

Mourning for Yerushalayim On Three Levels- Past, Future, and Present:

Incorporating the Bet Hamikdash into Our Daily Lives

1. שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות הנהגת אדם בבקר סימן א סעיף ג

ראוי לכל ירא שמים שיהא מיצר ודואג על חורבן בית המקדש.

I. Mourning the Past- Zeicher L'Churban

2. תלמוד בבלי מסכת בבא בתרא דף ס עמוד ב

ת"ר: כשחרב הבית בשניה, רבו פרושין בישראל שלא לאכול בשר ושלא לשתות יין. נטפל להן ר' יהושע, אמר להן: בני, מפני מה אי אתם אוכלין בשר ואין אתם שותין יין? אמרו לו: נאכל בשר שממנו מקריבין על גבי מזבח, ועכשיו בטל? נשתה יין שמנסכין על גבי המזבח, ועכשיו בטל? אמר להם: א"כ, לחם לא נאכל, שכבר בטלו מנחות! אפשר בפירות. פירות לא נאכל, שכבר בטלו בכורים! אפשר בפירות אחרים. מים לא נשתה, שכבר בטל ניסוך המים! שתקו. אמר להן: בני, בואו ואומר לכם: שלא להתאבל כל עיקר אי אפשר - שכבר נגזרה גזרה, ולהתאבל יותר מדאי אי אפשר - שאין גוזרין גזירה על הצבור אא"כ רוב צבור יכולין לעמוד בה, דכתיב (מלאכי ג'): "במארה אתם נארים ואותי אתם קובעים הגוי כולו", אלא כך אמרו חכמים: סד אדם את ביתו בסיד, ומשייר בו דבר מועט... עושה אדם כל צרכי סעודה, ומשייר דבר מועט... עושה אשה כל תכשיטיה, ומשיירת דבר מועט... מאי "על ראש שמחתי"? אמר רב יצחק: זה אפר מקלה שבראש חתנים. א"ל רב פפא לאביי: היכא מנח לה? במקום תפילין, שנאמר: (ישעיהו ס"א) "לשום לאבלי ציון לתת להם פאר תחת אפר". וכל המתאבל על ירושלים - זוכה ורואה בשמחתה, שנאמר: (ישעיהו סו) "שמחו את ירושלים וגו'".

The Sages taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Sota 15:11): When the Temple was destroyed a second time, there was an increase in the number of ascetics among the Jews, whose practice was to not eat meat and to not drink wine. Rabbi Yehoshua joined them to discuss their practice. He said to them: My children, for what reason do you not eat meat and do you not drink wine? They said to him: Shall we eat meat, from which offerings are sacrificed upon the altar, and now the altar has ceased to exist? Shall we drink wine, which is poured as a libation upon the altar, and now the altar has ceased to exist? Rabbi Yehoshua said to them: If so, we will not eat bread either, since the meal-offerings that were offered upon the altar have ceased. They replied: You are correct. It is possible to subsist with produce. He said to them: We will not eat produce either, since the bringing of the first fruits have ceased. They replied: You are correct. We will no longer eat the produce of the seven species from which the first fruits were brought, as it is possible to subsist with other produce. He said to them: If so, we will not drink water, since the water libation has ceased. They were silent, as they realized that they could not survive without water. Rabbi Yehoshua said to them: My children, come, and I will tell you how we should act. To not mourn at all is impossible, as the decree was already issued and the Temple has been destroyed. But to mourn excessively as you are doing is also impossible, as the Sages do not issue a decree upon the public unless a majority of the public is able to abide by it, as it is written: "You are cursed with the curse, yet you rob Me, even this whole nation" (Malachi 3:9), indicating

that the prophet rebukes the people for neglecting observances only if they were accepted by the whole nation.

Rabbi Yehoshua continues: **Rather, this is what the Sages said: A person may plaster his house with plaster, but he must leave over a small amount in it** without plaster to remember the destruction of the Temple... Rabbi Yehoshua continues: The Sages said that **a person may prepare all that he needs for a meal, but he must leave out a small item** to remember the destruction of the Temple... Rabbi Yehoshua continues: The Sages said that **a woman may engage in all of her cosmetic treatments, but she must leave out a small matter** to remember the destruction of the Temple... The Gemara asks: **What is the meaning of: Above my highest [rosh] joy? Rav Yitzhak says: This is referring to the burnt ashes that are customarily placed on the head [rosh] of bridegrooms at the time of their wedding celebrations, to remember the destruction of the Temple. Rav Pappa said to Abaye: Where are they placed? Abaye replied: On the place where phylacteries are placed, as it is stated: "To appoint to them that mourn in Zion, to give to them a garland in place of ashes"** (Isaiah 61:3). Since phylacteries are referred to as a garland (see Ezekiel 24:17), it may be inferred from this verse that the ashes were placed in the same place as the phylacteries.

The *baraita* continues: **And anyone who mourns for the destruction of Jerusalem will merit and see its joy, as it is stated: "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all that mourn for her"** (Isaiah 66:10).

I. Celebrating the Past – Zeicher L'Mikdash

3. תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קטו עמוד א

השתא דלא איתמר הלכתא לא כהלל ולא כרבנן - מברך על אכילת מצה ואכיל, והדר מברך על אכילת מרור ואכיל, והדר אכיל מצה וחסא בהדי הדדי בלא ברכה, זכר למקדש כהלל.

4. תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוכה דף מא עמוד א

משנה. בראשונה היה לולב ניטל במקדש שבעה, ובמדינה יום אחד. משחרב בית המקדש התקין רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שיהא לולב ניטל במדינה שבעה, זכר למקדש. ושיהא יום הנף כולו אסור.

5. תלמוד בבלי מסכת מנחות דף סו עמוד א

גופא, אמר אביי: מצוה למימני יומי ומצוה למימני שבועי. רבנן דבי רב אשי מנו יומי ומנו שבועי. אממר מני יומי ולא מני שבועי, אמר: זכר למקדש הוא

6. תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוכה דף מא עמוד א

גמרא. מנא לן דעבדינן זכר למקדש? אמר רבי יוחנן: דאמר קרא (ירמיהו) "כי אעלה ארכה לך וממכותיך ארפאך נאם ה' כי נדחה קראו לך ציון היא דרש אין לה", דרש אין לה - מכלל דבעיא דרישה.

7. "Twin Reactions to the Twin Towers Tragedy", Rabbi Norman Lamm

Rabbi Yossi Goldin
OU Israel Center
Tammuz/June 2021

Let me now turn to the question of what shall we remember, and how do we remember? There's a great debate that is still raging as recently as this morning's newspapers and it has been raging for the past year here in New York City: How and what shall we do to remember the tragic events of September 11th, 2001? There are two opinions about the story: one of them is that the place should be left as it is — destitute, except for a museum or a monument, an ever-lasting reminder of the cruelty that struck us and an ever-lasting tribute to the close to three thousand people who were killed, the three hundred who are still alive but who were wounded for life, and the thousands upon thousands of relatives and friends who will never forget this day of infamy and who were wounded psychologically and emotionally. There is an opposing attitude, and that is just the reverse. They are saying, 'Yes, it is important to remember the tragedy, but we Americans are optimistic and we have to go ahead and forge our own future and not allow ourselves to be dragged down by this one terrorist strike. And if we have to rebuild, then let us rebuild. If this was the financial capital of the world, it must again become the financial capital of the world. We must show that we are not only going to survive, but we are going to thrive, and that we will not allow the terrorists to determine our future.' So, which one ought we to emphasize? The recollection of the tragedy or the overcoming of the tragedy? Historically, we Jews have experienced both, each in its own context...

...Those two themes are called "zekher le'churban" - in memory of the churban, of the destruction. And the other one is "zekher le'mikdash" — in memory of the Temple itself. Zekher le'churban emphasized the pessimistic, the negative thinking: we remember the pain, the shame, and the national anguish. We must never forget; we owe it to the people who were destroyed, we owe it to the Temple that was ravished, we owe it to the People of Israel who had to suffer through this national cataclysm. The other memory was zekher le'mikdash — we will never forget the beauty of the Temple, we will never banish from our collective memory the glory, the sanctity, the holiness of the Temple, the service that took place, and how it united our people — and therefore, our hope that it will be re-established, rebuilt, and resurrected...

Hence, we have these two divergent themes struggling with each other: on the one hand, we remember the negative, the destruction; on the other hand, we recall the beauty, the glory and our unrepressed and eternal hope to overcome the destruction and relive our ancient glory. So the arguments, both Talmudic and contemporary, are reflections of the deeper ambivalence of the universal human psyche, the universal human mind and heart concerning catastrophes, whether natural or man-made. As a result we have paradoxical reactions: on the one hand, deep grief, mourning, bordering on despair, a sense of defeat. On the other hand: defiance, struggle, healing, hope and a striving to overcome and re-attain the glory that once was...

This morning's New York Times quoted something that New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg said and which is similar to what we have been saying: 'We'll mourn in the morning, and in the evening we'll rededicate ourselves to rebuild.' I agree with him almost completely about both themes, but they are not separate, with one period for mourning, and then forgetting the mourning and going on to the rebuilding. Rather, both tendencies must co-exist simultaneously — zekher le'churban and zekher le'mikdash. We cannot afford to dispense with either of them. As we mourn those who did not survive the World Trade Center attacks, as our hearts go out to those who were injured and who lost precious relatives, we keep both tendencies in mind. We realize that we Americans are a very proud people...

We must determine that this awful and dreadful anti-human event be preserved in the collective consciousness of America. But the memory of the destruction must not dominate us for all the future. Indeed, the zekher le'churban as we go on must be transformed dialectically into its opposite, into zekher le'mikdash. And the zekher le'mikdash can never afford to express itself without always having at its side the zekher le'churban. That is the way of maturity, that is the way the Sages, the guardians of our heritage, understood the reaction to the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash; and how we must understand the reactions to any and all such catastrophes.

II. Anticipating the Future

8. תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוכה דף מא עמוד א

ושיהא יום הנף. מאי טעמא? מהרה יבנה בית המקדש, ויאמרו: אשתקד מי לא אכלנו בהאיר מזרח - השתא נמי ניכול. ואינהו לא ידעי דאשתקד דלא הוה בית המקדש - האיר מזרח התיר, השתא דאיכא בית המקדש - עומר מתיר. - דאיבני אימת? אילימא דאיבני בשיתסר - הרי התיר האיר מזרח, אלא דאיבני בחמיסר...

The mishna continues: Rabban Yoḥanan instituted **that for the entire day of waving the Omer offering, it is prohibited to eat the grain of the new crop.** The Gemara asks: **What is the reason** for this ordinance? It is that **soon the Temple will be rebuilt, and people will say: Last year, when the Temple was in ruins, didn't we eat of the new crop as soon as the eastern horizon was illuminated,** as the new crop was permitted immediately with the advent of the morning of the sixteenth of Nisan? **Now, too, let us eat the new grain at that time. And they do not know that although last year, when there was no Temple, the illuminating of the eastern sky permitted one to eat the new grain immediately, now that there is a Temple, the omer offering permits one to eat the new grain.** Until the *omer* offering is sacrificed, the new grain is not permitted.

The Gemara asks: **When is it that the Temple will be rebuilt in this scenario? If we say that it will be rebuilt on the sixteenth of Nisan, since in the morning the Temple was not yet built, the illuminating of the eastern sky permitted one to eat the new grain, as the omer offering could not yet be brought. Rather, say that it will be rebuilt on the fifteenth of Nisan or on some earlier date, in which case the new grain would not become permitted by the illuminating of the eastern sky.**

9. תלמוד בבלי מסכת מכות דף כד עמוד ב

שוב פעם אחת היו עולין לירושלים, כיון שהגיעו להר הצופים קרעו בגדיהם. כיון שהגיעו להר הבית, ראו שועל שיצא מבית קדשי הקדשים, התחילו הן בוכין ור"ע מצחק. אמרו לו: מפני מה אתה מצחק? אמר להם: מפני מה אתם בוכים? אמרו לו, מקום שכתוב בו: (במדבר א) "והזר הקרב יומת" ועכשיו שועלים הלכו בו ולא נבכה? אמר להן: לכך אני מצחק, דכתיב: (ישעיהו ח') "ואעידה לי עדים נאמנים את אוריה הכהן ואת זכריה בן יברכיהו", וכי מה ענין אוריה אצל זכריה? אוריה במקדש ראשון וזכריה במקדש שני! אלא, תלה הכתוב נבואתו של זכריה בנבואתו של אוריה, באוריה כתיב: (מיכה ג') "לכן בגללכם ציון שדה תחרש [וגו']", בזכריה כתיב: (זכריה ח') "עוד ישבו זקנים וזקנות ברחובות ירושלם", עד שלא נתקיימה נבואתו של אוריה - הייתי מתיירא שלא תתקיים נבואתו של זכריה, עכשיו שנתקיימה נבואתו של אוריה - בידוע שנבואתו של זכריה מתקיימת. בלשון הזה אמרו לו: עקיבא, ניחמתנו! עקיבא, ניחמתנו.

On another occasion they were ascending to Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. **When they arrived at Mount Scopus** and saw the site of the Temple, **they rent their garments** in mourning,

in keeping with halakhic practice. **When they arrived at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox that emerged from the site of the Holy of Holies. They began weeping, and Rabbi Akiva was laughing. They said to him: For what reason are you laughing? Rabbi Akiva said to them: For what reason are you weeping? They said to him: This is the place concerning which it is written: "And the non-priest who approaches shall die" (Numbers 1:51), and now foxes walk in it; and shall we not weep?**

Rabbi Akiva **said to them: That is why I am laughing, as it is written**, when God revealed the future to the prophet Isaiah: **"And I will take to Me faithful witnesses to attest: Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah"** (Isaiah 8:2). **Now what is the connection between Uriah and Zechariah?** He clarifies the difficulty: **Uriah prophesied during the First Temple period, and Zechariah prophesied during the Second Temple period**, as he was among those who returned to Zion from Babylonia. **Rather, the verse established that fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah is dependent on fulfillment of the prophecy of Uriah. In the prophecy of Uriah it is written: "Therefore, for your sake Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become rubble, and the Temple Mount as the high places of a forest" (Micah 3:12), where foxes are found. There is a rabbinic tradition that this was prophesied by Uriah. In the prophecy of Zechariah it is written: "There shall yet be elderly men and elderly women sitting in the streets of Jerusalem" (Zechariah 8:4). Until the prophecy of Uriah with regard to the destruction of the city was fulfilled I was afraid that the prophecy of Zechariah would not be fulfilled, as the two prophecies are linked. Now that the prophecy of Uriah was fulfilled, it is evident that the prophecy of Zechariah remains valid.** The Gemara adds: **The Sages said to him, employing this formulation: Akiva, you have comforted us; Akiva, you have comforted us.**

III. Mourning the Present

10. תלמוד בבלי מסכת מועד קטן דף כו עמוד א

ואלו קרעין שאין מתאחין: הקורע על אביו, ועל אמו, ועל רבו שלימדו תורה, ועל נשיא, ועל אב בית דין, ועל שמועות הרעות, ועל ברכת השם, ועל ספר תורה שנשרף, ועל ערי יהודה, ועל המקדש, ועל ירושלים

11. תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת יומא פרק א דף לח טור ג/ה"א

אמרו כל דור שאינו נבנה בימיו מעלין עליו כאילו הוא החריבו

A 4- Part Series on the Three Weeks

Tuesday, June 29th

"Mourning for Yerushalayim On Three Levels- Past, Future, and Present "

Tuesday, July 6th

"When was the Beit Hamikdash REALLY Destroyed?"

Tuesday, July 13th

"Exploring Important Themes from the Kinnot of Tisha B'av"

Tuesday, July 20th

"Nachamu Ami- But Has Anything Actually Changed?"