

Tisha B'av 2023 – Is Peace in Israel Attainable? by Rabbi Eliezer Hirsch

1. **PRINCIPLE ONE: Tisha B'Av was caused by complacency in our relationships.**

- a. Why was the Second Temple destroyed? It was destroyed due to the fact that there was wanton hatred during that period. (Yoma 9b)
- b. One who serves [God] out of love occupies himself in the Torah and the mitzvot and walks in the paths of wisdom for no ulterior motive: not because of fear that evil will occur, nor in order to acquire benefit. Rather, he does what is true because it is true, and ultimately, good will come because of it. This is a very high level which is not merited by every wise man. It is the level of our Patriarch, Abraham, whom God described as, "he who loved Me," for his service was only motivated by love. (Mishneh Torah Teshuva 10:2)
- c. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Happy is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart shall fall into mischief" (Proverbs 28:14)? Jerusalem was destroyed on account of Kamtza and bar Kamtza. (Gitin 55b)
- d. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: The excessive humility of Rabbi Zekharya ben Avkolas destroyed our Temple, burned our Sanctuary, and exiled us from our land. (Gitin 56a)
- e. The great Ramban (aka Nachmonides 1194-1270) says that the problem was not their report; it was in their evaluation. "Efes ki az ha'am." (Num. 13:28) That first word is hard to translate. You might recognize Efes as the modern Hebrew word that means, "zero." So loosely, the translation is, "There is zero chance we can win! The people are mighty!" The problem wasn't the report that the people are mighty – it's the editorializing. (Sydney Kligman, Baltimore Jewish Times, June 26, 2019)
- f. You wept needlessly (**חינם**) that night, and I will therefore establish for you a true tragedy over which there will be weeping in future generations.
- g. We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt **free (חינם)** of charge, the cucumbers, the watermelons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. (Bamidbar 10:5)
- h. The time is surely coming when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of God. (Amos 8:11)

2. **PRINCIPLE TWO: Aveilut is about putting the past behind you.**

- a. And God said, "**Indeed, it is definitively true (אבל)** that your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac... (Bereisheet 17:19 and Rashi)
- b. In the Babylonian Talmud (Ta'anit 30b-31a, Bava Batra 121a-b), the sages listed several significant events that occurred on the 15th of Av), including: The annual "holiday" when the girls of Jerusalem would dance in the fields; the day when the deaths of those who perished in the desert ceased; the day when intermarriage between the tribes was permitted, the day when the tribe of Benjamin was allowed to marry within the congregation; the day when wood-cutting for the Temple rotation ceased the day when those who were killed at Beitar were permitted to be buried.

3. **PRINCIPLE THREE: The process of Aveilut to Nechama is about changing the way you think but ultimately, it is about being conscientious.**
 - a. And the Lord regretted (וַיִּנְחַם) that He had made man upon the earth, and He became grieved in His heart. (Bereisheet 6:6)
 - b. The Lord [then] reconsidered the evil He had said He would do to His people. (Shemot 32:14)
 - c. A conscientious person is someone who demonstrates a strong work ethic, integrity, and a commitment to doing what is right and necessary. (Chat GPT)
4. **PRINCIPLE FOUR: Tochecha (admonition) is only applicable if the other person feels like they are benefiting.**
 - a. Each person is commanded to love each and every one of Israel as themselves as [Leviticus 19:18] states: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
 - b. Whoever hates a [fellow] Jew in his heart transgresses a Torah prohibition as [Leviticus 19:17] states: "Do not hate your brother in your heart."
 - c. When one person wrongs another, the latter should not remain silent and despise him...Rather, he is commanded to make the matter known and ask him: "Why did you do this to me?", "Why did you wrong me regarding that matter?" as [Leviticus 19:17] states: "You shall surely admonish your colleague."
 - d. It is a mitzvah for a person who sees that his fellow Jew has sinned or is following an improper path [to attempt] to correct his behavior and to inform him that he is causing himself a loss by his evil deeds as [Leviticus 19:17] states: "You shall surely admonish your colleague." (**Mishneh Torah, Deot 6:3-7**)
 - e. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear a sin on his account...you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. (Vayikra 19: 17-18)
5. **PRINCIPLE FIVE: To achieve peace in Israel and put an end to the galut, it is crucial that we adopt a loving and helpful mindset towards one another. We should genuinely desire what is best for others, and our actions must reflect this intention, fostering an atmosphere of understanding and support.**