



## Critical Crying

In one of the most poignant moments in Tanach, Yosef Hatzadik and his brothers reconcile with one another. “*Vayinashek lechol echav vayeiv’k aleihem* - And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them.” (*Bereisheet 45:15*) The Midrash notes that just as Yosef appeased his brothers through tears, Hashem will redeem us through tears, “*Bevechi yavo’u u’vetachanunim ovileim* - with weeping they will come, and with supplications I will lead them.” (*Yirmiyahu 31:18*) We must understand the significance of these tears. Why was it that only Yosef Hatzadik cried and not his brothers? Further, why will there be tears at the time of redemption, will it not be a time of rejoicing?

The Ketav Sofer zt”l shares a moving interpretation. Obviously, when Yosef first went down to Egypt, it was very difficult for him to be separated from his father’s house and

his father’s teachings. However, as time wore on, Yosef became more accustomed to living in a foreign environment. We see from the name he gave to his first child Menashe, “*ki nashani Elokim et kol amali ve’et kol beit avi* - God has caused me to forget all my toil and all my father’s house,” (*Bereisheet 41:51*) that slowly, Yosef began to forget the impact of his ancestral home.

Now, however, when he saw his brothers, he sensed the intensity of *kedushah* surrounding them and realized to what extent he had been living in a land of such moral depravity. He suddenly remembered the beauty and holiness of his father’s house; thus he cried for all that had been lost throughout these 22 years. The brothers, however, were filled with joy upon discovering that Yosef was alive and well and had no reason to shed tears.

Likewise, notes the Ketav Sofer, we are so accustomed to living our lives in *galut*, surrounded by physicality and hedonism, that we don’t even realize what it is like to live with a full manifestation of Hashem’s Presence. Only when the redemption comes will we understand the contrast and will weep for all that we had been missing through the whole of exile.

Rav Pincus zt”l takes it one step further. At the time of redemption, we will realize the terrible effect of *galut* on us all, individually and collectively. This awareness will move us to tears, realizing how many people could have grown and developed more spiritually but such opportunities were lost because of the conditions of living in exile.

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We find a similar parallel in *Sefer Ezra*, as it describes the conditions when the second Temple was built. The older people wept uncontrollably, while the younger generation celebrated and rejoiced. The elders knew that the new Temple paled in comparison to the first Temple and cried because the younger people were not even aware of what they were lacking.

A fast day commemorating the destruction of Yerushalayim and the Beit Hamikdash allows us the opportunity to pause and reflect upon what is incomplete in our lives. When we can imagine what the world must have been like with Hashem's Presence fully expressed, we can yearn for this revealed state once again. May our tears this *Asarah be'Tevet* be a precursor to the tears we will shed with the coming of Mashiach and the ultimate redemption. ■

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