

## Second Day Rosh HaShannah 5785/2024 Text Study: Tears/Crying

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### Midrash Tehillim/Psalms 4:3 and Brachot 32b and Bava Metzi'a 59a

Even (when we feel the) gates of prayer are closed, the **gates of tears are never closed.**

### Hagar at the Well (Gen 21: 14-20)

וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם | בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח לֶחֶם וְחַמַּת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-הָגָר שָׂם עַל-שִׁכְמָהּ וְאֶת-הַיֶּלֶד  
וַיִּשְׁלַח וְתֵלַךְ וַתֵּתַע בְּמִדְבָּר בְּאֵר שָׁבַע:

14. Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמַּיִם מִן-הַחֶמֶת וַתִּשְׁלַךְ אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים:

15. When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes,

וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּשֶׁב לָהּ מִנְגֵד הַרְחֵק כַּמֶּטְחָנִי קִשְׁתָּ כִּי אָמְרָה אֶל-אֲרָאָה בְּמוֹת הַיֶּלֶד וַתֵּשֶׁב מִנְגֵד  
וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת-קִלְהָ וַתִּבְרַךְ:

16. and went and sat down at a distance, a bowshot away; for she thought, “Let me not look on as the child dies.” And sitting thus afar, she burst into **tears.**

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת-קוֹל הַנְּעֹר וַיִּקְרָא מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹהִים | אֶל-הַגָּר מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מֶה-לָּךְ  
הַגָּר אֶל-תִּירְאִי כִּי-שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶל-קוֹל הַנְּעֹר בְּאֶשֶׁר הוּא-שָׂם:

17. God heard the cry of the boy, and a messenger of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heeded the cry of the boy where he is.

קוּמִי שִׂאִי אֶת-הַנְּעֹר וְהִסְזִיקִי אֶת-יָדְךָ בּוֹ כִּי-לִגְוִי גֹדוֹל אֲשִׁימֶנּוּ:

18. Come, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.”

וַיִּפְתַּח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרָא בְּאֵר מַיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמְלֵא אֶת-הַחֶמֶת מַיִם וַתִּשְׁק אֶת-הַנְּעֹר:

19. Then God **opened her eyes** and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and let the boy drink.

וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַנְּעֹר וַיִּגְדֵּל וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִדְבָּר וַיְהִי רֹבֵה קִשְׁתָּ:

20. God was with the boy and he grew up; he dwelt in the wilderness and became skilled with a bow.

### **Lamentations 1:2**

בָּלוּ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה

“Cry, she will cry in the night...”

### **Talmud, Sanhedrin 104b**

“**She cries, she will cry [bakho tivke] at night**” (Lamentations 1:2). (**Why** are there) **there two cries? Rabba says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: One** is a cry **over** the destruction of **the First Temple, and one** is a cry **over** the destruction of **the Second Temple**.

The term “**at night**” indicates that the crying is **over matters of night, as it is stated: “The whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night.”** (Numbers 14:1).

### **Liora Ayalon’s drash<sup>1</sup>**

“*Cry, she will* [תִּבְכֶּה] *cry* – this is none other than a **command**: Cry, you will cry [תִּבְכֶּה]! **One must cry at the sorrow of one’s neighbor**, whose son or daughter has died. For thus **he takes away a little of their sorrow and puts himself a little in their place**.

*At night* – for in the daytime their neighbor sees their grief and may cry with them. **At nighttime, people are left alone with their grief**, and this is why it is written *Cry, she will cry*, **that their neighbor cry with them at night**, and as the **weeping and sorrow are shared**, they are diminished a little in the world.”

### **Talmud, Sanhedrin 104b**

There was a woman who was Rabban Gamliel’s neighbor, whose **son died**, and **she would cry** for him at night.

**Rabban Gamliel** heard her voice and **cried along with her** until his eyelashes fell out.

The next day his students took note and **removed her from his neighborhood**.

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<sup>1</sup> Liora Ayalon is a contemporary eighth-generation Jerusalemite with degrees in sociology, education, and Hebrew literature

### **Liora Ayalon's drash:**

“But Rabban Gamliel was fulfilling what was written *cry, she will cry at night*, so **why did they remove her from his neighborhood?** His students said, because his eyelashes fell out – and it was because **he was crying alone. His neighbors did not hear him crying, and did not cry along with him** for that neighbor who lost her child, that is why we removed her from the neighborhood...

**The students sought to remove her out of her neighborhood, that she would stir about in the world, going from one neighborhood to another, crying for her son, and her voice would be like a Shofar that sounds from one end of the earth to another,** calling out: *Cry, you will cry in the night*, for you are the Community of Israel.

And so, **Rabban Gamliel will not cry alone for her in the night, but the people of his community and all the communities, will cry along with them,** and the **sorrow will diminish** a little in the world.

And **since she stirred about in their neighborhoods, the people cried along with her and their tears cleansed their souls.** And so, her mind eased a little and she found some respite for her soul.”

### **Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, *Lekuti Etzot*<sup>2</sup>, Prayer, 18**

Every word which comes from your mouth in truth and sincerity will provide you with an exit from the darkness ....You may feel unable to say a single word because of the intense darkness and confusion which hedge you in on every side. But.. whatever you do say, say (it) truthfully as far as you possibly can. For example, you could at least say the words “God, send help (ה' הוֹשִׁיעָה)” truthfully. You may not be able to put much enthusiasm into the words, but you can still make yourself say them sincerely.

### **Mishnah Rosh HaShannah 4:9**

The order of the blasts: three sets of three each. The length of a *teki'ah* is equal to three *teru'ahs*, and **the length of a *teru'ah* is equal to three sobs.**

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<sup>2</sup> Lekuti Etzot – composed by Rebbie Nachman of Breslov (c.1790 – c.1810 CE). A collection of teachings on a variety of common human situations and emotions.