

“He [Yosef] cried in a loud voice.” (45:2)

Chazal view Yosef’s weeping as a portent for his descendants. They say, “Just as Yosef appeased his brothers only through weeping, so, too, *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* will redeem *Klal Yisrael* from its exile only through [their] weeping.” As it is written in *Yirmiyahu* 31:8, “For with weeping they will come; with supplications I will lead them.” *Chazal’s* words are enigmatic. If Hashem is waiting for tears, then our exile should have ended long ago. Have we not cried bitterly for thousands of years? Why did Hashem not respond to the tears of our ancestors and redeem them?

Horav Mordechai HaKohen explains that it is not merely the tears themselves that strike a chord. Rather, the reason for the tears distinguishes tears of redemption from the tears of pain. What type of tears flowed from Yosef? What catalyzed Yosef’s weeping? Yehudah said, “For how can I go up to my father if the youth is not with me, lest I see the evil that will befall my father (44:34).” Immediately thereafter, the Torah writes that Yosef could no longer restrain himself. What was there about Yehudah’s statement that evoked such an emotional upheaval within Yosef to the point that he immediately began to cry uncontrollably?

When Yosef heard sensitivity and compassion emanating from Yehudah, when he heard that the brothers were prepared to risk their lives for the welfare of Binyamin, he realized that it was wrong for him to continue to distress them. He felt within himself boundless love for his brothers, and he began to cry for their pain. Yes, when he saw that they were concerned for Binyamin, he cried for the suffering he had caused them. This explains the uniqueness of Yosef’s tears. He did not weep for his pain; he wept for his brothers’ pain.

This is what Hashem is waiting for. As Yosef wept for his brothers’ pain, so, too, is Hashem waiting for the tears that we cry for our brothers’ pain. It is one thing to cry for one’s own travail. It is altogether another thing, however, when one cries for the pain sustained by his friend. Hashem is waiting for our tears for *Klal Yisrael’s* anguish.