



You Shall Be Consoled With The Rebuilding of Jerusalem

Parshas Va'Eschanan – Nachamu

Even though he was deeply in grief, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai of Lelov was hurrying through the Jerusalem neighborhood of Meah Shearim on the eve of the Tisha Be'Av, the ninth of Av.¹ His face was sad, mourning and pain emanated from his eyes.

The scene had become common, the Rebbe hurrying through the streets and crying, heading towards the *Breslav Shul*. No one knew what he was looking for. One year, before the Six Day War, I accompanied him. The *Kottel* was not yet accessible to Jews. The Rebbe would go to the Mandelbaum Crossing, the closest point to the *Kottel*, sit on a stone and weep for the destruction of the Temples and yearn for the redemption. Throughout the period of the preceding "Three Weeks" the Rebbe would stay in Jerusalem and lament the Jews' plight of two thousand years of exile.

On his way to the Mandelbaum Crossing he would stop at the *Breslav Shul*. There, I witnessed a sight I will never forget. The building was empty, lit only by a small kerosene lamp. The Rebbe would approach Rebbe Nachman's chair, and there he would conduct his own private mourning service. He would weep for the lack of G-d's presence.

When the Rebbe exited the *Shul* he whispered to me: "All the righteous loved the Land of Israel, with Rebbe Nachman it was different, something higher. You could see it in his teachings", the Rebbe concluded.

During these days of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem we are reminded of the words of the sages in the Midrash on Shir Hashirim: "There were more righteous after Jerusalem's destruction than before it."

¹ *Tisha B'Av* is an annual mourning and fast day, named for the ninth day (*Tisha*) of the month of Av in the Hebrew calendar. The fast commemorates the destruction of both the First Temple and Second Temple in Jerusalem, which occurred about 655 years apart, but on the same Hebrew calendar date. Although primarily meant to commemorate the destruction of the Temples, it is also considered appropriate to commemorate other Jewish tragedies that occurred on this day, most notably the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Accordingly, the day has been called the "saddest day in Jewish history"

Rebbe Nachman² explains that G-d set paths for the Jews to illuminate their existence in its three realms of time, space and spirit. During this period of the year space relates to the Temple, time relates to this time period of mourning, and the spirit relates to the righteous.

The Temple was a source of guidance for the Jewish People, as are the righteous. At times, as during this period of destruction, G-d punishes us as guidance for us to mend our ways. Today, we lack the realm of space, as the Temple is not yet rebuilt, but we still have the realms of time and spirit to illuminate our existence.

During these days of a sorrow, one senses the lacking of the third element, of space, and prays for its return, thus completing the other two elements. The righteous sense this lacking all the more so, aware of the full implications of the lack of G-d's divinity dwelling in our midst, leaving the remaining elements of time and spirit as remnants and testament to what the Temple was.

After the Six Day war, when the entire city of Jerusalem became fully accessible to Jews, everyone was sure the Lelover Rebbe would go to the *Kottel* to mourn on Tisha Be'Av. All were surprised when the Rebbe stayed in the study hall and did not go to the *Kottel*.

After the fast day ended the Rebbe expressed his desire to go to the *Kottel*. He told us his grandfather would go to the *Kottel* every day, except on the Ninth of Av, when the loss was most tangible. Only at the conclusion of the day he would go to the *Kottel* to console and be consoled by Jerusalem. "We too", the Rebbe said, "Have come to console Jerusalem, and even now we can feel the extent of the consolation, as it is written in the *Haftorah* this week "Console, console My people," says your G-d."

² Likutei Moharan part II, 67.