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Tisha B'Av
Introduction to Kina #26: Az Behaloch Yirmiyahu
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Class of 2017

Weeping, our Imahot are weeping. 64 sons killed- our mothers are weeping. The midrash describes Yermiyahu as being asked by G-d to go to *Maharat HaMachpela* to awaken the Avot (Patriarchs) and Moses to intercede on behalf of the Jewish people, to beg for mercy¹.

In this imagined discussion between G-d and the Avot described in the Kina "Az Behaloch Yirmiyahu"², we see each patriarch using their specific zecut (merit) to make their case for the nation of Israel to an angry G-d. Abraham pleads, "*Was it in vain that I overcame the ten tests?*" Yitzchak beseeches "*Was it in vain that I was inscribed to be slaughtered...where is your promise to keep the covenant with me?*" Yaacov cries out, in words that ring true today, "*The Children I raised with such travail - how they have been shorn from me - are gone. And I have been punished a thousand-fold for the blood they have shed*"³. Our IDF is today wrongly accused of indiscriminate killing in Operation Protective Edge.

But all the while, during this dialogue between G-d and the Patriarchs, in the background I hear our mothers weeping. Leah's wailing "*pounds upon her heart*" - like the daily incessant pounding of our hearts as we stared at the pictures of each *chayal* (soldier) that was killed, mourning these young soldiers, such as Doniel Kedmi and Sagi Erez, Dori Deri. Others who died were more seasoned soldiers, such as Chief Warrant Officer Bayhesian Khasuian. His wife gave birth a week after his death, to their fourth child, a baby girl who will never know her father. Our hearts were racing with the IDF who worked tirelessly to find kidnapped soldier Hadar Goldin, believing him to be alive, praying he was, only to be slapped in the face with the truth, much like Zilpah and Bilhah in this elegy "*Zilpah slaps her face, Bilhah laments with both hands*"⁴. The IDF found enough of Hadar's body parts to finally declare him dead.

¹ Eicha Raba, Petiha 24

² Koren Mesorat Harav Kinot Page 469

³ Koren Mesorat Harav Kinot Page 469

⁴ Koren Mesorat Harav Kinot Page 469



Leah, with her sister Rachel, Zilpah and Bilhah are united in their pain, in the pain they feel for the loss of their sons and each other's sons. We reflect their unconditional love for all our children, all the life lost, our 64 brave beautiful boys. How will their broken families carry this pain? Though G-d is reconciled by the cries of these matriarchs and we are returned to Zion, to Israel, we are still asking G-d, "When will Jewish mothers stop weeping? G-d, when we will be redeemed from this unbearable situation?"



Rabba Dr. Carmella Abraham feels blessed to have the privilege of living her two callings as both a doctor and a member of the Orthodox clergy. Rabba Carmella has interned at the Hillels of Westchester, Columbia Presbyterian Hospital Chaplaincy Program and served as a Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Created Equal Seminar Fellowship. Rabba Carmella earned her bachelor's degree from Barnard College and her medical degree from Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She practiced at the Women's Health Program, where she held a dual appointment in Internal Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology. She currently works in Oncology Medical Affairs for pharma. Rabba Carmella is married to physician Dr. Steven Kubersky and has three children.