



Could there be any Benefits of Destruction?



Tears of Rebuilding

I never look forward to the first nine days of the month of Av, which are loaded with disaster and tragedy. Their melancholic scent lies heavily on my shoulders. In addition to the destruction of the Temples, that occurred at this time, other misfortunes sought this inauspicious day, like flies crowding on an open wound. These calamities include the Spanish expulsion, the breakout of the First World war, the deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto, and more recently, the expulsion from Gush Katif. Sometimes, it's hard to accept that the good G-d, Who loves us, can allow such suffering to exist. We need to strengthen our emunah to know that new light will shine forth—precisely according to the measure of the prior darkness. Just as when maggots from flies feed on dead tissue, they actually help prevent infection, so too, does the darkness of destruction become the backdrop for the renewed light of rebuilding. Plants may lie dormant during the dark winter months without a hint of bloom. Yet, when Spring kicks in, nature's renewed, green growth dazzles us with its flourishing vibrant herbage and colorful flowers. From where would plants get their powerful, springy growth spurt if not through their latent phase of hibernation? Pioneering research indicates that when humans cry in response to stress, it reduces the levels of stress hormones in the body, which in turn reduces stress. A friend recently told me, that her basement was completely destroyed by water damage. Yet, due to insurance coverage, they were able to rebuild it into a comfortable guest suite. A woman may feel awful during pregnancy, experiencing nausea, vomiting, indigestion, backpain, edema and more. Yet, the baby she bears will more than compensate her pain. The ninth of Av alludes to the nine months of pregnancy, and the ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *ט/et*, resembles an upside-down womb. During pregnancy, the fetus to be birthed into the world is growing yet concealed. This concealment is essential for its development. Similarly, the concealment of the Divine presence, during exile and suffering, is essential for our development (Meir Simchah Panzer).

Rebuilding Gush Katif in the Entire Land of Israel

14 years have passed since the expulsion from Gush Katif – a cluster of 17 Jewish settlements in the Gaza strip. Yet, I still clearly recall how this area served as a model of rectification for “senseless hatred.” Torah scholars and farmers stood united in Gush Katif’s wonderful integration of Torah and the working of the Land. In *Machon HaTorah V’Ha’Aretz* the laws dependent on the land were researched and implemented. The children of both Rachel and Leah were united in Gush Katif, as farmers and Yeshiva students danced hand in hand. This endured for 38 years, corresponding to the 38 additional years the Israelites had to wander in the desert. As we all knew already then, their tragic, senseless destruction didn’t bring us any closer to peace. On the contrary, additional violence has resulted from this suicidal reward for terrorism. The beautiful villages sprouting forth cherry tomatoes, bug-free lettuce and geraniums were totally demolished and turned into terrorist arsenals which ravage our entire country. No one can understand why this destruction had to happen. Perhaps, in the strength and boldness of Aza’s Gush Katif, there was a premature perfection, a model for which the rest of Israel was not ready.

Yet, our loss teaches us to desire it so much more. This yearning for such perfected communities may help us to rebuild the essential qualities of Gush Katif within the entire land of Israel.



With My Land in Tears

I cry with my Land in tears;
will you ever have any ears?

We have been slandered, ostracized and hated.
Are we pest or vermin that must be evacuated?

Growing and building with so much love and care;
bulldozed and brutally demolished so utterly unfair.

With utmost faith continuing sowing new seed.
Pleading and crying restraining any violent deed.

Lush gardens, farms, graves, synagogues and schools,
helplessly destroyed by those coerced to follow the rules.

Such a heavy price to pay for the falsest peace;
when will the ruin and destruction ever cease?

Why do you close your eyes, deny and refute that the terrorists continue to constantly shoot?

As reward for violence, bloodshed, aggression and terror they are given a bone and await to devour its marrow.

How many Jews in Israel can continue to live, when rewarding terrorism is the message we give?

Negotiating peace under fire is an absurd lie. Are we not all one big settlement in their eye?

Their aim is to cast the entire Zionist Entity into the sea, and make Haifa, Safad, Jaffa, and Jerusalem *Juden-free*.

The saddest thing piercing my heart is the feeling of betray, when a Jew is blinded to hate and expels his brother away.

When will we learn to build and foster love in our heart, instead of tearing down, blaming and ripping apart?

Chana Bracha Siegelbaum
12 Av, 5765
August 16, 2005

