



# Light Lines

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## Light Insight

### Consolation

**W**hy do we still cry for the destruction of the Holy Temple, it happened so long ago?

Of all his twelve sons, Jacob loved Joseph the most. Jacob's favoritism provoked the brothers' jealousy. This jealousy ultimately led to their selling Joseph into slavery. They dipped Joseph's coat into blood and showed it to their father Jacob. Jacob supposed that Joseph had been torn to pieces by a wild animal. He rent his clothes and mourned, and despite all his children's efforts to comfort him, Jacob was inconsolable for 22 years, until he received the news that his son Joseph

was alive and well in the land of Egypt. For twenty-two years, why could he never be consoled over the loss of his son?

G-d has only decreed that there be consolation over those who have passed from this world. No such decree exists for those who are still alive. This is why Jacob was inconsolable. Consolation is only over lost ones, and Joseph was still alive.

It was on the night of the Ninth of Av that Napoleon happened to be walking through the streets of Paris. He came upon a synagogue. From inside came the sounds of a great outpouring of sorrow. Napoleon told his servant to go inside and bring him the president of the synagogue. After some moments the servant returned with the president. Napoleon said "What is the reason for this terrible lamentation?"

Have the Jewish People experienced a tragedy that I am not aware of?" "Your majesty," replied the president, "We have experienced a tragedy beyond words. Our Holy Temple has been destroyed." "I was not aware that a tragedy had befallen my Jewish subjects," said Napoleon. "When did this happen?" "Eighteen hundred years ago, Your Majesty." "Eighteen hundred years! — and you're still mourning?" said Napoleon. "*If you can mourn for your temple for eighteen hundred years, you will surely get it back!*"

Consolation is only for the bereft.

There is no consolation for the tragedy of the Ninth of Av because the potential to have everything that we lost is still very much alive. The Holy Temple will be rebuilt. Its Builder lives and endures and His People survive as everlasting witnesses to this fact.

## LOVE of the LAND

*Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel*

### Kissing the Earth

*"For Your servants hold dear her stones and cherish even her dust." (Psalms 102:15)*

**T**he touching scene of Jews kissing the earth upon their arrival in the Land of Israel has its roots in the words of King David and in the actions of our Talmudic Sages. Rabbi Abba kissed the rocks at the port of Acco. Rabbi Chiya bar Gamda rolled in the dust of the land. Rabbi Chanina went even further by repairing the roads so that his beloved country would not have a bad reputation with those who traveled upon them.

## .....Light Update

### Ohr Somayach Makes Radio Waves

**A** two-hour live talk show on Israeli radio was dedicated last week to a round-table discussion with Ohr Somayach's Israeli Department about its impact on Israeli society.

Established a few years after the founding of Ohr Somayach's English speaking programs, the Israeli department is the largest of its kind in the world. In over two decades, countless thousands have crossed its threshold to a stronger Jewish identity.

The students represent a cross-section of Israeli society, from universities, the art and entertainment worlds, mainstream sabras and immigrants.

Among its successful programs, the Israeli Department has conducted highly successful educational programs for veterans and career officers of the Israel Defense Forces.

## The Other SIDE of the Story

### GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

*Our eyes see, our ears hear, our brains register, and we draw conclusions. These conclusions often explain events accurately. Yet, sometimes, through our senses, we are...*

#### Taken for a Ride

Our good friends the Steins invited us to their daughter's wedding Monday night. Since the wedding hall was in a small suburb far outside the city, I decided the cheapest and most convenient way to get there would be to organize a taxi van. I called a van company and they quoted

me a price of \$75 for a 10-seater van. Even though we only had 8 people, I decided to reserve the 10 seater. I would try to find two more people to go with us, or at least to return home with us

from the wedding. Monday evening all 8 of us gathered, and what pulled up but a van for 18 people! "What's going on?" I asked the driver, "we ordered a van for 10." He explained that there were no 10-seater vans available, so they sent a van for 18. For the same \$75 we could take ten people in the larger van.

At the wedding I found another couple, the Katz's, to fill up the other two seats for the return trip. When the van pulled around we all got on. As we were pulling out of the parking lot, Mr. Katz started yelling at the driver: "Why are you pulling out with eight empty

seats? There are lots of other people here who could use a ride back to the city. What an absolute waste of space!" Then he started yelling at all the passengers: "And why aren't any of you doing anything about this? Why are you letting him just drive off half-empty?"

Someone tried to explain to him that we had only contracted ten of the seats, but Mr. Katz was so annoyed that he wasn't even listening.

*Our senses trick us time and again, yet we never think twice before we react to them. Many times we make negative judgments about people because we accept our first perceptions, a quick superficial glance at reality. We need to rely on our senses for information about the world, however, our Creator commands us always to doubt their infallibility.*

• Concept based on "The Other Side of the Story" by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

## Response Line

Jeremy Weinstein asked:

*Why is it that Sephardic Jews will name their children after living people but Ashkenazic Jews do not?*

Dear Jeremy,

First, some background about names. A name is a label we use to convey the essence of something. The first place we find the giving of a name is when Adam names the animals, and then names Eve. The difference between this naming of animals and the naming of people is that ani-

mal names describe the species but not the individual, whereas people names describe only the individual. The Talmud tells us that the name given to a person can affect his character, and we are therefore careful to give our children names that will affect them positively. The Talmud also explains the verse in Proverbs "The remembrance of a tzaddik is a blessing, and the name of the wicked should rot" to mean that one should not name a child after a wicked person.

Another aspect of the significance of names was told to me by a rabbi in Jerusalem, that when a child is named after someone, the child "continues in the foot-

steps" of the first person, in order to complete their original task in life.

The reason that Sephardic Jews name children after a living relative is in order to honor the one after whom the baby is named. Ashkenazim do not name their children after living relatives, because although it would be a bestowal of great honor, it would be considered an *ayin hara* ('evil-eye') for the living relative – i.e., naming the child after someone might bring on that person's early demise.

I asked a rabbinic authority if it would make a difference if the relative said that they are not concerned about the *ayin hara*. He said that even if they said that they are not concerned, we wouldn't do it because our assumption is that deep down they probably do really care.