

**We are all "leibelech"
To whom the Shechino our mother cries out:
"Leiby Leiby where are you - return home"**

A Cheshbon Hanefesh during the week of shiva
for The Kodosh Vtahor Yehuda A'H ben R' Nachman HY"V

As we enter the Three Weeks, we are finishing the shiva for the holy and pure child Yehuda, known as Leiby, who was killed in such a brutal way that it shook up Jewish communities all over the world. The great tragedy that hit us like a thunder clap on a clear day still burns like a piece of red hot steel on our flesh. We are still in shock from the tremendous blow.

How can we forget that terrible Monday, a day which the Torah does not describe as "Ki Tov"?

After the children finished learning and playing, Leiby and all his friends left the building. Leiby was walking hesitantly, looking for the right path that would lead him to his wonderful mother who was waiting for him, anticipating giving him her loving motherly hug. But Leiby could not find his way. All along the way, people were passing him by, too busy with themselves, to pay attention to the fact that a child has lost his way.

Jews of all types gathered in Brooklyn, men women and children from all over came to help look for Leiby. Cars circled Boro Park with microphones blaring: "Leiby, Leiby - where are you?" All hoping that the lost Leiby would be found and returned unharmed to the arms of his loving parents. But there was no response. The Satan in the guise of a ruthless killer separated little Leiby from his mother's warm loving embrace. But no one was ready to accept as a possibility that the situation is, as said in Yirmiyahu (22:10): **בכו בכו להולך כי לא ישוב עוד וראה:** "Cry for the one that went away, because he won't return to see his birth land".

We all know that the name Leib is really a translation of Aryeh, a lion, a name frequently given to someone whose name is Yehuda. This goes back to Yakov Avinu who called his son Yehuda who was the king of the Shvotim, with the

name of the king of the animals: **"גור אריה יהודה"** - "Gur Aryeh Yehuda".

But due to our being unworthy, our Yehuda, dear Leibele was not: **"מטרף בני עלית"** - he was not able to escape the hunter, but instead: **חיה רעה אכלתהו, טרוף טרוף**, a wild beast devoured him, tearing him apart. A wild animal in the form of a bloodthirsty human cruelly killed him.

**Don't try to understand
what is supposed to be hidden**

No one has the right to say that he definitely knows why such a terrible thing happened to Klal Yisroel. Who has the audacity to explain why Hashem did not send a Malach to save Leiby; the Malach that should say to his killer: **"אל תשלח ירך אל הנער ואל תעש לו מאומה"** - "Don't touch the child and don't harm him at all".

The answer to questions like this, remain in the Heavenly Spheres. HKB"H only reveals it to select individuals, only to the greatest of our generation, as it says in Tehilim (25:14): **"סוד ה' ליוראיו ובריתו להודיעם"** - "The secrets of Hashem are with those who fear him". Hashem's ways are hidden and it is not our place to try to understand them as the Gemoreh says (Chagiga 13): **במופלא ממך אל: תדרוש, ובמכוסה ממך אל תחקור, במה שהורשית התבונן, אין לך עסק בנסתרות"**.

But, this does not free us from the obligation to do a Cheshbon Hanefesh, a soul searching, as the shvotim did when Yosef was missing (Breishis 42 28): **ויצא לבם ויחרדו:** "Their hearts sank and trembling they turned to one another saying, what has Hashem done to us?". Each of us must look introspectively at the korbton that was sacrificed to see if we can confidently say: **ידינו לא שפכו את הדם**

“Our hands did not cause this blood to be spilled” - הוזה. How frightening are the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Taanis 1:2,3) warning us about this:

”ודבר זה מדרכי תשובה הוא, שבזמן שתבוא צרה ויזעקו עליה ויריעו, ידעו הכל שבגלל מעשיהם הרעים הורע להן, ככתוב (ירמיה ה כה) עוונותיכם הטו וגו', וזה הוא שיגרום להסיר הצרה מעליהם, אבל אם לא יזעקו ולא יריעו, אלא יאמרו דבר זה ממנהג העולם אירע לנו, וצרה זו נקרה נקריה [בדרך מקרה], הרי זו דרך אכזריות וגורמת להם להידבק במעשיהם הרעים, ותוסיף הצרה צרות אחרות, הוא שכתוב בתורה (ויקרא כו כ) והלכתם עמי בקרי והלכתי גם אני עמכם בחמת קרי, כלומר כשאביא עליכם צרה כדי שתשובו, אם תאמרו שהיא קרי, אוסיף לכם חמת אותו קרי”.

He says that the Derech Hateshuva requires that when a calamity befalls us, we must scream as we realize that our actions caused this calamity, as it says in Yirmiyahu (5:25) “Your sins have brought this about”. This can cause the calamity to cease. But if the stricken people say it was caused by nature or coincidence, this is arrogant and will cause them to remain stagnant in their evil ways such that more calamities will befall them. As it says in Vayikra (26:20-24) “And if you treat me as happenstance... then I will treat you as happenstance”, meaning I will bring suffering upon you until you repent.

Two Eyes flowing with tears

The Holy Seforim explain an important concept in the need for our doing Cheshbon Hanefesh. Hashem wakes us up daily to do teshuva with a bas-kol as it says in Pirkei Avos (6:2) that every day a bas-kol comes from Har Sinai and says “Woe to those who insult the Torah”. And if chas vsholom we block our ears from hearing these heavenly warnings, then Hashem has to wake us up to do teshuva with more severe methods.

Hashem, with his infinite mercy, tries to constantly give us hints and reminders to realize what we need to do to improve ourselves. As it says in Devorim (10:12): “ועתה: “And now Yisroel what does Hashem want from you?” Our Rabbanim Shlit'a have already brought to our attention that we need to improve in a number of areas: Achdus, watching our eyes, having set times to learn Torah, and with their permission I want to add another layer of Cheshbon-Hanefesh.

Let us reflect upon the time of year that this horrible event occurred. Leiby A'H was kidnapped on Monday the 9th of Tammuz, the day that the Gemoreh in Rosh Hashono (18:) lists as the fast on the 9th day of the 4th month

(Tammuz) which commemorates the day Yerushalayim was breached. The Gemoro in Tanis (28:) says that this refers to the first Bais Hamikdash. During the 2nd Bais Hamikdash, the walls of the city were breached on the 17th day of Tammuz. Leiby was killed on Tuesday and buried on Wednesday, the 11th of Tammuz, and his shiva ended on the 17th of Tammuz, the first day of the Three Weeks.

The Bnai Yisoschor brings from the Ariza"l, that all months are represented by parts of the head. The months of Tammuz and Av are the 2 eyes. Yirmiyahu in Eichoh (1:16) laments: “על אלה אני בוכיה עיני עיני יורדה - מיים” - “For these things I weep, my eyes - my eyes shed tears”. These 2 months represent the 2 eyes from which salty tears flow because of the destruction of the 2 Batei Mikdashos.

We are called Jews because of Yehuda

The little boy named Yehuda reminds all of us known as Yehudim that we are called that after Shevet Yehuda. The Medrash (B"R 98:6) quotes Rav Shimon Bar Yochai that Yaakov ovinu blessed Yehuda that all of his brothers' descendants would be named after him and would not be called Reuvaini or Shimoni etc. only Yehudi.

Even the word “yeled” reminds us of “yeled shashuim”, a delightful child, as it says in Yirmiyahu (31:19): “Haben yakir lee Ephraim, im yeled shahshuim”. The Medrash explains that this refers to Klal Yisroel, so it says (ibid 49:16): “כי הנה קטן בגוים נתתיך” - “I have made you small among the nations”.

Yeled Shashuim, Klal Yisroel has a father and mother. Hashem is our father and the Shechina is our mother, as the Zohar explains by the mitzvah of Shiluach Haken: “והאם: רובצת על האפרוחים” - The mother is roosting on the eggs, is symbolic of the Shechina protecting Klal Yisroel when they learn Torah.

One doesn't need a very vivid imagination to understand the clear hint that Hashem is trying to give us with this horrible incident. This delightful child, Yehuda, that was lost unable to find his way home, is symbolic of Klal Yisroel, called Yehudim after Yehuda. His mother waiting for her child to return symbolizes the Shechina who waits for her children Klal Yisroel to return.

We are all “Leibelech” lost on our way, as Dovid wrote in Tehilim (119:176): “תעיתי כשה אובד בקש עבדך” - “I have strayed like a lost sheep”. The Shechina our mother is waiting for her children to return home, to the Bais

Hamikdosh where we once lived together. Her crying voice is echoing from one end of the world to the other crying out to us: "Leibele Leibele where are you, please come home."

Being sad over the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh

The haloche (O.C. 1:3) is: "ראוי לכל ירא שמים שיהא" - "A G-d fearing person should always be sad over the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh. If that is true all year, it is certainly true during the 3 weeks. If we were worthy we would be crying endless tears over the fact that we have no Bais Hamikdosh and are still in golus. But we are too busy chasing worldly pleasures and honor so the "eyes crying like water" fell on little Leibele. Hashem reminded us of the churban and our golus through the wicked killer of Leibele.

We must do teshuva to feel more pain over the churban, thinking more of Hashem's honor that is so low in the world, over the pain of the Shechina not having a home on this world, and for the Jewish children who had lost all connections with Torah and Yidishkeit. We need to focus our feelings on Hashem's pain over the churban.

The Gemoreh (Beroches 3.) says that there are 3 watches during the night and during each Hashem brays like a lion and says: "Woe is to my children whose sins caused the destruction of my home, and burned my dwelling and were exiled among the nations of the world." Let us accept upon ourselves to console Hashem, so to speak, by learning his Torah as it says (ibid 8.): "מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לך"

"להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ד' אמות של הלכה בלבד" - "From the day of the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash all Hashem has left is the 4 amos of halacha."

Let us pour out our hearts to Hashem as it says in Eicha (2:19): "שפכי כמים לבך נוכח פני ה'" - "shivchee kamayim lebaych nochach pnai Hashem".

We must say to Hashem:

Ribbono shel Olam, it is true that our desires turn us away from you, and we are far from perfect, but look at all the pain we suffer while in golus: "הבט משמים וראה, כי היינו לעג וקלס בגוים, נחשבנו כצאן לטבח יובל, להרוג ולאבד" - "Look down from Heaven and see how we are scorned by the other nations, with them trying to slaughter us, to destroy us, to beat us and to embarrass us."

So many of us are first and second generation survivors of the Holocaust, when vicious killers slaughtered and burned 6 million holy Jews. "Ubchol zos shimcha lo shachnu", Shuls and Batei Medrash all over the world are full of Jews coming in the morning and evening to learn Torah and daven to Hashem 3 times a day; Jews all over the world are involved in so many forms of Tzedokeh and chesed to the sick and other needy people, with love and limitless devotion. So we ask you Hashem "Nuh al tishcochynu" - Please don't forget us, take us out of this bitter golus, build a 3rd Bais Hamikdosh and you will see how we will serve you: "byirah kiymay olam uchahsnim kadmoniyos", as they did in the "old days".

In conclusion, we send condolences from the depths of our heart to the dear parents who are in such pain. Stay strong; accept the prayers and condolences of all of Klal Yisroel "Hamakom yenachem eschem bsoch shar avlai Zion vYerushalyim". Try to find strength in the fact that your pure son Yehuda Leibel A'H was chosen as a public korbon to wake up all of Klal Yisroel all over the world to the need to do teshuva and make a real Cheshbon Hanefesh.

May his Neshomeh rest in the Eternal world and may we all be zoche soon to Techias Hamaysim and the Geula Shlayma Bimheiru Beyomeinu in our days Omein.