

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

A HEBREW SAGE MIGHT SAY. . .

"If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither; let my tongue stick to my palate if I cease to think of you, if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory even at my happiest hour." [Psalms (Tehillim) 137. 5 - 6 Tanakh, Kethuvim]

THE NINE DAYS

"When you have begotten children and children's children and are long established in the land, should you act wickedly and make for yourselves a sculptured image in any likeness, causing the LORD your GOD displeasure and vexation, I call heaven and earth this day to witness against you, that you shall soon utterly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess; you shall not long endure in it, but shall be utterly destroyed. The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a scant few of you will be left among the nations to which the LORD will drive you. There you will serve man-made gods of wood and stone, that cannot see or hear or eat or smell.

But if you search there for the LORD your GOD, you will find HIM, if only you seek HIM with all your heart and soul — when you are in distress because all these things have befallen you and, in the end, return to the LORD your GOD and obey HIM. For the LORD your GOD is a MERCIFUL GOD, HE will not forsake you nor will HE let you perish; HE will not forget the covenant which HE made on oath with your fathers.

You have but to ask about bygone ages that came before you, ever since GOD created man on the earth, from one end of heaven to the other, has anything as grand as this ever happened, or has its like ever been known? Has any people ever heard the VOICE OF GOD speaking out of a fire, as you have heard, and live? Or has any god ventured to go and take for himself one nation from the midst of another by prodigious acts, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and awesome power, as the LORD your GOD did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

You have been shown to know that the LORD alone is GOD; there is none beside HIM. Out of heaven HE let you hear HIS VOICE, that HE might instruct you; on earth HE let you see HIS great fire, and from amidst that fire you heard HIS WORDS. And because HE loved your fathers, HE chose their descendants after them; HE HIMSELF brought you out of Egypt with HIS PRESENCE, in HIS great might, to drive from your path nations greater and mightier than you, to take you into their land and assign it to you as a heritage, as it is this day.

Know therefore this day and consider it in your heart that the LORD alone is GOD in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. You shall therefore keep HIS statutes and HIS commandments which I enjoin upon you this day, that it may go well

with you and with your children after you, and that you may long remain in the land that the LORD your GOD is giving you for all time." [Deuteronomy (Devarim) 4. 25 - 40 Tanakh, Torah]

The period known as **"The Nine Days"** begins — the days from Rosh Chodesh (head of the month), the month of **Av** to the fast of the ninth of Av (Tisha b' Av). In Jewish communities worldwide, prohibitions intended to decrease joy are implemented. All these reach a climax on the Fast of the Ninth of Av, a fast similar to Yom Kippur. During this time, we increase our solemn attitudes toward the Temple and of its loss. We are especially careful to keep our thoughts upon the destruction of the Holy Place and of the lifestyle that was lost with its destruction. There are no celebrations, no weddings, and no haircuts! Among the Orthodox, even bathing is kept to a minimum and freshly laundered clothes are not worn. These prohibitions are not intended to be overwhelming, but to turn our minds toward the seriousness of sin and its consequences.

Yet, even in destruction there is consolation. After Jeremiah prophesied judgment, he delivered a message of deliverance to the nation of Judah. **"For I am with you to deliver you — declares the LORD. I will make an end of all the nations among which I have dispersed you; but I will not make an end of you! I will not leave you unpunished, but will chastise you in measure."** [Jeremiah (Yirmeyah) 30. 11 Tanakh, Nevi'im; see also 46. 28]

The discipline of **GOD OMNIPOTENT** is a means to an end; that is, a restored relationship through repentance. **"Let us search and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD. Let us lift up our heart rather than our hands to GOD in heaven...I have called on YOUR NAME, O LORD, from the depths of the Pit. Hear my plea — Do not shut your ear to my groan, to my cry! — YOU have ever drawn nigh when I called YOU; YOU said — Do not fear! — YOU championed my cause, O LORD, YOU have redeemed my life."** [Lamentations (Ekhah) 3. 40 - 41, 55 - 58 Tanakh, Kethuvim]

Through judgment, we are reminded of our need for **GOD'S** mercy. The month of **Av** reminds us that we are sustained by the mercy of the **MOST HIGH GOD**. When properly grasped, this consolation of **Av** naturally leads us to the next step...the repentance of the month, **Elul**.

We encourage everyone to light a candle in their homes this evening in memory of the Israelis who have died in past and present wars and read Psalm 83 aloud. I encourage parents to gather their children and do this as a family prayer time. Let us take this day to join hearts with our Israeli and Jewish brethren around the world and offer united and fervent prayer to our **HEAVENLY FATHER**.

Sha'alu (Pray) for the Shalom (Peace) of JerUSAlem and all of Israel!

Redeem Israel, O ELOHIYM, out of all their troubles!

Welcoming Sabbath Chazon (*Sabbath of Prophecy*)! {Traditional Jews observe this as a day of mourning with a fast and the reading of the BIBLICAL BOOK of Lamentations. The Sabbath preceding Tisha b'Av is called *Shabbat Chazon*, the Sabbath of Prophecy. The hafTORAH is Isaiah's foretelling of the destruction of the Temple. The Shabbat following Tisha b'Av is *Shabbat Nachamu*, the Sabbath of Comfort, when Isaiah's message of consolation is read.}

Sabbath of Devarim - "**Words**" [Reading: Deuteronomy 1:1 -3:22; Isaiah 1:1-27; Matthew 24:1-22]

May our HEAVENLY FATHER hear our prayers. . . that our long-awaited MESSIAH Y'SHUA, THE SON OF DAVID, KING of kings comes quickly. And LORD, may YOUR Holy Temple be rebuilt speedily, even in our day. Amen & Amen!

Praying for the peace of Jerusalem, is praying for the return of our Messiah and Lord and for the Kingdom of God He is bringing when He comes. Then God's Will shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven and the world will experience true godly universal peace which is the fruit of Righteousness.

Email: delrifkah@gmail.com

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Please visit our web page for teachings on Bible texts and subjects.

Also notice the section showing the disparity between the Holy Bible and the Muslim Koran (Quran).