

"And he (Yosef) fell upon the shoulders of his brother Binyamin and wept, and Binyamin wept upon his (Yosef's) shoulders." (45:14)

Rashi comments that Yosef wept upon Binyamin's shoulder because he foresaw the destruction of the two *Batei Mikdash*, which would be in Binyamin's portion of *Eretz Yisrael*. It is interesting to note that Yosef also cried, falling upon his other brothers during his reconciliation with them, but there is no mention that he cried for the destruction of the *Batei Mikdash*. What was there about falling on Binyamin that inspired Yosef to mourn for the *Batei Mikdash*?

The *Eish Kodesh* cites the *Talmud Rosh Hashanah 20* which asserts that *mitzvos* were not given to us for the purpose of deriving benefit from them. They are to be viewed as an obligation, "a yoke upon our neck/shoulders." Every Jew has a responsibility, literally a yoke upon his shoulders. This yoke demands that he maintain a moral and virtuous lifestyle, guided by the Divine mandates of Hashem's *mitzvos*. Consequently, even during those moments of moral weakness, when his commitment might lapse, this responsibility to perform *mitzvos* looms over his head, engendering within him a determination to maintain his devotion to Hashem.

This assumption proves true as long as there is a source of spiritual strength from which to draw. The *Bais Ha'Mikdash* was that fountain of spiritual fortitude that provided viability, security and holiness. It was the anchor that helped to sustain the people's commitment to *Torah* and *mitzvos*. When the *Bais Ha'Mikdash* was destroyed, the gentiles drove us out of our land, abrogating our ability to serve Hashem properly. Moreover, the pain and persecution which we experienced catalyzed depression and a sense of desolation. In response, we sought to throw the "yoke of *mitzvos* off our shoulders."

Suffering has two sides. For some it stimulates *bitachon*, trust in Hashem, and presents man with an opportunity to draw closer to Him. It leads to introspection and ultimately to positive affirmation of one's self and one's heritage. For the Jew who can neither grasp nor handle its positive manifestations, suffering is a physically and spiritually depressing force. Pain is a dehumanizing force which causes one to lose sight of his personality and Jewish self. Suffering inhibits one's ability to react positively to religious inspiration and experience. Therefore, the very resources which could help an individual to tolerate suffering are inaccessible as a result of the despondency generated by the suffering.

When Yosef fell upon Binyamin's "shoulders", he immediately reacted to that area of the body which symbolizes one's relationship with spirituality. The shoulders represented to him the loss of the *Bais Ha'Mikdash*. When Yosef fell upon his brothers, the *Torah* does not mention that he fell upon their shoulders. Hence, the image of the *Batei Mikdash* was not invoked during their encounter.