



## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE MERON TRAGEDY

**QUESTION** The night of Lag B'omer at around 6:43 eastern time, which is about 1:43 Israel time and about the time the deaths in Meron were taking place, a friend of mine in Israel called me that she could not sleep, that she was having terrible negative thinking.

I walked her through confessing that she fell into negative thinking but does not want it, that she desires to bring all of it into the mitzvahs of guarding her life by getting a good night's sleep and guarding her soul from negativity, and walked her through breathing saying Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad over and over until she fell asleep. I found out the next day that we were doing this precisely at that time. Was Hashem's message all over Israel that night that her soul felt?

**ANSWER** It is very possible. Many people also felt what you described.

**QUESTION** 2) The Chofetz Chaim tells us that whenever anything happens it is a message for the Yidden to do teshuva. As the incident became more known, we heard that a ramp had been closed off and lives were trapped and others were falling onto them. Is that saying do teshuva, that Hashem is trying to come into this world and we are blocking His Light, that He wants us to return to Him through our understanding that He is doing everything, a certain light that is trapped animating a thought or emotion we cling to that is in essence blocking hearts from recognizing Him with understanding He is concealed there?

**ANSWER** That is very true, and it is one of the proper reflections to take out from it.

**QUESTION** 3) When more people told me about it, I said Hashem wants us to do teshuva. To my surprise, people

had strong negative reactions to that! One wanted to be in the moment of grief feeling for the families of the victims and absorbing the shock, basically calling me insensitive to the pain of others.

Another did not want to be blamed and told me I was burning up the world. And both felt very strongly that telling people to do teshuva was too harsh on people who cannot take it, who have gone off the derech hearing those crushing messages about Hashem's anger at us and becoming hardened and cold to Him.

A third person told me that she is so numb from everything that the tragedy simply has not registered in any way.

I realize that the galus has been long and we are storm tossed and we need Hashem to be gentle with us. Is the message that Hashem wants the Yidden to do teshuva applicable here?

**ANSWER** Speak to each person on their own level and in their 'language'. Any one lesson that can be learned from something will not be understood by everyone equally.

**QUESTION** 4) Is the [negative] reactivity to that all a kelipah in which the very light Hashem wants to come into the world being concealed?

**ANSWER** Yes, but before giving over the message to others, first see if the message will be taken positively or negatively by the other.

**QUESTION** 5) If it is indeed a message to do teshuvah, what is a way to respond so that those experiencing a push back to doing teshuva can recognize Hashem and "do the work" of opening their hearts?

**ANSWER** Same answer as #3. You need to figure out what the individual in question needs to hear, based on his on her personal soul and what you think they need to hear.

## MOURNING THE MERON TRAGEDY

### QUESTION

What is the inner way to view the unspeakable tragedy that happened in Meiron on Lag B'Omer this year?

### ANSWER

There is a “fallen” manifestation of the middas hadin, which is rooted in the concept of “He builds worlds and destroys them.” Of this it is said that Hashem originally wanted to create the world with middas hadin (*but He saw that the world wouldn't last like this*). All destruction and tragedies are rooted in this concept of Hashem destroying worlds, where He saw the world wouldn't last like this. There is also a perfected level of middas hadin, which is called the gevuros kedoshos, the holy judgments on High, which is the secret behind all of the limitations that define Creation. This is the original middas hadin that Hashem wanted to create the world with, and Hashem still retained this level of middas hadin on some level, and He uses it only with His most devout servants. As Chazal teach (*Bava Kamma 50a*), “Hashem is exacting with His devout ones, even for a hairsbreadth, for it is written, “And His surroundings are very exacting.” This is the holy, repaired side of middas hadin [used very rarely, and only on His most devout ones who serve Him].

The root of this repaired level of middas hadin is actually the very novelty of Creation. For at first, before Creation, everything was filled with Hashem's infinite light, and only the unlimited was revealed, while the concept of limitations (*or the Creation*) was there only contained in a very hidden and concealed dimension. Hashem then created the novelty that was Creation, meaning that He revealed outward the concept of limitations. This is the meaning of “Hashem will rejoice in His actions”, meaning that Hashem rejoices in this novel concept of creating limitations [the very backbone of Creation]. This particular aspect was the novelty of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai, who represents the middas hadin, as is well-known.

The day of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai's death is the concept of the fallen middas hadin becoming elevated to the repaired middas hadin. The Zohar (*Naso 144a*) brings that even as Rabi Shimon revealed his teachings of the “Idra Rabba” on his final day, there were three sages who perished, from the great revelation of joy then – which was the revelation of the root of

all limitations. Their deaths were similar to the loftiest form of death, which is death by the kiss of Hashem. The Zohar further mentions there that on that day, Eliyahu had to kill 45 high-ranking officials in order to save Rav Hamnuna. These were the 45 souls on the side of evil who had to die, in order to reveal the 45 souls on the side of holiness (*and 45 is the gematria of adam*). That was the revelation of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai: “Adam (*man*) was made, and said, for you.”

At this time, the 50th gate is being revealed. On the side of evil, it is a fall from the level of adam (*man*), and that was the lower root of the deaths of these 45 holy neshamos. But at the higher root of all this, it is a revelation of going above the level of adam (*man*), an ascent to the level of the future tzaddikim, who are called by the name of their Creator”, which was said especially of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai, that he was called by the name of the Creator. These 45 souls rose to the light of G-dliness that is above the design of man. They are praiseworthy, and praiseworthy is their lot, for they became enjoined in the soul of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai, and they are found with him in his joy, in the higher mesivta (*the yeshiva of Rashbi, in Heaven*).

And this is the true, inner comfort to the family of these 45 neshamos: That they should know, that their loved ones have worthy of becoming enjoined and unified with the soul of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai as he ascended upwards to his root above. When they (*the mourners*) will understand this and feel it in the depths of their hearts, they will rejoice, with an intense, wondrous joy!

## ON THE TRAGEDY IN MERON OF LAG B'OMER 5781

### QUESTION

1) I write this question with tears and pain over the unspeakable tragedy that happened to Klal Yisrael at the holy site of the Rashbi. There were a couple of eerie points in the tragedy. (1) There is a Gemara that “It is proper to rely on Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's view b'shaas hadechak, when we are “pushed” into having no choice, and the 45 korbonos this year at Kever Rashbi were killed by being pushed. (2) And 45 is equal in gematria to one of the names of Hashem, which is known as the Shem Ma”h, the name of Hashem that equals the number 45. What can the Rav tell us to console us about the tragedy? Also, when we take accounting of our actions, what was the implication of the tragedy with regards to the tikkun that we need. What is it that we especially need to fix? Also,

what is the connection between this tragedy and the Galus and the Geulah, both on a collective level as well as on a personal and inner level?

**ANSWER** 1) Everything in Creation has a chitzoniyyus (*outer level*) and a pnimiyyus (*inner level*) to it. It is the same when it comes to this matter as well.

Of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai it is said נֶעֱשָׂה אָדָם בְּעִבּוּרָךְ "Man was made because of you." The gematria of the word for man, "adam," is 45. Chazal said that in the future, "The tzadikim will be called by the name of their Creator," and a degree of this already took place on This World, with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, whom the Zohar compares to Hashem: "The face of the master Hashem – da Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai." This revelation, this ohr, is mainly in the End of Days, where the level called "Keser" (*crown*) is revealed. The Keser is the bridge between human beings and Hashem, as it were. The ohr, the revelations, in the End of Days are shining strongly now and it "shines" especially stronger on the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. There has been an ascent in this world in which there are souls who rose to the ideal level of the human being, called "adam."

These 45 neshamos rose to the level of "adam." They rose together with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and they were zocheh to enter into the mesivta d'Rashbi, in the higher world. And it was a realization of בְּקִרְבִּי אֶקְדֹּשׁ "With My close ones, I am sanctified," such as what took place at the inauguration of the Mishkan [with the deaths of Nadav and Avihu]. And here as well, this Lag B'Omer, there has been a day of special ascent for the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, an ascent to the level of "adam," the ideal level of man along with 45 neshamos were very, very worthy of ascending together with Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. They are praiseworthy in their portion. That is all with regards to the pnimiyyus, to the inner level of this event. But in the chitzoniyyus, in the outer level of this event, the 50th level of tumah, which counters the 50th level of kedushah was active. Whereas, the highest levels of kedushah bring a person above the normal human level, the lowest levels of tumah are able to bring a person beneath the normal human level, below the level of the adam.

That is where the world has fallen into today. And, G-d forbid, even in a makom kadosh, a holy place such as Meron, these impure devices of the 50th level of tumah enter there dai-

ly. Even on the holy day of Lag B'Omer, in a place where chasidus is guarded so carefully, it is now filled with these impure devices, which were used to take pictures of the tragedy, etc..

So, on the one hand, the great exalted light of the 50th level of kedushah shines, but at the same time, its opposite, which is the 50th level of tumah, counters it's its radiance, G-d forbid. As is known, every year on Lag B'Omer Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's soul becomes elevated again. Additionally, on the one hand, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai ascends to his high place above at his burial place, but at the same time, on the world down below, the "heads of the Erev Rav" take control of this place because of the 50th level of tumah which runs rampant today.

**QUESTION** 2) Although the government is Israel is not a real malchus, I felt as if the involvement of Chareidi politicians were to blame, for lack of organizing the event properly, for lack of responsibility, and just letting the oversized crowd to run it, etc....it seems to me that had the government been running it, this tragedy wouldn't have occurred, because they know how to organize things well and they are better equipped for events like this [i.e. large crowds]. So how should we handle this matter?

**ANSWER** 2) At the levayah of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai it was already like this. The Idra Zuta brings a story that the people of Tzipuri got into an argument with the people of Meron about where Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai should be buried. Until this day, the fighting concerning Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's burial place continues in different forms. Part of the fighting is done with good intentions. Part of the fighting is coming from personal, ulterior motivations. And part of the fighting is coming from the "Erev Rav." It is not for us to ever be involved with the "Erev Rav," whether it is an individual, or a leader, or the government of the "Erev Rav." And certainly we should not be involved with them when it comes to a holy place. Hashem, in His goodness, will do as He sees fit.

**QUESTION** 3) What can you say and respond to a youngster (*bachur*) who was there and saw the disaster in front of him? Thank you.

**ANSWER** 3) Every person who has experienced and seen this disaster needs to clarify this according to their own individual soul, and it is impossible to give guidelines on how each individual should act, and how to act with him.



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