

CHAPTER EIGHTY-SEVEN

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

The night air is cool and refreshing after the day's heat. You make your way toward the Kosel, feeling a certain sort of anticipation that is unlike any other. As you approach the huge plaza you catch your breath. There is no other sight that matches the one before you. Even if you are able to visit regularly, each sight still gives your heart a surge of spiritual energy.

You walk toward the ancient stones; they seem so dignified yet humble. They have seen so much pain and joy, they seem to be crying and laughing at one and the same time. You gather your bearings; if you are like me, you stroll about for a few moments. You see different group's davening and various individuals unloading their burdens. Some are weeping, others seem ensconced in joyous fervor - no one is the same, for here each person can be who he really is. The small *kappel* of one Yid and the *shtreimel* of the next seem perfectly in place, for here every member of every tribe has its warm spot.

You approach the wall and find yourself kissing its stone surface. Strange, the texture is soft, nothing like its hard veneer. The crevices seem made to measure for your own needs, they whisper to your soul, Welcome.

The worn *Tehillimel* is open in your hand; its words become transit tickets for your heartbreak. You start saying the words of David *Hamelech*, but the needs of your soul make them yours. Time flies by, was it a few minutes, or hours? No difference, it's time well spent, a time that has healed and renewed.

We often feel dullness in our heart; it's as if we are carrying around something that has died in our deepest recesses. Life's hurts get the better of us; we become worn and weary. We know that we want to be refreshed, and we seek something that will lift us above the careworn plain we find ourselves in.

The *Kosel* is such a place. It is silent yet alive. It has heard so much and given so much strength throughout the ages.

I remember when *Yidden* couldn't approach its forlorn stones. Holy Jews would climb up to the tops of nearby buildings just to catch a glimpse of it. They would rip their shirts in anguish over the desolation, not only of the site, but also of their inability to caress the lonely walls.

We have always had a special relationship with these walls, a sort of understanding. Here we can

open our hearts and spill out all the burdensome baggage we carry. At this special corner of the world we can sense *Hashem's* presence more than anywhere else, and feel His comforting touch all the better. Astoundingly, every Yid can find strength in this place. Your background means nothing; it just takes a bit of heart. So you sit there and *daven*, speaking to *Hashem* in your own way. You speak silently of things you never feel able to speak about anywhere else. You feel tranquil; the dullness slips away and your feelings are elevated. You rise to go, walking up to the sweet stones once more. Your head rests on their caring surface, ah, so calm, so giving, you don't want to leave, ever. You stay and thank *Hashem* for this comfort, your heart swells with love, and you are entirely ensconced in the web of *Hashem's* Will.

Finally you start to leave, walking backwards, stopping every few feet, wanting to remember the sight before you, engraving it in your mind for future reference. There will be other difficult times ahead, and you won't always be able to touch these stones, but they will be within you. These moments will guide your heart.

Sefer Tehillim speaks of *Yerushalayim* many times, for David wanted us to realize how much this holy place has to offer. In this *kapitel* we can find many of its attributes. Let's share them together and discover their healing secrets.

Livnei Korach mizmor shir., "A psalm of the sons of *Korach*, a song, its foundation is in the holy mountains. Hashem loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

This psalm starts with a remarkable insight. The Alshich Hakadosh explains that the son of *Korach*, *Assaf*, witnessed his father's demise with great trepidation. He saw how the earth opened at his father's feet and swallowed him up. He feared that with such a dramatic death, his father would never be enabled to return. He then had a prophetic vision that the gates of the Temple would also be swallowed by the earth when the rest of the Sanctuary was destroyed. The vision concluded with the very same gates being raised from the earth to their former glory. Then *Assaf* declared, "He Who will descend to the bowels of the earth to retrieve the Temple's gates will also raise my father *Korach*."

With this we find hope for ourselves. No matter how far we may have wandered from our roots, we are never completely lost. *Hashem* can raise us and bring us back to Him even from the darkest of spiritual pits. The Kosel is a reminder of this, and a depository of all our hopes and prayers.

Nichbados medubar bach., "Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of Hashem, sela."

In times of crises, when we can come and beseech Hashem in His holy place, we realize how glorious this location is. No matter from whence a Jew may come, he becomes enraptured by the awe of these "gates." True, we can find Hashem anywhere, no matter where we roam, but this place is special, and its uniqueness is spoken of by all.

UleTzion ye'amar ish ve'ish yulad bah., "But of Zion it can be said: 'Man after man was born in her,' and

He Himself will establish her as the most high."

Every place in this world was created with a purpose. Jerusalem and its Mount were created to breathe new life into man's soul. There is no other place where one can find such renewal. The *Rambam* tells us that Hashem created the first man on the *Har Habayis*, and therefore all life emanates from here.

You may well be feeling dull and drained from life's travails, but when you lean over to those inviting weeping stones and feel their calming embrace, you find yourself with new creative hope for tomorrow.

Text Copyright © 2009 by **Torah.org**. You can contact the author at Rabbi@theinformalproject.com.