

ONE HEART

by Rabbi Label Lam

One of the secrets that have been revealed to human beings is that man has the power of refining his soul and purifying his mind by way of knowing his Creator, to the point that an elevated spirit and a sublime feeling rest upon him, and then the Creator grants him some form of connection between him and his Creator, and he is worthy of hearing commands from the mouth of The Almighty, as one would hear a fellow man talking. This level we call prophecy- Nevuah! (Chazon Ish -Emunah and Bitachon)

The prophets did not prophecy whenever they wanted to but rather they focused their minds and settled down joyously, with a good heart, and privately, because prophecy does not visit in the midst of sadness but only in the midst of joy! (Rambam -Hilchos Yesodei Torah)

The Rambam spells it out that in order for a person to achieve prophecy he needs to be in an exalted and rapturous state of mind. The Chazon Ish asks a strong question based upon this principle. As we read on Tisha B'Av the Book of Eicha, it's hard not to feel the broken heart of the author as he describes the horrors he prophetically envisions surrounding the deconstruction and degradation of the jewel of G-d's creation with a graphic and poetic punch. Nothing could be more painful and tragic.

Now, if we are moved to tears thousands of years later, we can only imagine the angst of the one, who in anticipation of the destruction and the dispersal, knows with perfect clarity the full measure and magnitude of the loss. How is it possible for the prophet Yirmiyahu to be in, and remain in a state of ecstatic joy while, what must have been, a torrent of tears flowed from his eyes?

How can these two emotions of extreme joy, which is a prerequisite for prophecy, and the ultra-sadness associated with such a brutally honest report, coexist, living simultaneously within the same conflicted personality?

Answers the Chazon Ish that it is not a contradiction at all. King David had scribed, "Serve HASHEM with fear (awe) that you may rejoice when there is trembling!" Which is it? Rejoicing or trembling? Both? How is that possible?

A few short years ago I became aware through an eye witness to an event, of such a situation where both extreme emotions of sublime joy and deep sadness were forced to reside side by side.. The daughter of a young fellow I knew from Yeshiva days many years ago was about to be wed. The date was set. The invitations were in the mail.

Unfortunately, in the meantime, the father of the bride was ill and he was deteriorating rapidly. As the great day was approaching, it seemed less and less likely that the girl's father was going to be able to "make it" to the occasion. The wedding date was a Sunday and a decision was made to hold the wedding in the hospital on the Wednesday before. So it was, the Chupah, invited guests and all, came to the dying man's hospital room. Racked with pain and struggling to maintain consciousness the father was able to be present for his daughter's wedding.

I was told that the dancing that took place at the hall afterwards was beyond-beyond blissful as the whole local community, all the friends, and relatives joined in dancing and singing to make that day the happiest day in the life of this bride and groom. The report I received was that the Kallah- the bride herself was aglow with a special transcendent and radiant rapture. To be sure there was both a terrible sadness and sublime joy to be found there together in one heart.

As a sad postscript, just a few days later, before what would have been the scheduled wedding date, tragically, the father of the bride passed away.

On Tisha B'Av we can all feel the stinging pain of a lingering sadness and the joy of renewed hope in **one heart**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).