

## What Do You Remember? by Rabbi Philip H. Singer

The Mishnah teaches that originally the Esrog and Lulav were taken all seven days of the Festival of Sukkos only in the Temple. Throughout the land the Esrog and Lulav were taken only on the first day. This is the Biblical injunction (Leviticus 23:40) “And you shall take on the first day . . . and you shall rejoice before the Lord your G-d seven days.” Rejoicing before G-d, “Lifnai Hashem” is applicable only in the Temple.

However, after the destruction of the Temple, Rabbi Yochanan instituted that the Esrog and Lulav should be taken everywhere all the seven days. This is to serve as a “Zaicher Limikdosh”, as a remembrance of the Temple.

Similarly Rabbi Yochanan established that the sixteenth of Nisan shall maintain a prohibition of eating from the new wheat, though there is no “Omer” offering. The reason—“Zaicher Limikdosh”.

Likewise at the Seder table we eat “Koraich” to imitate the practice of Hillel. The reason —“Zaicher Limikdosh”. We then even verbalize the explanation. Possibly because at the Seder the duty of Haggadah includes all explanations.

At the first glance it is perplexing. Why should we remember the destruction of the Temple during a Festival? We have marked days in our calendar: Tishoh B'av Shivah Asar Bitammuz, Asoroh Biteves, when we remember the destruction of the Temple by fasting, reading in the Torah and Haftorah, appropriate prayers, Selichohs and Lammentations. Why remember the destruction of the Temple all seven days of Sukkos, designated as “Zman Simchosainu”, a period of joy and festivity? Why on Passover? Why at the Seder table? Are these times to inject sorrow and mourning? Festivals curtail Shivah and Shloshim periods of mourning. Many authorities negated any association with sorrow to be expressed in the wearing of a “Kittel” at the

Seder, and insisted that it is intended to add joy. Festivals are to be permeated only with enjoyment and happiness. Then why would a note of sorrow be introduced with a “Zecher Limikdosh”?

One would imagine that perhaps Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur would be chosen to mark a “Zecher Limikdosh”. Instead only Passover and Sukkos were selected. Is it not perplexing?

The answer came to me when I read an article in the Israeli newspaper “Maariv”. The heading of the article was “Aifah Hakotel Shelee”—“Where is my Wall?” In it, a native of Jerusalem expressed his dismay about the “Kotel”. In his youth he remembers the Wall was small and had a narrow passage. There was darkness. And the wall was visited by only the few. This is his Wall. Today the Wall is bigger, in fact, imposing. There is a huge plaza, filled always with Jews praying, singing and dancing. The Wall is lit up at night, and is visited constantly at all hours. This is not his Wall. And he complains, “Where is my Wall”.

In response to this bemoaning, I wrote him that there surely is a tremendous difference between the Wall that he remembers and the Wall that we behold today. His wall was a “Zaicher Lichurbon” a remembrance of the destruction of the Temple. The Wall that we visit today is a “Zaicher Limikdosh”, a remembrance of the Wall when the Temple stood there in all its beauty, glory and holiness.

On Tishoh B'av, Shivoh Osor Bitammuz and Asoroh Biteves, we remember the destruction of the Temple. But on the Festivals we remember how they were celebrated in the Temple. Rabbi Yochonon and Hillel did not introduce “Zaicher Lichurbon” but rather a “Zaicher Limikdosh”. Standing in the synagogue we imagine that we are in the Temple-court and sing along with the Levites “Halleluyah!” We carry the Esrog and Lulov and imagine we are the Jerusalem citizens who glorified this Mitzvah, as described in the Bireisoh. The holiday becomes more meaningful, and the spirit of joy is heightened. It is indeed, then,

“Ziman Simchosainu”.

The Holocaust dare never be forgotten. We shall ever remember our martyred six million. We shall never forgive the sadistic murderers. We dedicate ourselves to their holy memories. We shall always maintain a “Zaicher Lichurbon”.

But it behooves us to make also a “Zaicher Limikdosh”. While we publish Yizkor books, observe Memorial days, erect monuments and visit Yad Veshem to remember their tortured deaths, we must perpetuate their beautiful Jewish lives. While we offer to our children courses about the Holocaust, we must teach them also about the glorious Jewish communities—its people, their faith, principles and ideals.

Today when we recite Yizkor for our loved ones, we remember their illnesses, suffering and deaths. Why not remember also the good days. We remember the anguish until expiration. Why not remember also the love and devotion, the joys and radiance.

We memorialize our dear parents by lighting a Yahrzeit candle. That is only in remembrance of their deaths. Light the Sabbath and Holiday candles in remembrance of their pious lives. Set the Sabbath table, sing the Zemiros, put on your father’s Tallis, open his Chumosh or Gemorah and you will know the meaning of “Zaicher Limikdosh”.