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To: parsha@groups.io
From: Chaim Shulman
<cshulman@gmail.com>
& Allen Klein
<allen.klein@gmail.com>

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON DEVARIM – CHAZON – TISHA B'AV - 5784

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Tisha B'Av 5784: The Root And Message Of Jewish Suffering

By Rabbi Reuven Taragin - 5 Av 5784 – August 8, 2024
This year's Tisha B'Av will be different from past years. Our mourning usually begins slowly with the Three Weeks and culminates with Tisha B'Av. This year, it began with full intensity ten months ago and has continued unabated. Our mourning is also of a different type. We generally associate the mourning of Tisha B'Av with the *Churban* (destruction) of the *Beit HaMikdash*. This year, we have been mourning the terrible loss of life and crying for Jews suffering both in Israel and around the world. We have been mourning for the over 1,000 victims of the brutal and dehumanizing massacre of October 7 and the hundreds of soldiers killed since then. We have been crying for the over 100 still held hostage, for the hundreds wounded, for the families torn apart in so many ways by the war, and for the Jews attacked, harassed, and demonized around the world.

How should we transition from the mourning of the past ten months to the mourning of Tisha B'Av? What relationship, if any, exists between our suffering and the *Churban HaMikdash*?

The Duality of Tisha B'Av The answer lies in appreciating the full breadth of our Tisha B'Av mourning and reflection. Though Tisha B'Av commemorates the *Churban*, our mourning extends beyond it. Most of Tisha B'Av's *kinot* are not about the *Beit HaMikdash*. They are about Jewish suffering – at the time of the *Churban* and throughout the centuries since. For example, the *kinot* relate to the ten martyrs who were killed almost a century after the *Churban*, as well as the victims of the Crusades and the Holocaust millennia later. This year, many of us will add a *kinah* for those killed on and since October 7. (One such *kinah* was written by Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon at the behest of World Mizrahi.) The *kinot* express anguish not only over death but for other types of suffering as well. For example, we cry for the son and daughter of Rabbi Yishmael, who were sold as slaves, as well as the *sefarim* burned in France.

Eicha Sets the Tone The *perakim* of *Megillat Eicha*, the first *kinot* written after the *Churban*, provide the answer. Though Yirmiyahu HaNavi wrote *Eicha* in response to the *Churban HaMikdash*, the theme of his lamentations is Jewish suffering. *Eicha* seeks to understand Yerushalayim's suffering and isolation. It begins by asking how a city once full of people became so empty and lonely. How was a people once respected among the nations abandoned by her friends to the point that no one consoled her or even cared about her suffering? Though inspired by the *Churban HaMikdash*, *Megillat Eicha* focuses on the terrible suffering and abandonment that accompanied it. The continued historical development of the Tisha B'Av *kinot* builds off this model, reflecting not just upon the *Churban* but on all types of Jewish suffering. *Eicha* describes Jewish suffering at the time of the *Churban*; later *kinot* detail similar suffering throughout the ages. With this new understanding of the focus of Tisha B'Av mourning, we must ask: Why was the date of the *Churban HaMikdash* chosen as the time to mourn and cry for all types of suffering?

The Connection Between Suffering and the Churban All of our nation's suffering is rooted in the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*. More precisely, our suffering is rooted in what the destruction reflects – distance between us and Hashem. Our sins distance us from Hashem, and Hashem from us. Because the *Beit HaMikdash* symbolizes our relationship with Hashem when our sins fracture this relationship, the *Beit HaMikdash* becomes a meaningless shell that no longer represents a meaningful relationship and is destroyed. The *Churban HaMikdash* reflects the distance between us and Hashem. This distance is also why we suffer. Not only does Hashem not intervene to protect us, but He also *causes* us to suffer. Our suffering at the hands of other nations is

punishment for our sins and, on a deeper level, reflective of the problems between us and Hashem. Hashem causes others to reject us in order to keep us from “moving on” through assimilation. We have no choice but to return to and improve our relationship with Him.

Peace Depends on Peace The connection between our suffering and the *Churban* is made by Rashi and other commentaries on the Gemara in *Rosh Hashana* (18b). The Gemara, based on the *pesukim* in *Zechariah* (8:19), explains that our fast days will turn into days of celebration when there will be “*shalom*.” The *mefarshim* debate whether *shalom* refers to peace with other nations or peace with Hashem (represented by the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*). Rashi and the Ritva mention *both* factors as significant. This is because they saw both types of peace as linked. We will enjoy peace with other nations *only once* we achieve peace with Hashem, as symbolized by the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Until the *Beit HaMikdash* is rebuilt, Hashem ensures that we continue suffering and are continuously attacked, vilified, and hated. If we were not, we would not appreciate how problematic our distance from Hashem is. This is why even our best efforts have not solved the problem of antisemitism. When Jews lived in ghettos, many assumed that we were hated because we lived separately. When Western European countries allowed us entry into general society at the end of the eighteenth century, many Jews hoped that assimilation would gain them acceptance. Sadly, the scourge of antisemitism continued and reared its ugly head in the form of the Dreyfus Affair in Western Europe and riots in Odessa and Kishinev (and over 100 cities) in Eastern Europe. Theodore Hertzl and others realized that assimilation into secular society was not the solution. They hoped that removing the Jewish people from other countries and founding a Jewish state in desolate Palestine would solve the problem. Though they successfully established a state, the state did not solve the problem. Since founding the State of Israel, we have tried to gain acceptance by showing that we are strong enough to defend ourselves and our land and that we will not be driven out. We hoped others would eventually recognize and accept our presence in the Middle East. Five bloody wars showed us that this approach would not work, and we turned to a peace process that included giving away precious land and allowing our enemies to return and occupy it. Sadly, this attempt was also unsuccessful, as the peace process was met with continued hostility and violence. The fast of Tisha B’Av reminds us why this is so. We choose the date of the *Churban Beit HaMikdash* as the day to mourn for all our people’s suffering throughout the ages because our suffering is rooted in that *Churban*. Until we repair our relationship with Hashem, we will continue to find peace elusive. We should continue seeking it, but we must remember that ultimate peace hinges on earning peace between us and Hashem.

Transitioning to Tisha B’Av 5784 Sadly, we come to Tisha B’Av 5784 feeling the acute pain of renewed Jewish suffering. Like other difficult periods since the *Churban*, the past year has reminded us of the dysfunctionality of Jewish life in a world without a *Beit HaMikdash*. Tisha B’Av is the day we are meant to remind ourselves of the real reason for our suffering. The October 7 attack and subsequent struggles are about more than just Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, and antisemitism. They are rooted in the *Churban HaMikdash*. May realizing this inspire us to work on repairing our relationship with Hashem in a way that merits the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash* and, through that, peace for the Jewish people and the world.

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/the-nechama-of-three-and-seven/2013/07/11/>

The Nechama of Three And Seven

By [Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman](#)

5 Av 5773 – July 11, 2013

באב תשעה באב always falls between the *parshiyot* of *Devarim* and *V’etchanan*. This is very appropriate, because in the *parsha* of *Devarim* we read of **הטא המרגלים**, and the gratuitous crying which prompted the Almighty to say that He would one day give us good reason to cry; while the *parsha* of *V’etchanan* which contains within it the passage of **כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים**, which we read on **תשעה באב**— speaks of exile, *teshuvah*, and redemption. And so **תשעה באב** falls between these two *parshiyot* which span the whole cycle of **גאולה** and **חורבן**— beginning with the very root of **חורבן**, at the **הטא המרגלים**, through **גלות** and finally reconciliation and redemption.

באב תשעה באב is also situated between two sets of **הפטרות**: the 3 **הפטרות** of **פרעניות**, which tell of the threatening calamity, culminating in the **הפטרה** of **הזון**; followed by the 7 **הפטרות** of consolation, beginning with **נחמו נחמו עמי**.

These numbers – 3 and 7 – are very opposite. They are numbers, of course, that constantly come up in Judaism: The seven days of the week immediately come to mind, and the three festivals.

Generally it may be said that seven represents a full cycle. Thus seven days complete the cycle of the week, and the full course of a *Yom Tov*; seven days complete a cycle of **טהרה**, as in the **אדומה** and the **שבעה נקיים** of a **נדדה**; and seven times seven completes the cycle of the **עומר**. And there are many other examples.

The number three, on the other hand, represents rootedness. There are three **אבות**, who are the foundation of the Jewish People. A tree is deemed to take root in three days, as reflected in many *halachot*. And the *Mishnah* tells us that the world rests on the three pillars of Torah, *Avodah* and *Gmilit Chasadim*.

Likewise, the *mekubalim* teach that there are seven attributes which define how Hashem created and relates to the world;

these seven, in turn, being rooted in the three attributes of Divine wisdom: **חכמה בינה ודעת**.

R' Moshe Shapiro *shlita*, once pointed out a striking template for this pattern of three and seven in the Torah itself. The Torah describes the land of Israel as: **ארץ נחלי מים עינות ותהומות יוצאים בבקעה ובהר, ארץ חיטה ושעורה וגפן תאנה ורימון ארץ זית שמן ודבש**. Note that there are three sources of water (נחלי מים, עינות ותהומות), which, in turn, produce seven kinds of fruit. And this is a paradigm: Three sources, out of which comes a fullness of seven.

Perhaps we are used to thinking that first we have 3 sad weeks, and then the sad part's over, and we move on to the happy part. But if we understand the significance of the pattern of three and seven, we can gain a clearer perspective: The fullness of the comfort of the **שבעה דנהמתא** is rooted in the **אבילות** of the three weeks that precede it. And, more generally – that the completeness of the **דנהמה** which we ultimately look forward, grows out of our **אבילות** today. As Chazal say – “**כל המתאבל על ירושלים, זוכה ורואה בנחמתה**.”

The three weeks of mourning are the font and origin of the subsequent consolation, because by participating in that mourning and sharing in our people's collective suffering, we root ourselves in its history and join ourselves to its ultimately glorious destiny.

There is a very profound truth here, which needs to be amplified: *Chazal* speak with disdain of someone who is **פורש** *מדרכי ציבור*, a person who separates himself from the Jewish people. As the Rambam writes in the **הלכות תשובה**: “**הפורש מדרכי צבור ואף על פי שלא עבר עבירות אלא נבדל מעדת ישראל ואינו עושה מצות בכללן ולא נכנס בצרתן ולא מתענה בתעניתן אלא הולך בדרכו כאחד מגויי הארץ וכאילו אינו מהן אין לו חלק לעולם הבא**

One who separates himself from the community, even if he does not sin at all, but simply segregates himself from the community of Israel, and does not do *mitzvos* with them, participate in their troubles, or fast in their fast days, but goes his own way like one of the nations of the world, it is as if he is not one of them, and has no share in the world to come.”

Tidbits for

Parashas Devarim • Shabbos Chazon
Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> Thu, Aug 8, 7:03 PM (6 hours ago)

Parashas Devarim • Shabbos Chazon • August 10th • 6 Av 5784

The Nine Days began at shekiya on the evening of Rosh Chodesh Av, Sunday, August 4th. The restrictions of the Three Weeks of course remain in effect (see the recent editions of Tidbits for more information). There is a dispute among the Poskim if one may take a regular hot shower this Friday, August 9th, Erev Shabbos Chazon. Regardless, the shower should be taken as quickly as possible.

As meat may not be consumed during the Nine Days, one may not taste meat foods on Erev Shabbos. In the context of food preparation one may taste the food, but may not swallow it (no berachah is recited in this case).

The haftarah of Chazon Yeshayahu is leined. It describes the nation's sins and the resulting tragic Churban and Galus. Many read it to the tune of Eichah. The Sefer Eretz Tzvi explains that this Shabbos is called Shabbos Chazon, Shabbos of Vision, as Hashem always keeps us in His line of vision. Although suffering may be meted out, we are never abandoned. Rather, divine retribution will ultimately be followed by our redemption. One who customarily uses wine for Havdalah may drink the wine. However, many have the minhag to give it to a boy who is a minor of chinuch age - 6 or 7 years old (it would be preferable if that child does not understand the concept of mourning). Some use beer for havdalah instead.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Wednesday night, August 7th at 9:59 PM EDT. Still, the prevalent minhag is to wait until Motza'ei Tisha B'av (Tuesday night, August 13th) to recite Kiddush Levana. The final opportunity is Sunday night, August 18th.

As the precarious situation in Eretz Yisrael unfortunately continues, each person should increase reciting tehillim and performing other mitzvos as a zechus for the many Acheinu Beis Yisrael in travail and captivity as well as for the soldiers in battle.

Pirkei Avos: Perek 3

Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Bava Basra 46 • Yerushalmi: Challah 9 • Mishnah Yomis: Bava Kama 2:1-2 • Oraysa: Next week is Succah 40a-42a.

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well! Tisha B'av begins this Monday evening, August 12th. Shabbos Nachamu is next Shabbos Parashas Va'eschanan, August 17th.

Devarim: Moshe begins the final month of his life speaking to the Bnei Yisrael • A review - which included a veiled rebuke - of the events of the past forty years includes: Klal Yisrael leaves Sinai • Judges were appointed to assist Moshe • Klal Yisrael reaches Kadesh Barnea • The incident of the Meraglim • The decree that this generation, including Moshe, would not enter the land • Klal Yisrael travels for 40 years • The history of the lands of Ammon and Moav • Sichon and Og are defeated • Reuven and Gad receive their portion East of the Yarden • Moshe encourages Yehoshua

Haftarah: The haftarah of Chazon Yeshayahu is leined (Yeshayah 1:1-27); this is the third and final haftarah of the series of the shalosh d'puranusa. The Navi bemoans the sins and the resulting downfall of the Jewish nation that led to the tragic destruction, all which occurred primarily during The Three Weeks. The haftarah ends with the promise that we will be redeemed through righteous acts.

Parashas Devarim: 105 Pesukim • 2 Prohibitions

1) Do not appoint a judge who is unqualified. 2) Do not deviate from delivering true justice.

Mitzvah Highlight: A judge may not refrain from serving justice even if he fears for his safety. Additionally, one who has relevant information must share it with the judge and not be fearful of an angered litigant.

" ונתקרבוני אלי כלכם " (Devarim 1:22)

Rashi quotes the Midrash that relates that Moshe in his rebuke noted that Klal Yisrael approached Moshe with the idea of sending the Meraglim in a disorganized manner, the youth pushing the elders and the elders shoving the leaders. As the magnitude of the sin of the Meraglim was exceptionally great, why was it important to note this small detail regarding the lack of derech erez?

Rav Yitzchok M'Volozhin zt"l explains that Moshe was adjuring Klal Yisrael not to excuse themselves by saying that their original motivation for sending the Meraglim was noble and virtuous, and only went sour at a later stage. The lack of derech erez from the onset proves that their intentions were less than virtuous from the very beginning. At times it can be difficult to discern the nobility of an action or cause. Often the proof lies in the minor details of how the initiative is being carried out. Similarly, the Baalei Mussar advise that one can confirm that he is being motivated by his yetzer hara if he finds himself acting impulsively and immediately without proper consideration. The lack of decorum should have signaled to the nation to reassess the true lowly motivation behind their actions.

yutorah-in-print-parshat-devarim-5784.pdf

It Could Have Been Different

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

Yirmiyahu begins his dirge about the fall of Yerushalayim with an iconic word. The term "Eichah" had already been employed by both Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayahu HaNavi. As the Midrash comments, Moshe witnessed the rapid growth of a nation of former slaves and expressed his wonder with the term "Eichah": Eichah Esa Livadi Tarchachem Viribchem Umaasechem.

Similarly, Yeshayahu observed our moral freefall during the era of the First Mikdash and also wondered "Eichah": Eichah Haita Lizona Kirya Neemana.

How could a nation chosen by Hashem, awarded His land, and living near His Mikdash, so blatantly betray His will? Against this backdrop Yirmiyahu also begins his sefer with the symbolic word of "Eichah" conveying his own disbelief: Eichah Yashva Badad Ha'Er Rabati Am.

How was it possible that the ominous prophecies had now arrived? The word "Eichah" symbolizes the enigma of Jewish history. As Hashem's people, our national trajectory isn't normal or proportionate to other nations. When we succeed,

we rise meteorically and when we fail, we fall precipitously. Three prophets, at three different stages of history all acknowledged that Jewish history can't be neatly graphed. It is jagged and asymmetrical and can best be described as "Eichah".

Ayeka – Where Are You However, the term "Eichah" doesn't only recall Moshe and Yeshayahu but also evokes Hashem's message to Adam and Chava in Gan Eden. Hashem calls out to Adam and Chava, who had quickly gone into hiding after committing their grievous sin Vayikra Hashem Elo-kim El Haadam Vayomer Lo Ayeka.

Of course, the question of "Ayeka" isn't interrogative, as Hashem clearly knows their whereabouts. The term "Ayeka" poses an existential question: Where are you and who are you after violating your only divine command? What type of life can you possibly envision without Hashem living outside Gan Eden?

By launching his own sefer with the term "Eichah"- which contains the identical letters to "Ayeka- Yirmiyahu poses the same existential question to us: How can we possibly live without a Mikdash, expelled from Yerushalayim and distant from Hashem? Yirmiyahu's "Eichah" echoes with Hashem's "Ayeka". international tragedy. When Jews inhabit Yerushalayim the world below is properly aligned with the world above. Under these ideal conditions the entire world is in a better state, enjoying heightened spiritual consciousness and broad material prosperity.

When we left Yerushalayim the world was thrown into chaos. We were selected to study Hashem's Torah, fulfill His mitzvot and educate an entire planet about Him. When we compromised that mission, the world lost its interface with Hashem and His will. To capture the international scope of the Tisha b'av tragedy Yirmiyahu conjures the expulsion of Adam from Gan Eden. The first fall of Man occurred when Adam and Chava were banished from Gan Eden. The second fall of Man occurred when the chosen people were dispossessed of the land of G-d.

The Garden

Likewise, to highlight the universal scope of the tragedy, Yirmiyahu directly depicts Yerushalayim as a garden: ויחמוס כגן שוכו, שיחת מועדו; שיכח יהוה בציון מועד ושבתי, וינאץ בזעם-אפו מלך וכוהן.

which literally means that Hashem stripped His shelter like a garden. When we left Yerushalayim we didn't just leave our city. We forfeited our opportunity to regain a perfect, Gan Eden-like state and to spread this condition to Mankind. The destruction of Yerushalayim was a universal disaster, not just a national tragedy. Yirmiyahu wasn't the only prophet to comprehend the broader impact of the destruction of the Mikdash. Hoshei'a comments on our moral hypocrisy: כי הסד חפצתי ולא זבח, ודעת אלקים מעלות

By masking our moral failures through empty sacrifices, we violated our covenant with Hashem just like "Adam". Just as

the first man, who was named “Adam” betrayed His covenant with Hashem, we betrayed ours. Our betrayal damaged the world’s fortunes in the same manner that Adam’s failure did. Yirmiyahu’s usage of the term “Eichah”, his comparison of Yerushalayim to a garden, and Hosei’a’s referring to us as “Adam, all emphasize the universal scope of the Tisha b’av tragedy. The day we left Yerushalayim the lights went out on humanity.

The Fall Of Rome

Humanity paid a steep price for its crime of destroying Yerushalayim. In the short-term aftermath of the churban, the superpower responsible for this crime, itself collapsed.

The Day The Lights Went Out

Yirmiyahu inserts his version of “Ayeka” or “Eichah” for an additional reason. The impact of our eviction from Yerushalayim was similar to the fallout of Adam’s expulsion from Gan Eden. Adam’s sentence was announced with the term Ayeka, and, likewise, our own exile was introduced with the term “Eichah”.

The destruction of the Mikdash and the ransacking of Yerushalayim were national calamities. After centuries of religious malfunction Hashem no longer tolerated us in His land. We have spent two millennia recovering from the great fall of Jewish history and it has taken us thousands of years to repair the rupture in our relationship with Hashem.

However, the destruction of the Mikdash was also an A Roman empire, which was built to last a thousand years, crumbled soon after its attack on Yerushalayim. The decline of the Roman empire began in the 3rd century, about a hundred years after its brutal suppression of the Bar Kochba rebellion and, by the year 476, Rome had been conquered by German barbarian. Throughout history the city of Rome was sacked seven times, a small punishment for assaulting the city of G-d and for wrecking the fortunes of an entire planet.

The Dark Ages

In a broader sense, when Yerushalayim was destroyed, humanity sank into a period of close to 1000 years of darkness. During the Dark Ages (which many view as lasting until the 14th century) the world stagnated culturally, scientifically and politically. Suffering the aftershocks of the fall of Yerushalayim, humanity was marred by frequent invasions, political fragmentation, and social upheaval. Humanity only began to recover in the 14th century, experiencing a “Renaissance” of spirit which stimulated close to 600 years of scientific progress, human freedom and economic improvement. Just when history began veering toward Jewish redemption the curse of Tisha B’av slowly lifted.

Plan “B”

Though galus compromised our historical mission it didn’t entirely cancel it. On the day we left Yerushalayim our national mission became transformed. Jewish history shifted into “Plan B”.

Originally, we were meant to enter Israel, empty it of pagan culture, and establish a kingdom of Hashem. As a sovereign nation living in our homeland, we would educate and inspire the world by modeling a life of commitment and covenant. Having failed at this model, we entered a different stage of history and were now assigned a very different version of Jewish mission. This new version would exact a heavy price from our people.

Under the terms of “Plan B” we would now wander through this planet, hosted by a collection of host countries. Our people, however, would never be typical guests. As a people of the book, we would always be far more literate than our surrounding culture. This literacy gap was especially conspicuous in periods when literacy rates barely exceeded 20 % of the population.

Additionally, we lived temperate and financially responsible lifestyles, avoiding overindulgence while investing in family, community, and social welfare. This contributed to our financial stability, even under trying conditions.

Jewish loyalty to one another assured a tight-knit web of Jews around the world. Networks are crucial for business and commercial success.

Unlike other non-indigenous people, we never fully blended in with our host culture. We maintained our own customs, religious ceremonies, dietary laws, and social interactions, all the while marrying within our own people. To our hosts, we always felt very different. We were an intelligent, literate people, living economically sound and prosperous lives, preserving our own identity through cultural insularity.

And, on top of everything else, we also claimed to have a message for humanity. Even in exile we viewed ourselves as a nation sent to inspire the world to moral monotheism. This new “arrangement” of Jewish history or Plan B was combustible. A guest is not expected to succeed more than his host. A guest is expected to blend in with the host. A guest is not expected to provide moral challenges for a host. We were never typical guests.

These elements of Plan B of Jewish history sparked vicious and violent antisemitism. It is morally corrupt to blame a victim for violence. Over the past 10 months our people have suffered this hypocritical moral algebra, being blamed for the horrific pogrom of October 7th. We certainly don’t blame ourselves for antisemitism. Every individual has full freedom to decide whether to resort to violence. However, Plan B of history certainly enflamed hatred which, in turn, incited antisemitism. In a broad sense, and without exempting antisemites of their hateful crimes, we are responsible for Plan B which incited tensions and hatred. Had Plan A remained intact we would have inspired the world from our own sovereign land of Israel. We are slowly crawling our way back to Plan A. It is a long and difficult journey. On Tisha b’av we mourn the shift to Plan B. We also mourn the world which shattered on that day and is still so terribly broken.

from: Rabbi YY Jacobson <rabbiiy-theyeshiva.net reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net date: Aug 8, 2024, 4:17 PM subject: The Arab-Israeli Conflict Is Not Territorial - Essay by Rabbi YY The Arab-Israeli Conflict Is Not Territorial

Why Are We Afraid to Speak Truth?

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

On a Hike

Four Europeans go hiking together, and get frightfully lost.

First they run out of food, and then they run out of water.

"I'm so thirsty," says the Englishman, "I must have tea." "I'm

so thirsty," says the Frenchman, "I must have wine." "I'm so

thirsty," says the German, "I must have beer."

"I'm so thirsty," says the Jew, "I must have diabetes."

Israel Today

Israel today is facing a complex reality, with more varied and serious threats than we've seen before. There is the threat from Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, the PA, and the other enemies of Israel waiting for their moment.

During such times, it is vital that we, the Jewish people, stand firm and united. First and foremost, we must articulate to ourselves—and to the world—the truth about Israel.

Not Even a Foot

In this week's Torah portion (Devarim), Moses, bidding farewell to his nation just weeks before his passing, narrates the experiences of the young nation during their forty years of wandering in the Sinai wilderness, en route to the Holy Land. Their long trek, from Egypt through the Sinai Peninsula, to the Eastern bank of the Jordan, forced them to pass neighboring countries, all of them antagonistic toward the Israelites. Moses records his instructions to the Israelites on how to treat these neighboring nations. His words are both shocking and stunning; their moral power resonates to this very day.

"G-d said to me," Moses recalls (1), "Give the people the following instructions: 'You are passing through the borders of your brothers, the descendants of Esau, who dwell in Saeir [Southeast of Israel]. Although they fear you, you must be very careful. You shall not provoke them, for I will not give you even one foot of their land. As an inheritance to Esau I have given Mount Saeir.'"

Moses continues the instruction: "You shall purchase food from them for money so that you may eat; also water shall you buy from them for money so that you may drink." From Saeir, also known as Edom, the Hebrews continue their journey northward toward the territory of Moab, located at the East of the Dead Sea. This is Moses' message to the Jews once again: "G-d said to me, 'You shall not distress Moab and you shall not provoke war with them. I will not give you their land as an inheritance, since I have already given Ar [the capital of Moab] to Lot's descendants as their heritage."

As the Jews continue their voyage up north toward the country of Ammon, today's Jordan, Moses has this to say to his people: "G-d spoke to me saying... 'You will be coming close to the

Ammonites. You shall not distress them and you shall not provoke them, for I shall not give any of the land of the descendants of Ammon to you as an inheritance; to the descendants of Lot have I given it as an inheritance (2)."

These words, uttered three millennia ago (in the year 1273 BCE), one month before Moses dies, are startling. When the world was still a moral desolate desert, a barbaric pagan society, Jews were barred from taking even a single inch from the territories of Saeir, Moab and Ammon. "I will not give you even one foot of their land," G-d declares to Israel. Not only can you not build homes on their territory, you mustn't even stand on their soil without permission. You can't enjoy a falafel without their consent. Why? Because their land does not belong to you, the Israelites; it belongs to another nation. Do not lay a finger on that which is not yours.

The Eternal Lesson

Why does the Torah record these apparently insignificant instructions of Moses concerning the Jewish encounter with the three countries of Saeir, Moab and Ammon (and Moses is sharing this with them long after the actual events happened)? What historical relevance is there in this lengthy and detailed account? Especially considering that the Torah is far more a book of moral instruction than a work of historical data. What moral message does this tale convey?

The answer is clear. The Torah is communicating to us the circumstances surrounding the ultimate Israelite conquest and settlement of their homeland, Eretz Israel, so that when the United Nations, the White House, the International Court of Justice, the European Union, CNN, the New York Times, the Universities of the US and Europe, the State Department, and all of the Arab countries will decry Israel as an apartheid state, occupying Palestinian soil and controlling land annexed from another nation, the Jewish people will be able to open their own constitution, the Torah, and present its unwavering message:

"Listen ye, defenders of morality and human rights! Do not preach to us about stolen land. At a time when most tribes and nations were slaughtering their very own children to pagan gods (3); in a milieu when parents regularly practiced infanticide, murdering their weak newborn children; in an era when cannibalism was a routine diet, and most people lacked the slightest idea about the very notion of right and wrong -- Jewish children growing up in a desert were taught that they could not touch that which did not belong to them. They could not step foot into a territory that was not theirs.

"When your great-great grandparents were still entrenched in barbaric pagan rites, our children were studying G-d's instruction to cultivate absolute respect for the property and nationhood of others.

"This was to teach the Jewish people that the land that they were instructed to settle was theirs for eternity."

The very same G-d who instructed them not to set foot on foreign soil, granted the Land of Israel – the entire territory

from the Jordanian River to the Mediterranean Sea – as His gift to the Jewish people. It is not stolen land; it is the eternal heritage of the Jewish people.

Israel became a nation in 1313 BCE, 2,000 years before the birth of Islam. Forty years later, in 1273 BCE, the Jews conquered Eretz Israel and enjoyed dominion over the land for a thousand years. Even after the Babylonians and then the Romans put an end to the Jewish sovereignty, Jews continued to reside there throughout all of their history. The Jews have had a continuous presence in the land of Israel for the past 3,300 years.

"You Are Thieves"

The great 11th-century French biblical commentator, Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yitzchaki), one of the greatest sages in the history of the Jewish people, asks the following question in his commentary on the opening verse of Genesis. If the Hebrew Bible is a book of Jewish law, why does it begin with the story of creation, and the entire book of Genesis, and not proceed immediately to the the first mitzvah given to the Jews in the book of Exodus?

Rashi, who wrote these words as Christian crusaders were attempting to purge the land from Muslim rule, presents an incredible answer. One day in the future, Rashi says, the nations of the world will turn to the Jewish people and declare, "You are thieves! You have stolen the land of Israel from non-Jewish tribes."

What ought to be the appropriate Jewish response? To answer this question, the Hebrew Bible commences its text with the story of creation of the universe, and the entire story of Genesis, in order to grant the Jew the best and truest answer to the accusation that he is a bandit. The entire universe, the Bible is saying, belongs to G-d. He created it. Every piece of land belongs to Him, and He chose to give the Land of Israel to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants. To call Israel occupiers is akin to calling France occupiers of Paris or Britain occupiers of London.

The Bible -- a book embraced by 1.5 billion Muslims and 2.5 billion Christians as the word of G-d -- states clearly hundreds of times that the entire country, including the West Bank and Jerusalem, is G-d's eternal gift to the Jewish people. In fact, our ownership of Israel surpasses that of any other nation's ownership of its country. Every other nation in the world bases its claim to its land on conquest. A people came, conquered the indigenous people, took the land, settled it, and called it by a new name.

"Might makes right" is the historical claim of almost all nations in history. With one exception: Israel, Eretz Israel. This country belongs to the Jewish people because, as the Bible states hundreds of times, G-d gave it to them as their eternal heritage. It is the most moral claim by every definition of morality.

The Truth About the Refugees

Harvard University professor Ruth Wisse wrote these wise words in The Wall Street Journal (June 16, 2003):

"Unfortunately, the Arab war against Israel is no more a territorial conflict than was al Qaeda's strike against America, and it can no more be resolved by the 'road map' than anti-Americanism could be appeased by ceding part of the U.S. to an Islamist enclave. From the moment in 1947 when Jewish leaders accepted and Arab rulers rejected the U.N. partition plan of Palestine, the Arab-Israeli conflict bore no further likeness to conventional territorial struggles. Arab rulers defied the U.N. charter by denying the legitimacy of a member state. Arab countries refused to acknowledge the existence of a single Jewish land. Arab rulers did not object to Israel because it rendered the Palestinians homeless. Rather, they ensured that the Palestinians should remain homeless so that they could organize their politics around opposition to Israel.

"At any point during the past 55 years, Arab governments could have helped the Palestinian Arabs settle down to a decent life. They could have created the infrastructure of an autonomous Palestine on the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza territory that Egypt controlled until 1967, or encouraged the resettlement of Palestinians in Jordan, which constitutes the lion's share of the original mandate of Palestine. Rather than fund the Palestine Liberation Organization to foment terror against Israel they could have endowed Palestinian schools of architecture, engineering, medicine and law. What Israel did for its refugees from Arab lands, Arabs could have done much more sumptuously for the Palestinians displaced by the same conflict. Instead, Arab rulers cultivated generations of refugees in order to justify their ongoing campaign against the 'usurper.'"

Every decent human heart goes out to the pain of innocent Arab children, women and men who grew up in impoverished refugee camps. Their suffering should evoke the compassion of all moral men. But let us be clear on the matter: Their suffering has absolutely nothing to do with Israel. Their profound agony is the result of the Arab and Palestinian leaders who have in a most cynical way used them as weapons in their bloody battle against Israel, robbing them of any prospect of a brighter future.

This abuse of the Arab refugees by their leaders began back in 1948. For the most part, the refugees were encouraged by Arab leaders to leave Israel, promising to purge the land of Jews. Sixty-eight percent left their homes without ever seeing an Israeli soldier.

Out of the 100 million refugees after World War II, theirs is the only refugee group in the world that was not absorbed or integrated into their own peoples' lands. Jewish refugees which numbered the same amount as Palestinian refugees were completely absorbed into Israel, a country no larger than the state of New Jersey. Yet the Arab refugees were intentionally not absorbed or integrated into the Arab lands to which they fled, despite the vast Arab territory. Why? Because cynical

Arab leaders realized that the true value of the refugees was not as Arab brothers but as pawns to be used against Israel.

What About the Palestinian People?

How about the ingrained notion that the Palestinians are fighting for their ancient homeland annexed by the Jews? The truth about this matter has been so deliberately obscured that even raising the issue seems strange to many people.

Let us reflect on some undisputed historical facts. (Please read till the end and reflect on these facts before you dismiss them instinctively). In the 1967 war, did Israel annex territory from a Palestinian nation? No. Not a single inch. Israel captured the West Bank and Eastern Jerusalem from Jordan's King Hussein and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, after they planned to destroy the Jewish State. It was only following the Six-day War in 1967 that Arab refugees living in these territories began identifying themselves as part of a "Palestinian people."

One must wonder why these Palestinians suddenly discovered a national identity after Israel won the war, but not during the "Jordanian occupation"?

If the people you mistakenly call 'Palestinians' are anything but generic Arabs collected from all over – or thrown out of -- the Arab world, if they really have a genuine ethnic identity that gives them right for self-determination, why did they never try to become independent until Arabs suffered their devastating defeat in the Six Day War?

Here are the facts, and you can check them out. There has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians. Palestinians are regular Arabs, indistinguishable from Jordanians, Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Egyptians, etc., who have all lived for hundreds of years under Turkish rule, and then, after World War I, under British rule. At that time even Jews living in the Holy Land were called "Palestinians." There is no language known as Palestinian. There is no distinct Palestinian culture. There is no such an entity as a "Palestinian people."

The name "Palestine" was created in the second century after the Romans committed genocide against the Jews, burnt the Temple and declared that the land of Israel would be no more. From then on, the Romans promised, it would be known as Palestine. The name was derived from the Philistines, a Goliathian people conquered by the Jews centuries earlier. It was a way for the Romans to add insult to injury. (They also tried to change the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina, but that had even less staying power.)

The present conflict between Israel and the Arabs has absolutely nothing to do with any occupation. In 1967, when there was not one Jewish settlement and no occupation, five Arab countries -- Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon joined by Saudi Arabia -- contrived a plan to annihilate Israel and "drive the Jews into the sea." Israel fought back and won the war -- and the territories from which it was attacked. Keep in mind that in 1967 the Arabs controlled 99.9 percent of the Middle East lands. Israel represented less than one-tenth of 1

percent of the land mass. But even that was too much for the Arabs. They wanted it all. No matter how many land concessions the Israelis make, it will never be enough. During the summer of 2000 at Camp David, Yasser Arafat was offered by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak 98 percent of the "occupied territories" and a first time ever Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem. Arafat rejected the Israeli offer and initiated three years of horrific bloodshed in Israel. Then in 2005, Israel evacuated every last Jew from Gaza, giving away Gaza exclusively to the Arabs. The result? Gaza became Chamastan, and Israel has not enjoyed a day of peace coming from Gaza. October 7th was the 'gift' Hamas gave to Israel for returning Gaza to them.

The History of the Palestinians

In Hal Lindsey's book "Everlasting Hatred: The Roots of Jihad," he traces the history of the people now being called the "Palestinians." I want to quote a few critical paragraphs.

"In the 7th century, the Muslims took control of Palestine for the first time. From 635 CE until 1917, the Muslims ruled it, with only a few interruptions by the European Crusaders. During that span of time, the land was reduced to total desolation. Many people who traveled the land in the 19th century remarked on the fact that Palestine was as desolate as the moon and very few people lived there.

"In 1867, Mark Twain remarked about his visit to the Holy Land in his book, 'The Innocents Abroad.' He lamented: 'Stirring scenes occur in the valley [of Jezreel] no more. There is not a single village throughout its whole extent – not for 30 miles in either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride 10 miles hereabouts and not see 10 human beings.' "Twain described the country as 'A desolate country whose soil is rich enough but is given over wholly to weeds. A silent, mournful expanse. We never saw a human being on the whole route. There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country.'

"By all eyewitness accounts of that era, Palestine was a total desolation. There were virtually no trees and no people. Because of lack of trees, the weather changed and it rarely ever rained. The irrigation systems of the once fertile valleys were all destroyed, rendering most areas into malaria-ridden swamps. The terraces of the mountainsides were torn down, causing terrible erosion that left only barren rocks. This was the condition of Palestine by the beginning of the 19th century. "It was at this time that Jews began to flee severe persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe. In the mid-1800s, some Jews came to Palestine and, with the generous aid of some successful Jews, began to buy property from Muslim Ottoman Turks. The Muslims thought the land was worthless anyway, so they sold it to the 'dumb Jews' for extremely inflated prices. "To everyone's amazement, the Jews were very successful at reclaiming the land. Many of them died from malaria and the

rigorous life the work demanded, but they performed an agricultural miracle that made the land very productive again. As a result of their success, poor migrant workers from the surrounding Muslim countries began to flood in to work for the Jews. The Jews literally became victims of their own success – almost all of the people calling themselves 'Palestinians' today are the descendants of those migrant workers.

"When the Hashemite Tribe, who were rulers over Mecca and Medina for centuries, were driven out by the Saudis, the British gave them control over the vastly greater numbers of 'migrant workers' in Trans Jordan. The British said this would be, in effect, "The State of Palestine." Instead, the Hashemites, who make up only about 20 percent of the population, turned it into their own kingdom and called it the Kingdom of Jordan.

"When the Jordanians and Egyptians controlled the so-called West Bank and the Gaza Strip for 19 years (1948 to 1967), there was never a thought of giving the disorganized mass of 'migrant workers' a state. Why? Because they knew there were no cohesive, homogeneous people known as 'Palestinians.'

"The current efforts of Jordan and Egypt and all the rest of the Muslim Middle East nations to give these same people a state is clearly a ploy to get a foothold inside Israel. It is a strategic accommodation to establish a base from which the final assault against Israel can be made. What they couldn't do militarily is now being facilitated through the United Nations and the E.U. "Muslims will never accept a permanent presence of infidels in what they claim is sacred Islamic soil. Especially Jewish infidels, for which the Koran reserves its most vehement condemnations. In their minds, the Koran and Allah will not let them accept Jews in what they view as their third holiest site."

The Best Kept Secret

The early founding fathers of modern Israel, even if they were not religious, were deeply steeped in the realization of the Jewish Biblical connection to the land. David Ben Gurion, for example, had an appreciation of the necessity of anchoring a modern, even secular, Israeli state in biblical and Jewish tradition.

Yet, tragically, this has changed dramatically in recent years. You will rarely, if ever, hear an Israeli leader state the truest and most moral justification for a Jewish presence in the Holy Land: G-d's gift to the Jewish people. I am sure our leaders are trying to do the best for their country, but the practical consequences of this policy are counterproductive.

The Arabs are protesting against Israel, saying, "You have annexed our land; you are building settlements on our soil; you are intruding into our territories." And Israel routinely responds: "Yes, you have the right to create on these territories a Palestinian state, but we have a right for self-defense." The world, we know, has embraced the Arab point of view. Condemnation of Israel as an apartheid state has become the norm.

The world is sympathetic to the Arab propaganda against Israel because Israel itself has embraced the Arab version of "truth." Israel never refuted the core Arab claim that the territories captured in the 1967 war constitute ancient Palestinian land. Israel only states, that notwithstanding the validity of the Arab claim, she has a right for self-defense. So the world says: "OK, so defend yourself in your territories, not in theirs."

This remains Israel's most profound diplomatic and strategic error. In many of its actions, it treats the 1967 territories as though they belonged to Israel; yet in its words, Israel agrees to the Arab claim that this is Palestinian land. So the world is confused: The Arab position is clear to all; the Israeli position is shrouded in mystery. Do they believe this land belongs to them or not? If yes, let them stop saying that they consent to create a Palestinian State there. If not, why do they still maintain a presence there? The Arabs are not confused. Israel is.

And when Jews are confused about who they are and what they believe in, the world resents them. "You are the nation who heard G-d speak at Sinai; if you guys can't speak moral truth, you must be up to something really devilish." As long as the status of the entire country remains ambiguous, the terror campaign against Israel will, Heaven forbid, continue. The Arabs will view Israel's moral and political ambiguity as a green light to proceed with their aspiration to "liberate all of Palestine from the Zionist entity." And the world will sympathize with this craving for statehood and freedom. Israel must stand up and put an end to the ambivalence around Jewish ownership of the land.

Israel must state clearly that "There will be no more negotiations on even a single inch of the land of Israel. We have attempted to negotiate land for peace with our neighbors; we have offered them 98 percent of the territories and an independent state side-by-side with our state. Yet they have reciprocated by sending suicide bombers to our pizza shops, cafés, supermarkets, schools, and private homes. They have blown to pieces hundreds of innocent Jewish men and women. They have sent thousands of rockets and aim daily to murder as many Jews as possible. They have murdered, raped, burned thousands of Jews, and taken hundreds into captivity. They have vowed to do this again and again. One cannot give land to leaders who teach their followers to put children into ovens, behead women while raping them, play soccer with Jewish skulls, and who inculcate in their children's hearts, from infancy onward, with venomous hatred toward the people of Israel."

Israel should allow anybody who wishes to depart for another country to do so. There are 22 Arab countries in the Middle East, and one tiny Jewish country, the size of New Jersey. Israel must reclaim its permanent sovereignty over all of the territories and crush every vestige of terror. Anyone who wants to live as a guest in the Jewish eternal homeland, great. But whoever wants to murder Jews --would be dealt with in the

strongest way. Jews should be encouraged to live in their entire homeland. This will save not only countless Jewish lives but also scores of Arab lives. It will once and for all purge the region from continuous bloodshed and terror. This is not occupied territory. It is the land of Israel, given by G-d to the Jewish people.

Let's set the record clear: This is Jewish land, not Arab land. Let all Jews and people of moral standing unite and encourage Israel to bring life and peace to all good people in the region, Jew and Arab alike. (4)

Footnotes:

1) Deuteronomy chapter 2:2-6. All of the subsequent quotes are from this chapter. 2) Later on, Moses relates the story of the two kingdoms of Sichon and Og, located on the Eastern bank of the Jordan who, in response to Israel's request for peace, declared war against Israel and were subsequently wiped out. 3) When paganism ruled, it was common to see human beings sacrificed to pagan gods. Child sacrifices were common rituals of the Canaanite Baal worshipers in ancient times. Moses warned the Jews a number of times that if they would leave the Canaanite tribes in their midst, they might begin to emulate their cruel and barbaric pagan practices. This indeed transpired. It was this practice of many Jews that caused the prophet Elijah, with G-d's approval, to condemn and destroy 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:6-40). Near Mount Carmel on the site of the ancient city of Meggido, archaeologists have discovered the remains of infants who, under the corrupt rule of the Israelite King Ahab and Queen Jezebel in the ninth century B.C.E., had been sacrificed in a temple of Ashtoreth, the goddess of Baal. In the eighth century B.C. the corrupt King Ahaz of ancient Israel sacrificed (by burning) his own son to the Canaanite god Molech (2 Kings 16:3). Not too long after Ahaz, another immoral monarch of Israel, King Manasseh, sacrificed his son (also by burning) in the Valley of Hinnon (2 Kings 21:6). And during the latter part of the seventh century B.C., the prophet Jeremiah condemned numerous Israelites for sacrificing "their sons and daughters in the fire" (Jeremiah 7:3 1). 4) This essay is based on a talk delivered by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, 4 Av 5740, July 17, 1980 (published in Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 3 pp. 704-706.) The Rebbe's opposition to ceding land for peace was not based on his belief that the sanctity of the land is more important than life. To the contrary, he often said—quoting Jewish law (Orach Chaim 329)—that this is exactly what will distance peace. The more Israel gives up land, the more bloodshed and loss of life on both sides. The enemy uses all autonomy to increase terror against Israel and simply brings the enemy closer to Israel. If anyone ever doubted the accuracy of the Rebbe's predictions, just study the case of Gaza or ANY other period when Israel gave up sovereignty over any piece of land, i.e. the Oslo Accords.

from: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com> date: Aug 8, 2024, 8:26 PM subject: Potomac Torah Study Center: Devrei Torah for Shabbat Devarim 5784

Hamas continues to manipulate the media while pretending to negotiate with Israel. Hersh Polin Goldberg, cousin of very close friends of ours and a U.S. citizen, remains a captive. Concerns are increasing that fewer than half of the hostages may still be alive. We continue our prayers for the hostages and all our people stuck in Gaza. May Hashem enable us and our people in Israel to wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by Hezbollah and other anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully.

We always read parshat Devarim on the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av. Moshe reviews significant lessons from Jewish history for the new generation and gives them a pep talk as they stand where their parents did thirty-eight years earlier – by Jericho, a distance of only a walk of eleven days from Egypt, at the entry point to Israel. The name of this Shabbat is Shabbat Chazon, the Shabbat of the Vision, based on the opening verse of Isaiah, his vision of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. The vision comes true, and we read the result on Tisha B'Av, with Jeremiah's Eicha (Lamentations), the horribly graphic and bitter central reading on this most unhappy day in the calendar. In retrospect, after considering the entire period in the Midbar, Moshe realizes his error and the reason why he cannot enter the land with the new generation. There is no mention of hitting a rock. In Moshe's story, we see references back to Gan Eden and realize that the generation of the Exodus does not learn from man's errors. Adam and Chava Rishon disobey God's one rule – that they must not eat from Hashem's one special tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As Rabbi David Fohrman and his scholars at alephbeta.org explain, only God has the right to determine what is good and what is evil in the world that He creates for humans. The punishment for disobeying God's commandment is death and exile. Death – once eating from that tree, humans lose immortality – some day they will all die. Also, God bans humans from Gan Eden – exile. Isaiah warns that by disobeying Hashem's mitzvot, especially in mistreating fellow humans, Jerusalem and Judah are on a path that will bring them to death and exile (to Babylon). The generation of the Exodus has an opportunity to enter the land thirty-eight years earlier, but they sin rather than accepting God's gift. The first generation sees Hashem bring a series of plagues to Egypt and save B'Nai Yisrael from the effects. They see God free them from slavery to Paro, split the Sea of Reeds for them, and then destroy the Egyptian horses, chariots, and army. The people understand God's power. When Hashem brings manna from the sky six nights a week and quail when they want meat, the people should understand that Hashem loves them and takes care of them, even when they cannot see Him in action.

Standing by Jericho thirty-eight years earlier, after sending ten of the greatest men of their generation to visit the land, the Meraglim have a majority and a minority report. Calev and Yehoshua both say that Hashem will fight for us and enable us to defeat the Canaanite tribes, as He defeats other nations during their years in the Midbar. However, the other eight meraglim exaggerate the dangers and scare the people. Rather than accepting Hashem's loving gift of a very special land, the people choose to go back to Egypt, where they had loved the variety of food and felt safe, even as slaves. The adults at the time of the Exodus all die in the desert, and only their children "who do not know good and evil" (accept that Hashem sets the rules) will enter the land. Near the end of his life, Moshe realizes that he did not adequately prepare the first generation to realize Hashem's love – and that failing is why he could not enter the land.

With Tisha B'Av, Rabbi Yehoshua Singer reminds us that we do not mourn the past. Rather, we mourn that we still do not have a Temple Mount and a Beit HaMikdash, and we still cannot bring back the system of korbanot. Hashem shows His mercy by limiting the destruction to inanimate items (the Temple and vessels) and keeping alive enough of our people for them to do teshuvah so later B'Nai Yisrael can return to Israel and Jerusalem. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, observes that Judaism is a religion of both love and justice. Tzedek is a combination of justice and compassion. To merit the most from Hashem, we must focus on justice and compassion. Tisha B'Av reminds us that sinat chinam, senseless hatred, is the primary reason for the destruction of the Temple. The more we can focus our lives on justice, compassion, and active works to make the world a better place for widows, orphans, and immigrants – the most disadvantaged members of our society – the sooner we shall be worthy of rebuilding the Temple. May this time come speedily, hopefully in our lifetimes.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan Fisher

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during and since the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

from: OU Israel <tt@ouisrael.org> reply-to: tt@ouisrael.org
date: Aug 8, 2024, 12:17 PM subject: Torah Tidbits - Parshat Devarim - Issue 1575

From the Desk of **Rabbi Moshe Hauer** Ou Executive Vice President

Anchoring Our Future in Our Past

The Jewish People's future must be based firmly on a deep respect for our past, on the tradition of values that have

characterized our people since Avraham and Sarah and since we stood as a nation at Sinai. This point is underscored every year, on the Shabbos before Tisha b'Av, when we read about the sin of the spies, the story of the original Tisha b'Av that undermined our permanent connection to Eretz Yisrael. As told in the Parshat Devarim version, the story began on the initiative of the Jewish people, and from the very first words of that account, the dye is cast and our critical failFor more info see [httping](http://www.alephbeta.org) is highlighted (Devarim 1:22): "Then all of you approached me and said, "Let us send agents ahead to explore the land for us...."

Rashi notes the contrast between the approach as described here – a low point for the Jewish people - in contrast to a description we will read next week that describes the Jewish people in a far better place, at the feet of Har Sinai. Here it describes "all of you" approaching, in a disorganized crowd, in conFor more info see [http](http://www.alephbeta.org)trast to what it describes there (Devarim 5:20): "You approached me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders." As Rashi explains, based on the Sifrei: "That approach to me was a fitting one — young people showing respect to their elders, letting these precede them, and the elders showing respect to the heads of the tribes that should precede them. Here, however, you approached me in a crowd, the young pushing aside their elders, the elders pushing aside the heads."

At the core of our failure in initiating the mission of the spies was our lack of respect for the continuity of values within Klal Yisrael, reflected in the absence of genuine deference to our parents and leaders and their values. Honoring parents is not only an expression of gratitude and decency; it serves as the foundation of our Mesorah, the tradition of both our knowledge and values. It is when we abandon that genuine respect that we lose our connection to that which anchors us, to the morasha kehillat Yaakov, the ultimate heritage of our nation, the Torah given to us at Sinai. Along with that, we similarly undermine the other element referred to as our morasha, our connection to our homeland,

Eretz Yisrael. Ramban makes this clear in his commentary to the original version of the story of the spies (Bamidbar 14:17): "Moshe did not pray [for mercy] here based on the merit of the patriarchs, and [therefore] he did not mention Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov at all in this prayer. The reason [for not mentioning them] was because the Land was given to the patriarchs, and it is from them that they were to inherit it, but they rebelled against their ancestors, and did not want the gift which the patriarchs desired very much, so how could he say now, "Remember AvraFor more info see [http](http://www.alephbeta.org)pham, Yitzchak, and Yisrael, Thy servants, to whom You did swear by Your own self, ... and all this Land that I have spoken of will I give to your seed, (Shemos 32:13), since they were saying: "We do not want this gift!"

During this month of "Av", we need to reset our own values such that they affirm and reflect that which was cherished and

valued by our “Avos”, reestablishing in both heart and mind our firm bond with our twin legacies of Torah and Eretz Yisrael.

from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>
date: Aug 8, 2024, 3:43 AM subject: **Rav Kook on Tisha**

B'Av: Seeing Jerusalem in its Joy

Tisha B'Av: Seeing Jerusalem in its Joy

The Sages taught in Ta'anit 30b:

כל המתאבל על ירושלים — זוכה ורואה בשמחה (תענית ל:)

“All who mourn the destruction of Jerusalem will merit to see it in its joy.”

At first glance, this statement seems peculiar. Why did the Sages say that those who mourn Jerusalem’s destruction will merit seeing it be-simchata - “in its joy”? Would it not be more logical to say that they will merit seeing Jerusalem be-vinyana — when the city will be restored and rebuilt? After all, our primary hope and prayer is for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Rav Kook offered an insightful interpretation for this statement. The Sages knew that a time would come when Jerusalem would be rebuilt, and everyone alive at that time would witness its physical reconstruction. This includes even those who did not mourn for Jerusalem’s destruction.

The Sages chose their words with great precision. Indeed, many will witness the rebuilding of Jerusalem. But only those who were grieved by Jerusalem’s destruction will merit to behold the city “in joy.” Only those who mourned its desolation will experience the profound joy and simchah as Jerusalem is restored to its former splendor.

Rejoicing in Jewish Independence

In the exhilarating days following the 1920 San Remo conference, when the League of Nations adopted the Balfour Declaration, Rav Kook remarked:

“There are some Jews for whom international recognition of the Jewish people’s right to its land fails to inspire joy. This is because the primary focus of their mourning is the spiritual destruction of Jerusalem and Eretz Yisrael. The bitter humiliation of the Land of Israel being subjected to foreign rule does not trouble them.

But for those who always felt a deep sorrow, not only for the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of the Land, but also for the lack of Jewish sovereignty in our homeland... the international declaration that the Land of Israel must return to the people of Israel is a source of great joy. These individuals merit ‘to see Jerusalem in its joy.’”

Repairing the Baseless Weeping Rav Kook’s dictum for the month of Av also speaks of our joy in witnessing the initial steps of redemption:

גילת עם בשביבי אור ישועה תקומם אשר הרסה בכנה של הנם

“The people’s joy in sparks of redemption will rebuild what was destroyed by baseless weeping.”

The term “baseless weeping” (bechayah shel chinam) refers to the episode in which the spies sent by Moses spoke against the Land of Israel, causing the people to despair and weep without cause. This sin requires a profound correction. How do we rectify their cries of despair?

Rav Kook explained that the repair, the tikkun, for this sin is through teshuvat ha-mishkal — a repentance that counterbalances the initial wrongdoing. To counteract the baseless weeping, we must respond with a tangible and enthusiastic joy as the Land of Israel is rebuilt, stone by stone. We need not wait until the final stages of redemption to experience this profound sense of excitement. Even if the redemption is only partial - even if we only witness “sparks of redemption” - we should still feel immense joy. We should actively work toward hastening the process of redemption with all our strength.

As Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi wrote at the end of his classic work, The Kuzari:

“Jerusalem will be rebuilt when the Jewish people yearn for it with the deepest longing, so that they cherish even her stones and dust.”

(Adapted from Mo'adei HaRe'iyah, pp. 567-568)

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The Sick Fasting on Tisha B'av

by R. Daniel Mann

Question: How sick does one need to be to be exempt from fasting on Tisha B'av? What food limitations, if any, does he have?

Answer: The closest gemara on the subject says that pregnant and nursing women are required to fast on Tisha B'av (Pesachim 54b). Rishonim posit that this is because they are considered healthy, but that a woman within thirty days after childbirth and a person who is sick with a not-expected-to-be dangerous illness need not fast (see Ran, Ta'anit 10a of Rif's pages; Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 554). Although such people must fast on Yom Kippur (see details in Shulchan Aruch, OC 617:4), Tisha B'av is different because it is not a Torah-level prohibition. Even though the non-dangerously sick may not eat a Rabbinically forbidden food (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 123:2), the Rabbis built into the institution of the fast of Tisha B'av that it does not apply to clearly sick/weak people (Ran, ibid.; Shulchan Aruch, OC 554:6).

How do we define sick in this regard? The leading definition regarding Shabbat leniencies is nafal l'mishkav – needing to spend serious time in bed (Shulchan Aruch, OC 328:17). That phrase is not found in the poskim here (see Aruch Hashulchan, OC 554:7). Significant fever certainly qualifies, as well as conditions that fasting complicates (see Ohr L'tzion III, 29:(5)). Generally, a situation that prevents the average person from going to work is included. Remember, our sick person is

equivalent to a woman in the first month after birth (the differences are that she can feel perfectly wonderful, but her body is known to have gone through a major trauma). Rav M. Feinstein (Igrat Moshe, OC IV:114) says that one who is fasting particularly poorly counts as sick. It is very difficult to know where to draw the line on that (consider that fasting is usually difficult for pregnant and nursing mothers).

Regarding a woman after childbirth, the Rama (OC 554:6) says that despite the halachic exemption, the minhag is to fast (see Chayei Adam II, 135:2; Mishna Berura 554:13).

Regarding a sick person, stringency is less encouraged (ibid. and ibid:16).

To what extent do we say the fast does not exist, as opposed to the situation of a dangerously sick person on Yom Kippur, to whom the fast exists but is compromised as needed (Shulchan Aruch, OC 618:7)? The Shulchan Aruch (OC 554:6) says it was not instituted for them – apparently, at all. Therefore, several poskim said that there is no need to limit eating (Kaf Hachayim, OC 554:31; Avnei Nezer, OC 540; Shevet Halevi IV:56).

It is also possible to say that a sick person should try to limit the amount of eating on Tisha B'av, but the specific size/time formula (shiurim) we find regarding Yom Kippur (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 618:8) is irrelevant. The Aruch Hashulchan (OC 554:7) implies that shiurim are significant only concerning Torah-law prohibitions. There, they are important for the Torah punishment, which does not apply to Rabbinic prohibitions like eating on Tisha B'av. This is not obvious because the gemara (Yoma 79a) bases the amounts for Yom Kippur on their effect on the experience of fasting, which can apply to Tisha B'av as well.

The difference between the approaches to why not to require shiurim is regarding other means of limiting the eating. The Chayei Adam (ibid.) says that one should try to fast part of the day (see Yoma 82a in regard to the partial fasting of children under bar/bat mitzva). Some explain that the delaying or minimizing of the eating does not indicate a partial existence of the fast per se, but is based on the idea of wanting to share with the general pain that everyone is experiencing (see Chut Shani III:93). There may be a distinction between someone who starts the day fully sick and someone who we do not want to fast because it likely will make him sick, in which case he should wait until it is necessary (see Dirshu 554:26).

לעילוי נשמת יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

from: Torah in Action /Shema Yisrael

<parsha@torahinaction.com>

subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם

Eichah, how can I alone bear your contentiousness, your burdens, and your quarrels. (1:12)

Chazal (Eichah Rabbah 1:1) observe that three leaders prophesized using the word eichah, how: Moshe Rabbeinu,

Yeshayahu, and Yirmiyahu. Moshe said, Eichah essa levadi? “How can I alone bear?” Yeshayahu said, Eichah haysah l'zonah kiryah ne'emanah? “How has the faithful city become a harlot?” (Yeshayahu 1:21). Yirmiyahu said, Eichah yashvah vadad? “How she sits alone” (Eichah 1:1). This, say Chazal, may be compared to a woman who had three guests: one she saw when she was successful; the other when she was failing; and, the third, following her downfall. According to the Midrash, the three eichah's represent a timeline of Jewish history. Moshe's complaint addresses the nation's refusal to accept the judgment the bais din issued, and the machinations they resorted to in an attempt to subvert the judicial system. The later Neviim, Yeshayahu and Yirmiyahu, also rendered their complaints with the word, eichah. The obvious question is how three distinct complaints, which addresses three distinct periods of the continuum of Jewish history, all begin with the same word. Words are significant, and the Hebrew lexicon is exact; nothing is arbitrary. Imagine if a speaker would render the same speech at three different venues: a wedding; a school function; and a funeral. Unless a common thread winds through them, he will appear inappropriate.

Horav Tzvi Kushelevsky, Shlita, observes that the Jewish People possess a middah, character trait, that can work to their benefit and elevate them to unparalleled greatness. This middah, if misapplied, can also lead to their detriment and plummeting to serious impairment. He quotes Maharal, who posits that the neshamah, soul, is the dominant factor in the nature of a Jew. He uses the example of am k'shei oref, a stiff-necked people, which is not one of our finer qualities. From a practical point of view, we refuse to accept criticism and reproof. We are always right. Here our spiritual side comes into play. Something material can be altered and manipulated. Something spiritual defies alteration. Thus, the Jew is change-resistant. We will do what we want, regardless of the opinion and advice of others. Furthermore, when one is stubborn and unbending, he must have his way, regardless of who stands in his way. He will just aggressively push his way through.

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that the Jewish People are all bnei melachim, royalty, princes. The spiritual royalty from which we descend has imbued us with a profound regality, which manifests itself in our disdain of being subjugated in any manner, to the point that it is not unnatural for us to resist authority or be bound by someone's views. They do what they feel is correct and proper. (Truthfully, the Torah decides this for us. We follow its dictates, regardless whether or not it conforms to popular opinion).

The Maharal had a Christian acquaintance who asked why Jews have strong opinions – often not agreeing even with their own co-religionists. The fact that ideological differences exist which give voice to varied approaches to religious service did not elude him. This fellow, who was a pastor, boasted, “My congregants accept anything I say. The mere fact that

they fall in line whenever I issue an injunction is proof positive that the Christian faith is the emblem of Divine truth.”

The Maharal countered with an analogy. A flock of sheep will obsequiously accept a leader and adhere to his instructions with blind faith. This is due to their being simple-minded animals with no hint of a regal bearing. Not so the lion. A pack of lions will superficially appear to be in disarray, its members each independent of one another. They roam where they want, staking out their own individual territory at will. To the casual observer, they appear to be weak, but what resembles weakness actually bespeaks their strength.

Am Yisrael may be compared to a pack of lions, with their differences and obstinacy against bending to authority (with which they do not agree) finding its roots in our regal lineage – bnei Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Our Patriarchs did not bend, neither will we. This is but one of our strengths.

This, explains the Rosh Yeshivah, is the underlying message of the word eichah that weaves its way through the three prophecies. They each focused on Klal Yisrael’s regal-centered strength which they demonstrated in three disparate venues. Moshe underscored the nation’s stubbornness with regard to acquiescing to the judgment issued by the bais din. Here the refusal to be swayed by another person (albeit greater in knowledge and wisdom) can be both beneficial and detrimental. On the one hand, it motivates one to plumb the depths of the halachic question to see what his own cognitive ability can unfold. Nonetheless, if this obstinacy is overused, it can be self-destructive. Even the most logical argument requires the correct time for its presentation. In other words, one must know when to agree and when to dissent. This demands seichel, common sense, which is at a premium. When the Neviim Yeshayahu and Yirmiyahu admonished the people, pointing out their faults and issuing warning concerning the impending punishment which would be visited upon them if they did not alter their ways, they stubbornly refused to listen. Hence eichah – bemoaned by Yeshayahu and later by Yirmiyahu – expressed the Jewish People’s obstinacy. There is a time and place for everything. If one is unable – or refuses – to accept and decipher this reality, he will be forced to accept eichah.

The regal nature of the yehudi is derived from a Divinely implanted spiritual power source called the neshamah. The Yiddishe neshamah, soul, is an infinitesimal component of the Divine which transforms us from mere flesh and blood into a creation with unimaginable spiritual potential. The neshamah is our essence; sadly, some of us cover it with so much dross that it is difficult for it to shine through. But it exists, and wherever a “break” in the murky clouds that conceal it occurs, it springs forth and empowers the person, so that he finds it hard to believe it is the same person that previously had been acting in the most spiritually contemptible manner. Apparently, a spark breaks through the dross, and the intrinsic regality of the neshamah bursts forth.

Consider the following incident. In Auschwitz, in 1944, “dinnertime” consisted of non-kosher meat. The Nazi fiends not only wanted to destroy our bodies, but also whatever semblance of spiritual dignity we might possess. One Jew emphatically refused to eat dinner. He would not touch the treif meat. It was not as if the Nazi commandant cared if the Jew starved to death; he just could not tolerate him practicing his religious beliefs. He immediately walked over, lifted his truncheon, and said, “Eat!” The Jew said, “No!” This was too much for the Nazi to swallow. No observant Jew was going to refuse his direct order. He was, however, mistaken. This Jew was as secular as could be. His entire life he had eaten non-kosher meat as part of his anti-religious lifestyle. Yet now he would not budge. He knew that he was relinquishing his life to die a painful death by refusing to do now what had been natural for him. The Nazi took his truncheon and beat the Jew within an inch of his life – but he did not eat the meat. When asked later what prompted him to act in complete opposite of his past life, he said, “I just realized the severity of eating non-kosher food.” What transpired within this man? His royal essence burst forth. A spark of inspiration penetrated years of apathy and self-loathing. In one spiritual moment, he had returned home – to the palace of the King.

from: Michal Horowitz <contact@michalhorowitz.com> date: Aug 8, 2024, 11:01 AM subject: [New post] Tisha b’Av 5784 Tisha b’Av 5784 By Michal Horowitz on Aug 08, 2024 08:01 am

Av 5784. The month of our mourning for churban Batei Mikdash (the destruction of both Temples, Bayis I by the Babylonians, and Bayis II by the Romans), the exile of Tzion and Yerushalayim, and all our travails that have befallen us in exile since that bitter day when the 2nd Temple was destroyed almost 2,000 years ago. כְּבוֹ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה, וְדַמְעָתָהּ עַל לַחְיָהּ—אִין-לָהּ מְנַחֵם, מִכָּל-אֲהָבָיִהּ: כָּל-רַעְיָהּ בְּגָדוּי דְרָלֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת מְבַלֵּי בְּאֵי מוֹעֵד כָּל-שַׁעְרֵיהָ שׁוּמְמִין כְּהַגִּיָּה נֶאֱמָרְתִּים בְּהוֹלָתֶיהָ: (Eichah 1:2); דְרָלֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת מְבַלֵּי בְּאֵי מוֹעֵד כָּל-שַׁעְרֵיהָ שׁוּמְמִין כְּהַגִּיָּה נֶאֱמָרְתִּים בְּהוֹלָתֶיהָ – The roads of Tzion are in mourning because no one comes at the appointed (festival) times; all her gates are desolate, her kohanim groan; her virgin daughters grieve while she herself suffers bitterly (1:4); וְעוֹלָלֶיהָ הָלְכוּ שָׁבִי לַפְּגִיזָר; her young children went into captivity before the enemy (1:5).

The day I pen these words, Yom Sheni, Rosh Chodesh Av 5784 (Monday, August 5, 2024), is the fifth birthday of Ariel Bibas, who was brutally kidnapped on Oct. 7, along with his mother, Shir, father, Yarden, and baby brother, Kfir. In honor of his 5th birthday, his paternal grandmother (his maternal grandparents were murdered on Oct.7, HY”D) wrote her grandson a birthday letter.

My dear Luli, Happy birthday to my first grandchild. You’re five years old! Five years... Do you even know that this big day is approaching?

Can you feel our longing, the immense love that fills our hearts? Over nine months have passed since you were taken from us by bad people. Nine months of tears, prayers, and unwavering hope. The world around us continues to turn, but time seems to have frozen without you. You’ve grown a year older, but there’s no celebration.

The kumquat tree you love so much has blossomed again, its branches filled with tiny orange fruits. I see them and remember your small hands, eager to pick and taste them. The loquat tree near your home has also borne fruit, orange ones, and I can imagine you running to your mum, so proud of what you've picked.

When I read a story to your cousin Toto, my eyes search for you. As if looking hard enough would find you sitting beside her, listening intently and smiling your shy, sweet smile. My heart skips a beat every time I remember how much you're missed. I try to imagine the moment you'll return to us. Will you still call me 'Grandma Nini'? Will you still want to play 'piggyback'? I can almost hear your laughter as you splash water on me while we water the plants in the garden. Luli, so much has changed in the last year. Instead of celebrating all the new things you've learned, we're dealing with an absence – of you, of your mum and dad, and of little Fir Fir. We're also in the shadow of a terrible loss. Grandpa Yossi and Grandma Margit are no longer with us, and how will you react when you learn this news?

But we never stop hoping. Every day I dream of the moment we'll be together again. I imagine the excitement, the tears, the hugs. I see you shouting 'Grandma Nini!' and little Kfir, who might not remember me anymore, smiling at me with a big grin.

My dear Luli, you're so close yet so far away. I pray that soon we'll receive the greatest gift – to hug you and the whole family again. I'm waiting for this dream to become reality. Until then, Luli, know that you are loved, that we think of you every moment. And one day, we'll celebrate all the birthdays we've missed, together. Love, Pnini (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13708125/Grandmother-Ariel-Bibas-held-captive-Gaza-Hamas-pens-poignant-letter-grandson-fifth-birthday.html>)

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Rav *zt'l*, teaches that "There is *aveilus chadasha* ('new mourning') and *aveilus yeshana* ('old mourning', for *churban Tzion*). We all know the aphorism, *ha'avar ayin, v'ha'asid adayin, v'ha'ohveh ke'heref ayin*... However, in my opinion, this is wrong. The past is not gone; it is still here. The future is not only anticipated, it is already here, and the present connects the future and the past. This is what is meant by a *unitive time consciousness*.

"Tisha b'Av, the 9th of Av, would be a ludicrous institution if we did not have the *unitive time consciousness*. We say in the *Kinnos*, 'On this night, *b'layl ha'zeh*, my Temple was destroyed.' This night means a night nineteen hundred years ago; *b'layl zeh* means tonight.

Apparently, that night nineteen hundred years ago is neither remote nor distant from us; it is living – as vibrant a reality as this fleeting moment in the present. The *unitive time consciousness* contains an element of eternity. There is neither past nor future nor present. All three dimensions of time merge into one experience, into one awareness. Man, heading in a panicky rush toward the future, finds himself in the embrace of the past. Bygones turn into facts, pale memories into living experiences and archaeological history into a vibrant reality.

"Of course, historical mourning is based upon this *unitive time consciousness*. Without that experiential memory it would be ridiculous to speak of mourning due to an event which lies in antiquity" (*Out of the Whirlwind*, p.17).

For Klal Yisrael, our destiny is one where past, present and future all merge together into one continuous stream of time, and experience. Tisha b'Av is a day of mourning for destruction; but not only of

ancient destruction, of days long gone and time epochs long past. The mourning of Tisha b'Av is an *aveilut* into which is enmeshed all of our mourning, our staggering losses, and the entirety of the bitterness of exile, from 'yamim ha'hem', those days, to 'b'zman ha'zeh', our times.

Says the Rav, "Kalir also notes in the *kinnot* that the desire to kill children is more pronounced than the desire to kill adults. They first killed the children and then the intellectuals. Intellectuals they killed not only among the Jews, but among all the nations. But killing the children was a special privilege bestowed upon the Jewish people alone. There was a psychopathic desire to kill the children. From the view of the psychopath, this kind of killing is more satisfying to his psychopathic urge because in the children they see the future of the people, and they want to destroy the future. Once you kill the children, there is no future.

"This was also the case during the Holocaust. The children were taken away immediately, even before the ghettos were liquidated. By the time the adults were sent off to Treblinka, Auschwitz and Buchenwald, there were not many children left. The children were already exterminated by the time they started to liquidate the middle-aged and the elderly people" (*The Lord is Righteous in All His Ways*, p.294-295).

Tisha b'Av is a day of mourning for events of past and present, for *aveilus yeshanah* and *aveilus chadasha*, for the burning of the BHM"K and the burning of Kfar Aza and Nir Oz, for the blood-thirsty enemy of old, and the one of new, for the German Jewish communities of Speyer, Mainz and Worms, annihilated during the first Crusade one thousand years ago, and for the innocent blood spilled in Be'eri and Sderot on Simchas Torah 5784.

"Our historical mourning is based upon this *unitive time consciousness*."

From the Egyptian enslavement – *כל-הבן הילוד, הַיָּאֲרָה תִּשְׁלִיכֶהוּ* – every baby boy that is born, he shall be cast into the river (*Shemos* 1:22); To Yirmiyahu's lament – *עַל-אֶלֶהָ אֲנִי בֹכֵהָ עֵינַי עֵינַי יִרְדּוּ מַיִם כִּי-רַתַּם מִמֶּנִּי* – Over these I cry; my eye, my eye, runs with tears, for the comforter to restore my soul is far from me; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed (*Eichah* 1:16).

From evil Haman and wicked Achashvairosh – *לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגַּ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת-כָּל-הַיְּהוּדִים מִנְּעוּר וְעַד-זָקֵן טַף וְנָשִׁים בָּיּוֹם אֶחָד* – to destroy, kill and obliterate all the Jews, from youth to elderly, from small children to women, on one day (*Esther* 3:13);

To the suffering exiles upon the River Babylon – By the rivers of Bavel, there we sat and there we wept, as we remembered Tzion; On the willows in her midst, we hung our harps; For there our captors asked us for words of song and our tormentors [asked of us] mirth, "Sing for us of the song of Zion"; *אֵיךְ נִשְׁרֵי אֶת-שִׁיר ה' עַל אֲדָמַת נֶגֶר*; "How can we sing the song of Hashem on foreign soil? *אִם-אֶשְׁכַּחְתִּיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח תְּשָׁכַח יְמִינִי* – if i forget thee O J'lem, let my right hand be forgotten, may my tongue cleave to its palate if I do not remember thee, if I do not raise J'lem at the head of my rejoicing (*Tehilim* 137:1-5).

May we merit the immediate redemption, peace in our Land, and the building of the third BHM"K in our day and in our time, when G-d will have mercy on His nation and His Land.

בברכת מנחם ציון ובונה ירושלים