



# Tachanun and Tisha B'Av

Illustration courtesy of Ron Segalovitz (ronsegalovitz@gmail.com)



**M**any have the impression that the main function of the *Beit HaMikdash* is to offer *korbanot*.

However, when Shlomo HaMelech offered his famous *tefilla* upon the dedication of the *Beit HaMikdash*, he did not mention the offering of *korbanot*.

He described the *Beit HaMikdash* as the *makom tefilla*, that everyone, Jews and non-Jews alike, should come to daven to G-d in this place: וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ וְהִתְחַנְּנוּ אֵלַי בְּבַיִת הַזֶּה - “And they will pray and supplicate to You in this Temple” (Melachim I 8:33).

All prayer is supposed to be directed towards the *Beit HaMikdash*.

This is the “office” in which the prayers may be accepted. Yeshayahu (56:7) also referred to the *Beit HaMikdash* in this way when he said, כִּי בֵּיתִי בֵּית תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל הָעַמִּים, - “for My House will be called a House of Prayer for all the peoples.”

That is why, as a result of *churban HaBayit*, our situation is described by the *pasuk*, גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשְׁוֹעַ שְׁתָּם תִּפְלְתִי - “Though I would cry out and plead, He shut out my prayer” (Eicha 3:8).

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 559:4) rules that we do not recite *Tachanun* on Tisha B'Av, since this day is referred to as a *moed*.

Rav Soloveitchik suggested an additional reason for the omission of *Tachanun* based on the Gemara in Bava Metzia (59b) that stresses the special efficacy of reciting *Tachanun* immediately after the *Shemoneh Esrei*.

The Gemara recounts that from the time that Rabban Gamliel placed Rabbi Eliezer, his brother-in-law, in *cherem*, the wife of Rabbi Eliezer made a point of interrupting Rabbi Eliezer after he completed his *Shemoneh Esrei*, thus preventing him from reciting *Tachanun* immediately. She feared

that if Rabbi Eliezer were to recite *Tachanun*, her brother, Rabban Gamliel, would be harmed.

On one occasion, she failed to interrupt him, and on that day, since Rabbi Eliezer's *tefillot* were fully accepted, Rabban Gamliel died.

From this Gemara, we see that when we recite *Tachanun* immediately after *Shemoneh Esrei*, our *tefillot* are more readily accepted. On Tisha B'Av, we have the *minhag* to omit the phrase, תְּקַבֵּל צְלוֹתָהוֹן וּבְעִוְתָהוֹן - “May the prayers and supplications be accepted,” from the *Kaddish* after *Shacharit*, since the Gemara in Berachot (32b) teaches, “From the time the *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed, the heavenly gates of prayer were locked.” The Gemara's source is the *pasuk* cited earlier in reference to the *Churban*, גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשְׁוֹעַ שְׁתָּם תִּפְלְתִי.

Perhaps we refrain from reciting *Tachanun* on this day to demonstrate that our *tefillot* are not answered to the same extent they would be if there was a *Beit HaMikdash* (See *Nefesh HaRav*, 1994 ed., p. 200).

■ Adapted from Rav Schachter on Tefillah.

**Rabbi Hershel Schachter** is Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University.



Scan here for a special *shiur* by Rabbi Schachter on *Bein HaMetzarim*.



A member of the Mizrahi Speakers Bureau  
[mizrahi.org/speakers](http://mizrahi.org/speakers)