



Comfort, comfort, My Nation, says your G-d.
(Haftoras Parshas Nachamu)

“Comfort, comfort, My Nation, says your G-d,” said Rav Brechya HaKohen: [This means] Comfort Me, comfort Me, My nation. It is the way of the world that if one has a vineyard and thieves cut it down, who do you comfort, the vineyard or the owner of the vineyard? Similarly, if one has a house and thieves come and burn it down, who do you comfort, the house or the owner of the house? [Hashem says] You [Klal Yisroel] are My vineyard. Nevuchadnezzar came and destroyed it and exiled you and burned down My house, I am the One who needs to be comforted! (Psikta Rabasi 29)

At face value, this *Medrash* seems beyond explanation. One doesn’t comfort a house or vineyard that is destroyed because, as opposed to their owners, they have no feelings. How can this be compared to consoling *Klal Yisroel* for all the unending suffering of *Galus*, inquisitions, pogroms, and holocaust, which we feel only too well?!

If the *Medrash* says the pain felt by the owner of a burned house in comparison to the pain of the house itself, is comparable to the pain Hashem feels over our suffering in comparison to the pain we ourselves feel, then it must be a true comparison. How is this so?

This question only bothers us due to our lack of appreciation of the depth of the infinite love Hashem feels for us every day of our lives! We know Hashem’s love is compared to that of a father. We may imagine how much love we feel for our children as we read this and think that this is how much Hashem loves us, but that is an infinite underestimation. Why? Think of the love a father feels at the deathbed *R”l* of his son. Is it not so many times greater than the love he feels for his son at any given moment of any regular day? Why is this so? Has the father suddenly developed a much greater love for his son? Of course not! The tragedy has simply uncovered the depths of love that he always had deep in his heart. However, regarding Hashem, there’s no such thing as feelings that are dormant, all the love he has for us, that is compared to the love of a father to his son, is constantly felt by Him on its deepest level and in all its burning intensity. Furthermore, the description of Hashem’s love for us as that of a father to a son, is merely the greatest analogy we can relate to in an attempt to describe the greatest love. However, in truth, there is no limit to Hashem’s love for us from before we were born until this very moment!

With this understanding of Hashem’s love we can appreciate the comparison Hashem makes between our own suffering and that of Hashem’s pain over our suffering, the latter being so much greater than the former as to allow it to be compared to the great suffering a vineyard owner feels over having his source of livelihood burned down, to the suffering of the actual vineyard which, of course is non-existent.

So, the next time we call out to Hashem over our own suffering and we remind ourselves that He too feels our pain, let us remember that it is not “He too” who feels our pain, He in fact is the main one suffering over the pain of His beloved son. So much so, that our own pain, compared to His pain over witnessing it, pales to insignificance!

