



# Breslov Research Institute



## Dvar Torah for *Tisha B'Av*

Lebanon is in the news a lot lately, but it's the wrong Lebanon. Many, many years ago, Chazal (our Sages, of blessed memory) taught that "Lebanon" is often used in the Torah as a code word referring to the Beit HaMikdash, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Here are two pieces about "Lebanon."

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Sefer Torah 3

All disagreements are territorial: you say it's yours, but he says it's his and he's coming in, whether you like it or not. If you genuinely loved one another, you could agree to share the space. If you worked on your self to reach a high enough degree of humility then "my space" would not be a problem.

So it was, once upon a time, in Jerusalem and in the Beit HaMikdash. Chazal tell us that no one in Jerusalem ever complained that he felt crowded; that even if people stood shoulder to shoulder in the Beit HaMikdash, when they bowed themselves they allowed their neighbors total privacy with the Divine.

There is, in fact, a "place" where all people and all peoples can gather peacefully without fear of harm, and frolic together and live in harmony.

This "place" is called the Tree of Life. Sadly, even if we knew "where" the Tree is, we couldn't get there now.

Why? Because the path to the Tree of Life is blocked. It is guarded by angels who wield a burning sword that is in constant motion. They aim the blade in one direction and then another. They will continue to point this sword at you and me, and anyone unqualified, who tries to approach. What qualities do we need?

Faith, awe, humility and truth. The first three are the roots of the Tree; the last is its trunk. Reb Noson writes that these are not out of reach. If we seek advice from tzaddikim rather than from anti-tzaddikim our faith will grow. If we are cognizant of God's presence, then we begin to realize the awesome effects, beneficial or otherwise, of our thoughts, words and actions.

Humility, he writes, comes from admitting that you're not the smartest person to ever live, that anyone could improve his life, if only he would listen to you. Finally, one's affinity for the truth grows the more he turns to the "Torah of truth" (Malachi 2:6) for wisdom.

As these qualities become more of you, you approach the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life was first in the Garden of Eden. We'll find it again in the Beit HaMikdash—when it will be rebuilt.

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Based on Likutey Halakhot, Mezuzah 5

Your mezuzah is the border between Eretz Yisrael (Israel) and \*chutz l'Eretz\* (outside the Land [of Israel]). When you go home, you expect to be safe and protected: no incoming missiles with payloads of ideas you don't want, desires you can't stand anymore, anxiety and stress you don't need.

The physical walls that protect you (or the firewalls of your computer) are offspring of the walls of your mind. The first line of defense is your ability to discriminate between true and false, right and wrong. Without this you aren't inside at all; you're outside, vulnerable, prey to all the harm that animals and people can inflict. (God spare us!)

That little mezuzah affixed to your doorway isn't decorative; it's active.

It brings to your home the holiness of Eretz Yisrael, especially the holiness of the Beit HaMikdash. The two \*parshiyot\* (Torah chapters) it contains allude to the Ten Commandments; these ten remind us of the other mitzvot. Each mitzvah in its turn awakens and reawakens our awareness of the presence of the Speaker of the Ten Utterances Who brought the world into existence.

The Beit HaMikdash was the home, the source, of prayer and Torah. It was the home of the holiness of the Jewish home, the primary place where the Shekhinah "resided" so that She could "reside" in private homes as well.

Because the Beit HaMikdash wasn't just a place where one prayed to God or studied His Torah. It was a place where one brought his prayer and study to experience God, and knew, from that experience, that any place could be His "home."

One cannot always stay "home," in the safety of his holiness. Some days he's got to get out of the door and down to the streets all alone. This is why he needs to place his hand on the mezuzah as he steps out—to take mezuzah/Beit HaMikdash faith and holiness with him. One places his hand on the mezuzah on the way in as well—to make all the "outside" experience part of a clearer, maturer, in-home faithfulness.

Reb Noson writes that this is why people are sometimes temporarily driven from their homes. They have completed one "reading," one level of understanding the Torah; now, from the (disad-)vantage point of exile they get to refine their understanding, building a sturdier house and home, one more filled with Torah spirit.

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May we feel the pain of our fellow Jews driven from their homes and share with God His pain of being in exile (as it were), and see soon the building of the Beit HaMikdash and the Total Redemption. Amen.