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## Droshos - Tragedy: Hashem's Scream

### ***Different Ways of How Hashem Communicates With Us***

It is written, “So shall you say to the house of Jacob, and so shall you tell the sons of Israel.” Rashi explains that the ‘house of Jacob’ refers to the women, who need to be addressed softly, which is the term ‘*amirah*’; whereas the men need to be addressed in a harsher manner, which is the term of ‘*dibbur*’.

There is a way to speak to someone softly: *amirah* (and there is always a more casual way, which is called ‘*sichah*’), and there is the manner of harsh speech, which is *dibbur*. The term *dibbur* is when we are spoken to harshly - and its purpose is to penetrate into our innermost point.

When our ears are sanctified, we only need *sichah*. We don’t have to be told what to do; it can be conversed to us simply and we get the point. If we are a bit toughened, we need some rebuke, first in a soft manner, through *amirah*. If we are still very hardened, we need a harsher rebuke: *dibbur*.

But if the ears never hear the *dibbur* in the first place, then what? Then there is a whole different language that we need to hear that will speak to us and break through all the blockages.

When Hashem created the world with Ten Expressions, everything was created with His word, and ever since then Hashem speaks to us through His Creation. The prophets saw it openly, but with the rest of us, Hashem speaks to us through the Creation - as a whole and as individuals. But we need ears to hear the messages. We do not have prophets anymore, but the word of Hashem has never stopped for a moment. As long as we have the ears to hear, we hear His words.

When we stood at Sinai there was a “great voice that did not stop”. Ever since then, Hashem speaks to each individual, at all times. But in order to hear His voice, we must have ears that are able to hear it.

In order to hear the word of Hashem, our life has to be a life in which we are “*not hungry for bread and we are not thirsty for water, only to hear the word of Hashem*”. If a person is thirsty for Hashem’s word - when he is disconnected from a materialistic life, he hears Hashem speaking to Him. But if his lifestyle is caught up in materialism, he doesn’t hear Hashem.

The more a person is connected with materialism, the less he hears Hashem. It won’t help him even if he goes to an *asifah* (gathering) of *hisorerus* (inspiration)! There will be almost no point. A person gets inspired for a few moments, and as our Sages state<sup>[1]</sup>, the inspiration comes and goes, and then he is back in his spiritual slumber, he forgets about it, until he has no more recollection of it.

If a person keeps being told something, again and again, and he is not hearing what we are telling him, it will not help to try telling him again. He doesn't hear. So what hope does he have, then? He needs a new language that will speak to him and get him to understand.

### **Hashem's Scream**

The new language that Hashem has spoken to us now is not '*sichah*', it is not '*amirah*', and it is not even *dibbur*. It is a language in which He is screaming to us (*tzevachah*)!

The language of '*dibbur*' is a language to us that conveys to us certain letters, words, and sentences. The same is true with the languages of '*sichah*' and '*amirah*'. But a *tzevachah*, a scream, has no letters and words that can describe it; it is a sound of pain to us. It cannot be described in the word. If it could be described with letters and words, it wouldn't have its effect.

This week,  
Hashem screamed  
at us. He has not  
merely spoken to  
us harshly ...

This week, Hashem screamed at us. He has not merely spoken to us harshly with *dibbur*. If one truly hears this scream, his soul cannot remain at the same level that it was at before.

What message is Hashem sending us? What does He want from us? We have no prophet who can tell it to us openly. But if we are being screamed at, let us reflect on why it is necessary for us to hear a scream: There are two reasons why it is necessary to scream.

We will use people as an example: there are two reasons why people scream at each other. One scenario is when a person screams at another person because he loses patience and he's angry. But this is not the nature of how Hashem screams at us, for Hashem's wrath only lasts a moment. His wrath is not to be understood in the same way of how people get angry at each other, *chas v'shalom*.

But there is another reason why a person would scream at another person. If we see someone drowning, his life is in danger, and we scream out for help. Whenever there is a danger to life, a scream accompanies it.

When the danger to us is not so great, there are times when we are addressed with *sichah*, with *amirah*, and with *dibbur*. But when we are in a situation in which we are totally in palpable danger, we need much more than that. We need to be screamed at; *tzevachah*. There is no other language that will speak to us then.

### **The Role of The Individual During These Trying Times**

We must try to reflect on how we came to such a situation, in which we need Hashem to scream to us.

I am not talking about the general whole of *Klal Yisrael*; that is a separate issue. There is no one who can change the entire *Klal Yisrael*, because none of us are prophets whose mission is to change the *klal*. I am speaking about each of us in the individual sense, and not in the collective sense.

In today's times, there is a lot of Torah learning; perhaps it can be said that it is unprecedented. But there is an internal layer to everything. There is the action that we do, and there is the heart behind

it. We are in a situation in which our hearts have become like stone! It makes no difference which community one comes from: they must all hear the same thing now. The heart, the inspirations and ambitions to live a spiritual life....where is it?

If a person these days does not keep the *possuk* of "עד יעבור זעם...עד יעבור זעם", "*Close the doors behind you...until the wrath passes*", when he does not choose to ignore the materialistic influences that are tempting the world of Torah - there is no truth! It's all materialism that is screaming at us from every corner. This is not the sound of Torah, of mitzvos, of seeking truth, of serving Hashem. The atmosphere of the streets today is totally the opposite of Torah.

There are individuals - and in fact there are many of them - who live apart from all of the influences of the street. But the general lifestyle of most people is influenced by the outside, in contradiction with the Torah's values.

The 'heads of the *Erev Rav*' found within our surroundings - as the *Vilna Gaon* wrote about[2] - have swayed those who were innocent and pure and who feared Hashem, to think of ideals that are totally not befitting for a Jew. It is written in the words of the *Tochachah*[3] that if we act improperly in Eretz Yisrael, we are cursed with insanity. This needs no explanation. It is stark and obvious to anyone as long as he is not totally blind, even if he is not very spiritual.

There is the generation, there is the *klal* that lives in it, and within the *klal*, are each of us as individuals. Nobody can change the generation or the *klal*. But the 'individual' that is in each of us can change. We can each understand that the lifestyle today totally contradicts the lives of our *Avos* - Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Dovid and Moshe - and our previous *Gedolim* who came after them.

If Hashem is screaming at us, it is because our [spiritual] lives are *totally*, and *palpably*, in danger.

### ***The Decline of Truth In Our Times***

I am not referring to physical danger; those are decrees of Heaven. We are in *spiritual* danger, and it is total. It is a situation that can be compared to a blind man walking near the edge of a river, who is in danger of falling in and drowning (to quote the words of *Mesillas Yesharim*).

[In the *Selichos*, there is a prayer], we say, מה יעשה הבן שלא יחטא, "*What should the son do, so that he should not sin?*" Today, the things a person sees in the streets are what he sees in the so-called 'Chareidi' newspapers[4], and he cannot avoid it, because it's in the home of his parents that he is forced to come into [so the 'son' cannot be blamed].

Do we see a *Toras Emes* (Torah of truth) today?? Do we see a person today who truly feels when he gets up in the morning, "*How I love Your Torah, all day it is my conversation*"?? Is there any person today who falls asleep at night with thoughts of closeness to Hashem??

Do we see a heart today that is entirely filled with yearnings for truth and to be close to Hashem, from the depths of the soul?? Do we see a person today who has a true *tzuras adam* (ideal form of man), whose entire life is about Hashem and His Torah, a life which is entirely connected to Hashem and Torah and to *Klal Yisrael*, in the depths of his soul?? The life we see today is totally the opposite of this!

I, too, have children, and I pity them, on what will be with them, in the kind of generation they are growing up in. But Hashem has even more pity.

Long ago, we never would have believed that the situation would become like it is today. But we have gotten used to being less and less bothered by different things that should have bothered us.

## ***The Ultimate Choice***

The choice we are faced with today is like the choice that Avraham Avinu had to make in his life, when the entire world was steeped in idol worship. He was an individual against the rest of the world.

We must know that “Our Torah will not be exchanged”! Concerning the group of people who are attempting to replace the ways of our forefathers - a group of sinners whose agenda is to bring the worst depths of spiritual impurity into the world of Torah[5] - we must reinforce our belief that the Torah, the truth, will not be exchanged.

Every individual now has the *bechirah* (free choice) to seek truth, to follow in the footsteps of our *Avos* and the *Gedolim* who came after them, to return to a life in which one truly seeks Hashem, Torah, and is connected with *Klal Yisrael*.

We must know that what happened [this week] is not just ‘another’ event. It was an event in which anyone who heard it was shaken to his very core. It was Hashem transforming His *dibbur*, His speech of harsh rebuke to us, into a *tzevachah*, a scream.

If someone was missing inspiration until now, if he wasn’t getting the messages through *sichah* and *amirah* and *dibbur* of Hashem, he has heard the scream of Hashem now.

We all know that it was Hashem speaking harshly to us. That was obvious to all of us. But this is not enough for a person to internalize it. If a person didn’t realize that it was a scream of Hashem to him, he should know that He has given him one last opportunity of free choice, to decide if he will seek truth or not.

We do not know how long this will go on for; if it will go on for the next day, 2 days, a year, 2 years, or 10 years or 20 years. But what we do know is that there is no harsher message to us than Hashem’s scream. If one does not hear that scream, his soul will go lost forever.

If a person thinks that this was just another tragic event we hear about and that we will eventually ‘get over it’ as time goes on, and that we should just accept it lovingly, of him it can be applied the verse, “*Lazy one, why do you sleep?*”

### ***The ‘50<sup>th</sup> Gate Of Impurity’ Coming Into The World of Torah***

It is not an issue of being on a high spiritual level or not. It is a question of life and death to our soul that is affecting each and every one of us.

The *Rambam* says that a person is influenced by his surroundings. The world now overshadows a small and sheltered world of Torah which is in mortal spiritual danger. It is attempting to pull everyone out of it and bring them all into the outside world.

As for those they [the secular influences] don’t succeed in bringing outward, they bring in all of the evil influences, the *Shaar HaNun D’Tumah*, (the 50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Impurity), the worst depths of spiritual impurity - into the world of Torah, where they can affect them from the inside.[6]

If someone would have said 20 years ago that the ‘50<sup>th</sup> Gate of Impurity’ would enter the world of Torah, that we would all be faced with spiritual danger like this which causes people to give in either willingly or by force - would anyone have believed this? But this is our situation now. This is where Hashem has placed us now, and He has given us the power as well to deal with it.

What, indeed, is that power we were given to counter all that we face?

## ***Living A Life of 'Mesirus Nefesh' For Hashem***

Rabbi Akiva awaited his whole life for the day of death. He wanted to die *al kiddush Hashem* (in sanctification of Hashem's Name), because he knew that to love Hashem "with all your soul" means, even when your life is being taken from you.

In the previous generation, the destruction that came upon Jewry in Europe, was of a physical nature, in which people had to give up their lives for Hashem. They had to recite a blessing that one makes when he is about to die *al Kiddush Hashem*. Their bodies were destroyed. But we are exactly in that situation as well - *spiritually*, not physically. And spiritual destruction is far, far worse than physical destruction.

We do not recite a blessing of *Kiddush Hashem* over our current requirement of *Kiddush Hashem*, but we need to live a life of *Kiddush Hashem*. Each day, when we say *Kerias Shema*, we should realize that we need to give up our lives for Him. If one has this in mind for the two times a day when he recites *Shema*, and he is truly prepared to have *mesirus nefesh* for Him - not just as superficial words in his head, but as an inner decision - this is fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* which applies to us nowadays.

If someone has a Jewish heart, he understands *exactly* what is being said here.

At Har Sinai, each Jew gave up his soul to hear the Torah, for every word of Hashem they heard. Every day as well, we need to give up our own souls for Hashem, when we say *Shema*. If we truly contemplate the concept of *mesirus nefesh* as we say *Shema*, and we do not just think of this in superficial terms, this is *Kiddush Hashem* nowadays. It is required even according to *Halacha* to do so as well.

This is not describing a high spiritual level, or some lofty concept. In the situation we are in, if someone is not truly prepared to give himself up for Hashem with *mesirus nefesh*, he will surely fall into the other side, which is destruction.

## ***Purifying Our Heart***

When we need to speak harshly, we say certain words. When we scream, which has no words, what message are we conveying? We are basically screaming out, "Life is in danger." So what do we need to do when our life is in danger? It is the possuk, "*In Your hand, I place my spirit.*"

When wondering about this, people ask, "Okay, so what should I actually do, *l'maaseh* (practically speaking)?" What you should do "*l'maaseh*" is: "*My son, give your heart to Me.*" Those are the words of *Shlomo HaMelech*. In order to act correctly, our heart needs to be purified. If our heart isn't first purified, our actions that follow will not be pure. We need a *lev tahor*, a "pure heart", which Hashem created us with.

What is a *lev tahor*, a pure heart? It is when a person has desires and yearnings that are only for Hashem, His Torah, and boundless love for the Jewish people. It is that even when a person walks in the street, his heart is still spiritually alive.

The Chofetz Chaim was once asked about the situation of *Klal Yisrael*, and he said, "I don't know. All I know is that upstairs in Heaven, there are five degrees in which a Jew's *Yiddishkeit* is measured - there is 'frozen' *Yiddishkeit*, there is 'cold' *Yiddishkeit*, there is 'lukewarm' *Yiddishkeit*, there is 'warm' *Yiddishkeit*, and there is 'boiling hot' *Yiddishkeit*."

We are in a time of wrath. It is concerning every aspect of a Jew's life today, which has become the

total opposite of a Torah life and the ways of our forefathers. Of course, the gentiles live much further from the Torah's ideal way of life. And those who are outside of the Torah world are also far from the Torah's lifestyle, entrenched in the ways of life that are in the streets. But even within our own Torah world, our lifestyle does not resemble the lifestyle of our Avos, at all. It is a fantasy for one to think otherwise.

A true Jewish heart is a heart that totally burns with feelings for Hashem, for His Torah, and for the Jewish people.

When Dovid *HaMelech* wanted to improve and do something, what did he ask Hashem for? "*A pure heart You created me with*" – he sought a new heart. That is exactly our situation: we need a new heart. It is like the *halachah* of "An earthenware vessel, when broken, is purified."

Our *avodah* is to come to what is written, "*A broken heart, and a crushed heart, will not be disgraced.*" Hashem does not ignore the heart of one who feels broken and crushed. But how do we attain the 'broken' and 'crushed' heart that we need, so that Hashem will not turn us away? It is only when we erase the various desires from our heart which do not belong there, to truly give up our desires for Hashem.

We need to be prepared to detach from This World, let go of it, and connect ourselves with the reality of Hashem.

Not only do we need to improve the problems that are in our spiritual heart. We need a new heart entirely. Dovid *HaMelech* said, "*My heart is empty within me.*" He emptied out his previous heart and received an entirely new heart.

### ***To Totally Change***

What Hashem wants from us in sending us this recent tragedy, is that He is asking us to *totally* leave the false kind of life that we have been living. It won't be enough to leave one aspect; we need to leave it entirely.

Compare this to a person who keeps "*kashering*" his kitchen, leaving over one utensil that is non-kosher from being cooked with meat and milk. For every time he cooks with that utensil, he will keep making his kitchen non-kosher, and it will not help to keep kashering the kitchen so long as he remains with the non-kosher utensil. It must be *kashered* entirely, or else it will forever remain non-kosher.

So, too, we must leave everything in our life entirely, all of it – and if we do not leave every last aspect of it, it will not help to leave 'some' of it.

In the *Hagaddah*, we say that Lavan was worse than Pharaoh. Pharaoh wanted to kill all the baby Jewish boys, but Lavan attempted to uproot the entire Jewish people. The 'Lavan' in our entire generation is presenting itself like a '*tallis* that is entirely *lavan*\white', attempting to uproot everything from us by fooling us with its influences.

What is being asked of us? To give up everything for Hashem. To leave the new lifestyle that has entered us in the last couple of years. Anyone who lived through the last 20 years can all remember that the lifestyle of several years ago was totally different than the new lifestyles of today that have begun. We remember a different life than the one we see today. We needed to improve then also, but now there is a new generation which has introduced a kind of lifestyle that is totally unbecoming.

### ***The Daily 'Hisbodedus' (Meditation and Self-Accounting)***

So we need to give our lives for Hashem. What can we actually do? We need to close ourselves off in a room each day, as the *Chofetz Chaim* did, and contemplate thoughts of *teshuvah*. The *Ramchal*<sup>[7]</sup> said to do this every day, and that without doing this, a person is close to his destruction.

What should one contemplate there? He should remember the day he stood at Sinai and ask himself if his life is similar to the kind of life he had when he stood at Sinai. He should ask himself if his will in life is to do the will of Hashem, just as we wanted when we stood at Sinai; if his heart feels unified with the hearts of all Jews, just as our hearts were all unified when we stood at Sinai.

Who does not need to do this? Is there anyone who can say "I am already purified" ...?

And after realizing that one's life is indeed not in line with the level he was at when he stood at Sinai, he should burst out into tears, bitter tears, and cry to Hashem to be saved from the situation.

If a person does not contemplate each day if what the true kind of life is supposed to look like – the way our forefathers lived and the way we looked like when we stood at Sinai – he wonders "Maybe yes, maybe no." But there is no doubt about this. The style of clothing we wear today – would we stand at Har Sinai with it and receive the Torah?

If a person really wants to return to the true way that a Jew used to live, he has to return to there from the depths of his heart and cry to Hashem, "Hashem, show me the way and purify my heart!"

He has to really want it, and not just say the words superficially. One has to cry to Hashem from the depths of his heart and beg Hashem that his heart be purified. There has to be crying accompanying his prayers, and it must pour forth from the depths of the heart.

If a person makes sure to do this every day, Hashem will show him what he has to do, in his personal life. Each of us will be shown the way that is unique to each of our individual roles.

### ***The Ultimate Resolution***

Yonah HaNavi said, "*My death is better than my life.*" He knew it was not worth living if he is in a world that is false. We also need to ask ourselves if our life is worth living, when we live in a world of total falsity. If we don't seek the truth from the depths of the soul, nothing will help. No lecture and no inspirational gathering will do it. The resolutions to improve that we make are the superficial layer of what we need to do. Most of the time we cannot even keep to our resolutions, because we are faced with tremendous tests.

What Hashem really wants from us – in addition to the keeping of *Halacha* which each person needs, to learn and keep the Torah, which applies to every single person – as individuals, Hashem is asking each of us, "*My son, give Your heart to me.*"

If one is truly prepared to give his heart over to Hashem – which really means to give up his life<sup>[style]</sup> for Him – he has the key to success. If one cannot do this, there is no hope to succeed, for nothing else will help.

### ***Realizing The Gravity Of The Situation***

People are coming forward and saying, "This is all too hard. It's too high of a level to be on. How long can we keep to such a level?!" But would our *Avos* live like this?

We know our financial situation is difficult, but what about our spiritual situation? Do we realize that our spiritual life is in danger? The entire spectrum of our spirituality is in danger.

There are some *B'nei Torah* who, *rachmana litzlan*, have left the *Beis Midrash* due to the outside influences. The larger percentage of *B'nei Torah* have remained in the *Beis Midrash*, but even those who remained on the inside are missing their [spiritual] hearts,[as a result from all of the influences of the outside].

What do we want when we get up in the morning...? When we walk in the street, what do we want...? What do we want when we go to sleep...?

### ***In Light Of The Recent Tragedy***

Hashem is speaking to each of us. It is written, "*I have given you life and death, and you shall choose life.*" Why did Hashem scream at us now? If we merit it, this will be the last time He screams. But if we do not merit, He will only scream louder at us, until every single Jew is shaken to the core.

The tragedy that took place this week, Hashem's scream to us, is an event that our *daas* (logical mind) could not bear. Our minds did not make any sense of it and could not explain it. It went past all of our *daas* and penetrated straight into our heart. Some people tried to give explanations for why it happened, but the truth is that there is no way to rationally explain it. We were supposed to feel from it that Hashem was communicating with us.

At Sinai, we heard the word of Hashem, and we were prepared to give up our lives to hear His world, when our souls left our bodies. So too, in our own times, we can hear the scream of Hashem, which addressed the innermost point of our soul that is in all of our hearts.

We can do this by disconnecting from the current lifestyle of falsity – even though others around us do not live correctly. We can strengthen ourselves by always asking ourselves if our *Avos* lived this way or not. And the answer is "No" - which means that is not the truth.

### ***In Conclusion***

Each person, as an individual, should set aside time every and seclude himself in a room where he can make a self-accounting, from the depths of the soul, and cry to Hashem that his heart be opened, that his eyes become illuminated to really see what he needs to see, and that he should be given the strength from Hashem to understand what he has to rectify, and that he be given the strength to rectify what he needs to rectify.

*"Hashiveinu Avinu L'Torasecha"* – "Return us, our Father, to Your Torah..." But in order to merit doing *teshuvah*, one must cry to Hashem, bitterly, from the depths of his soul. One who cries to Hashem in this way will have a guarantee that "The *Shaarei Demaos*, the Gate Of Tears, is never closed" on him.

There is nothing that can be said to the general *klal* that will work for everyone. Resolutions to improve on behalf of the *klal* are praiseworthy, but this should not be the main thing. The main thing should be that each person, on his own, as an individual, needs to change his heart. The 'heart of stone' in a person must become transformed into a soft 'heart of flesh', to the 'pure heart' that we are created with.

One who truly cries about this and he begs Hashem to be helped to change, from the depths of his soul, will merit to reach the true bond with Hashem, His Torah, and all the souls of *Klal Yisrael*.

May Hashem merit us that we should no longer hear of any tragedies in our midst – that we should no longer hear any bitter screams, and that instead, we should all hear the unified cry that will come from the depths of our heart to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*: "*Hashem, Hu Ha'Elokim*" – "Hashem, He is G-d."[\[8\]](#)



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[1] In Tractate Bava Kamma

[2] For more information on modern-day Erev Rav, refer to the pdf of "Erev Rav Talks."

[3] Parshas Ki Savo

[4] Refer to Tefillah #093 - Media Influence.

[5] This is referring to the 'Erev Rav' which the Rav mentioned earlier in the derasha.

[6] See also Derashos #0103 - Surviving Spiritually.

[7] In sefer Derech Eitz Chaim

[8] This moving derasha was given in the aftermath of the horrifying tragedy of the stabbing of Rav *Elazar Abuchatzairah* hy"d in the summer of 5771. It contains poignant and eternal lessons that can help strengthen us during all times of tragedy, *lo aleinu*.

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