



SHORT INSIGHTS INTO KINNOS

Kinnah #6 שבת סורו מני

We are all familiar with the pasuk, “*im eshkachech Yerushalayim*,” if I forget you, Jerusalem. The pasuk comes from Tehillim 137, which describes the Jews sitting on the banks of the Euphrates after being exiled from Eretz Yisrael. The kinnah (*al pnei Pras nuftzu chasideha*) references a midrash that gives the following background: As the Jews sat there, the Babylonians mocked them, asking them to play the songs that they played in the Beis Hamikdash and sing the songs of the Leviim. The righteous people said, “*eich nashir es shir Hashem al admas nechar*,” how can we sing these songs on foreign land? (Tehillim 137:4). To avoid the pressure of doing so, they mutilated themselves so that they

could not play the instruments or sing the songs of the Mikdash.

Shira seems to play an important role in the story of the Churban. In fact, Chazal (*Ta’anis* 29a) tell us that at the time of the actual Churban, the Levi’im were singing *shira*. Out of all of the tragedies to highlight about the Churban, why do we choose to focus on the loss of *shira*? The main *avodos* (services) in the Beis Hamikdash were the korbanos. The *shira* only served as an enhancement to the korbanos, and if a korban was brought without *shira* it was completely valid. Why do we focus on *shira*, which seems to be secondary to the korbanos themselves?

At the end of the *tochecha* in Parashas Ki Savo, the Torah tells us the root

cause of the tragedies listed in the *tochecha*:

תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה
ובטוב ללב מרב כל.

Because you would not serve your God in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything.

Devarim 28:48

Even if we perform the mitzvos, if we don’t do so with excitement and enthusiasm, it can be a cause for Churban. This is why we highlight *shira* in discussing the Churban and in the first kinnah of the day. It is true that we are supposed to spend Tisha B’Av crying over the Churban and the many tragedies that klal Yisrael faced. However, when that is over, and we want to fix our previous mistakes and bring about the rebuilding of the

Beis Hamikdash, we need to bring more passion and enthusiasm into the mitzvos that we perform.

Kinnah #16 זכור אשר עשה צר

This kinnah discusses the terrible acts that Titus did to defile the Beis HaMikdash. How is it possible that when the Beis Hamikdash was in its glory, the only one to ever enter the Kodosh Kodashim was the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, and yet now, Titus can perform unspeakable acts in there? Chazal (*Shir Hashrim Rabbah* 3) tell us, “*kimcha techina tachant*,” he was grinding ground flour. In other words, by the time Titus came, the Beis Hamikdash was already destroyed. Hashem decided to remove His Shechina. It wasn't the Babylonians or the Romans that destroyed our Batei Mikdash. It was our own *chataim*. The Babylonians and the Romans only destroyed the physical aspects of the Batei Mikdash.

But Titus didn't stop with destroying the Beis Hamikdash. He wanted to prove to the Romans what he did and so he decided to take the Klei Hamikdash, the vessels, back to Rome to parade them in the streets. This was forever memorialized on the famous Arch of Titus.

If we look at the depiction of the parade on the Arch of Titus, there is one vessel that stands out from the rest — the Menorah. Why did Hashem arrange for this Roman sculptor to make the Menorah the lasting symbol of destruction?

The Ramban (Bamidbar 8:2) tells us that the mitzvah of the Menorah was given in two parts: the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash and the Menorah of Chanukah. The Menorah of Chanukah is a symbol of our eternal connection to Hashem in *galus*.

Titus thought that by parading the vessels around Rome, he symbolically declared the destruction of klal Yisrael. In reality, he etched in stone the ultimate symbol of the eternity of klal Yisrael.

Kinnah #28 איך תנחמוני

The refrain of this kinnah is “*v'eich enachem*,” how can I be comforted? It is true that Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning, but it is also a day that has some *nechama* built in. After midday, we get up from the floor, we sit in chairs, put our tefillin on and then recite *Nachem* in the Shemoneh Esrei of Mincha. Yet this kinnah seems to imply that *nechama* is impossible. How do we resolve this apparent contradiction?

The answer can be found in the last line of the kinnah:

עד יִשְׁקִיף יְיָ מִמַּעַל, מוֹרִיד שְׂאוֹל וְיַעַל, וְאֵז אֲנַחֵם.

Until He looks down from above, goes into the depths and raises [us] and then I will be comforted.

True *nechama* can only come from Hashem. He is the ultimate source of *nechama*. This is why we say to someone sitting *shiva*, “*Hamakom yenachem eschem*,” the Omnipresent should comfort you. We cannot see

the big picture and understand why certain events take place. Our *nechama* comes from knowing that Hashem runs the world and is watching over us.

Kinnah #45 אלי ציון

The last kinnah is recited standing up and with a tune that portrays a theme of optimism. We are not quite ready to move on to Tisha B'Av afternoon, where the focus is on *nechama*. Yet we are not sitting on the floor crying like we do during the other kinnos. What is the exact thought that we are trying to capture?

The words of the kinnah provide some insight:

אלי ציון ועריה כמו אשה בציריה.

Wail, O Zion and her cities like a woman in labor.

This kinnah compares our *galus* to a woman about to give birth. Her experience at the moment is extremely painful. Yet she knows that soon she will have a beautiful baby. This is how we end Kinnos. We spent the morning recognizing how difficult *galus* is and remembering all the tragedies that took place as a result. Now we look at them from a different angle — like the pain of a woman in labor — knowing that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that ultimately, all our suffering will lead to the rebirth of klal Yisrael, the rebirth of Eretz Yisrael, and the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash, *bimheirah b'yameinu*.



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