

Echoes from an Inner Place

תְּנִיָּא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסִי: פַּעַם אַחַת הָיִיתִי מְהַלֵּךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ, וְנִכְנַסְתִּי לְחֹרֶבָה אַחַת מִחֹרְבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְהִתְפַּלֵּל. בָּא אֵלָיו זְכוּר לְטוֹב וְשָׁמַר לִי עַל הַפֶּתַח וְהִמָּתִין לִי עַד שְׁסִימָתִי תְּפִילָתִי. לְאַחַר שְׁסִימָתִי תְּפִילָתִי אָמַר לִי: בְּנִי, מִפְּנֵי מָה נִכְנַסְתָּ לְחֹרֶבָה זוֹ? אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: לְהִתְפַּלֵּל. אָמַר לִי: הֲיָה לָךְ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּדֶרֶךְ. וְאָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: מִתְּיָרָא הָיִיתִי שָׁמָּה וַפְּסִיקוּ בִּי עוֹבְרֵי דְרָכִים. וְאָמַר לִי: הֲיָה לָךְ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל תְּפִילָה קְצָרָה.

בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה לְמִדְתִּי מִמְּנוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים: לְמִדְתִּי שָׂאִין נִכְנָסִין לְחֹרֶבָה, וְלְמִדְתִּי שְׁמִתְפַּלְלִין בְּדֶרֶךְ, וְלְמִדְתִּי שֶׁהַמִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּדֶרֶךְ מִתְפַּלֵּל תְּפִילָה קְצָרָה.

וְאָמַר לִי: בְּנִי, מָה קוֹל שְׁמַעְתָּ בְּחֹרֶבָה זוֹ? וְאָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: שְׁמַעְתִּי בֵּת קוֹל שְׁמִנְהָמַת כְּיוֹנָה וְאוֹמְרָת: אוֹי לְבָנִים שְׁבַעוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם הִחְרַבְתִּי אֶת בֵּיתִי וְשָׂרַפְתִּי אֶת הַיְכָלִי וְהַגְּלִיתִים לְבֵין הָאוֹמוֹת. וְאָמַר לִי: חֲיִיד וְחַיִּי רַאשְׁךָ, לֹא שָׁעָה זוֹ בְּלִבְד אוֹמְרָת כֵּן, אֶלֶּא בְּכָל יוֹם וַיּוֹם אוֹמְרָת כֵּן. וְלֹא זוֹ בְּלִבְד, אֶלֶּא בְּשָׁעָה שִׁישְׂרָאֵל נִכְנָסִין לְבֵיתִי כְּנִסְיוֹת וּלְבֵיתִי מְדַרְשׁוֹת וְעוֹנִין "יְהִיָּה שְׁמִיָּה הַגָּדוֹל מְבוֹרָךְ" הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְנַעֵנַע רֹאשׁוֹ וְאוֹמֵר: אֲשָׁרִי הַמְּלֶכֶךְ שְׁמַקְלִסִין אוֹתוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ כֵּן, מָה לוֹ לָאֵב שֶׁהִגְלָה אֶת בְּנָיו, וְאוֹי לָהֶם לְבָנִים שֶׁגְּלוּ מֵעַל שׁוּלְחַן אֲבֵיהֶם.

Rabbi Yosi said: Once I was traveling and I entered one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Elijah, always remembered for the good, came and waited for me at the entrance until I had finished my prayer. After I finished my prayer, he said to me: *Shalom alecha/peace be upon you, my master!* I answered: *Shalom alecha, my master and my teacher!* He said to me: My son, why did you enter this ruin? To pray, I replied. Said Elijah: You should have prayed on the road. I was afraid, said I, lest the passers-by interrupt me. He said to me, You should have prayed a shortened prayer.

And so I learned three things from him: I learned that one does not enter a ruin. I learned that one prays on the road, and I learned that one who prays on the road prays a shortened prayer.

My son, Elijah continued, what voice did you hear in that ruin? I told him: I heard a heavenly voice cooing like a dove and saying: Woe to the children on account of whose sins I destroyed my house and burned my Temple and exiled them among the nations!

By your life and breath, said he, it is not only in that moment that she cries so. It's every day, three times a day, she coos like a dove: *wooo, wooo, woe to the children...* And not only that, but whenever Israel enters its synagogues and study houses and recites the Kaddish, saying, *Y'hei shemei hagadol m'vorach/May his great name be blessed*, the Holy One, blessed be He, shakes his head and says: Happy is the king who is thus praised in his house! What a thing for the father who banished his children to hear! Woe to those children who are banished from their father's table.

(Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 3a)

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