



# Everything That Was Destroyed Can Be Built



At the Peel Commission of 1936, then Chairman of the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion, addressed the crowd with the following statement: “About 300 years ago, a ship named ‘Mayflower’ sailed into the new world. It was a great event in the history of England and America, but I would like to know if there is one Englishman who knows exactly when this ship set sail and how many Americans know when. Do they know how many people were on the same ship, and what was the nature of the bread they ate when they left?”

“And yet,” Ben-Gurion added, “More than 3,300 years before the Mayflower voyage, the Jews left Egypt, and every Jew in the world knows exactly what day they went out – on the 15th of Nissan. And everyone knows exactly what bread the Jews ate – *matzah*. To this day, Jews all over the world eat *matzah* on the 15th of Nissan – in America, Russia and other countries, and tell the story of the Exodus and the troubles that befell the Jews from the Exodus until today.”

There is no other nation in the world that embodies, marks, recalls and is tormented by the events which occurred to them thousands of years ago. But the Jews have been reminding and remembering for thousands of years – not just the Temple which was destroyed on this day, Tisha B’Av, but all the significant events

our people have gone through throughout history. The basis of the Jewish holidays is built upon this concept, so that Jewish tradition can be passed on, from father to son, from mother to daughter and for all future generations, because the essence of Judaism is *וְהָיָה לְבָנֶיךָ*, and you shall tell your son.

According to tradition, it was on Tisha B’Av that the spies who toured the Land returned to Moshe and to *Am Yisrael* who were awaiting their report in the desert. The spies managed to incite the people against Moshe and against the Land. Against them stood one man, Calev ben Yefuneh (who was later joined by Yehoshua bin Nun), who shouted loudly: *עֲלֵה נָעֲלָה*, “Let us go up and inherit it!” One man against an entire nation, trying to bring the nation to its rightful place, *אֶרֶץ חַמְדָּת*, *אֲבוֹת*, the Land of the Forefathers, which would become the inheritance of their children.

This fast also marks the destruction of the Temple, the holiest place in Judaism. The destruction of the Second Temple was caused by *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred; because of a simple quarrel between two Jews, one of whom hurt his friend in public. It was this hatred that caused the great fire that eventually led to the destruction of the Temple.

From these events, we came to know the power of the individual. From the destruction, we learned how the hatred of one simple man – and the controversy he managed to stir up against another Jew – managed to cause such immense damage. But, as Rabbi Nachman says, if you believe destruction is possible, believe rectification is possible too.

Every person has the power to destroy, but also, equally, the power to build.

On Tisha B’Av, we remember the moments of sorrow and pain that have befallen our people through the ages. The *kinnot* give expression to Jewish calamities, from the destruction of the Temples, through the Crusades, the suffering of the Martyrs in Spain, the pogroms to the destruction of European Jewry during World War II. This day is unique in that it belongs to all of us, to each and every one of our people. This fast does not belong to specific rabbis or personalities, because every member of the Jewish people can and should mark this historic national day, the day the *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed, the day our people went into exile.

I pray and hope that just as the Temple was destroyed by the *sinat chinam* of ordinary Jews, so will it be rebuilt soon, with the help of G-d, through the *ahavat chinam* of ordinary Jews in our generation, each according to his or her power and abilities in prayer, good deeds, preservation of Jewish tradition and strengthening of faith and healthy, vibrant Judaism.

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