



## Forewarning

It stands out very prominently in this week's Torah reading: fifty-five consecutive verses of nightmarish misery and torture, all destined to befall the Jewish people when they will be exiled from their land because of their sins. Many of the curses are so appalling that they are difficult to read. Indeed, the Baal Koreh (public reader of the Torah in the synagogue) is expected to read these verses quickly and in a quieter voice than usual. Astoundingly, these maledictions are included in Moses' parting words to the nation he loved so much, whom he lovingly shepherded for forty difficult years.



Some questions don't need to be asked – they jump out at you. Even if G-d intended to bring all these punishments on His people, what is the purpose in describing them in the Torah in such gruesome detail? Furthermore, why does Moses use only fourteen verses to describe the rewards and blessings which G-d will shower upon us when we will obey His commandments – less than a third of the verses used to describe the maledictions?!

What is the purpose in describing the curses in such gruesome detail?

Sadly, every one of these dreadful prophecies has come to pass. Indeed, if these verses wouldn't be part of the Torah, they could be mistaken for a Holocaust memoir written by a concentration camp survivor: "You will serve your enemies, whom the L-rd will send against you, [when you are] in famine, thirst, destitution, and lacking everything ... And your life will hang in suspense before you. You will be in fear night and day, and you will not believe in your life. In the morning, you will say, 'If only it were already evening!' and in the evening, you will say, 'If only it were already morning!'..."

After experiencing such horrors it is only natural to ask, "Where was G-d?" and, "If there really is a G-d, how could He allow the inhumanity and cruelty of the Holocaust?" No one questions the source of our blessings, but after enduring excruciating pain, people begin to have doubts. Perhaps this is why all the suffering is so vividly portrayed in the Torah. How can the Holocaust be used to deny G-d's existence when G-d Himself informed us that this event will occur? This is not to say that we can possibly understand the reasons for our nation's tormented history, but we do know that it is all from G-d – and therefore ultimately for our good.

It seems to me that Moses is doing much more than informing us of the troubles which we will experience, he is telling us not to lose our faith because of them. Reading this week's Torah portion and seeing how it has actually all come to pass offers us a measure of hope. It strengthens our belief that we will also certainly see the realization of the conclusion of this prophecy (in next week's Torah portion): "The L-rd, your G-d, will bring back your exiles, and He will have mercy upon you ... Even if your exiles are at the end of the heavens, the L-rd, your G-d, will gather you from there ... And the L-rd, your G-d, will place all these curses upon your enemies and upon your adversaries who pursued you."

*(by Rabbi Naftali Silberberg from [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org))*

## The Root Of Unhappiness

*"Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with happiness and goodness of heart, when you had everything in abundance" (28:47)*

The Torah attributes all of the horrific curses which will befall Bnei Yisroel to not serving Hashem with happiness. The complaint is not that we will not serve Hashem, rather, although we will serve Him, the stress is upon the fact that it will not be done with happiness. Citing the Zohar, the Ramban teaches that the admonition in this week's parsha refers to the period of the second Beis Hamikdash through its destruction and the subsequent exile.

The Talmud states that the second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because of "sinas chinam" – "baseless hatred". This would appear to contradict the reason offered by the Torah, that the destruction was precipitated by Bnei Yisroel's not serving Hashem with happiness. How do we reconcile this contradiction?

The Torah attests to the fact that we were unhappy, even though we had everything. This is mirrored by the contemporary phenomena which finds a high percentage of depressed and disenchanted people to be those who enjoy success and high social standing. Why do people who apparently have everything that life has to offer, still exhibit a lack of happiness?

*(continued on the other side)*

A person can only be truly happy if he appreciates what Hashem has given him. However, if a person is egocentric, considering himself deserved of all that he has, he will not be content by that which is already his; rather, he will be focused on those things which are not yet his, but to which he feels entitled. If a person goes through life with the attitude that everyone owes him, he will constantly be miserable, never satisfied with what he has. Furthermore, since he feels he is entitled to everything that he desires, a person who has something he desires becomes an immediate threat to him. He begins loathing that person for no reason other than the perception he maintains that that person is withholding from him an object which should rightfully be his. It is this type of loathing that the Talmud defines as baseless hatred.

Consequently, baseless hatred can be traced back at its inception to our lack of appreciation for what Hashem has done and continues to do for us. Therefore, sinas chinam is not a different reason than the reason offered by the Torah as to what precipitated the destruction of the Temple; it is a manifestation of being unhappy when serving Hashem.

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))



Sponsorship for two flower displays on the Bima during Yom Kippur is available at \$225. Consider sponsoring the flowers in honor or in memory of someone. Please contact the Allan Genut at [agenut@gmail.com](mailto:agenut@gmail.com) or 410-486-8435 to make arrangements.

Please join or renew your membership in  
**The Shul at the Lubavitch Center.**

Also **Yomim Naraim seating reservations** are included on the membership form (for both members and non-members).

These forms and information are available on the shul website at <http://www.chabadshul.org>

**Membership**



We wish a Mazel Tov to **Elle Hoffberg**  
on the occasion of  
her **Bat Mitzvah**.

Mazel Tov to her parents,  
**Robert and Karen Hoffberg,**  
and to all of her Family & Friends.

Mr. & Mrs. Hoffberg are sponsoring Kiddush after davening  
in honor of this simcha.

#### Yahrzeits This Week:

Eliyahu Schwartz	21 Elul - Saturday night / Sunday	for mother	Chava Basya bas R' Tzvi HaCohen
Leslie Silverberg	23 Elul - Monday night / Tuesday	for father	Eugene Hettleman

#### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

##### Friday, 9/12 — 19 Elul

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

##### Shabbat, 9/13 — 20 Elul

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:52 a.m.  
Minchah — 6:50 p.m.  
Shkiah — 7:18 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.  
Selichot — 1:00 a.m.

##### Sunday, 9/14 — 21 Elul

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:55 p.m.

##### Monday, 9/15 — 22 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:20 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:55 p.m.

##### Tuesday, 9/16 — 23 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:30 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:55 p.m.

##### Wednesday, 9/17 — 24 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:30 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:55 p.m.  
Tanya Shiur: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud  
V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation  
and the unity of Hashem — 7:35 p.m.

##### Thursday, 9/18 — 25 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:20 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:55 p.m.

##### Friday, 9/19 — 26 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:30 a.m.  
Shabbat Candles — 6:49 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:50 p.m.