride

That's why we pray **ותולִיכֵנוּ קוֹמָמִיּוֹת לְאַרְצֵנוּ**: We ask that once more Hashem should lead us *upright* back to our land. Upright, with heads held high; not cringing like we have learned to cringe in *Golus*.

And Hashem weeps for that because it's not enough that we should be merely a *frum*, pious nation. That's not enough. It's of the utmost importance that we should know that we and no one else are the purpose of the world, that what we're doing is important and what the *umos haolam* are doing is nothing; it's just background noise.

All the gatherings of the gentiles, even when tens of thousands come, for rock carnivals, to view baseball games, to listen to opera, it's all *hevel varik!* It's much ado about nothing. What happens in Congress when a mob of politicians come together is entirely meaningless. Hashem is entirely uninterested.

When we come together in our *beis hakenesses* or in the yeshivah, that's the big news of the day. When a father sits down with his son and they're learning together **שְׁנִים אוֹחֲזִים בְּטִלִּית**, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu is all attention. When a *rebbe* in a *yeshivah ketanah* is saying *kametz alef ah*, or when the *rosh yeshivah* is saying a *shiur* in the yeshivah then it's big news in the world. The *chiddushim* in the yeshivah, that's what's uppermost in the world.

The Eyes are Fooled

Now that's easy to say but in Exile we lost that true attitude. We say it but we don't feel it. After all, it's very difficult to contradict what your eyes see. Here you sneak in to a little *shtiebel* on the side to *daven* Mincha and outside is a big stormy

world; people are going places, traffic, cars, sounds, airliners.

The newspapers have big headlines about everything else; all the puny things, the little ideals, the picayunes, the trivialities, are made big. And so gradually, day by day in *Golus*, it weakens our pride; it weakens our understanding that what we were created for is infinitely more important.

Here's a man on *motzaei Shabbos* he goes to a little *melaveh malkah* someplace. Outside, everybody is traveling; Saturday night! There are cars racing down Ocean Parkway in both directions. Traveling where? Who cares? Not Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He's interested in that *melaveh malkah*, where they're singing to Hashem and saying *sippurei tzaddikim*. He's interested in the lady in her house who's cleaning up after Shabbos, who's putting her children to bed, saying Shema with them.

It's true – even more true than you imagine – but as much as we say it, as much as we know it's true, the feeling is gone. **מִפְּנֵי גְּוָה שְׁנִטְלָה מֵהֶם** – *Our ancient pride is no longer*. We can't even *imagine* what it once was. In Eretz Yisroel, when the Beis Hamikdash stood, we were **גְּאִים**, we were proud. We felt it in our bones! We knew that we were the *Am Ram*, the exalted nation, and that it's only us fulfilling our function that matters.

And now, in Exile, it's no more; and it's for this that Hashem weeps. “I weep **מִפְּנֵי גְּאוֹתֵן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל** – *because of the pride of the Jewish people*, **שְׁנִטְלָה מֵהֶם** – *it was taken away from them.*” Hashem weeps because of what once was; when the entire nation – men and women, boys and girls – knew that they were it. They were a nation of **גְּאִים**, of proud ones.

Part II. Happy Days

Proper Pride

Now, when the Am Yisroel says “we're proud”, it's not for the sake of nothing; it's not that we

should march down 5th Avenue with blue and white flags. It's not that we have a state, or a language. It's not 'Jewish cuisine' or 'Jewish scientists'; that's a nothing-pride. Of course, we're happy to have Jewish doctors and Jewish judges and Jewish plumbers; why not? But that's not our pride. We're proud for one reason and one reason only – because we are chosen by Hakadosh Baruch Hu!

And even that's not the whole story. Because what we are chosen for, that's what matters. We're chosen by Hakadosh Baruch Hu for an especial purpose, to fulfill an especial function in this world. Oh, that's something else already – we are proud because we were created by the Ribono Shel Olam for a certain purpose.

Our Purpose is Praise

And it's based on a statement in Yeshayah Hanavi, a statement we should keep always before our eyes because it's the secret to everything. Do you want to know why you are in this world? You want to know your function here in this world as a Jew, what Hakadosh Baruch Hu expects of you? So listen what Yeshayah Hanavi says in the name of Hashem: **עַם זֶה יִצְרַתִּי לִי תְהִלָּתִי יִסְפְּרוּ** – *I created this nation for Me, so that they should relate My praises* (Yeshayah 43:21).

Now, we have to listen to these words carefully because it's not merely some vacuous expression that you might hear from somebody with a literary tendency; this is actually the fundamental teaching of the Torah. "I created You for Me!" We were created for Him! And what does it mean for Him? **תְּהִלָּתִי יִסְפְּרוּ** – You're in this world to speak the greatness of Hashem! *Now you know why you were created.*

Now I'm sure many people, even *frummeh*, don't realize that; they have other ideas. That's why it's good you came here tonight, so that you should hear what Hakadosh Baruch Hu says about

this subject: **עַם זֶה יִצְרַתִּי לִי** – *You want to know why I created this nation?* **תְּהִלָּתִי יִסְפְּרוּ** – *So that that they should speak My praises.*

The True Jewish Occupation

It's as clear as could be and so make no mistake about it: The Jew's job in life is to sing about the greatness of Hashem. You're a doctor? A street cleaner? No, that's not it; that's just a sideline. If you're a Jew you have only one profession. **תְּהִלָּתִי יִסְפְּרוּ!** *You're a praiser of Hashem.* That's why we were made and that's why we're proud. We're a proud nation because we were especially chosen to fulfill the function of singing the praises of Hashem.

That's what it means you're a Yehudi; that's the name of our nation today, Yehudim. And you know what that word means? Yehudah is the archaic form of *yodeh*. Like Yosef means 'he shall add' but the old form was Yehosef, with the *hei*: **עֲרוֹת בִּיהוֹסֵף**. So *yehudah* means *yodeh*, 'he shall praise'; Yehudim means those who praise. And Whom do they praise? There's only One thing that we praise: **ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ**.

When you get up in the morning open your eyes, first thing, **מוֹדֵה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ**. What does *modeh* mean? Yehudah! I give thanks; I praise You Hashem. And at night when you go to bed your last words speak the praises of Hashem: **שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ**. That's how you finish the day's work.

But not only in the morning and the evening; it means you start in the morning and you finish at night but you're busy *all day long* singing of the glories of Hashem. That's your job. A cup of water? **בִּרְכּוּ אֶת הַשֵּׁם**. You're breathing? **הַלְּלוּ**! The Medrash says that **עַל כָּל נְשִׁימָה וְנְשִׁימָה** – *for every single breath you owe a Hallel*. You see the blue sky? Sing to Hashem! A cloudy sky? Sing a different song. You're walking? Your knees are functioning? Your heart is pumping? **לֹא זָמְרוּ לֹא** – *Sing to Him!* And you shouldn't forget about this

function even for a minute. **תְּהַלְתִּי יְסַפְּרוּ** – *Relate His praises*. Anything you do in this world should be a song to Hashem.

Praise Hashem At Work

So you'll say when will I have time to take care of my computer? When will I have time to do my other chores?

The answer is that when you're banging away on the computer you're doing it only as one who is composing a song to Hashem; that's how you should think. Why are you working? You want to pay the rent for a family of *yehudim*, a wife and children who sing the praises of Hashem. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know. You need big money to support a *frum* Jewish home, a home of *tehillos Hashem*.

You want to pay *sechar limud* for your children who will sing to Hashem. You want to give *tzedakah* to help *yeshivos* that will sing to Hashem. You want to support yourself so that every morning and night you can sing to Hashem in the shul. And on Shabbos all day long you'll sing to Hashem. And so everything you do should be with a *kavanah lesheim Shomayim*; for the purpose of singing songs of praise to Hakadosh Baruch Hu! That's a fundamental attitude – whatever we do we are singing praises to Hashem.

The Ancient Song

When you learn Torah, it's a song to Hashem. When you do *mitzvos*, when you are putting on *tefillin*, you are singing a song to Hashem, you are praising His greatness. When you sit in the *succah*, when you nail a *mezuzah* on your door, whatever you do, remember first and foremost that it's a demonstration of your fulfillment of your vocation in *Olam Haze*; you're demonstrating the greatness of Hashem. Why else would you nail a piece of parchment on the doorway? Why else would you move into a hut for eight days? Why

else would you go out to the *beis medrash* at night to *daven* to Him and learn His Torah?

Everything we do, a whole nation altogether, it's a beautiful orchestra of songs to the One Who created our nation for that purpose. And that's why we're proud. **לְהוֹדוֹת לַשֵּׁם קָרָשִׁידָּ לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בְּתוֹהֲלֹתָיָהּ** – Our pride is that we were the ones chosen to fulfill this function!

Now, when did we best live up to this function? When were we a nation that was most proud about being chosen for this purpose?

The answer is before the *Churban*, in the days when we were all together in *Eretz Yisroel*. For hundreds of years, from the days of *Yehoshua* down to the *Churban*, we lived according to that high ideal of **תְּהַלְתִּי יְסַפְּרוּ**. We lived for the purpose of praising Hashem.

The King and His Nobles

Just as an example we'll choose one of the best times – when *Dovid* was our king. When *Dovid Hamelech* sat in his palace surrounded by a big company of *yarei Hashem*, what did they do? They all together were singing to Hashem. People don't realize that. *Dovid* was surrounded by a group of enthusiastic devoted men who spent their lives speaking about the greatness of Hashem and singing to Him.

That's what it means **יִשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֹשֵׂיו** – *the Am Yisroel was joyful in their Creator*, **בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן –** *when the sons of Tziyon*, **יִגְּלוּ בְּמַלְכָּם** – *rejoiced in their king* (*Tehillim* 149:2). The *bnei Tziyon* were the important people of *Yerushalayim* – the noblemen, the wealthy, the aristocracy – and they specialized in singing to Hashem. They sat in the palace and *Dovid* sat among them with his harp and together they all sang a chorus of praises to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You hear that? The king and his people were in the palace talking about Hashem and singing His praises. Not figuratively – they were actually singing.

They studied Torah too but even that was a song to Hashem. Remember, it was Dovid who said *זְמֵרוֹת הָיוּ לִי הַקִּיָּה* – *Your laws were my songs*. The Gemara says that Dovid was criticized for that but that's only a poetic criticism. After all we still say those words, *זְמֵרוֹת הָיוּ לִי הַקִּיָּה*; it's not erased, we say it all the time. It means that when Dovid and the *bnei Tziyon* learned *אַרְבָּעָה אַבוֹת* *אֲרֵיבָנִים*, when they learned *יְצִיאַת הַשָּׁבֶת*, or *בִּיצָה שְׁנוּלָדָה*, *בִּיצָה שְׁנוּלָדָה*, whatever they learned, it was a way of singing a song of praise to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Mesichta Bava Kama was one tune, Mesichta Shabbos another tune. And so everything they did was with this function in mind; it was all included in *שִׁירֵי הָדוֹד עֲבָדָה*.

A Proud Generation

Now when a king and aristocrats, the noblemen, are all together singing to Hashem you know what kind of effect that has on the people? The common people always imitate the rulers and the wealthy class. And in Dovid's time everybody who was important, all the *bnei Tziyon*, came to Dovid and *יָגִילוּ בְּמֶלְכָם* – *they rejoiced in their King*.

Who was their king? Not Dovid, no! Hashem was the King! Dovid said that constantly and he said it in prose. He was the one who loved Hashem with all his heart and he was able to express it. He was a beautiful harpist and he played on his harp the most beautiful songs. He was *נָעִים זְמֵרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל*, the sweet singer of Yisroel, because he had a knack for making people inspired by his words. His songs were contagious.

The *bnei Tziyon* came marching forth from his palace and they were humming the tunes and repeating the words and the common people caught it up. And everyone heard and was inspired and they sang together. Everybody was singing the *שִׁירֵי הָדוֹד עֲבָדָה*, the songs of Dovid Your servant. Make no mistake about it, the entire Jewish nation in Eretz Yisroel were singing the praises of Hashem with all their heart in Dovid's time.

Proud Generations

And it continued on in the time of Shlomo Hamelech. Of course Dovid was greater than Shlomo Hamelech – he was the originator – but his son, Shlomo, took Dovid's ideals and spread them even further.

More or less that was the picture of the Jewish nation when we were sitting safely and strongly on our land. At that time the glory of Hashem was uppermost in the world. Who cared that in the far reaches of the world there were savages? Who cared that there were idol worshippers? Even if they would be modern savages, evolutionists, atheists, materialists, who cares? That doesn't weaken our pride a bit. The purpose of the world was being fulfilled right here in Eretz Yisroel.

The Jewish nation is singing Dovid's songs! The people are living with the ideals that sprung forth from the heart of Dovid and all the *tzaddikim*. A nation that is fulfilling the fundamental principle of our purpose in this world: *עַם זֶה יָצַרְתִּי לִי תְהַלְתִּי* – *This people I created for Me that they should relate My praise (ibid.)*.

And about that period of our history there the expression was used *יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו* – *The glory of Hashem should continue forever and Hashem should rejoice in His handiwork (Tehillim 104:31)*. Because at that time we glorified Hashem – and we glorified in this function – so He rejoiced in the Am Yisroel.

Part III. A Happy World

Enjoying Compliments

Now it's important to interject one valuable comment here; otherwise we'll lose the gist of the subject. Why was Hakadosh Baruch Hu so happy when they were singing His praises? Does it make any difference to Hashem if a trillion human beings would get together and praise Him? It wouldn't make the slightest difference. Hakadosh

Baruch Hu is too strong to be influenced by such things.

We are weaklings. If even one person says a compliment it makes our day. Ah! For the whole day we're full of joy; because we're weaklings so it tickles our nerves. It tickles our vanity and therefore we're happy for the rest of the day. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu is sublimely superior to all that. So why does He rejoice in the work of His hands just because we recognize His greatness and sing His praises?

A World of Kindness

Now pay attention because it's a fundamental principle. עוֹלָם הָסֵד יִבְנֶה - *Hakadosh Baruch Hu made this world for the purpose of doing kindness* (ibid 89:3). Kindliness for whom? For man. You see that everything was made for man.

There's metal in the earth. Do wolves use metal? Do lions use metal? Only mankind uses metal. And mankind uses lions too. Mankind kills lions and uses their skins. תַּמְשִׁילֶהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְרִידָה - *Hashem, You gave man dominion over all the works of Your hand* (Tehillim 8:7).

כָּל שִׁפְתֵי תַחַת רַגְלָיו - You Hashem have placed everything under man's feet, under man's control (ibid.). Why is it when you walk in the streets, you see sidewalks of cement everywhere. Who needs cement? Do birds need cement? Do animals need cement? Only man needs cement. The tar that paves the streets? Only mankind needs the tar; and miles and miles of roads are paved with the tar. Miles and miles of sidewalks. And so you see that mankind is getting what he needs.

If there are potatoes that grow in the earth, it's for man. If there are apples on trees, it's for man. And why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu make everything for man? Because He wanted to give man kindness. He's trying to make us happy. He supplies us not with colorless and tasteless food just to keep us alive. No; He supplies us with food

with a pleasant taste, with pleasant aromas. Even with colors; He gives a little blush to the pear. On one cheek, the pear is blushing a little bit. It makes it look better.

He makes the orange beautiful; a beautiful yellow, almost orange. Yellow bananas and red apples. Blueberries and raspberries. He gives color to the things we eat because He's feeding us בְּחֵן וּבְרַחֲמִים. Not only He's giving us what we need to exist but He gives us with kindness.

A Double Kindness

But there are two kinds of kindness and you have to understand both of them. You know, when a guest comes to your house and you take out an apple from the refrigerator and you wash it off and polish it and now a bright shiny apple is served to your guest on a plate, so you're doing two forms of kindness to your guest. One, you're giving him the pleasure of eating a delicious apple. An apple is fun. It's a refreshing drink. An apple is a food but it's a drink too; and it's nourishing. No question about it, it's a *chessed*.

But there's a greater kindness that you're giving him, more than just an apple. Because when he looks at the apple, if he is a man of discretion he'll think "Look what a beautiful creation that is. 'It looks almost natural'. Who produced such a product? A luscious food-drink, flavored not too sour and not too sweet, exactly suited to the needs of men. And it's wrapped in such a beautiful wrapper with colors and tints that make it attractive".

The True Delight of Apples

So the guest is thinking – remember, we're talking now about a good guest who wants to get everything he can out of this apple; so he's thinking, "How did that happen? Where did it come from? Was it DuPont Chemical Corporation that produced that apple? You mean to say it came by itself? Could such a thing happen by itself? A

miracle of packaging and flavoring. Oh no! There must be a great Chef with a capital C Who could produce such a concoction.”

And then when he opens up the apple inside there are some coupons entitling him to some more apples. All he needs is to spit them out on the ground and an apple tree will grow. How did that happen? Seeds, reproduction. ‘An accident’ of reproduction? Are you crazy? Can there be an accident of reproduction? And so the apple seeds demonstrate that there's a Great Designer for the universe.

And so when you're giving your guest an apple you're giving him knowledge. That's the biggest gift you can give him, to help him recognize there's a Creator. Of course, he knows there's a Creator; he's a *frum* Jew. His mother and father told him so and his *rebbe* too. But as he's chewing on the apple he's knowing it more and more.

Delighting in Hashem

And so the apple is a delightful way of learning about Hashem. As you were told many times here, if a Gemara would be printed on sponge cake and as you're studying the Gemara you're chewing a little bit of the big margins and enjoying it, ah that would make it an even more *geshmake sugya*. Ah! Such a delicious subject, this *sugya*. And you bite off a little bit of the *Gilyon Hashas* and you chew it. “Ah! A pleasure to read this.”

It's a delight to study about the Creator from an apple. And as the apple goes into your insides and begins to spread its benevolent nourishment throughout your body, it's the benevolent nourishment of your mind that's even more important. The *emunah* that you gain from the apple is even more important.

So now after the guest takes the napkin that you offer him and wipes off his lips and makes a *borei nefashos*, he thanks Hashem for the apple; but he thanks Hashem for the bigger gift of true

knowledge which he acquired by means of the apple. That's the biggest kindness you can give anybody. It's the biggest kindness you can give yourself! More *emunah*!

Hashem's Joy

And so when Hashem sees that you're enjoying the apple He's happy. “Ah! You're hungry?” he says, “Take an apple, My child, and enjoy it. That's why I'm making it colored.” An apple could look like a potato; it could be the same color. But we wouldn't enjoy it that much. So He colors it; and He gives flavors to it. “My child take an apple and enjoy it.” Certainly He's happy that you like His apples.

But when He sees that you're getting the real benefit of the apple – that you're learning about the Creator – Hashem is certainly more full of joy. He rejoices because you're complimenting Him? Because you're praising Him? No! He's happy because you're gaining what is most important to gain. You're achieving our function for which we were created – awareness of Hashem and singing His praises. That's how the *chessed* Hashem is being fulfilled in the greatest possible manner.

And that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu made *everything* in this world, for the great kindness of helping mankind recognize Him. Like Dovid Hamelech says in *Ashrei*; we say it too, every day, only we're unaware of what we're saying. What is the world made for? **יְרוּדָהּ ה' כָּל מַעֲשָׂיוֹ** – *All of Your deeds praise You*. You hear that? The purpose of Your deeds, of Your handiwork is that they should praise You.

A Joyful Summer

The apple praises You. The peach praises You. Ah! A peach, beautiful pink cheeks. The plum praises You. The red cherry praises You. A watermelon, ah a delicious red watermelon – it praises You.

Not only fruit; I mention fruit because it's the summertime now. It's the best time to go on a trip to a fruit store and sing to Hashem; that's the purpose of summertime fruit, for singing. But in the winter the snow praises Hashem; the winds praise Hashem. And in the rainy season the clouds and the rain. All things are praising You, Hashem. That's why You made them.

And that's why You made the Am Yisroel; so that we especially should be the ones in this world whose function it is to fulfill the purpose of creation. **עם זו יצרת לי** – *This one nation, I created,* **תהלת יספרו** – *they are the ones who will speak My praises.*

The Creator Rejoices in His People

And that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu rejoiced most when we were living together as one nation in our land. Because it was one nation under G-d. Dovid Hamelech and his company sat in the evenings or in the mornings or sometimes all day and they sang songs to the Creator, thanking Hashem for His kindness. And these songs went forth from the palace and were hummed and repeated by the entire nation. A whole nation that understood their function in this world.

Even long after Dovid, for many centuries, the spirit of **עם זו יצרת לי תהלת יספרו** poured out of the gates of Yerushalayim into the suburbs and into the rest of Eretz Yisroel. And so it was a nation, **באיש אחר בלב אחר**, proud of its function and living up to their purpose to the greatest extent possible.

And so, **ישמח ה' במעשיו** – Hakadosh Baruch Hu rejoiced in His nation during those great days when we lived on our land because it was a nation that was achieving all the results that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had intended when He made the world. And so He rejoiced in our greatness, in the perfection we achieved because of our pride.

Part IV. A Sad World

From Rejoicing to Crying

And now Hakadosh Baruch Hu views the ruins of Yerushalayim, of the nation that lived with the ideals of Yerushalayim. The spirit of Dovid, the heart of the nation, has been stilled. The nation was chased off their land and the glorious atmosphere that we had then, the inspiration and idealism that the nation absorbed and achieved, their perfection in this function of **תהלת יספרו**, abruptly came to an end.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu cries about that. Not because their land was taken away but because their pride, the pride in living for the ultimate purpose, was taken away. And more than taken away, it was given to the nations of the world: **אמר רב שמואל בר יצחק** – *Rav Shmuel bar Yitzchak said,* **מפני גאותן של ישראל שננטלה מהם** – *Hashem cries because of the pride that was taken away from the Am Yisroel,* **ונתנה לעובדי בוכבים** – *and it was given to idolaters.*

Stolen Valor

It was taken away, that's a *halbe tzarah*. But it was also given to the *goyim*! Oh, that's a knife in the heart of our nation. Because when we lived together in Eretz Yisroel, in our ascendancy, it was easy to live with the ideal that Hashem told us: **כל הגוים מאפס ותהו נחשבו לו** – *All the other nations of the world are considered to Me like nothing* (Yeshayah 40:17). I'm interested only in you.

Hashem says **הן גוים כמר מדלי** – *the nations are to Me like a drop that drips on the outside of a bucket* (*ibid.* 40:15). When you draw a bucket of water from the well and underneath the bucket there's hanging a little drop, is that important compared to the water inside the bucket? **וכשחקו מאזנים נחשבו** – *They're considered to Me like the dust on the scales* (*ibid.*) When you put on the scales to weigh something and after you finish weighing, you take off the merchandise and some

dust falls off from the merchandise onto the scale; it's unimportant. We are the water in the bucket; we are the merchandise.

Visible Glory

Now, it was easy to live with those ideals when we were together under Dovid Hamelech. After all, Dovid conquered all the nations around and they all brought tribute to him. In Shlomo Hamelech's time tribute poured in from all the surrounding kingdoms. So it's easier to understand the greatness of Yisroel when you see that physically they also are in the ascendancy. And so we lived confidently, proudly. That was their attitude – here is where the news is being made! Our lives, our *avodas Hashem*, that's what matters in the world!

But then it was 'taken from us and given to them'. We were dispersed among the nations and now we're no longer the leaders in world history. Of course, we still are because even today Hakadosh Baruch Hu thinks only of us always; but our greatness was taken away from us – where it really belongs – and it was given to gentiles.

The World Upside Down

Everything now is in the hands of those who are not fulfilling the purpose of the world. The gentiles have the big cities; they have the big schools, big cathedrals. They have statues and skyscrapers. They build big museums and stadiums and universities.

The gentiles have the newspapers. You pick up a newspaper – do you read about the Creator? Everything but! Bush and Gore, who won the election, yes. But the Creator and the Am Yisroel, no.

Now, if Gore would have been in competition with Bush about learning *Mishnayos* let's say, and Bush would have learned one more *mesichta* than Gore, ok. But to be President, it's *hevel va'rik*;

there's nothing to it. Nothing to it at all. Now, Bush is surely excited about it; *oy vey* is he excited! And maybe we get excited as well. Alright, could be. But Hashem is not excited about it *at all*.

What is Hashem excited about? If a man is sitting and learning *Mesillas Yesharim*. A man who is making progress in learning *Gemara*. If a girl is trying to become more and more of an *oived Hashem*; someone who is *midakdeik b'mitzvos*. That's what He loves! That's what's important to Him! The other things, the 'big' things, are very insignificant to Him.

Golus is an עולם הפוך, an upside-down world. Everything that is important is on the bottom. And everything that is unimportant in this world, it is on the top.

A Deprived Nation

And that's a great tragedy because our minds are being deprived of the truth. The attitudes of the nations have percolated into the best Jewish circles. Even the observant Jews are suffering under the disability of the opinions of the *umos ha'olam*; we're influenced.

Other things become important. Politics. Money. Driving on the highways. Little things. But תהלתִי יִסְפְּרוּ? No. And that creates a confusion, and we lose sight of the truth that it's the Am Yisroel fulfilling their function, that's what matters in the world. Even if we know that *Golus* is an upside down world, but it creates a weakening in our minds.

And that's why Jews go lost among the *goyim* in Exile – וְאֲבִרְתֶּם בְּגוֹיִם. We're still *frum* – some are very, very *frum* – but so many are not fulfilling the purpose of their lives; to be *Yehudim*, praisers of Hashem. עַם זֶה יִצְרַתִּי לִי – *The people I created for Me*, תהלתִי יִסְפְּרוּ – *so that they should say My praises and gain awareness of Me*.

And so Hakadosh Baruch Hu weeps for us; He's not weeping for Himself because it makes no

difference at all to Him. He weeps for the greatness that our nation deserves, that our nation needs in order to be most successful in its function. He's weeping because the Am Yisroel is falling behind in its function in *Golus*. And when we weep, we are weeping along with Him. We cry over what went lost from our nation.

The Silver Lining

Now, you have to remember that this weeping for our pride is done in secret; Hashem is crying *bamystarim*, behind closed doors. And that means that we too, even though we have to cry about *גְּאוֹתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּטְלָה מֵהֶם וְנִתְּנָה לְעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים* – *the pride that was taken away from us and given to idolaters*, it's in a secret compartment in the back of our minds.

Why in secret? Because we have to know always that even in *Golus* we are a happy and confident nation – *עַז וְחֹדֶה בְּמִקְוָמוֹ*. That's what Hashem teaches us that always we are a strong, happy nation, confident in our mission.

Only that we have a tinge of sadness in a secret compartment of our minds as a reminder to ourselves about what Hashem wants from us. It's a weeping for the pride that we have to try to regain even while we're in *Golus*; the pride of being *Yehudim*, praisers of Hashem.

And we can do it. It's more difficult but to a great extent we can achieve our purpose even in *Golus*; we can be a successful nation, an accomplished nation. If a person wants to, if he understands his purpose and he ignores all the falsehoods of *Golus* he can do it – even in America or in England or Australia. Even in Siberia. And so that tinge of sadness, the weeping in a secret place in our minds, always reminds us that we have a function in this world: the function of *תְּהִלַּתֵי יִסְפָּרוּ*. And even though our function is being stifled in *Golus*, as long as we recognize our purpose in this

world, then even in *Golus* we reinvigorate our pride and live successfully *and happily*.

Part V. A Different Weeping

Going Public

But that's not the whole story. Because the Gemara there tells us that there's one thing that causes Hakadosh Baruch Hu to cry in public; He weeps even *בְּבֵיתוֹ הַבְּחוּצִים*, in His outside chambers. That's what the Navi Yeshaya (22:12) says: *וַיִּקְרָא ה' אֱלֹקִים צְבָאוֹת בְּיוֹם הַהוּא וַלְמַסְפָּד וּלְמִסְפָּד וּלְקִרְחָה וְלַחֲגֹר שֶׁקָּרָא* – *Hashem proclaimed on that day, for weeping, and for mourning, and to put on sackcloth. He declares a time of public weeping!*

And so the Gemara asks, isn't that a contradiction? Above you said Hashem weeps in secret – you quoted so from the Navi – and here it says *וַיִּקְרָא לְבָבִי*, that He *proclaims* a public weeping. It's a *kasha*.

So the Gemara answers as follows: *שֶׁאֲנִי חֹרְבֵן בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ* – *The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, that's a different subject, וְדִאֲפִלוּ מְלַאכֵי שָׁלוֹם בָּבוּ* – *because even the angels weep for that*. The *Golus*, the exile from our land and the pride that went lost, that's one thing; but the Mikdash is something else. The Beis Hamikdash is something entirely different and even the *malachim* – the *malachim* are intended as a model for us – even they cry.

A Different Story

And so we have now two different subjects. The first is what we spoke about until now; the subject of going into Exile and losing sight of our superiority and our function as the chosen nation that's a cause of sadness to Hashem. He weeps *bamystarim*, in a private place, because of that.

But when it comes to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, that's a different story. Then it's *וַיִּקְרָא ה' לְבָבִי וְלַמַּסְפָּד*; Hashem proclaims a public weeping. He's not ashamed to picture Himself

kaviyachol, as if He's shedding tears. And that means that He wants us to shed tears too; he wants us to understand that this is something to weep about. **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** our mourning is not a secret matter. On Tisha B'Av we sit on the floor, the whole nation together, and we make a public mourning; we shed copious tears for the loss of the Beis Hamikdash.

Now let's understand that. Why is the Mikdash different?

A Nation Without a Heart

You have to understand that the Beis Hamikdash isn't just something in our history; that we're a nation and also we once had a Beis Hamikdash. No, that's not right – the Beis Hamikdash is *the heart of the nation*. If a person is missing his heart is he a person?

The purpose of Yetzias Mitzrayim, of the birth of our nation, was **מִקְדָּשׁ ה' בּוֹנֵנו יִרְדּוּ**, that they should establish that Mishkan; that was the purpose. It says that openly in the Chumash (Shemos 29:46): **אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁכְנִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם**. “I took you out of Mitzrayim for one purpose – not merely you should be a *frum* nation and keep the Torah. That's very good but it's not enough. I took you out **לְשִׁכְנִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם**, so that my Shechina should dwell among you. Not that you should be able to bring *korbanos* or have a mitzvah of being *oleh regel* – it's so that I should live with you.”

And that's why right away when they came out of Mitzrayim Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to tell the people: **וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ** – *They should make for Me a sanctuary*, **וְשִׁכְנֵתִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם** – *and I'll move in there and I'll dwell in their midst* (ibid. 25:8).

Are You Serious?!

Now these words, because of habit, don't have an effect on us but the first time they were said, they were stunning. Moshe Rabbeinu couldn't believe his ears. “What do you mean we'll make a

מִלֵּא כָּל הָאָרֶץ?! But **מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ**?! You fill the whole universe with Your glory!

You know what it means ‘the universe’? If you would sit down in a speed craft that travels with the velocity of light and you start now, you wouldn't reach the outermost spaces of this universe in thousands of light years. Thousands of light years! That's how great this universe is. It's even bigger than that. Every year the scientists are updating their knowledge. Oh, it's bigger than we told you last time. It's tremendously big, more than they could imagine.

And so Moshe and the nation were dumbfounded: “You're telling me that the Master of the Universe, the One Who created and manages and supervises this tremendous creation of the universe declares, ‘Make for Me a little edifice and I'm going to move out of the universe and I'll move into that little edifice’?!” It boggles the mind! “How could it be? You mean to say You'll forsaking space and concentrate Your vast endlessness into one little place?”

Experiencing Divinity

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu said “Never mind your surprise. You go ahead and do it. Make it according to My specifications and I'll take care of the rest. I promise you that **וְשִׁכְנֵתִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם**. I'm going to move in because you, My nation, you're everything to Me. You're the purpose of creation and I want you to know that, to feel it, to experience it, in the best way possible.”

Now as I said before, words and comprehension are many times very far apart. We can say the words but it needs a great deal of effort to comprehend them. How could He come? Is Hakadosh Baruch Hu a body? We can't even try to describe it. But our nation experienced it! That's what matters. We experienced it!

And the people became so inspired it went into their bones; the Awareness of Hashem, which

is the purpose of life, transformed them from head to toe.

The Epitome of Happiness

It made them also the most happy people on the face of the earth. “We don't need any other form of happiness,” they said. “This is it!” Because the yearning of the human soul is to see Hashem. רְצוֹנָנוּ לְרֹאוֹת אֶת מַלְכֵנוּ Hashem. – Our yearning is to see Hashem.

Retzoneinu! That's the only thing! If you have a yearning for anything else in this world, you don't realize that you're being duped. You think you're longing for travel. You think you're longing for pleasures. You think you're longing for money. You think you're longing for good times. No; you're longing to see Hashem!

Only that man doesn't know it; he thinks he's yearning for something else so he looks for substitutes to still that yearning. It's like a man who is hungry and he thinks he'll chew paper and that will cure his hunger. For the moment you deceive yourself but chewing paper won't nourish you. You spit it out and you'll still be hungry.

And so all the substitutes, all the good times, after they're over leave a man with an empty feeling; “This is not really what I wanted.” That's why all the people who revel, go to entertainment, go to affairs, they come home with an empty feeling. The movie ends, the lights go off, and you walk out into a dark street. That's not it. We've been deceived. We've been had! Because the human soul yearns for Hashem. That's all he wants.

Olam Haba in Olam Hazeih

And so if the Shechina comes among us, that's the highest form of fulfillment and happiness a person can experience in this world. It's actually *me'ein Olam Haba*; it's something like Olam Haba. Because that is the World to Come; צְדִיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים בְּרֵאשִׁיהֶם – The righteous sit with crowns

on their heads, וְנִהְיִין מְזִיזֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה – and they enjoy the delight of the splendor of the Shechina. That's the greatest form of happiness that Hashem Himself could invent. He can't make anything better than that because He can't make anything better than Himself! And so to have such a demonstration of Hashem's Presence, that He lives among us, there's nothing like it.

That's why Yerushalayim was called מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ, the joy of all the world. Because the Beis Hamikdash, the Home of Hashem, was there. It was the city of our glory, the city of our happiness, because there they gained what was the most necessary desire of the human soul, that feeling of the closeness of Hashem. The Beis Hamikdash requited the fundamental yearning in the heart of every human being, what we want more than anything else.

More than anything else in the world the Beis Hamikdash did that and so when we had that, we had everything! The awareness that the *Shechinah* resided among the nation, the people felt that this is the greatest happiness above which there is nothing greater in this world.

Charging the Nation

And that gave the nation the charge, the energy, to fulfill our destiny to the highest degree. His Presence in the midst of our nation! It's one thing to know that we have a function of singing His praises, but it's something else entirely when He's living among you, when He demonstrates not merely in teachings, not merely in theories, but He demonstrates by His actual Presence that He is with us.

Nothing could bring the clarity of perception of *emunah* as much as the Beis Hamikdash with the Presence of Hashem there. It had an unfailing effect on everybody. We cannot realize how living with the Beis Hamikdash transformed our forefathers.

And our nation lived that way generation after generation. Even though after a while they became habituated, they became somewhat dulled by habit, nevertheless the Beis Hamikdash that was in their midst always fulfilled its function. The Beis Hamikdash provided our nation with an actual awareness of Hashem's presence, the success for which men are created.

Part VI. Open Mourning

A Reason to Cry

And so when that went lost then Hakadosh Baruch Hu declared a public mourning because that's everything! When it came to the destruction of the Mikdash even Hakadosh Baruch Hu – the One about Whom it says *עַז וְחֶדְוָה בְּמִקְוָמוֹ*, the One Who is always happy – even He announces *לְבָבִי וּלְקִרְחָה*, *a day of weeping and mourning*, *וּלְחֹגֵר שֶׁק*, *and putting on sackcloth*.

Because His happiness is when we are fulfilling our function. *יִשְׂמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו* – *Hashem is happy with His people when we live up to our purpose of* *עַם זֶה יִצְרָתִי לִי תְהִלָּתִי יִסְפְּרוּ*. And without the Beis Hamikdash we are an orphaned nation because that was the place that made it most easy to see Hashem.

That is the essence of our mourning. We're mourning primarily not for the destruction of Yerushalayim and the loss of Eretz Yisroel – which in itself is a tremendous catastrophe. I would like to explain to you more what Yerushalayim meant to us. We don't have time however. We need a long time to understand what it means the loss of Yerushalayim. We need a very long time to explain what it means the loss of Eretz Yisroel. It needs a great deal of talk to explain.

But whatever we'll say is nothing compared to the loss of the Beis Hamikdash. Because the Beis Hamikdash, that's the place from where the human soul was recharged with a new energy,

from where it received that mysterious power of confidence, of awareness that Hakadosh Baruch Hu fills the entire universe with His Presence.

Message Of The Mikdash

From the Beis Hamikdash came forth the awareness that Hashem is in the trees. Hashem is in the wind. Hashem is in the thunder. Like Dovid Hamelech stood at the seashore and said *קוֹל ה' עַל הַיָּם* – *the voice of Hashem is over the waters* (Tehillim 29:3). He wasn't saying poetry. He was saying what he experienced.

And so from the Beis Hamikdash came forth that great message that made all the people of Yisroel fulfill the purpose of their lives. All the greatness of our nation, greatness that we can only dream about, came from the holiness that poured out of the Mikdash, the Home of Hashem.

They lived in the shadow of Hashem. On the streets people greeted each other with the words *Hashem imachem*; because Hashem was top of mind. If you look in Tanach every Jewish name had the name of Hashem in it. The spirit of Hashem filled the atmosphere and it came out of the Beis Hamikdash.

Living With Awe

If we could view how the *kohanim* walked slowly doing the sacrifices we would become so overwhelmed with true genuine intrinsic piety. They were dressed with especial garments of white linen; everyone was dressed exactly in the same uniform. And as they walked through the courtyard of the Beis Hamikdash in the *azarah*, they walked slowly, one foot was just behind the other; that's how they walked, with fear, with the utmost reverence.

Like it states at the end of Shemoneh Esrei when we yearn for the days of old and we ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to restore the Beis Hamikdash: *וְשֵׁם נִעְבְּרָךְ בִּירְאָה כִּימֵי עוֹלָם וּכְשָׁנִים קְדָמוֹנִיּוֹת*

– There we should serve You once more in fear, in the greatest of awe, like the olden days and the years that passed by.

Anyone who saw that became deeply impressed that here was the palace of a *Melech Gadol*; a great King resides here and everyone who enters the premises steps with the utmost awe. And all those who witnessed this became impressed and it never forsook them for the rest of their lives.

And so the Beis Hamikdash was the gem of our nation. It was the heart of our nation. Not only our pride; it was our *neshamah*! It was our life! It was more than our lives!

A Nation in Sorrow

You know, Josephus was a witness to the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash and he describes how the people reacted to the *Churban*. The people had been already besieged in the city for years; it was a siege of three years. And the people were dying of famine and also pestilence; epidemics had set in. Outside were the Romans who were besieging them and inside the people were dying.

Then finally the Romans breached the walls and entered the city and the iron legions of Rome began clanking over the streets with their armor and slaughtering everybody. Slaughtering everybody! No exceptions! The city was bathing in its own blood.

All the people of the city now were groaning in sorrow and crying out in wretchedness. And in their misery they looked up into the center of the city, to the *מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ*. And what did they see? They saw a flame shoot up from the Beis Hamikdash. That's the way it's described by Josephus. A Roman soldier set fire to the Beis Hamikdash and the people saw now that the Home of their Father, their King, was burning.

Now, when the dying Jews who were being slaughtered saw that, a great outcry came up from

them; a cry so loud, so piercing, that it drowned out all the cries of those who were being slaughtered. The Beis Hamikdash! The soul of our nation! The breath of our nostrils! The Beis Hamikdash is burning!

The Greatest Cry

That's how the scene is described. A great cry came up from the entire city; as more and more people saw the fire the cry became louder and louder. All the dying, all the suffering, cried out with one voice over the destruction of the Mikdash; louder than all the cries of sorrow over the destruction of the people and the city and the land.

Because the Beis Hamikdash, that was the heart of our nation more than anything else. Our fulfillment of our function in this world – to live with Hashem, to think about Him always, to walk and talk and think in His Presence, and to see Him in all of creation and sing His praises always – reached its highest point because of the Beis Hamikdash where our Creator resided among us. We knew that He lived among us and we therefore lived according to that understanding. We lived entirely different lives.

And therefore Hashem said, “That day I proclaim sadness in public! For this I don't weep only *bamystarim*. I weep secretly for the pride of our nation, the dignity of the Jewish people who once were uppermost in the world. But once it comes to the Beis Hamikdash, I emerge from My secret chamber and I weep publicly for the *Churban*. For the Mikdash I weep in public because I want everyone to know that I'm weeping for the destruction of My home where I dwelled among My people. Because I want you to know what to weep for most.”

Why We Weep

And that's mostly why we weep on Tisha B'Av. Of all the things we have to weep for, the most

important – the sadness that actually breaks the heart of our nation – is the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Because by means of the Mikdash the nation lived with Hashem. We lived with the awareness of our function in this world – to be with Him in our thoughts always.

And when we finally understand what the loss really was and we weep for that perfection gone lost then Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, “Now I see that you understand what you’re missing. Now I see that You desire to be with Me once again.” And then He’ll fulfill His promise to us that **שְׂמֹחֵהָ אֶת כָּל אֲהַבְיָהָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם וְגִילוּ בָּהּ כָּל אֲהַבְיָהָ שְׂשׂוֹ אֶתָּהּ מְשׂוֹשׂ כָּל הַמְתַאֲבְלִים עִלְיָהּ** – All you who loved Yerushalayim will rejoice with her, **שְׂשׂוֹ אֶתָּהּ מְשׂוֹשׂ** – all those who mourn for Yerushalayim will rejoice together with her in her happiness. (Yeshayah 66:10).

Have a Wonderful Shabbos and a Meaningful Tisha B’Av

Let’s Get Practical

Expressing Our Sorrow

In Rav Miller’s ‘Ten Steps to Greatness’ he urged his *talmidim* to sit on the ground for one minute every night and mourn the *churban*. He recommended doing this all year round. Surely this week, the week of Tisha B’Av, we should take the lessons we learned about to heart and spend some time each day mourning for our ancient perfection and what we lost at the *churban*.

This week’s booklet is based on tapes:

605 – Pride of Israel | **613** – Longing For the Days of Old
696 – When Hashem Weeps | **925** – Lessons of the Churban

Q&A WITH RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT”L



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QUESTION

How can I mourn for the Beis Hamikdash properly?

ANSWER

How can you mourn for the Churban Beis Hamikdash? First of all you have to think about the Beis Hamikdash. Most people don’t even think about what the Beis Hamikdash meant for Klal Yisroel.

So when you come to the last few words in Shemona Esrei, **יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ שְׂיִבְנֶהָ בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ** – Please Hashem! Let it be Your will that the Beis Hamikdash should be rebuilt quickly in our days, say it with *kavanah*. At least these words say with feeling. So even if you were sleeping through the *davening* at least these last few words say with feeling. Show that you understand that it’s a loss. If you don’t even recognize the loss then there’s no use even talking. So every day, when you finish Shemoneh Esrei, say these words and think about them.

Also, spend some time thinking about how great of an opportunity we had when the Beis Hamikdash existed. You would come to the Beis Hamikdash and you would learn *yiras Hashem* just from being there. **לְמַעַן תִּלְמַד לְיִרְאָה אֶת ה’ אֶלְקֵיכֶם כָּל הַיָּמִים** – Come to the Mikdash in order to learn how to fear Hashem (Devarim 14:23). Merely by coming there and seeing the **כְּהֹנִים בְּעִבְדוֹתָם וְלוֹוִיִּים בְּשִׂרְם וּבְזִמְרָם** you’d become so inspired. You know that Yonah HaNavi became a *navi* because he was present at the *simchas beis hashoeivah* in the Beis Hamikdash. He was so inspired that the *ruach hakodesh* came upon him and he became a *navi*. Think about that when you say **וְשֵׁם נִעְבְּדֶךָ בְּיִרְאָהָ**.

And therefore you must speak to the Ribono Shel Olam. “Ribono Shel Olam, please restore the Beis Hamikdash.” I’m not even talking about Moshiach. The Beis Hamikdash even without Moshiach is such an opportunity. You can gain so much *yiras Hashem* from seeing the Beis Hamikdash. Of course, it won’t come without Moshiach as well. But we want Hashem to build the Beis Hamikdash once again so that we can all come together and be *zocheh* to *ruach hakodesh* and to see Hashem. That’s why we are looking forward to the binyan Beis Hamikdash.

Little by little, you must work on thinking these thoughts and that’s the way to mourn for the Beis Hamikdash. You’ll never mourn for the Beis Hamikdash if you don’t feel the loss – if you don’t know what you’re missing. So first you must train yourself to feel how great of an opportunity it was to have the Beis Hamikdash – and then you’ll know what it means that we don’t have it. And then you’ll be able to mourn the loss.

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