

Chaos Theory, The Power of Teshuva, & The Fast of Asarah B'Teves

This week the Fast of Asarah B'Teves will occur. This fast commemorates the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, which culminated in the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE.

It truly marks a very sad event. However like the sale of Joseph to Egypt it teaches us some very important lessons. Joseph's brothers because they did Teshuva were not punished by Joseph or by Hashem for their terrible deed. Teshuva can transform our bad deeds into good things. Joseph told his brothers now. Why did he say now? Because the bad deed they did by selling him would NOW be forgiven because they had done Teshuva by trying to save Benjamin. The scientific theory of Chaos states that in nature there are certain points where particles must arrive on a regular basis. However the paths taken to get to that point can vary greatly i.e. winter comes every year but the temperatures leading to it are not always the same. G-d has a plan. His plan cannot be thwarted. The Jewish people were destined to go down to Egypt but they didn't have to get there by selling Joseph. G-d sometimes takes the evil we do and makes it good because no matter what we do we cannot thwart G-d's plans. However if we do evil we will suffer unless we will do Teshuva, Czar Nicolas II was a terrible Czar Vis a Vis the Jewish people because he started pogroms, which killed several hundred Jew. But because of these pogroms millions of Jews left Russian dominated area and went to the U.S. and other places. Their lives were saved when Hitler 40 years later killed almost all the Jews in the former Russian dominated area. Czar Nicolas II never was sorry for what he did and he did suffer greatly.

The two people who were chiefly responsible for the actual destruction of the First Temple were Nebuchadnetzar the king of Babylonia and his General Nebuzaradan.

Both of them acted very cruelly toward the Jewish people. And even if as the Midrash says they felt they had a Divine mandate to destroy the Temple. They certainly had no Divine Mandate to act so cruelly to the Jewish people. The Prophet Daniel became the chief minister in the court of Nebuchadnetzar and was able to ameliorate the plight of his brethren and prepare them for their return to Israel 70 years after the destruction of the First Temple. Nebuchadnetzar was punished because of what he did to our people. He became insane for 7 years. When he regained his sanity he did Teshuva and even praised Hashem. His General Nebuzaradan according to the Midrash immediately after the destruction of the Temple became a Jew and his descendants Shemaya and Avtalyan became heads of the Sanhedrin.

None of us should ever despair even if we have done some bad things G-d will forgive us if we will do Teshuva. On the level of the Jewish people we also shouldn't despair. We should try to do everything we can to prevent and overcome all threats. But we should always remember that we Jews will always be part of G-d plan and we, as a people will always survive. Behold the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers not sleeps