

"And the people wept that night." (14:1)

The slanderous statements of the *meraglim*, spies, achieved their intended purpose; *Bnei Yisrael* believed them and were terrified to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. That night, which happened to be *Tishah b'Av*, the people withdrew to their tents and began lamenting the terrible "fate" in store for them. Thus began a night of ceaseless crying, one which would go down in history as a night of unwarranted weeping. The *Talmud* in *Taanis 28a* states that Hashem said to *Bnei Yisrael*, "You wept without reason, I will provide you with a weeping for generations." This refers to *Tishah b'Av* when both *Batei Mikdash* were destroyed. The ninth of *Av* became a time of national mourning, for it was the precursor to the exile that continues to this day. Hashem repays unreasonable, unjustified weeping and all overactive expressions of grief and worry by giving us a reason for crying, by creating situations in which our worry will be justified.

We may question, however, the text of the *Talmud* in distinguishing between the two forms of weeping. The weeping of that night is referred to as "unwarranted weeping", while the punishment is referred to as "a weeping for generations", or everlasting weeping. What is the contrast between these two expressions of grief? One would think that unwarranted grief is to be contrasted with justified grief -- or eternal grief should be contrasted with momentary grief.

We suggest that there is a valuable lesson to be derived here. There are two types of weeping: one that is warranted and one that is not. What is viewed as warranted weeping? The only form of grief which is justified is one that is lasting. Momentary grief does not constitute a situation in which one is permitted to let himself go and lose control of his emotions. Often we are confronted with a circumstance which is cause for grave concern in our minds. According to our limited vision, we see what appears to be a serious situation. Our response to these occurrences is usually overreactive and totally inconsistent with the reality of the predicament. That, however, is regrettably the human response to the brief and momentary dilemmas which often challenge us.

Such an orientation is contrary to *Torah* dictate. As Jews, we should be concerned only with the everlasting and the eternal, not the fleeting and the passing. Reality is not achieved by reflecting on the here and now, but on what the future has in store for us. *Klal Yisrael* was overwhelmed by a temporary enemy, one which they thought they could not overcome. Their first reaction was uncontrolled weeping. Where was their faith and trust in Hashem? He would continue to sustain them in the future. Their crying was unwarranted, because it was focused on an unfounded fear induced by the slander of the spies. They cried for nothing. Their punishment was a weeping which would be everlasting, a grief of a more permanent nature.

Often we succumb to our emotions and lose ourselves. We reject the notion that Hashem can and will spare us, if we are so deserving. We must analyze our state of affairs, by differentiating between what is real and what is simply a reaction of our overactive imaginations.