



*Likutei Lechteich*

# TISHAH B'AV

תשפ"ה

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לעז"נ • נח רפאל ז"ל בן ר' יוסף חיים הכהן • ישראל ז"ל בן ר' ישעיה הלוי

## *Not Part of the Promise*

Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira of Munkacs, known as the Minchas Elazar (1871–1937), once fell seriously ill and was hospitalized far from home in Budapest.

It was a difficult time to be a Jew. Antisemitism was rampant, and even in the hospital, Jews weren't treated kindly.

As Shabbos approached, the Rebbe made a heartfelt request. He turned to his doctor and asked, "Please, may I daven with a minyan here in the hospital? Just ten men. Quietly. No disturbance to anyone."

The hospital refused. "It's too dangerous. It's against the rules."

Later, privately, the Rebbe gently approached the doctor again. "Please understand. This is deeply important to me. I promise—we'll be discreet. Only ten men. No disruption. Just the chance to daven together."

The doctor looked at him, paused, and said, "For you—a holy sage, a righteous man—I'll take responsibility. I trust you."

The Rebbe smiled and gave him a heartfelt *brachah* for a long life.

That Friday night, the Rebbe, still weak in bed, sat up. As planned, ten men quietly entered the room, one by one, until a *minyan* had gathered. The Rebbe's hope—fulfilled.

They began to daven minchah. As a preparation, they recited *kapitlach* of *tehillim* together. When they reached *kapitel zayin*—"Yomru geulei

*Hashem*"—the words struck a deep chord: *Those redeemed by Hashem will say so, those He redeemed from the hand of distress...*

They were proclaiming that it is Hashem—only Hashem—who has the power to save us. From enemies. From fear. From anxiety. From every form of darkness.

The Rebbe listened closely. He took it all in—the room, the quiet *minyan* in the hospital—and it left a profound impression on him. His eyes filled with tears. His heart pounded. The words hit him like lightning.

They continued: "*From the east and the west, from the north and the sea...*"

Every direction. Every place. It's all under Hashem's Hand. His judgment. His mercy. His presence.

And suddenly, the Rebbe could no longer contain himself. A cry burst from his lips. Tears streamed down his cheeks. His body trembled as he sobbed aloud.

The doctor, alarmed, rushed into the room. "Rebbe, please! You promised to stay quiet. I could lose my position. Why this noise? This commotion? We had an agreement."

After Shabbos, the doctor sat beside the Rebbe. "Rebbe," he said gently, "I don't understand. Even if you felt deeply... couldn't you have been more careful? More considerate? What if you woke up the other patients?"

The Rebbe answered softly:

“Doctor... please understand... I tried. I really did.”

“But that night,” the Rebbe said, “I heard a scream. A terrible scream. It was loud—so loud—and full of pain. It woke me up, and I couldn’t fall back asleep. And I started thinking...how strict is this rule of silence, really?”

Someone was screaming. There was pain, fear... and it woke me, too. And I—I started to scream.”

“It was truly a scary situation,” the Rebbe explained to the doctor.

The doctor looked back at him and said, “Rebbe...that scream came from a man who had been hit by a car. His legs were crushed. He was crying out from unbearable pain. And that’s why we need quiet—so people like him can rest, recover. That’s what our deal was about. That’s why I don’t understand you. Why were you screaming?”

The Rebbe paused. He sat in silence, thinking how to explain something this deep to someone outside the world of Jewish pain.

And then he turned to the doctor and asked, “Doctor...in all your training—in medical school—did they ever teach you about Jewish pain?”

The doctor looked confused. “Jewish pain?”

The Rebbe nodded. “Yes. Do you know what it feels like to be a Jew waiting thousands of years for Mashiach to come? Every year we say, ‘This is the year.’ And every year—we’re still waiting. Still in exile.”

He looked directly into the doctor’s eyes and said, “That pain—of the Jewish soul longing for redemption—is real. It’s deep. It’s raw. And sometimes, it just bursts out.

“That scream wasn’t just mine. It was the cry of the Shechinah, Hashem’s Presence, in *galus*. It was the cry of the Beis HaMikdash going up in flames. The cry of generations of Jews torn from their homes. Of mothers and children hiding in fear. Of entire families—waiting, praying, hoping: When will it finally be time? When will Mashiach come?

“That’s what I was crying about.

“And yes—we had a deal. And yes—you were kind to me. But you have to understand: this wasn’t me. This was something bigger than me. It wasn’t something I could control.”

“Just like you understand that man—screaming in pain from crushed legs—you must understand my scream too. My crushed spirit. My shattered hopes. My broken dreams.

“This didn’t come from my mind. It came from the deepest place in my soul.

“That’s what I was crying about.

“Please...try to understand.”

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On Tishah B’Av, we feel that cry.

We sit on the floor like mourners. We don’t eat. We don’t greet. We cry. We remember the

*The pain of the Jewish soul longing for redemption is real.  
It’s deep. It’s raw. And sometimes, it just bursts out.*

Churban—the destruction—and all the pain that followed.

But this pain isn't limited to just one day a year.

Every pain we know—the fear, the confusion, the loneliness, the division, the darkness in the world—it all comes from one source: Shechinah *b'galusa*. Hashem is in exile. The world is not whole. And if Hashem is in pain, then so are we.

Maybe today—even right now—Hashem will look down and say: My children are ready. They want Me. I'm coming home.

And then...

The long, sad cry will become a shout of joy. The tears will turn to dancing. What was broken will become whole.

And the Third Beis HaMikdash—the Bayis Shlishi—will shine forever. May we be *zocheh* to that day.

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## *Bear Hug*

About 20 years ago, I heard a shiur from the great Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus *zt"l* that gave me a perspective I've carried with me ever since—especially on this day, the day when we sit on the floor, mourning together across the world.

The *pasuk* says, “*Mizmor l'Asaf—Elokim, ba'u goyim b'nachalasecha*.”

It's a song—a *mizmor*—about the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

And Chazal ask the obvious question: *Mizmor l'Asaf*? A song?

Shouldn't it say *Kina l'Asaf*—a lament? This is the Churban!

How can Asaf sing about the Beis HaMikdash going up in flames?

We see the same thing in Megillas Eicha. Yirmiyahu Hanavi watches children collapsing

in hunger in the streets. And what does he say?

“*Kumi roni balayla*—Get up and sing at night.”

Not *kini*, not “cry”—but *roni*, “sing.”

Sing—about what?

“*Al nefesh oleh lach*—over the souls of your starving children.”

Sing—about devastation? About loss? How can that be?

And the question deepens with the famous story at the end of Makkos 24b.

When Rabbi Akiva saw foxes coming out of the Kodesh HaKodashim, his friends wept—and he laughed.

What are we to make of this?

How can there be song, laughter, light—on Tishah B'Av?

How can we sing in the shadow of so much destruction?

Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus offered a perspective that is at once novel and deeply true—so simple, so piercing, and so profound.

Chazal teach that Tishah B'Av is a *moed*—a festival. Not that it will become a *moed* in the future, but that it is a *moed* even now, in 2025. Amid the pain, in the heart of the darkness, in the tragedies that surround us—Tishah B'Av is still called a *moed*.

Just as Pesach is the time of our freedom, Shavuot the time of receiving the Torah, and Sukkot the time of joy, Tishah B'Av is the time of redemption.

It's the day Mashiach is born. That's not just a historical statement—it's a revolution in how we understand the day. If from this fire and devastation, Geulah can be born—if out of ashes and grief can emerge redemption—then Tishah B'Av is not just the end. It's the beginning.

If Mashiach comes from here, then somewhere within the river of tears...there is a song.

And once we hear even the faintest note of that song, everything shifts. The breakdown contains the breakthrough. The destruction contains the rebuilding. And the darkness holds light.

But how is that possible?

To begin to understand, says R' Pinchas of Pshischa, we must shift how we see darkness itself.

He says: walk into any shul and what do you see? A *mechitzah*. A divider.

At first glance, it seems to separate—but in truth, it facilitates closeness. It creates a sacred space where men and women, though required

to be apart, can daven side by side, can connect deeply with Hashem. Without the *mechitzah*, there would be no space for that kind of connection.

The same is true in creation. Hashem separated the upper and lower waters—not to distance them, but to make room for life.

At Har Sinai, Hashem wrapped Himself in *anan v'arafel*—in cloud and fog and darkness. Not to push us away. On the contrary—to protect us, so we could survive that closeness. The cloud wasn't a curtain—it was a hug.

And when Hashem says, *haster astir panai*—I will hide My face—He never says, I will leave you. Only I will hide. Because if His light were fully revealed in this broken world, we simply couldn't endure it. So He wears a mask.

And that, Rav Shimshon David says, is the secret of Tishah B'Av.

It's the deepest mask of all.

On Purim, Hashem hides behind natural events. In the Megillah, His name isn't mentioned once—but every *pasuk* is saturated with His presence.

Tishah B'Av is the same. The mask is darker. It's terrifying. It looks like destruction. It looks like a bear. It's scary.

But He is still there.

Just like the *mechitzah* in shul, Tishah B'Av allows for closeness. It allows two opposites to co-exist: Hashem's greatness, and our human frailty. His overwhelming light, and our fragile vessels. The only way to be together in this broken world is through a mask, a *mechitzah*—even a *churban*.

To capture this idea, Rav Shimshon once shared a story:

He dressed up on Purim in a giant bear costume. His young son took one look, screamed in terror—“It’s a bear! It’s going to eat me!” But the boy’s mother whispered, “It’s not a bear. It’s Tatty.”

And once the boy knew, once he recognized the truth, he ran toward the bear—and hugged it.

Why? Because behind the frightening exterior was his father, his protector, his source of love.

That is Tishah B’Av.

We see pain. We see destruction. We see exile.

But behind it all—it’s Tatty.

He’s not gone. He’s not angry. He’s hidden. He’s holding us in the only way He can—within a world too broken to hold His light. And when we realize that, the crying begins to shift. It becomes a *mizmor*. A nighttime song.

The tears don’t stop. But they start to shine.

We begin to see the light inside the pain.

We start running toward the darkness, not away—because we know He is in it.

As the Brisker Rav said on the *pasuk*, “*Evrach mimcha eilecha* — I flee from You, to You.” Even when we run from Hashem in pain, we are still running to Him. Because there’s nowhere else to go. Because it’s all the Eibishter.

And even in the midst of tragedy and confusion, we are enveloped in His presence, in His embrace.

And that’s why Tishah B’Av will endure even in the days of Mashiach.

Because it’s the night we stop running away

from pain—and start running into His arms.

Because the burning Beis HaMikdash wasn’t the end of the relationship. It was proof that the relationship still burns.

So how do we find light in the darkest day?

By understanding that the deepest darkness is not the absence of Hashem—it’s His disguise.

And when we see that, Tishah B’Av is no longer a dirge. It becomes a song. A melody of longing, of brokenness, of hope, and of eternal love.

And one day soon, we will sing that song—not in exile—but in the light of a rebuilt Yerushalayim. Holding Tatty’s hand. With no masks. And no more tears.

We sit here on the floor—post-October 7th. After the Holocaust. After so many tragedies, losses, fears. As a *klal*, and as individuals. With our own battles, our own struggles.

And on this day, we say: Yes, it’s painful. Yes, it’s hard. But still, *Evrach mimcha eilecha*—we run from You, to You. Because we know that You are the one behind the mask.

That’s the essence of Tishah B’Av.

May our pain give birth to purpose.

May our tears become *tefillas*.

May our longing turn into song.

And may we be *zocheh* this very year, to walk hand-in-hand with our Father in Heaven, in Yerushalayim HaBenayah—with no more masks, no more distance, no more sorrow.

Only clarity.

Only closeness.

And the everlasting light of the third Beis HaMikdash.

# All About the King

For many long years, a couple prayed silently, their hearts aching with the emptiness of childlessness. Then, a miracle—finally—the wife was expecting a baby. Hope blossomed at last.

But when the time came to give birth, the joy turned to heartbreak. The doctors faced a cruel choice: Save the mother, or save the child. They chose the child. The mother's life slipped away that day—a quiet sacrifice made in the name of love.

Years passed. The father raised their son alone, carrying the weight of loss and love intertwined. As the boy neared his bar mitzvah, something inside him began to drift—his spirit pulling away from the path his parents had dreamed for him.

The father's heart broke silently.

Before the mother's first yahrtzeit, the father pleaded with his son to say Kaddish. The boy hesitated, reluctant to carry the burden of grief.

That night, with tears in his eyes and hope in his heart, the father wrote a letter:

"My dear son,

I know you are struggling, and I love you deeply. But please—remember your mother. You live because she gave her life for you.

I'm not asking you to say Kaddish for yourself. I ask you to say it for her—for the mother who made your very life possible.

Do it for her. Do it for the love that brought you into this world."

This story brings us to an age-old question:

How can we relate to the Churban Beis HaMikdash?

I never saw it. I never experienced its glory. How can I mourn something I've never known?

It becomes even more challenging when Chazal tell us:

האין מקימין על חריבת בית המקדש — כאילו חרב  
בימי.

*One who does not mourn the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash — it is as if it was destroyed in his time.*

But how can we be expected to yearn for something so abstract, so far beyond our direct experience?

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander *zt"l*, the Sifsei Chaim, offers a powerful insight based on the Medrash (Yalkut Shimoni on Eichah):

When Hashem decreed the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, He said:

כי כלה שכינתי בעינה, לא יעמוד שר ולא שטן עליה.  
*As long as My Presence dwells there, no enemy can destroy it.*

Immediately, He removed His Shechinah—and only then was the destruction possible.

We learn that the Beis HaMikdash could only be destroyed after the Shechinah had left. So long as the Shechinah was present, no force could touch it—like trying to set fire in the middle of an ocean.

The Sifsei Chaim explains that Hashem, being pure *kedushah*, can only rest in the highest realms—*shamayim*. But the Beis HaMikdash was the one place in this physical world that could contain that *kedushah*. It was His home. Once He left, it was vulnerable.

And what about us?

In 2025—and still today—we live without the Shechinah.

Yes, Hashem is Shomer Yisrael, always protecting us. But we lack that closeness, that intimate dwelling. We live in a world without His home. And whether we feel it or not, we are suffering from that loss.

Let's briefly reflect on some sources describing these tragic consequences:

*From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the gates of prayer were locked. (Berachos 32:2b)*

*Since the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash... men of faith have ceased to be. (Sotah 48:1)*

*Since the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Hashem has not rejoiced... until the Mikdash is rebuilt. (Yalkut Shimoni)*

*From the day the Temple was destroyed, there is no day without a curse. (Sanhedrin 97:1)*

These sources are not meant to depress us, but to

awaken us — to help us realize that even when life seems comfortable, something essential is missing. We are not yet home. And Hashem is not yet home.

They remind us that all the tragedies we face are a direct result of Shechinah *b'galusa* — the Divine Presence in exile. They are not meant to overwhelm us, but to shake us awake — to remind us that no matter how stable life feels, something profound is still absent. We are still in *galus*.

Take a moment to reflect on some of the darkest nightmares we've endured as a nation in the past decade. Sometimes, the pain of not feeling is itself a kind of pain.

If we cannot cry over our own losses, let us do something even higher — cry for Hashem.

Let us think about Him. He has no home. He is waiting. He is aching.

Like the young boy who never met his mother yet carries her memory and sacrifice within him, we too have never experienced the Beis HaMikdash firsthand, yet its absence deeply reverberates in our souls. The holy stones may be distant, but Hashem's presence—the Shechinah—feels the pain of exile, separated from His home. This loss is alive today, shaping our spiritual reality and calling us to mourn, to yearn, and to prepare for the day when Hashem will return and the sacred dwelling will be restored.

Dedicated by Ari & Elana Lorber (Lawrence, NY)  
אליהו בן ראובן ל'illui nishmas



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