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Relief from the Arch of Titus in Rome, showing some of the vessels captured from the Temple

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Israel and
Canada

Rabbi Elan Mazer



Tisha B'Av – The Way to Move Forward

From the very first incidence of sin in the Torah, the consequence has always been Galut – Exile. But what is the purpose of the punishment of Exile?

The Maharal of Prague, in *Netzach Yisrael* (Chapter 1), defines Galut as an unnatural state of being. Every creation has a place and a purpose defined by its creator. Thus its natural state is the environment best suited to accommodate this purpose. Galut is therefore a place or reality in which one cannot accomplish one's destiny, where one's Divine purpose is suppressed.

The ideal conditions for Am Yisrael to accomplish its objectives are when we are living as a united sovereign nation in the Land of Israel. Our national Galut, under the governance of others, suppressed our Divine purpose.

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After every pogrom, inquisition, or Holocaust, no matter the harm, suffering and torture, we never stopped living

However, surely it seems rather counterintuitive that as a punishment for not following the commandments, we should be placed in an environment where we are no longer able to fulfill our national purpose!

Rav Kook (*LeMahalach HaIdeot* 4) explains that the goal of Galut is for us to reflect on our ultimate purpose, specifically because we are presently lacking the ability to accomplish it. The method is similar to a teacher who removes a disruptive student from the classroom. The student was not taking advantage of the educational opportunities, and the teacher's hope is that by removing him, he will realize what he is missing, and will return to the classroom to take advantage of the tools he needs to fulfill his academic purpose as part of the class.

The tools we need to accomplish our mission of representing God in the world and forging humanity into a vessel for His presence are unity and sovereignty in our homeland.

In Galut we do not have these tools. So this is why we mourn during the Three Weeks and Tisha B'Av.

What should our reaction be to this reality? Our knee-jerk reaction may be despair: why continue if we cannot fulfill our purpose?

The prophet Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah 29) addressed this exact question. His answer was as simple as it was powerful; *“Build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have*

sons and daughters, take wives for your sons and give your daughters to men, and they shall bear sons and daughters, and multiply there and be not diminished” (ibid. 5-6). Yirmiyahu teaches the lesson that has given the Jewish people the strength to overcome all suffering. Move on, never despair, never give up hope. After every pogrom, inquisition, or Holocaust, no matter the harm, suffering and torture, we never stopped living.

We survived 2,000 years of exile with these words ringing in our ears.

That was not the whole message though. After Yirmiyahu had prophesized the destruction of Jerusalem for a number of years, God told him, *“Go to your uncle and buy land in Anatot.”* (32:7) At a time when destruction and exile was imminent, Yirmiyahu was to have a land-buying ceremony in the Land of Israel. He was to take the deed of sale and place it in an earthenware jar and declare, *“Houses and fields and vineyards shall be purchased once again in this land.”* (ibid. 15)

Refusing to despair and continuing to hope is a two-way street. We cannot just continue and move forward; we must also continue to hope for our return. Because we know that Jews will always strive to do whatever it takes to buy land and live in the one place in which our Divine purpose can be fully accomplished.

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**Torat
HaMizrachi**

Rabbi Doron Perez



Senseless Hatred – Cause and Cure

How is it possible to be genuinely kind to someone and to hate them at the same time?

Remarkably, this is what the Talmud seems to say regarding the spiritual cause of the destruction of the Second Temple:

“During the Second Temple period the people occupied themselves with Torah, Mitzvot and loving kindness. Why was the temple destroyed? Because they acted with Sinat Chinam, senseless hatred.”¹

How is this possible?

The Netziv suggests an answer. The people being hated were not the same ones being showered with loving kindness: *“As a result of the senseless hatred in their hearts that one harbored for the other, they suspected all those who did not follow their path as a God-fearing Jew of being a Sadducee and a heretic.”²*

If you were part of my community of believers and followed my customs you were accepted, but if not, you were rejected.

Sectarianism reigned supreme prior to the destruction. There were many distinct sects: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots and Sicarii, and more factions within these sects. If you were part of my faction, specific ideological group and community, you were worthy of endless kindness.

But if you were part of another sect whose values and beliefs threatened mine, you were scorned and hated. There was no middle road. Only black and white. Either you're ideologically with me or against me.

Thus the hatred and infighting in Jerusalem was so disastrous on the eve of destruction that Josephus describes the society as “a great body torn in pieces.”³

How do disagreements deteriorate into such deep hatred?

In the War Scroll, found near the Dead Sea in the caves of Qumran, we can perhaps detect an answer. The text – probably written by the Essenes – describes its followers as “the sons of light” and all others (including fellow Jews) as “the sons of darkness.”

This changes the rules of discourse.

We are no longer debating views or ideas. We are delegitimizing the other as a person. It is no longer about perspectives but about the person – vicious ad hominem attacks. It's no longer about right and wrong, but about you and me. All who think and act like me are ‘good’ and bring spiritual light and morality to the world and all who disagree are ‘bad’ and immoral, invoking spiritual darkness. When I am absolutely right and you are absolutely wrong; when the other is

totally disqualified, we are treading dangerously close to the abyss of senseless hatred.

How blessed we are to have had a renewed Jewish society in Israel for 70 years now. We face many challenges in Israel and around the world as to how best chart the way forward. These issues are often extremely divisive because they touch the very essence of Jewish life and destiny.

Hence we should always be very wary of what the Sages tell us is the spiritual cause at the heart of destruction: totally disqualifying the views of others in our society and the inability to see any validity in their point of view. More than any other, the month of Av is the time of year to reflect on this cause and to imagine and strive for its cure.

¹ Yoma 9b.

² Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, HaEmek Davar, introduction to the book of Genesis.

³ The Jewish War, Book 5:1.

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Tisha B'Av in the Independent State of Israel



Rabbi
Reuven Taragin

Our feelings on Tisha B'Av today differ vastly from those of our ancestors. Our ancestors mourned something that was a distant memory and no more than an imagined future. Today, all Jews – young and old – can walk the streets of Yerushalayim and daven freely at the Kotel.

Some have even suggested that this difference makes fasting on Tisha B'Av anachronous. Support for this position is brought from the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (18b) which states that, in a time of 'shalom,' the fast days become holidays. Based on Rashi's explanation that shalom means Jews achieving independence, one might conclude that Tisha B'Av should now become a day of celebration.

There are two reasons why this position is rejected. The first is that other Rishonim (Rashba, Ritva) explain that the independence Rashi refers to is a situation in which Jews live without fear. Sadly, we have not yet arrived at this stage.



Second Temple ruins in the Ophel Archeological Garden, Jerusalem (Tamar Jordanian, Wikipedia 0.3)

The second reason is that Rabbeinu Chananel believes that 'peace' means the rebuilding of the Beit Mikdash. Even if we absolutely controlled and lived completely peacefully in Israel, we would still need to fast and mourn over the missing Beit Mikdash.

A close reading of Rashi (and the Ritva) reveals that he mentions both independence and the rebuilding of the Beit Mikdash as conditions for a transformation in the status of Tisha B'Av. I think this is because the two are inextricably linked. Recent Jewish history has shown us that even the founding of a Jewish State – and even the willingness to make major concessions in the pursuit of peace – have not put an end to Jewish suffering. Rashi's linkage accounts for this by explaining that true independence and peace will only be achieved with the rebuilding of the Beit Mikdash.

Continued anti-Semitism and Jewish suffering stem from the world's rejection of us as God's people. This will cease only once God clarifies the world's purpose and our place within it. All this will be indicated by the rebuilding of the Beit Mikdash.

Tisha B'Av commemorates not only the suffering at the time of the destructions of the Batei Mikdash, but all of our suffering till today (Crusaders, burning of books and communities, Holocaust, etc.), because it all stems from the destabilization of our relationship with God, reflected in the continued Churban HaMikdash.

Tisha B'Av's message is much broader than just the longing for the Beit Mikdash; it also includes the recognition of the

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**True
independence
and peace...
only with the
rebuilding of the
Beit Mikdash**

reason for and the implications of the continued churban.

As Religious Zionists, we feel an additional pain on Tisha B'Av. We see our return to Eretz Yisrael as the beginning of the redemption process so its being incomplete is all the more frustrating. When we read of the churban we feel that we are closer than ever to completing the process of rebuilding the Beit Mikdash. God has returned us to our Land and awaits our response of truly returning to Him in a way that justifies the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

May we fast and reflect on Tisha B'Av in a way that can facilitate the realization of the dreams of Jews all over the world and throughout the generations who have still yearned while mourning for 2,000 years.

Rabbi Reuven and Rabbanit Shani Taragin are the Educational Directors of World Mizrachi and RZA-Mizrachi USA. Rabbi Taragin is also Dean of the Yeshivat HaKotel Overseas Program





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Beatings or Blossoms?

The three Haftarah readings we read at this time of the year begin with the first chapter of Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) who was inaugurated as a prophet 40 years before the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. Upon his initiation as national prophet, God asks him: "What do you see?"

Yirmiyahu answers, "I see a rod (makel) of an almond tree (shaked)," whereupon God responds, "You have seen well for I shall bring My word quickly." Rashi explains that the almond rod is indicative of the speed of God's punishment: Just as the almond blossoms for 21 days until fruition, so too will God bring punishment during the 21 days between the 17th of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av. The Malbim (Jeremiah 1:11) explains that one should not just focus on the almond, but on Yirmiyahu's identification of the rod as a makel – a rod. Not a staff of leadership (mateh) or a cane of support (mishenet), but a makel, a rod used for beating. Yirmiyahu understood that God's message was an indicator that He was to bring His 'rod of striking and punishment' upon the Nation.

Perhaps that is why God asks, "What do you see?" for Yirmiyahu could have easily seen the same rod and identified it as a mateh! In Parshat Korach (Bamidbar 17), after Korach's rebellion against the appointment of Aharon as the Kohen Gadol (High Priest), God demonstrated the divine nature of selection. Each tribal leader was commanded to bring a staff (mateh, which also means tribe)

with his tribal name engraved upon it. The next morning, only Aharon's staff blossomed, brought forth buds, and bore ripe almonds, indicating God's selection of Aharon and his descendants as priestly leaders. So Yirmiyahu could have seen the almond rod as a match of leadership and divine selection.

However, God enjoins him to look closely – "What do you see?" i.e. do you see a staff of leadership and selection, or as you appreciate the context of God's words and the religious-historical zeitgeist, do you see impending punishment represented by the makel? Yirmiyahu intuitively answers correctly – he sees a makel of almond grain (Radak) – the imminent punishment.

Nevertheless, Yirmiyahu later encourages the people by telling them that God will heal their wounds and return their wearied souls to the Land of Israel.



"And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them (shakadeti) to pluck up and to break down, and to overthrow and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over (eshkod) them to build and to plant, says God." (Jeremiah 31:27)

The same verb – "shakad" – used for the word almond is employed in these words of comfort too! Just as God brought the makel of striking quickly like the shaken, so too will He bring redemption and rebuilding. The employment of the same verb underscores the message of consolation; sometimes we are meant to anticipate the beatings of exile and punishment, and sometimes we are meant to see the blossoming of fruit and redemption.

What do we see? Do we see and anticipate rods of retribution or do we see blossoms of redemption? The answer lies not in prophetic interpretation, but in our internalizing the messages of the prophecies of the past for the present. Are we deserving of the fruitful almonds and blossoms or are we to be wary of impending punishment for not properly following religious directives? The answer is that what we see is up to us! This is the season when we determine what will blossom. Let us take these 21 days to heart and view our lives with clearer vision and understanding!

Rabbanit Taragin is a senior educator in women's higher educational institutions in Israel





If My Grandfather Could See Jerusalem Today

The period between the 17th of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av is laden with the pain of history. These are days for which our Sages instituted a number of decrees in order to keep the memory of the burning of the Beit HaMikdash and the destruction of Jerusalem imprinted in our minds. And indeed, even 2,000 years after the Temple's destruction, the Jewish people still remember their national tragedies, place ashes on their heads, and together with Jeremiah, lament, *"How does the city sit solitary, that was full of people!"* (Lamentations 1:1)

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Thanks to countless prayers, boundless efforts and daring acts of courage, this prophecy is now our reality

For 2,000 years, we have mourned for Jerusalem; for 2,000 years, Jerusalem has been the focus of every prayer, every request, and every hope; for 2,000 years, we have turned towards Jerusalem with deep longing.

Today thank God, after meriting the rebirth of Jewish sovereignty 70 years ago and the liberation of Jerusalem 51 years ago, we can see a different Jerusalem with our very own eyes. This is a colorful and developed city whose walls are strong and streets are bustling; where Torah study and technological innovation combine.

If only I could take my own grandfather – who did not merit seeing the dream and yet continued to pray *"L'Shana HaBa'a BiYerushalayim HaBenuya"* – for a tour of Jerusalem, I would show him how the city is flourishing once again.

I would take him to the Knesset, the symbol of the sovereign State of Israel. I am sure he would be proud to see his grandson presiding over the foremost symbol of modern Jewish democracy. I know he would be moved to see the national institutions of today standing within eyeshot of those from the time of David and Solomon.

I would take him to the Hebrew University, one of the world's leading research institutions, and to the National Library, which houses the spiritual and intellectual treasures of the Jewish people. I would take him to Machane Yehuda, filled to capacity with vendors and customers, a cacophony of colors and smells and the lively sounds of business. I would take him to the dozens

of start-up incubators and to the cultural institutions, synagogues and playgrounds which crowd the streets of modern Jerusalem. I would tell him, "Your hope was not for naught!" Jerusalem not only has a glorious past, but a wonderful present and a promising future. Today, perhaps more than ever, this is a city of beauty, and people come from around the world to enjoy it and learn from it. Finally, I would tell him that despite all the challenges, Torah and tidings – of creativity, blessing, and peace – still emanate from Jerusalem.

Today, the Three Weeks are not just a reminder that the prophecies of destruction were fulfilled in full. They remind us, to recall the words of Rabbi Akiva, that the prophecies of comfort have also been fulfilled.

I am encouraged by the words of Zechariah, who stood in Jerusalem at the beginning of Shivat Zion, the Return to Zion, and cried out, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited without walls for the multitude of men and cattle." (Zechariah 2:4) In other words, the walls and boundaries that confined the destroyed city will one day burst from the sheer amount of people and trade.

Thanks to countless prayers, boundless efforts and daring acts of courage, this prophecy is now our reality. Together with Jews from around the world, I pray that our eternal city will continue to grow and flourish and that its light will shine throughout the entire world.

MK Yuli Yoel Edelstein is the Speaker of the Knesset



Ask
the
Rabbi

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon



Questions and Answers

When I brush my teeth and wash my mouth with water, am I still considered to be fasting?

It is forbidden to wash one's mouth on a public fast day (Shulchan Aruch 5167:3), although the Rema (Darchei Moshe 100:1) writes that the Maharil permitted 'rubbing' one's throat with water, but not on Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur. The Mishna Berura writes (5167:11) that brushing teeth can be allowed in a case of discomfort, but one should tilt one's head so as not to mistakenly swallow, which is also the Minchat Yitzchak's opinion (4:109).

But in our times, we can allow tooth brushing l'chatchila (from the outset)! Why?

1. Because we are used to brushing our teeth every day, and we do feel uncomfortable if we don't brush.



2. The concern about brushing teeth is that we may swallow water. Therefore, since toothpaste is not fit for consumption, one can use it l'chatchila, since there is no fear of swallowing it. And if the purpose of washing our mouth is to remove the toothpaste (and we have no intention of swallowing the water), it seems that this is permitted l'chatchila. If one wants to be stringent, one can brush and wash with mouthwash, and then there is certainly no prohibition (because mouthwashes are not fit to drink).

Therefore, it is permitted to brush one's teeth on a lesser fast day l'chatchila. However, this is not the case on Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur (although there is room for discussion, but we are accustomed to be extra stringent on these days).

When a group of people travel together, is it better that one person says Tefillat HaDerech for everyone or that each person says it for themselves?

The answer depends on whether Tefillat HaDerech (Prayer for a Journey) is a bracha or a tefilla, a blessing or a prayer. If it's a blessing, one would be able to exempt others, but if it's a prayer, the Gemara says that prayer "is a request for mercy" and that each individual is supposed to pray for himself (apart from a person who doesn't know how to).

Is Tefillat HaDerech a bracha or a tefilla?

On the one hand, when the Gemara or the Rishonim talk about "Tefilla" they are usually referring to the Amidah, and all the brachot in the Amidah are considered

brachot. On the other hand, the Tefillat HaDerech text is like a prayer, and it appears in the Shulchan Aruch (Siman 110) with other prayer issues, and not in Hilchot Brachot. The Tosafot (Berachot 60b; Pesachim 104a) also writes that Tefillat HaDerech does not begin with "Baruch" because it is a "Tefilla B'Alma" (a regular prayer).

Apart from that, the reason it is impossible to fulfill someone else's prayer obligation is because of "a request for mercy," and the whole essence of Tefillat HaDerech is a request for mercy!

So there are those that say one can exempt others, but it is best if everyone says Tefillat HaDerech for themselves (Kinyan Torah Responsa 2:119). Others have written that one cannot exempt others (Rav Chaim David Halevi, Mayim Chaim Responsa, 1:8).

Indeed it is preferable if each person says it for themselves, but it is worth having one person say it out loud with everyone saying it with him (if someone finds it difficult to say, or is concerned that perhaps there is no obligation to say it on this particular journey, he should listen and answer Amen.)

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon is Head of Mizrahi's Shalhevet Educational Advisory Board, Chairman of the Halacha Education Center and Rabbi of Machon Lev



Listening to the Prophetic Voice

At this time, as we recall the destruction of our two Temples, we read three of the most searing passages in prophetic literature, from the beginnings of Jeremiah and Isaiah.

Perhaps this is the only time of the year when we are so acutely aware of the enduring force of Israel's great visionaries. The prophets had no power. They were not kings or members of the royal court. They were (usually) not priests or members of the religious establishment and they held no office. Often they were deeply unpopular, none more so than Jeremiah, who was arrested, flogged, abused, put on trial and only narrowly escaped with his life. Only rarely were the prophets heeded in their lifetimes: Jonah for example, and he spoke to non-Jews, the citizens of Nineveh. Yet their words were recorded for posterity and

became a major feature of Tanach. They were the world's first social critics and their message continues through the centuries. To paraphrase Kierkegaard: when a king dies, his power ends; when a prophet dies his influence begins.¹

The prophet was distinctive not because he (or she – there were seven biblical prophetesses) foretold the future. The ancient world was full of people who claimed to know the forces that govern fate and “shape our ends, rough-hew them how we will.” Judaism has no time for such people. The Torah bans one “who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead” (Deuteronomy 18:10-11). It disbelieves such practices because it believes in human freedom. The future is not pre-scripted. The prophet warns – not

predicts – of the future that will happen if we do not heed the danger and mend our ways. The future depends on us and the choices we make.

Nor was the prophet distinctive in blessing or cursing the people. In Judaism, blessing comes through priests not prophets.

Several things made the prophets unique. The first was their sense of history. The prophets were the first people to see God in history. We tend to take our sense of time for granted. Time flows. As the saying goes, time is God's way of keeping everything from happening at once. But actually there are several ways of relating to time and different civilizations have perceived it differently.

There is cyclical time: time as the slow turning of the seasons, or the cycle of birth, growth, decline and death. Cyclical time is time as it occurs in nature. All that lives, dies. The species endures, individual members do not. Kohelet contains the most famous expression of cyclical time: *“The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course ... What has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.”*

Then there is linear time: time as an inexorable sequence of cause and effect. As French astronomer Pierre-Simon Laplace said in 1814: If you “know all forces that set nature in motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed,” together with all the laws of physics and chemistry, then “nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present” before



Jeremiah on the ruins of Jerusalem (Horace Werner, Wikipedia 0.3)



your eyes. Karl Marx applied this idea to society and history. It is known as historical inevitability, and when transferred to human affairs it amounts to a massive denial of personal freedom.

Finally, there is time as a mere sequence of events with no underlying plot or theme. This leads to the kind of writing pioneered by Herodotus and Thucydides, scholars of ancient Greece.

Each of these concepts has its place, but none was time as the prophets understood it. The prophets saw time as the arena in which God and humanity played out the great drama of life, especially in the history of Israel. If Israel was faithful to its mission, it would flourish. If it was unfaithful it would fail. It would suffer defeat and exile. That was Jeremiah's tireless – and timeless – message.

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As the saying goes, time is God's way of keeping everything from happening at once

The second prophetic insight was the unbreakable connection between monotheism and morality. Somehow the prophets sensed that idolatry was not just false but corrupting. It saw the universe as a multiplicity of oft-clashing powers. Might defeating right. The fittest surviving while the weak perish. Nietzsche believed this, as did the social Darwinists.

Their third great insight was the primacy of ethics over politics. The prophets have surprisingly little to say about politics. Yes, Samuel was wary of monarchy but we find almost nothing in Isaiah or Jeremiah about the way Israel/Judah should be governed. Instead we hear a constant insistence that the strength of the nation is not military or demographic but moral and spiritual. If the people keep faith with God and one another, no force on earth can defeat them. If they do not, no force can save them.

Jeremiah, the most passionate and tormented of all the prophets, has gone down in history as the prophet of doom. Yet this is unfair. He was also supremely a prophet of hope. He is the man who said that the people of Israel will be as eternal as the sun, moon and stars (Jeremiah 31). He is the man who, while the Babylonians were laying siege to Jerusalem, bought a field as a public gesture of faith that Jews would return from exile: *“For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land”* (Jeremiah 32).

Jeremiah's feelings of doom and hope were not in conflict: they were two sides of the same coin. The God who sentenced His people to exile would be the God who brought them back, for though His people might forsake Him, He would never forsake

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Only by being faithful to God do we stay faithful to one another

them. Jeremiah may have lost faith in people; he never lost faith in God.

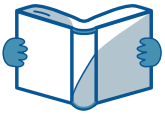
Prophecy ceased in the Second Temple era. But the prophetic truths are eternal. Only by being faithful to God do we stay faithful to one another. Only by understanding the deep forces that shape history can we defeat the ravages of history. Only by being open to a power greater than ourselves can we become greater than ourselves. It took a long time for biblical Israel to learn these truths. We must never forget them again.

¹ Kierkegaard actually said: “The tyrant dies and his rule is over; the martyr dies and his rule begins.” *Papers and Journals*, 352.

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Ordinary Heroes

The Power of Jerusalem

Shlomo (Nagosa) Mula, a former member of Israel's Knesset, was only 16 when he left his home to go to Israel by foot.

It was the stories of the holy city of Jerusalem – with the Golden Temple at its heart – that led him and his friends to endanger their lives back in the early 1980's.

"I had heard stories about Yerusalem (Jerusalem) ever since I was born," he recalls. "We would sit in a circle and the adults would talk. We were 11 brothers and sisters – I was number 5, the sandwich child – and we just listened. It was forbidden to interrupt an adult speaking."

Shlomo's parents talked about Jerusalem as an enchanted place, almost heavenly; a place where the righteous people live. "We were told that anyone who gets to Jerusalem will never die, because it is a

sacred place, with streets flowing with milk and honey."

Jerusalem was very much part of young Shlomo's childhood in Ethiopia. When they slaughtered a cow, they would place it in the direction of Jerusalem. When they went to bed, they would lie with their heads in the direction of the Holy City. And in the winter, whenever a rainbow appeared, they would stand still and listen. "We believed it was a sign that God wanted to speak to us. We would stand in silence, look at the rainbow and wait expectantly for Him to whisk us away to Jerusalem."

One day, after rumors began arriving that Jews from the Tigray region had managed to reach Jerusalem, his friend Azamaro said to him, "Let's go to Jerusalem!"

"How does one get to Jerusalem?" Shlomo asked in wonder. "Just like the Jews from Tigray," said Azamaro. "First we walk to Sudan, and then we cross the desert to Egypt, walk to Beersheba (where our forefather Abraham lived), and on to Jerusalem."

It was a crazy plan. Escaping Ethiopia to Sudan was wrought with danger – thousands of miles of jungles, deserts, hostile locals, tigers, lions, snakes... the stuff of movies...

But in 1981, Shlomo and 15 friends – with no shoes, a cob of corn and an earthenware water bottle – set out for Jerusalem, after paying a local guide \$2 to take them to Sudan. "We walked fast. With every step we felt that Jerusalem was getting closer." But it certainly wasn't a walk in the park.

First, their guide got drunk. Secondly they had to split up into smaller groups so they wouldn't be caught. And third, after hiding for a few hours in the trees, they were confronted by a huge snake.

After they'd overcome those obstacles, they were then attacked by a band of armed robbers, who made them strip to their underwear and stole whatever remaining money they had, eventually letting them continue on their way.

Eventually, the group managed to make their way out of the jungle, only to be faced with the trek across the Kassala Desert. An endless sea of sand with no water in sight. After almost five days of continuous walking – over 400 miles – with eyes burning, throats dry and feet sinking into the sand, they reached the edge of the desert. But it was there that despair began to set in.

It was Shlomo's eldest brother who encouraged them all to carry on. "Not much longer. Jerusalem is waiting for us. A few more hours of suffering and that'll be it!" If only...

As soon as they entered Sudan they were captured and thrown into prison. They spent 90 days under torture and repeated interrogations. The guards enjoyed beating them up with sticks and branches and tried to break them mentally as well.

"I almost gave in," recalls Shlomo. "Was the goal really worth all this suffering? But I knew that whoever broke first would condemn the rest of us to death. I knew Jerusalem was waiting for us, with its sweet milk and honey flowing in the streets."



The goal became even more important after Azamaro, the friend who had instigated the trip, died in jail.

One day they were suddenly transported to a refugee camp, Um-Rakuba, along with thousands of other Africans who had tried to escape their own corrupt or war-torn countries.

Although they didn't know it at the time, there were Mossad agents in Um-Rakuba, charged with transferring the Jews to another camp at Gedarif, run by the Red Cross. This too involved a night-time getaway, another long walk, hiding and bribing a local driver.

On February 3rd, 1984, Shlomo Mula and his friends reached Gedarif. A Mossad agent handed them some clothes. They were able to change their shirts and pants for the first time in three years.

"Follow me!" ordered the agent. Shlomo and his friends didn't know what to expect. They had every reason to be suspicious.

But after yet another long walk, they finally came to a clearing occupied by a group of armed soldiers, faces covered and wearing helmets.

"This time we thought we were finished," said Shlomo.

And then they saw a huge bird roaring in the sky, splitting the clouds before landing nearby. "We were really scared. We'd never seen a plane before."

The soldiers pushed them into these birds; it was dark, cool and very noisy inside. They sat on the floor. And then the soldiers took off their masks and helmets and starting singing "Heveinu Shalom Aleichem" in Hebrew.

"I had no idea what was happening until someone told us: This is a plane from Eretz Yisrael. The white soldiers are Jews. We have come to take you to Jerusalem!"



What's in a Word



גְּלִידָה

Dr. Avshalom Kor



If you come to Eretz Yisrael in the summer, you are likely to find yourself eating ice cream – גְּלִידָה. The creation of the word גְּלִידָה is a fascinating story combining verses from Tanach, Onkelos's translation of the Torah, and even Italian.

140 years ago, a need arose to give a name to this beloved summer treat. Anyone who reads שְׁנֵי יָמִים מִקְרָא וְאַחַד פְּתוּגָה – or anyone who just takes a look at Onkelos's translation – is familiar with the word גְּלִידָה, written with an ך at the end, from Ya'akov's words to his father-in-law Lavan: "זֶה עֲשׂוּיִם שָׁנָה אֲנוּכִי עִמָּךְ... בְּיוֹם אֶכְלֶנִי חֶרֶב וְקָרָח בְּלִילָה" (בראשית לא, מ).

Onkelos translates קָרָח (ice) as גְּלִידָה. And the word גְּלִידָה is also found in the Mishna

(for example in Tractate Mikvaot 7:1), as one of the types of freezing cold water permitted for immersion in a Mikveh, a ritual bath: "הַשֶּׁלֶג וְהַבָּרָד וְהַכֶּסֶל וְהַגְּלִיד...". (The letter ך at the end of a word is the Aramaic equivalent of the הּ [the definite article] at the start of a word in Hebrew.)

However, in both places, in Bereishit and in the Mishna in Mikavot, the text is referring to plain ice, not to ice designated for consumption.

Therefore, we must return to the first morning we came across manna in the Sinai Desert, after we had left Egypt: "וַתַּעַל שְׁכַבְתָּ הַטֵּל וְהָיָה עַל פְּנֵי הַמִּדְבָּר דָּק מְחֻסָּפָס, דָּק כְּכֹר עַל הָאָרֶץ" (שמות טז, יד). Here, Onkelos translates the word כֹּר as

גְּלִידָה, because we are talking about גְּלִידָה, ice, as food! And the Torah even tells us its taste: (לא, שם) "וְטַעְמוֹ כְּצִפְיָחִית בְּדִבְשׁ"

Said Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the man who revived the Hebrew language for day-to-day life: If this is sweet ice, then the word גְּלִידָה is fitting for our summer food. And we'll write it with a ה at the end, giving it the same form as another Biblical food: גְּבִינָה, cheese.

And the Italians can add that the Hebrew word for ice cream, coined by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, sounds very much like its Italian counterpart, gelato!

Dr. Avshalom Kor is an Israeli linguist and expert on Hebrew grammar and semantics





Current Torah

Matot-Masei

Sivan Rahav-Meir



Keep Going

"These are the journeys of the Children of Israel who came out of the Land of Egypt."
(Bamidbar 33:11)

This first verse of the portion of Masei, which we read a week before Tisha B'Av, reminds us of the 42 geographical stations through which the Children of Israel passed on their way from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael. The Torah spends many verses describing this long journey in between each of these places.

We can interpret the listing of these names in different ways. The Ramban (Nachmanides) writes that "The secret of this matter has not been revealed to us." It's a mystery, something we need to decipher.

“We should always look back and contemplate the journeys in our personal lives, and know that there is a reason for and significance to every milestone

Perhaps our history is the solution and the explanation. After all, the journey has not yet ended. The Torah details the journeys in the past but we still haven't reached our final destination. The people would reach the Land but would also be exiled from it, and then they would return and be driven out yet again, and only in our generation would they merit a renewed ingathering in Eretz Yisrael.

The expression *"these are the journeys"* not only summarizes the journeys of the past, but foresees the journeys of the future: we are destined to experience many more than 42 milestones. Cities and villages, shtetls and ghettos, pogroms and camps...

And it's not just our national journey. According to Chassidic commentaries, the verses tell us that we should always look back and contemplate the journeys in our personal lives, and know that there is a reason for and significance to every milestone. And that we should be always looking forward to the next stop, and remembering that our journeys will never end.

Rabbanit Esther Jungreis once wrote that throughout all these journeys, the Jewish people must preserve its sense of being created in God's image: "In the midst of the Nazi horrors, I always said to myself: In spite of it all, thank God I am on the side of the murdered and not on the side of the murderers. I saw how the most cultured nation in the world could sink to carry out the most terrifying evil in the world. And when I think about our journeys, it appears they shouldn't be talking about us as victims but as victors. The Jewish people was not saved from

the Holocaust but emerged victorious, and it is incumbent upon us to continue to win."

Wheat and Chaff

Sometimes we don't need commentary. The Torah verses speak for themselves. Before they left for war, the tribes of Reuben and Gad ask permission from Moses to leave their property and children behind: *"Pens for the flock we shall build here for our livestock and cities for our infants."* (Bamidbar 32:16) In that order. First the business, then the family.

Moshe Rabbeinu answers them, but he changes the order: *"Build yourselves cities for your infants and pens for your flock."* First the kids, then your job.

This is not semantics. It's an order of ethical priority.

As Rashi writes so simply: "they were more concerned about their money than their sons and daughters..." Moshe said to them, no! Make the important important and the less important less important. Career is for the family and not vice-versa.

This reminded me of the advice given to parents in Israel so they don't forget their children in the car in the heat of summer: leave your mobile phone next to the child, because you'll never forget that ...

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a popular Israeli journalist, broadcaster and author of #Parasha



**Israel
Insight**

David M. Weinberg



If I Forget to Build in Thee, O Jerusalem

Thank God a thousand times that the streets of Jerusalem are no longer empty. They are filled daily with close to one million residents and tourists. Darchei Tzion einan aveilot – the roads to Zion are no longer in mourning!

Keeping it this way requires constant renewal. Jerusalem needs 6,000 new apartments a year just to meet the demands of natural growth. Unfortunately, there has been almost no major residential construction in Jerusalem for two decades, mainly because of diplomatic constraints.

Jerusalem already abuts Ramallah in the north and Bethlehem in the south. Environmental lobbies have stymied plans for housing projects in the green mountains west of the city. So the only direction to grow is eastwards, beyond the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus into the quadrant known as E-1, along the road to Ma'ale Adumim. This is the last significant piece of unsettled land in the Jerusalem envelope, and some 50,000 homes can be built there.

Every Israeli prime minister since Yitzhak Rabin has promised to expand Jerusalem into E-1, but has been blocked by successive American administrations. Washington argues that Israeli settlement of E-1 interferes with Palestinian territorial contiguity. Israel argues that a system of road underpasses is sufficient to connect Palestinian autonomous areas.

The result of this standoff is that upwardly-mobile young Israeli families have few affordable housing options in Jerusalem, and they have been moving elsewhere. This leaves Jerusalem primarily with a socio-economically poor population – Arabs and



Yeshivat HaKotel (MathKnight-Ma'ale HaYetzira, Wikipedia 2.5)

Haredi Jews. This has grim implications for the attachment of mainstream Israelis to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem must grow in order to remain a pluralistic and modern metropolis; a city for all Jews – and E-1 is the right solution.

Just 50 years ago, naysayers said that it was insane to build over the Green Line, or to move back into the mainly-Arab Old City of Jerusalem. Pioneers like Rabbis Aryeh Bina and Yeshayahu Hadari, the founders of Yeshivat Hakotel, defied such opposition.

They waded into the ruins wrought by 19 years of Jordanian occupation, intent on bringing Torah study back to the Temple precinct. The first classes were held on Tisha B'Av, our day of lamentation for the destruction of the First and Second Jewish Temples. It was more than symbolic that davka on this day modern Israel's Religious Zionist frontiersmen trail-blazed their way back into ancient Jerusalem.

Great philanthropists like Kurt Rothschild of Canada and Maurice Wohl of England later helped build the yeshiva's colossal building.

Under the deanship of Rabbi Hadari, who passed away this year, Yeshivat Hakotel grew into a powerhouse of scholarship and leadership training, with alumni active in all walks of Israeli and Diaspora Jewish life.

Rabbi Hadari's powerful personality and spiritual worldview were what drew me and so many others to the yeshiva. He uniquely combined Volozhin with Zionism. He was questing for "Cossacks with shtreimels," as he once picturesquely described it; meaning that he was seeking to raise a generation of soldiers who were also scholars deeply entrenched in Jewish learning. Specifically, this was Torah flavored by the Hassidic thought of the Sfot Emet and Rav Zadok, and infused with Rav A.Y. Kook's Zionist-transformational bent.

He was a true boneh Tzion, a builder of Jerusalem. May his memory be a blessing.

David M. Weinberg is the Vice-President of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies

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One
on
One

Should we be Actively Building t

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner

After the incredible victory in the Six-Day War in 1967, our Rabbi, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook, would emphasize Maimonides' words at the beginning of the Laws of Kings, that the establishment of the Kingship of Israel precedes the building of the Temple, and that our current mission is not to build the Temple but to build the Kingship of Israel.



Every mitzvah of every Jew throughout the world and throughout the generations builds Jerusalem, and when a certain amount is reached, the Temple will actually be constructed

Therefore, even though, with God's help, we have merited a government which has the status of kingship to a certain extent, it is definitely not a complete kingship,¹ and so we need to focus all of our energy in this direction.

However, there is something else that we should do to advance the building of the Beit HaMikdash. Maimonides wrote in Hilchot Beit HaBechira (6:6), that the holiness of the Land of Israel is established through conquest, whereas the holiness of the site of the Temple is determined by way of the Divine Presence.

And how do we cause the Divine Presence to come to rest on that site? Through Torah and Mitzvot, kindness and love. In the Amidah prayer, one of the blessings is "God builds Jerusalem," in which "Jerusalem" is referring to the Temple and "builds" is in the present tense. Yet how is God building it? We don't see anything happening right now. Surely we should be saying, "He will build it"?

We do not see because we are looking through our limited, mortal eyes. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook explained that every mitzvah of every Jew throughout the world and throughout the generations builds Jerusalem, and when a certain amount is reached, the Temple will actually be constructed. A particularly important mitzvah is groundless love, as in Rav Kook's famous words that the Third Temple will be built through groundless love (Orot HaKodesh 3:324).

So we have to wait.

Even when King David wished to build the Temple, God told him that the time had not yet arrived. God told him: Now is the time of wars. Now is the time of building up the kingdom. The time for building the Temple will come later – through your son Solomon.

The halachic delay tells us that the time has not yet arrived.² We have a lot of work ahead of us. When the Six-Day War ended and Rav Tzvi Yehuda's class for his top students recommenced, he humbly asked, "What should we learn now?" One student suggested, "Perhaps the laws of the Temple?" Our master warmly grasped that student's hand and said to him, "Before we learn that we have a lot more to learn about the laws of kings and their wars."

Nevertheless, throughout history the Jews have expressed a longing for the Temple and the Temple Mount, and every prayer ends with: *"May it be God's will that the Temple should be rebuilt speedily in our days."* We should derive strength and courage from this burning longing to add one more mitzvah, more Torah learning, more kindness and more holiness.

One by one, mitzvah by mitzvah, kindness by kindness, the Temple will be rebuilt.

¹ Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook explains that since the government was elected by a majority, it contains some of the obligations of kingship but none of the privileges.

² If we are unable to build the Temple for halachic reasons, it is a sign that God does not yet want us to do so.



the Beit HaMikdash?



Rabbi
Shlomo Aviner

Rabbi
Yisrael Ariel

Rabbi Yisrael Ariel

“Rise and Let us go up to Zion”

Why has the Third Temple still not been built? After all, that is what we have been praying for in every generation: *“May it be Thy Will... that You take us up in joy to our Land and plant us in our borders, and there we will make our obligatory sacrifices before You.”*

Our generation merited the God of Israel restoring us to the Temple precinct through miraculous events, with the army of Israel entering the Temple Mount to the moving sounds of the shofar. So our question is even louder: why have the people delayed in fulfilling their obligation to renew the Temple service?

Let us look at what our ancestors did for the sake of the building of the House of God. In Second Temple times, approximately 42,000 Jews made Aliyah from Babylon. Despite being desperately short of resources and surrounded by enemies, the first thing they did was to renew the Temple service (See Ezra 3:10).

The Hasmoneans did the same after expelling the Greeks from the Temple – as we say in the “Al HaNissim” prayer on Chanukah: *“Your children entered the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleaned Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, and lit candles...”* Despite the hardships and the wars, the Second Temple was built in all of its glory, and that period

was a golden age in Jewish history. As the Sages said: *“He who has not seen Herod’s Temple has never seen a beautiful building in his life.”*

The Second Temple was destroyed and the Jewish people exiled, but attempts to rebuild the Temple continued. A very important description is found in the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 64) in which Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hanania – one of the heads of the Sanhedrin – went up with others from the Exile to build the Third Temple with royal permission. The people made their way en masse to Jerusalem. As they reached the Rimmon Valley, the king’s clerk arrived with an annulment of the permit. There was a suspicion of rebellion, and Yehoshua ben Hanania calmed the anger by expressing hope that the Temple would soon be rebuilt. But the fire of rebellion had been ignited, the people did not give up on building the Bayit, and Bar Kochba, guided by Rabbi Akiva, fought the Roman legions. His soldiers reached Jerusalem but were brutally thwarted by Hadrian.

The mitzvah of building the Mikdash has occupied our Torah leaders in every generation, and a major part of the Talmud is dedicated to the topic. Maimonides says that the mitzvah of building the Temple – which covers 200 of the 613 commandments – is an obligatory mitzvah in every generation. He himself endangered his life to pray at the Temple Mount, making that day a personal festival for the rest of his life.

In the 13th century, Rabbi Yechiel of Paris made Aliyah with 300 other rabbis and planned to build the Mikdash in place of the Dome of the Rock (exactly where the First and Second Temples were too) and to begin the work of the sacrifices. The plan was aborted following the Tartar’s invasion of Jerusalem. And in recent generations, Rabbi Kalischer, the Chafetz Chaim and Rabbi Kook have aroused the public to make the necessary preparations for building the Temple again.

Our modern spiritual and political leadership has yet to completely free itself of the Exilic mentality and suffices with a prayer area at the Western Wall. But we are comforted by a new and alert generation, proudly carrying the “Flag of Jerusalem” raised by Rabbi Kook, and calling for the rebuilding of the Mikdash in Jerusalem. Our young people are engaged in the laws of the Mikdash and acting to rebuild it speedily in our days, as they issue the clarion call: *“Rise and let us go up to Zion to the House of God our Lord.”*

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner is Rosh Yeshiva of Ateret Yerushalayim and Rabbi of Beit-El

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