

## MLPJ # 14 - Does God Hear our Tears?

We now are experiencing the heat of mid-summer and battling the dust that accompanies the rainless months. I am reminded of Psalm 102, which tells us that the stones and dust of the Land are beloved by the servants of the King, whose throne is eternally established in this city, and it moves them to compassion.

Dust is, after all, the result of the curse, which rests upon all the earth as a result of man's sin and separation from his Creator. Mankind must sweat and struggle with it to establish habitations and produce sustenance, and to battle the clouds of it that settle in our homes! Since the Fall and the expulsion from *Gan Eden* - the Garden of Eden, the serpent-deceiver is doomed to slither on his belly in it, and at the End of Days eventually will "bite the dust" once and for all!

In the meantime, the glory of Zion and Jerusalem is coated and obscured, her brilliance and beauty dimmed with literal layers of this reminder of the exile from Eden. Around the world, the serpent, too, is still very much alive and active, with his lies and deception and destruction; most of which are aimed at this place so dear to the heart of God. And so, tears of sorrow, frustration, and pain still flow from the eyes of His people - here in Israel and wherever senseless hatred and cruelty are holding sway.

I recall one of the many horrendous suicide-bombings, one in the summer of 2002, on bus #2 in Jerusalem. It was especially heart-wrenching due to the fact that it was packed with families and young people who were returning from prayer at the *Kotel* (the Western Wall). A large percentage of the victims, who were murdered or maimed, were babies and toddlers. At the time, a popular song by Sarit Hadad (a well-known Israeli female vocalist) was played and replayed on the radio. It is called "*KeSheh Halev Bocheh*", "When the Heart Cries".

Some of the words, in English, are:

When the heart cries, only God hears  
The pain erupts from the depths of the soul.  
Man falls, and before he descends still deeper,  
a small prayer cuts through the stillness.

"*Sh'ma Yisrael*, (Hear O' Israel)  
My God, You can do all  
You gave me my life, You gave me it all.  
In my eye a tear, the heart weeps silently  
and when the heart is silent, the soul cries out.

People often wonder: Does God hear our tears?

We are wonderfully assured by the Psalmist in **Psalm 56 : 8 - 11**

You have kept count of my wanderings;  
You put my tears in your bottle.  
Are they not recorded in your book?  
Then my enemies will turn back  
in the day when I call.  
This I know, that God is for me.  
In God, whose Word I praise,  
In the Lord, Whose word I praise,  
In God I trust; I shall not be afraid.  
What can man do to me?

Another question we can ask is: "Do we hear God's tears?"

We know in the gospel of Luke, that Jesus wept over Jerusalem and the tragedies that would befall her. And the gospel of John describes how, at the death of Lazarus, he wept at the pain of his friends.

The prophets of Israel remind us again and again of how God mourns the loss of intimacy between Him and His children. He grieves at our disobedience, hypocrisy and greed; at our idolatry and violence. But, do we hear His tears?

There is a very sweet story of a Rabbi who was walking with a few of his students in a forest close to a nearby town. They came across a young boy slumped behind a tree and crying bitterly. Hurrying over to him in concern they asked him why he was crying. "I am hiding but no one is looking for me!" he sobbed. After they had consoled him, the Rabbi turned to his students and said, "God is crying for the same reason!"

There is no pain greater than ignored pain...that of ignored tears.

In her book, "In the Narrow Places", Erica Brown records words from a Rosh HaShanah speech given, in September 1962, by Rabbi Norman Lamm, then chancellor of Yeshiva University in New York. It was entitled, "Three Who Cried" and he spoke of three types of tears:

the tears that come when our myths of absolute security and certainty are shattered,  
the tears of those who resign themselves to hopelessness,  
and the tears of those who cry over reality, not from frustration or resignation, but from a determination to change and renew that reality.

Rabbi Lamm also expressed that in modern society, quote, "...we have embarrassed ourselves into silence. And so the unwept tears and unexpressed

emotions and the unarticulated cries well up within us and seek release. What insight the Kotzker Rebbe had when he said that when a man needs to cry, and wants to cry but cannot cry, that is the most heart-rending cry of all.” (End of quote)

The themes of the month of Elul and the Fall Festivals are Repentance, Restoration of Relationship, Redemption and Rejoicing. Only man’s acceptance of God’s gift of repentance can turn his heart of stone into one that can cry with God and can love and heal and redeem - and then rejoice!

Abraham Joshua Heschel, in his book ‘*Man is Not Alone*’ observed:

“The world is not one with God and this is why His power does not surge unhampered through all stages of being.. Creature is detached from Creator and the universe is in a state of spiritual disorder. Yet God has not withdrawn completely from this world. The spirit of unity still hovers over the face of all plurality. The goal of all our efforts should be to bring about the restitution of the unity of God and the world. The restoration of unity is a constant process and its accomplishment will be the essence of the final Messianic Redemption.”

That is our challenge - to work with God in the restoration of unity that can only come about through real and genuine relationships, those based on truth and love, with Him and with one another. Our constant hope is that we can rely on His Word, which fades not and cannot be destroyed by senseless hatred. He has not forsaken His people, nor His precious dwelling place of Zion, and we can say with the prophet Isaiah:

"The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on High, HE WILL fill Zion with JUSTICE and RIGHTEOUSNESS. HE WILL be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge, the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.”

Isaiah also proclaims: "**Shake off your dust**, rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem.”

May it be so, soon, in our lifetime – that His Name might be glorified in all the earth as Jerusalem is exalted as the throne of the King of kings and is established in security and Shalom!

Amen and Amen and Shalom from My Little Place in Jerusalem!

~ Keren Hannah