

Dvar Torah for the 17th of Tamuz

Based on *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom #70*

Sunday is the 17th of Tamuz, the fourth month of the Jewish year, counting from Nissan (the month in which Pesach [Passover] occurs). We fast in commemoration of the breaching of the wall of Jerusalem, three weeks prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. The date of the Temple's destruction, 9 Av, is also observed with fasting.

A law was once passed, bringing much evil to the Jews, God forbid. The Rebbe then said, “Can it be that we allow God to bring evil to the world? We must call God away from His other tasks—like decreeing evil, God forbid. We must tell Him to put everything else aside and listen to us, to what we want, to speak to Him and to ask Him to draw us close.

“For when a Jew wishes to speak to God, to pour out his heart to Him, God casts aside everything else including the evil decrees, God forbid, He wants to decree. God puts aside, as it were, all His other concerns and turns His attention solely to the person that wants to speak to Him and pour out his heart to Him for help in coming closer to Him.”

The czar passes a law negatively affecting hundreds of thousands of Jews and because of one little Jew the decree is going to go away? The Third Reich passes evil laws affecting over six million Jews and because of one little Jew the decrees are going to go away?

The UN, PLO, Tanzim and Hizbollah each wants to make evil “decrees,” God forbid, and because of one little Jew who wants help making *berakhot* (blessings), giving charity, keeping kosher or keeping Shabbat, God’s not going to let it happen?!

Exactly right.

God has no interest in inflicting pain on either Jew or gentile. On the contrary, the whole purpose of Creation was to allow people the opportunity to earn the greatest possible pleasure, awareness of God. Evil decrees are meant to make us aware. They are rude and painful, but if we are recalcitrant we have no one to blame but ourselves.

By the same token, if an individual wakes himself up, there is *no need* for any evil decree. Even one person’s awareness of God—and desire to seek more of it—can be a mitigating factor. Of course, how many decrees it may mitigate and to what extent, depends on the depth and sincerity of the person's desire.

“Nation will not lift up sword against nation and they will no longer learn war” when the Mashiach (Messiah) arrives because “the world will be filled with awareness of God, as the water covers the sea” (*Isaiah 2:4*; *ibid.* 11:9). When all of mankind reaches the maximum awareness there will be nothing left to mitigate.

Have an easy fast. May we soon be worthy of seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy, “The fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth [months] will become happy and joyous” occasions (*Zachariah 8:19*). Amen.

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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[Home](#) | [Dvar Torah Index](#) | [Zemani Hashanah Index](#)