



TRAVELING LIGHTLY

One of the metaphors used to understand what *galus* really is, is the idea of travel. The Gemara refers to the “Ten Journeys of the *Shechinah*,” enumerating the stages of exile to which the *Shechinah* was “subjected.” The Gemara specifically describes it as נסיעה—travelling a long distance, rather than the more common term of הליכה, which is used for traveling shorter distances.

...Because of the extreme difference to the space in which we live, *galus* is called travel.

Likewise, the change a *neshamah* is forced to endure when coming into the physical form of a body is called a travel. It travels from its origins, standing in complete *bitul* (devotion) to Hashem, arriving in

a body whose default state is the opposite of that. The *neshamah* even runs the risk of falling and being seduced by the *klipah* around it.

This paradigm of understanding the world that we live in—we are in the middle of a journey, away from our “home turf”—also has another implication. As the Alter Rebbe writes,¹ “The believer will not be agitated by any deficiencies in matters related to children, health and wealth.” Seeing this world as one stage in a journey can bring a degree of comfort to those who are suffering.

When people travel, it is perfectly normal and expected that they will have to compromise on certain things. Even among the extremely wealthy, not everything can be packed up

and taken each time they travel.

In the bedroom at home, one may have the highest quality mattress, the best bedding, and perfect pillows. When travelling, though, it is unrealistic to take all of these along; he will have to make do with what is available locally.

At mealtime, the wealthy may have all sorts of delicacies specially prepared for them, served on the finest dishes by their personal staff. But when packing for a trip, one cannot (literally and figuratively) take along “the kitchen sink.” Compromise must be made.

The suitcase is always smaller than the closet at home. At home, one may have summer clothes and winter clothes, clothes for formal



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לזכות
 החיילת בצבאות ה'
 ברכה תחי'
 לרגל הולדתה ח' אדר ה'תשע"ח
 ולזכות הור'
 הרה"ת ר' ארי' לייב
 וזוגתו מרת אריאלה ליבא שיחיו לבנר
 נתרם ע"י זקניה
 ר' מנחם שלום
 וזוגתו מרת שושנה יפה שיחיו
 סיגלשטיין



and informal settings, with multiple sets of each. On a trip one packs lightly, with far fewer options.

If challenged on why he is eating and sleeping and dressed so simply, the traveler can respond easily and explain that he's away from home. There is no shame in this; it is to be expected. On a journey, pack lightly—just remember to take your checkbook to buy whatever is needed.

Our life in *galus* is merely “part of a trip.” There is no need to be disappointed that we aren't wealthy like Rockefeller... As the [Frieddiker] Rebbe famously said, “They have only one world ... we have two worlds...”

There are those for whom this world is their only world and all they will ever have—this is the best it's going to get. For them, if there's something missing in life it is truly cause for disappointment. For us though, this is only one stop along the way. As such, it is understandable that we don't always have all of the comforts of home.

The *Beis Hamikdash*—our true “home”—did in fact have to be perfect. Even the clothes of the

Kohanim served to bring honor to Hashem. It would be inappropriate for them to have any stains or creases. Today, those don't matter as much. What we must have is simply our “checkbook”—Hashem's desire to fulfill our desires, from the sublime down to the most practical regarding children, health, and wealth.

With this approach to physical problems, the depression (stemming from *klipah*) falls away, and one can truly be happy. We are instructed to serve Hashem with joy. The Baal Shem Tov teaches that joy actually helps us do the right things.

To those who are “big *machmirim*” and will complain that we are talking about being happy now—quoting Chazal who say that “When Av arrives, we should decrease our joy”:

To them we respond, firstly, there are still two days until Rosh Chodesh.

Secondly, the Gemara says that “we should **decrease** our joy.” Relative to the exuberance of Adar, we are less happy during Av. Relative to the celebration when Moshiach comes, when “our mouths will be filled with laughter,” we laugh less in the month

of Av. This does not mean that we may not be happy **at all** during this time.

How much should we decrease?

The [Frieddiker] Rebbe writes of those who didn't follow the Baal Shem Tov's teaching on the importance of joy, that on Simchas Torah [where extra happiness is mandated], they would drink some milk—which *al pi din* is an intoxicating drink— and then pinch their [own] cheeks to form them into the shapes of smiles...

Since the good [must] always outweigh the bad, the measure for how much to decrease during Av can be commensurate to their custom then—“pinch from the other side...”

With proper happiness, we can break through all limitations. This includes the rule that “Moshiach will only come in a generation that is perfectly righteous, or the opposite.”

Then, the rule of decreasing joy in Av will also be canceled, and these days will be transformed into days of celebration. **1**

(Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei, Mevorchim Chodesh Av, 5713)

1. Tanya, Igeres Hakodesh 11