

WHAT TO CRY ABOUT

by Rabbi Label Lam

Remember please, and lament, O all of Israel, let your voices be heard on high. For Germany has destroyed our people, during the stormy days of the World War; with killings, horrible and cruel, with starvation and thirst. For all generations, do not forget, until you will merit witnessing the (ultimate) consolation.

(Remember) Their screams and their weeping as they were tightly packed and locked into the train's (cattle) cars. Like sheep to the slaughter they were led to be incinerated in the crematorium ovens. May the sound of their pleading cries be eternally remembered by the One Who dwells in the Heavens. When they proclaimed, "Shema Yisrael" they offered up their lives to the Lord of lords.

(Excerpt from the Kinnah in memory of the Martyrs of Churban Europe by Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, the Bobover Rebbe)

The following is found in a footnote of the Artscroll Tisha B'Av Siddur: The Bobover Rebbe was a scion of Sanz, one of the most illustrative Rabbinic and Chassidic dynasties. The Rav lost everything in the Holocaust- family, friends, followers, disciples, and students in the thousands. The Rebbe arrived in America after the war with nothing but the clothes on his back and a burning determination to rebuild what the Nazis had destroyed. With the help of HASHEM the glory of the House of Bobov has been restored and one can find dozens of Bobover institutions and thousands of Bobover Chassidim in every corner of the globe.

In 1984, the Bobover Rebbe composed a special Kinnah to bemoan the tragedy of Churban Europe and it is recited in many congregations. When the Rav was asked to for permission to include his Kinnah and its translation in this edition of Kinnos, he graciously conceded. Then he explained why he had written it; "For years I had wanted to express my grief over my personal loss and Klal Yisrael's loss, in a special Kinnah, but I hesitated. I felt that in order to compose a Kinnah one must be on the exalted level of R' Elazar HaKalir, who wrote with

Ruach HaKodesh, Divine Inspiration. Moreover, he was a master of Kabbalistic secrets and knew the mystical incantations of the ministering angels. Still many Chassidim requested a vehicle to express their personal sorrow on this bitter day, but I held back because I felt genuinely unworthy.

Then one day I was studying the laws of Tisha B'Av in the book Seder HaYom (By Moshe Ben Yehuda Makir, Rosh HaYeshiva in Sefad, and a colleague of the Arizal and the R'Yosef Karo) He

writes as follows: "Whoever can wail on this day should wail, and whoever can recite Kinnos should recite Kinnos-either those already recorded in the holy books or the Kinnos he himself composed with the intellect that G-d has granted him. It is a Mitzvah for each and every individual to compose Kinnos for weeping and moaning and to recite them on this bitter day. Whoever does this is considered most righteous and is worthy of being described as one of Jerusalem's mourners and one of her holy men. But one who is not capable of composing his personal Kinnos, should recite the Kinnos written by others."

"When I read these words", the Rav concluded, "I saw a clear sign from heaven that time had come to compose a Kinnah over the last Churban. For doesn't the Seder HaYom say clearly that any person, even the smallest, should express his feelings in his original Kinnah?"

For those of us who have grown up in the era of the American exile a Kinnah awaits to be written and wailed about on the bitter day of Tisha B' Av... Woe for all the heads without Tefillin...after 3700 years from Avraham Avinu and after surviving Holocausts and Inquisitions Jewish boys and girls blunder in the darkness that plagues our generation and go lost by the millions, with visions of isms and pleasure in an instant, rapt in utter ignorance, bathed in a blue light that captivates their souls, they may never escape, and generations and giant families whole have disappeared and their names only grace lonely stones in forgotten cemeteries bearing words their children, those that had, could never read. Woe to us...on this bitter day we too have what to cry about. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.