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ON TISHA B=AV - 5756

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SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS  
DEVARIM-SHABBOS CHAZON By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Parashas Devorim-Chazon Chazon Yeshayah Ben Amotz... (Haftorah).

Shopping During The Nine Days

QUESTION: Is it permitted to go shopping during the Nine Days?

DISCUSSION: It is forbidden to make a major purchase, such as a car, silver items or furniture in the Nine Days. There are two possible prohibitions involved in such a purchase:

1) Purchasing a substantial (Chushuv) item (even if used) obligates one to recite a Shehechyanu(1); and it is improper to recite it throughout the Three Weeks(2) and especially during the Nine Days(3).

2) If the car or furniture is for the use and enjoyment of the entire family, in which case Hatov V'hameitiv is recited instead of Shehechyanu(4), one would be allowed to buy it during the Three Weeks but not during the Nine Days. Buying these items in the Nine Days is prohibited since it is similar to building or buying a Binyan Shel Simcha (loosly translated as building or buying an item for pleasure or joy), which the Shulchan Aruch<sup>5</sup> clearly forbids(6).

Shopping for clothing or shoes, even if they are intended for use after the Nine Days(7), is prohibited(8). Both expensive and inexpensive items (such as socks) are included(9). If one has no clean shirt for Shabbos Chazon, he may wear a new shirt(10).

Shopping for items which a) do not require a Shehechyanu, b) are not purchases which could be classified as a Binyan Shel Simcha, and c) are not apparel, is permitted. Even when shopping is prohibited, the following leniencies apply:

Only actual buying is prohibited. The Halachah does not forbid shopping without buying. Window or comparison shopping is permitted. Returns are

permitted. Exchanges may be prohibited(11).

An item which is forbidden to be bought during the Nine Days because of the Shehechyanu restriction may be bought during the Nine Days if it requires assembly, and the assembly will be done after the Nine Days<sup>12</sup>. The same Halacha applies to a utensil that requires immersion. If the immersion will not take place till after the Nine Days, no Shehechyanu is said<sup>13</sup>.

It is permitted to buy a car or furniture for business purposes. The Shehechyanu should be said after Tisha B'av(14). People in the clothing business may purchase stock during the Nine Days<sup>15</sup>.

If delaying the purchase will cause one a substantial loss(16), it is permitted to buy the item during the Nine Days(17).

A bachelor who is getting married after Tishah B'av may buy anything he needs during the Nine Days(18).

One who does not have appropriate shoes to wear on Tishah B'av may buy them during the Nine Days(19).

HALACHA is published L'zchus Haya'el Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

FOOTNOTES:

1 OC 223:3. 2 OC 551:17. 3 Aruch Hashulchan 551:38.

4 OC 223:5. 5 OC 551:2, Mishnah Berura 11 and Shaar Hatzion 13.

6 Mishnah Berurah, ibid and Aruch Hashulchan 20 prohibit buying silver items as Binyan Shel Simcha. Igros Moshe OC 3:80 prohibits car buying for the same reason. See also Nitei Gavriel (pg. 51) who quotes the Pupper Rov as including furniture as well. 7 Mishnah Berurah 551:49. 8 Rama OC 551:7. See also Mishnah Berurah 45. 9 Mishna Berurah 551:45-46.

10 Biur Halacha 551:6 according to the explanation of Igros Moshe OC 3:80. The Poskim do not mention specifically if one would also be allowed to buy the shirt during the Nine Days.

11 Since the shopper is getting a new item in exchange for the old one, it may be considered as if he is buying the item anew. A Rov should be consulted. If the item being exchanged requires a Shehechyanu, it definitely may not be exchanged during the Nine days - See Moadei Yeshurun pg. 152 fn31 quoting Harav M. Feinstein. 12 223:17.

13 Shaar Hatzion 223:21 quoting Reb Akiva Eiger. See also V'zos Ha'bracha (4th printing) pg. 167 quoting Harav C.P. Scheinberg.

14 Igros Moshe OC 3:80. 15 Mishnah Berurah 551: 11.

16 See Hilchos Chol Hamoed pg. 94 who quotes Harav M. Feinstein and Harav Y. Kamenetsky who rule that when an item is offered on sale at a substantial reduction and the sale is not likely to occur again in the near future, it is considered a Davar Ha'veid in regard to Hilchos Chol Hamoed.

17 Based on Mishnah Berurah 551:11 and 13 that permit even a Binyan Shel Simcha in order to avoid a loss. There are other Poskim who prohibit a Binyan Shel Simcha even in a case of loss - See Kaf Hachayim 551:29.

18 Mishnah Berurah 551:14 and 46. Other Poskim disagree with this leniency - see Kaf Hachayim 551:30, 33 and 101. 19 Igros Moshe OC 3:80.

Rebuilding the Bais Hamikdash: What Can We Do? "Rabbi Yissocher Frand "RavFrاند" List - Rebuilding the Bais Hamikdash: What Can We Do?

Imagine that a \$10 million building campaign was announced to rebuild the Bais Hamikdash. Can anyone doubt that the sum, or even ten times as much, would be raised within hours? Yet, writes the Chafetz Chaim, we are not required to spend a penny to rebuild the Bais Hamikdash; a building campaign without fundraising! All that is needed is to rectify the sins of lashon hara and sinas chinam (causeless hatred) for which the second Temple was destroyed; in short, to approach one another in a spirit of peace. And yet, Mashiach carries and the Bais Hamikdash continues to lie in ruins, the Kodsh HaKadoshim (Holy of Holies) covered by a mosque. Chazal remind us in numerous subtle and not so subtle ways of the cause for the Temple's destruction. Whenever Rosh Chodesh falls on Sunday, the Haftarah of the preceding Shabbos begins with the words, "Yonasan said to [David], "Tomorrow is the New Noon..." (Shmuel I 20:18). With the

exception of these words there is seemingly no other connection between the Haftarah and Rosh Chodesh the following day, and yet Chazal decreed that it would supplant the normal Haftarah of the parashah. Why?

To answer that question, Rabbi Shimon Schwab noted that in the Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh we beg Hashem, "Nay You establish a new Altar in Zion..." When Rosh Chodesh is on Sunday, the preceding day's Haftarah reminds us why on the morrow we will daven Mussaf rather than bring a Mussaf offering, why we will pray for the rebuilding of the Altar rather than bring our sacrifices upon one that is already rebuilt. In that Haftarah there is a dramatic exchange between King Shaul and his son Yonasan. King Shaul asks at the festive Rosh Chodesh meal, "Why has the son of Yishai [i.e., David] not come not yesterday and not today?" A seemingly innocent question, but one that reverberates throughout the generations, for Mashiach, too, is referred to as ben Yishai. Why has he not come? For the same reason that David did not come. Just as David did not come due to the causeless hatred that King Shaul had in his illness conceived for him, so his descendant the Mashiach does not come because of causeless hatred. On Tishah B'Av, we read the Book of Eichah as part of our mourning over the destruction of the Temple. There the profit Yirmiyahu cries out, "He filled me with bitterness (va?m?roorim), sated me with wormwood" (Eichah 3:15). The word m?roorim resonates for us and reminds us of Pesach night when we are commanded to eat the Pesach sacrifice together with bitter herbs (m?roorim). Midrash Eichah makes explicit the connection between Pesach and the mourning of Tishah B'Av: "'He filled me with bitterness' ; this refers to the first day of Pesach; 'sated me with wormwood' ; this refers to Tishah B'Av." The Midrash then draws another connection between Pesach and Tishah B'Av: Tishah B'Av is always on the same day of the week as the first day of Pesach.

The message for us is: If Pesach comes and goes, and you still have not absorbed its lesson, then you are guaranteed that Tishah B'Av will remain a night of crying. And what is that lesson? The Gateshead Mashgiach, Rabbi Mattisyahu Solomon, says the lesson is one taught by the two dippings at the Seder. Those dippings, the Ben Ish Chai explains, are reminders of two historical events ; one related to the going down to Egypt and the other to our Redemption from Egypt. The first dipping reminds us of how Yosef's brothers dipped his coat into the blood of a goat and brought it to their father Yaakov. Because of their hatred of their own brother we descended to slavery in Egypt.

The second dipping conveys a similar message by reminding us of an event diametrically opposed to the dipping of Yosef's coat in blood. Just before the Jewish people left Egypt, we were instructed to take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in blood. The bunch (a ?gudas) of hyssop represents the unity of the Jewish people ; the unity that was the precondition for leaving Egypt. According to the Midrash (Midrash Hillel p. 127), in addition to not changing their dress or their Jewish names, the Jewish people in Egypt did not speak lashon hara about one another. They were thus able to correct the sin of Yosef's brothers, which had brought them to Egypt in the first place. And until we do the same today, we cannot hope to leave our galus (exile) behind; and Tisha B'Av will remain a night of crying and mourning.

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Kinot Tisha Bav

Kinos1  
Tisha Bav has several motifs which are mutually exclusive: it is the Taanis Tzibbur par excellence (except for Yom Kippur). As the Gemara says that with the exception of Tisha Bav, there is no Taanis Tzibbur in Bavel. The Taanis Tzibbur characteristics are expressed in 2 ways: we begin the fast the evening prior, and the 5 deprivations, Inuyim, are in effect. There is another

element of a classic Taanis Tzibbur, Tachanunim. A Taanis Tzibbur is distinguished by its prayers. A Taanis Tzibbur is special in that we recite the 13 Midos of mercy, based on the Gemara in Rosh Hashana that on a Taanis Tzibbur we must offer supplications and frequently mention the 13 attributes of mercy. This is associated with the concept that the prayers on a Taanis Tzibbur have a double purpose. Besides the regular obligation to pray, there is a requirement to blow the trumpets when a calamity befalls the Jewish People, which includes the recitation of supplications. This special aspect of a Taanis Tzibbur is not found on Tisha Bav. We do not recite supplications on Tisha Bav.

When Chazal formulated the relationship between the Yom Tov and the Sidra read preceding the Yom Tov: Tzav before Pesach, Bamidbar before Shavuot, Tzumu Tzumu from Vaeschanan before Tisha Bav, Nitzavim before Rosh Hashonah (Megillah). The Rambam states that Vaeschanan is read before Tisha Bav. The formula used to introduce the reading in general consists of mentioning the reading for the Shabbos that precedes the Yom Tov. However for Tisha Bav we associate the day with the reading that FOLLOWS Tisha Bav. We should have associated it with Devarim. The Rambam quotes this halacha the same way as the Gemara. Apparently Tisha Bav, as far as content is concerned, is associated with both Devarim and Vaeschanan, but Chazal emphasized the link between Vaeschanan and Tisha Bav. The classical reason for why we read Devarim before Tisha Bav is that at the beginning of Devarim we tell all the places that Bnai Yisrael traveled and rebelled against Hashem. But this is a weak link between the requirement to read the Parsha and Tisha Bav and requires further explanation.

After the Kaballas Hatorah and construction of the Mishkan, it was time to enter Eretz Yisrael. This is the story we find in Behaloscha that the system of justice was put in place which according to the Ramban equated for entry to the land. At that point they were prepared to enter immediately to Eretz Yisrael. And had Moshe brought the Jews into EY, there would have been no need to fight. The conquest would have happened in a matter of days. Instead Jewish history was changed. Vatikravna Aylay Kulchem, you all gathered around me. Hashem said there is no need to send spies. But Moshe agreed to send them and the disaster happened that changed Jewish history to one of martyrdom. Moshe was supposed to divide the land and not Joshua. Instead they spent 38 years wandering, and during that time traveled what in reality was a short distance.

Tosfos in Baba Basra quotes that each year on Tisha Bav the people dug their own graves and they spent the night in the graves. In the morning they would put out a call for the living to separate themselves and arise. Thousands remained in the graves. Eventually all the members of the doomed generation dies out. So Tisha Bav is related to the story that was told in Devarim, that the original seeds of the eventual destruction of the Beis Hamikdash were traced to the episode of the spies. In fact, in the days of the Tanaim, they used to read the story of the spies on Tisha Bav. The story of the spies was that of retribution for sin. Death and destruction. Such a reading was appropriate to Tisha Bav. Devarim is appropriate because like Shelach, it relates the catastrophe of the spies.

The reading that we have on Tisha Bav is associated with Tisha Bav because it mentions exile and the concept of Teshuva that when the hour is darkest and the situation appears hopeless, we will repent and return to Hashem with all our heart and He will accept us redeem us. The message of the Krias Hatorah on Tisha Bav is that no matter how horrible the tragedy of Tisha Bav and how it is a symbol of all our national tragedies, Hashem has never abandoned us and never will. We are the chosen people and our sins will be washed away with Teshuva. There is a promise from Hashem that at the end of days Bnai Yisrael will do teshuva. no matter how stubborn the people will be, they will do Teshuva.

It is strange that the Gemara changed the reading from one of retribution (the spies) to one of repentance (Ki Tolid Banim) and the special status of Bnai Yisrael. So the reading of Devarim before Tisha Bav is equivalent to the reading of Shelach. Even though we no longer read Shelach on Tisha Bav, the same story is told in Devarim and we read it the Shabbos before. The reading on Tisha Bav says: "remember the loss of the temple but don't lose hope for the eventual redemption". That's why Vaeschanan is the reading that is associated with Tisha Bav.

There is another issue with the reading on Tisha Bav. Eichah is mentioned in

Kodshim. Eichah is unique in that it is read at night. In the morning, if its read, it is read after Kinos. Ruth and the other megillos are read by day (purim we have it read twice). Chazal said that a person is more sensitive to their pain in the night time as opposed to day time. The story of Raban Gamliel that there was a woman who had one son and she used to only cry at night for her son and Raban Gamliel cried along. Because at night, when man is alone, the full magnitude of how hopeless his situation is sinks in. This is based on the Passuk of Kumi Roni Balayla. We are also more sensitive at night in that man shares the suffering of his fellow man. The Bacho Tivkeh Balayla refers to the passuk of Vayivku Ha'am Balayla Hahu by the meraglim. Since the crying that they did in the Midbar was at night, Eichah is recited at night.

Tefilas Tisha Bav is not a regular Tefila. If it was, we would not recite Kinos. There is a concept of blessing Hashem in bad times just as we are obligated to Bless Hashem in good times. How do we have a right to ask Eichah? We can't ask Hashem for an accounting. We say Dayan Haemes and accept His will. There is a special permission given to Knesses Yisrael to ask Eichah on Tisha Bav. It was granted to Jeremiah. If not for this permission we would not have the right to recite Eichah. We must preface Kinos with Eichah otherwise we could not recite Kinos. Masechta Sofrim says that the entire congregation must say the blessing of Dayan Haemes in its entirety (with Shem and Malchus) on Tisha Bav. So before we recite Eichah there are no Kinos without an introduction. Immediately after Eichah we start saying Kinos at night. But during the day time we also require permission to recite Kinos. The Haftorah is the first Kinah and prior to the Haftorah we don't say any Kinos. (Should an individual who does not hear the haftorah refrain from kinos? Perhaps the haftorah in shul grants permission to all). All Haftoros conclude with words of comfort. Not on Tisha Bav. Al Yishalel Chacham Bchachmaso is intended as a rebuke and warning. That's how we start Kinos. After Eichah we call the Mekonenos (those women who are all to familiar with sorrow and Kinos) to continue Kinos. By day we call them after we read the Haftorah. If Tisha Bav comes out on Sunday we don't have to call 3 people to the Torah, only one according to one opinion in the Gemara. From this we see that on Tisha Bav the Krias Hatorah is not the main theme as opposed to other festivals where it is. The reading is implemented as a vehicle for getting to the Haftorah. Without the Haftorah there would have been no separate Krias Hatorah. Unlike Yom Tov where the reading is part of Limud Torah for the Yom Tov. On Tisha Bav we need the Haftorah as permission to recite Kinos.

The Kinos start and revolve around words of Eichah or parts of the Haftorah. We measure the Churban in terms of physical destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Sechi Umaos, means that we are mourning and emphasizing the desecration of the name of Bnay Yisrael amongst the people of the world. The midrash says that during the Churban, Hashem announced to the angels that they should mourn for the destruction of Yerushalayim. In Churban, physical destruction is not the worst aspect. As in the Tehillim, Bau Goyim Bnachlasecha, that there was destruction of both Beis Hamikdash and Knese Yisrael. On the Seventh night of Pesach we read about how the waters of the Yam Syf were a pillar around Bnay Yisrael. It was the time that Hashem decided to reject the defense of the Egyptian people by their arch angel on the grounds that both Jew and Egyptian were idolators and if one should perish, so should the other. Hashem allowed Bnay Yisrael to live. The Beis Hamikdash was not responsible for the actions of Bnay Yisrael. Why should it suffer for the sins of Bnay Yisrael? By right, Bnay Yisrael should be destroyed and the Beis hamikdash should continue. Instead it was the other way thanks to the kindness of Hashem. That is why the Mishkan is called a Mashkon for the sins of Bnay Yisrael. On one hand, Tisha Bav is the day of the Churban and we grieve for it. On the other hand it was a day of salvation that Hashem decided that Bnay Yisrael should continue even though the Beis Hamikdash will not. However the cost was the desecration of the name of Hashem across the nations. (In a similar vein, our enemies were blasphemous during the holocaust years. The Rav came across such challenges.) Tisha Bav is a day of mourning for the destruction and exile as well as the desecration of the name of Hashem that resulted. This is one of the themes of the first Kina.

Kinos2

Hester Panim is equated with Sasam Tefilasi which is equated with Sechos Hamishkan. There is Midas Hadin and there is Hester Panim. We find one mention of this term in Parshas Vayelech. The holocaust and churban can be classified under hester panim. It is siluk hashgacha, the worst kind. where Hashem turns His back, kvayachol, on the people. In Egypt there was hester panim and followed by Vayeda Elokim which is the opposite of Hester Panim. Vatzaku Vataal Shavasam El Elokim Vayeda Elokim this ended Hester Panim. Churban is Hester Panim.

What is Chazon Ben Brachya? Why was it singled out among all of the other Nevuos like those of Yehaiah? Rabbi Akiva when he walked by the Har Habayis was happy while the others cried. He said that based on the Nevuah of Ben Brechya he was happy. Shualim Hilchu Bah describes a place that only foxes will visit, i.e. a desolate place where civilization has been removed. Rabbi Akiva compared the Nevuos of Yeshaya and Zecharyah. The animals will come to a place where humans will not come any longer. They built a home on the Har Habayis which has been desolate for almost 2000 years. Zecharyah's Nevuah was that eventually the Har Habayis will be so full of people. Just as one prophesy came true (Yeshaya), the other (Zecharyah) will as well.

Gilgal is associated with the 14 years of conquest and division during the time of Joshua. It is the opposite of desolation and Churban. In Gilgal we had the Mishkan - Lo Basa El Hamnucha Vel Hanachla. Eyni Chiksa - my eye waited for the prophecy of Ben Brechya which will surpass the joy of the division of the times of Joshua and the joy that went along with it.

At the end of Eicha the Bayis Sheini is mentioned, Tam Avonech Bas Tziyon (Eicha 4:22). This refers to the second Churban by the hands of Edom, even though Eichah was written about Churban Bayis Rishon. The first one was destroyed by Bavel the second by Edom. However it is to be viewed as one destruction. Rabbi Eliezer Hakalir devoted his Kinos to Bayis Sheini. We have a special Kinah for the destruction of the 10 tribes. Al Yehuda Veshomron. They debate who suffered more in the exile and Churban: Yehuda or the 10 tribes. Yehuda returned but was exiled again. Veahaliav Tizak Nisrfu Armonai, Yehuda will say that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and my Churban is greater than that of the 10 tribes.

Yirmiyahu mentions Shilo in the same place that the Churban for the Beis Hamikdash is mentioned. He describes how Shilo was destroyed also for the sins of the people. The Gemara when discussing the Psukim in Reeh of KI Lo Basa el Hamnucha Vel Hanachla says that Mnucha is Shilo. Nachla was Beis Hamikdash. The Ramban says that Shilo had many true properties of the Beis Hamikdash. Before the Beis Hamikdash was built, there was no Mitzvah Aliyah Lregel until Shilo was built. Shilo was outstanding among the Batei Mikdash in that it was considered in terms of importance after the 2 Batei Hamikdash. It was considered as a "Bayis". It was destroyed when the Plishtim came and destroyed it and took the Aron. One must study the Sugyos in Zvachim for more details regarding Shilo. It is interesting to note that we never find mention of the Kosel Hamaaravi among the Rishonim. For instance the Ramban never mentions it. To his generation it was apparently invisible. It was completely covered over. Similarly, Shilo was completely destroyed and vanished without a trace. We don't even know where it stood. The worst possible curse is that Yersahalayim should suffer the same fate as Shilo, and disappear without a trace. Shilo stood for 365 years yet we have no idea where it was and so little is known about it in Jewish History.

We don't know who exactly was Ben Dinai. Koli Lehashmia Baarav Higremuni refers to the story of the Bnay Yishmael who gave the Jews salty herring and empty flasks to drink from and they died.

Ki Tam Chakta is Rabbi Eliezer Hakalir referring to the Gemara in Chullin where Yaakov's image is etched into the Kisei Hakavod. The changing of the motives to mention the desolation of the land indicates both the blessing and the curse of desolation. Even though the Mikdash is destroyed, which was the curse, the fact that no one else tried to rebuild the Har Habayis shows that the Har Habayis is still holy. Ki Tam Chakta: who said that Hashem will reassign the task of settling the Har Habayis to some other people besides Am Yisrael? The fact that there is still desolation shows that Hashem is sitting on His throne but the image of Yaakov is etched before Him. We are still His people.

Eicha Atzta Bapecha discusses Galus Edom in a parallel way to Eichah that Yirmiyahu said for Galus Bavel. Edom and Amalek are one and the

same. Ein Hacos Shalem, the throne of Hashem is not complete, until Amalek is destroyed. The same applies to the destruction of Edom.

Vlo Zacharta Pligas Dilug - the people were scattered all over Egypt and on the night of Pesach they were assembled Al Kanfei Hashechina. Another Pshat is that the plans that You had for Your people of entering Eretz Yisrael right away were ruined by the sin of the Meraglim. Many times Hashem met with Bnay Yisrael. The Mishkon was a place for Knesses Yisrael to meet with Hashem. The term Viyud is used. At Matan Torah we had a Viyud with Hashem. This terminology is found at the end of Parshas Tetzaveh. The Mishkon will have Kedusha because Hashem will be found there. The Ohel Moed was not only special because Moshe met the Shechina there but because it was a special place of rendezvous for Bnay Yisrael. Veses refers to a concept of time. Periodic. We were accustomed to meeting Hashem from time to time. Zevulecha - is an abode. When Shlomo built the Beis Hamikdash he called it a Beis Zevul for Hashem. This was now desecrated.

Why does it say Chitui Chukei Chalev? At the time of Kabalas Hatorah there was Eirusin (betrothal) and we had to consummate the Nisuin (marriage). The people made the Eigel but the Nisuin was not consummated till after the erection of the Mishkan. However there was no Sefer Krisis between Hashem and Knesses Yisrael that would have nullified the impending marriage. It is the only Kidushin that is not subject to divorce. People who want to be intimate with each other go into a house. Just like Hashem and Knesses Yisrael through the Mishkon. It symbolizes the shade and protection that a house normally provides and the intimate relationship between Hashem and Knesses Yisrael. In human life many things can't be accomplished in public. This is Zevul, a hidden place where not all can go. (See the prayer of Shlomo Hamelech when he dedicated the BEis Hamikdash as a Beis Zevul.) It is representative of the intimate relationship between Hashem and Knesses Yisrael. An intimate place is needed because Tefila is an intimate act. In an intimate place man will say things that are private that he would not say in public. For instance the Kohen Gadol does the Avodah in the Kodesh Kodshim where no one else could enter because the Kohen Gadol must admit the sins of the people. This admission is an intimate act and requires privacy. This intimate meeting place between Hashem and His chosen people was taken away from us.

Tarachta B'torchecha - It was extremely painful for You to deliver Your flock into the hands of the enemy. Why did you pain yourself to punish us?

In the chapter Aadeh Ad Chug Hashamayim, we use the term Veamtzayhu which is similar to the language used in Hematzat Lanu Bvakashaseynu, that everyone should see the glory of Hashem. We want to be able to show that indeed at one time we were worthy of, and did see the revelation of the divine presence. Before Adam's original sin, Hashem wanted that man should be His neighbor, Kvayachol. He would be close to him. But man lost Him. Had Adam been repentant he could have saved the situation. But the lack of contrition together with his blaming Hashem for giving him a wife sealed his fate. There was no recognition and admission of sin. We express our longing and sense of nostalgia for Hashem. We promise that we would not make such a mistake again. Even though Adam did not know this secret, I know it and I would not hide myself when I hear the sound of Hashem strolling through the Garden of Eden. This sense of longing for and seeking of Hashem is represented by Shir Hashirim in the positive sense. Here in the Kinot we have it in the reverse standpoint of exile. It is interesting that we include this mention of longing on " ". The longing is not diminished even on a day as bleak as " ". The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash has changed the cosmos and even nature to a degree forever. This chapter represents this change and mentions that at night the celestial bodies are crying. Also time as an entity has changed since the destruction of the temple. According to Judaism, time has a certain aspect to it that is real: the concept of Kedushas Hayom states that there is a certain substance to the day. It expresses the difference between a weekday and a holy day. Tisha Bav is referred to as a day of bitterness but also as a time period whose spirit and essence is bitterness.

We pray that next year Tisha Bav should be turned into a holiday, indeed the Chachmei Hakaballah are of the opinion that it will be the biggest holiday. Because not only will Moshiach bring the redemption, rebuild the Beis Hamikdash and bring back the exiles but the most important thing he will do is to usher in the age of Haemes V'Hashalom Ehavu, when the 2 attributes who advocated against creating man (because man is by nature contentious or

because all men are liars). Because there is a fundamental disagreement between the pure man of Halacha and the pure man of Emes. One of them has to compromise in order for both litigants or parties to a dispute to be happy with a judgement. We await the age when true unmitigated justice will take place and where only one of the litigants can be right yet both will accept and there will still be peace between them. We hope that we will put away the book of Kinot at the end of this Tisha Bav forever and next year we will no longer need them.

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Tisha B'Av 5756 - "The fall of Betar"  
The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E  
by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@jer1.co.il)  
edited by Yonasan Rosenblum

This week's issue is dedicated by my grandmother, Mrs. G. Turkel, to the memory of my beloved grandfather, Israel (Reb Yisroel Shimon ben Shlomo HaLevi) Turkel. Tisha B'Av 5756

### THE FALL OF BETAR

On the 9th of Av the stronghold city of Betar was captured and destroyed by the Romans (~135 CE) (Mishnah, Ta'anit 4:6)

Forty baskets of Tefillin (phylacteries) were found on the heads of those who were killed in Betar. (Gittin 58a)

Bar-Kochba, based in Betar, led an army of G-d-fearing Jews who rebelled against the mighty Roman empire. His forces were eventually overcome by the Romans and slaughtered while still wearing their Tefillin. What is the significance of the fact the Bar-Kochba's soldier's were cut down in their Tefillin? Is the Gemara simply reporting the piety of Bar-Kochba's troops?

### II

The Gemara describes a unique quality of Tefillin:

Why did Elisha [a righteous man who wore his Tefillin in defiance of the Roman decree against wearing them] refer to his Tefillin as dove's wings? ...Just as a dove's wings afford it protection [a dove wards off enemies with its wings -Rashi], so too the Mitzvah [that is, particularly the Mitzvah of Tefillin] protect the Jewish people. (Shabbat 130a)

Members of a Torah army must excel in their observance of the Mitzvah of Tefillin: If one speaks after donning Tefillin on the arm, but before completing the Mitzvah by putting on the second Tefillin on the forehead, it is considered a sin. One who has sinned in such a manner may not join ranks of the Jewish army [as he will not be promised Divine protection]. (Sotah 44b)

Not one of the warriors who fought against Midyan (Bamidbar 31) put on their forehead-Tefillin before their arm-Tefillin. Had they done so, Moshe would not have praised them and they would not have all returned home safely. (Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba to verse 4:4)

It is through keeping the Mitzvah of Tefillin [on the arm and the forehead] properly that Hashem grants the Jewish armies the blessing of Moshe Rabbenu. "He shall smite the enemy's arms and foreheads" (Devarim 33:20) [They would sever the head and arm of the enemy with one blow -Rashi ad loc.]. (Rosh, Hilchos Tefillin sec. 15; see also Kol Eliyahu #132)

### III

What is it about Tefillin that affords one who wears them protection in times of war? And why is it so important not to don them in reverse order and not to interrupt the process by speaking? In Berachot we are told:

Hashem too wears Tefillin.... What is written on the parchment enclosed in the Creator's Tefillin? "Who is like Your nation, Israel, a unique nation on earth! (I Divrei Hayamim 17:21)".... Hashem says, "You, Israel, have proclaimed Me unique, as it is written, 'Hear O Israel, Hashem is our Lord, Hashem is One (Devarim 6:4),' I too shall proclaim you unique, as it is written,



by Rav Meir Spiegelman

The laws of aveilut (mourning) become ever more lenient with increasing distance from the event which is mourned. On the day of the burial the laws are extremely stringent, and thereafter there are lesser laws which apply to the next seven days, the thirty-day period, etc. During the "three weeks" (between the 17th of Tammuz and Tish'a be-Av) the opposite is the case: more stringencies are added as time goes on. Moreover, after Tish'a be-Av we cease to mourn and on the tenth - when the main part of the destruction actually took place - only certain of the laws are still practiced.

Tish'a be-Av is called a mo'ed (festival) and therefore we do not recite Tachanun on that day. This connection between mourning and mo'ed also finds expression in other areas. Mourning lasts seven days, as do the festivals. Also, that a mourner is forbidden to engage in work is learned from the parallel between festivals and mourning. This connection seems far-fetched - after all, the significance of mourning appears to stand in stark contrast to that of the festivals. Indeed, each of the three pilgrim festivals serves to cancel the remaining period of an individual's mourning because of the inherent conflict between them, and hence it is difficult to understand why Chazal saw fit to draw a parallel between them (we will not enter into a discussion here of whether the source for the requirement of the first day of mourning is biblical or rabbinic.)

"Rabbi Levi said: A mourner should see himself for the first three days as though a sword is lying between his two thighs; from the third until the seventh day - as though it is lying opposite him in the corner; and from then on - as though it passes in front of him in the market." (Mo'ed Katan 27b)

The image of a sword obviously holds a negative symbolism for man, but it also has a positive corollary: special Divine attention is paid to the mourner. Hashgacha peratit (Divine guidance of the individual) is clearly something to be happy about - although in this instance it had negative results. Likewise, part of the idea which finds expression in the festivals is that of God's involvement in our world. Each festival reflects a different aspect of this revelation (in the same way that each individual person represents a revelation of a sort).

From this perspective, even mourning reflects God's involvement in the sense that the "keys of life" were not given over to angels but rather retained by God Himself. The midrash recounts the story of Rabbi Akiva laughing when he saw a fox roaming about among the ruins of the Temple Mount. To him, this fox was living proof of God's intervention, and by the same token he knew that God would again be involved in the future re-establishment of the Temple. Still, we desire a different form of supervision than that which was manifest in this era of history. In Tachanun we recite David's prayer and wish "to fall by God's hand" - without any concealment - and not to fall by "natural means." On Tish'a be-Av this prayer is inappropriate, because Tish'a be-Av is an expression of the hiddenness of God's involvement in the world. Without His providence no human hand would have had the power to conquer the Temple, but on the other hand it was indirectly through an emissary, that His design was fulfilled at that time.

We find many instances which demonstrate that tum'a (spiritual impurity) causes one to be distanced from God (for example, someone who is tamei is forbidden to enter the Temple precincts, etc.). The converse is also true: Distance from God causes tum'a. It is for this reason that the person who burns the inner sin-offerings becomes tamei, even though tum'a is not explicitly mentioned in this context. Unfortunately, there is no room for elaboration here.) Rav Soloveitchik (in his "Shi'urim Le-zekher Aba Mori," part II) explains that the significance of mourning is a distancing from God. We may, therefore, extend this equation in an associative fashion: Mourning is parallel and comparable to tum'a. According to certain of the Rishonim, the principle of mourning is to be learned from the obligation of a kohen to become tamei for his relatives. This becomes clear in light of the above, for the two concepts are connected. The prohibition of a kohen becoming tamei is based on the prohibition of distancing himself from the Temple. When he is in mourning he is by definition distanced from the Temple, and this permits his exposure to tum'a.

If we accept this comparison then it becomes easier to understand certain prohibitions associated with mourning. We may at first find it strange that a mourner is not permitted to wash himself. Why is the withholding of this specific pleasure heavier to bear than that of other pleasures and why is

washing defined as an activity which causes one joy? Yom Kippur, too, with its ban on leather shoes and washing, presents this difficulty, but there the basis for the prohibition is the need for inui (self-affliction), while here the laws of mourning seem to include no such requirement. One must therefore look elsewhere for the rationale underlying a mourner's prohibitions.

In their treatment of mourning, Chazal wished to emphasize the element of tum'a. They therefore instituted a mourning period of seven days, composed of two levels - up to and including the third day, and from the fourth day onwards - just as we find in the laws pertaining to purification through the ashes of the para aduma (red heifer). In addition, Chazal stipulated that certain of the customs observed by the person who is tamei also be observed by the mourner, and they prohibited those actions which resemble the procedure by which someone who is tamei becomes tahor (ritually pure). The basic process of ritual purity includes the washing of one's body and clothes, and thus both are prohibited to the mourner. (Our intention here is to explain why these specific activities are chosen as representative of "joy;" we are obviously not denying the fact that these prohibitions also aid a person in the mourning process.) The prohibition of studying Torah makes sense as well. Someone who is tamei is also prohibited from studying Torah, according to a law legislated by Ezra, because involvement in Torah study reflects closeness to God - as we learn from the mishna in Pirkei Avot (3:6). In order to avoid a situation whereby a mourner would be altogether unable to study Torah, he is permitted to study those sections which reflect Divine distancing and punishment. Shaving is also one of the steps involved in purification, as we find in the case of the Levites and the metzora (someone suffering from tzara'at, a physical manifestation of certain spiritual disorders usually translated as leprosy). In addition we find that a metzora must let his hair grow and must keep his head completely covered (only the former is incumbent upon the mourner nowadays). Sexual relations are also prohibited to those falling under certain categories of impurity.

Other prohibitions, too, are connected to tum'a, if only indirectly. A person who is tamei must overturn his bed and sit on the floor in order not to cause his bed to become tamei under the category of "tum'at midras," a situation which is both serious in its own right and technically difficult to reverse. (The prohibition of wearing leather shoes is also connected to this issue.) A person who is tamei is also divided to some extent from the community (for instance, the metzora has to sit alone outside the camp of Israel), because tum'a causes distancing or separation. Furthermore, someone who is tamei is also not permitted to greet others (the prohibition of work is also connected to this, but for the mourner the issue of work obviously also includes the problem of his attention being diverted from his mourning.)

Hence, the prohibitions which apply on Tish'a be-Av can be divided into two categories. The first group consists of all those laws which pertain to a day of affliction and trouble, like any fast day, while the second category includes those prohibitions which pertain to mourning and reflect distance from God, and are hence connected with tum'a. Since mourning is associated with distance from God, it is clear that when we speak of removal of the Shekhina (God's presence) from the Temple, we are required to mourn.

However, this mourning is different from "regular" mourning. In the case of regular mourning the person is subjected to a certain event, and as he comes to terms with that event he learns to live with it and it disturbs him less. The mourning over the Temple, on the other hand, is an expression of the removal of the Shekhina. This removal increased gradually as the time of the destruction grew nearer. The Shekhina mourns, as it were, her exile, and Bnei Yisrael mourn together with her. Therefore the degree of mourning grows with the approach of this day each year, because what we mourn is the removal of the Shekhina rather than the destruction of what was, after all, merely an edifice of wood and stone. For this reason the beginning of the punishment was worse than its culmination, and we fast on the ninth of Av (rather than on the tenth, when most of the physical destruction took place). The beginning of the punishment involved a total removal of the Shekhina, and the burning of the Temple did not add any qualitative dimension to our mourning.

We may note here that, generally speaking, any manifestation of kedusha

- holiness - brought about by a person starts off with great force and then becomes gradually weaker. God, who is able to direct reality towards a certain end, can create the opposite - a holiness which becomes increasingly stronger. (This is the difference between Shabbat and the pilgrim festivals and between Shmitta and Yovel [the Sabbatical and Jubilee years], but there is no room for elaboration here.) The physical parallel can be found in the area of speech. As man shouts his voice becomes weaker and weaker, whereas God's voice "grows steadily stronger," as we learn in the Torah's description of the Sinai experience. In the same way, mourning which originates in man becomes less stringent as we move away from the day of tragedy whereas our mourning which reflects that of the Shekhina culminates at its peak, on the day of tragedy itself.

As mentioned above, the revelation of God's strict justice has both a positive and a negative aspect. The positive aspect of Tish'a be-Av lies in our hope that on this date we will in future be redeemed, and this positive motif finds expression in our celebration of the holiday which falls on the "seventh day of Tish'a be-Av" - i.e. the fifteenth of Av (Tu be-Av). This day - the counterpart of Yom Kippur, the revelation of God's mercy - concludes the seven-day period ("festival") beginning with Tish'a be-Av. Tu be-Av

The midrash is commenting on the fact that Pesach and Tish'a be-Av always fall on the same day of the week. Although the Beit Ha-Levi concludes in his responsa (Derush 2) that "there seems to be no practical difference as to which day it falls," the midrash nevertheless appears to indicate a qualitative connection between the two. This question is discussed further on in the Beit Ha-Levi, Derush 4, as well as in the commentary of the midrash on the spot. Let us take the midrash a step further and add our own contribution.

The Significance of the Maror on Pesach Night

In both the Written and the Oral Law, we make a distinction between the Pesach sacrifice as commemorated in Egypt and the Pesach sacrifice of all future generations. Which of them is the "real" Pesach? A superficial consideration of the two would lead us to the conclusion that the real Pesach was that of the Exodus, the sacrifice in the merit of which - according to the well-known midrash - our forefathers came out of Egypt, while the Paschal sacrifice of all future generations is simply a commemoration of that first Pesach. However, this perception contradicts the explicit wording of the text: "And you shall tell your son on that day saying, 'Because of THIS God did for me when I came out of Egypt'" (Shemot 13:8) - i.e., "in order that I should fulfill His commandments, including this Paschal sacrifice, this matza and this maror" (Rashi). From here it would appear that the whole purpose of the exodus from Egypt was in order that the Paschal sacrifice should be offered throughout the generations.

A strong proof for this view can be brought from the unique combination of history and halakha which characterizes the episode of the exodus from Egypt as described in the Torah. It is specifically at the point where the drama reaches its peak that God sees fit to command the nation with the tiniest details, not only those pertaining to their immediate task - their own Paschal sacrifice - but also those pertaining to the Paschal sacrifice for all generations. For Bnei Yisrael it was a time of entirely new experiences and great tension; they were required to undertake an operation the likes of which had never been imagined. Could God not have found a more relaxed and appropriate time for instructions which in any case had no bearing on that moment itself?

This question certainly makes sense, but only if we assume that Pesach for future generations is nothing more than a commemoration of the Pesach in Egypt. If, however, we look at the situation in light of the expression "because of THIS..." then there is no more natural and obvious place than here for God to command the nation with regard to Pesach for future generations. It is essential that Bnei Yisrael understand their redemption and its purpose. Moreover, were it not for the commandment regarding Pesach for future generations, there would have been no way of understanding the Pesach in Egypt itself.

What passed through the minds of those Hebrew slaves upon hearing the command to sacrifice the Pesach? They were certainly familiar with the festive sacrifices - le-havdil - offered by their pagan neighbors. The majestic celebrations, the joy of the masses, the feeling of security and stability of a nation sovereign in its own land - all this they observed among the

reveals the positive aspect hidden in Tish'a be-Av, allowing us a glimpse of the seed of redemption which that tragic day holds, the seed whose existence is made possible by the fact of God's involvement in the world and in history. This same revelation is what allows for destruction and mourning as well as for redemption and joy. (Originally appeared in Daf Keshet 142 Av 5748, vol. II, pp. 92-94. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

"You Comfort Me in Vain" - A Clarification of the Connection Between Pesach and Tish'a be-Av  
by Rav Elyakim Krumbin

"Satisfy me with maror (bitter herbs)' - This refers to the first day of the festival of Pesach, the day on which we eat [the Paschal sacrifice] 'on matzot and maror'; 'Satisfy me with wormwood' - Just as you satisfied Me on the first night of Pesach, so should you satisfy Me on the night of Tish'a be-Av, with wormwood. Hence the night [of the week] on which Pesach begins is the same night [of the week] as Tish'a be-Av." (Eikha Rabba 3:5, and also the beginning of 18).

Egyptians, and despaired. Now, Moshe Rabbeinu appears in front of our forefathers with the news of the command - a festival for God! A festival for Israel! But how? Without an altar? Smearing the blood on the entrances to their clay houses? Some type of underground activity ("No man shall go out from the entrance of his house")? In haste? With all their bags packed? The Pesach of Egypt could not have been commanded without a full disclaimer of any hint of mockery of the downtrodden slaves. The true festival is ahead of us, in the future, in Eretz Yisrael, and "ba'avur zeh" (because of this) - for the sake of that future - you are leaving. What is required of you today? A demonstration of your faith in that future. You will celebrate the Pesach today, in a foreign land, under the whips of the overlords, in unbearable conditions, because you await the future redemption and long for it - and I shall consider it as though you celebrated the Pesach in all its halakhic details and with all the appropriate majesty.

To what can this be compared? To the command of the prophet Yirmiyahu: "Place markers for yourself, make for yourself road-signs" (31:20). On our way out of Israel and towards our exile we were commanded to place markers and road-signs in order that the way back would be easily recognizable. These would serve as a tangible sign that "your hope is not lost, because you will still return to these your cities" (Radak). And our Sages commented in the Sifri: "Although I am banishing you from the land and sending you into exile, keep yourselves identified with the mitzvot, such that when you return they will not be new to you" (quoted by the Ramban, Vayikra 18:25). For the purposes of our argument it makes no difference whether the Sifri is referring here to all the mitzvot, in accordance with the Ramban who holds that "the mitzvot are directed mainly to the dwellers of God's land" (in which case their observance in exile is in any case only for the purposes of "identification"), or to those mitzvot which de-oraita (as biblically mandated) fall away during the time of the Temple's destruction (but which were declared obligatory by the Sages for our time, for the duration of the exile). Either way, our devotion to the Divine command and our faith in the future are expressed in our observance of the mitzvot under impossible conditions, during the periods of destruction and exile. In this respect we follow in the footsteps of the generation which left Egypt, which "celebrated" the Pesach in the shadow of their slavery, but with an unshakable faith that their modest actions would be amplified in the future by their descendants, in the full commemoration of the Pesach for all generations. They were redeemed in the merit of this faith.

With this in mind we are able to resolve a substantial problem with regard to the mitzva of maror, which - according to the Torah - is connected to the Paschal sacrifice, which must be eaten "on matzot and maror." How do we explain the combination of the eating of the Pesach, symbol of redemption, together with the symbol of the bitterness of slavery? And on what basis did Hillel take this a step further, expounding that the maror must literally be eaten in the same mouthful as the Pesach?

We must remember that for our forefathers in Egypt, the maror symbolized the eternity of their faith: We are in exile, the taste of the maror is still in our mouths, and nevertheless we celebrate the Pesach! The same is

true of Pesach for all future generations: the maror symbolizes the thread connecting every Paschal sacrifice to the Pesach of Egypt. Each Pesach started then, in the fiery furnace; it was there that the seed was planted, and today we are enjoying its fruit. The Pesach of future generations is the explanation of Pesach in Egypt - its inevitable conclusion.

In summary: The combination of the maror and the Pesach declares that faith in the future is victorious over the depression of the present; it is indeed possible to taste the redemption in the very grains of the maror.

A Perversion of the World Order

In order to see the connection between Pesach and Tish'a be-Av, we must first clarify one issue pertaining to the portions of the Torah dealing with rebuke of the nation. Our nation has, during its long existence, become very familiar with the experience of the decline from the heights of joy to the depths of despair. But there is one specific point which seems to highlight the tragedy; a point which is exemplified by a comparison of the parallel curses in the two Torah portions of rebuke. In parashat Bechukotai we read, "And I shall make your heavens like copper and your land like brass... and your land will not give forth its produce, and the trees of the land shall not give their fruit." In contrast, in Sefer Devarim we find, "The field shall give forth much seed but you will reap little, for the locusts will destroy it. You shall plant vines and work at them, but wine you shall not drink and you shall not gather, for the worms will eat it." Why is the second scenario so much more terrifying than the first? Because the first describes the total removal of blessing and its replacement with curses (no rain, no produce), while the second describes a situation where there is a potential for blessing, but it is wasted - there is produce, but it is eaten by the locusts. Further examples: the leading away into exile as described in Vayikra is absolute, while in Devarim it is executed in stages - the head of the family remains on his land in order to try and stave off the catastrophe. Once, his house resounded with children's laughter; now, "your children are given to a foreign nation, and your eyes see it." The stranger, who once accepted our authority, now assumes a position "higher and higher above you." In Vayikra we are told, "And you shall consume the flesh of your children," but Devarim emphasizes the fact that it is specifically "the soft-hearted and delicate man," the epitome of gentleness and humanity, who will carry out this horrifying act. In short: the crux of the tragedy is not in being led off to exile, but rather in life at home becoming a nightmare; not when the reality changes to a point where it becomes unrecognizable, but rather when it is easily recognizable, when just beyond the perversion and violence we can still make out the outlines of the same world which once showered us with its good and its blessings.

"I called to my beloved ones (me'ahavai); they have deceived me" (Eikha 1:19)

In light of the above, we may explain the strange words of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the midrash on the pasuk, "I have called to my beloved ones (or 'endearers'), they have deceived me." He explains that the "me'ahavim" referred to are specifically the genuine prophets, "who endear me to God: 'they have deceived me' - they deceived me by saying, 'separate teruma and ma'aser.' As if there is any teruma and ma'aser applicable in Babylon! Rather, they say this in order to endear me to God. This is what Yirmiyahu refers to when he says, 'Place markers for yourself' - remain identified by the mitzvot by which the Jews were previously identified."

Here again we are confronted by the same wonderful concept which we examined above. What "deception" can there possibly be in this beautiful idea which expresses our faith in and devotion to the Torah, despite everything which befalls us? It seems that when we look at the situation from the perspective of the destruction, we are incapable - and unwilling - to see in the command to "place markers for yourself" anything more than a bitter illusion. Teruma and ma'aser outside of Israel? Shaking of the lulav on the seven days of Sukkot - "and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God" - on the rivers of Babylon? Can there be any greater perversion? It is perfectly clear to anyone with eyes in his head that the entire observance of Torah is built on one central assumption: that the nation of Torah is dwelling in its land. Who on earth dreamed up the absurd idea of Torah observance, communal life, even the mitzvot which pertain specifically to Eretz Yisrael - all continuing in exile? Could any right-minded Jew seriously believe, as the prophets claimed, that such a situation would "endear" us to God? Surely, if

we were genuinely beloved to God, then we would still be there, in Eretz Yisrael, instead of sitting here and playing "make believe." Such a situation is nothing but the expression of melancholy of a young bride whose husband has left her, and who continues to beautify herself in his honor as though nothing has happened.

In fact, were it not for the stubbornness of those "endearers," claims Israel, the destruction would yet be somehow bearable. We would then be able to distance ourselves spiritually from those mitzvot, considering them as inapplicable until the coming of Mashiah, and that would be that. But the "endearers" will not give up. For some reason they feel compelled to take the once glorious Torah and to squeeze it and twist it to make it fit exile as well, and then to make us keep it. The result is that we are reminded every day anew of what could have been, of our glorious past, which now peeps at us through the pathetic mask of "make yourself markers." It is in vain that the prophets comfort us with their visions of the future, with their promises and their oaths. The reality is that God has cast us away from before Him. We cannot share their view that by placing markers for ourselves it will be possible to "live the dream," because we believe that as the years go by, our lives and our history become one great illusion.

Just as the experience of the destruction forces us to view the command to "place yourself markers" differently, so does the prototype of that view - the Pesach of Egypt. Once we ate the maror in order to identify with the heroic faith of our forefathers in Egypt, which attained its justification and its realization in the celebration of the Pesach in the Temple. But now the Pesach of the Beit Ha-mikdash, too, appears to have been a passing euphoria, and meantime the Pesach of Egypt - observance of the mitzvot under difficult conditions - has become the dominant situation for all generations. For the weary nation of Israel only absolute redemption can justify the old understanding of Pesach in Egypt - as a road-sign for the future. At this stage the Pesach of Egypt appears as nothing more than yet another example of the gloomy scenario which plays itself over and over - a perverted observance of the beautiful Torah which exists only in the dreams of seers. The maror was supposed to be the basis for the Paschal sacrifice, but Tish'a be-Av gives it a new perspective: the sacrifice has disappeared, but the maror remains. The maror of Pesach joins the maror of Tish'a be-Av, and the two together embody the expression, "Satisfy Me with maror, satiate Me with wormwood." "Hold this, and from this, too, do not allow your hand to falter" (Kohélet 7:18)

We have presented above two points of view regarding the issue of "place yourself markers" - the traditional and generally accepted view of the prophets, and that of Knesset Yisrael as we believe it to be expressed in the words of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Midrash Eikha. We subscribe to the first view, just as we try as a general rule to see all the events of our times in an optimistic light. However, on Tish'a be-Av, at least, we have to examine things realistically. Specifically for us - we who have merited to return to Eretz Yisrael - this is crucial. Otherwise we are bound to spend our whole lives using concepts such as "the beginning of the dawning of our redemption," etc., without noticing that what we have merited is in fact only the "markers;" a shriveled version of how things really should be. It is specifically because we have merited to see many of the signs of redemption that we have to feel the full pain of the question: Where is the content that should exist here? May we soon merit a full answer. (Originally appeared in Daf Keshet 193, Av 5749, Vol. II, pp. 310-312. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

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Jerusalem Post - Thursday, July 18, 1996

When Silence is Just Yellow By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

A famous story in the Talmud attributes the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 C.E. not to the destructive enmity of the Roman armies, but rather to the "causeless hatred" between two Jewish neighbors, as well as to the "humility" of a renowned rabbi named R. Zecharya b. Abkulas (B.T. Gittin 55b).

The story is simple. There was a man who had a good friend named Kamtza, and an enemy named Bar Kamtza. One day he decided to throw a great feast,

but the servant sent with the invitation to Kamtza, the good friend, ended up inviting Bar Kamtza, the enemy.

Delighted to receive the invitation, he happily arrived at the party, only to discover that the host wanted him out of there. His pride shaken, Bar Kamtza offered to pay his own way if he would be allowed to remain. The host wouldn't back off. Bar Kamtza kept raising the offer, from paying half the price of the feast, to paying for the entire party, just so that he wouldn't have to be publicly shamed. But the host was adamant. He would not deign to have his enemy at his table.

That Bar Kamtza desired revenge is not surprising, but instead of aiming his malice at the unforgiving host, he directed his hatred toward the rabbis who were in attendance but didn't speak up.

Most likely the rabbis' silence was understandable - but nonetheless reprehensible. It was a period of great poverty in Jewish history. If the host could afford such an extravagance, and if so many rabbis gave up an evening of Torah study to attend, he must have not only been a very wealthy man, but a major contributor to the charitable institutions of his day. The various heads of religious institutions therefore made an economic decision not to anger their benefactor.

Bar Kamtza was determined to show those rabbis a thing or two. He went straight to Caesar with the classic complaint that the Jews were rebelling. The emperor wanted proof, so Bar Kamtza suggested that the monarch send them an offering to be sacrificed on the altar in Jerusalem. He then blemished the animal's lips, rendering it unfit by Jewish law, although fit by Roman standards. Bar Kamtza believed the animal would not be offered, and the emperor would thereby be convinced that the Jews were indeed disloyal. The rabbis had to decide what to do with the emperor's offering. They realized the danger if they rejected it, and so for the sake of the well-being of the citizenry they suggested that the offering be made anyhow. But one of the sages, R. Zecharya b. Abkulas disagreed. "They will say that blemished animals are offered on the altar," he warned.

When the rabbis next suggested that they kill Bar Kamtza to prevent him from returning to the emperor, R. Zecharya b. Abkulas again spoke up. "They will say that one who blemishes a consecrated animal is killed!" The language Rabbi Zecharya used was specific and instructional: "They will say..."

In the first situation, R. Zecharya was worried about how the extremely religious element in the community would react to a ruling that permitted offering a blemished animal, even if the issue at hand was saving human lives. In the second situation, R. Zecharya was worried about how liberals would react to killing a man because his knife 'accidentally' cut the lip of the calf.

R. Yohanan has the final word, and how he summarizes events is illuminating. Instead of placing blame on the early characters in the narrative - the causeless hatred personified by the host, the initial silence of the Rabbinic leadership, or the treachery of Bar Kamtza - he points his finger at R. Zeharya.

Of course the behavior of Bar Kamtza and his host are inexcusable, demonstrating all the foibles of human existence. But R. Yohanan aims at a greater target than two stubborn fools. He wants us to understand that a grave mistake was committed when R. Zecharya didn't take proper action. The tragedy could have been prevented by rendering a courageous halachic decision. There was a failure in leadership. And so R. Yohanan concludes: "Because of the humility of R. Zecharya our House has been destroyed, our Temple burnt."

Now undoubtedly R. Zecharya was a dedicated rabbi, and didn't want a questionable religio-legal decision to get out of his courthouse. But R. Zecharya was too worried about how the decision would affect the various political-religious factions in the community. He was not worried enough about doing what was correct in the eyes of God.

The word R. Yohanan uses to describe R. Zecharya's attitude, anivut, means 'humility,' which seems strange, since humility usually connotes a positive dimension. We are being told, however, that when humility prevents a religious leader from taking a necessary position as a result of his desire not to oppose other religious opinions it can be misplaced or even destructive. There are situations, especially when the well-being of the Jewish community is at stake, when courage and not humility must be the guiding principle.

Ultimately, teaches R. Yohanan, the destruction of the Temple came about due to the lack of courage to make tough decisions. It's certainly fitting, therefore, that this week's portion also provides incontrovertible guidelines for the judges and the sages of Israel: "Do not give anyone special consideration when rendering judgment. You shall hear the great and small alike. You shall not be frightened (or impressed) by any human being, for the judgment is God's." (Deut 1:17) Shabbat Shalom

Ohr Samayach

And Rabbi Akiva Laughed...

What response is appropriate when hearing the battle cries of the invincible Roman army? What should be the reaction when seeing ruined Jerusalem and the Holy Temple's rubble? What is the proper response of a disciple seeing his beloved teacher dying in torment...?

Laughter? Certainly not. But according to the Talmud, such was Rabbi Akiva's response in these very situations.

Roman battle cries heard miles away caused the sages to weep. Rabbi Akiva laughed. Frolicking foxes on the Temple Mount - where once only the high priest dare tread - brought tears to the eyes of the sages. Rabbi Akiva laughed.

The death throes of their teacher, the saintly Rabbi Eliezer, wrenched sobs from the throats of the sages. Rabbi Akiva laughed.

The destruction of Jerusalem can be called the Jewish tragedy extrordinaire. It claimed millions of lives and unleashed a 2,000 year torrent of crusades, pogroms, jihads and holocaust. Arguably, it is the worst thing that ever happened to the Jewish people.

The death of a Torah scholar, not merely a Jewish tragedy, is a global one. Because "Torah scholars increase peace in the world."

In each case, the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of a Torah scholar, laughter would seem the most inappropriate of reactions. How, then, is Rabbi Akiva to be understood?

\* \* \* \* \*

Simcha - Happiness

Happiness has many expressions, and in Hebrew there is a word for each. The happiness expressed in laughter is called Simcha.

Sometimes people laugh. Every once in a while something strikes their funny bone, and they giggle, chuckle or burst out howling. Why? What causes the simcha of laughter?

Rabbi Saadia Gaon offers a novel insight into this phenomenon: When a person suddenly gains a straight perception of reality, the result is laughter. A flash of reality obliterates time-honored falsehoods, and the soul laughs.

This novel idea, the link between truth and laughter, is expressed in Psalms: "Ohr zarua l'tzadik, ulyishrei lev simcha..."

"Light is sown for the righteous, and for the straight of heart, simcha..." Bare to the truth, the 'straight of heart' are ever open to deeper and deeper perceptions of reality. Thus, their heart is sown with 'simcha,' the joy expressed in laughter.

"Pkudei Hashem y'sharim msimchei lev..."

"Hashem's commandments are 'straight,' they bring simcha to the heart..." Hashem's commandments bring simcha because they are 'straight.' Torah study

and observance confront a person with hitherto unrealized insight, hence simcha and laughter.

When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, Rabbi of the Lubavitch Chassidim, was arrested for organizing a network of Torah education in Russia, a KGB officer put a gun to his head and demanded he name his collaborators. The Rabbi laughed. No believing Jew is afraid to declare, "I believe in the World to Come." But a loaded gun brings the existence of the World to Come into such crisp focus, the alternative is instantly reduced to absurdity.

And so Rabbi Akiva laughed. He laughed because he excelled in the quality of 'straightness of heart.' His keen perception of reality allowed him immediately to glean the kernel of truth from the very event his comrades mourned.

\* \* \* \* \*

Renewal - Consolation

"Akiva, why do you laugh?" the sages asked him when they heard the clamor of Roman legions. "Why do you cry?" Rabbi Akiva replied. "Idol worshippers dwell in peace and security, while the Holy Temple is burnt to the ground ... shall we not cry? "That's why I'm laughing," said Rabbi Akiva. "If this is how G-d rewards the Romans - who are so wicked and cruel - for the good deeds they sometimes do, how much more will be the reward of the righteous people in the World to Come." "Akiva, how can you laugh?" they asked standing at the Temple ruins. "Why do you cry?" he replied. "The Holy of Holies about which it's written, 'Any unauthorized person who enters shall die,' and now foxes play there? Shall we not cry?" "That's why I'm laughing," said Rabbi Akiva. "Seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy - 'Zion will be plowed like a field' - I more deeply internalize the knowledge that all the prophecies will be fulfilled, including those that foretell the rebuilding of Jerusalem!" At their teacher's deathbed, Rabbi Akiva explains: "Our teacher, Rabbi Eliezer, enjoyed an ideal life ... his wine never soured, his oil never went bad. He was completely successful in everything, had a suspicion that he was somehow receiving his reward in this life, and that he had no part in the World to Come. Now that I see his suffering, I realize he's being purged of whatever minute sin he may have committed, and that his reward in the next world remains intact."

And faced with death by torture for the 'crime' of teaching Torah, Rabbi Akiva laughed. "All my life I've been waiting to fulfill the concept 'You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul...' and now I finally have the chance."

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May we all merit to become 'straight of heart,' to approach Rabbi Akiva's depth of truth. And then, may we say, as the sages did, "Akiva, you have comforted us. Akiva, you have comforted us."

Sources: o Tractate Makkot 24a o Tractate Sanhedrin 101a  
o Tractate Menachot 61b o Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachot 9:5

The Three Weeks - Tammuz 5756 Based on a Lecture by Rabbi Mordechai Becher Adapted by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor Rabbi Moshe Newman

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The Nine Days

A Word To The Wise

During the beginning of the second Temple period (approx. 340 B.C.E - 70 A.C.E) there was a body of sages called the Men of the Great Assembly. Rabbi Yehoshua Son of Levi in the Talmud tells us that they were given that name for the following reason.

At the time of the destruction of the first Temple, when Yirmiyahu the Prophet knew the enemy had entered the Holy Temple, he said "strangers are in G-d's sanctuary, where is the manifestation of His awesomeness?" As a result, he omitted the word awesome from the three word expression originally "coined" by Moses in the Torah (great, mighty, and AWESOME).

Daniel, the Great Jewish sage who rose to great notoriety in the courts of the Kings of Babylon and Persia-Media during the exile from the first Temple era, also omitted a word from Moshe's phrase. He exclaimed "strangers are imposing their rule over His children, where is the manifestation of His might?" He left out "mighty" from his prayers.

Later, upon returning to Israel, the Men of the Great Assembly reinstated these words in the prayers. They explained: the fact that G-d doesn't react is a demonstration of His might and awesomeness. The fact that G-d holds back His anger and vengeance against the perpetrators of persecution, desecration, and dictatorship, is an sign of G-d's might and awesomeness. For bringing out this realization, the Men of the Great Assembly received their name.

Of course, we would all agree that by openly punishing wrongdoing and rewarding righteousness, G-d would also be showing us His might and awesomeness. However, in a time such as now, when G-d chooses not to reveal His countenance to us in an open way, this is His way of manifesting

His qualities of might and awesomeness. We should not perceive His silence as a weakness, or as our having been forsaken, (G-d forbid), but as a sign of strength. Hashem is not threatened by evil, he doesn't need to quash the rebellion.

The Talmud writes "a hint is enough for a wise person." A wise person can see the "signs" that G-d leaves us in this world, and draw the conclusions which G-d wants him/her to see. Very humbly and thankfully, we must look back at our own history and exclaim "this is His might and His awesomeness! We're still here! After all we've experienced---the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition---The Hitlers! They are gone, and we are still here! We're here, and we are rebuilding, with G-d's help. The Torah (the written and oral law) is the lifeline which we held through the centuries which keeps us afloat, and prevents us from going under, so to speak.

In communist Russia, many people sacrificed a great deal to observe whatever Torah Commandments they could. Small study groups popped up in many places, and people from the U.S. and other countries tried to help in any way they could. Many smuggled in religious articles, knives for ritual slaughter, and gave classes. Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, in his book "It Happened in Heaven" writes of his experiences in the former Soviet Union.

Very clandestinely, a class in scriptures was convened. Rabbi Goldwasser was staying in a hotel, and he knew he should be back by 11:00 P.M. to minimize any suspicion. After his lesson, he got up to leave, and Sasha, a young participant, ran over to him and said "five more minutes." He sat down again and the class of almost 30 people continued to learn with great fervor. At 11:30 he again got up to leave, and again Sasha requested five more minutes. Again he could not refuse and he sat down to learn with his enthusiastic students. When they finally finished learning, a man went over to a piano and begged him to teach him a Jewish song. Before long, everyone was on their feet, singing and dancing. Upon returning to the hotel, Rabbi Goldwasser found the clerk and the floor matron fast asleep. He quietly retired to his room relieved to have escaped suspicion.

During the nine days beginning with the first day of the month of Av, and ending with Tisha B'Av, or the ninth of Av, we mourn for the destruction of the Temple, and our extended exile. However, our consolation comes through our mourning. The fact that we are here, and that we have not abandoned our hopes and dreams of seeing G-d's might and awesomeness in an open way, are the greatest proof that we will not be disappointed.

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The Three Weeks

B"H Guide to Jewish Holidays and Events

The Three Weeks REVEALING HIDDEN LOVE: MAKING THE BEIS HAMIKDASH A REALITY

(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVIII, Yud-Beis Tammuz and Bein HaMetzarim)

A Paradox in Time

The Three Weeks between the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av are referred to by our Sages as Bein HaMetzarim ("between the straits"), and are marked by several customs associated with mourning. [1]

As its name implies, this is a difficult period: it commemorates the calamities which occurred between the breaching of the walls surrounding Jerusalem and the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash itself. Even in our day, it is considered an unfavorable time for the Jewish people. [2]

Despite its tragic associations, this period is characterized by strong positive spiritual influences. On the temporal plane, this is reflected in the fact that the period of Bein HaMetzarim falls in the summer.

Everything that transpires in our material world is a reflection of the corresponding spiritual forces that operate in the higher realms. Moreover, the way any entity functions on the physical plane results from relationships between these spiritual forces which are the source of all material existence. As such, every tangible entity serves as a material illustration of these forces. For example: The sun is associated with the Four-Letter Divine Name Y. H. V. H. As it is written, [3] "For Y. H. V. H. and E-L-O\_K-I-M [4] are like

the sun and [its] shield."

The Name Y. H. V. H. expresses the Divine attributes of mercy [5] and revelation. [6]

The shining of the sun, especially during the Three Weeks when it is at its most powerful, thus indicates the prevalence of intense G-dly mercy.

#### What G-d Does Out of Love

The tragic nature of the Three Weeks and its status as a time in which G-d's mercy is manifest, are not mutually exclusive.

The inner motivating force of the Three Weeks is G-d's love.

However, genuine love can at times require conduct which appears harsh.

When a father chastises his son, it is unpleasant for both son and father, but the father is no doubt motivated only by a deep concern for his son's growth and development.

Likewise, cleaning a small child who has soiled himself [7] is not always a comfortable process. For a father to subject an infant to this discomfort requires a very unselfish sort of love, a love powerful enough to outweigh his natural aversion to causing his child pain. This kind of love is the hidden content of the Three Weeks. [8]

The positive and overtly recognizable aspect of this love will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption, when "all the [commemorative] fasts will be annulled and will be transformed into holidays and days of rejoicing." [9] At that time, the hidden dimension of G-d's love will surface and become manifest.

#### A Foretaste of Redemption

In our day, we are standing on the threshold of the Redemption; we are, in fact, in the process of crossing that threshold. [10]

The Redemption is no longer a distant dream - it is an increasingly manifest reality. Moreover, we can now already savor a foretaste of the Redemption and sense the positive dimension of the Three Weeks at present, even though we are still in exile.

Although our Sages teach that "When the month of Av begins, we minimize our joy," [11] celebrations associated with a mitzvah are permitted. [12]

In order to express our appreciation of the positive nature of the Three Weeks, we should take every possible opportunity to celebrate such occasions. [13]

On each of the [first] Nine Days of Av, for example, [14] one can celebrate the festive conclusion of the study of a Talmudic tractate by conducting a siyum. [15]

#### Building the Beis HaMikdash

Our emphasis on the positive dimension of the Three Weeks should also motivate us to intensify our study of the laws governing the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. Doing so will focus our attention on its building rather than on its destruction.

When G-d revealed the structural details of the future Beis HaMikdash to the prophet Yechezkel, He told him, [16] "Tell the people of Israel of the House... and measure its design."

Yechezkel, as our Sages relate, [17] replied: "Master of the Universe! Why are You telling me to tell Israel of the form of the House?... They are now in exile in the land of our enemies. Is there anything they can do? Let them be until they return from exile. Then I will go and inform them." G-d answered: "Should the construction of My House be ignored because My children are in exile?... The study of the Torah's [description of the Beis HaMikdash] is deemed equal to its [actual] construction. Go, tell them to study the form of the Beis HaMikdash. And, as a reward for their study..., I will consider it as if they had actually built the Beis HaMikdash!"

One of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah is the commandment to build a Sanctuary, [18] and its fulfillment is incumbent upon every Jewish man and woman. [19] It is clear from the above Midrash that by studying the laws of the Beis HaMikdash, a person fulfills his obligation to build a Sanctuary, for G-d describes this study as "the building of My House."

A similar concept is expressed in the Rambam's choice of the verse, [20] "Seek out the welfare of Jerusalem, those who love you shall find repose," as the introductory verse of Sefer Avodah, "The Book of Divine Service." This choice implies an obligation to "seek out the welfare of Jerusalem" and to concern ourselves with the structure of the Beis HaMikdash, even though we are at present incapable of actually constructing it. [21]

Though these concepts were known in previous generations, they are of much

greater relevance at present, because there is a difference between studying laws relating to a mitzvah one is about to perform, and studying a theoretical subject.

We should study the laws of the Beis HaMikdash with the anticipation of a bar-mitzvah boy learning the laws of tefillin.

For in the very near future, we will actually participate in building the very structure we are studying.

This kind of study will serve as a catalyst to uncover the positive dimension of the Three Weeks. And then we will merit the fulfillment of the prayer, [22] "Rebuild Your House as in former times and establish Your Sanctuary on its site; let us behold its construction, and cause us to rejoice in its completion." May this take place in the immediate future.

Footnotes:

1 . See the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 551:16-18, and the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, ch. 122. 2 . The dates of the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av are discussed in Taanis 26a, 28b ff. Note also the statement of our Sages (ibid. 29b, quoted by the Shulchan Aruch, loc. cit., para. 1) that a Jew who has a lawsuit with a gentile should postpone it until after the month

of Av. 3 . Tehillim 84:12.

4 As explained in the Kabbalah and in the Midrash (Shmos Rabbah 3:6), the various Names of G-d represent different manifestations of His attributes. For example, the Name Y. H. V. H. is associated with the power of revelation (represented above by "the sun"), while the name E-L-O-K-I-M is associated with the power of self-concealment (represented above by "[its] shield").

See the maamar entitled VeYadata 5657 (English translation; Sichos In English, N.Y., 1993) for a more detailed explanation of the mystical connotations of these names and their interaction. 5 . See Bereishis Rabbah 12:15 and the Zohar I, 173b, 251b. 6 . See Torah Or, Parshas Yisro, p. 69d; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah, ch. 6; and other sources. 7 . This analogy is used by the prophets; see Yeshayahu 4:4. 8 .

See also the essay below entitled "From Exile to Redemption," which elaborates on the Divine love underlying the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the exile of our people.

9 . Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taaniyos 5:19, based on Zechariah 8:19. 10 . See the essay entitled "On the Threshold of the Redemption," as well as the essay entitled "Open Your Eyes," in Sound the Great Shofar (Kehot, N.Y., 1992). 11 . Taanis 26b, cited by the Rambam, loc. cit. 5:6.

12 . See Rama, Orach Chayim, loc. cit. 551:10. 13 . This allows for a non-literal interpretation of our Sages' statement cited above, "When Av enters, we minimize [its apparently negative dimensions] with joy" i.e., happiness serves as a medium to minimize the month's severity.

14 . Even on Tishah BeAv itself a siyum should be held, for it is permitted to conclude the study of Tractate Moed Katan on that day.

15 . Such siyumim are not simply intended to provide opportunities for eating meat. As noted in Sefer Minhagim (English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 5752), p. 95, the meal with which the Rebbe Rashab used to honor each such siyum during the Nine Days, included neither wine nor meat.

16 . Yechezkel 43:10. 17 . Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Tzav, sec. 14.

18 . See Sefer HaMitzvos, Positive Mitzvos 20; Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah 95. 19 . Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 1:12. 20 .

Tehillim 122:6. 21 . The prophet Yirmeyahu (30:17) laments that "Zion has none that show concern for her." This shows that we ought to show concern for her (Rosh HaShanah 30a). 22 . The Mussaf service for festivals (Siddur Tehillat HaShem, p. 263).

#### REPAIRING THE BREACHES

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos,  
Vol. XVIII, Yud-Beis Tammuz;  
Vol. XXIII, p. 277 ff.

#### Picking Up G-d's Signals

The Rambam introduces his discussion of the commemorative fasts as follows: [1] There are days when our people all fast because of calamities that happened to them - to arouse [their] hearts, and open the paths of repentance [to them]. This will serve as a reminder of our undesirable conduct [2] and that of our ancestors, which... brought these calamities upon them and upon

us.

This understanding of the commemorative fasts echoes an idea that appears elsewhere in the writings of the Rambam: [3] A person should not say, "What has happened to us is simply a natural phenomenon and this difficulty is merely a chance occurrence." Instead, a person should realize that a calamity is a signal from G-d, intended to motivate him to repent. By the same token, on the national level, the commemoration of the sequence of calamities which led to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash is intended to spur us on to attain a deeper bond with G-d.

#### Five Calamities

Our Sages explain [4] that G-d metes out reward and punishment, "measure for measure." Therefore, by analyzing the national crises associated with these commemorative fasts, we should be able to infer the direction in which our repentance should be channeled.

Five calamities occurred on the 17th of Tammuz: [5]

The Tablets of the Law were broken;

The offering of the daily sacrifices was interrupted (even before the First Beis HaMikdash was destroyed);

The walls of Jerusalem were breached (before the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash); [6]

Apostomos the Wicked burned a Torah scroll;

And he erected an idol in the Beis HaMikdash. [7]

The repeated association of a particular date with national catastrophes cannot be coincidental; rather, it points to the spiritual character of the day. [8]

In examining the meaning of the 17th of Tammuz, the breaking of the Tablets is particularly significant, for it is the first in the chronology of the five calamities that occurred on that day.

And chassidic thought [9] teaches that precedence in time reflects primacy in importance.

#### A Breach in Man's Union with the Torah

The Tablets are symbolic of the deepest possible connection between the Torah and man, for the letters of the Ten Commandments [10] were hewn into the body of the stone Tablets.

When the letters of a Torah scroll are inscribed with ink on parchment, they are a separate entity, and not an integral part of the parchment. In the Tablets, they and the Torah were one and inseparable. [11]

This fusion into utter unity reflects a corresponding state which a person can attain - a state in which he is totally at one with the Torah. He does not see the Torah as an entity separate from himself which he must study and whose laws he must follow, but rather as part and parcel of his own very being. He and the Torah are a single whole. [12]

The breaking of the Tablets indicates a deficiency in this connection. And thus it is the lack of unity between man and the Torah which is the root of all the difficulties which led to our fasting on the 17th of Tammuz.

#### Compensating for the Breaking of the Tablets

The Biblical account of the breaking of the Tablets also indicates the form of divine service that can compensate for this deficiency.

Moshe Rabbeinu broke the Tablets as an act of ahavas Yisrael, out of his love for the Jewish people. In order to minimize the sin of the Jewish people - for without the Tablets, the wedding bond they share with G-d would not appear complete - [13] he took that which he cherished most dearly, the Tablets of the Torah, and broke it. [14]

Moshe's action embodies a lesson for future generations.

We can compensate for the lack of unity between man and the Torah (symbolized by the breaking of the Tablets) by increasing our efforts to establish unity within the Jewish people.

#### Jerusalem - Consummate Awe

The importance of ahavas Yisrael, loving a fellow Jew, also relates to the tragedy most usually associated with the fast of the 17th of Tammuz - the breaching by the Romans of the wall surrounding Jerusalem.

In terms of our divine service, Jerusalem represents (as hinted at by its etymology) yirah shalem, meaning "complete fear." [15]

When a person's fear of G-d is complete, it has an all-encompassing effect on his conduct, influencing every aspect of his thought, speech, and deed.

Fear of G-d requires a protective "wall", a willingness to "make a fence around the Torah," [16] i.e., to undertake stringencies which are not required

by the minimal letter of the law.

When this wall is broken and undesirable influences penetrate and affect one's "complete fear" of G-d, this is a tragedy which requires a fast.

#### A Positive Dimension of the Breaching of Jerusalem's Walls

A vigilant individual who has "complete fear" of G-d often erects a wall to separate himself from those people and influences which threaten his observance. He need not, however, cut himself off entirely from the world around him; the wall protecting his fear of G-d can have gates and doorways that will allow entry and exit.

These gates and doorways will allow him to diffuse the influence of Jerusalem outward, and will allow people from outside Jerusalem to enter and be exposed to its uplifting atmosphere.

Traffic through such entrances is, however, usually limited, in order to enable one to monitor his interaction with his surroundings. Seen from a positive perspective, breaking down Jerusalem's walls thus symbolizes an unrestrained drive toward outreach, extending oneself to people who have not [yet] attained "complete fear," with a commitment beyond the ordinary.

#### Unearned Love Compensating for Unearned Hatred

Our Sages explain [17] that the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of our people came about because of unwarranted hatred.

It follows that by displaying love even for our undeserving fellow man, we can eliminate the cause of the exile so that the exile itself will cease to exist. Indeed, commitment to loving the undeserving will lead to the advent of the era when "All the [commemorative] fasts will be nullified... and indeed, will be transformed into holidays and days of rejoicing." [18]

The 17th of Tammuz [19] is a particularly appropriate time for focusing on the transformation of hatred to love.

For the breaching of Jerusalem's walls can be perceived as a preliminary stage in the cosmic process leading to the fulfillment of the prophecy, [20]

"Jerusalem will be settled like an open city, because of the multitude of people and cattle it will contain,... and I... will be a wall of fire around her."

The potential for transition from exile to redemption is highlighted in the present generation.

As a result of the Previous Rebbe's redemption on Yud-Beis Tammuz, the month of Tammuz has been transformed into "a Month of Redemption" in our age.

May we merit witnessing the culmination of this process with the coming of the ultimate Redemption, and may this take place in the immediate future.

Footnotes:

1 . Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taaniyos 5:1. 2 . Although these calamities took place in previous generations, we share the responsibility for them. As the Jerusalem Talmud (Yoma 1:1) states, "Every generation during which the Beis HaMikdash is not rebuilt, should consider it to have been destroyed in its time."

3 . Mishneh Torah, loc. cit. 1:3. 4 . Sotah 8b, 9b. 5 . Taanis 26a, 28b ff.

6 . According to most opinions, the walls of Jerusalem were breached before the first Destruction on the ninth of Tammuz (Rosh HaShanah 18b). There are, however, opinions (see Jerusalem Talmud, Taanis 4:5 and the Glosses of Rabbeinu Nissim and the Ritva to Rosh HaShanah) which maintain that then, too, the walls of Jerusalem were breached on the seventeenth of the month.

7 . Our translation follows the conception of the Rambam (loc. cit. 5:2). Others interpret this as a reference to the idol erected by King Menasheh in the First Beis HaMikdash. See the Jerusalem Talmud, Taanis 4:6.

8 . See Taanis 29a. 9 . See Sefer HaLikkutim, Tzemach Tzedek, s.v. Zman, sec 3-4. 10 . Indeed, according to our Sages (Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim 6:1), the entire Torah, comprising both the Written Law and the Oral Tradition, was carved into these tablets. 11 . See Likkutei Torah, Parshas Bechukosai, p. 45a. 12 . For a broader exposition of this concept, see Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, Parshas Chukas, and the sources listed there.

13 . Rashi on Shmos 34:1; Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Ki Sisa, sec. 30.

14 . See Likkutei Sichos, VeZos HaBerachah, 5748. 15 . See Tosafos on Taanis 16a; Bereishis Rabbah 56:10; Likkutei Torah, Rosh HaShanah, p. 60b. 16 . Avos 1:1. 17 . See Yoma 9b; Gittin 55b.

18 . Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taaniyos 5:19, based on Zechariah 8:19. See also the essay above entitled "Support for Jerusalem," which explains the connection between this transformation of the commemorative fasts and this service of unrestrained love.

19 . On the mystical level of gematria, the connection between these concepts and the Seventeenth of Tammuz is reflected in the fact that the letters of the Hebrew word tov ("good") are numerically equivalent to 17.  
20 . Zechariah 2:8-9.

#### FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 360 ff.; Vol. XVIII, p. 310 ff.

##### The Cherubs' Embrace

Two cherubs of gold stood on either end of the Kappores covering the Ark of the Covenant.

Our Sages [1] relate that when the Jewish people followed G-d's will, the cherubs faced each other, embracing like lovers; when the Jewish people were rebellious, the cherubs would avert their gaze and face opposite walls. During the celebration of the pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem, the Kohanim would unveil the Holy of Holies and show the people the cherubs' embrace. "See the great love G-d has for you," they would declare, "a love like that between a man and a woman." [2]

The cherubs of the Holy of Holies also figure in the narrative of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

Our Sages [3] relate that when the gentile invaders entered the Holy of Holies, they saw the cherubs embracing. They brought them out to the market place and displayed them, exclaiming, "How could Israel worship these?" As we know, during the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash G-d "poured out His wrath like fire; G-d was like an enemy." [4] Why, then, were the cherubs intertwined in love at this time of apparent anger? [5]

If their configuration reflected the fluctuating relationship between G-d and Israel, what could their embrace mean at a time when "He cut down, in fierce anger, the pride of Israel?" [6]

##### G-d's Only Son

These questions should be examined in the more comprehensive light of our relationship with G-d. From the prophetic perspective and in the commentaries of the Sages, exile appears to be a punishment, an expression of G-d's wrath at Israel's misdeeds.

This view, however, reflects only one dimension of the bond between G-d and Israel.

At this level, the bond is dependent upon Israel's conduct. If Israel is meritorious, she will be rewarded; if she sins, she will be punished. Beyond this connection, however, there is a deeper bond, a level at which Israel are "children unto the L-rd your G-d." [7]

The Baal Shem Tov intensifies the child-parent metaphor: [8] G-d cherishes every Jew with the love of a parent for an only child who is born to him in his old age.

A father does not love his son only because the son is virtuous or obedient; most fundamentally, he loves him - unconditionally and unwaveringly - because he is his son. With or without redeeming qualities, his father loves him.

G-d loves Israel in the same way. No matter what our conduct, we are His children. Therefore, even when G-d appears to be displeased with us, His love for us is revealed in the Holy of Holies, at the inner core of the Sanctuary.

Continuing with the child-parent metaphor, we can even understand G-d's wrath as an expression of love.

It is written, [9] "He who withholds the rod, hates his son," implying that when a parent punishes a child he is in fact manifesting his love. In fact, defying one's natural impulse to excuse misconduct, and instead rebuking a cherished child, demonstrates a deep and selfless commitment on the part of the parent.

From this perspective, though exile is obviously a descent from the majestic state to which Israel had been accustomed, we can understand that the force motivating this exile is love.

In a subtle manner, which only His ultimate wisdom can fully comprehend, G-d guides the course of His son's development.

##### Descent for the Purpose of Ascent

In light of this, exile appears to be a temporary means to a positive end. Our Sages teach [10] that a descent for the purpose of ascent cannot be branded a descent. By the same token, since G-d's purpose in exiling his

people is to elevate them to a higher rung, the hardships endured are eclipsed by their ultimate goal.

In this spirit, our Sages [11] teach that Mashiach was born on the very day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed; i.e., the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash sparked the process of preparation for the Era of Redemption. Concealed beneath the fall of the Jewish people is G-d's desire to bring Mashiach, and to elevate both Israel and the world to a state of ultimate fulfillment.

##### Stripping Away the Husk

Our Sages [12] compare the process of exile to the sowing of seeds; as the prophet says, [13] "I will sow [Israel] unto Me in the earth." When harvested, the produce that grows from seeds greatly exceeds the quantity initially sown; this increase reflects the long-range gains of exile, as explained above. For this growth to take place, the exterior husk of a seed must utterly decompose. Only then, can its kernel flourish into a flowering plant. In a similar way, the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and our people's exile were intended to strip away all superficiality and allow the Jewish people to blossom into fulfillment in the Era of Redemption.

##### A Holiday of Redemption

In light of this, we can understand the inner dimension of a halachic observation of our Rabbis, [14] that Tishah B'Av always falls on the same day of the week as the first day of Pesach.

This calendric correspondence reflects an intrinsic tie: both days are associated with redemption.

Pesach marks the redemption from Egypt, and Tishah B'Av anticipates the ultimate Redemption.

Every year, in fact, Tishah B'Av generates a renewed impetus for the coming of the Redemption. [15]

At no point in our national history has the redemptive aspect of Tishah B'Av been as relevant as it is today, for we are at the threshold of the Redemption and, indeed, in the process of crossing that threshold. [16]

May we merit the completion of this process and the coming of the era when "all the [commemorative] fasts will be nullified... and indeed, will be transformed into festivals and days of rejoicing." [17]

May this take place speedily, in our days.

Footnotes:

1 . Bava Basra 99a; Yoma 54a. 2 . Yoma 54b. 3 . Ibid. 4 . Eichah 2:4-5. 5 . See Maharsha, Chiddushei Aggados, on Yoma, loc. cit. 6 . Eichah 2:3. 7 . Devarim 14:1. 8 . Keser Shem Tov (Kehot edition), Addenda, sec. 133. 9 . Mishlei 34:15. 10 . Makkos 7b. 11 . Jerusalem Talmud, Berachos 2:4; Eichah Rabbah 1:51. 12 . Pesachim 87b. 13 . Hoshea 2:25; see Torah Or, Parshas Beshallah, p. 61a. 14 . Tur and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 428:3. 15 . This is reflected by the concept cited above, that Tishah B'Av is the birthday of Mashiach. A birthday is a time when mazalo gover, when the particular spiritual source of a person's soul shines powerfully (Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh HaShanah 3:8). The birthday of Mashiach is thus a time when he and the Redemption of which he is the catalyst are granted renewed power. 16 . See the essay entitled "On the Threshold of the Redemption" and the essay entitled "Open Your Eyes," in Sound the Great Shofar (Kehot, N.Y., 1992). 17 . The conclusion of Hilchos Taaniyos in Mishneh Torah of the Rambam, based on Zechariah 8:19. Tishah B'Av in particular is connected with this concept; as our Sages (Introduction to Midrash Eichah) state, "Happiness is manifest solely on Tishah B'Av." End of Text - The Three Weeks

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Tisha B'Av, the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av, is the day which is set aside for Jewish mourning. We fast, and assume the posture of mourners, as if for a family member, and we mourn the loss of the Holy Temple twice lost. However, one must never delude oneself into thinking that we are mourning for a building. There is much more to it than that. The Temple, or Bais Hamikdosh, represents a striving, and an achievement of spiritual heights.

Regarding the first Bais HaMikdosh which was destroyed by Nevuchadnetzar King of Babylon, approximately 830 years BCE, the Rabbis state "he ground ground wheat." In other words, it had already been destroyed before the actual building was torn down. Either the building was

destroyed or it wasn't. What is the difference between the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash, and the destruction of the structure?

This question leads us into a discussion which gets to the heart of the day of Tisha B'Av. It happened after the destruction of the second Bais HaMikdash, that Rabban Yochanan Son of Zakkai, the leader of the Generation

at that time, was riding on a donkey. He saw a poor young girl picking grains of barley from the manure of the donkeys of the people who lived in the vicinity. This would be the food of this starving young girl. When she the great sage, she ran over and asked him for food. She turned out to be the daughter of one of the richest men in Jerusalem before it fell to the Romans. Now she was a beggar. The words which Rabban Yochanan said resound.

"Fortunate are you Jewish People, for when you do the will of G-d you reach the highest of heights, and when you don't you are placed below even the lowliest of animals from whose manure you get your food."

If we don't do the will of G-d, then we are made lowly. This is why we are fortunate? How is that considered to be good fortune? The answer can be understood through the following analogy from the Chofetz Chaim. A man once ordered a pair of shoes from a shoemaker. "They'll be ready in two weeks" he was told. Upon returning he was presented with a pair of shoes which were neither the correct color or the right size. "I refuse to pay you for this" said the customer. "O.K., I understand your concern about the shoes, but could you at least pay me for my time?"

Our good fortune is that G-d expects greatness from us, and we are capable of delivering it. This is what we are here for. When we are a nation who emphasizes the spiritual and lives up to the Torah's expectations, then our spiritual state manifests itself outwardly, in the form of a Bais HaMikdash, or a spiritual center of worship. However, when we are not, then we are delivering a pair of shoes which are neither the correct color or size. Then, even outwardly, our low spiritual state manifests itself. We lose the outward signs as well. The Bais HaMikdash was already defiled and lacking its "soul" before the structure which housed that "soul" was destroyed. Tisha B'Av is a time to remind ourselves of this important foundation of being a Jew. May we merit to see the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash, and rise to the expectations for our good, for now and for always.

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"yhe@jer1.co.il" yhe-metho@jer1.co.il "METHODOLOGY - 24: Tisha B'Av  
TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY  
by Rav Moshe Taragin

In memory of daniel ben reuven ferziger, z"l, in honor of the upcoming shloshim. We extend our deepest gratitude to all our friends from the yeshiva who greeted us at the kevura in beit shemesh.-sandra, reuven, jonathan, minna, adam and ari ferziger

#### The Aveilut of Tisha be-Av

As previously noted (shiur entitled "The issur for an avel to attend a simcha"), the aveilut of Tisha be-Av itself is patterned, in scope and intensity, after the period of shiv'a which a person experiences immediately after the loss of a loved one. To this end the gemara in Ta'anit (30a) composes a list of items which are forbidden on Tisha be-Av proper. The list of forbidden activities is reminiscent of the week of shiv'a: skin ointments, leather shoes, sexual activity and Torah study. At first glance, no disparity between this catalogue and individual aveilut is noticed. Closer inspection, however, reveals significant differences both in what is mentioned and what isn't cited in this register. These differences might help focus upon the essence of Tisha be-Av aveilut and how it differs from individual aveilut.

Though Torah study is listed as prohibited during Tisha be-Av, the beraita does include two significant qualifications. One is permitted to study topics which sadden

rather than provide joy to a person; studying from Iyov, Ekha and the somber prophecies of Yirmiya are permissible. Similarly, according to R. Yehuda's position, one is allowed to study unfamiliar sections of Torah. He reasons that, given the unfamiliarity with these segments and the initial difficulty in comprehension, no tangible pleasure will be received (we certainly acknowledge this analysis: Despite the incomparable relish we experience when we finally master a topic or text, we all undergo an initial struggle in grappling with that which initially appears unyielding). As such, studying in this manner will not produce delight and isn't disallowed. In fact, R. Yehuda's position is adopted by several Rishonim (primarily the Rambam Ta'anit perek 5). To summarize: what is striking about the Tisha be-Av issur are its qualifications: studying lamentable sections as well as (according to R. Yehuda) studying unfamiliar sections.

By stark contrast, the issur of Torah study for an individual avel is stated without any exemptions. The gemara in Mo'ed Katan (21a) declares an issur for an avel to study Torah; no permits are allowed for learning sorrowful sections or unfamiliar topics. Tosafot notices this discrepancy and shares with us the lifelong deliberations of Rabenu Tam. Initially, he prohibited an avel from studying these depressing sections, in light of the unconditional prohibition which the gemara in Mo'ed Katan imposes for a personal avel. Subsequently, though, as an old man, Rabenu Tam reconsidered and permitted this type of learning based upon the 'heter' which already exists on Tisha be-Av; why, after all, should they be different!!!

In truth, if we accept this discrepancy and discriminate between personal aveilut and Tisha be-Av we must closely examine the source for the issur for an avel to learn Torah. The gemara in Ta'anit (30a) bases this halakha upon the principle that an avel may not experience enjoyment or happiness. As Torah learning represents the highest state of happiness (pekudei Hashem yesharim mesamchei lev - see Tehillim 19), its study and the resultant joy is forbidden. In this respect, learning Torah can be compared, "le-havdil," to taking a bath or wearing leather shoes; all these experiences are proscribed because of the pleasure they will induce. Given this view we would certainly concur with the gemara's ruling that Torah study which dispirits rather than rejoices, should be permissible. The gemara, however, in Mo'ed Katan (15a) presents a second source for the prohibition of Torah study. The gemara cites a prophecy given to Yechezkel (Yechezkel 24) that he will conduct himself as an avel and he will "sigh in silence (ha'anek dom)". As part of his silence he cannot learn Torah (since silence is taken not just in the verbal sense but also in the overall experiential manner - a complete shutdown of creative or cognitive activity). By ceasing to engage in Torah study, an avel punctuates the overall shutdown of human activity. This pasuk provides a drastically different theme for the issur of Torah study. Torah study is not banned because of the resulting emotions but INHERENTLY. If Torah study were prohibited only to prevent pleasure, certain tragic segments would not be included within the issur. However, the process of halting this study to insure complete 'silence' encompasses all areas of Torah. Essentially there are two issurim which apply to an avel in the study of Torah. Though, in general, they overlap, in some instances only one clause applies.

In fact, these two strands seem to reflect two distinct dimensions of aveilut. On the one hand, aveilut is commonly associated with the privation of pleasure. The principle of "ha'anek dom", however, seems to demand much more. An avel must also actively display his PERSONAL SENSE of aveilut primarily by distinguishing and distancing himself from the

rest of society. This is accomplished to some degree by his 'code of silence'. The texture of aveilut is not limited to refraining from delightful or pleasurable practices. Indeed, it includes active displays of mourning to highlight the unique condition of the avel and to 'segregate' him. The issur of Torah partakes of each of these two aspects. It causes happiness and therefore is forbidden. In addition, it reflects the normal and common intellectual and emotional 'routine' of a Jewish person and desisting from this exercise underscores the shutdown of the avel's lifestyle.

Finally, to reflect again on the discrepancies between Tisha be-Av and personal aveilut, one might question to what degree each of these 'aveilut factors' are equally relevant to individual aveilut and to Tisha be-Av. Clearly, avoiding simcha is equally applicable to them both. When it comes to the second strand - the active displays of aveilut - one calls into serious question its relevancy to Tisha be-Av. After all, on Tisha be-Av we are all considered mourners and distinguishing one person is just as futile as distinguishing them all. Though the 'issur simcha' might apply, the 'Nihugei Gavrah' (the active display of mourning) might not. As a result, Torah on Tisha be-Av is only forbidden because of the simcha which is caused in its wake; hence, gloomy segments of Torah are permissible. There is no purpose in outright silence and therefore Torah is not universally forbidden. By contrast, Torah study for an individual avel is forbidden so that he may be silent and no distinction is drawn between joyous segments and mournful ones.

#### SUMMARY:

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The discrepancy in the scope of the issur Talmud Torah might reflect a fundamental disparity in the aveilut of Tisha be-Av and that of an individual avel. An avel must remain absolutely silent and hence cannot engage in any Torah study. On Tisha be-Av we must merely avoid rejoicing through Torah study; mournful segments may still be studied.

Can this fundamental difference be discerned in additional halakhic incongruities between Tisha be-Av and individual aveilut? We have focused above upon an issur which, though it applied to each, exhibited some slight differences. A quick glance at the Tisha be-Av list provided by the gemara in Ta'anit (30a) demonstrates more dramatic discrepancies between the two. Quite striking is the complete absence from the Tisha be-Av list of several aspects of individual aveilut. Within the list of Tisha be-Av issurim there is no mention of not greeting or answering others, of not wearing tefillin, nor of turning one's bed upside down. All these however, apply to a personal avel. Might this confirm an essential gap between the two experiences?

The gemara in Mo'ed Katan (21a) describes the prohibition for an avel to don tefillin for the first three days of his aveilut. Though no mention of tefillin is made regarding Tisha be-Av (and one might interpret this reticence as indicating its permissibility) the Rishonim debate this issue. The Maharam Mi-Rotenberg (Teshuva 51) equates Tisha be-Av and individual aveilut, concluding that on Tisha be-Av we refrain from tefillin. By contrast, the Ritva in Ta'anit (30a) distinguishes between the two, accepting the simple reading of the gemara that there is no prohibition of tefillin on Tisha be-Av. Presumably this distinction, as well, is a product of the aforementioned basic difference between Tisha be-Av and individual aveilut. Though one may not rejoice during Tisha be-Av, no concept of publicly displaying aveilut entails. Tefillin is forbidden for an avel because Hashem told Yechezkel to 'bind his turban' as part of exhibiting his mourning. In this respect it is aligned both in spirit and textually with the second facet of the issur Talmud Torah

(they each appear in the same directive to Yechezkel) - they are each geared to actively demonstrate the state of aveilut. As such, on Tisha be-Av when no PERSONAL PUBLIC display is implemented this is not necessary and tefillin may be donned.

In a similar vein, there is some discrepancy between individual aveilut and Tisha be-Av regarding whether one can leave the house. The gemara in Mo'ed Katan (23a) rules that a mourner may not leave his house during the week of shiv'a. A similar halakha does not appear regarding Tisha be-Av. Tosafot (Mo'ed Katan 21b), considering this difference, expresses some uneasiness about our practice of attending shul on Tisha be-Av. "Why not", they ask, "pattern it exactly after personal aveilut?" Their only answer is based on a parallel text which limits the prohibition of an avel to the first three days of shiv'a, which are the most intense. Since Tisha be-Av is likened to the latter phase of shiv'a one need not be sequestered on Tisha be-Av. Essentially, though, Tosafot feel that Tisha be-Av and personal aveilut are comparable.

In theory, one might have concluded differently from Tosafot based upon the stated differences between the kinds of aveilut. Leaving the house, it would seem, is not forbidden because of simcha. This prohibition vividly highlights the requirement of an avel to publicly display his mourning and separate himself from the rest of society. This obviously has no relevance to Tisha be-Av and therefore we may all leave our houses.

Whoever mourns Jerusalem will be zokheh to share in the joy of its rebuilding (Ta'anit 30b). Moshe Taragin  
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SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS  
DEVARIM-SHABBOS CHAZON By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Parashas Devorim-Chazon Chazon Yeshayah Ben Amotz... (Haftorah).

Shopping During The Nine Days

QUESTION: Is it permitted to go shopping during the Nine Days?

DISCUSSION: It is forbidden to make a major purchase, such as a car, silver items or furniture in the Nine Days. There are two possible prohibitions involved in such a purchase:

1) Purchasing a substantial (Chushuv) item (even if used) obligates one to recite a Shehechyanu(1); and it is improper to recite it throughout the Three Weeks(2) and especially during the Nine Days(3).

2) If the car or furniture is for the use and enjoyment of the entire family, in which case Hatov V'hameitiv is recited instead of Shehechyanu(4), one would be allowed to buy it during the Three Weeks but not during the Nine Days. Buying these items in the Nine Days is prohibited since it is similar to building or buying a Binyan Shel Simcha (loosly translated as building or buying an item for pleasure or joy), which the Shulchan Aruch<sup>5</sup> clearly forbids(6).

Shopping for clothing or shoes, even if they are intended for use after the Nine Days(7), is prohibited(8). Both expensive and inexpensive items (such as socks) are included(9). If one has no clean shirt for Shabbos Chazon, he may wear a new shirt(10).

Shopping for items which a) do not require a Shehechyanu, b) are not purchases which could be classified as a Binyan Shel Simcha, and c) are not apparel, is permitted. Even when shopping is prohibited, the following leniencies apply:

Only actual buying is prohibited. The Halachah does not forbid shopping without buying. Window or comparison shopping is permitted. Returns are

permitted. Exchanges may be prohibited(11).

An item which is forbidden to be bought during the Nine Days because of the Shehechyanu restriction may be bought during the Nine Days if it requires assembly, and the assembly will be done after the Nine Days<sup>12</sup>. The same Halacha applies to a utensil that requires immersion. If the immersion will not take place till after the Nine Days, no Shehechyanu is said<sup>13</sup>.

It is permitted to buy a car or furniture for business purposes. The Shehechyanu should be said after Tisha B'av(14). People in the clothing business may purchase stock during the Nine Days<sup>15</sup>.

If delaying the purchase will cause one a substantial loss(16), it is permitted to buy the item during the Nine Days(17).

A bachelor who is getting married after Tishah B'av may buy anything he needs during the Nine Days(18).

One who does not have appropriate shoes to wear on Tishah B'av may buy them during the Nine Days(19).

HALACHA is published L'zchus Haya'el Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

FOOTNOTES:

1 OC 223:3. 2 OC 551:17. 3 Aruch Hashulchan 551:38.

4 OC 223:5. 5 OC 551:2, Mishnah Berura 11 and Shaar Hatzion 13.

6 Mishnah Berurah, ibid and Aruch Hashulchan 20 prohibit buying silver items as Binyan Shel Simcha. Igros Moshe OC 3:80 prohibits car buying for the same reason. See also Nitei Gavriel (pg. 51) who quotes the Pupper Rov as including furniture as well. 7 Mishnah Berurah 551:49. 8 Rama OC 551:7. See also Mishnah Berurah 45. 9 Mishna Berurah 551:45-46.

10 Biur Halacha 551:6 according to the explanation of Igros Moshe OC 3:80. The Poskim do not mention specifically if one would also be allowed to buy the shirt during the Nine Days.

11 Since the shopper is getting a new item in exchange for the old one, it may be considered as if he is buying the item anew. A Rov should be consulted. If the item being exchanged requires a Shehechyanu, it definitely may not be exchanged during the Nine days - See Moadei Yeshurun pg. 152 fn31 quoting Harav M. Feinstein. 12 223:17.

13 Shaar Hatzion 223:21 quoting Reb Akiva Eiger. See also V'zos Ha'bracha (4th printing) pg. 167 quoting Harav C.P. Scheinberg.

14 Igros Moshe OC 3:80. 15 Mishnah Berurah 551: 11.

16 See Hilchos Chol Hamoed pg. 94 who quotes Harav M. Feinstein and Harav Y. Kamenetsky who rule that when an item is offered on sale at a substantial reduction and the sale is not likely to occur again in the near future, it is considered a Davar Ha'veid in regard to Hilchos Chol Hamoed.

17 Based on Mishnah Berurah 551:11 and 13 that permit even a Binyan Shel Simcha in order to avoid a loss. There are other Poskim who prohibit a Binyan Shel Simcha even in a case of loss - See Kaf Hachayim 551:29.

18 Mishnah Berurah 551:14 and 46. Other Poskim disagree with this leniency - see Kaf Hachayim 551:30, 33 and 101. 19 Igros Moshe OC 3:80.

Rebuilding the Bais Hamikdash: What Can We Do? "Rabbi Yissocher Frand "RavFrاند" List - Rebuilding the Bais Hamikdash: What Can We Do?

Imagine that a \$10 million building campaign was announced to rebuild the Bais Hamikdash. Can anyone doubt that the sum, or even ten times as much, would be raised within hours? Yet, writes the Chafetz Chaim, we are not required to spend a penny to rebuild the Bais Hamikdash; a building campaign without fundraising! All that is needed is to rectify the sins of lashon hara and sinas chinam (causeless hatred) for which the second Temple was destroyed; in short, to approach one another in a spirit of peace. And yet, Mashiach carries and the Bais Hamikdash continues to lie in ruins, the Kodosh HaKadoshim (Holy of Holies) covered by a mosque. Chazal remind us in numerous subtle and not so subtle ways of the cause for the Temple's destruction. Whenever Rosh Chodesh falls on Sunday, the Haftarah of the preceding Shabbos begins with the words, "Yonasan said to [David], "Tomorrow is the New Noon..." (Shmuel I 20:18). With the

exception of these words there is seemingly no other connection between the Haftarah and Rosh Chodesh the following day, and yet Chazal decreed that it would supplant the normal Haftarah of the parashah. Why?

To answer that question, Rabbi Shimon Schwab noted that in the Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh we beg Hashem, "Nay You establish a new Altar in Zion..." When Rosh Chodesh is on Sunday, the preceding day's Haftarah reminds us why on the morrow we will daven Mussaf rather than bring a Mussaf offering, why we will pray for the rebuilding of the Altar rather than bring our sacrifices upon one that is already rebuilt. In that Haftarah there is a dramatic exchange between King Shaul and his son Yonasan. King Shaul asks at the festive Rosh Chodesh meal, "Why has the son of Yishai [i.e., David] not come not yesterday and not today?" A seemingly innocent question, but one that reverberates throughout the generations, for Mashiach, too, is referred to as ben Yishai. Why has he not come? For the same reason that David did not come. Just as David did not come due to the causeless hatred that King Shaul had in his illness conceived for him, so his descendant the Mashiach does not come because of causeless hatred. On Tishah B'Av, we read the Book of Eichah as part of our mourning over the destruction of the Temple. There the profit Yirmiyahu cries out, "He filled me with bitterness (va?m?roorim), sated me with wormwood" (Eichah 3:15). The word m?roorim resonates for us and reminds us of Pesach night when we are commanded to eat the Pesach sacrifice together with bitter herbs (m?roorim). Midrash Eichah makes explicit the connection between Pesach and the mourning of Tishah B'Av: "'He filled me with bitterness' ; this refers to the first day of Pesach; 'sated me with wormwood' ; this refers to Tishah B'Av." The Midrash then draws another connection between Pesach and Tishah B'Av: Tishah B'Av is always on the same day of the week as the first day of Pesach.

The message for us is: If Pesach comes and goes, and you still have not absorbed its lesson, then you are guaranteed that Tishah B'Av will remain a night of crying. And what is that lesson? The Gateshead Mashgiach, Rabbi Mattisyahu Solomon, says the lesson is one taught by the two dippings at the Seder. Those dippings, the Ben Ish Chai explains, are reminders of two historical events ; one related to the going down to Egypt and the other to our Redemption from Egypt. The first dipping reminds us of how Yosef's brothers dipped his coat into the blood of a goat and brought it to their father Yaakov. Because of their hatred of their own brother we descended to slavery in Egypt.

The second dipping conveys a similar message by reminding us of an event diametrically opposed to the dipping of Yosef's coat in blood. Just before the Jewish people left Egypt, we were instructed to take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in blood. The bunch (a ?gudas) of hyssop represents the unity of the Jewish people ; the unity that was the precondition for leaving Egypt. According to the Midrash (Midrash Hillel p. 127), in addition to not changing their dress or their Jewish names, the Jewish people in Egypt did not speak lashon hara about one another. They were thus able to correct the sin of Yosef's brothers, which had brought them to Egypt in the first place. And until we do the same today, we cannot hope to leave our galus (exile) behind; and Tisha B'Av will remain a night of crying and mourning.

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Kinot Tisha Bav

Kinos1  
Tisha Bav has several motifs which are mutually exclusive: it is the Taanis Tzibbur par excellence (except for Yom Kippur). As the Gemara says that with the exception of Tisha Bav, there is no Taanis Tzibbur in Bavel. The Taanis Tzibbur characteristics are expressed in 2 ways: we begin the fast the evening prior, and the 5 deprivations, Inuyim, are in effect. There is another

element of a classic Taanis Tzibbur, Tachanunim. A Taanis Tzibbur is distinguished by its prayers. A Taanis Tzibbur is special in that we recite the 13 Midos of mercy, based on the Gemara in Rosh Hashana that on a Taanis Tzibbur we must offer supplications and frequently mention the 13 attributes of mercy. This is associated with the concept that the prayers on a Taanis Tzibbur have a double purpose. Besides the regular obligation to pray, there is a requirement to blow the trumpets when a calamity befalls the Jewish People, which includes the recitation of supplications. This special aspect of a Taanis Tzibbur is not found on Tisha Bav. We do not recite supplications on Tisha Bav.

When Chazal formulated the relationship between the Yom Tov and the Sidra read preceding the Yom Tov: Tzav before Pesach, Bamidbar before Shavuot, Tzumu Tzumu from Vaeschanan before Tisha Bav, Nitzavim before Rosh Hashonah (Megillah). The Rambam states that Vaeschanan is read before Tisha Bav. The formula used to introduce the reading in general consists of mentioning the reading for the Shabbos that precedes the Yom Tov. However for Tisha Bav we associate the day with the reading that FOLLOWS Tisha Bav. We should have associated it with Devarim. The Rambam quotes this halacha the same way as the Gemara. Apparently Tisha Bav, as far as content is concerned, is associated with both Devarim and Vaeschanan, but Chazal emphasized the link between Vaeschanan and Tisha Bav. The classical reason for why we read Devarim before Tisha Bav is that at the beginning of Devarim we tell all the places that Bnai Yisrael traveled and rebelled against Hashem. But this is a weak link between the requirement to read the Parsha and Tisha Bav and requires further explanation.

After the Kaballas Hatorah and construction of the Mishkan, it was time to enter Eretz Yisrael. This is the story we find in Behaloscha that the system of justice was put in place which according to the Ramban equated for entry to the land. At that point they were prepared to enter immediately to Eretz Yisrael. And had Moshe brought the Jews into EY, there would have been no need to fight. The conquest would have happened in a matter of days. Instead Jewish history was changed. Vatikravna Aylay Kulchem, you all gathered around me. Hashem said there is no need to send spies. But Moshe agreed to send them and the disaster happened that changed Jewish history to one of martyrdom. Moshe was supposed to divide the land and not Joshua. Instead they spent 38 years wandering, and during that time traveled what in reality was a short distance.

Tosfos in Baba Basra quotes that each year on Tisha Bav the people dug their own graves and they spent the night in the graves. In the morning they would put out a call for the living to separate themselves and arise. Thousands remained in the graves. Eventually all the members of the doomed generation dies out. So Tisha Bav is related to the story that was told in Devarim, that the original seeds of the eventual destruction of the Beis Hamikdash were traced to the episode of the spies. In fact, in the days of the Tanaim, they used to read the story of the spies on Tisha Bav. The story of the spies was that of retribution for sin. Death and destruction. Such a reading was appropriate to Tisha Bav. Devarim is appropriate because like Shelach, it relates the catastrophe of the spies.

The reading that we have on Tisha Bav is associated with Tisha Bav because it mentions exile and the concept of Teshuva that when the hour is darkest and the situation appears hopeless, we will repent and return to Hashem with all our heart and He will accept us redeem us. The message of the Krias Hatorah on Tisha Bav is that no matter how horrible the tragedy of Tisha Bav and how it is a symbol of all our national tragedies, Hashem has never abandoned us and never will. We are the chosen people and our sins will be washed away with Teshuva. There is a promise from Hashem that at the end of days Bnai Yisrael will do teshuva. no matter how stubborn the people will be, they will do Teshuva.

It is strange that the Gemara changed the reading from one of retribution (the spies) to one of repentance (Ki Tolid Banim) and the special status of Bnai Yisrael. So the reading of Devarim before Tisha Bav is equivalent to the reading of Shelach. Even though we no longer read Shelach on Tisha Bav, the same story is told in Devarim and we read it the Shabbos before. The reading on Tisha Bav says: "remember the loss of the temple but don't lose hope for the eventual redemption". That's why Vaeschanan is the reading that is associated with Tisha Bav.

There is another issue with the reading on Tisha Bav. Eichah is mentioned in

Kodshim. Eichah is unique in that it is read at night. In the morning, if it is read, it is read after Kinos. Ruth and the other megillos are read by day (purim we have it read twice). Chazal said that a person is more sensitive to their pain in the night time as opposed to day time. The story of Raban Gamliel that there was a woman who had one son and she used to only cry at night for her son and Raban Gamliel cried along. Because at night, when man is alone, the full magnitude of how hopeless his situation is sinks in. This is based on the Passuk of Kumi Roni Balayla. We are also more sensitive at night in that man shares the suffering of his fellow man. The Bacho Tivkeh Balayla refers to the passuk of Vayivku Ha'am Balayla Hahu by the meraglim. Since the crying that they did in the Midbar was at night, Eichah is recited at night.

Tefilas Tisha Bav is not a regular Tefila. If it was, we would not recite Kinos. There is a concept of blessing Hashem in bad times just as we are obligated to Bless Hashem in good times. How do we have a right to ask Eichah? We can't ask Hashem for an accounting. We say Dayan Haemes and accept His will. There is a special permission given to Knesses Yisrael to ask Eichah on Tisha Bav. It was granted to Jeremiah. If not for this permission we would not have the right to recite Eichah. We must preface Kinos with Eichah otherwise we could not recite Kinos. Masechta Sofrim says that the entire congregation must say the blessing of Dayan Haemes in its entirety (with Shem and Malchus) on Tisha Bav. So before we recite Eichah there are no Kinos without an introduction. Immediately after Eichah we start saying Kinos at night. But during the day time we also require permission to recite Kinos. The Haftorah is the first Kinah and prior to the Haftorah we don't say any Kinos. (Should an individual who does not hear the haftorah refrain from kinos? Perhaps the haftorah in shul grants permission to all). All Haftoros conclude with words of comfort. Not on Tisha Bav. Al Yishalel Chacham Bchachmaso is intended as a rebuke and warning. That's how we start Kinos. After Eichah we call the Mekonenos (those women who are all to familiar with sorrow and Kinos) to continue Kinos. By day we call them after we read the Haftorah. If Tisha Bav comes out on Sunday we don't have to call 3 people to the Torah, only one according to one opinion in the Gemara. From this we see that on Tisha Bav the Krias Hatorah is not the main theme as opposed to other festivals where it is. The reading is implemented as a vehicle for getting to the Haftorah. Without the Haftorah there would have been no separate Krias Hatorah. Unlike Yom Tov where the reading is part of Limud Torah for the Yom Tov. On Tisha Bav we need the Haftorah as permission to recite Kinos.

The Kinos start and revolve around words of Eichah or parts of the Haftorah. We measure the Churban in terms of physical destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Sechi Umaos, means that we are mourning and emphasizing the desecration of the name of Bnay Yisrael amongst the people of the world. The midrash says that during the Churban, Hashem announced to the angels that they should mourn for the destruction of Yerushalayim. In Churban, physical destruction is not the worst aspect. As in the Tehillim, Bau Goyim Bnachlasecha, that there was destruction of both Beis Hamikdash and Knese Yisrael. On the Seventh night of Pesach we read about how the waters of the Yam Syf were a pillar around Bnay Yisrael. It was the time that Hashem decided to reject the defense of the Egyptian people by their arch angel on the grounds that both Jew and Egyptian were idolators and if one should perish, so should the other. Hashem allowed Bnay Yisrael to live. The Beis Hamikdash was not responsible for the actions of Bnay Yisrael. Why should it suffer for the sins of Bnay Yisrael? By right, Bnay Yisrael should be destroyed and the Beis hamikdash should continue. Instead it was the other way thanks to the kindness of Hashem. That is why the Mishkan is called a Mashkon for the sins of Bnay Yisrael. On one hand, Tisha Bav is the day of the Churban and we grieve for it. On the other hand it was a day of salvation that Hashem decided that Bnay Yisrael should continue even though the Beis Hamikdash will not. However the cost was the desecration of the name of Hashem across the nations. (In a similar vein, our enemies were blasphemous during the holocaust years. The Rav came across such challenges.) Tisha Bav is a day of mourning for the destruction and exile as well as the desecration of the name of Hashem that resulted. This is one of the themes of the first Kina.

Kinos2

Hester Panim is equated with Sasam Tefilasi which is equated with Sechos Hamishkan. There is Midas Hadin and there is Hester Panim. We find one mention of this term in Parshas Vayelech. The holocaust and churban can be classified under hester panim. It is siluk hashgacha, the worst kind. where Hashem turns His back, kvayachol, on the people. In Egypt there was hester panim and followed by Vayeda Elokim which is the opposite of Hester Panim. Vatzaku Vataal Shavasam El Elokim Vayeda Elokim this ended Hester Panim. Churban is Hester Panim.

What is Chazon Ben Brachya? Why was it singled out among all of the other Nevuos like those of Yehaiah? Rabbi Akiva when he walked by the Har Habayis was happy while the others cried. He said that based on the Nevuah of Ben Brechya he was happy. Shualim Hilchu Bah describes a place that only foxes will visit, i.e. a desolate place where civilization has been removed. Rabbi Akiva compared the Nevuos of Yeshaya and Zecharyah. The animals will come to a place where humans will not come any longer. They built a home on the Har Habayis which has been desolate for almost 2000 years. Zecharyah's Nevuah was that eventually the Har Habayis will be so full of people. Just as one prophesy came true (Yeshaya), the other (Zecharyah) will as well.

Gilgal is associated with the 14 years of conquest and division during the time of Joshua. It is the opposite of desolation and Churban. In Gilgal we had the Mishkan - Lo Basa El Hamnucha Vel Hanachla. Eyni Chiksa - my eye waited for the prophecy of Ben Brechya which will surpass the joy of the division of the times of Joshua and the joy that went along with it.

At the end of Eicha the Bayis Sheini is mentioned, Tam Avonech Bas Tziyon (Eicha 4:22). This refers to the second Churban by the hands of Edom, even though Eichah was written about Churban Bayis Rishon. The first one was destroyed by Bavel the second by Edom. However it is to be viewed as one destruction. Rabbi Eliezer Hakalir devoted his Kinos to Bayis Sheini. We have a special Kinah for the destruction of the 10 tribes. Al Yehuda Veshomron. They debate who suffered more in the exile and Churban: Yehuda or the 10 tribes. Yehuda returned but was exiled again. Veahaliav Tizak Nisrfu Armonai, Yehuda will say that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and my Churban is greater than that of the 10 tribes.

Yirmiyahu mentions Shilo in the same place that the Churban for the Beis Hamikdash is mentioned. He describes how Shilo was destroyed also for the sins of the people. The Gemara when discussing the Psukim in Reeh of KI Lo Basa el Hamnucha Vel Hanachla says that Mnucha is Shilo. Nachla was Beis Hamikdash. The Ramban says that Shilo had many true properties of the Beis Hamikdash. Before the Beis Hamikdash was built, there was no Mitzvah Aliyah Lregel until Shilo was built. Shilo was outstanding among the Batei Mikdash in that it was considered in terms of importance after the 2 Batei Hamikdash. It was considered as a "Bayis". It was destroyed when the Plishtim came and destroyed it and took the Aron. One must study the Sugyos in Zvachim for more details regarding Shilo. It is interesting to note that we never find mention of the Kosel Hamaaravi among the Rishonim. For instance the Ramban never mentions it. To his generation it was apparently invisible. It was completely covered over. Similarly, Shilo was completely destroyed and vanished without a trace. We don't even know where it stood. The worst possible curse is that Yersahalayim should suffer the same fate as Shilo, and disappear without a trace. Shilo stood for 365 years yet we have no idea where it was and so little is known about it in Jewish History.

We don't know who exactly was Ben Dinai. Koli Lehashmia Baarav Higremuni refers to the story of the Bnay Yishmael who gave the Jews salty herring and empty flasks to drink from and they died.

Ki Tam Chakta is Rabbi Eliezer Hakalir referring to the Gemara in Chullin where Yaakov's image is etched into the Kisei Hakavod. The changing of the motives to mention the desolation of the land indicates both the blessing and the curse of desolation. Even though the Mikdash is destroyed, which was the curse, the fact that no one else tried to rebuild the Har Habayis shows that the Har Habayis is still holy. Ki Tam Chakta: who said that Hashem will reassign the task of settling the Har Habayis to some other people besides Am Yisrael? The fact that there is still desolation shows that Hashem is sitting on His throne but the image of Yaakov is etched before Him. We are still His people.

Eicha Atzta Bapecha discusses Galus Edom in a parallel way to Eichah that Yirmiyahu said for Galus Bavel. Edom and Amalek are one and the

same. Ein Hacos Shalem, the throne of Hashem is not complete, until Amalek is destroyed. The same applies to the destruction of Edom.

Vlo Zacharta Pligas Dilug - the people were scattered all over Egypt and on the night of Pesach they were assembled Al Kanfei Hashechina. Another Pshat is that the plans that You had for Your people of entering Eretz Yisrael right away were ruined by the sin of the Meraglim. Many times Hashem met with Bnay Yisrael. The Mishkon was a place for Knesses Yisrael to meet with Hashem. The term Viyud is used. At Matan Torah we had a Viyud with Hashem. This terminology is found at the end of Parshas Tetzaveh. The Mishkon will have Kedusha because Hashem will be found there. The Ohel Moed was not only special because Moshe met the Shechina there but because it was a special place of rendezvous for Bnay Yisrael. Veses refers to a concept of time. Periodic. We were accustomed to meeting Hashem from time to time. Zevulecha - is an abode. When Shlomo built the Beis Hamikdash he called it a Beis Zevul for Hashem. This was now desecrated.

Why does it say Chitui Chukei Chalev? At the time of Kabalas Hatorah there was Eirusin (betrothal) and we had to consummate the Nisuin (marriage). The people made the Eigel but the Nisuin was not consummated till after the erection of the Mishkan. However there was no Sefer Krisis between Hashem and Knesses Yisrael that would have nullified the impending marriage. It is the only Kidushin that is not subject to divorce. People who want to be intimate with each other go into a house. Just like Hashem and Knesses Yisrael through the Mishkon. It symbolizes the shade and protection that a house normally provides and the intimate relationship between Hashem and Knesses Yisrael. In human life many things can't be accomplished in public. This is Zevul, a hidden place where not all can go. (See the prayer of Shlomo Hamelech when he dedicated the BEis Hamikdash as a Beis Zevul.) It is representative of the intimate relationship between Hashem and Knesses Yisrael. An intimate place is needed because Tefila is an intimate act. In an intimate place man will say things that are private that he would not say in public. For instance the Kohen Gadol does the Avodah in the Kodesh Kodshim where no one else could enter because the Kohen Gadol must admit the sins of the people. This admission is an intimate act and requires privacy. This intimate meeting place between Hashem and His chosen people was taken away from us.

Tarachta B'torchecha - It was extremely painful for You to deliver Your flock into the hands of the enemy. Why did you pain yourself to punish us?

In the chapter Aadeh Ad Chug Hashamayim, we use the term Veamtzayhu which is similar to the language used in Hematzat Lanu Bvakashaseynu, that everyone should see the glory of Hashem. We want to be able to show that indeed at one time we were worthy of, and did see the revelation of the divine presence. Before Adam's original sin, Hashem wanted that man should be His neighbor, Kvayachol. He would be close to him. But man lost Him. Had Adam been repentant he could have saved the situation. But the lack of contrition together with his blaming Hashem for giving him a wife sealed his fate. There was no recognition and admission of sin. We express our longing and sense of nostalgia for Hashem. We promise that we would not make such a mistake again. Even though Adam did not know this secret, I know it and I would not hide myself when I hear the sound of Hashem strolling through the Garden of Eden. This sense of longing for and seeking of Hashem is represented by Shir Hashirim in the positive sense. Here in the Kinot we have it in the reverse standpoint of exile. It is interesting that we include this mention of longing on " ". The longing is not diminished even on a day as bleak as " ". The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash has changed the cosmos and even nature to a degree forever. This chapter represents this change and mentions that at night the celestial bodies are crying. Also time as an entity has changed since the destruction of the temple. According to Judaism, time has a certain aspect to it that is real: the concept of Kedushas Hayom states that there is a certain substance to the day. It expresses the difference between a weekday and a holy day. Tisha Bav is referred to as a day of bitterness but also as a time period whose spirit and essence is bitterness.

We pray that next year Tisha Bav should be turned into a holiday, indeed the Chachmei Hakaballah are of the opinion that it will be the biggest holiday. Because not only will Moshiach bring the redemption, rebuild the Beis Hamikdash and bring back the exiles but the most important thing he will do is to usher in the age of Haemes V'Hashalom Ehavu, when the 2 attributes who advocated against creating man (because man is by nature contentious or

because all men are liars). Because there is a fundamental disagreement between the pure man of Halacha and the pure man of Emes. One of them has to compromise in order for both litigants or parties to a dispute to be happy with a judgement. We await the age when true unmitigated justice will take place and where only one of the litigants can be right yet both will accept and there will still be peace between them. We hope that we will put away the book of Kinot at the end of this Tisha Bav forever and next year we will no longer need them.

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Tisha B'Av 5756 - "The fall of Betar"

The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E

by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@jer1.co.il)

edited by Yonasan Rosenblum

This week's issue is dedicated by my grandmother, Mrs. G. Turkel, to the memory of my beloved grandfather, Israel (Reb Yisroel Shimon ben Shlomo HaLevi) Turkel. Tisha B'Av 5756

### THE FALL OF BETAR

On the 9th of Av the stronghold city of Betar was captured and destroyed by the Romans (~135 CE) (Mishnah, Ta'anit 4:6)

Forty baskets of Tefillin (phylacteries) were found on the heads of those who were killed in Betar. (Gittin 58a)

Bar-Kochba, based in Betar, led an army of G-d-fearing Jews who rebelled against the mighty Roman empire. His forces were eventually overcome by the Romans and slaughtered while still wearing their Tefillin. What is the significance of the fact the Bar-Kochba's soldier's were cut down in their Tefillin? Is the Gemara simply reporting the piety of Bar-Kochba's troops?

### II

The Gemara describes a unique quality of Tefillin:

Why did Elisha [a righteous man who wore his Tefillin in defiance of the Roman decree against wearing them] refer to his Tefillin as dove's wings? ...Just as a dove's wings afford it protection [a dove wards off enemies with its wings -Rashi], so too the Mitzvah [that is, particularly the Mitzvah of Tefillin] protect the Jewish people. (Shabbat 130a)

Members of a Torah army must excel in their observance of the Mitzvah of Tefillin: If one speaks after donning Tefillin on the arm, but before completing the Mitzvah by putting on the second Tefillin on the forehead, it is considered a sin. One who has sinned in such a manner may not join ranks of the Jewish army [as he will not be promised Divine protection]. (Sotah 44b)

Not one of the warriors who fought against Midyan (Bamidbar 31) put on their forehead-Tefillin before their arm-Tefillin. Had they done so, Moshe would not have praised them and they would not have all returned home safely. (Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba to verse 4:4)

It is through keeping the Mitzvah of Tefillin [on the arm and the forehead] properly that Hashem grants the Jewish armies the blessing of Moshe Rabbenu. "He shall smite the enemy's arms and foreheads" (Devarim 33:20) [They would sever the head and arm of the enemy with one blow -Rashi ad loc.]. (Rosh, Hilchot Tefillin sec. 15; see also Kol Eliyahu #132)

### III

What is it about Tefillin that affords one who wears them protection in times of war? And why is it so important not to don them in reverse order and not to interrupt the process by speaking? In Berachot we are told:

Hashem too wears Tefillin.... What is written on the parchment enclosed in the Creator's Tefillin? "Who is like Your nation, Israel, a unique nation on earth! (I Divrei Hayamim 17:21)".... Hashem says, "You, Israel, have proclaimed Me unique, as it is written, 'Hear O Israel, Hashem is our Lord, Hashem is One (Devarim 6:4),' I too shall proclaim you unique, as it is written,



by Rav Meir Spiegelman

The laws of aveilut (mourning) become ever more lenient with increasing distance from the event which is mourned. On the day of the burial the laws are extremely stringent, and thereafter there are lesser laws which apply to the next seven days, the thirty-day period, etc. During the "three weeks" (between the 17th of Tammuz and Tish'a be-Av) the opposite is the case: more stringencies are added as time goes on. Moreover, after Tish'a be-Av we cease to mourn and on the tenth - when the main part of the destruction actually took place - only certain of the laws are still practiced.

Tish'a be-Av is called a mo'ed (festival) and therefore we do not recite Tachanun on that day. This connection between mourning and mo'ed also finds expression in other areas. Mourning lasts seven days, as do the festivals. Also, that a mourner is forbidden to engage in work is learned from the parallel between festivals and mourning. This connection seems far-fetched - after all, the significance of mourning appears to stand in stark contrast to that of the festivals. Indeed, each of the three pilgrim festivals serves to cancel the remaining period of an individual's mourning because of the inherent conflict between them, and hence it is difficult to understand why Chazal saw fit to draw a parallel between them (we will not enter into a discussion here of whether the source for the requirement of the first day of mourning is biblical or rabbinic.)

"Rabbi Levi said: A mourner should see himself for the first three days as though a sword is lying between his two thighs; from the third until the seventh day - as though it is lying opposite him in the corner; and from then on - as though it passes in front of him in the market." (Mo'ed Katan 27b)

The image of a sword obviously holds a negative symbolism for man, but it also has a positive corollary: special Divine attention is paid to the mourner. Hashgacha peratit (Divine guidance of the individual) is clearly something to be happy about - although in this instance it had negative results. Likewise, part of the idea which finds expression in the festivals is that of God's involvement in our world. Each festival reflects a different aspect of this revelation (in the same way that each individual person represents a revelation of a sort).

From this perspective, even mourning reflects God's involvement in the sense that the "keys of life" were not given over to angels but rather retained by God Himself. The midrash recounts the story of Rabbi Akiva laughing when he saw a fox roaming about among the ruins of the Temple Mount. To him, this fox was living proof of God's intervention, and by the same token he knew that God would again be involved in the future re-establishment of the Temple. Still, we desire a different form of supervision than that which was manifest in this era of history. In Tachanun we recite David's prayer and wish "to fall by God's hand" - without any concealment - and not to fall by "natural means." On Tish'a be-Av this prayer is inappropriate, because Tish'a be-Av is an expression of the hiddenness of God's involvement in the world. Without His providence no human hand would have had the power to conquer the Temple, but on the other hand it was indirectly through an emissary, that His design was fulfilled at that time.

We find many instances which demonstrate that tum'a (spiritual impurity) causes one to be distanced from God (for example, someone who is tamei is forbidden to enter the Temple precincts, etc.). The converse is also true: Distance from God causes tum'a. It is for this reason that the person who burns the inner sin-offerings becomes tamei, even though tum'a is not explicitly mentioned in this context. Unfortunately, there is no room for elaboration here.) Rav Soloveitchik (in his "Shi'urim Le-zekher Aba Mori," part II) explains that the significance of mourning is a distancing from God. We may, therefore, extend this equation in an associative fashion: Mourning is parallel and comparable to tum'a. According to certain of the Rishonim, the principle of mourning is to be learned from the obligation of a kohen to become tamei for his relatives. This becomes clear in light of the above, for the two concepts are connected. The prohibition of a kohen becoming tamei is based on the prohibition of distancing himself from the Temple. When he is in mourning he is by definition distanced from the Temple, and this permits his exposure to tum'a.

If we accept this comparison then it becomes easier to understand certain prohibitions associated with mourning. We may at first find it strange that a mourner is not permitted to wash himself. Why is the withholding of this specific pleasure heavier to bear than that of other pleasures and why is

washing defined as an activity which causes one joy? Yom Kippur, too, with its ban on leather shoes and washing, presents this difficulty, but there the basis for the prohibition is the need for inui (self-affliction), while here the laws of mourning seem to include no such requirement. One must therefore look elsewhere for the rationale underlying a mourner's prohibitions.

In their treatment of mourning, Chazal wished to emphasize the element of tum'a. They therefore instituted a mourning period of seven days, composed of two levels - up to and including the third day, and from the fourth day onwards - just as we find in the laws pertaining to purification through the ashes of the para aduma (red heifer). In addition, Chazal stipulated that certain of the customs observed by the person who is tamei also be observed by the mourner, and they prohibited those actions which resemble the procedure by which someone who is tamei becomes tahor (ritually pure). The basic process of ritual purity includes the washing of one's body and clothes, and thus both are prohibited to the mourner. (Our intention here is to explain why these specific activities are chosen as representative of "joy;" we are obviously not denying the fact that these prohibitions also aid a person in the mourning process.) The prohibition of studying Torah makes sense as well. Someone who is tamei is also prohibited from studying Torah, according to a law legislated by Ezra, because involvement in Torah study reflects closeness to God - as we learn from the mishna in Pirkei Avot (3:6). In order to avoid a situation whereby a mourner would be altogether unable to study Torah, he is permitted to study those sections which reflect Divine distancing and punishment. Shaving is also one of the steps involved in purification, as we find in the case of the Levites and the metzora (someone suffering from tzara'at, a physical manifestation of certain spiritual disorders usually translated as leprosy). In addition we find that a metzora must let his hair grow and must keep his head completely covered (only the former is incumbent upon the mourner nowadays). Sexual relations are also prohibited to those falling under certain categories of impurity.

Other prohibitions, too, are connected to tum'a, if only indirectly. A person who is tamei must overturn his bed and sit on the floor in order not to cause his bed to become tamei under the category of "tum'at midras," a situation which is both serious in its own right and technically difficult to reverse. (The prohibition of wearing leather shoes is also connected to this issue.) A person who is tamei is also divided to some extent from the community (for instance, the metzora has to sit alone outside the camp of Israel), because tum'a causes distancing or separation. Furthermore, someone who is tamei is also not permitted to greet others (the prohibition of work is also connected to this, but for the mourner the issue of work obviously also includes the problem of his attention being diverted from his mourning.)

Hence, the prohibitions which apply on Tish'a be-Av can be divided into two categories. The first group consists of all those laws which pertain to a day of affliction and trouble, like any fast day, while the second category includes those prohibitions which pertain to mourning and reflect distance from God, and are hence connected with tum'a. Since mourning is associated with distance from God, it is clear that when we speak of removal of the Shekhina (God's presence) from the Temple, we are required to mourn.

However, this mourning is different from "regular" mourning. In the case of regular mourning the person is subjected to a certain event, and as he comes to terms with that event he learns to live with it and it disturbs him less. The mourning over the Temple, on the other hand, is an expression of the removal of the Shekhina. This removal increased gradually as the time of the destruction grew nearer. The Shekhina mourns, as it were, her exile, and Bnei Yisrael mourn together with her. Therefore the degree of mourning grows with the approach of this day each year, because what we mourn is the removal of the Shekhina rather than the destruction of what was, after all, merely an edifice of wood and stone. For this reason the beginning of the punishment was worse than its culmination, and we fast on the ninth of Av (rather than on the tenth, when most of the physical destruction took place). The beginning of the punishment involved a total removal of the Shekhina, and the burning of the Temple did not add any qualitative dimension to our mourning.

We may note here that, generally speaking, any manifestation of kedusha

- holiness - brought about by a person starts off with great force and then becomes gradually weaker. God, who is able to direct reality towards a certain end, can create the opposite - a holiness which becomes increasingly stronger. (This is the difference between Shabbat and the pilgrim festivals and between Shmitta and Yovel [the Sabbatical and Jubilee years], but there is no room for elaboration here.) The physical parallel can be found in the area of speech. As man shouts his voice becomes weaker and weaker, whereas God's voice "grows steadily stronger," as we learn in the Torah's description of the Sinai experience. In the same way, mourning which originates in man becomes less stringent as we move away from the day of tragedy whereas our mourning which reflects that of the Shekhina culminates at its peak, on the day of tragedy itself.

As mentioned above, the revelation of God's strict justice has both a positive and a negative aspect. The positive aspect of Tish'a be-Av lies in our hope that on this date we will in future be redeemed, and this positive motif finds expression in our celebration of the holiday which falls on the "seventh day of Tish'a be-Av" - i.e. the fifteenth of Av (Tu be-Av). This day - the counterpart of Yom Kippur, the revelation of God's mercy - concludes the seven-day period ("festival") beginning with Tish'a be-Av. Tu be-Av

The midrash is commenting on the fact that Pesach and Tish'a be-Av always fall on the same day of the week. Although the Beit Ha-Levi concludes in his responsa (Derush 2) that "there seems to be no practical difference as to which day it falls," the midrash nevertheless appears to indicate a qualitative connection between the two. This question is discussed further on in the Beit Ha-Levi, Derush 4, as well as in the commentary of the midrash on the spot. Let us take the midrash a step further and add our own contribution.

The Significance of the Maror on Pesach Night

In both the Written and the Oral Law, we make a distinction between the Pesach sacrifice as commemorated in Egypt and the Pesach sacrifice of all future generations. Which of them is the "real" Pesach? A superficial consideration of the two would lead us to the conclusion that the real Pesach was that of the Exodus, the sacrifice in the merit of which - according to the well-known midrash - our forefathers came out of Egypt, while the Paschal sacrifice of all future generations is simply a commemoration of that first Pesach. However, this perception contradicts the explicit wording of the text: "And you shall tell your son on that day saying, 'Because of THIS God did for me when I came out of Egypt'" (Shemot 13:8) - i.e., "in order that I should fulfill His commandments, including this Paschal sacrifice, this matza and this maror" (Rashi). From here it would appear that the whole purpose of the exodus from Egypt was in order that the Paschal sacrifice should be offered throughout the generations.

A strong proof for this view can be brought from the unique combination of history and halakha which characterizes the episode of the exodus from Egypt as described in the Torah. It is specifically at the point where the drama reaches its peak that God sees fit to command the nation with the tiniest details, not only those pertaining to their immediate task - their own Paschal sacrifice - but also those pertaining to the Paschal sacrifice for all generations. For Bnei Yisrael it was a time of entirely new experiences and great tension; they were required to undertake an operation the likes of which had never been imagined. Could God not have found a more relaxed and appropriate time for instructions which in any case had no bearing on that moment itself?

This question certainly makes sense, but only if we assume that Pesach for future generations is nothing more than a commemoration of the Pesach in Egypt. If, however, we look at the situation in light of the expression "because of THIS..." then there is no more natural and obvious place than here for God to command the nation with regard to Pesach for future generations. It is essential that Bnei Yisrael understand their redemption and its purpose. Moreover, were it not for the commandment regarding Pesach for future generations, there would have been no way of understanding the Pesach in Egypt itself.

What passed through the minds of those Hebrew slaves upon hearing the command to sacrifice the Pesach? They were certainly familiar with the festive sacrifices - le-havdil - offered by their pagan neighbors. The majestic celebrations, the joy of the masses, the feeling of security and stability of a nation sovereign in its own land - all this they observed among the

reveals the positive aspect hidden in Tish'a be-Av, allowing us a glimpse of the seed of redemption which that tragic day holds, the seed whose existence is made possible by the fact of God's involvement in the world and in history. This same revelation is what allows for destruction and mourning as well as for redemption and joy. (Originally appeared in Daf Keshet 142 Av 5748, vol. II, pp. 92-94. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

"You Comfort Me in Vain" - A Clarification of the Connection Between Pesach and Tish'a be-Av  
by Rav Elyakim Krumbin

"Satisfy me with maror (bitter herbs)' - This refers to the first day of the festival of Pesach, the day on which we eat [the Paschal sacrifice] 'on matzot and maror'; 'Satisfy me with wormwood' - Just as you satisfied Me on the first night of Pesach, so should you satisfy Me on the night of Tish'a be-Av, with wormwood. Hence the night [of the week] on which Pesach begins is the same night [of the week] as Tish'a be-Av." (Eikha Rabba 3:5, and also the beginning of 18).

Egyptians, and despaired. Now, Moshe Rabbeinu appears in front of our forefathers with the news of the command - a festival for God! A festival for Israel! But how? Without an altar? Smearing the blood on the entrances to their clay houses? Some type of underground activity ("No man shall go out from the entrance of his house")? In haste? With all their bags packed? The Pesach of Egypt could not have been commanded without a full disclaimer of any hint of mockery of the downtrodden slaves. The true festival is ahead of us, in the future, in Eretz Yisrael, and "ba'avur zeh" (because of this) - for the sake of that future - you are leaving. What is required of you today? A demonstration of your faith in that future. You will celebrate the Pesach today, in a foreign land, under the whips of the overlords, in unbearable conditions, because you await the future redemption and long for it - and I shall consider it as though you celebrated the Pesach in all its halakhic details and with all the appropriate majesty.

To what can this be compared? To the command of the prophet Yirmiyahu: "Place markers for yourself, make for yourself road-signs" (31:20). On our way out of Israel and towards our exile we were commanded to place markers and road-signs in order that the way back would be easily recognizable. These would serve as a tangible sign that "your hope is not lost, because you will still return to these your cities" (Radak). And our Sages commented in the Sifri: "Although I am banishing you from the land and sending you into exile, keep yourselves identified with the mitzvot, such that when you return they will not be new to you" (quoted by the Ramban, Vayikra 18:25). For the purposes of our argument it makes no difference whether the Sifri is referring here to all the mitzvot, in accordance with the Ramban who holds that "the mitzvot are directed mainly to the dwellers of God's land" (in which case their observance in exile is in any case only for the purposes of "identification"), or to those mitzvot which de-oraita (as biblically mandated) fall away during the time of the Temple's destruction (but which were declared obligatory by the Sages for our time, for the duration of the exile). Either way, our devotion to the Divine command and our faith in the future are expressed in our observance of the mitzvot under impossible conditions, during the periods of destruction and exile. In this respect we follow in the footsteps of the generation which left Egypt, which "celebrated" the Pesach in the shadow of their slavery, but with an unshakable faith that their modest actions would be amplified in the future by their descendants, in the full commemoration of the Pesach for all generations. They were redeemed in the merit of this faith.

With this in mind we are able to resolve a substantial problem with regard to the mitzva of maror, which - according to the Torah - is connected to the Paschal sacrifice, which must be eaten "on matzot and maror." How do we explain the combination of the eating of the Pesach, symbol of redemption, together with the symbol of the bitterness of slavery? And on what basis did Hillel take this a step further, expounding that the maror must literally be eaten in the same mouthful as the Pesach?

We must remember that for our forefathers in Egypt, the maror symbolized the eternity of their faith: We are in exile, the taste of the maror is still in our mouths, and nevertheless we celebrate the Pesach! The same is

true of Pesach for all future generations: the maror symbolizes the thread connecting every Paschal sacrifice to the Pesach of Egypt. Each Pesach started then, in the fiery furnace; it was there that the seed was planted, and today we are enjoying its fruit. The Pesach of future generations is the explanation of Pesach in Egypt - its inevitable conclusion.

In summary: The combination of the maror and the Pesach declares that faith in the future is victorious over the depression of the present; it is indeed possible to taste the redemption in the very grains of the maror.

A Perversion of the World Order

In order to see the connection between Pesach and Tish'a be-Av, we must first clarify one issue pertaining to the portions of the Torah dealing with rebuke of the nation. Our nation has, during its long existence, become very familiar with the experience of the decline from the heights of joy to the depths of despair. But there is one specific point which seems to highlight the tragedy; a point which is exemplified by a comparison of the parallel curses in the two Torah portions of rebuke. In parashat Bechukotai we read, "And I shall make your heavens like copper and your land like brass... and your land will not give forth its produce, and the trees of the land shall not give their fruit." In contrast, in Sefer Devarim we find, "The field shall give forth much seed but you will reap little, for the locusts will destroy it. You shall plant vines and work at them, but wine you shall not drink and you shall not gather, for the worms will eat it." Why is the second scenario so much more terrifying than the first? Because the first describes the total removal of blessing and its replacement with curses (no rain, no produce), while the second describes a situation where there is a potential for blessing, but it is wasted - there is produce, but it is eaten by the locusts. Further examples: the leading away into exile as described in Vayikra is absolute, while in Devarim it is executed in stages - the head of the family remains on his land in order to try and stave off the catastrophe. Once, his house resounded with children's laughter; now, "your children are given to a foreign nation, and your eyes see it." The stranger, who once accepted our authority, now assumes a position "higher and higher above you." In Vayikra we are told, "And you shall consume the flesh of your children," but Devarim emphasizes the fact that it is specifically "the soft-hearted and delicate man," the epitome of gentleness and humanity, who will carry out this horrifying act. In short: the crux of the tragedy is not in being led off to exile, but rather in life at home becoming a nightmare; not when the reality changes to a point where it becomes unrecognizable, but rather when it is easily recognizable, when just beyond the perversion and violence we can still make out the outlines of the same world which once showered us with its good and its blessings.

"I called to my beloved ones (me'ahavai); they have deceived me" (Eikha 1:19)

In light of the above, we may explain the strange words of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the midrash on the pasuk, "I have called to my beloved ones (or 'endearers'), they have deceived me." He explains that the "me'ahavim" referred to are specifically the genuine prophets, "who endear me to God: 'they have deceived me' - they deceived me by saying, 'separate teruma and ma'aser.' As if there is any teruma and ma'aser applicable in Babylon! Rather, they say this in order to endear me to God. This is what Yirmiyahu refers to when he says, 'Place markers for yourself' - remain identified by the mitzvot by which the Jews were previously identified."

Here again we are confronted by the same wonderful concept which we examined above. What "deception" can there possibly be in this beautiful idea which expresses our faith in and devotion to the Torah, despite everything which befalls us? It seems that when we look at the situation from the perspective of the destruction, we are incapable - and unwilling - to see in the command to "place markers for yourself" anything more than a bitter illusion. Teruma and ma'aser outside of Israel? Shaking of the lulav on the seven days of Sukkot - "and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God" - on the rivers of Babylon? Can there be any greater perversion? It is perfectly clear to anyone with eyes in his head that the entire observance of Torah is built on one central assumption: that the nation of Torah is dwelling in its land. Who on earth dreamed up the absurd idea of Torah observance, communal life, even the mitzvot which pertain specifically to Eretz Yisrael - all continuing in exile? Could any right-minded Jew seriously believe, as the prophets claimed, that such a situation would "endear" us to God? Surely, if

we were genuinely beloved to God, then we would still be there, in Eretz Yisrael, instead of sitting here and playing "make believe." Such a situation is nothing but the expression of melancholy of a young bride whose husband has left her, and who continues to beautify herself in his honor as though nothing has happened.

In fact, were it not for the stubbornness of those "endearers," claims Israel, the destruction would yet be somehow bearable. We would then be able to distance ourselves spiritually from those mitzvot, considering them as inapplicable until the coming of Mashiah, and that would be that. But the "endearers" will not give up. For some reason they feel compelled to take the once glorious Torah and to squeeze it and twist it to make it fit exile as well, and then to make us keep it. The result is that we are reminded every day anew of what could have been, of our glorious past, which now peeps at us through the pathetic mask of "make yourself markers." It is in vain that the prophets comfort us with their visions of the future, with their promises and their oaths. The reality is that God has cast us away from before Him. We cannot share their view that by placing markers for ourselves it will be possible to "live the dream," because we believe that as the years go by, our lives and our history become one great illusion.

Just as the experience of the destruction forces us to view the command to "place yourself markers" differently, so does the prototype of that view - the Pesach of Egypt. Once we ate the maror in order to identify with the heroic faith of our forefathers in Egypt, which attained its justification and its realization in the celebration of the Pesach in the Temple. But now the Pesach of the Beit Ha-mikdash, too, appears to have been a passing euphoria, and meantime the Pesach of Egypt - observance of the mitzvot under difficult conditions - has become the dominant situation for all generations. For the weary nation of Israel only absolute redemption can justify the old understanding of Pesach in Egypt - as a road-sign for the future. At this stage the Pesach of Egypt appears as nothing more than yet another example of the gloomy scenario which plays itself over and over - a perverted observance of the beautiful Torah which exists only in the dreams of seers. The maror was supposed to be the basis for the Paschal sacrifice, but Tish'a be-Av gives it a new perspective: the sacrifice has disappeared, but the maror remains. The maror of Pesach joins the maror of Tish'a be-Av, and the two together embody the expression, "Satisfy Me with maror, satiate Me with wormwood." "Hold this, and from this, too, do not allow your hand to falter" (Kohélet 7:18)

We have presented above two points of view regarding the issue of "place yourself markers" - the traditional and generally accepted view of the prophets, and that of Knesset Yisrael as we believe it to be expressed in the words of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Midrash Eikha. We subscribe to the first view, just as we try as a general rule to see all the events of our times in an optimistic light. However, on Tish'a be-Av, at least, we have to examine things realistically. Specifically for us - we who have merited to return to Eretz Yisrael - this is crucial. Otherwise we are bound to spend our whole lives using concepts such as "the beginning of the dawning of our redemption," etc., without noticing that what we have merited is in fact only the "markers;" a shriveled version of how things really should be. It is specifically because we have merited to see many of the signs of redemption that we have to feel the full pain of the question: Where is the content that should exist here? May we soon merit a full answer. (Originally appeared in Daf Keshet 193, Av 5749, Vol. II, pp. 310-312. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

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When Silence is Just Yellow By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

A famous story in the Talmud attributes the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 C.E. not to the destructive enmity of the Roman armies, but rather to the "causeless hatred" between two Jewish neighbors, as well as to the "humility" of a renowned rabbi named R. Zecharya b. Abkulas (B.T. Gittin 55b).

The story is simple. There was a man who had a good friend named Kamtza, and an enemy named Bar Kamtza. One day he decided to throw a great feast,

but the servant sent with the invitation to Kamtza, the good friend, ended up inviting Bar Kamtza, the enemy.

Delighted to receive the invitation, he happily arrived at the party, only to discover that the host wanted him out of there. His pride shaken, Bar Kamtza offered to pay his own way if he would be allowed to remain. The host wouldn't back off. Bar Kamtza kept raising the offer, from paying half the price of the feast, to paying for the entire party, just so that he wouldn't have to be publicly shamed. But the host was adamant. He would not deign to have his enemy at his table.

That Bar Kamtza desired revenge is not surprising, but instead of aiming his malice at the unforgiving host, he directed his hatred toward the rabbis who were in attendance but didn't speak up.

Most likely the rabbis' silence was understandable - but nonetheless reprehensible. It was a period of great poverty in Jewish history. If the host could afford such an extravagance, and if so many rabbis gave up an evening of Torah study to attend, he must have not only been a very wealthy man, but a major contributor to the charitable institutions of his day. The various heads of religious institutions therefore made an economic decision not to anger their benefactor.

Bar Kamtza was determined to show those rabbis a thing or two. He went straight to Caesar with the classic complaint that the Jews were rebelling. The emperor wanted proof, so Bar Kamtza suggested that the monarch send them an offering to be sacrificed on the altar in Jerusalem. He then blemished the animal's lips, rendering it unfit by Jewish law, although fit by Roman standards. Bar Kamtza believed the animal would not be offered, and the emperor would thereby be convinced that the Jews were indeed disloyal. The rabbis had to decide what to do with the emperor's offering. They realized the danger if they rejected it, and so for the sake of the well-being of the citizenry they suggested that the offering be made anyhow. But one of the sages, R. Zecharya b. Abkulas disagreed. "They will say that blemished animals are offered on the altar," he warned.

When the rabbis next suggested that they kill Bar Kamtza to prevent him from returning to the emperor, R. Zecharya b. Abkulas again spoke up. "They will say that one who blemishes a consecrated animal is killed!" The language Rabbi Zecharya used was specific and instructional: "They will say..."

In the first situation, R. Zecharya was worried about how the extremely religious element in the community would react to a ruling that permitted offering a blemished animal, even if the issue at hand was saving human lives. In the second situation, R. Zecharya was worried about how liberals would react to killing a man because his knife 'accidentally' cut the lip of the calf.

R. Yohanan has the final word, and how he summarizes events is illuminating. Instead of placing blame on the early characters in the narrative - the causeless hatred personified by the host, the initial silence of the Rabbinic leadership, or the treachery of Bar Kamtza - he points his finger at R. Zeharya.

Of course the behavior of Bar Kamtza and his host are inexcusable, demonstrating all the foibles of human existence. But R. Yohanan aims at a greater target than two stubborn fools. He wants us to understand that a grave mistake was committed when R. Zecharya didn't take proper action. The tragedy could have been prevented by rendering a courageous halachic decision. There was a failure in leadership. And so R. Yohanan concludes: "Because of the humility of R. Zecharya our House has been destroyed, our Temple burnt."

Now undoubtedly R. Zecharya was a dedicated rabbi, and didn't want a questionable religio-legal decision to get out of his courthouse. But R. Zecharya was too worried about how the decision would affect the various political-religious factions in the community. He was not worried enough about doing what was correct in the eyes of God.

The word R. Yohanan uses to describe R. Zecharya's attitude, anivut, means 'humility,' which seems strange, since humility usually connotes a positive dimension. We are being told, however, that when humility prevents a religious leader from taking a necessary position as a result of his desire not to oppose other religious opinions it can be misplaced or even destructive. There are situations, especially when the well-being of the Jewish community is at stake, when courage and not humility must be the guiding principle.

Ultimately, teaches R. Yohanan, the destruction of the Temple came about due to the lack of courage to make tough decisions. It's certainly fitting, therefore, that this week's portion also provides incontrovertible guidelines for the judges and the sages of Israel: "Do not give anyone special consideration when rendering judgment. You shall hear the great and small alike. You shall not be frightened (or impressed) by any human being, for the judgment is God's." (Deut 1:17) Shabbat Shalom

Ohr Samayach

And Rabbi Akiva Laughed...

What response is appropriate when hearing the battle cries of the invincible Roman army? What should be the reaction when seeing ruined Jerusalem and the Holy Temple's rubble? What is the proper response of a disciple seeing his beloved teacher dying in torment...?

Laughter? Certainly not. But according to the Talmud, such was Rabbi Akiva's response in these very situations.

Roman battle cries heard miles away caused the sages to weep. Rabbi Akiva laughed. Frolicking foxes on the Temple Mount - where once only the high priest dare tread - brought tears to the eyes of the sages. Rabbi Akiva laughed.

The death throes of their teacher, the saintly Rabbi Eliezer, wrenched sobs from the throats of the sages. Rabbi Akiva laughed.

The destruction of Jerusalem can be called the Jewish tragedy extrordinaire. It claimed millions of lives and unleashed a 2,000 year torrent of crusades, pogroms, jihads and holocaust. Arguably, it is the worst thing that ever happened to the Jewish people.

The death of a Torah scholar, not merely a Jewish tragedy, is a global one. Because "Torah scholars increase peace in the world."

In each case, the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of a Torah scholar, laughter would seem the most inappropriate of reactions. How, then, is Rabbi Akiva to be understood?

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Simcha - Happiness

Happiness has many expressions, and in Hebrew there is a word for each. The happiness expressed in laughter is called Simcha.

Sometimes people laugh. Every once in a while something strikes their funny bone, and they giggle, chuckle or burst out howling. Why? What causes the simcha of laughter?

Rabbi Saadia Gaon offers a novel insight into this phenomenon: When a person suddenly gains a straight perception of reality, the result is laughter. A flash of reality obliterates time-honored falsehoods, and the soul laughs.

This novel idea, the link between truth and laughter, is expressed in Psalms: "Ohr zarua l'tzadik, ulyishrei lev simcha..."

"Light is sown for the righteous, and for the straight of heart, simcha..." Bare to the truth, the 'straight of heart' are ever open to deeper and deeper perceptions of reality. Thus, their heart is sown with 'simcha,' the joy expressed in laughter.

"Pkudei Hashem y'sharim msimchei lev..."

"Hashem's commandments are 'straight,' they bring simcha to the heart..." Hashem's commandments bring simcha because they are 'straight.' Torah study

and observance confront a person with hitherto unrealized insight, hence simcha and laughter.

When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, Rabbi of the Lubavitch Chassidim, was arrested for organizing a network of Torah education in Russia, a KGB officer put a gun to his head and demanded he name his collaborators. The Rabbi laughed. No believing Jew is afraid to declare, "I believe in the World to Come." But a loaded gun brings the existence of the World to Come into such crisp focus, the alternative is instantly reduced to absurdity.

And so Rabbi Akiva laughed. He laughed because he excelled in the quality of 'straightness of heart.' His keen perception of reality allowed him immediately to glean the kernel of truth from the very event his comrades mourned.

\* \* \* \* \*

Renewal - Consolation

"Akiva, why do you laugh?" the sages asked him when they heard the clamor of Roman legions. "Why do you cry?" Rabbi Akiva replied. "Idol worshippers dwell in peace and security, while the Holy Temple is burnt to the ground ... shall we not cry? "That's why I'm laughing," said Rabbi Akiva. "If this is how G-d rewards the Romans - who are so wicked and cruel - for the good deeds they sometimes do, how much more will be the reward of the righteous people in the World to Come." "Akiva, how can you laugh?" they asked standing at the Temple ruins. "Why do you cry?" he replied. "The Holy of Holies about which it's written, 'Any unauthorized person who enters shall die,' and now foxes play there? Shall we not cry?" "That's why I'm laughing," said Rabbi Akiva. "Seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy - 'Zion will be plowed like a field' - I more deeply internalize the knowledge that all the prophecies will be fulfilled, including those that foretell the rebuilding of Jerusalem!" At their teacher's deathbed, Rabbi Akiva explains: "Our teacher, Rabbi Eliezer, enjoyed an ideal life ... his wine never soured, his oil never went bad. He was completely successful in everything, had a suspicion that he was somehow receiving his reward in this life, and that he had no part in the World to Come. Now that I see his suffering, I realize he's being purged of whatever minute sin he may have committed, and that his reward in the next world remains intact."

And faced with death by torture for the 'crime' of teaching Torah, Rabbi Akiva laughed. "All my life I've been waiting to fulfill the concept 'You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul...' and now I finally have the chance."

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May we all merit to become 'straight of heart,' to approach Rabbi Akiva's depth of truth. And then, may we say, as the sages did, "Akiva, you have comforted us. Akiva, you have comforted us."

Sources: o Tractate Makkot 24a o Tractate Sanhedrin 101a  
o Tractate Menachot 61b o Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachot 9:5

The Three Weeks - Tammuz 5756 Based on a Lecture by Rabbi Mordechai Becher Adapted by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor Rabbi Moshe Newman

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The Nine Days

A Word To The Wise

During the beginning of the second Temple period (approx. 340 B.C.E - 70 A.C.E) there was a body of sages called the Men of the Great Assembly. Rabbi Yehoshua Son of Levi in the Talmud tells us that they were given that name for the following reason.

At the time of the destruction of the first Temple, when Yirmiyahu the Prophet knew the enemy had entered the Holy Temple, he said "strangers are in G-d's sanctuary, where is the manifestation of His awesomeness?" As a result, he omitted the word awesome from the three word expression originally "coined" by Moses in the Torah (great, mighty, and AWESOME).

Daniel, the Great Jewish sage who rose to great notoriety in the courts of the Kings of Babylon and Persia-Media during the exile from the first Temple era, also omitted a word from Moshe's phrase. He exclaimed "strangers are imposing their rule over His children, where is the manifestation of His might?" He left out "mighty" from his prayers.

Later, upon returning to Israel, the Men of the Great Assembly reinstated these words in the prayers. They explained: the fact that G-d doesn't react is a demonstration of His might and awesomeness. The fact that G-d holds back His anger and vengeance against the perpetrators of persecution, desecration, and dictatorship, is an sign of G-d's might and awesomeness. For bringing out this realization, the Men of the Great Assembly received their name.

Of course, we would all agree that by openly punishing wrongdoing and rewarding righteousness, G-d would also be showing us His might and awesomeness. However, in a time such as now, when G-d chooses not to reveal His countenance to us in an open way, this is His way of manifesting

His qualities of might and awesomeness. We should not perceive His silence as a weakness, or as our having been forsaken, (G-d forbid), but as a sign of strength. Hashem is not threatened by evil, he doesn't need to quash the rebellion.

The Talmud writes "a hint is enough for a wise person." A wise person can see the "signs" that G-d leaves us in this world, and draw the conclusions which G-d wants him/her to see. Very humbly and thankfully, we must look back at our own history and exclaim "this is His might and His awesomeness! We're still here! After all we've experienced---the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition---The Hitlers! They are gone, and we are still here! We're here, and we are rebuilding, with G-d's help. The Torah (the written and oral law) is the lifeline which we held through the centuries which keeps us afloat, and prevents us from going under, so to speak.

In communist Russia, many people sacrificed a great deal to observe whatever Torah Commandments they could. Small study groups popped up in many places, and people from the U.S. and other countries tried to help in any way they could. Many smuggled in religious articles, knives for ritual slaughter, and gave classes. Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, in his book "It Happened in Heaven" writes of his experiences in the former Soviet Union.

Very clandestinely, a class in scriptures was convened. Rabbi Goldwasser was staying in a hotel, and he knew he should be back by 11:00 P.M. to minimize any suspicion. After his lesson, he got up to leave, and Sasha, a young participant, ran over to him and said "five more minutes." He sat down again and the class of almost 30 people continued to learn with great fervor. At 11:30 he again got up to leave, and again Sasha requested five more minutes. Again he could not refuse and he sat down to learn with his enthusiastic students. When they finally finished learning, a man went over to a piano and begged him to teach him a Jewish song. Before long, everyone was on their feet, singing and dancing. Upon returning to the hotel, Rabbi Goldwasser found the clerk and the floor matron fast asleep. He quietly retired to his room relieved to have escaped suspicion.

During the nine days beginning with the first day of the month of Av, and ending with Tisha B'Av, or the ninth of Av, we mourn for the destruction of the Temple, and our extended exile. However, our consolation comes through our mourning. The fact that we are here, and that we have not abandoned our hopes and dreams of seeing G-d's might and awesomeness in an open way, are the greatest proof that we will not be disappointed.

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The Three Weeks

B"H Guide to Jewish Holidays and Events

The Three Weeks REVEALING HIDDEN LOVE: MAKING THE BEIS HAMIKDASH A REALITY

(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVIII, Yud-Beis Tammuz and Bein HaMetzarim)

A Paradox in Time

The Three Weeks between the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av are referred to by our Sages as Bein HaMetzarim ("between the straits"), and are marked by several customs associated with mourning. [1]

As its name implies, this is a difficult period: it commemorates the calamities which occurred between the breaching of the walls surrounding Jerusalem and the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash itself. Even in our day, it is considered an unfavorable time for the Jewish people. [2]

Despite its tragic associations, this period is characterized by strong positive spiritual influences. On the temporal plane, this is reflected in the fact that the period of Bein HaMetzarim falls in the summer.

Everything that transpires in our material world is a reflection of the corresponding spiritual forces that operate in the higher realms. Moreover, the way any entity functions on the physical plane results from relationships between these spiritual forces which are the source of all material existence. As such, every tangible entity serves as a material illustration of these forces. For example: The sun is associated with the Four-Letter Divine Name Y. H. V. H. As it is written, [3] "For Y. H. V. H. and E-L-O\_K-I-M [4] are like

the sun and [its] shield."

The Name Y. H. V. H. expresses the Divine attributes of mercy [5] and revelation. [6]

The shining of the sun, especially during the Three Weeks when it is at its most powerful, thus indicates the prevalence of intense G-dly mercy.

#### What G-d Does Out of Love

The tragic nature of the Three Weeks and its status as a time in which G-d's mercy is manifest, are not mutually exclusive.

The inner motivating force of the Three Weeks is G-d's love.

However, genuine love can at times require conduct which appears harsh.

When a father chastises his son, it is unpleasant for both son and father, but the father is no doubt motivated only by a deep concern for his son's growth and development.

Likewise, cleaning a small child who has soiled himself [7] is not always a comfortable process. For a father to subject an infant to this discomfort requires a very unselfish sort of love, a love powerful enough to outweigh his natural aversion to causing his child pain. This kind of love is the hidden content of the Three Weeks. [8]

The positive and overtly recognizable aspect of this love will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption, when "all the [commemorative] fasts will be annulled and will be transformed into holidays and days of rejoicing." [9] At that time, the hidden dimension of G-d's love will surface and become manifest.

#### A Foretaste of Redemption

In our day, we are standing on the threshold of the Redemption; we are, in fact, in the process of crossing that threshold. [10]

The Redemption is no longer a distant dream - it is an increasingly manifest reality. Moreover, we can now already savor a foretaste of the Redemption and sense the positive dimension of the Three Weeks at present, even though we are still in exile.

Although our Sages teach that "When the month of Av begins, we minimize our joy," [11] celebrations associated with a mitzvah are permitted. [12]

In order to express our appreciation of the positive nature of the Three Weeks, we should take every possible opportunity to celebrate such occasions. [13]

On each of the [first] Nine Days of Av, for example, [14] one can celebrate the festive conclusion of the study of a Talmudic tractate by conducting a siyum. [15]

#### Building the Beis HaMikdash

Our emphasis on the positive dimension of the Three Weeks should also motivate us to intensify our study of the laws governing the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. Doing so will focus our attention on its building rather than on its destruction.

When G-d revealed the structural details of the future Beis HaMikdash to the prophet Yechezkel, He told him, [16] "Tell the people of Israel of the House... and measure its design."

Yechezkel, as our Sages relate, [17] replied: "Master of the Universe! Why are You telling me to tell Israel of the form of the House?... They are now in exile in the land of our enemies. Is there anything they can do? Let them be until they return from exile. Then I will go and inform them." G-d answered: "Should the construction of My House be ignored because My children are in exile?... The study of the Torah's [description of the Beis HaMikdash] is deemed equal to its [actual] construction. Go, tell them to study the form of the Beis HaMikdash. And, as a reward for their study..., I will consider it as if they had actually built the Beis HaMikdash!"

One of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah is the commandment to build a Sanctuary, [18] and its fulfillment is incumbent upon every Jewish man and woman. [19] It is clear from the above Midrash that by studying the laws of the Beis HaMikdash, a person fulfills his obligation to build a Sanctuary, for G-d describes this study as "the building of My House."

A similar concept is expressed in the Rambam's choice of the verse, [20] "Seek out the welfare of Jerusalem, those who love you shall find repose," as the introductory verse of Sefer Avodah, "The Book of Divine Service." This choice implies an obligation to "seek out the welfare of Jerusalem" and to concern ourselves with the structure of the Beis HaMikdash, even though we are at present incapable of actually constructing it. [21]

Though these concepts were known in previous generations, they are of much

greater relevance at present, because there is a difference between studying laws relating to a mitzvah one is about to perform, and studying a theoretical subject.

We should study the laws of the Beis HaMikdash with the anticipation of a bar-mitzvah boy learning the laws of tefillin.

For in the very near future, we will actually participate in building the very structure we are studying.

This kind of study will serve as a catalyst to uncover the positive dimension of the Three Weeks. And then we will merit the fulfillment of the prayer, [22] "Rebuild Your House as in former times and establish Your Sanctuary on its site; let us behold its construction, and cause us to rejoice in its completion." May this take place in the immediate future.

Footnotes:

1 . See the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 551:16-18, and the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, ch. 122. 2 . The dates of the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av are discussed in Taanis 26a, 28b ff. Note also the statement of our Sages (ibid. 29b, quoted by the Shulchan Aruch, loc. cit., para. 1) that a Jew who has a lawsuit with a gentile should postpone it until after the month

of Av. 3 . Tehillim 84:12.

4 As explained in the Kabbalah and in the Midrash (Shmos Rabbah 3:6), the various Names of G-d represent different manifestations of His attributes. For example, the Name Y. H. V. H. is associated with the power of revelation (represented above by "the sun"), while the name E-L-O-K-I-M is associated with the power of self-concealment (represented above by "[its] shield").

See the maamar entitled VeYadata 5657 (English translation; Sichos In English, N.Y., 1993) for a more detailed explanation of the mystical connotations of these names and their interaction. 5 . See Bereishis Rabbah 12:15 and the Zohar I, 173b, 251b. 6 . See Torah Or, Parshas Yisro, p. 69d; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah, ch. 6; and other sources. 7 . This analogy is used by the prophets; see Yeshayahu 4:4. 8 .

See also the essay below entitled "From Exile to Redemption," which elaborates on the Divine love underlying the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the exile of our people.

9 . Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taaniyos 5:19, based on Zechariah 8:19. 10 . See the essay entitled "On the Threshold of the Redemption," as well as the essay entitled "Open Your Eyes," in Sound the Great Shofar (Kehot, N.Y., 1992). 11 . Taanis 26b, cited by the Rambam, loc. cit. 5:6.

12 . See Rama, Orach Chayim, loc. cit. 551:10. 13 . This allows for a non-literal interpretation of our Sages' statement cited above, "When Av enters, we minimize [its apparently negative dimensions] with joy" i.e., happiness serves as a medium to minimize the month's severity.

14 . Even on Tishah BeAv itself a siyum should be held, for it is permitted to conclude the study of Tractate Moed Katan on that day.

15 . Such siyumim are not simply intended to provide opportunities for eating meat. As noted in Sefer Minhagim (English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 5752), p. 95, the meal with which the Rebbe Rashab used to honor each such siyum during the Nine Days, included neither wine nor meat.

16 . Yechezkel 43:10. 17 . Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Tzav, sec. 14.

18 . See Sefer HaMitzvos, Positive Mitzvos 20; Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah 95. 19 . Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 1:12. 20 .

Tehillim 122:6. 21 . The prophet Yirmeyahu (30:17) laments that "Zion has none that show concern for her." This shows that we ought to show concern for her (Rosh HaShanah 30a). 22 . The Mussaf service for festivals (Siddur Tehillat HaShem, p. 263).

#### REPAIRING THE BREACHES

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos,  
Vol. XVIII, Yud-Beis Tammuz;  
Vol. XXIII, p. 277 ff.

#### Picking Up G-d's Signals

The Rambam introduces his discussion of the commemorative fasts as follows: [1] There are days when our people all fast because of calamities that happened to them - to arouse [their] hearts, and open the paths of repentance [to them]. This will serve as a reminder of our undesirable conduct [2] and that of our ancestors, which... brought these calamities upon them and upon

us.

This understanding of the commemorative fasts echoes an idea that appears elsewhere in the writings of the Rambam: [3] A person should not say, "What has happened to us is simply a natural phenomenon and this difficulty is merely a chance occurrence." Instead, a person should realize that a calamity is a signal from G-d, intended to motivate him to repent. By the same token, on the national level, the commemoration of the sequence of calamities which led to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash is intended to spur us on to attain a deeper bond with G-d.

#### Five Calamities

Our Sages explain [4] that G-d metes out reward and punishment, "measure for measure." Therefore, by analyzing the national crises associated with these commemorative fasts, we should be able to infer the direction in which our repentance should be channeled.

Five calamities occurred on the 17th of Tammuz: [5]

The Tablets of the Law were broken;

The offering of the daily sacrifices was interrupted (even before the First Beis HaMikdash was destroyed);

The walls of Jerusalem were breached (before the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash); [6]

Apostomos the Wicked burned a Torah scroll;

And he erected an idol in the Beis HaMikdash. [7]

The repeated association of a particular date with national catastrophes cannot be coincidental; rather, it points to the spiritual character of the day. [8]

In examining the meaning of the 17th of Tammuz, the breaking of the Tablets is particularly significant, for it is the first in the chronology of the five calamities that occurred on that day.

And chassidic thought [9] teaches that precedence in time reflects primacy in importance.

#### A Breach in Man's Union with the Torah

The Tablets are symbolic of the deepest possible connection between the Torah and man, for the letters of the Ten Commandments [10] were hewn into the body of the stone Tablets.

When the letters of a Torah scroll are inscribed with ink on parchment, they are a separate entity, and not an integral part of the parchment. In the Tablets, they and the Torah were one and inseparable. [11]

This fusion into utter unity reflects a corresponding state which a person can attain - a state in which he is totally at one with the Torah. He does not see the Torah as an entity separate from himself which he must study and whose laws he must follow, but rather as part and parcel of his own very being. He and the Torah are a single whole. [12]

The breaking of the Tablets indicates a deficiency in this connection. And thus it is the lack of unity between man and the Torah which is the root of all the difficulties which led to our fasting on the 17th of Tammuz.

#### Compensating for the Breaking of the Tablets

The Biblical account of the breaking of the Tablets also indicates the form of divine service that can compensate for this deficiency.

Moshe Rabbeinu broke the Tablets as an act of ahavas Yisrael, out of his love for the Jewish people. In order to minimize the sin of the Jewish people - for without the Tablets, the wedding bond they share with G-d would not appear complete - [13] he took that which he cherished most dearly, the Tablets of the Torah, and broke it. [14]

Moshe's action embodies a lesson for future generations.

We can compensate for the lack of unity between man and the Torah (symbolized by the breaking of the Tablets) by increasing our efforts to establish unity within the Jewish people.

#### Jerusalem - Consummate Awe

The importance of ahavas Yisrael, loving a fellow Jew, also relates to the tragedy most usually associated with the fast of the 17th of Tammuz - the breaching by the Romans of the wall surrounding Jerusalem.

In terms of our divine service, Jerusalem represents (as hinted at by its etymology) yirah shalem, meaning "complete fear." [15]

When a person's fear of G-d is complete, it has an all-encompassing effect on his conduct, influencing every aspect of his thought, speech, and deed.

Fear of G-d requires a protective "wall", a willingness to "make a fence around the Torah," [16] i.e., to undertake stringencies which are not required

by the minimal letter of the law.

When this wall is broken and undesirable influences penetrate and affect one's "complete fear" of G-d, this is a tragedy which requires a fast.

#### A Positive Dimension of the Breaching of Jerusalem's Walls

A vigilant individual who has "complete fear" of G-d often erects a wall to separate himself from those people and influences which threaten his observance. He need not, however, cut himself off entirely from the world around him; the wall protecting his fear of G-d can have gates and doorways that will allow entry and exit.

These gates and doorways will allow him to diffuse the influence of Jerusalem outward, and will allow people from outside Jerusalem to enter and be exposed to its uplifting atmosphere.

Traffic through such entrances is, however, usually limited, in order to enable one to monitor his interaction with his surroundings. Seen from a positive perspective, breaking down Jerusalem's walls thus symbolizes an unrestrained drive toward outreach, extending oneself to people who have not [yet] attained "complete fear," with a commitment beyond the ordinary.

#### Unearned Love Compensating for Unearned Hatred

Our Sages explain [17] that the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of our people came about because of unwarranted hatred.

It follows that by displaying love even for our undeserving fellow man, we can eliminate the cause of the exile so that the exile itself will cease to exist. Indeed, commitment to loving the undeserving will lead to the advent of the era when "All the [commemorative] fasts will be nullified... and indeed, will be transformed into holidays and days of rejoicing." [18]

The 17th of Tammuz [19] is a particularly appropriate time for focusing on the transformation of hatred to love.

For the breaching of Jerusalem's walls can be perceived as a preliminary stage in the cosmic process leading to the fulfillment of the prophecy, [20]

"Jerusalem will be settled like an open city, because of the multitude of people and cattle it will contain,... and I... will be a wall of fire around her."

The potential for transition from exile to redemption is highlighted in the present generation.

As a result of the Previous Rebbe's redemption on Yud-Beis Tammuz, the month of Tammuz has been transformed into "a Month of Redemption" in our age.

May we merit witnessing the culmination of this process with the coming of the ultimate Redemption, and may this take place in the immediate future.

Footnotes:

1 . Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taaniyos 5:1. 2 . Although these calamities took place in previous generations, we share the responsibility for them. As the Jerusalem Talmud (Yoma 1:1) states, "Every generation during which the Beis HaMikdash is not rebuilt, should consider it to have been destroyed in its time."

3 . Mishneh Torah, loc. cit. 1:3. 4 . Sotah 8b, 9b. 5 . Taanis 26a, 28b ff.

6 . According to most opinions, the walls of Jerusalem were breached before the first Destruction on the ninth of Tammuz (Rosh HaShanah 18b). There are, however, opinions (see Jerusalem Talmud, Taanis 4:5 and the Glosses of Rabbeinu Nissim and the Ritva to Rosh HaShanah) which maintain that then, too, the walls of Jerusalem were breached on the seventeenth of the month.

7 . Our translation follows the conception of the Rambam (loc. cit. 5:2). Others interpret this as a reference to the idol erected by King Menasheh in the First Beis HaMikdash. See the Jerusalem Talmud, Taanis 4:6.

8 . See Taanis 29a. 9 . See Sefer HaLikkutim, Tzemach Tzedek, s.v. Zman, sec 3-4. 10 . Indeed, according to our Sages (Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim 6:1), the entire Torah, comprising both the Written Law and the Oral Tradition, was carved into these tablets. 11 . See Likkutei Torah, Parshas Bechukosai, p. 45a. 12 . For a broader exposition of this concept, see Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, Parshas Chukas, and the sources listed there.

13 . Rashi on Shmos 34:1; Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Ki Sisa, sec. 30.

14 . See Likkutei Sichos, VeZos HaBerachah, 5748. 15 . See Tosafos on Taanis 16a; Bereishis Rabbah 56:10; Likkutei Torah, Rosh HaShanah, p. 60b. 16 . Avos 1:1. 17 . See Yoma 9b; Gittin 55b.

18 . Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taaniyos 5:19, based on Zechariah 8:19. See also the essay above entitled "Support for Jerusalem," which explains the connection between this transformation of the commemorative fasts and this service of unrestrained love.

19 . On the mystical level of gematria, the connection between these concepts and the Seventeenth of Tammuz is reflected in the fact that the letters of the Hebrew word tov ("good") are numerically equivalent to 17.  
20 . Zechariah 2:8-9.

#### FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 360 ff.; Vol. XVIII, p. 310 ff.

##### The Cherubs' Embrace

Two cherubs of gold stood on either end of the Kappores covering the Ark of the Covenant.

Our Sages [1] relate that when the Jewish people followed G-d's will, the cherubs faced each other, embracing like lovers; when the Jewish people were rebellious, the cherubs would avert their gaze and face opposite walls. During the celebration of the pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem, the Kohanim would unveil the Holy of Holies and show the people the cherubs' embrace. "See the great love G-d has for you," they would declare, "a love like that between a man and a woman." [2]

The cherubs of the Holy of Holies also figure in the narrative of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

Our Sages [3] relate that when the gentile invaders entered the Holy of Holies, they saw the cherubs embracing. They brought them out to the market place and displayed them, exclaiming, "How could Israel worship these?" As we know, during the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash G-d "poured out His wrath like fire; G-d was like an enemy." [4] Why, then, were the cherubs intertwined in love at this time of apparent anger? [5]

If their configuration reflected the fluctuating relationship between G-d and Israel, what could their embrace mean at a time when "He cut down, in fierce anger, the pride of Israel?" [6]

##### G-d's Only Son

These questions should be examined in the more comprehensive light of our relationship with G-d. From the prophetic perspective and in the commentaries of the Sages, exile appears to be a punishment, an expression of G-d's wrath at Israel's misdeeds.

This view, however, reflects only one dimension of the bond between G-d and Israel.

At this level, the bond is dependent upon Israel's conduct. If Israel is meritorious, she will be rewarded; if she sins, she will be punished. Beyond this connection, however, there is a deeper bond, a level at which Israel are "children unto the L-rd your G-d." [7]

The Baal Shem Tov intensifies the child-parent metaphor: [8] G-d cherishes every Jew with the love of a parent for an only child who is born to him in his old age.

A father does not love his son only because the son is virtuous or obedient; most fundamentally, he loves him - unconditionally and unwaveringly - because he is his son. With or without redeeming qualities, his father loves him.

G-d loves Israel in the same way. No matter what our conduct, we are His children. Therefore, even when G-d appears to be displeased with us, His love for us is revealed in the Holy of Holies, at the inner core of the Sanctuary.

Continuing with the child-parent metaphor, we can even understand G-d's wrath as an expression of love.

It is written, [9] "He who withholds the rod, hates his son," implying that when a parent punishes a child he is in fact manifesting his love. In fact, defying one's natural impulse to excuse misconduct, and instead rebuking a cherished child, demonstrates a deep and selfless commitment on the part of the parent.

From this perspective, though exile is obviously a descent from the majestic state to which Israel had been accustomed, we can understand that the force motivating this exile is love.

In a subtle manner, which only His ultimate wisdom can fully comprehend, G-d guides the course of His son's development.

##### Descent for the Purpose of Ascent

In light of this, exile appears to be a temporary means to a positive end. Our Sages teach [10] that a descent for the purpose of ascent cannot be branded a descent. By the same token, since G-d's purpose in exiling his

people is to elevate them to a higher rung, the hardships endured are eclipsed by their ultimate goal.

In this spirit, our Sages [11] teach that Mashiach was born on the very day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed; i.e., the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash sparked the process of preparation for the Era of Redemption. Concealed beneath the fall of the Jewish people is G-d's desire to bring Mashiach, and to elevate both Israel and the world to a state of ultimate fulfillment.

##### Stripping Away the Husk

Our Sages [12] compare the process of exile to the sowing of seeds; as the prophet says, [13] "I will sow [Israel] unto Me in the earth." When harvested, the produce that grows from seeds greatly exceeds the quantity initially sown; this increase reflects the long-range gains of exile, as explained above. For this growth to take place, the exterior husk of a seed must utterly decompose. Only then, can its kernel flourish into a flowering plant. In a similar way, the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and our people's exile were intended to strip away all superficiality and allow the Jewish people to blossom into fulfillment in the Era of Redemption.

##### A Holiday of Redemption

In light of this, we can understand the inner dimension of a halachic observation of our Rabbis, [14] that Tishah B'Av always falls on the same day of the week as the first day of Pesach.

This calendric correspondence reflects an intrinsic tie: both days are associated with redemption.

Pesach marks the redemption from Egypt, and Tishah B'Av anticipates the ultimate Redemption.

Every year, in fact, Tishah B'Av generates a renewed impetus for the coming of the Redemption. [15]

At no point in our national history has the redemptive aspect of Tishah B'Av been as relevant as it is today, for we are at the threshold of the Redemption and, indeed, in the process of crossing that threshold. [16]

May we merit the completion of this process and the coming of the era when "all the [commemorative] fasts will be nullified... and indeed, will be transformed into festivals and days of rejoicing." [17]

May this take place speedily, in our days.

Footnotes:

1 . Bava Basra 99a; Yoma 54a. 2 . Yoma 54b. 3 . Ibid. 4 . Eichah 2:4-5. 5 . See Maharsha, Chiddushei Aggados, on Yoma, loc. cit. 6 . Eichah 2:3. 7 . Devarim 14:1. 8 . Keser Shem Tov (Kehot edition), Addenda, sec. 133. 9 . Mishlei 34:15. 10 . Makkos 7b. 11 . Jerusalem Talmud, Berachos 2:4; Eichah Rabbah 1:51. 12 . Pesachim 87b. 13 . Hoshea 2:25; see Torah Or, Parshas Beshallah, p. 61a. 14 . Tur and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 428:3. 15 . This is reflected by the concept cited above, that Tishah B'Av is the birthday of Mashiach. A birthday is a time when mazalo gover, when the particular spiritual source of a person's soul shines powerfully (Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh HaShanah 3:8). The birthday of Mashiach is thus a time when he and the Redemption of which he is the catalyst are granted renewed power. 16 . See the essay entitled "On the Threshold of the Redemption" and the essay entitled "Open Your Eyes," in Sound the Great Shofar (Kehot, N.Y., 1992). 17 . The conclusion of Hilchos Taaniyos in Mishneh Torah of the Rambam, based on Zechariah 8:19. Tishah B'Av in particular is connected with this concept; as our Sages (Introduction to Midrash Eichah) state, "Happiness is manifest solely on Tishah B'Av." End of Text - The Three Weeks

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Tisha B'Av, the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av, is the day which is set aside for Jewish mourning. We fast, and assume the posture of mourners, as if for a family member, and we mourn the loss of the Holy Temple twice lost. However, one must never delude oneself into thinking that we are mourning for a building. There is much more to it than that. The Temple, or Bais Hamikdosh, represents a striving, and an achievement of spiritual heights.

Regarding the first Bais HaMikdosh which was destroyed by Nevuchadnetzar King of Babylon, approximately 830 years BCE, the Rabbis state "he ground ground wheat." In other words, it had already been destroyed before the actual building was torn down. Either the building was

destroyed or it wasn't. What is the difference between the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash, and the destruction of the structure?

This question leads us into a discussion which gets to the heart of the day of Tisha B'Av. It happened after the destruction of the second Bais HaMikdash, that Rabban Yochanan Son of Zakkai, the leader of the Generation

at that time, was riding on a donkey. He saw a poor young girl picking grains of barley from the manure of the donkeys of the people who lived in the vicinity. This would be the food of this starving young girl. When she the great sage, she ran over and asked him for food. She turned out to be the daughter of one of the richest men in Jerusalem before it fell to the Romans. Now she was a beggar. The words which Rabban Yochanan said resound.

"Fortunate are you Jewish People, for when you do the will of G-d you reach the highest of heights, and when you don't you are placed below even the lowliest of animals from whose manure you get your food."

If we don't do the will of G-d, then we are made lowly. This is why we are fortunate? How is that considered to be good fortune? The answer can be understood through the following analogy from the Chofetz Chaim. A man once ordered a pair of shoes from a shoemaker. "They'll be ready in two weeks" he was told. Upon returning he was presented with a pair of shoes which were neither the correct color or the right size. "I refuse to pay you for this" said the customer. "O.K., I understand your concern about the shoes, but could you at least pay me for my time?"

Our good fortune is that G-d expects greatness from us, and we are capable of delivering it. This is what we are here for. When we are a nation who emphasizes the spiritual and lives up to the Torah's expectations, then our spiritual state manifests itself outwardly, in the form of a Bais HaMikdash, or a spiritual center of worship. However, when we are not, then we are delivering a pair of shoes which are neither the correct color or size. Then, even outwardly, our low spiritual state manifests itself. We lose the outward signs as well. The Bais HaMikdash was already defiled and lacking its "soul" before the structure which housed that "soul" was destroyed. Tisha B'Av is a time to remind ourselves of this important foundation of being a Jew. May we merit to see the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash, and rise to the expectations for our good, for now and for always.

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"yhe@jer1.co.il" "yhe-metho@jer1.co.il" **METHODOLOGY - 24: Tisha B'Av**  
**TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY**  
by Rav Moshe Taragin

In memory of daniel ben reuven ferziger, z"l, in honor of the upcoming shloshim. We extend our deepest gratitude to all our friends from the yeshiva who greeted us at the kevura in beit shemesh.-sandra, reuven, jonathan, minna, adam and ari ferziger

#### The Aveilut of Tisha be-Av

As previously noted (shiur entitled "The issur for an avel to attend a simcha"), the aveilut of Tisha be-Av itself is patterned, in scope and intensity, after the period of shiv'a which a person experiences immediately after the loss of a loved one. To this end the gemara in Ta'anit (30a) composes a list of items which are forbidden on Tisha be-Av proper. The list of forbidden activities is reminiscent of the week of shiv'a: skin ointments, leather shoes, sexual activity and Torah study. At first glance, no disparity between this catalogue and individual aveilut is noticed. Closer inspection, however, reveals significant differences both in what is mentioned and what isn't cited in this register. These differences might help focus upon the essence of Tisha be-Av aveilut and how it differs from individual aveilut.

Though Torah study is listed as prohibited during Tisha be-Av, the beraita does include two significant qualifications. One is permitted to study topics which sadden

rather than provide joy to a person; studying from Iyov, Ekha and the somber prophecies of Yirmiya are permissible. Similarly, according to R. Yehuda's position, one is allowed to study unfamiliar sections of Torah. He reasons that, given the unfamiliarity with these segments and the initial difficulty in comprehension, no tangible pleasure will be received (we certainly acknowledge this analysis: Despite the incomparable relish we experience when we finally master a topic or text, we all undergo an initial struggle in grappling with that which initially appears unyielding). As such, studying in this manner will not produce delight and isn't disallowed. In fact, R. Yehuda's position is adopted by several Rishonim (primarily the Rambam Ta'anit perek 5). To summarize: what is striking about the Tisha be-Av issur are its qualifications: studying lamentable sections as well as (according to R. Yehuda) studying unfamiliar sections.

By stark contrast, the issur of Torah study for an individual avel is stated without any exemptions. The gemara in Mo'ed Katan (21a) declares an issur for an avel to study Torah; no permits are allowed for learning sorrowful sections or unfamiliar topics. Tosafot notices this discrepancy and shares with us the lifelong deliberations of Rabenu Tam. Initially, he prohibited an avel from studying these depressing sections, in light of the unconditional prohibition which the gemara in Mo'ed Katan imposes for a personal avel. Subsequently, though, as an old man, Rabenu Tam reconsidered and permitted this type of learning based upon the 'heter' which already exists on Tisha be-Av; why, after all, should they be different!!!

In truth, if we accept this discrepancy and discriminate between personal aveilut and Tisha be-Av we must closely examine the source for the issur for an avel to learn Torah. The gemara in Ta'anit (30a) bases this halakha upon the principle that an avel may not experience enjoyment or happiness. As Torah learning represents the highest state of happiness (pekudei Hashem yesharim mesamchei lev - see Tehillim 19), its study and the resultant joy is forbidden. In this respect, learning Torah can be compared, "le-havdil," to taking a bath or wearing leather shoes; all these experiences are proscribed because of the pleasure they will induce. Given this view we would certainly concur with the gemara's ruling that Torah study which dispirits rather than rejoices, should be permissible. The gemara, however, in Mo'ed Katan (15a) presents a second source for the prohibition of Torah study. The gemara cites a prophecy given to Yechezkel (Yechezkel 24) that he will conduct himself as an avel and he will "sigh in silence (ha'anek dom)". As part of his silence he cannot learn Torah (since silence is taken not just in the verbal sense but also in the overall experiential manner - a complete shutdown of creative or cognitive activity). By ceasing to engage in Torah study, an avel punctuates the overall shutdown of human activity. This pasuk provides a drastically different theme for the issur of Torah study. Torah study is not banned because of the resulting emotions but INHERENTLY. If Torah study were prohibited only to prevent pleasure, certain tragic segments would not be included within the issur. However, the process of halting this study to insure complete 'silence' encompasses all areas of Torah. Essentially there are two issurim which apply to an avel in the study of Torah. Though, in general, they overlap, in some instances only one clause applies.

In fact, these two strands seem to reflect two distinct dimensions of aveilut. On the one hand, aveilut is commonly associated with the privation of pleasure. The principle of "ha'anek dom", however, seems to demand much more. An avel must also actively display his PERSONAL SENSE of aveilut primarily by distinguishing and distancing himself from the

rest of society. This is accomplished to some degree by his 'code of silence'. The texture of aveilut is not limited to refraining from delightful or pleasurable practices. Indeed, it includes active displays of mourning to highlight the unique condition of the avel and to 'segregate' him. The issur of Torah partakes of each of these two aspects. It causes happiness and therefore is forbidden. In addition, it reflects the normal and common intellectual and emotional 'routine' of a Jewish person and desisting from this exercise underscores the shutdown of the avel's lifestyle.

Finally, to reflect again on the discrepancies between Tisha be-Av and personal aveilut, one might question to what degree each of these 'aveilut factors' are equally relevant to individual aveilut and to Tisha be-Av. Clearly, avoiding simcha is equally applicable to them both. When it comes to the second strand - the active displays of aveilut - one calls into serious question its relevancy to Tisha be-Av. After all, on Tisha be-Av we are all considered mourners and distinguishing one person is just as futile as distinguishing them all. Though the 'issur simcha' might apply, the 'Nihugei Gavrah' (the active display of mourning) might not. As a result, Torah on Tisha be-Av is only forbidden because of the simcha which is caused in its wake; hence, gloomy segments of Torah are permissible. There is no purpose in outright silence and therefore Torah is not universally forbidden. By contrast, Torah study for an individual avel is forbidden so that he may be silent and no distinction is drawn between joyous segments and mournful ones.

#### SUMMARY:

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The discrepancy in the scope of the issur Talmud Torah might reflect a fundamental disparity in the aveilut of Tisha be-Av and that of an individual avel. An avel must remain absolutely silent and hence cannot engage in any Torah study. On Tisha be-Av we must merely avoid rejoicing through Torah study; mournful segments may still be studied.

Can this fundamental difference be discerned in additional halakhic incongruities between Tisha be-Av and individual aveilut? We have focused above upon an issur which, though it applied to each, exhibited some slight differences. A quick glance at the Tisha be-Av list provided by the gemara in Ta'anit (30a) demonstrates more dramatic discrepancies between the two. Quite striking is the complete absence from the Tisha be-Av list of several aspects of individual aveilut. Within the list of Tisha be-Av issurim there is no mention of not greeting or answering others, of not wearing tefillin, nor of turning one's bed upside down. All these however, apply to a personal avel. Might this confirm an essential gap between the two experiences?

The gemara in Mo'ed Katan (21a) describes the prohibition for an avel to don tefillin for the first three days of his aveilut. Though no mention of tefillin is made regarding Tisha be-Av (and one might interpret this reticence as indicating its permissibility) the Rishonim debate this issue. The Maharam Mi-Rotenberg (Teshuva 51) equates Tisha be-Av and individual aveilut, concluding that on Tisha be-Av we refrain from tefillin. By contrast, the Ritva in Ta'anit (30a) distinguishes between the two, accepting the simple reading of the gemara that there is no prohibition of tefillin on Tisha be-Av. Presumably this distinction, as well, is a product of the aforementioned basic difference between Tisha be-Av and individual aveilut. Though one may not rejoice during Tisha be-Av, no concept of publicly displaying aveilut entails. Tefillin is forbidden for an avel because Hashem told Yechezkel to 'bind his turban' as part of exhibiting his mourning. In this respect it is aligned both in spirit and textually with the second facet of the issur Talmud Torah

(they each appear in the same directive to Yechezkel) - they are each geared to actively demonstrate the state of aveilut. As such, on Tisha be-Av when no PERSONAL PUBLIC display is implemented this is not necessary and tefillin may be donned.

In a similar vein, there is some discrepancy between individual aveilut and Tisha be-Av regarding whether one can leave the house. The gemara in Mo'ed Katan (23a) rules that a mourner may not leave his house during the week of shiv'a. A similar halakha does not appear regarding Tisha be-Av. Tosafot (Mo'ed Katan 21b), considering this difference, expresses some uneasiness about our practice of attending shul on Tisha be-Av. "Why not", they ask, "pattern it exactly after personal aveilut?" Their only answer is based on a parallel text which limits the prohibition of an avel to the first three days of shiv'a, which are the most intense. Since Tisha be-Av is likened to the latter phase of shiv'a one need not be sequestered on Tisha be-Av. Essentially, though, Tosafot feel that Tisha be-Av and personal aveilut are comparable.

In theory, one might have concluded differently from Tosafot based upon the stated differences between the kinds of aveilut. Leaving the house, it would seem, is not forbidden because of simcha. This prohibition vividly highlights the requirement of an avel to publicly display his mourning and separate himself from the rest of society. This obviously has no relevance to Tisha be-Av and therefore we may all leave our houses.

Whoever mourns Jerusalem will be zokheh to share in the joy of its rebuilding (Ta'anit 30b). Moshe Taragin  
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