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The Tammuz Potential

I'm nervous about Tammuz.

A little scared, if I'm being honest.

Even before the Three Weeks begin on Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, the entire month already carries the weight of דין — strict judgment. Not because destruction already happened, but because this is the month where the cracks began. The walls of ירושלים were breached on the 17th of Tammuz. The enemy entered the city through an opening that should never have been there.

And once there's a breach in the walls, the trajectory toward destruction begins.

That's what frightens me most about Tammuz. Not the destruction itself — that comes later, in Av. Tammuz is the realization that something vulnerable has already been exposed.

What's striking is that Av, despite containing Tisha B'Av and the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, is deeply connected to נחמה and רחמים. Somehow, even during the destruction itself, at the moment of the fiercest of fires, comfort begins to emerge. But Tammuz? Tammuz is the month of alarming realization. The month where we are forced to notice the cracks before the collapse.

In fact, the מרגלים left on the 29th of Sivan and their mission unfolded throughout the month of Tammuz. Before there were

breached walls in Jerusalem, there was already a breach in spirit. Ten leaders unified their voices around fear, despair, and rejection of Eretz Yisrael — the very gift Hashem longed to bring His people into.

That unified voice changed history.

Not because they lacked facts. The land truly was difficult. The giants were real. The challenges were intimidating. But these loud voices caused the entire nation to lose perspective.

And I wonder whether that is one of the hidden dangers of Tammuz: not only destruction itself, but the spreading belief that destruction is inevitable.

Because once people stop believing repair is possible, walls begin falling long before stones collapse.

So I wonder where we are holding now.

As individuals.

As a nation.

As a people trying very hard to stay together while so much pulls us apart.

What trajectory are we on?

Because it is obviously easier to repair a crack than to rebuild from ashes.

The breached walls of Jerusalem were physical, but Chazal teach us that destruction never begins with stone. It begins internally. Spiritually. Emotionally. In the fractures between people. In שנאת חינוך. In the way we look at and think of other people. In the ways anger, name calling and labeling become identity. In the ways we listen less to others' opinions as we become more committed to being right than being united.

And maybe that's why Tammuz feels heavy.

Because it asks us to be honest about breaches while hopefully still small enough to mend.

Maybe יד is not only strict judgement. Maybe יד is clarity.

A moment where Hashem lovingly refuses to let us ignore what is weakening us.

There's something merciful about being warned before collapse.

And maybe that is the avodah of Tammuz: not despair,

not fear,

but reawakening.

To notice the cracks before they widen.

To ask:

Where have I become disconnected?

Where have I hardened?

Which relationships need repair?

Which resentments have I justified for too long?

What small act of unity can I create before speaking about national healing?

Because every wall that fell once began with a breach no one thought was urgent enough.

But if unified fear once altered our national destiny, perhaps unified love can alter it again.

If ten voices speaking hopelessness could pull a nation backward from Eretz Yisrael, perhaps millions of voices speaking gratitude, responsibility, compassion, and love for one another can move us forward again.

David Hamelech writes חסד ואמת נפגשו, צדק ושלוה נשקו. Kindness and truth have met. Righteousness and peace have kissed (Tehilim 85:11)

Qualities that seem contradictory: truth or peace, judgement or compassion are possible to work in tandem. When these opposites stop fighting, this is Geulah- a world where truth itself becomes compassionate and peace becomes honest. In other words, when we

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speak truthfully without losing compassion and pursuing peace without sacrificing truth.

Perhaps there is where תיקון begins.

Not in grand declarations, but in choosing not to deepen fractures.

In refusing to speak with contempt.

In remembering that our people survive not only through strength, but through connection.

I don't want to enter Tammuz paralyzed by fear. I want to enter it awake.

Aware that destruction is a trajectory — but so is redemption.

And maybe redemption also begins small:

one repaired relationship,

one softer conversation,

one moment of restraint,

one act of compassion,

one less fracture among us.

Maybe that is how walls are rebuilt. ■

The **Airleys** have built **Beit Binyamin**, a retreat center in Tzfat for those directly affected by the war. Soldiers, Zaka members, security forces, bereaved families and widows can come for respite, relaxation and rejuvenation. For more information and to donate, visit Beitbinyamin.org

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