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from: Yeshiva.co subscribe@yeshiva.org.il

date: Jul 15, 2021, 2:21 PM

subject: **All You Need To Know About Tisha B'Av**

Tisha B'Av on Motsaei Shabbat: A Primer

The transition from Shabbat to the Fast of Tisha B'Av * How to make havdalah when Tisha B'Av falls on Motzei Shabbat *

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Av 7 5775

When Tish'a B'Av falls out on ...Sunday, and on that Shabbat one may eat meat, drink wine, and even serve a meal like King Shlomo did in his day. We also sing Shabbat songs as usual, because there is no mourning on the Sabbath (concerning things done in private, see S.A. 554:19).

The Transition between Shabbat and Tish'a B'Av

However, there is an intermediate time between Shabbat and the fast, during which Shabbat has not yet ended but the prohibitions of the fast have already begun. This happens because we are unsure when one day ends and the next day begins – at sunset, or when the stars emerge. Therefore, the period between sunset and the emergence of the stars is ambiguous, being possibly day, and possibly night. It is called "bein hashmashot" (twilight). And since there is a mitzvah to add time onto Shabbat, Shabbat continues until a few minutes after the stars emerge, as listed on most calendars (in Jerusalem, sunset is at 19:45, and Shabbat ends at 20:21. In Tel Aviv, sunset is at 19:43, and the Shabbat ends at 20:23) 1.

Consequently, the time between sunset and shortly after the emergence of the stars is both Shabbat and Tish'a B'Av. During that time, it is forbidden to do anything that would appear like a custom of mourning, because we do not mourn on the Sabbath. On the other hand, after sunset, we avoid doing anything that is not necessary for the sake of Shabbat, like eating, drinking, washing, and anointing.

Seudah Shlishit

Therefore, we eat the third Sabbath meal (seudah shlishit) like we do on any other Shabbat, including the singing of Sabbath songs. However, we stop

eating and drinking before sunset, because there is no obligation – from a Shabbat perspective – to continue eating seudah shlishit after sunset. It is also fitting not to sing joyous songs after sunset, and doing so does not constitute an expression of mourning, for people do not generally sing happy songs every moment of Shabbat.

Washing During the Transition Period

We also refrain from washing and anointing ourselves after sunset; after all, we do not bathe or anoint ourselves on Shabbat in any case. However, one who relieves himself during bein hashmashot should wash his hands normally, for if he washes only part of his hands as required on the fast, he is, in effect, mourning on the Sabbath.

The Changing of Clothes and Shoes

We remain in our Sabbath clothing, keep our shoes on, and continue to sit on chairs and greet each other until a few minutes after three, mid-sized stars appear in the sky. Then, we say "Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh le'chol" ('Blessed is He Who separates between the holy and the mundane'), by which we take leave of the Sabbath. Afterwards, we remove our shoes, take off our Sabbath garments, and change into weekday clothes.

Some people have a custom to remove their shoes at sunset, seeing as wearing shoes is one of the prohibited actions on Tisha B'Av, and since in any case, there is no obligation to walk in shoes all of Shabbat, there's no lack of respect for the Sabbath by doing so. However, if others take notice that one has removed his shoes for the sake of mourning, it is clearly forbidden. Therefore, the prevalent custom is to remove one's shoes only after Shabbat has ended.

When changing from Shabbat to weekday clothing, one should wear clothing that was already worn the previous week, because one may not wear freshly laundered clothing on Tish'a B'Av.

Evening Prayer

Many communities have a custom to delay Ma'ariv until around fifteen minutes after Shabbat ends, in order to give everyone time to take leave of the Sabbath at home, remove their shoes, change their clothes, and come to the synagogue for Ma'ariv and the reading of Eichah in weekday clothes.

Havdalah in Speech and Over Wine

The fast begins immediately after Shabbat, making it impossible to say havdalah over a cup of wine. Therefore, we postpone saying this form of havdalah until after the fast. Nevertheless, we say havdalah – "Ata Chonantanu" – in the Ma'ariv prayers, after which we are permitted to do work. Some say that women should pray Ma'ariv on such a Saturday night, in order to make havdalah in 'Ata Chonantanu'. Women who do not follow this practice should say, 'Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh le'chol', after which they are permitted to do work.

The Blessing over the Candle

In addition, we recite the blessing over fire on such a Motzei Shabbat, because this blessing is not dependent on the cup of wine. Rather, it is an expression of thanks to God for creating fire, which was revealed to Adam on the first Motzei Shabbat. The custom is to recite the blessing after Ma'ariv, before the reading of Eichah, because people light candles at that time. Women also recite the blessing over fire. If they are in synagogue, they should hear the blessing of the chazan (cantor), and have benefit from the light of the candle lit in their vicinity so they can see it. If they are at home, they should light a candle and recite the blessing (see, Peninei Halakha: Shabbat 8:1, footnote 1).

Havdalah over Wine after the Fast

At the end of the fast, two blessings are recited: Borei pri hagefen, and HaMavdil ('He Who separates'). No blessing is made on spices or fire. When the fast is over, it is forbidden to eat before making havdalah over the cup of wine, because saying "Ata Chonantanu" or "Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh le'chol" permits one to do work, whereas havdalah over a cup permits one to eat and drink.

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Havdalah for a Sick Person Who Needs to Eat on Tisha B'Av

A sick person who needs to eat on Tish'a B'Av, must say havdalah over a cup before eating. In such a case, it is proper to use chamar medinah, literally, a beverage containing alcohol, but is not wine, such as beer. In asha'at dachak (time of distress), one may also make havdalah on coffee, for some poskim hold that it is also considered a mashkeh medinah (Peninei Halakha: Shabbat 8:4). If one has no such beverage, he should sayhavdalah over grape juice, for since it has no alcohol content, it does not make one happy. And if even that is unavailable, he should say havdalah on wine and drink only a melo lugmav (a cheek full) [around 40 ml.].

A minor who eats on Tish'a B'Av need not say havdalah before eating.

The Laws of Mourning on the Day after Tisha B'Av

The majority of the Temple actually burned on the tenth of Av. Nevertheless, our Sages set the fast on the ninth of Av, according to when the fire began, but since in practice the majority of the Holy Temple was burned on the tenth, the People of Israel have a custom not to eat meat or drink wine on that date. In addition, many Jews are accustomed not to take a haircut or shower in hot water, do laundry, or wear laundered clothes on the tenth of Av.

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from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>

date: Jul 14, 2021, 11:00 AM

subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest for 07/14/2021

The Transition From Shabbat Into Tisha B'Av

by **R. Daniel Mann**

Question: Could you please explain how to handle the transition from Shabbat into Tisha B'Av (when it falls on Motzaei Shabbat) regarding se'uda shlishit, Havdala, and changing clothes?

Answer: Se'uda shlishit: The baraita, quoted in Ta'anit 29a says that one may eat as extravagant a meal as he wants on Shabbat even if Tisha B'Av falls on that day or the next. The Tur (Orach Chayim 552) cites customs that one is allowed and would do best to curtail the Shabbat meal. This is especially so at se'uda shlishit, which is, in effect, the se'uda hamafseket. However, these considerations are countered by the need to avoid displaying mourning on Shabbat. Therefore, there are no real restrictions, even at se'uda shlishit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 552:10).

However, the mood should somewhat reflect the coming of Tisha B'Av, as long as it does not bring on clearly noticeable changes (Mishna Berura 552:23). One important halachic requirement is that one must finish eating before sunset (Rama ad loc.).

Havdala: One says Havdala in Shemoneh Esrei. Havdala over a cup of wine is done after Tisha B'Av (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 556:1). Despite these facts, if one forgot to mention Havdala in Shemoneh Esrei, he does not repeat Shemoneh Esrei.

Rather, the declaration of HaMavdil, which enables one to do actions that are forbidden on Shabbat, suffices (Mishna Berura 556:2). Unlike Havdala during the Nine Days, where we try to give the wine to a child rather than an adult (Rama, Orach Chayim 551:10), after Tisha B'Av, an adult can freely drink the Havdala wine (Mishna Berura 556:3). The beracha on besamim is not recited this week because it is always recited only on Motzaei Shabbat, and on Tisha B'Av it is not appropriate because it is supposed to serve as a pleasure that revives the soul.

The beracha on the fire is specific to Motzaei Shabbat, is not a pleasure, and does not require a cup. Therefore, the minhag is to recite it in shul toward the end of davening, before the reading of Eicha (Mishna Berura 556:1). There are those who say that a woman should, in general, avoid making Havdala. This is because of the doubt whether a woman is obligated in the beracha on the fire, which is not directly related to Shabbat and thus is a regular time-related mitzva, from which women are exempt (Bi'ur Halacha 296:8). Therefore, if one's wife will not be in shul at the time of the beracha, it is better for the husband not to fulfill the mitzva at that time, but to make the beracha on the fire at a time that his wife can hear it (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 62:(98)).

Taking off shoes: As we mentioned, one may not do a noticeable act of mourning before Shabbat is over. While finishing to eat before sunset or refraining from washing need not be noticeable, taking off shoes is. There are two minhagim as to when to take them off: 1) One waits until after Shabbat is out, says HaMavdil, and then changes clothes and goes to shul. One can do so a little earlier than the regular time listed for Shabbat being out, which is usually delayed a little bit beyond nightfall to allow for a significant adding on to Shabbat at its end. The exact time is not clear and depends on the latitude of one's location. It is advisable to start Ma'ariv a little late in order to allow those who take this approach to make it to shul (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 62:40; Torat HaMo'adim 9:1). (If the rabbi has ruled that everyone should take the

following approach, all should conform, and there is no need for such a delay). 2) One takes off his shoes after Barchu of Ma'ariv. One who takes the second approach should bring non-leather footwear and Eicha/Kinot books to shul before Shabbat to avoid the problem of hachana (preparations for after Shabbat). However, if one uses these sefarim somewhat in shul before Shabbat is out, he can bring them with him on Shabbat (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata ibid. 41).

from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust <info@rabbisacks.org>

date: Jul 14, 2021, 2:18 PM

subject: The Leader as Teacher (Devarim 5781)

The Leader as Teacher (Devarim 5781)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ZL

It was one of the great moments of personal transformation, and it changed not only Moses but our very conception of leadership itself.

By the end of the book of Bamidbar, Moses' career as a leader would seem to be ending. He had appointed his successor, Joshua, and it would be Joshua, not Moses, who would lead the people across the Jordan into the Promised Land. Moses seemed to have now achieved everything he was destined to achieve. For him there would be no more battles to fight, no more miracles to perform, no more prayers to make on behalf of the people.

It is what Moses did next that bears the mark of greatness. For the final month of his life he stood before the assembled people, and delivered the series of addresses we know as the book of Deuteronomy or Devarim, literally "words." In these addresses, he reviewed the people's past and foresaw their future. He gave them laws. Some he had given them before but in a different form. Others were new; he had delayed announcing them until the people were about to enter the land. Linking all these details of law and history into a single overarching vision, he taught the people to see themselves as an am kadosh, a holy people, the only people whose sovereign and lawgiver was God Himself.

If someone who knew nothing about Judaism and the Jewish people were to ask you for a single book that would explain both who Jews are and why they do what they do, the best answer would be Devarim. No other book so encapsulates and dramatises all the key elements of Judaism as a faith and way of life.

In a much-watched TED talk, and a book with the same name,[1] Simon Sinek says that the transformative leaders are those who 'Start with Why.' More poetically, Antoine de Saint-Exupery said, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

Through the addresses we read in the book of Devarim, Moses gave the people their Why. They are God's people, the nation on whom He has set His love, the people He rescued from slavery and gave, in the form of the commandments, the constitution of liberty. They may be small but they are unique. They are the people who, in themselves, testify to something beyond themselves. They are the people whose fate will defy the normal laws of history. Other nations, says Moses, will recognise the miraculous nature of the Jewish story – and so, from Blaise Pascal to Nikolai Berdyaev and beyond, they did.

In the last month of his life Moses ceased to be the liberator, the miracle-worker, the redeemer, and became instead Moshe Rabbeinu, "Moses, our teacher." He was the first example in history of the leadership type in which Jews have excelled: the leader as teacher.

Moses surely knew that some of his greatest achievements would not last forever. The people he had rescued would one day suffer exile and persecution again. The next time, though, they would not have a Moses to do miracles. So he planted a vision in their minds, hope in their hearts, a discipline in their deeds and a strength in their souls that would never fade. When leaders become educators they change lives.

In a powerful essay, 'Who is fit to lead the Jewish people?' Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik contrasted the Jewish attitude to kings and teachers as leadership types.[2] The Torah places severe limits on the power of kings.

They must not multiply gold, or wives, or horses. A king is commanded “not to consider himself better than his fellow Israelites, nor turn from the law to the right or to the left” (Deut. 17:20).

A king was only to be appointed at the request of the people. According to Ibn Ezra, the appointment of a king was a permitted, but not an obligation. Abarbanel held that it was a concession to human frailty. Rabbeinu Bachya regarded the existence of a king as a punishment, not a reward.[3] In short, Judaism is at best ambivalent about monarchy – that is to say, about leadership as power.

On the other hand, its regard for teachers is almost unlimited. “Let the fear of your teacher be as the fear of heaven,” says the Talmud.[4] Respect and reverence for your teacher should be greater even than respect and reverence for your parents, rules Rambam, because parents bring you into this world, while teachers give you entrance to the World to Come.[5]

When someone exercises power over us, they diminish us, but when someone teaches us, they help us grow. That is why Judaism, with its acute concern for human dignity, favours leadership as education over leadership as power. And it began with Moses, at the end of his life.

For twenty-two years, as a Chief Rabbi, I carried with me the following quotation from one of the greatest leaders of the Zionist movement, Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. Although he was a secular Jew, he was enough of a historian and Bible scholar to understand this dimension of leadership, and said so in eloquent words:

Whether you hold humble office in a municipality or in a small union or high office in a national government, the principles are the same: you must know what you want to achieve, be certain of your aims, and have these goals constantly in mind. You must fix your priorities. You must educate your party and must educate the wider public. You must have confidence in your people – often greater than they have in themselves, for the true political leader knows instinctively the measure of man’s capacities and can rouse him to exert them in times of crisis. You must know when to fight your political opponents, and when to mark time. You must never compromise on matters of principle. You must always be conscious of the element of timing, and this demands a constant awareness of what is going on around you – in your region if you are a local leader, in your country and in the world if you are a national leader. And since the world never stops for a moment, and the pattern of power changes its elements like the movement of a kaleidoscope, you must constantly reassess chosen policies towards the achievement of your aims. A political leader must spend a lot of time thinking. And he must spend a lot of time educating the public, and educating them anew.[6]

The poet Shelley once said that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”[7] Whether this is true or false, I do not know, but this I know: that there is all the difference between giving people what they want and teaching them what to want.

Teachers are the unacknowledged builders of the future, and if a leader seeks to make lasting change, they must follow in the footsteps of Moses and become an educator. The leader as teacher, using influence not power, spiritual and intellectual authority rather coercive force, was one of the greatest contributions Judaism ever made to the moral horizons of humankind and it can be seen most clearly in the Book of Devarim, when Moses for the last month of his life summoned the next generation and taught them laws and lessons that would survive, and inspire, as long as there are human beings on earth.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha DVARIM 5781

Rabbi Wein’s Weekly Blog

This last oration of our teacher Moshe reviews the occurrences in history of the Jewish people after their miraculous Exodus from Egypt. The words of

Moshe are very personal to him alone and reflect his recollection and viewpoint of all of the events and incidents that occurred during the 40 -year sojourn of the Jewish people in the desert of Sinai.

Nuances of difference sometime appear between the descriptions that Moshe attributed to events that occurred, and the more objective description of those events recorded previously in the Torah. This is natural because of the different personal recollections by humans regarding events that occurred in the purely objective description, giving them a view of the same events but from a different perspective.

There is no need to reconcile the two apparent differing descriptions of the same Torah event. We know that human beings can never really be truly objective, and that everything that we see, and experience is always filtered through our own personalities, thoughts and even prejudices. As such, we can never claim objectivity in recalling past events and describing them for later generations.

It is not that truth is a subjective value, but, rather, it is not possible within the limitations of human existence, for truths to be accurately described, without the injection of the personality and the subjective viewpoint of the person recalling or describing the truth as to what occurred. Only heaven achieves ultimate accuracy of truth. We human beings strive for such perfection but should be aware that it is beyond our abilities to actually attain.

We see this clearly in how Moshe describes the origin of the debacle that befell the Jewish people regarding the sending of the spies to gain intelligence about the land of Israel. In the Torah previously, it appears that Moshe himself was the instigator and catalyst for this idea that later went so wrong. However, when Moshe relives the matter here in the book of Dvarim, he casts the incident in a different light completely. It was the people emerging as a mob upon him that forced him to agree to send spies, and to bring back a report about the land of Israel to the Jewish people before their actual entry into the country.

It is not that Moshe was trying to extract himself from blame and participation in this sad incident, which would doom that generation of the desert and never reach the land of Israel. It is simply that he records for us his absolute misgivings when the proposal first surfaced. In his memory, he does not see himself as ever having instigated the proposal and describes himself as an almost unwilling participant in the process that later ensued. In the eyes of heaven, because Moshe later acquiesced to the public demand for the sending of the spies, it made Moshe a prime mover, and instigator, if you will, in the event of the spies.

Oftentimes, in life, we are apparently innocent victims of forces brought upon us, and yet, we are held accountable personally for the consequences of our participation in the event, unwilling and hesitant as it may have been. The book of Dvarim teaches us many lessons in life that otherwise we may overlook, ignore and of which we may not be aware.

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>

date: Jul 16, 2021, 12:10 AM

subject: Rabbi Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur

Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Devarim 5781

– Topic – A Thought from the Beis Yitzchok on the Parsha

This comes from the Sefer Beis Yitzchok which is attached to the famous Kehillas Yitzchok and in the newer prints there is a Beis Yitzchok. He goes on the Posuk that is found in 1:17 (לֹא-תִכְרֹר פְּנִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט). Don’t recognize faces in judgment. The Lashon is (תִּכְרֹר פְּנִים). It should have said Lo Si’su Panim, don’t favor people. (לֹא-תִכְרֹר פְּנִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט). What does it mean don’t recognize people?

The Beis Yitzchok brings an incredible explanation of something well-known to us from Chazal. It is well-known that when Alexander the great set

out to conquer the world and he came to Eretz Yisrael and he met Shimon Hatzaddik he fell to his feet and said as is found in Maseches Yoma 69a (12 lines from the bottom) כיון שראה לשמעון הצדיק ירד ממרכבתו והשתחוה לפניו אמרו (מלחמתי לו מלך גדול כמותך ישתחוה ליהודי זה אמר להם דמות דיוקנו של זה מנצחת לפני בבית גזול do battle. This is a well-known Chazal.

The Beis Yitzchok gives a tremendous insight. What does it mean he recognized him? Could be Poshut Pshat, but he says more. He says Alexander the great was a student of Aristotle, he was a philosopher. Why did he set out to conquer the world? He was from the non-Jews in a non-Jewish world Aristotle had a certain greatness, a sense of purpose. Why was his disciple Alexander setting out to conquer the world?

The Beis Yitzchok says that the world was still full of Avodah Zorah even after the Yeitzer Hora of Avodah Zorah had passed, but the world was full of Avodah Zorah like Tosafos says at the beginning of Avodah Zorah. They didn't believe in it much but they still did it. Alexander who believed in philosophical approaches to humanity and to the world, wanted to rid the world of Avodah Zorah. When he set out he said it has got to be a better world. That is why he was a big Maskil, he was a big philosopher and he set out to conquer the world and set it in the path he wanted.

When Alexander saw Shimon Hatzaddik he recognized the Eidilkeit on him, he recognized the Feinkeit. Alexander was an Adam Poshut. The fact that Jews took his name to give to our children is not so Poshut. Alexander was somebody who had a deeper understanding of human beings. When he saw Shimon Hatzaddik he said it is for people like this that I am fighting all my battles. It is for a man like this that I look for. Every time I go to battle I look for someone who has this Demus, for somebody who has this Feinkeit, this Eidilkeit, this greatness, this glow.

There is a concept of Hakaras Panim, of being able to recognize the Feinkeit, the Eidilkeit and the greatness of a person. It is Lav Dafka that he saw an exact image of the face of Shimon Hatzaddik. The point was that it was Kidmuso, this is the image that he was looking for.

Says the Beis Yitzchok that is (לא-תכירו פנים במשפט). Even if someone comes with an Eidilkeit, with a Feinkeit (לא-תכירו פנים במשפט). Don't favor him in Mishpat. In Mishpat the Mishpat has to be purely based on the case itself, who is right who is wrong. The arguments back and forth. (לא-תכירו פנים במשפט).

I would add as a PS (לא-תכירו פנים במשפט) when it comes to Mishpat there is (לא-תכירו פנים במשפט), however, Stam Azoi in the world you should look to recognize people who are Baalei Madreiga. These are two thoughts on the Parsha.

– Topic – A Thought on the upcoming Tisha B'av

Let me turn to one basic overarching thought regarding our 2,000 year Galus and the upcoming Tisha B'av. We find a number of places in the Torah that there is Kefitzas Haderech. In Parshas Chaya Sarah as is found in 24:42 (אָבֶהָא). Eliezer has Kefitzas Haderech. In Parshas Vayeitzei as is found in 28:11 (וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמְקוֹם וְגָלָן שָׁם). In Parshas Behaloscha as is found in 10:33 (וַיִּסְעוּ מִהָרַר יְרֵרָה, דְרָדָה שְׁלִשָּׁת יָמִים) we find that Klal Yisrael before the Meraglim traveled three days travel in one day as Rashi point out (מהלך שלשת ימים הלכו) (ביים אחד). Kefitzas Haderech.

There is an old Kler that we always had. How does Kefitzas Haderech work? What is Kefitzas Haderech? I travel 100 miles and it takes me 2.5 hours and I did it in 2.5 minutes. That is Kefitzas Haderech. How does that work? Does it mean that I actually traveled 100 miles but time was suspended, so that after traveling the 100 miles and I get there I find out that only 2.5 minutes had gone by. So it is a miracle in Zman, it is a miracle in time. Or maybe not. Maybe it is a miracle in space. I traveled 100 miles in 2.5 minutes because the Ribbono Shel Olam compressed the 100 miles and I was able to go as if I was going just 100 feet and I got there 2.5 minutes later.

To illustrate the Chakira, if I had an odometer on my car and I was Eliezer and I traveled to find a Shidduch and I made it in one day. I traveled maybe 600 miles in one day. Did my odometer click off 600 miles of traveling, did I use up gas for 600 miles of traveling just that time was suspended, or no, the

Pshat is that I only had to travel one day's worth of traveling and it is a miracle in space that I got there. Is it a miracle in time or a miracle in space? In Parshas Behaloscha (I might have mentioned it this year) that the Taima Dik'ra (11:1) brings a proof that no you are traveling the whole time but it is a miracle in Zman because you are still traveling the 100 miles. But once you get there the time is earlier than it would normally be. An understanding of Kefitzas Haderech.

The follow up Kasha is why. If the Borei Olam is doing a miracle and you are traveling from NY to Liberty 100 miles and the Ribbono Shel Olam says it normally takes 2.5 hours for you 2.5 minutes. Why would the Ribbono Shel Olam do the Neis in a way that makes you be Mat'riach, makes you bother, makes you have the Shlep of the road and you get there and it is only 2.5 minutes. Let the Ribbono Shel Olam do the Neis the other way that it should be a quick trip so to speak? A trip that involves only traveling 100 feet and not 100 miles?

The important answer is this. There is something to the trip, there is something to the traveling. We tend to think that when there is a problem we just have to get past the problem and the idea is to be smooth, the idea is not to have the problem.

There was once a Yid who had 6 children and 3 of them were rebellious children and they gave him a lot of headaches and 3 were the smooth type. He told an Adam Gadol about his problem and he said I didn't ask the Ribbono Shel Olam for 6 children. Had He given me only 3 children I would have Nachas and I would be very happy. To that this Adam Gadol replied, you are a fool. In Shamayim you were supposed to have 3 challenging children and that is your Tafkid. A Malach said You are going to give him 3 difficult children and no regular children. So the Ribbono Shel Olam said okay I will throw in 3 regular children. But your Tafkid is not the self-pilot children your Tafkid is the children that require your efforts and your Kochos.

Same thing here. We travel somewhere and we say it is Ratzon Hashem I am heading out. I am going and I am traveling to Eretz Yisrael. So I say let me just get there. No. The travel is meaningful. The going there is traveling. The effort that you put in is traveling. When you are traveling it is purposeful. The Tircha, the bother of getting there counts. The challenges, the difficulties that is the whole purpose of the traveling.

The mistake that people make is not appreciating the challenges on the way. It comes a Tisha B'av and many people have an attitude let me just close my eyes and open them up and Tisha B'av will be over. I fasted a whole day and accomplished, I fasted. No. The idea is not to get to the end of Tisha B'av without eating, the idea is to have a Tisha B'av that is meaningful. A Tisha B'av that counts for you, that is a source of Avodas Hashem. A source of Aliya in Avodas Hashem. It is not just to get there. It is how you get there. It is how you get there. The bother of getting there. The bumps on the road. They are purposeful. When there is Kefitzas Haderech, Hashem doesn't say alright you won't have the bother you will just be there. No. The bother is purposeful. Hashem doesn't steal that from you. The Tircha, the Shvitz, the bother. HKB"H doesn't steal it from you, not at all. You are Zoche to work hard.

It says in Parshas Maasei (וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם, לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם) this is where they were for their travel. I think that it is the Rogatchover who said you might think that the travel is just to get there and it doesn't matter. He said no (וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם, לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם) there is a purpose. The traveling itself, the Masa itself is for a purpose.

So Tisha B'av is coming and its challenges. The Minhagei Aveilos that we have all of this is purposeful. Someday it is going to go on the scale when we go upstairs when they judge the Maasei Bnei Adam. Tisha B'av is an opportunity to be really meaningful.

Try on the afternoon of Tishav B'av to take out a Sefer Iyov if you haven't learned it recently. Most of Iyov is very hard. But learn the first two Perakim. Geshmak! When I was a counselor I used to learn it with my campers and they used to beg me just to go further and I said no and we did the first Perek. The first Perek is fascinating. It is full of Mussar too.

So take an Iyov and learn it and then if you are in a Shul that has Rav Schwab on Iyov take out the Rav Schwab on Iyov and look at what he says on what you just learned. Even if hopefully Tisha B'av is a Yom Tov you can still learn Iyov and you are allowed to learn it on Yom Tov. Wishing everyone an absolutely wonderful meaningful Shabbos Chazon. Please Daven for me to be Zoche to get into Eretz Yisrael this coming week. I am hoping next Thursday to be on the way to the airport during this call. B'ezras Hashem I hope to squeeze it in somehow between the TSA and boarding. B'ezras Hashem please Daven for me. Be well. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!

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Rav Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Avram Abish ben Menachem Mendel.

Everyone's a Critic

These are the words that Moshe spoke to Israel, on the other side of the Yarden, in the desert, in the plain, between Paran and Tophel... (1:1)

This week's parsha opens with Moshe addressing the entire nation. Both Rashi and Targum Yonason (ad loc) point out that Moshe isn't merely speaking to Bnei Yisroel - he's actually criticizing them. In fact, all the places listed in the possuk are locations where the Jewish people transgressed and angered Hashem.

The Talmud (Bava Metzia 30b) states that the reason Jerusalem was destroyed was because the inhabitants went according to the strict letter of the law and didn't act in ways that would have gone beyond the letter of the law. In other words, they didn't treat one another any better than the Torah required them to. Tosfos (ad loc) asks that the reason given for the destruction seems to contradict the Gemara (Yoma 9b), which states that the reason for the destruction was because of "baseless hatred." Tosfos answers that both those reasons played into the cause for the destruction. Seemingly, Tosfos is explaining that the baseless hatred led them to only do for each other what was required and nothing beyond the strict letter of the law.

Yet, the Gemara in Shabbos (119b) states that the reason for the destruction was because people failed to criticize one another. This, once again, seems to contradict the Gemara in Yoma that states the destruction stemmed from baseless hatred. Presumably, if baseless hatred was rampant in the city of Jerusalem then harsh criticism couldn't be far behind. What does the Gemara mean when it says that people didn't criticize each other?

Almost everyone is familiar with the Torah command "hocheach tocheach es amisecha" - the obligation of criticizing a fellow Jew. Sadly, many people have no idea what this really means or when to apply it. As an example:

Most of us feel it is our sacred obligation to (loudly) shush the person in shul who is talking too loudly or is disruptive in some way. However, this does not fall under the obligation of criticizing a fellow Jew.

Maimonides (Hilchos Deyos 6:7) lays out very clearly what this mitzvah entails: "It is a mitzvah for a person who sees that his fellow Jew has sinned, or is following an improper path, to return him to proper behavior and to inform him that he is causing himself harm by his evil deeds - as the Torah (Vayikra 19:17) states: 'You shall surely admonish your colleague.'"

Clearly, according to Rambam, the prime motivation for criticism of another Jew should be your interest in his well being. In fact, as Rambam points out, one of the key elements of criticism is the explanation of how the person's behavior is harmful to themselves. In other words, the main driving force of criticism of another has to be your love of them and your desire that they don't hurt themselves.

Most of us only criticize the behaviors of others that bother us, not the behaviors that are harmful to them. We would prefer to blithely ignore the behaviors of our friends that are clearly detrimental to them - unless, of course, their behavior or something they do is disruptive to our own lives. At

that point, we jump into action. But until that point is reached we would rather ignore their shortcomings and "leave well enough alone." In other words, we effectively only criticize when their behavior is about us, not when their behavior is about them. In addition, we should carefully consider what that says about our "friendships."

That's what the Gemara means by saying that Jerusalem was destroyed because we didn't criticize one another. This was a direct result of the baseless hatred. Because of the baseless hatred we had for one another we didn't care about each other and therefore didn't make any attempt to prevent other people from harming themselves.

The Death of Disconnection

How can I alone carry your trouble and your burden and your quarrels? (1:12)

Parshas Devarim is read every year on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av. In this parsha Moshe laments: "eicha esa levadi - how can I myself bear the burden of Bnei Yisroel's quarrels and arguments." It is customary to read this possuk in the special melody of Megillas Eicha. Chazal, in the prologue of Midrash Eicha, give an interpretation to the meaning of the word eicha and the connection to Tisha B'av:

"R. Abbahu taught 'But they like men [Adam] have transgressed the covenant' (Hoshea 6:7). This refers to Adam Harishon, of whom Hashem said, 'I brought him into the Garden of Eden and I imposed a command upon him, but he transgressed it so I punished him by driving him out and sending him away.' 'V'kinati alav eicha - and lamented over him,' [...] as it is said, 'Therefore Hashem God sent him forth, and lamented over him. 'Where art thou? (ayeka).' Similarly with his descendants. I brought them into the land of Israel, [...] I gave them commandments, [...] they transgressed my laws [...] so I punished them by driving them out, and by sending them away, and I lamented over them, how (eicha) she (referring to Yerushalayim) sits solitary'" (Eicha 1:1).

This, of course, refers to Adam's sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge and violating the only commandment given to him at the time, which led to his banishment from Gan Eden. The parallel to Adam's sin is the sins of Bnei Yisroel that caused them to be driven out of Eretz Yisroel. These two words, eicha and ayeka, appear identical in the non-vowelized text as they are the exact same letters. Just as Hashem used the word ayeka when He banished Adam, He uses the word eicha when He banished Bnei Yisroel from Eretz Yisroel.

Maimonides (Hilchos Teshuvah 6:1-3) states that one of the core tenets of understanding Hashem's providence is the knowledge that all evil that befalls us, whether individually or as a community, comes from consciously using our free will to transgress sins. These punishments often come to us in the most horrific ways, but they are all meted out in accordance to Hashem's divine knowledge of the proper way to exact punishment to fit the sin. But all of these punishments are only if the person doesn't do teshuvah. However, if a person repents in a conscious manner and of his own free will, then this acts as a shield to protect him from punishment.

In light of this, we must examine how we, as a people, react to the devastating loss of the Beis Hamikdosh, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the death and banishment of the Jewish people, which is poignantly memorialized by the three weeks and Tisha B'Av.

Our sages instituted the custom to begin a period of mourning on the 17th of Tammuz. This gets progressively more intensive, culminating with Tisha B'Av. Towards the end of Tisha B'Av we begin to console ourselves, and over the next seven week we experience what is known as the "seven weeks of consolation." This is highlighted as such by the weekly haftorahs. Only after this process do we begin to embark on the teshuvah process. This seems a little backwards. According to Maimonides it seems we should be immediately embarking on teshuvah. What is this process of mourning?

What are we trying to internalize?

Most people think that the period of mourning is the process of internalizing the terrible tragedies that happened to the Jewish people and feeling a sense

of loss. This is really only part of the purpose, and perhaps, only a small part of it.

Of course Maimonides is right, we need to constantly focus on doing teshuvah. But the real issue in doing teshuvah is that we are often distracted from the root cause of our problem. We often look at teshuvah as our apology for a transgression, as in “please don’t punish me (i.e. my family, my business) for my sins, I am sorry that I behaved in such a terrible manner.” This is, at best, an incomplete perspective.

What we really should focus on is the severing of the relationship with Hashem due to our misbehavior. We need to begin to fathom the true effect of our transgressions – the disconnection from our source. When we are disconnected from Hashem that is when all the terrible things happen to us. Being disconnected from Hashem is literally death, because we are now merely finite beings.

That is why when Adam sinned he brought death to the world and that is what Hashem said to him “ayeka – where are you?” If we are disconnected from Hashem we are nowhere. Gone. Banished. The loss of the Beis Hamikdash and Eretz Yisroel is the manifestation of the severing of the relationship with Hashem that had been restored, in part, after the sin of the Golden Calf.

This is also why it is prohibited to study Torah on Tisha B’Av; the Torah and its infinite connection to Hashem masks this sense of disconnection. It is this death, the severing of our relationship with Hashem, that we must mourn during this time period. We have been banished from the relationship. It is for this reason that all the stories of the destruction, those that we are permitted to study on Tisha B’Av, appear in the tractate of Gittin – laws of divorce.

Only after suitably internalizing this loss, and its ramifications, do we begin to console ourselves. Even after all that we have done to Hashem, He still wants a relationship with us. When we begin to understand his yearning for us to return, then we can properly return to him with a complete teshuvah – a return to the relationship.

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Prepare for Tisha b'Av with Megillat Eichah

In preparation for Tisha b'Av, the Steinsaltz Center presents a special edition of Megillat Eichah with commentary by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz zt"l. We hope this PDF gives you a deeper insight into Tisha b'Av and that we see an end to all suffering in our days.

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Tisha b'Av: Destruction & Redemption

The gloomiest day in the entire Jewish calendar is Tisha B’Av – the 9th day of the summer month of Av. A long series of national disasters, from the destruction of the first Temple to the Spanish Expulsion, is historically identified with this date. Moreover, in every generation this day has been looked upon as the essence of all national mourning, and the lamentation prayers of Tisha B’Av recall not only the events that occurred on that day, but also the story of the sufferings of our people throughout its exile. Nevertheless, the focus of mourning is the destruction of the Temple, both the beginning and the symbol of all that occurred thereafter.

For the Jewish people, the Temple was the only place for complete worship. It was the recognized center for all the Children of Israel, however scattered they were. Indeed, the Temple was the only holy place recognized by Judaism.

A Loss of Direction

As long as the Temple exists there is direction and significance to the flow and direction of life. The destruction of the Temple deprived the Jewish people of the central axis about which their lives revolved and toward which

all other life expression was directed. Since it was destroyed, the Jewish people lack that central axis needed to direct its religious and national life and its very existence as a national body. Thus, the destruction of the Temple was not only metaphysically, but also historically and actually “the removal of the Shekhinah” (the Divine Presence) from Israel, “the exile of the Shekhinah.”

The far-flung communities of Israel, which had possessed a center toward which all life was directed, were suddenly no longer in a state of mere temporary absence (which would eventually be terminated), but, in a deeper sense, in exile, under the yoke of “foreign slavery” in every land, including the land of Israel. Therefore, the sufferings of Israel are unlike those recorded in the history of any other nation. The destruction of the Temple was the “expulsion of the Divine Presence” from Israel, and all the subsequent sufferings of Israel are understood as merely a repetition of that same event, a loss continually felt by a people lacking the center of its being. All of our sufferings are qualitatively the same – the nation is not unified by a single center but is, rather, broken into separated parts and subject to continual injury. Therefore, in the course of the generations, all the days of mourning commemorating particular inflictions and sufferings were cancelled and Tisha B’Av became an all-encompassing day of heightened mourning.

Destruction & Redemption

The legend that the Messiah is born on Tisha B’Av, at the very time of the Destruction, is a key to understanding one aspect of the problem of the destruction and the notion of redemption. For redemption to take place, the repair of the various individual destructions alone is insufficient. Even if the entire people of Israel were to return to its land, this would be insufficient for the redemption of the Destruction. Furthermore, even the building of the Temple in and of itself could not repair that which had been damaged in the course of the generations.

Only the Messiah – who will bring redemption to the world on a higher plane and in a more complete fashion than ever before possible – can undo the Destruction. Redemption is not simply a return to the situation as it previously existed. Restoration is only a small part of the scheme of redemption. The redemption of the Jewish people must be accompanied by a qualitative change that affects the entire world. Only a redemption that rises above the sufferings of two thousand years, that brings the Jewish people – and the entire world – to a higher level of existence, this alone is full reparation for the Destruction.

~Adapted from "Tisha B'Av: Destruction & Redemption," by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz zt"l, courtesy of Aleph Society, Inc

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Devarim

פרשת דברים תשפ"א

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל... בין פארן ובין תופל ולבן וחצרות ודי זהב
These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Yisrael... between Paran and Tophel, and Lavan, and Chatzeiros, and Di Zahav. (1:1)

Eileh ha' devarim is reference to Moshe Rabbeinu's rebuke of Klal Yisrael for their past insurrections. In his attempt not to embarrass and offend his listeners, Moshe did not mention the sins in detail; rather, he made veiled references to the sins by using place names which alluded to the sins. *Chazal* (*Tamid* 28a) teach that one who rebukes his fellow *l'shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven (solely to help and guide his fellow back to a path of appropriate behavior), will merit to dwell in the portion of Hashem... Moreover, the Heavenly Court extends over him a cord of Divine grace. What an incredible reward for someone who fulfills the *mitzvah* of *hochachah*, rebuke, *l'shem Shomayim*. We wonder why it should be so. Why

should one who performs this *mitzvah* for the sake of Heaven be any more meritorious than he who performs any of the other 612 *mitzvos l'shem Shomayim*? A *mitzvah* is a *mitzvah*, and performing it in accordance to the Heavenly directive is the standard that applies to all *mitzvos* – or is this *mitzvah* unique in this sense?

Horav Nosson Ordman, zl (Rosh Yeshivah, Eitz Chaim, London), explains that a fundamental difference exists between the *mitzvah* of rebuke and all other *mitzvos* with regard to *l'shem Shomayim*. All other *mitzvos*, even if one were not to mention the correct and proper intentions *l'shem Shomayim*, he has at least performed a *mitzvah*. He has shaken the *Lulav*, he has recited *Kiddush*. If one rebukes for ulterior motives – anything other than to carry out the Heavenly mandate that one rebuke his fellow – it is an *aveirah*, a sin. It is precisely the *l'shem Shomayim* that transforms ordinary rebuke into a *mitzvah*. Otherwise, when ulterior motives are present it may be an act of *sinaah*, hatred. We lose our sense of objectivity, often convincing ourselves that we are acting out of love and care.

It is for this reason that, concerning other *mitzvos*, the rule of performing *shelo lishmah*, acting not for the sake of the *mitzvah*, applies and is even encouraged. The more one performs the *mitzvah*, the greater his attachment to it, and, with time, the *mitzvah* will refine him to the point that he will execute it *l'shem Shomayim*. *Tochachah*, however, is a sin which is only ennobled by its Heavenly connection. An *aveirah* does not become a *mitzvah* with its replication. One must delve into the *mitzvah* of rebuke, understand its significance, comprehend how it promotes love of Hashem and love of one's fellow. Thus, if one implements the *mitzvah* properly, he is allowed entrance into the portion of Hashem.

Another area in which *l'shem Shomayim* determines the spiritual respectability of an action is *kanaus*, jealousy. Unless a *kanai*, zealot, acts *l'shem Shomayim*, he is not a zealot. He is a rabble-rouser, a vengeful person who is guilty of character assassination and, even, murder. One may not think of himself when he acts zealously. He thinks only of the affront that is being perpetrated against Hashem. He is motivated by Hashem's "pain," by the disgrace to His Name, by the defamation of His Glory. Anything less than this is a sinful act of subjective reprisal.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* acted *l'shem Shomayim*. Otherwise, why would he have glossed over the gory details of their sins? He cared about *Klal Yisrael* and wanted to be certain that he did not overdo it. He had one purpose in his rebuke: to promote the honor of Hashem's Name. Their sins created a spiritual stain that needed to be expunged with *teshuvah*. In order to repent, one must first acknowledge his sin. This is the purpose of rebuke: reveal the sin and help to guide the sinner on his trip of return.

One issue remains concerning Moshe's rebuke which demands clarification. Moshe's rebuke focused on past indiscretions, sins that had been committed throughout *Klal Yisrael's* forty-year journey. What is to be gained by hashing over their past shortcomings? They sinned; they were punished – now what? They certainly will not make the same mistake again. They learned their lesson. Now would be a good time for *chizuk*, strengthening their resolve, elevating their egos, reminding them who they are and what they were capable of achieving. The last thing they needed was rebuke. *Rav Ordman* explains that Moshe's intent was to probe their weaknesses to demonstrate to the nation that it was not over. It could happen once again. The *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, is relentless in his mission to create obstacles and encourage us to sin. He alters his strategy from person to person, and, as a result, no person, regardless of his spiritual echelon, is safe from his wiles. Moshe admonishes the people concerning their past behaviors, because their demeanors manifest a deficiency that could reappear at any time. He preached vigilance and more vigilance, because one can never know.

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל

These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Yisrael. (1:1)

Moshe *Rabbeinu's* "words" were words of reproof, in which he lectured the nation for their past indiscretions. He did not censure; rather, he subtly alluded to their sins by mentioning places which intimated their sin: Why did

he refer to the sins via the medium of place, rather than period/time during which the sin occurred? The *Mei HaShiloach* implies that since the place where they were encamped at the time of the sin's occurrence was not their decision, they had some sort of excuse to mitigate their behavior by blaming the effects of the environment in which they were located, over which they had no control. The journey followed Hashem's command. When He directed them to move – they moved. They remained encamped until Hashem issued their next moving orders. Thus, Moshe employed place in order to moderate – rather than excoriate. He rebuked with love and common sense.

Horav Zev Weinberger, zl, questions this. *Klal Yisrael* had no control over time either. Place is the "where?" – time is the "how long?" In any event, they had no authority neither regarding where they camped, nor how long they were there. *Rav Weinberger* explains that had Moshe employed time to allude to their sin, it would have magnified their guilt. He quotes *Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl*, who comments on the Torah's description of the sin of the Golden Calf; *Saru meheir min ha'derech asher Tziveesim*; "They have strayed quickly from the way that I commanded them" (*Devarim* 9:12). The *Mashgiach* asks: What is the difference whether their deviation from the path which Hashem commanded took place quickly or over a period of time? A sin is a sin. It is almost as if the celerity of their turning to sin is what determined the sin's stark negativity. *Rav Yeruchem* explains that forty days had elapsed from the sixth of *Sivan*, the day the Jewish nation received the Torah, until the seventeenth of *Tammuz*, the day that Moshe shattered the *Luchos*. If the nation could descend to such a nadir in only forty days, it was an indication that their actual acceptance of the Torah on the sixth of *Sivan* was deficient. Thus, we see that "time" plays a role in defining the egregiousness of a sin. The period during which it occurred intensified the sin of the *meraglim*, spies. The nation was enjoying unprecedented miraculous intervention on an almost constant basis. To sin at this time exacerbated the sin. Therefore, Moshe chose the medium of place over time to allude to the sin.

Clearly, there is an appropriate way to rebuke, and while the sincerity of the rebuker plays a major role in the delivery and acceptance of the rebuke, his wisdom, i.e., common sense, is just as important. One must know whom and when to rebuke. Not all people can handle rebuke and not all times are propitious for accepting rebuke. Subtle actions which deliver a potent message work better than words. A lecture can be misunderstood. Saying nothing and acting in a manner that delivers the message: "I care about you; I know that you did something inappropriate, but I am not prepared to talk about it until you are willing to accept what I have to say," can have greater efficacy without damaging the wrongdoer's emotions or ego. The following incident reinforces this idea.

A *talmid*, student, of *Yeshivas Mir*, Yerushalayim, asked the *Rosh Yeshivah*, *Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zl*, for permission to leave early. The *zman*, semester, would be over in two weeks, and, apparently, his grandfather was gravely ill. "I am very close with my grandfather, and it is only a question of two weeks. May I leave early?"

Rav Nosson Tzvi replied that guarding and adhering to the *yeshivah's* schedule is *kodesh kodoshim*, holy of holies. Furthermore, permission granted by the *Rosh Yeshivah* may be misconstrued by the other students who would similarly find some way to empower themselves to also leave early. While he would love to help, it would be detrimental to the student (questioner) and the rest of the *Yeshivah* if he would be lenient in this regard, "Continue to learn Torah and, perhaps in the merit of your studies, Hashem will send your grandfather a *refuah sheleimah*, complete recovery."

The young man respectfully left the *Rosh Yeshivah's* office, but did not respectfully return to the *bais hamedrash*. Instead, he called a taxi and went to the airport. He had decided (even before he went to the *Rosh Yeshivah*) that his love for his grandfather superseded everything, and nothing would stand in the way of his last good-bye. He was going home – regardless of the repercussions.

Unfortunately, he was unaware that Hashem had other plans. The *Malach Ha'Maves*, Angel of Death, had already been dispatched to return his grandfather's *neshamah*, soul, to its Heavenly Source. As soon as the plane landed in Kennedy Airport and he could now return to phone service, he noticed a number of text messages from his mother. He immediately called to ask what was wrong. To his chagrin, he was told that his grandfather had passed away during the interval of his flight from *Eretz Yisrael*. Since he was the closest and eldest grandchild, it was decided that he should accompany the body to burial in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Back-to-back flights are never easy. For a young man under the pressure of accompanying his grandfather's body to its final resting place, it was a difficult physical and its emotional journey. During the entire return trip, he had before his eyes the image of his revered *Rosh Yeshivah* who had just the other day admonished him concerning the *sidrei ha'yeshivah*. He did not know how he would be able to face him when he returned.

Not many people attended his grandfather's funeral. One person who came, however, was a complete surprise: *Rav* Nosson Tzvi Finkel! He attended the funeral in order to render emotional support to his student – who had just returned from a grueling double overseas flight. The *Rosh Yeshivah* suffered greatly from an illness that physically debilitated him. Yet, despite his pain, he was present, and he remained until the *zibulah basraita*, last shovel of dirt. The student turned to the *Rosh Yeshivah* and wanted to say "something." He was nervous, exhausted, fully-aware that he had acted in contradiction to the *Rosh Yeshivah's* advice. He was embarrassed. Before he could open up his mouth, the *Rosh Yeshivah* said, "You have just spent an entire twenty-four-hour period on a plane. You are exhausted, physically and emotionally drained from the trauma. You are certainly famished. I have asked my *Rebbetzin* to prepare a hearty meal for you. Now, you will come with me to eat and rest. Later, we will speak."

The *bachur's* eyes moistened when he heard the *Rosh Yeshivah*. No rebuke – despite his actions, which were counter to the *Rosh Yeshivah's* advice. No rebuke – yet, the *Rosh Yeshivah*, despite his pain and heavy schedule, had attended his grandfather's funeral, just to be present for him. No rebuke – the *Rosh Yeshivah* had his *Rebbetzin* prepare a large sumptuous meal for him, because after such an ordeal, he must be famished and exhausted. During the entire car trip to the *Rosh Yeshivah's* apartment – not one word of rebuke. It was not necessary; the *Rosh Yeshivah's* actions were, in and of themselves, the most powerful rebuke.

ד' אלקינו דבר אלינו בהרב לאמר רב לכם שבת בהר הזה

Hashem, our G-d, spoke to us in Chorev, saying: Enough of your dwelling by this mountain. (1:6)

Rashi quotes the *Midrash* which defines *rav*, enough, as abundance. This refers to the abundance of reward and achievement that *Klal Yisrael* gained during their one-year layover at *Sinai*. At *Sinai*, they received the Torah, built the *Mishkan* with its accoutrements, and Hashem designated the *Zekeinim*, Elders, as the leaders of the nation. Now, it was time to move on. The *Nesivos Shalom* offers an alternate exposition, with a homiletic twist. Chorev may be translated as destruction, referring to the *churban*, destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*. Does this mean that we as a nation in exile are finished? Do we have no hope? *Rav lachem sheves* should be read as *Shabbos*. True, without the *Bais Hamikdash*, the Three Festivals during which we were *oleh regel*, pilgrimaged to the Temple thrice annually, were no longer possible. The *korbanos*, sacrifices, we had offered on the *Mizbayach*, Altar, were no longer feasible. *Shabbos*, however, is here to stay. It is our holy island in time which will never leave us. We should not give up, because, through *Shabbos*, we can achieve a sense of holiness even in our contemporary exile, when there is no Temple.

Furthermore, *Hashem Elokeinu diber eileinu b'chorev*. The sanctity of the Torah which we received remains with us even in Chorev – *churban*. Even in exile, the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, is with us on *Shabbos* and through our commitment in Torah study.

ויפנו ויעלו ההרה ויבאו עד נהל אשכל

They turned and ascended the mountain and came until the valley of Eshkol. (1:24)

"Never allow the sadness of the past and your anxiety concerning the future to cloud the happiness of the present moment." *Chazal* teach that Eshkol was the name of one of Avraham *Avinu's* three friends, whom he consulted when he was commanded to have a *Bris Milah*. Anar advised against the procedure, claiming that it was too dangerous to chance at his advanced age. Mamreh told him to follow Hashem's command. Eshkol concurred with Anar and added his own negativity, suggesting that Avraham's enemies would take advantage of his weakened state.

Horav Elie Munk, zl, sees an analogy in the episode of the *eshkol anavim*, cluster of grapes, brought back by the spies. They sought to enforce their position that, just as the fruit was unusually large, so, too, were the land's inhabitants inordinately powerful. This is why the place was already called Eshkol at the time of Avraham's *Bris Milah*. It was characterized as a place where fears of one's future enemies would discourage a person from doing the right thing today.

Nachal Eshkol was a place which bespoke fear of the future. People that carry with them the baggage of past sad experiences cannot properly focus on and enjoy the present. Likewise, those who constantly worry about what the future holds for them have great difficulty living in the moment. *Hayom, achshov*, today, now, represents a Jew's faith. Today we are healthy, strong, united in our conviction. Yet, for some people, fear trumps faith, and, as a result, we refuse to accept what today, the present, has to offer, because we are afraid of the future. Eshkol feared the future. He symbolized one whose faith is frozen due to fear. Avraham did not listen to him, because his faith in Hashem transcended fear.

Someone once said that given the choice, we would all do *teshuvah*, repent. It is the right thing to do – today. What prevents us from following through on our logical positive intentions? Yesterday and tomorrow. We are anxious concerning yesterday's mistakes and fret over what will happen tomorrow. Were we to focus on the present – we would make the correct decision. *Im lo achshav eimasai*; "If not now when": Hillel's well-known maxim (*Pirkei Avos* 1:14) should guide us concerning the importance of seizing the moment and making the most of it. *Ibn Ezra* buttresses this thought with his own: *Ha'ovav ayin, v'ha'asid adayin, v'ha'hoveh k'heref ayin, im kein daagah minayin?* "The past is no longer here; the future is not yet; the present lasts but an eye blink; so why worry and fret?" if, indeed, we live only in the present then we would do well to seek to accomplish our goals in the immediate "now."

The only thing that we control is this very moment. Why waste it? This does not mean one should ignore the past – its lessons are critical. Neither should we completely disencumber ourselves from thinking about the future – one must have vision and goals. When one becomes overburdened by what might occur in the future, however, his present will be injudiciously slighted. We each have a spark within us that has the potential of igniting and becoming a powerful flame. Unfortunately, for some, this spark is suppressed as a result of life's troubles and travails. If we focus on the "here and now," and seize the moment, we will succeed in mitigating the "yesterdays" and "tomorrows" and have a better, more accomplished life.

The concept of "now" plays itself out in another manner. *Chazal* (*Berachos* 6b) teach, "One should be meticulous in observing *Tefillas Minchah*, because it was at *Minchah* that Eliyahu *HaNavi* was answered." The *Lubavitcher Rebbe, Horav Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, zl*, explains that, in the morning, one always has time to *daven Shacharis*; he can always wake up a half-hour earlier and then go to work. For *Maariv*, if he is running late, he just goes to bed fifteen minutes later. *Minchah*, however, is to be recited in the afternoon, right in the middle of the work day, the meeting, the conference, the trip. We recite it in the midst of intense activity. To be able to interrupt the business day in order to make time to recite *Minchah* is, indeed, an indication of dedication and commitment.

It is the same with regard to the life cycle. When one is young or old, it is relatively easy to make time for religious services. It is in the afternoon of

one's life, the time reserved for "Minchah," that he manifests the greatest indication of commitment. It is during the "twenty to sixty" prime of life, when one has the vision and wherewithal to throw himself into world and business affairs, when the pursuit of material bounty absorbs most of his waking hours – it is then, if he invests time in spiritual matters, that he shows that he is deservedly meritorious.

Va'ani Tefillah

יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך – *Yiheyu l'ratzon imrei fi v'hegyon libi lefanecha*. May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You.

When one concludes his recitation of the *Shemoneh Esrai*, he has completed an esoteric encounter with Hashem. If he has executed the recitation with proper devotion and awe, he should experience a feeling of rapture and inspiration. This intimate encounter with Hashem will have elevated his soul. One must remember that upon reciting the words *Baruch Atah Hashem*, "Blessed are You Hashem," one is speaking directly to the Almighty. (The thought of this alone should gratify and elate a person.) Since *Shemoneh Esraei* is considered formal prayer as established by the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah*, Men of the Great Assembly, as an obligatory prayer, reciting it demonstrates only that one is fulfilling his obligation. As a result, one might be crossing the line between a prayer which should be a petition for mercy and a supplication and one that is a fixed routine (which *Chazal* disdained). Thus, *Chazal* (as quoted in the *Talmud Berachos* 16b) were careful to add a personal prayer at the end of the *Shemoneh Esrai*, thereby manifesting intent to seek Divine favor and mercy. Once one has completed the blessings, his soul is aflame with great love for Hashem. Now is the time to express his innermost feelings, personal petitions and praises.

לע"נ רוזה רחל בת ר' משה אריה-ע"ה נפ' ח' אב תשנ"ו

Shelley Horwitz ע"ה

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Parshat Devarim (Deuteronomy 1:1 – 3:22)

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – The biblical reading of Devarim always falls out on the Sabbath preceding Tisha Be'av, the fast commemorating the destruction of our Holy Temples. This is not merely an "accident" of the calendar; in our portion, Moses reviews his life and he cries out, "How (eicha) can I bear your troublesomeness and your burdens and your belittling barbs?" [Deut. 1:12], a verse which begins with the same word that opens the Scroll of Lamentations ("How [Eicha] does she sit alone, the city once filled with our people?") The Torah reader on the Sabbath chants the Torah verse Eicha with the same haunting melody used for the Eicha reading on Tisha Be'av. What is the significance of the destruction of the Temple? How important could the Temple have been if Judaism managed to survive without it for the last 2,000 years? And how many modern Jews can really identify with the slaughter of animals as offerings in a Temple? By exploring a fundamental difference of opinion between two great Jewish leaders—Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Akiva—we can gain insight into the significance of our Temple, and the irretrievable loss we suffered as a result of its destruction.

As the Romans besieged Jerusalem, Rabbi Yohanan managed to leave the city and meet with Vespasian, the leader of the Roman armed forces carrying out the siege. The rabbi requested that the Romans spare the city of Yavne and its wise men, the Sanhedrin of sages.

Rabbi Yohanan was willing to relinquish Jerusalem and the Temple so long as the Jews could remain in Israel and maintain their ongoing interpretations of the Oral Law.

Approximately six decades later, Rabbi Akiva bitterly condemned this accommodating stance of Rabbi Yohanan (even though he taught both of Rabbi Akiva's own two teachers, Rabbi Yehoshua and R. Eliezer), referring to a verse from the Prophet Isaiah which he applied to Rabbi Yohanan: "God turns the sages backwards and transforms their wisdom into foolishness" (Isa. 44:25) (B.T. Gittin 56b). Apparently, Rabbi Akiva believed that Rabbi Yohanan gave up too much too soon, that he should have continued to fight in order to retain Jerusalem and the Holy Temple.

Indeed, Rabbi Akiva put his ideas into practice by spearheading the Bar Kochba rebellion against Rome (135 CE) for the avowed purpose of Israel's liberation of Jerusalem and rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

What was the fundamental difference of opinion between these sages? Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai believed that, apart from the prohibitions of murder, sexual immorality and idolatry, the only value for which one may forfeit one's life is the survival of the Jewish nation. This explains why the Bible introduces the concept of a life-endangering obligatory war (milhemet mitzva) for the sake of the conquering the Land of Israel at the dawn of our history, because without the Land of Israel there would never have developed the nation of Israel. Given the overwhelming might of the Roman Empire and the Roman armies, Rabbi Yohanan concluded that if the Land of Israel and the Torah of Israel could be secured—Yavne and its wise men—it would be unnecessary and even halachically unacceptable to risk the survival of the Jewish people in a war for Jerusalem and the Holy Temple.

Rabbi Akiva believed differently. He understood the function of the Holy Temple and Jerusalem as being cardinal to the mission of Israel, a holy nation and a kingdom of priest-teachers (to the world) through whom all of the families of the earth are to be blessed.

The people of Israel were entrusted to teach the world that God created every human being in His Divine image, that each individual must be free and inviolable, and that our God of love and morality demands a world of peace and security for all. The city from which this message must emanate is the City of Jerusalem, the City of Peace (Yeru Shalom); the mechanism by which this mission is to be advanced is the Holy Temple, the beacon from which the Torah will go forth to all nations of the world, impressing upon them how "swords must be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift sword above nation and humanity will not learn war anymore" (Isa. 2:4). Rabbi Akiva believed that unless we disseminate this teaching to the world, there is no purpose to our national being; hence the centrality of our Messianic vision and the necessity of continuing to fight for Jerusalem and the Holy Temple.

Bar Kochba's revolt ended in failure. The subsequent Hadrianic persecutions and the resulting Jewish exile wrought havoc upon our nation, and it became clear to the overwhelming majority of our sages that Rabbi Akiva was wrong and Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai had been correct. He had rescued Judaism by his initiating the "exchange" with Vespasian.

But our situation has radically changed. Contemporary history, post-Holocaust, teaches us that the nation of Israel cannot survive without a Jewish state and a Jewish army. We live in a global village where one madman with nuclear power can (God forbid) destroy the entire world. This teaches us that, unless the inviolability of the human being and the universal acceptance of a God of peace becomes an axiom of all humanity, there will be no free humanity left in the world, and certainly no Jewish nation. Rabbi Akiva has been vindicated for our times; only by teaching fundamental absolute morality in our City of Peace can we secure the future of Israel and the free world.

Shabbat Shalom!

http://download.yutorah.org/2012/1053/Tisha_Bav_To-Go_-_5771_Rabbi_Reiss.pdf

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Bereavement and Consolation
Rabbi Yona Reiss

And I will make their mourning into joy, and I will comfort and gladden them from their suffering. Yirmiyahu 31:12

Tisha Be'av is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. This is the day on which "painful events were repeated" (Rosh Hashanah 18b), when both of the Holy Temples were destroyed, and the totality of Jewish tragedy is commemorated. And yet, every year, almost immediately upon the conclusion of the day of Tisha Be'av, we celebrate Shabbos Nachamu, the Shabbos of "comfort" and the joyous day of Tu Be'av, which is considered one of the two most festive days of the year. How do we explain this curious juxtaposition?

The question is amplified further when we consider the unique character of the mourning period that leads to Tisha Be'av. When a person mourns the death of a parent, an "aveilus chadashah" (new experience of loss), the most intense period of mourning is the first day, followed by the seven day "shiva" period that restricts hygiene, grooming and movement, followed by a less restrictive thirty day period that still prohibits haircutting, followed by an attenuated mourning period of twelve months. By contrast, the mourning for Tisha Be'av, an "aveilus yeshanah" (old experience of loss), becomes more intense as time progresses, beginning with the three weeks, during which haircuts and marriages are prohibited, then advancing to the month of Av during which laundering is prohibited, and then culminating with Tisha Be'av itself, in which the observances of the day are akin to the most intensive observances of a mourner observing "shiva."

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (see *Out of the Whirlwind*, pp. 9-30) explained that the reason for the distinction between the two mourning patterns is because the purpose of the mourning of a parent is to confront the immediate pain, and then eventually to re-adjust to a pattern of normalcy. By contrast, the purpose of the observance of Tisha Be'av, commemorating catastrophes that go back thousands of years, is to gradually reach a level of sensitivity and appreciation for the terrible loss that has befallen us, starting with a dull, almost imperceptible awareness, which gradually cascades into a crescendo of bitter mourning. However, if the purpose of the mourning period ending in Tisha Be'av is to increase the intensity of the mourning experience, how can we expect that almost immediately after the climax of bereavement, we will somehow have the capacity for comfort, and even for the celebration six days later of the day of Tu Be'av, one of the happiest days on the Jewish calendar? More puzzling is that the comfort and celebration are planned in advance, regardless of whether or not the Temple will actually be rebuilt immediately after Tisha Be'av.

Perhaps the message is that there is in fact no contradiction. The term "nachamu" which heralds the Shabbos after Tisha Be'av and headlines the haftarah of that Shabbos, has a double meaning, as explained by Rashi in Bereishis (6:6, and 27:42) with respect to other variations of the word nichum: "Nachamu" can mean either to be comforted, or to have a change of mind. True comfort can only be achieved when the fullest extent of one's anguished emotions have been expressed, so that there can be a "change of mindset" from mourning to joy. It is only at the point that the mourning for the loss of the Holy Temple has been most acutely felt that the ultimate experience of comfort becomes possible. Thus, the mourning for Tisha Be'av is both a pre-requisite for the ensuing comfort and a prescription for future joyousness. The notion of mourning as a pre-requisite for future joyousness is spelled out in the following Talmudic passage: Make Jerusalem happy and gladden it, all who love her shall rejoice with her, gladden all those who mourn for her." (Isaiah 66:10) From here it was taught that one who mourns Jerusalem shall behold its joyousness, but one who does not mourn Jerusalem will not behold its joyousness. Ta'anit 30b Furthermore, Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Shochet (early 20th century), author of *Ahavat Shaul* (drush l'yom sheni shel Shavuot), observes that the experience of mourning creates the immediate capacity to appreciate the joyousness of the Temple. This is why the Talmud uses the present tense, Zocheh Viroeh Besimchata (which literally means "beholds its joyousness") and not the future tense Yizkeh Viyireh. In this vein, it is also interesting to note that the Ramban quotes a version of the text (in his *Toras Ha'adam*) that states

Zocheh Viroeh Besimchata – the mourner of Jerusalem experiences its comfort.

But why should it be that the full intensity of the mourning for the Temple creates the immediate capacity for comfort, and even for joy? One simple explanation, based on the Talmudic passage quoted above, is that the mourning creates the eligibility for the Temple to be rebuilt, for Jerusalem to be restored to its glory. We are comforted because, through mourning our loss, we have become eligible for salvation, and therefore we have the right to participate in eager anticipation for the redemptive moment to occur. However, another possible explanation for the immediate capacity for comfort is inherent in the words at the beginning of the fifth chapter of Megilat Eikhah – Zechor Ha-shem Meh Haya Lanu – remember, Oh G-d, what we have experienced. Most commentators understand the phrase as referring to a recollection of destruction, and a cry for compassion regarding our devastation as a people. But there is another interpretation from the Alshikh HaKadosh that appears to be reflected in the elegy Eikha Atzta B'apekha by Rabbi Elazar HaKalir, in which the phrase Zechor Ha-shem Meh Haya Lanu is utilized as a refrain to provide a contrast between the grandeur of the Temple period and the 46 ravaging consequences of its destruction. According to the Alshikh, the words Zechor Ha-shem Meh Haya Lanu do not refer to the period of defeat, but rather to the time of triumph, when Jerusalem and the Temple were in their glory. He explains that it is impossible to mourn our current state of spiritual poverty and political subjugation without a remembrance of the sovereignty and spiritual prosperity that we once possessed as a people, the same way that a pauper who is born indigent is less equipped to bemoan his lack of riches than a wealthy person who has become impoverished and constantly recollects what he has lost.

Accordingly, our capacity to mourn properly on Tisha Be'av is ultimately dependent upon a recollection and appreciation of what it means to be spiritually rich, to bask in the divine presence of HaKadosh Barukh Hu in the Holy Temple, and to engage in His service in an atmosphere pervaded with holiness. It is only when we realize how impoverished we have become in our mundane existence in exile, and gradually grasp, through the progressive sequence of the mourning experience, the full extent of our loss and devastation, that we are able to comprehend and therefore experience the mourning of Tisha Be'av. Once we have achieved this heightened state of recognition, as the *Ahavat Shaul* explains, we can appreciate the joy that is attainable through regaining our previous state of spiritual majesty. This understanding enables us to transform the intensity of the mourning experience into a period of comfort and even joy, as we once again perceive the purpose of our strivings in this world, and look forward to re-living an existence that is inextricably woven with a connection to the Almighty.

This renewed appreciation for redemption elucidates the significance of Tu Be'av. The Talmud (Ta'anit 30b, immediately following the discussion about Tisha Be'av) describes various reasons regarding the celebration of Tu Be'av, including the identification of Tisha Be'av as the day that members of different tribes were given permission to marry each other, and other auspicious occasions. However, Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen Me'Lublin in his work *Pri Tzadik* (volume 5) notes that there is another key allusion to the special nature of Tu Be'av contained in the Mishnah in Ta'anit (26b). The Mishnah records that the two greatest Yamim Tovim (days of celebration) on the Jewish calendar are Tu Be'av and Yom Kippur. After describing the festivities of these two days, the Mishnah quotes the verse from Shir Hashirim (3:11): . The Mishnah then expounds upon the latter part of this verse: – the day of his marriage: this is the day that the Torah was given. Rashi explains that the day of marriage is a reference to Yom Kippur, the day that the luchot shniot (second set of Tablets) were given to the Jewish people. The Mishnah concludes with an exposition upon the second half of this concluding phrase – the day of happiness of his heart: this is the day of the future building of the next Holy Temple. The *Pri Tzadik* notes that based on the sequence of the Mishnah, the day of "happiness of his heart" must be a reference to the holiday of Tu Be'av (see also *Maharsha ad*

loc, who writes similarly), on which day he concludes that the Holy Temple will be re-built in the future!

After the mourning of the Temple has been observed in all of its intensity and has elicited an appreciation of the grandeur that we seek to re-experience through the re-building of the Holy Temple, we are prepared not only for the comfort of Shabbos Nachamu but for a “change of 47 mindset” from mourning to celebration, reflected in the celebration of Tu Be’av, heralding the future building of the Holy Temple. May we all witness the full and ultimate realization of this celebration, when even the day of Tisha Be’av itself shall be transformed into a day of jubilation upon the building of the third Beit Hamikdash, may it happen speedily in our time.

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Menachem Av 8, 5771

Thoughts on Tisha B'Av

Rabbi Jay Kelman

One does not have to look very hard to find sources within our tradition that allow, encourage, or even demand that we “hate” others. While the mitzvah to love our neighbor as ourselves is, according to Rabbi Akiva, the fundamental principle of the Torah, many restrict our neighbour, re’acha, to re’acha bmitzvot, our neighbour in mitzvot, excluding those are not observant.

The Shulchan Aruch codifies laws regarding sinners, including admonitions against giving certain sinners charity and the opinion that, under certain circumstances, certain severe sinners should be thrown into a pit and be left to die. The Rambam pulls no punches in ruling how sinners are to be treated. And sinners in the eyes of the Rambam include those observant Jews who reject one of what he considers to be a principle of faith. Thus, a wonderful person who meticulously observes the mitzvot but who believes, as the simple reading of the Torah implies, that G-d has a body, loses his share in the world to come and is to be despised.

It is also true that one can marshal other sources with a more “liberal” approach, which extend a hand to the less observant; on most contentious issues sources can be found on either side of the debate. Additionally many of our greatest scholars have “reinterpreted” many of these “harsh” sources or explained why for a variety of reasons they no longer apply in the open societies in which we live.

Yet to deny that hatred is at least part of our tradition – even if we may not use it in practice – would be a distortion. And that is even before we talk about such commands to wipe out Amalek, to destroy the seven nations or the killings that seem so prevalent in the early prophets.

It is not hatred per se that bothered the Rabbis but Sinnat Chinam usually translated as baseless hatred or hating for no reason or a very poor reason. The word chinam literally means free, for nothing, as in a guardian who is not paid for his services and thus bears no responsibility if the object is lost or stolen. Sinnat chinam would then imply a hatred that comes freely, where one does not take responsibility for one’s action. One may say something without thinking about what feelings and pain it may evoke in others. One acts without thinking of the consequences as if one is free to do as one pleases, period. Focusing on oneself primarily means that our concern for others is minimized.

But sinnat chinam can also mean hatred without a purpose. Those sources in our tradition that mandate hate do so because of the belief that such hatred would actually accomplish something, making society better despite its rough medicine. By destroying Amalek and his many current followers we destroy evil, and by throwing evildoers into a pit we remove those who might entice others to sin. Imagine if every person caught driving while intoxicated was sentenced to death – it might be harsh and inappropriate but I guarantee you that within a month, almost no one would drive drunk, saving many more lives.

Our rabbis did not advocate “hatred” unless it would in the end prove to be constructive. Tragically by the time of the second commonwealth this was no longer true. Hatred, even if there was a good reason for it, produced little except more hatred. Tragically this cycle of hatred has continued throughout Jewish history. Great rabbis have been involved in great debates that with the perspective of history seem pointless. There were good reasons for these debates and the rabbinic and lay leadership was doing what they felt was necessary for the Jewish people and our way of life. But it seems to me at least that these arguments produced little and those energies would have brought greater benefit had they been employed elsewhere. What was gained by the Emden-Eibysetz controversy except for the lowered stature of the rabbinate; were the fierce debates – and that is an understatement- over the founding of Chasidut productive? What positives for the Jewish people have come out of the denominational wars of today?

It is not enough to quote halachic sources allowing one to fight with others. Nor is having a good reason for causing controversy a strong foundation. One must ask oneself if such debate will truly benefit the Jewish people. No doubt the answer is often difficult but the last 2,000 years has taught us the likely answer. And while my analysis may be wrong if I am wrong I would prefer to err on the side of peace. Because if we err on the side of controversy we run the risk of perpetuating sinnat chinam.

Rav Kuk famously said that the third Temple will be rebuilt when we are routinely practice ahavat chinam. We look forward to the day when our interactions with others are those that will be productive and benefit the entire Jewish people. May that day come soon.

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