

Tehillim 85-Shivat Zion

Based on a shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

"For the conductor, a song of the sons of *Korah*. O Hashem, You have appeased Your land; You have returned the Captivity of Jacob." Korach was one of the Levites who rebelled against Moshe, but some of his children survived.

L'ratzot means to appease and the *Yalkut Shemoni* says that in the *tochacha* (admonition) at the end of *Vayikra*, Hashem says- If you will not let the land rest you will be exiled and then the land will be placated because she will be given back her *Sabbath*, the year of *shemitta*. In the first exile in Bavel, the land wasn't tilled and cultivated for 70 years rectifying the 70 *shemittas* that were violated. Now the 70 years are over and Hashem has placated the land and is ready to take us back. This psalm was written in the days of Ezra and Nechemya when the Jews began to return.

"You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have concealed all their sin forever. You have taken in all Your wrath; You have retreated from the fierceness of Your anger. Return us, O Hashem of our salvation and

revoke Your anger with us." *Nasata avon* usually means to forgive but can also mean to carry. In the Biblical mindset, you've got this proverbial sack and every time you do something wrong you put a heavy rock in it and you walk around carrying it. Every action has its consequences. When you do something wrong, it creates a psychic spiritual burden and according to natural law there are consequences. Rav Soloveitchik explains that when Hashem lifts the sin off us it means there aren't immediate consequence to our actions. There's a chance to rehabilitate and change our relationship. We can cover the damage but since we betrayed Hashem's trust in us, we must prove our faithfulness again. We ask Hashem not only to cover the sin but to undo all the anger.

"Show us, O Hashem, Your kindness, and Your salvation You shall give to us." This was a song and a prayer of the captives returning from Bavel. They came to a land that was desolate. They needed to start all over again and rebuild. They took the desert and made it bloom but it didn't come easy, hence this prayer.

"I shall hear what Hashem will speak when He speaks peace to His people and to His pious men, and they will not return to folly." Some commentators explain *chasidov* as righteous non- Jews who have chosen to recognize Hashem. Hashem speaks to them too. A *kesil* is a fool and *kisla* means trust. Hashem says- Don't fall back on the foolishness of misplaced trust. Throughout our long exile we trusted the foreign nations and maybe even ourselves relying on our own strength and forgetting who it is that's actually protecting us. "Truly, His salvation is near those who fear Him, so that His glory dwell in our land."

"Truth will sprout from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven. Righteousness will go before him, and He will place it on the way of his steps." We have to take the first step, then Hashem will respond in kind. We have to try to set things right again and prove that we are trustworthy. We must win back not only Hashem's love that's given to us unconditionally but also his truth and justice and then we will merit to experience peace.

The Nine Mourning Days

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tzipora Heller-Gottlieb

We measure time through the changes we observe in the physical atmosphere such as rotations and evolutions. All physical change has a spiritual cause. The Ramchal explains that Hashem created the world as a conduit through which He would relate to mankind. In earlier times people could read the constellations and see what would happen in the future. Av is the month in which the *tziruf* (permutation) of Hashem's name is backward. The Nine days correspond to the ninth month of pregnancy when the child is fully developed and is almost ready to enter the world. Much like the labor pains of birth, the *ikvesa d'Mashiacha* herald the coming of the redemption.

When we lost the two *batei mikdash*, we lost the merit of the avot and we received our just punishment. The destruction was a statement- We weren't holding there. We lost Avraham's chesed because promiscuity is about taking

and objectifying. We lost Yitzchak's devotion because if you're bound to Hashem you can't worship idols. We lost Yaakov's truth because if you look at the entire picture you cannot stoop to murder. In the Nine Days we should be acknowledging the wrongs we did and seeking a path to repentance.

In *Shir Hashirim* it says, "I'm asleep but my heart is awake." The commentators explain that the heart is the spirit of prophecy. Prophecy means hearing Hashem's words and it is the outcome of *deveikut*-cleaving to Hashem. Rambam points out in *Moreh Nevuchim* that what life is for is *deveikut* and a person who does it right can attain prophecy which is the ultimate expression of connection. We are asleep but our collective heart is awake. We have conscientious recognition when things are not right. People want meaning and connection to Hashem but they cannot find Him because they are distracted.

We are meant to emulate the *middot* of Hashem who is the ultimate giver. Ask yourself -Am I a giver or a taker? Rav Dessler says this can be applied to everything in life. In marriage it's- Do I want to give, do I want to bring out what's best in the other person and help build them or is my whole objective- What can that person do for me? So too at work- Do I want to do what I'm doing successfully and well, or do I want to just get my money and leave? Am I eating to strengthen my body so I can serve Hashem or is it just to satiate my desires?

The *Baal HaLeshem* explains that everything in this world has a bond that connects it to Hashem. Nothing can exist without Him and there's nothing that's autonomous. All of creation was created chaser- lacking something. We are in this world to fill that chaser. As we get closer to the end there will be more lack and greater trials in *emunah*. We have to

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hold on. This is true on an individual and national level. The Gra discusses stages in the process of redemption and that before the final *geulah* there will be a partial return to the land. Living in *Eretz Yisrael* is going to bring to the fore what we lack. We like security, we're ok with leading our lives without Hashem and Hashem says- You'll come here and you'll see that you can only live your life with Me. That's the first step towards bringing *geulah*. It's actualized by keeping *Shemitta* and the *mitzvot hateulyot b'aretz* which lift the curtain

and show us Hashem's intervention.

In *Av*, our Father (*av*) seeks His children. He doesn't want us to continue floating through life aimlessly. He's bringing us to a point where we are compelled to look for Him with sincerity and *emunah*.

The destruction happened because instead of seeing all of the parts of the body as working together each of us saw ourselves separately. You could disagree with another person but

you could still love and respect him. You could see people promoting wrong ideas and feel compassion, not hatred for them. The enormous separation within is what is preventing the *bet hamikdash* from being rebuilt. The second *bet hamikdash* was built in the merit of *Klal Yisrael* who is like a body with many limbs. No one is more or less a part of the body. If we want to rebuild the *bet hamikdash* we must work on increasing unity.

Lost Property

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dayan Shlomo Cohen

Property saved from a flooding river or a place where wild animals roam can be kept and there is no obligation to try to locate the owner because one can assume he has lost hope and relinquished ownership. This applies even if the owner doesn't know his item has been washed away in the flooded river. If you see the owner running around and yelling that he's lost property you can still take it as *Chazal* explain that he's acting this way out of desperation and not because he didn't give up hope. Still, it's certainly correct to give it back, although one isn't obligated to do so.

Sometimes the item might be lost in a river, but if there are sharp turns which might possibly make it wash up ashore, the item might be saved. If there are identifying features, there is an obligation for the finder to try to locate the owner. Even if there are no identifying features, if there is a possibility that if the owner was there he might be able to save it, you can't take it for yourself until the owner knows of his loss and has given up

hope of getting it back. But if the owner was present and made no effort to save the item, then you can presume he's given up hope and the property can be taken.

If you find property in a private place such as in someone's house or courtyard, then there's an obligation to return it. It can't be presumed that the owner has given up hope unless the owner of the domain is a dishonest person. Then anyone who lost something there will realize that he won't be getting back his item and will give up hope.

If you find a buried treasure or an archeological find in someone's domain you could take it only in a case where you can see it was not hidden by the owner or his ancestors. If the property owner is new and you find something that looks like it was buried there for a long time you would be able to take it because it's obvious that it was left by someone who has already given up hope of finding it.

The question arises, seeing as halachically one's domain can acquire property for the owner, shouldn't the item not belong to the owner? According to *halacha*, an owner can't acquire something if he doesn't know or never imagined that an item was there. When the owner bought the property he had no idea that there was a buried treasure there and therefore he never acquired it. The Rema brings a similar case of a woman who bought a lead ring. After a while the ring fell and broke open and the woman found a gold ring inside. The Rema rules that the woman can keep the gold because when the seller acquired the ring he never acquired the gold as he never imagined that there was something inside. This only applies to lost objects that one finds on someone's property. It wouldn't apply to natural resources such as oil or precious metal hidden below. If you find actual gold underground it would belong to the owner of the domain seeing that it's a part of the actual land and not something that came from outside and was hidden later.