

# THE ESSENCE OF TISHAH B'AV

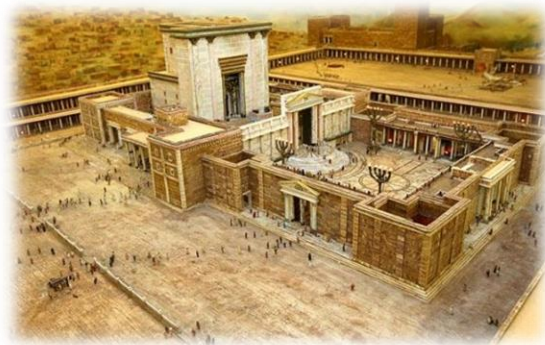
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**BY: RAV YAAKOV WEINBERG ZT"L**



## About Rav Weinberg Zt"l

HaRav Yaakov Weinberg, zt"l, was the Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Ner Yisrael in Baltimore, Maryland from 1987 until his petira in 1999. For many decades he was a force for Torah in the Jewish world. He was the ultimate Rabbi, transforming the hearts and minds of thousands of talmidim with his unfaltering adherence to the truth of Torah and the words of Chazal. With his incisive analysis and penetrating insight, he developed generations of outstanding leaders. They follow his example in their understanding of Torah and in their responsibility for its transmission. His talmidim have been instrumental in creating communal organizations including shuls, schools and kiruv centers. Rav Weinberg was a sought-after advisor, involved in hundreds of private and public issues within the Jewish community. He often conducted the question and answer sessions at Torah Umesorah conventions where many benefited from his counsel. Rav Weinberg was married to Rebbetzin Shaina Chana Ruderman, the daughter of Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, zt"l, the founder of Ner Yisroel. He was the older brother and mentor of Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l, the founder of Aish HaTorah.



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*The Rosh HaYeshiva had a distinctive and expressive style of speaking. The text has been  
edited extensively for readability. However, where necessary, the usual grammatical  
rules have been relaxed to retain the force and flavor of  
the Rosh HaYeshiva's delivery.*

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## The Essence of Tishah B'Av

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Preliminary: I think we have pointed out all way through the basic meaning of *Yom Tovim*, that a *Yom Tov* is not an occasion of remembering. A *Yom Tov* has a specific affect and

'המועדים בישראל אינם רק ציון לעבר הרחוק. אלא, בכל שנה ושנה מתעורר מחדש כוח הארת וזכר ההוא, כמו שהיה בפעם הראשונה, ואנו חוגגים את הנס המועד שנעשה לנו עתה ממש... " [ראה שער הכוונות הקדמה לדרושי ראש השנה].

changes us. It is at least an opportunity and obligation to become different. For example, one ought to be a different person after *Shabbos* then he was before. *Shabbos* ought to make an impression and does. The question only is do

we make use of it or don't we? But the reality is that *Shabbos* changes what we are. It brings us into a realm of *kedushah* - of sanctity. Therefore, at the end of *Shabbos*, having experienced the reality of sanctity, one ought not to be the same person that he was before. Because living through sanctity has to have, or should have, an enormous impact on the *neshamah* - the soul - and all that we are, how we feel and how we react to things. We can lose it, unfortunately, rapidly and most easily, if we never take cognizance of the fact that we did experience this sanctity.

Every *Yom Tov* does this. *Pesach* gives us *cheirus*. And *Shevuos* of course, Torah and our relationship to Torah. And *Succos*, *simchah*. And *Rosh Hashana*, *yirah*. And *Yom Kippur*, *kapparah* with all that is involved in that. But the same, of course, is true with Rabbinic *Yom Tovim*, with a *Purim* and with a *Chanukah*. But the same is also true with a Three Weeks and a *Tishah B'Av*. It is not a commemoration. It is not just an *aveilus*. It has affected our basic existence and it is

Every *Yom Tov* has a specific role that it plays in forming the Jewish *neshamah*. And each *Yom Tov* has that which it has to imbue us with, with which we become full and complete and without which, we lack that which is of the essence of our existence.

necessary to use it, to be affected by it, to respond to what it does for us.

Before we can so respond and before we can so use it we have to understand what it is that it comes to fulfill in our existence as Jews.

Every *Yom Tov* has a specific role that it plays in forming the Jewish *neshamah*, in imbuing us with certain *kochos hanefesh*, certain abilities, certain strengths of character and potentials of influence within ourselves and with others. And each *Yom Tov* has that which it has to imbue us with, with which we become full and complete and without which we lack that which is of the essence of our existence.

The Biblical ones we've had occasion to go through. The Rabbinic ones also I think we've had occasion to discuss, what *Purim* and what *Chanukah* does for us.

That which a *d'rabanan* does is by definition an adjustment. That is to say, obviously, if it were something that is needed in the essence of the Jewish *neshamah* it would have to be in the Torah. The fact that the Torah did not give it means that a Jewish *neshamah* as such does not require the *Yom Tov* of *Purim* and does not require the *Yom Tov* of *Chanukah*. That there comes a need for a

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The Rabbinic days are obviously not of the essence in our ability to exist as Jews. The very fact that they are not Biblical holidays but rabbinic holidays means that we could very well have been Jews without these *Yomim Tovim*. That there comes a need for a *Purim* is an indication that there has been some violence done, that a trauma has taken place that threatens us and which we must make up through the *Yom Tov*.

that threatens us and which we must make up through the *Yom Tov*.

In *Purim*, of course, it was obvious and clear what the trauma was. The trauma was the loss of the presence of the *Shechinah*. Until then, Jews lived within a direct and immediate awareness of not

only the reality of *Hashem's* existence but *Hashem's* relationship with them. He was there. They knew He was there. They related to Him directly, immediately in an open manner. And therefore, their whole form of being was on a totally different level.

When that was no longer there and they now had to live with *Hashem m'toch hester punim*, with the reality of *Hashem* and His closeness hidden from them, they had to make an adjustment. They had

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to give their *neshamos* that inner *koach* - that inner power, that inner dynamism - with which to be able to respond to a new mode of existence. They now inhabit a world in which their relationship to *Hashem* is hidden. It requires different abilities and different responses and a different strength of soul. This was not required in the normal way of Jewish existence, which is when the *Shechinah* is *nigleh*, with an open relationship to *Hashem*. That's the norm. And so that not being the norm, it required a non-Torah, non-

"אמרי ליה פפונאי לרב מתנה...אסתר מן התורה מנין? -  
"ואנכי הסתר אסתיר..." [חולין, דף קלט:].

Biblical response. We came through it with what we did on *Purim* and with the *Chachamim's* reaction by being *kovayo*, of creating the *Yom Tov*, out of which we derive our ability, our strengths, that character with which we are able to deal with the fact of *Hashem* living with us *m'toch hester punim*, in a hidden way.

Therefore, we now have to try to understand what happened to us with the *churban bayis* that necessitated a whole new response. It was an event that made such a profound effect on the totality of our existence as a Jewish people and as Jews that there was now a lack that needed to be filled in order for us to maintain our equilibrium as a Jewish people and as Jews. What

What happened with the *churban*? What were the changes in the very essence of Jewish life, in the very inner core of our being that took place then that so profoundly affected the reality of our existence? What were those changes that required a response and a source of new strength in order to be able to deal with that reality and to survive in spite of that loss?

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Even in the *Bayis Sheni*, when we were living with *Hashem b'hester punim*, with His face as it were hidden from us, that is to say when we were not directly aware of His presence and our

relationship with Him and which made possible apostasy, made possible the questioning of whether He is or not, whether He cares or not, whether His Torah is real or not, whether *Torah sh'baal peh* is actual or not, all of this was impossible, inherently impossible, during *giluy punim*.

**In the *bayis sheni*, when we were living with *Hashem b'hester punim*, with His face as it were, hidden from us, which made possible apostasy, which made possible the questioning of whether He is or not, whether He cares or not, whether His Torah is real or not, whether *Torah sh'baal peh* is actual or not. Yet, even in that era we had the *Bais Hamikdash*!**

There was no way to discuss G-d's existence when His *Shechinah* was an actual entity of daily experience. There was no way to discuss His concern and care when there was a daily experience of His responding to the way we were and the way we acted. There was no question of His Torah, including the *Torah sh'baal peh*, when there was a daily reminder that

we related through this Torah. Therefore, there never was any discussion. There was reject, accept, defy, live with, express our love, repress our love - those were the areas with which we expressed our challenges during a period of *giluy punim*. *Hester punim* brings about a whole new way of living, a whole new type of experience on a daily basis, with whole new questions of what problems we face and the needs to solve them and the methodology with which to solve them. We now have to talk of the proof of Torah. We have to discuss the proofs of *Hashem*. A whole new form of existence has come into being.

But, we had the *Bais Hamikdash*. In the *Bais Hamikdash* we had always available to us a direct touch, a direct contact. We had the ability to express our feelings and our needs and our

**In the *Bais Hamikdash* we had always available to us a direct touch, a direct contact. We had the ability to express our feelings and our needs and our relationships and our contact because we could always go directly to that *Bais Hamikdash* and to that *mizbayach*. And in that *Bais Hamikdash* and *mizbayach* relate directly and immediately to a *Ribonoy Shel Olum*. We could directly contact Him and reach out to Him. And get a *kapparah* through the *korbanos* that we brought. There was an ongoing contact. A contact which was broken with the *churban Bais Hamikdash*.**

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those sacrifices to create ongoing relationships that expressed themselves through what we felt we were doing in the *korban*, the self that we were giving to Him via the *korban*. There was an ongoing contact, a contact which was broken with the *churban Bais Hamikdash*.

The *churban bayis* not only took away the immediacy of a contact but brought into existence a whole variety of new situations. As long as that *Bais Hamikdash* was there and the contact was there, there was a total acceptance and understanding of ourselves as an *Am Hashem*. There was

**As long as that *Bais Hamikdash* was there and that contact was there, there was a total acceptance and understanding of ourselves as an *Am Hashem*.**

a total understanding and acceptance of ourselves as the people of the *bris* - of the covenant. There was an ongoing expression of ourselves as being the Torah people, of relating to Torah and having it as the central expression of our lives, of relating to the

*Gedolei Yisroel*, to the *Sanhedrin*, to the *Bais Din Hagadol*, of relating to that which unifies, makes

one of, brings together all the factions and all the different individuals and creating out of them one entity, which is *Am Yisroel*.

All this took place through the *Bais Hamikdash* and the *mizbayach* and the *korbanos*, when we shared as one people the *korban tomid* every day, the *korbanos musafim* on the *Yom Tovim*, the *korban* of a *Shabbos*, and that represented the oneness of us all. So that we lived as one people. We related as one people. And we had one guide and one Torah and one *Sanhedrin*. And we were a whole people that could live and survive and flourish as an *Am*.

"שנצטוו ישראל שיקריבו על ידי משרתי השם יתברך, שהם הכהנים, שני כבשים בני שנה תמימים לעולה בכל יום, האחד בבוקר והשני בין הערבים, שנאמר [במדבר, כה, ב'], צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם את קרבני לחמי לאשי וגו' שנים ליום עולה תמיד..." [חינוך, מצוה תא]

"שנצטוו ישראל להקריב שני כבשים קרבן בכל יום שבת על קרבן התמיד של כל יום, והוא הנקרא מוסף שבת, שנאמר [במדבר כה, ט'], וביום השבת שני כבשים..." [חינוך, מצוה תב]

מצות קרבן מוסף בכל חדש וחדש - שנקריב קרבן מוסף בכל ראש חדש על תמיד של כל יום, שנאמר [במדבר, כה, יא-טו] פרים בני בקר שנים ואיל אחד, כבשים בני שנה שבעה תמימים, ומנחתם ונסכיהם" וגו', ושעיר עזים אחד לחטאת ליי..." [חינוך, מצוה תג]

Even if some of us were in Rome and some us were in Bavel and some of us were in Persia, there was that which made us one and kept us one and unified us as one so that we remained THE *Am Hashem*, made into a

unit, bound together, identifying with each other, through that *Bais Hamikdash*.

It did more. When you were not there you knew that you were in *galus*. You knew that you belonged someplace else. You knew that you were a spread-out part of an *Am Yisroel* that had

**It did more. When you were not there you knew that you belonged someplace else. You knew that you were a spread-out part of an *Am Yisroel* that had its source and its reality back in *Eretz Yisroel* in which the *Bais Hamikdash* was to be found.**

its source and its reality back in *Eretz Yisroel* in which the *Bais Hamikdash* was to be found. You related to it and you dealt with it as a reality of your ongoing life, even while you were in *galus*, even while you were far away. But you knew that that's where you belonged. And you knew that

that's where the core and source of your existence lay and there was the identification with what went on there and the realization, the knowledge, that I am a stranger where I am. I do not belong here in Rome. Persia is not really the place that is mine.

When that *Bais Hamikdash* is gone and with it that which unified us, that contact with Hashem, which is the source of that unification, that ability to directly address Him on the physical level,

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which enabled us to identify ourselves totally and completely as an *Am Hashem*, as an *Am Yisroel*, the *galus* took on altogether different dimensions.

An American Jewry can feel that really America is the place to be. Of course, I take upon myself certain responsibilities, certain sympathies, you know a certain emotional bond to Jews elsewhere, especially in Israel, but America is *my* country. That's where I'm comfortable. That's where I belong, or the French Jew in France, the British Jew in Britain. Whether it be in Australia, whether it be in Europe, he feels at home. He feels that he is where he belongs.

Worse, he thinks he's living a normal life. It is the person dying of a disease who thinks that he's perfectly normal. He thinks this is the way things ought to be.

A person with flat feet walks around and he sees somebody with an arch, he says, "Hey, your feet are funny!" He thinks flat feet is the norm. "There's something funny with you." Because he

"אמנם חולי הנפשות אשר לא ירגישו בחלים וידמו בו שהוא בריאות...אחריתם למה שיהיה אחרית החולה כשימשך אחר הנאותיו ולא יתרפא שהוא ימות בלא ספק...אך על שאינם מרגישים דבר שלמה הרבה אמר, דרך אויל ישר בעיניו, ושומע לעצה חכם, ר"ל שומע לעצת החכם (חכם), מפני שהוא יודיעהו הדרך שהוא ישר באמת לא אשר יחשבהו הוא ישר, ואמר יש דרך ישר לפני איש ואחריתו דרכי מות, ואמר בחולי הנפשות האלה בהיותם בלתי יודעים מה יזיקם ומה יועילם דרך רשעים כאפלה לא ידעו במה יכשלו..." [רמב"ם, שמונה פרקים, פרק ג]

has adjusted to and accepted as the right way of being, flat feet. He doesn't know that his feet are not the norm and that maybe they need a little fixing. Maybe he needs a counteraction in order to be able to walk without strain and not do damage to other bones.

So all of us face this as a steady, consistent problem in our existence, don't we? We feel perfectly at home and perfectly normal in the United States or in Mexico, or in England or France or in Belgium, wherever it is. We feel a sense of normalcy.

We may pay lip service to "We want *Mashiach*." But do we want *Mashiach*? Do we need *Mashiach*? And for what? If I'm perfectly normal and perfectly at home and perfectly comfortable and this is my place and, after all, I keep my *mitzvos*. I keep kosher. I keep *Shabbos*. I keep *taharas hamishpacha*. What more can you want? *Yom Tovim* and *matzah* and *succah* and a

We may pay lip service to "We want *Mashiach*." But do we want *Mashiach*? Do we need *Mashiach*? And for what? I'm comfortable financially. I'm comfortably materially but I haven't neglected my spiritual life. I don't need *Mashiach* anymore. I'm not really looking forward to him anymore.

*luluv* and an *esrog*. I mean, I keep them all! What is missing? And even better, I sit and learn Torah. And I build *Yeshivos* and day schools and *chadarim*. What more can anybody want? It's delightful. I'm comfortable financially. I'm comfortably materially but I haven't neglected my spiritual life. I haven't rejected my *ruchnios*. On the contrary, I contribute to it, and I make sure that it's there. I build the *yeshivos*. I build the

institutions. It's my home. It's delightful. It's wonderful out here. I don't need *Mashiach* anymore. I'm not really looking forward to him anymore.

But there is a peculiar *halachah*, a devastating *halachah*, in the *Rambam*.

The *Rambam* says that if somebody doesn't believe in the coming of *Mashiach* he has no share in

"המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה לממשלה הראשונה ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל וחוזרין כל המשפטים בימיו כשהיו מקודם מקריבין קרבנות ועושין שמטין ויובלות ככל מצותה האמורה בתורה וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו שהרי התורה העידה עליו שנאמר ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך וגו' אם יהיה נדחך בקצה השמים וגו' והביאך ה' ואלו הדברים המפורשים בתורה הם כוללים כל הדברים שנאמרו ע"י כל הנביאים..." [רמב"ם, הלכות מלכים, פרק יא, הלכה א].

the Torah of Moshe. He cannot be a fully functioning Jew. That's a half a *tzarah*. We believe that *Mashiach* is going to come. But the *Rambam* says something much more terrible. Somebody who believes that *Mashiach* is going to come but isn't anticipating his coming, isn't waiting for it, can't have a share in a functioning Jewish

Torah. That already is frightening. It's devastating.

It isn't enough to believe and accept and know that *Mashiach* is going to come. It is necessary to *want* it. To be *waiting* for it. To feel that his not coming is a *lack*. That I *need* it. That's what waiting for *Mashiach* means. *Im eino michokeh lo*, if he isn't awaiting *Mashiach*...What does it

**It isn't enough to believe and accept and know that *Mashiach* is going to come. It is necessary to want it. To be waiting for it. To feel that his not coming is a lack. That I need it. That's what waiting for *Mashiach* means.**

mean to await *Mashiach*? To await for *Mashiach* means to be aware of my need for him, of a *lack*. Therefore I'm waiting. I'm waiting because I know I need it. I'm waiting because I am aware of something missing. That's what waiting means.

If there is not an awareness that the way I am and the way I'm living is empty, is incomplete, then I cannot be a full Jew. That's what the *Rambam* is...a *halachah*, a *p'sak din*. That's devastating.

That means it isn't enough to know. We've got to feel a need. We've got to be aware. We've got to understand directly and feel that living as Jews in America is not normal. That there is a disease involved. We are living in a diseased situation. We are sick. We need help. We need to reach out for health. We are incomplete. We are missing an essence of our existence. And then

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we look forward to, *ach*, when is going to come *Mashiach*? We feel the need for him. We await his coming. We know that without him we are really, really suffering. That's what it means. The *Rambam* is saying that it is necessary in order to be a functioning Jew.

How do we achieve this awareness and understanding which the *Rambam* says is of the essence of surviving as a Jew? Or, how do we make up for the loss of that contact which the *Bais Hamikdash* created? How do we make up in order to achieve that sense of unity and oneness which the *Bais Hamikdash* provided that we no longer have today? How do we resist the trends towards disintegration, the trends towards shattering the unity, the centrifugal forces that would tear us apart? That would make us instead of a whole people, fragmented little remnants? That which the *Bais Hamikdash* prevented? That which the *Bais Hamikdash* kept as a whole, how do we prevent that fragmentation which otherwise inevitably takes place?

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**Those who don't keep the Three Weeks and *Tisha B'Av* are inevitably fragmented. Inevitably, they lose piece after piece of themselves into the mainstream of the non-Jewish world. We call it assimilation. We call it intermarriage. We call it the loss of a**

assimilation. We call it intermarriage. We call it the loss of a sense of identity.

In order to maintain that sense of identity which enables us to resist the pull of intermarriage and assimilation, we need the Three Weeks and *Tishah B'Av*. That is where we express the realization of our desperate need for that contact, of our desperate need for that relationship which the *Bais Hamikdash* was. This yearning, this desperate recognition of need, makes up the loss and the

contact itself. This *aveilus*, this expression of grief in which we become deeply aware of the need, provides a substitute for the reality of the *mikdash*, as it were. It gives us that unifying force. It

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gives us that contact which the loss of the *Bais Hamikdash* removed from us. It is through the *aveilus* and the expression of that *aveilus* of the Three Weeks and of *Tisha B'Av*, the depth of the suffering which we feel and the degree to which we actually feel.

That determines how much we remain with our unity as Jews and our recognition of the need for *Mashiach*. That determines our anticipation of him in our yearning for that contact with Hashem, which enables us to survive and live in an era and a period when that contact has been lost.

Therefore, it is that which obviates the need, *rachmana l'atzlan*, for other reminders. An *Am Yisroel* that maintains the *aveilus* of the period of *Shivah A'sar B'Tamuz* through *Tishah B'Av* is an *Am Yisroel* that doesn't need the other methods of being reminded "you're a Jew!" Because remember, as soon as G-d forbid there arises a problem of this remembering, as soon as G-d forbid Jews have a tendency to forget their otherness, their specialness, their uniqueness, their oneness, something happens, *rachmana l'atzlan*, something happens to remind them of it,

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always, always! We cannot forget. We cannot lose contact. We cannot become complacent with a feeling of comfort and normalcy in a *galus*, it cannot happen. And if we're about to let it happen, G-d forbid, G-d forbid, something is going to pull us out of it. And going to make us not comfortable. And going to make

us aware of the disease. And make us understand that we're an *Am echad mefuzar bain ha'amim*. And make us recognize and realize that we are an *Am echad umiyuchad*, an *Am Hashem*. And G-d forbid that we ever need those reminders because those reminders become unbelievably, unbelievably unbearable. They are ovens. They are drownings. They are swords. They are very much to be avoided.

This is an inevitable pattern. We can use the period of *aveilus* with which to remember and hold and maintain that contact, with which to identify ourselves as a part of a whole *Am*, with which to recognize that we're not living in normal ways, which to accept the reality that this is a diseased, unhappy form of existence. Because the true form of existence needs that contact, needs that oneness, needs that source that we all identify with. And it is in this mourning that we give ourselves that recognition that enables us to survive the loss itself. When G-d forbid that is gone and we cannot survive...but, Hashem said that we will survive, there must occur that which will overcome the loss and remind us of the need, whether you call it a holocaust or any one of the other sufferings. But they all have in common that they provide that contact, that unifying force, that awareness that we're not in our own home, that awareness that we are in a *galus*, that we are not living a normal life. That they always provide, every one of these occasions, G-d help us to avoid them, never, G-d forbid, ever to need them. And the way is through a complete understanding and awareness of what the Three Weeks mean.

But that of necessity means that I am different after *Tishah B'Av* than I was before. *Tishah B'Av* has performed this function. If it has performed this awareness of otherness, this understanding



of I am not as I should be...that my life is not a normal one, that I do not belong in the United States of America with all its material comforts, that it is a truly suffering situation when I cannot be back with all my people in *Eretz Yisroel*, where I don't have my direct contact with *koviyachol*, with the *Ribonoy Shel Olum*, where I can't bring my *kapparah*. That is an insufferable form of existence. It is an agony. It is something that I have to constantly work to make up and ask of Hashem to overcome.

If I become aware of all of this, then, tell me, am I not going to change my lifestyle? Am I not going to change what I do with myself? And how I relate to my children? And what I say to them? And what I look for? Don't I feel a sense of dissatisfaction with the material comforts? Don't I come to understand that I must seek more than the comfortable being that I have? Does it not, in other words, mandate a very deep and far-reaching change in the very forms of my existence? Can I be the same after these days of *aveilus* as I was before? Can I live with the same complacency? Can I live with the same seeking of physical material comforts and luxuries? Do I

Can I be the same after these days of *aveilus* as I was before? Can I live with the same complacency? Can I live with the same seeking of physical material comforts and luxuries? Do I not attach myself to an entirely different set of values, to a different awareness of where I am and what I am and of where I ought to be and what I ought to be? Is that not inevitably the result of a true mourning for that which I have lost? So the period of mourning that goes through *Tishah B'Av* does profoundly affect us in the innermost recesses of our existence.

not attach myself to an entirely different set of values, to a different awareness of where I am and what I am and of where I ought to be and what I ought to be? Is that not inevitably the result of a true mourning for that which I have lost?

If I mourn honestly and I mean it and therefore I am cognizant of the incompleteness and the emptiness of where I am and what I'm doing, will I not change

it? Will I not find ways to make it more real? Will I not seek to overcome the lack? Won't all my values and all my feelings be dramatically affected, that I find no satisfaction in the fine house that I live in and no great joy in the whirlpool that I have in my bathroom and no totality of sufficiency in the seven or six or five or four or three television sets which adorn my home? But, rather try to find those things which will reaffirm my sense of otherness, my sense of uniqueness and my sense of incompleteness? Will I not have a different striving, a different aspiration, a different goal for each day of life than I did before I felt the reality of this mourning period?

So the period of mourning that goes through *Tishah B'Av* does profoundly affect us in the innermost recesses of our existence. And if it doesn't, we haven't really felt the pain. We haven't really mourned. The *aveilus* was *min hosufu v'lachutz*. It was a shallow, skin-deep *aveilus*.

Therefore, the *avoda* ought to be and should find its expression in deepening the actual sense of loss, of deepening the actual sense of great sorrow, of a feeling of incompleteness, a feeling of pain because of the incompleteness, which is really what mourning is all about.

We use the *halachos* of mourning to create the reality of suffering that is mourning. That is in the crying and in the feeling of a sharp sense of loss out of which we can remind ourselves and bring back to ourselves the realization of what it is that we seek, the dedication of ourselves to that which we are seeking, to the Torah which gives us the ability to achieve that missing point, to the Torah through which alone we can maintain our existence that we know must have so much help in order for it to be able to go on.

So that out of a period of *aveilus* there has to come a reaffirmation and re-strengthening of our awareness, understanding, commitments, ways of doing, ways of thinking and ways of feeling. We should feel a little out of place in the country that we live in, a little uncomfortable in spite of all the luxuries, a yearning for that which we are missing and an outreaching desire to find it again and to achieve it which alone assures us an awareness of ourselves of Jews, a sense of that which unites us as Jews. A sense of that which together makes us one people out of which there

Those of us who understand and know bear the brunt of the responsibility to feel the *aveilus* - the mourning - to feel deeply the agony of this loss and to bring that feeling to all our fellow Jews so that together we may see that which will unite us again, which will normalize our lives, and which will make us the *Am Hashem* in all its fullness *bemheira b'yameinu, Amen.*

is obviated so much of the frictions and the hatreds, so much of the conflicts and the tensions that are a part of the body of Israel today simply because, *b'avonoseinu harabim*, so many of our people do not feel the mourning that is the reality of Jewish existence today.

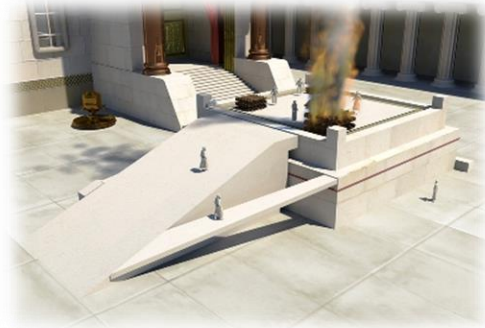
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"מצות בנין בית הבחירה - לבנות בית לשם יי, כלומר שנהיה מקריבים שם קרבנותינו אליו, ושם תהיה העליה לרגל וקבוץ כל ישראל בכל שנה, שנאמר ועשו לי מקדש... משרשי מצוה זו... ידוע הדבר ומפרסם בינינו העם מקבלי המצות כי שבעים פנים לתורה, ובכל אחד מהן שרשים גדולים ורבים, ולכל שרש ושרש ענפים, כל אחד ישא אשכל גדול של פרות נחמדים להשכיל לבות, יום יום יוציאו פרח לשוקדים עליהם, פרחי חכמה ושכל טוב, כל עינים מאירות ורחבה ונסבה עמק חכמתה עד שאין כח באדם להשיג תכליתה... והנחת הטעם הזה בענין הבית תחייב אותנו גם כן לסמך אל הטעם הזה בעצמו לפי הפשט ענין הקרבנות ושבת עובדו וכלים יקרים ידועים... ועוד יש התעוררות אחר ללב בקרבן הבהמות מצד הדמיון שגוף האדם והבהמה ידמו בכל עניניהם לא יתחלקו, רק שבזה נתן השכל ולא בזה. ובהיות גוף האדם יוצא מגדר השכל בעת החטא, יש לו לדעת שנכנס בעת ההיא בגדר הבהמות אחר שלא יחלקם רק הוא לבדו. ועל כן נצטוו לקחת גוף בשר כמוהו ולהביאו אל המקום הנבחר לעלוי השכל ולשרפו שם, ולהשכיח זכרו כליל יהיה לא יזכר ולא יפקד תחת גופו, כדי לציר בלבבו ציור חזק שכל ענינו של גוף בלי שכל אבד ובטל לגמרי, וישמח בחלקו בנפש המשכלת שחננו האל שהיא קימת לעולם, וגם לגוף השתף עמה יש קיום בתחיה בסבתה בלכתו בעצתה, כלומר שישמר מן החטא, ובקבעו בנפשו ציור זה, יזהר מן החטא הרבה. והבטיחה התורה שבמעשה הגדול הזה ובהסכמת עושהו שיתנחם על חטאו מלב ומנפש, תכפר אליו שגגתו..." [חינוך, מצוה צה]



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