



5786 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Ki Teitzei / פרשת כי-תצא

A Moment of Wrath, An Eternity of Mercy

In this week's *haftorah*, *Yeshayahu* continues to console us with promises of redemption and Divine love (*Yeshayahu* 54). He again calls out in the name of *Hashem* to the barren *Yerushalayim*, telling her to rejoice and sing over her restoration. In the midst of these promises of redemption, God assures *Yerushalayim* that her days of suffering and disgrace will be short-lived. *Tzion* is compared to an estranged, disloyal wife who will be gathered back into her Beloved's embrace:

בְּרִגְעַ קָטָן עָזַבְתִּיךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבָּצְךָ – For but a brief moment have I forsaken you, and with abundant mercy will I gather you in.

בְּשֹׁעֵץ קָצֵף הִסְתַּתֵּרְתִּי כִּגְוִי רִגְעַ מְלֶמֶד וּבְחֶסֶד עוֹלָם רַחֲמִתִּיךָ אֶמַּר גְּאֻלְךָ יְקֹנֶנּוּ – With a slight wrath have I concealed My countenance from you for a moment, but with eternal kindness shall I show you mercy, said your Redeemer, *Hashem*.

Hashem finally swears with an eternal oath – similar to the oath He swore to *Noach* after the waters of the great flood receded – that *Tzion* will never suffer again.

These verses are lyrical and beautiful, brimming with hope and consolation. But an obvious question is also impossible to ignore. Reading this *haftorah* today – after millennia of brutal suffering and Divine concealment – one cannot help but wonder how *Yeshayahu* could possibly refer to our exile as a “רגע קטן – a brief moment”. How can the horrors of the Holocaust, along with the countless persecutions, expulsions, and tragedies that have permeated our history, be referred to as “שֹׁעֵץ קָצֵף – a slight wrath”?!

While a fully sufficient answer will not be understood until the completion of the final redemption, we can at least begin to grapple with this formidable question by referencing an essential verse tucked away in *sefer Tehillim* (90:4):

כִּי אֵלֶּף שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כִּיּוֹם אֶתְמוּל כִּי יַעֲבֹר – For a thousand years are in Your eyes like yesterday, which passed.

The *Gemara Sanhedrin* (97a) explains that this verse reveals a radical distinction between mortal man and his Divine Creator regarding time. Over the course of a thousand years, man perceives a slow progression of time, with dozens of generations being born into this world and gradually fading away into distant memory. And yet, for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, the Source of existence and Creator of time itself, a thousand years merge seamlessly into a single unified event – a Divine “day” that passes like the blink of an eye.



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From a mortal perspective, the pain and suffering of thousands of years cannot be dismissed or ignored. It is simply too overwhelming and tragic, no matter the theological explanations of why such agony is justified.

However, as *Klal Yisrael* is welcomed back into the home of its Divine Husband, we will begin to see history through the lens of eternity. What once appeared to be a never-ending exile will be revealed as a backdrop of the eternal relationship between *Hashem* and His people.

United with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and deeply intertwined with His will, our perspective will begin to shift towards *Hashem's* Divine calculations that are beyond time and physical limits. The exile that seemed endless will finally be seen for what it was: a “רגע קטן” – a brief moment – within the vastness of Hashem’s eternal plan.

For us, it will be thousands of years. For Him, it will be but a moment. And at the end of that moment will come the eternal embrace that *Yeshayahu* promised us long ago: “With eternal kindness shall I show you mercy.”