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Exile In The World

There is exile in time, such as the Three Weeks. There is also exile in a place, such as how Adam was exiled from Gan Eden. There is also exile in our own soul (our *nefesh*): when our own soul is exiled. How does the soul become exiled?[1]

The Jewish people have been exiled among the nations, but there is also an exile within the Jewish people: we are exiled among the *Erev Rav* (the Mixed Multitude). The current exile, Edom – which has also recently entered into a new phase, the exile of Yishmael – has just now expanded into the exile of the *Erev Rav*. This is a more inner exile than the exile of Yishmael, because it is an exile within the Jewish people itself.[2]

A Scattered Soul Is A Personal Exile

Yet there is an even deeper kind of exile than our exile to the *Erev Rav*. This is the exile of our very *nefesh* (soul). What is this exile?

The *Mahara*[3] writes that just as there is exile in the Jewish people, so is the Torah in exile. The Sages say that the “words of Torah are rich in one place and poor in another place.” The fact that the words of Torah are spread out and scattered all over the place is a form of the Torah in exile. With regards to our own soul as well, when the soul abilities of a person is scattered inside himself, he is in a personal exile.

When a person’s soul is scattered around inside, he is exiled within himself. The soul has many abilities, and they each have their proper place. When they get mixed around, this puts a person into an exile within himself.

This is also the depth behind the suffering of *Gehinnom*. If a person lived his life wrong and he is sent into *Gehinnom*, his real punishment is that he is in a place where he doesn’t belong. He is in exile.

That is exile: when we aren’t in the *place* we should be. The same is true for our soul. If the abilities in our soul are out of place, that is exile, because the abilities are not where they are supposed to be, and it creates an internal chaos.

The exile of the soul is really the depth of our exile. Chazal say that three sins take a person out of this world: jealousy, desire, and honor. That is exile – when we are taken out of our proper place, due to negative traits of the soul, which “take a person out of the world.”

The *Ramban* says that a person exists where his thoughts are. If, for example, a person is sitting in the *Beis Hamidrash*, but he's spacing out, thinking about what's going on in the world, where is he? He is really outside of the *Beis Midrash*, out there in the world, in a place where he doesn't belong. It is exile.

First Feel Your Own Exile

A person must come to recognize this matter from within himself (as it is written, "*From my flesh I see G-d.*"). If a person doesn't feel his own personal exile that is taking place inside himself, he won't be able to feel the general exile of the Jewish people either. In order to know what exile is, you have to already recognize the concept from within yourself.

There are many areas in the soul. There is the layer of our actions, our *middos* (character traits) and emotions, and our thoughts. If a person realizes how mixed up the parts of his soul are with each other, he will realize how much he is in a personal exile.

If a person realizes that this is his situation and he is able to cry about it, he has the key to feel the exile of the Jewish people, and the fact that the *Shechinah* is in exile and that Moshiach hasn't come yet. Although it is "*shelo lishmah*" (ulterior motivations), because he is only crying about himself and not about other, still, the rule is that *shelo lishmah* can bring a person to "*lishmah.*"

The concept of *galus* (exile), on a superficial level, is well-known. But the inner meaning of *galus* is not that well-known. The *Maharal* says that the concepts of exile and redemption are interrelated, for the words "*galus*" (exile) and "*geulah*" (redemption) are rooted in the word, "*giluy*" - to reveal. The depth of this concept is because when a person sees how much we are missing in exile, he sees how much is needed to be 'revealed' - and he will then be able to feel the pain of the exile.

If someone still cannot feel how his very soul is in exile, and he doesn't realize that we are supposed to reveal Hashem, and that we are missing this in exile, what can he do to feel the loss of the *Shechinah*?

He is not exempt just because he doesn't feel his own personal exile. He should think into the world's dire situation right now; how much the world is missing now. It is written about Moshe, "*And he went and he saw their suffering.*" So too, one should think about the painful situation of today's times, and that will get himself to feel the loss of the *Shechinah*, the situation of exile.

Basic Empathy

If this is still not enough for a person to awaken himself to feel the pain of this exile, he should at least think about how much people are missing *physically* in their life. For example, think into the following:

1) How many widows and orphans are there on the world? **2)** How much suffering and illness is going on in the world? **3)** How much financial stress is going on in the world?

How much pain is going on in this world?? Feel the pain of other people on this world; connect with the pain of others whom you meet.^[4] Anyone is capable of doing this - we can all unite together in this way and feel some mutual connection.

This will elevate our own personal suffering from being self-absorbed, into feeling the suffering of others, the suffering of the masses. This will help us feel the pain of exile, and of this the Sages state, "Whoever mourns properly over the destruction of Yerushalayim, will merit to see it rebuilt."

[1] This statement of the Rov is based on a concept often mentioned in *Sefer Yetzirah* known as “*Olam, Shanah, Nefesh*” – “World, Time, and Soul” – That everything takes place in three planes: in a place in the world, in a certain time, and in our own soul. Here, the Rov is explaining how the concept of exile takes place in the world, in time, and in the soul.

[2] See ***Tefillah #085 - Erev Rav Today*** and ***Chanukah #048 - Greek Influence Today***, and ***Derashos #086 - Exile of Past and Present***

[3] *Maharal: Netzach Yisrael*

[4] See also ***Tefillah #0111 - Empathy***; and ***Tefillah #0158 - Deeper Kindness and Compassion***

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