

Communal Loss: Tisha B'Av after October 7th

Rabbi Avi Katz Orlow

I. The Breach Revisited

1. Mishnah Ta'anit 4:6

On the seventeenth of Tammuz the tablets were broken by Moshe when he saw that the Jews had made the golden calf; the daily offering was nullified by the Roman authorities and was never sacrificed again; the city walls of Jerusalem were breached; the general Apostemos publicly burned a Torah scroll; and Manasseh placed an idol in the Sanctuary.

On the Ninth of Av it was decreed upon our ancestors that they would all die in the wilderness and not enter Eretz Yisrael; and the Temple was destroyed the first time, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the second time, by the Romans; and Beitar was captured; and the city of Jerusalem was plowed, as a sign that it would never be rebuilt. Not only does one fast on the Ninth of Av, but from when the month of Av begins, one decreases acts of rejoicing.

2. David Roberts "The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans., A.D. 70"



II. Good Grief: Personal and Collective Mourning

4. Lamentations 1:1-2

Alas! Lonely sits the city. Once great with people! She that was great among nations is become like a widow; The princess among states is become a thrall. **Bitterly she weeps** in the night, Her cheek wet with tears. There is none to comfort her of all her friends. All her allies have betrayed her; They have become her foes.

5. Sanhedrin 104b

With regard to the verse: "Her cheek wet with tears" (Lamentations 1:2), Rava says that Rabbi Yohanan says: This is like a woman who cries over the husband of her youth, as it is stated: "Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth" (Joel 1:8).

בְּשִׁבְעָה עָשָׂר בְּתַמּוּז נִשְׁתַּבְּרוּ הַלְוִיֹּת,
וּבִטְלָה הַתְּמִיד,
וְהַבִּקְעָה הָעִיר,
וְשָׂרֵף אֶפֹסְטֶמוֹס אֶת הַתּוֹרָה,
וְהָעֶמִיד צֶלֶם בְּהִיכָל.
בְּתִשְׁעָה בָּאֵב נִגְזַר עַל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שְׁלֹא יִכְנָסוּ לָאָרֶץ,
וְחָרַב הַבַּיִת בְּרֹאשׁוֹנָה וּבִשְׁנִיָּה,
וְנִלְכְּדָה בֵּיתֵר,
וְנִחְרְשָׁה הָעִיר.
מִשְׁנִכְנָס אֵב, מִמַּעֲטִין בְּשִׁמְחָה:

3. The Failure of the Fence on October 7th



אֵיכָה | יֹשְׁבָה בְּדָד הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עִם הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבָּתִי
בְּגוֹיִם שְׂרָתִי בְּמִדְיָנוֹת הָיְתָה לְמִסִּי:
בָּלוּ תִבְכָּה בְּלִילָה וְדִמְעָתָהּ עַל לִחְיָהּ אֵין-לָהּ מְנַחֵם
מִכָּל-אַהֲבֶיהָ כָּל-רֵעֶיהָ בְּגָדוּ בָּהּ הָיוּ לָהּ לְאִיבִים:

ודמעתה על לחיה (איכה א, ב)
אמר רבא אמר ר' יוחנן כאשה שבוכה על בעל נעוריה
שנאמר אלי כבתולה חגורת שק על בעל נעוריה
(יואל א, ח)

6. Shulchan Aruch Roeh Deah 340:1

One who suffered a bereavement, namely, [one] of [their] near-of-kin [died], for whom they are required to observe mourning rites, must rend [his garments] for them. One must rend [their garments] while standing; and if one rent [their garments] while sitting, they have not discharged their duty; *and they must rend again*.

7. Shulchan Aruch Orech Chaim 561:1

One who sees the Cities of Judah in their destruction says "Your Holy Cities have become a desert" (Isaiah 64:9) and rends (their clothes). (*Rema*): *And one is not obligated to tear except when one reaches near to them like from Mt Scopus to Jerusalem [Bais Yosef]*

8. Joel 1:8-14

Lament—like a maiden **girded** with sackcloth for the husband of her youth! Offering and libation have ceased from the House of God; The priests must mourn who minister to God. The country is ravaged, the ground must mourn;
For the new grain is ravaged, the new wine is dried up, the new oil has failed. Farmers are dismayed and vine dressers wail over wheat and barley; For the crops of the field are lost. The vine has dried up, the fig tree withers, Pomegranate, palm, and apple—**All the trees** of the field are sear. And joy has dried up among the **people**. Gird yourselves and lament, O priests, Wail, O ministers of the altar; Come, spend the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God. For offering and libation are withheld from the House of your God. Solemnize a fast, proclaim an assembly; Gather the elders—all the inhabitants of the land—In the House of the Eternal your God, And cry out to God.

9. Genesis 3:7,21-24

Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves **loincloths**.

And God Lord made **garments** of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. And God Lord said, "Now that humankind has become like any of us, knowing good and bad, what if one should stretch out a hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" So God Lord banished humankind from the garden of Eden, to till the humus from which it was taken: it was driven out; and **east** of the garden of Eden were stationed the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

10. Lamentations 5:21

Take us back, O Lord, to Yourself, And let us come back; Renew our days as of old!

11. Martin Prechtel's The Smell of Rain on Dust: Grief and Praise (21st Century American)

Grief expressed out loud for someone we have lost, or a country or home we have lost, is in itself the greatest praise we could ever give them. Grief is praise, because it is the natural way love honors what it misses.

מי שמת לו מת והוא מהמתים שראוי להתאבל עליהם חייב לקרוע עליו וצריך שיקרע מעומד ואם קרע מיושב לא יצא (וצריך לחזור ולקרוע)

הרואה ערי יהודה בחורבן אומר ערי קדשך היו מדבר וקורע [ואינו חייב לקרוע אלא כשמגיע סמוך להם כמן הצופים לירושלים [ב"י]:

אֵלֵי כְּבִתּוּלָה חֲגֵרֶת־שֵׁק עַל־בֶּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ:
הִכְרַת מִנְחָה וְנֹסֶף מִבֵּית יְהוָה אָבְלוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים מִשְׁרָתִי יְהוָה:
שָׂדֶד שָׂדֶה אָבְלָה אֲדָמָה כִּי שָׂדֶד דָּגָן הוֹבִישׁ תִּירוֹשׁ אֲמָלַל יִצְהָר:
הַבִּישׁוּ אַכְלִים הִלִּילוּ כְרָמִים עַל־חֹטָה וְעַל־שַׁעֲרָה כִּי אָבַד קִצְרֵי שָׂדֶה:
הַגִּפֶּן הוֹבִישָׁה וְהַתְּאֵנָה אֲמָלְלָה רִמּוֹן גַּם־תִּתְמַר וְתַפּוּחַ כָּל־עֵצִי הַשָּׂדֶה יִבְשׁוּ כִּי־הִבִּישׁ שִׁשּׁוֹן מִן־בְּנֵי אָדָם:
חֲגְרוּ וּסְפְדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים הִלִּילוּ מִשְׁרָתִי מִזֶּבֶחַ בָּאוּ לִינוּ בִּשְׁקִים מִשְׁרָתִי אֱלֹהֵי כִי נִמְנַע מִבֵּית אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וְנֹסֶף:
קִדְשׁוּ־צוּם קִרְאוּ עֲצֹרָה אִסְפוּ זִקְנִים כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְזַעֲקוּ אֶל־יְהוָה:

וּתְפַקְחֶנָּה עֵינֵי שְׂנֵיהֶם וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי עִירְמָם הֵם וַיִּתְּפְרוּ עָלֶיהָ תְּאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם **חֲגֵרֶת**:

וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם:
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאֶחָד מֵאֲנָשֵׁינוּ לִדְעַת טוֹב וָרָע וְעַתָּה אֶפְּנוֹ־יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מִעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וַחֲיִי לָעַלְמ:
וַיִּשְׁלַחֵהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִגֶּן־עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִשָּׁם:
וַיַּגְרֵשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגֶן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְרָבִים וְאֶת לֶהֱטֵ הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לִשְׁמֹר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֶבָה חַדָּשׁ יְמֵינוּ **כְּקִדְמָם**:

III. Hope v. Senseless Hatred

12. Lamentation 3:28-29

Let him sit alone and keep silence, because God has laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.

(כח) ישב בַּדָּד וידם כי נטל עליו:
(כט) יתן בעפר פיהו אולי יש תְּקוּהָה:

13. Naftali Herz Imber, *Hatikvah* (1877)

Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope of two thousand years,
To be a free nation in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

עוד לא אָבְדָה תְּקוּוֹתֵנוּ,
הַתְּקוּהָה בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים,
לְהִיּוֹת עִם חִפְשֵׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ,
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם

14. 55th Paratroopers Brigade: Zion Karasenti v. Abraham Borstein



15. Gittin 55b-56a

The Gemara explains: **Jerusalem was destroyed on account of Kamtza and bar Kamtza**. This is **as** there was **a certain man whose friend** was named **Kamtza** and **whose enemy** was named **bar Kamtza**. He once **made** a large **feast** and **said to his servant**: **Go bring me** my friend **Kamtza**. The servant **went** and mistakenly **brought him** his enemy **bar Kamtza**. The man who was hosting the feast **came and found bar Kamtza sitting** at the feast. The host **said to bar Kamtza**. **That man is the enemy [ba'al devava] of that man**, that is, you are my enemy. **What then do you want here? Arise and leave**. Bar Kamtza **said to him**: **Since I have already come, let me stay and I will give you money for whatever I eat and drink**. Just do not embarrass me by sending me out.

אֶקְמָצָא וּבֵר קְמָצָא חֲרוּב יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – דִּהְיוּא גְבָרָא
דְּרַחֲמִיה קְמָצָא, וּבָעַל דְּבָבִיה בֵּר קְמָצָא. עֲבַד סְעוּדָתָא,
אָמַר לִיה לְשִׁמְעִיה: זֵיל אִייתִי לִי קְמָצָא. אָזַל אִייתִי לִיה בֵּר
קְמָצָא.
אָתָּא, אֲשַׁכְחִיה דִּהּוּ יָתִיב. אָמַר לִיה: מַכְדִּי הֵהוּא גְבָרָא
בָּעַל דְּבָבָא דִּהְיוּא גְבָרָא הוּא, מַאי בָּעִית הָכָא? קוּם פּוּק!
אָמַר לִיה: הוּאִיל וְאָתָּאִי, שְׂבָקֵן יְהִיבְנָא לָךְ דְּמֵי מָה
דְּאֶכִּילְנָא וְשְׁתִּיבְנָא.

(56a) The host **said to him**: **No**, you must leave. Bar Kamtza **said to him**: **I will give you money for half of the feast**; just do not send me away. The host **said to him**: **No**, you must leave. Bar Kamtza then **said to him**: **I will give you money for the entire feast**; just let me stay. The host **said to him**: **No**, you must leave. Finally, the host **took bar Kamtza by his hand, stood him up, and took him out**. After having been cast out from the feast, bar Kamtza **said to himself**: **Since the Sages were sitting there and did not protest** the actions of the host, although they saw how he humiliated me, **learn from it that they were content** with what he did. **I will therefore go and inform [eikhul kurtza] against them to the king**.

אָמַר לִיה: לֹא. אָמַר לִיה: יְהִיבְנָא לָךְ דְּמֵי פִלְגָא דְּסְעוּדָתִי!
אָמַר לִיה: לֹא. אָמַר לִיה: יְהִיבְנָא לָךְ דְּמֵי כּוּלָּה סְעוּדָתִי!
אָמַר לִיה: לֹא. נִקְטִיָּה בִּידֵיה וְאִוקְמִיה וְאַפְקִיָּה.
אָמַר: הוּאִיל וְהוּוּ יָתִיבִי רַבֵּנן וְלֹא מַחוּ בֵּיה, שְׁמַע מִינָה קָא
נִיחָא לְהוּ, אִיזִיל אִיכּוּל בְּהוּ קוֹרְצָא בִּי מִלְכָּא.

16. Leonard Cohen

Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering, there is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in

