

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter LVII: Kinnot (Lamentations)

Essay 2: The role of Gabriel and Michael in the destruction of the Temple.

**מדרש** ילקוט פלרעציה בגדו בה וכו'. זה גבריאל ומיכאל, שהיו מלמדים עליהם זכות. אמר להם הקב"ה מי חביב עליכם? אמרו לו ישראל. ואחר ישראל, מי חביב עליכם? אמרו לפניו בית המקדש. אמר להם נשבע אני בשמי הגדול שאתם בעצמכם מציתים בו את האור.

**There is a Midrash in Yalkut [Shimoni] on the verse, "Weeping, she has wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheek; she has no comforter among all her lovers; all her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies" (Lam. 1:2):**

**This is, i.e., refers to, Gabriel and Michael, who were giving the benefit of the doubt [to Israel]. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them, "Who is dear to you?" They said to Him, "Israel." "And besides Israel, who is dear to you?" They said before Him, "The Temple." He said to them, I swear by My great Name that you will by yourselves light it on fire!"**

- Yalkut Shimoni on Nach, remez 1009:1

מקשים העולם דלמה הביא דרשא זו על פסוק פלרעציה בגדו בה אם לכאורה אין כאן בגידה כלל, ואדרבא הם למדו זכות על ישראל! שפשעאל אותם מי חביב עליכם, השיבו ישראל. ואם הכוונה שהבגידה היא לפי שהם בעצמם הציתו אש בבית המקדש, קשה דמה זו בגידה והלא מוכרחים היו בכך, מפנין שפכר נשבע הקב"ה שהם יציתו בו אש? ועוד שגנראה דדרך קנס קנס עליהם שהם בעצמם יציתו אותו, ולמה כן, ועל מה קנס אותם, וכי שלא פדין השיבו.

**Everyone wonders why this Midrash was brought on the verse, "All her friends have betrayed her," for apparently there is no betrayal here at all, and to the contrary they held Israel dear! For when [G-d] asked them whom they held dear, they answered "Israel." If the intent is that the betrayal was that they themselves set the Temple on fire, it is difficult to understand how this is betrayal, for weren't they compelled to do this, since the Holy One, Blessed be He, swore that they would set it on fire? Also, apparently a penalty was imposed upon them that they themselves would set it on fire; and why is this so, and for what reason were they penalized, for didn't they answer according to the law?**

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וַיִּבְנוּ בְּמַאי דְּאַמְרִינוּ בְּפֶרֶק ח' דְּיוֹמָא אָמַר לֹו הַקָּב"ה לְמִיכָאֵל סְרָחָה אוֹמְתָהּ. אָמַר לֹו רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, דִּינִים לְטוֹבִים שְׂפָהֶם, אָמַר לֹו הֲרַגִי שׁוֹרֶף אוֹתָם וְאֵת הַטּוֹבִים שְׂפָהֶם, מִיָּד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִישׁ לִבְשׁ הַבְּדִים וְכו', אָמַר רַב חֲנָנִי בְּרַבּוֹנוּ אָמַר ר' שְׁמַעוֹן חֲסִידָא אֶלְמָלָא לֹא נִצְטַנְנוּ גְּחָלִים מִיָּדוֹ שֶׁל מִיכָאֵל לִידוֹ שֶׁל גַּבְרִיאֵל לֹא נִשְׁתַּיֵּיר מִשׁוֹנְאֵיהֶם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂרִיד וּפְלִיט. וּכְתִיב וְהִנֵּה הָאִישׁ לְבוּשׁ הַבְּדִים מְשִׁיב דָּבָר לְאֹמֶר, עֲשִׂיתִי כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָנִי. אָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן, בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה אֶפְקֹוּהוּ לְגַבְרִיאֵל וּמִחִיוּהוּ שְׁתֵּין פּוֹלְסֵי דְנוּרָא, אָמְרוּ לֹו אִי לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ, אִי עֲבַדְתָּ הִנֵּה לָךְ לְמִיעֶבֶד כְּדִפְקֹדוּךָ. וְעוֹד אִי עֲבַדְתָּ כְּדִפְקֹדוּךָ לֹא אִיבָעִי לָךְ לְאַהֲדוּרִי, לִית לָךְ אֵין מְשִׁיבִין עַל הַשְּׁלָקָה וְכו'.

**It will be understood by what is said in the eighth chapter of tractate Yoma:**

**The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to [Michael], the ministering angel of the Jewish people,<sup>1</sup> “Your nation has sinned.” [Michael] said to Him, “Master of the universe, may it be enough that among them are good [people].” [G-d] said to him, “Behold, I am burning them [all, both the wicked] and the good among them [because the good do not rebuke the wicked].” Immediately, [G-d spoke to Gabriel:] “He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, ‘Step inside the wheelwork, under the cherubs, and fill your hands with glowing coals from among the cherubs, and scatter them over the city’ ” (Ezek. 10:2). Rav Chana bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida, “If it were not for the fact that the embers cooled [as they were passed] from the hand of Michael<sup>2</sup> to the hand of Gabriel, [instead of Gabriel taking the embers directly himself as he had been told,] not a remnant or a refugee of the enemies of the Jewish people [a euphemism for the Jewish people themselves] would have survived.”**

**It is written: “And behold, the man clothed in linen with the slate by his side, reported the matter saying: I have done as You have commanded me” (Ezek. 9:11). Rabbi Yochanan said: “At that moment, they cast out Gabriel, and they struck him with sixty blows of fire. They said to him: ‘If you did not do it, you did not do it. If you did do it, you needed to do it as you were commanded [and taken the glowing coals directly]. Moreover, if you already did it as you were commanded, you shouldn’t respond in this way, for don’t you [know] that one should not deliver a report about destruction? [I.e., one should only hint that he succeeded in such a mission.]’ ”**

- Yoma 77a.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Dan. 10:21, the angel reveals to Daniel that Michael will join him in the fight against the ministering angels of the Persians and Greeks.

<sup>2</sup> The current edition of the Talmud, as well as older editions checked on <https://bavli.genizah.org>, name the second party as Gabriel, but refer to the first party only as “the cherub.” The translator hasn’t found the source, but there is apparently a tradition that “the cherub” was Michael, as the same identification was given in Chomat Anakh on Ezekiel, composed c.1784–c.1804 by Rabbi Chayim Joseph David Azulay (“Chida”).

<sup>3</sup> The text closely follows the text of the Guadalajara, Spain printing c. 1488, which differs somewhat from our modern text based on the Vilna edition of 1886.

ופירש רש"י אי לא עבדת כלל היינו מצדיקים אותך לומר דוקה הוא את הדבר אולי ישוב הקב"ה מתרונו ויתרצה להם עכ"ל.

**Rashi explained, “If you did not do it at all, we would have justified you in acting thus, saying, ‘He delayed the matter, because perhaps the Holy One, Blessed be He, would recover from his anger and would be reconciled with them.’ ”**

ומהרש"א פירש לבש הבדים הוא גבריאל וכו', וגם הוא מהפך בזכות ישראל, ואילו לא נצטננו הגחלים, הנה האש מכלה הכל ולא הנה נשתתף וכו'. וזהו כמעט כסדר היינו, אלמלא שנצטננו הגחלים היינו חס ושלום כלים באש כסודם שנאמר בקה"ה המטיר על-סדם . . . גפרית ואש. ואף כאן ניצת-אש בציון, ועל ידי שנצטננו לא כלו באש רק עצים ואבנים עכ"ל.

**The Maharsha<sup>4</sup> explained, “‘The one dressed in linen’ is Gabriel, and he contemplated the matter,<sup>5</sup> i.e., G-d’s order, in the merit of Israel, and if the embers had not cooled, the fire would have destroyed everything, and nothing would have remained. Thus, ‘we would have been like Sodom’ (Isaiah 1:9); or, if it were not for the fact that the embers cooled, then G-d forbid, we would have been vessels in fire like Sodom, as it is said about them, ‘The L-rd rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfurous fire’ (Gen. 19:24). But here, ‘He kindled a fire in Zion’ (Lam. 4:11), and since [the embers] were cooled, [the people] weren’t burned by fire, but only the wood and stones of the Temple were burned.”<sup>6</sup>**

ומכאן נראה בבירור שהכל הוא ענין אחד וזמן אחד ומעשה אחד, ודברי תורה סתומים ועננים במקום אחד ועשירים במקום אחר, והיינו שהקב"ה אמר למיכאל ואין הכי נמי שהיה אף גבריאל עמו כמו שאומר המדרש, הואיל שגם הוא מהפך בזכות ישראל. והענין הוא שבעת הזאת שהיה הקב"ה בפעם על ישראל היה רוצה שיהפכו אלו בזכותם כדי לבטל הרוע. וכדי לתת להם מקום להפוך בזכותם, שאל להם מי חביב עליכם בדברי המדרש הנ"ל. ומעתה כשהשיבו ישראל, בודאי שיש להם להפוך בזכותם כדי שיהיו ניצולים.

**From here it appears clearly that everything is one matter, one time and one incident, and “the words of the Torah” are sealed and “poor in one place but rich in another place,”<sup>7</sup> since the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Michael—and yes, it is indeed so that Gabriel was with him as the Midrash says—since [Michael] also contemplated [the matter] in the merit of Israel. The point is that at this time that G-d was angry with Israel, He wanted them to contemplate the matter in [Israel’s] merit in order to eliminate the rage. In order to give them a chance to contemplate the matter in their merit, He asked them, “Who is dear to you,” as in the words of the Midrash above. Now that they answered, “Israel,” they certainly have a reason to contemplate the matter in Israel’s merit in order that they should be saved.**

<sup>4</sup> Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels (1555–1631), Polish rabbi famous for his Talmud commentaries, Chiddushei Halachot and Chiddushei Agadot.

<sup>5</sup> *Mehafech be-* (מהפך ב-) means “turning something over in one’s mind,” which the translator has rendered as “contemplating the matter.”

<sup>6</sup> Chiddushei Agadot on Yoma 77a.

<sup>7</sup> Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah 17a.

אחר כך אמר למיכאל סרחה אומתה, דהנינו האומה שאמרת שהיא חביבה עליה, ואין הכי נמי שהיה אף גבריאאל עמו כנ"ל. והשיב ד[י]ם לטובים שבהם, דמשמע שיכלה את הרשעים ויניח הצדיקים. והקב"ה כעס על תשובה זו ואמר לו הריני שורף אותם, דהנינו הרשעים כמו שאמרת וגם הטובים שאמרת להניח, לפי שתשובה זו אינה תשובה נכונה, שהרי אם לא היו נמצאים בהם טובים נמצאו כלם מתים חס ושלום.

**Afterward [G-d] said to Michael, "Your nation has sinned," which is the nation that you said is dear to you, and yes—it is indeed that Gabriel was with him, as stated above. [Michael] answered, "May it be enough that among them are good people," with the meaning that He should destroy the wicked and leave the righteous alone. The Holy One, Blessed be He, was angry with this answer, and said to him, "Behold, I am burning them, which is the wicked ones as you said and also the good ones that you said to leave alone, because this answer is not a correct answer, for if good ones had not existed among them, all of them would have been found dead, G-d forbid."**

ועוד שסתר דבריו הראשונים, שאם האמת שחביב עליהם ישראל לא היה לו לומר שיכלה את הרשעים, אלא אדרבא היה לו להשתדל להפוך בנכותם, הואיל שהם חביבים שאפילו מיתת אחד מישראל קשה לפני הקב"ה דכתיב ונפל ממנו רב. ועוד שתשובה זו שהשיבו לא הצילו נמי הצדיקים, שהרי המדת הדין טוענת מה נשתנו אלו מאלו. אלא ודאי צריך לומר שחביב עליהם הבית המקדש יותר מישראל עצמם, הפך דבריהם הראשונים, ומשום הכי היו רוצים שיתקיימו הצדיקים כדי שיתקיים הבית המקדש.

**Furthermore, [Michael] contradicted his first words, for if it were true that Israel was dear to them, he wouldn't have said to Him to destroy the wicked. Rather, to the contrary, he would have endeavored to contemplate the matter in [Israel's] merit, since they were so dear that even the death of one person of Israel is difficult for the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is written, "The L-rd said to Moses, 'Go down, warn the people not to break through to the L-rd to gaze, lest many of them perish' " (Ex. 19:21).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in this answer that [Michael and Gabriel] gave, they didn't even save the righteous, for the attribute of strict justice charged, "How are these righteous people different from those wicked ones?"<sup>9</sup> Rather it certainly needs to be said that the Temple was dearer to them than Israel itself, the opposite of their first words, and because of this they wanted the righteous to exist in order that the Temple would exist.**

<sup>8</sup> Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 19:21: "If one of them falls, it is [to Me] as if all have fallen; the one detracts from the many. One of them who falls is reckoned against the entire act of creation, as it says: 'For to the L-rd (will be) the eye of (one) man and (it will be reckoned as) all the tribes of Israel (Zech. 9:2).'"

<sup>9</sup> Shabbat 55a: "The attribute of justice said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: 'Master of the Universe, how are these different from those?' [G-d] said to him: 'These are full-fledged righteous [people] and those are full-fledged wicked [ones].' [The attribute of justice] said to Him: 'Master of the Universe, it was in the hands of the righteous to protest the conduct of the wicked, and they did not protest.'"

ומעתה דברייהם לא באו על נכון אלא סתרי אהדדי, שאם האמת שחביב עליהם ישראל היתה להם להביא טענות להציל אף הרשעים. והיה להם לומר מתחלה לשרוף הבית כדי להציל אף הרשעים, כי חביב נפש אחת מישראל לפני הקב"ה.

**But now their words didn't come true; rather they contradicted each other, for if it were true that Israel were dear to them, they should have brought arguments to save even the wicked. They should have from the beginning said to G-d to burn the Temple in order to save even the wicked, because the soul of one person from Israel is dear to the Holy One, Blessed be He.**

אי נמי היתה יכול לטעון שיש ציל אף הרשעים בשביל הצדקה שהיו עושים, כדאמרינן בפרק י"א דסנהדרין (דף ק"ד) מדה אחת היתה בירושלים ותיירה על סדום, דאילו התם ונדעני ואביון לא הוזיקה, והכא כתיב ידי נשים רחמניות וכו'. וגדול כח הצדקה שמהפכת מדת הדין למדת הרחמים כמו שאמרו ו"ל על פסוק השקיפה ממעון קדשך וכו'.

**It was also possible to claim that He should save even the wicked because of the charity that they gave, as it says in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sanhedrin (page 104b), "There was an additional measure of suffering in Jerusalem that was not in Sodom. For there, with regard to Sodom, it is written: 'Only this was the sin of your sister Sodom: arrogance! She and her daughters had plenty of bread and untroubled tranquility, but she did not support the poor and destitute' (Ezek. 16:49). But here, it is written, 'The hands of compassionate women cooked their own children' " (Lam. 4:10). The power of charity is great, for it reverses the attribute of strict justice to the attribute of mercy, as [the rabbis] of blessed memory said on the verse, "Look down from Your Holy Abode, from Heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the soil You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers" (Deut. 26:15).<sup>10</sup>**

ואף על פי שאין טענה זו כל כך מספקת כמו שפיתחנו לעיל בסמוך, מפל מקום אם היתה משיב בפירוש שלא ימית שום אחד מהם, אלא יגלה את הרשעים, לפי שאינו מן הדין שישבו בארץ הואיל שלא שמרו המצוות כנ"ל, בנדאי שהצלה פורתה מיהא הוי בטענה זו. אבל מדקאמר ד[י]ם לטובים שבהם נראה שלא היו מקפידים כלל על איבוד ישראל אלא דוקא על קיום בית המקדש, ומשום הכי קנס עליהם שהם יציתו במקדש אש, וזו היא הבגידה שעשה מיכאל שלא הפך בזכות הרשעים. ועל זה מקונן הנביא איכה ישבה בדרך העיר רבתי עם, וקיינה זו של פסוק זה היינו מקוננים אותה אפילו לדברי מיכאל, שהרי אם ישחית הרשעים יתמעטו יושביה.

**Although that argument is not as satisfying as we wrote above, at any rate, if [Michael] had responded in explanation that [G-d] should not kill any of them, but rather exile the wicked—because according to justice they should not settle in the Land, as they are not guarding the commandments, as discussed above—then it is certain “that some will be saved by this claim.”<sup>11</sup> But from the fact that he said, “May it be enough that among them**

<sup>10</sup> Rashi on Deut. 26:15: “We have done what You have laid upon us, do now what is upon You to do, because You have said, ‘If you walk in My ordinances ... Then I will give you rain in its season, etc.’ (Lev. 25:3–4).” See also Yerushalmi Ma’aser Sheni 32b.

<sup>11</sup> The text is found in Rabbi Abraham Abulafia’s Imrei Shefer (1291) in the essay Drush leVein haMetzarim, as well as in Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz’s Kli Yakar (Lublin 1602) on Ex. 9:14.

are good people,” it appears that they weren’t strict at all regarding the loss of Israel, but rather especially regarding the existence of the Temple. Because of this they were punished, that they would be ordered to set it on fire, and this was the betrayal that Michael did, that he didn’t contemplate the matter in the merit of the wicked. It is for this reason that the prophet lamented, “Alas! Lonely sits the city [that was once] great with people! She who is [now] like a widow, was [once] great among the nations; the princess among states has become a captive servant” (Lam. 1:1), and we would say the lament of this verse even according to the words of Michael, for if [G-d] had destroyed the wicked instead of the Temple, nevertheless [the Land’s] inhabitants would have been reduced in number.

ובנה יתורץ סדר הפסוקים, שמתחלה אמר איכה ישבה בדד קודם העיר רבתי עם, וכן היתה כאלמנה קודם רבתי בגוים. וכן בסוף הנה לו לומר היתה למס קודם שרתי במדינות, אלא לפי שהראשונות היו מתקיימות אף לדברי מיכאל, אמנם היתה למס לא נתקיימה אלא אחר חרבן בית המקדש, שגלו מארצם והיו למס ולמשיסה בידתם לבור גלות. ואם נפרש היתה למס שהיו פחת עול מלכי האומות, קשה שאף בזמן הבית היו מעלים מס למלך בבל והנה לו להקדים היתה למס לישבה בדד.

In this way we will solve the order of the verses, that in the beginning [the prophet] said, “Alas! Lonely she sits,” before saying “the city [that was once] great with people,” and similarly, the prophet said, “[she who was] like a widow” before saying, “who was [once] great among the nations.” Similarly, at the end of the verse, if the clause were to provide a parallel construction of first expressing the current state and then the earlier state, [the prophet] should have said, “She has become a captive servant” before saying, “who was once a princess among states.” Instead, this third pair reads, “She who was once a princess among states, has become a captive servant.” Why then is the structure: 1a) the later state; 1b) the earlier state; 2a) the later state; 2b) the earlier state; 3a) the earlier state; and 3b) the later state? **But the first clauses existed even according to the words of Michael**, i.e., “lonely she sits” and “like a widow” were already true when Jerusalem was besieged but while the Temple still stood, when Michael and Gabriel were telling G-d that they held Israel and the Temple dear. **However, Israel being a captive servant happened only after the destruction of the Temple, when they were exiled from their land and became a captive servant and prey, in their descent into the pit of exile.** Thus, clauses 1a through 3a existed as past events prior to clause 3b, and clause 3b is relegated to the end of the verse. **Even if we will try to interpret, “She has become a captive servant” as meaning that she was under the yoke of the kings of the nations**, i.e., to make it an earlier event than the time of the Exile, following the destruction of the Temple, **it is difficult** to understand in that way. **For even in the time of the Temple, they were raising tax for the king of Babylonia.** So if one were to interpret it as referring to being under the yoke of nations, then [Jeremiah] should have had the clause, “she has become a captive servant” at the very beginning of the verse, even before



he wrote, **“lonely she sits.”** Thus, we are right to interpret it to mean after the destruction of the Temple, and to place it at the end of the verse.<sup>12</sup>

והואיל ישעתה היתה צרתנו כפולה בין על הצדיקים ובין על הרשעים, משום הכי מקונן בלשון כפול בכו תבכה בלילה וכו', אין לה מנחם מפל וכו' כל־רעה בגדו בה, שלא הפכו בזכות הרשעים, ומתוך כך ישבה בך.

Now we have a better understanding of Lamentations 1:2. **Since now our distress is doubled, both because of the loss of the righteous and also of the wicked, therefore the lamenting is in the doubled language: “Weeping, she has wept in the night,” etc. “She has no comforter among all [her lovers]; all her friends have betrayed her,” that they didn’t contemplate the matter in the merit of the wicked,” and with this, as it says in the first verse, “Lonely she sits.”**

ועדיין יש לדקדק בסוגיא דיומא הנ"ל ועוד אי עבדת כדפקדוה לא איבעי לה לאהדורי, לית לה וכו', ומי איכא ספיקא קמי שמיא, דקאמרו ליה אי עבד [ת] כדפקדוה שגרא דמספקא להו אי עבד כדפקדוהו או לא. אמנם כתבו המפרשים שהקב"ה רצה שיהיו מלאכי הדין בירושלים, כדי שלא יעשו דין גמור, אף על פי שמן הראוי היה שיהיו מלאכי דין להשפיע דין.

**It is still necessary to scrutinize the section in tractate Yoma mentioned above: “Moreover, if you already did it as you were commanded, you should not have responded in this way; don’t you [know] that one should not deliver a report about destruction?” (Yoma 77a). “Is there doubt before G-d in Heaven!?” (Berachot 3b). For they said, “If you already did it as you were commanded,” which appears that they are uncertain if he already did it as he was commanded or not. In truth, the commentators wrote that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wanted them to be angels of mercy who would enact judgment against Jerusalem, in order that they shouldn’t enact complete judgment against Israel, although according to the letter of the law, it was proper that they should have been angels of justice to influence a strict justice against Israel.**

ואם כן זהו מה שאמרו לגבריאל אי לא עבדת לא עבדת, כלומר הואיל שאתה מלאך רחמים היה לה להתנצל שלא עשית דין בשביל שרחת על ישראל. ואי עבדת שלא השגחת לרחם אלא לעשות מה שנצטוית, הנה לה למיעבד כדפקדוה. ואי עבדת כדפקדוה—מטעם שהואיל שהקב"ה צוה אותה, שאתה מלאך רחמים על ישראל, משמע בכלל הציווי שתתמלא עליהם רחמים ולא תשפיע דין גמור—ושפיר קאמרת עשיתי ככל אשר צויתני, לפי שצוה דוקא אותה, כדי שתשנה לטובה ותרחם. לא הנה לה לאהדורי, לית לה דאין משיבין על השלקלה.

**If so, this is what they were saying to Gabriel: “No matter what your thinking was, there are grounds to reprimand you! (1) If you did not do it, you did not do it.” As if to say, “If you believe that G-d wanted you to destroy Israel, but since you are an angel of mercy you decided**

<sup>12</sup> This explains why Jeremiah didn’t want to preserve the later state/earlier state structure for the third pair of clauses, because he wanted “she has become a captive servant” to be saved for the end of the verse. However, the translator wonders why the prophet didn’t draft the verse as earlier state/earlier state for all three pairs of clauses?

to spread only dying embers, then you know that you did not do what you think G-d wanted, and **you needed to apologize that you didn't do justice, for you showed mercy to Israel.** (2) **If you did it, and you took no pity but acted only as you were commanded, i.e., your taking of dying embers was an act of carelessness, then you still deserve to be reprimanded, because you needed to do it as you were commanded.** (3) **If you did it as you were commanded—thinking that since the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded you because you are an angel of mercy on Israel, this means that in general the imperative is that mercy will be fulfilled upon them and complete justice will not be implicated—then it's at least accurate that you said, 'I have done as You have commanded me,' specifically as He commanded you as opposed to another angel, for [G-d intended] you to change [the outcome] to good and to have compassion on Israel.** (4) But even if it was this last case, and you thought that G-d wanted you to show compassion, **you shouldn't respond in the way that you did, saying, 'I have done as You have commanded me,' for don't you [know] that one should not deliver a report about destruction?"**

ובזה יתורץ מאי דקשיא לן על דברי ר' שמעון חסידא הנ"ל אלמלא לא נצטננו הגחלים מידו של מיכאל לידו של גבריאל לא נשתתיר וכו', שנראה שהשיור בא לנו מחמת מיכאל וגבריאל, ודברי הפתוב אומר בהפוך לולי ה' צבאות הותיר לנו שריד כמעט וכו'. ובמה שפתבנו אתי שפיר שהקב"ה כשצוה להם שהם מלאכים של חסד להשפיע דין, נתפנון שיעשו בענין שישאר שריד.

**In this way the difficulty of Rabbi Shimon Chasida will be solved, that “If it were not for the fact that the embers cooled as they were passed from the hand of Michael to the hand of Gabriel, instead of Gabriel taking the embers directly himself as he had been told, not a [remnant of the Jewish people] would have survived.”** The difficulty is **that** from his statement, **it appears that our remnant was due to Michael and Gabriel, even though Scripture says the opposite, “Had not the L-rd of Hosts left us some remnant, we would have been like Sodom, another Gomorrah” (Isaiah 1:9). From what we have written, everything is fine, for when the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded them, it was that they were angels of mercy to influence justice, with the intent being that they should act in the matter such that a remnant of Israel would remain. I.e., it was G-d's intention that the angels would act this way.**

והפסל של פכו תבכה וכו', היינו דאמרינן בפסוק כ"ג לשבת זה מאור עיניו של אדם שהולך אחר הבכי וכו'. ר' חנינא שכיבא ליה ברתיה וכו' תכלא ועורא, אבל כאן אינו רוצה הפתוב שבשביל זה נחזל מלבכות על חרבן הבית, אלא ודמעתה על לחיה.

**The duplication of the words in the verse, “Weeping, she has wept,” is as we said in the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of tractate Shabbat (151b) regarding the verse “and the clouds return after the rain” (Eccl. 12:2), “this is the light of a person's eyes, which goes and dwindles after one cries.”<sup>13</sup>**

<sup>13</sup> In Shabbat 151b, the Gemara is discussing verses from Ecclesiastes that relate to death and old age. Regarding Eccl. 12:2, “Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain,” the rabbis taught that “and the clouds return after the rain” refers to “the light of a person's eyes, which goes [and dwindles] after one cries [as if it were covered by clouds].”



The Gemara on Shabbat 151b also relates a story: **“When Rabbi Chanina’s daughter died, he did not cry over her. His wife said to him, ‘Have you [merely] let a chicken out of your house [that you do not show any signs of sorrow]?’ He said to her, ‘[If I cry, I will suffer twice, from] bereavement and blindness,’ ”** as he considered crying out of sorrow to be damaging to eyesight. **But here the Scripture doesn’t want that fear to cause us to cease crying about the destruction of the Temple, rather it encourages us to cry, as it says, “Weeping, she has wept in the night, her cheek wet with tears.”**

אי נמי בדרך אחר דאמרינן במדרש על פסוק אשר הוזהר ה' ביום חרון אפו, לא הנה חרון אפו של הקב"ה אלא יום אחד, אם היו עושים תשובה מיד היו נגאלים עכ"ל. ואמר הכתוב בכו תבכה בלילה והבכיה היא לעורר הרחמים כידוע, אמנם ביום ראשון אי אפשר, שאל תרצה את חבירך בשעת כעסו, אבל בלילה שכבר עבר היום והחרון אף אז הוא זמן הבכיה לעורר הרחמים כדי שיהיו נגאלים. ועוד אמרו ז"ל כל דור שלא נבנה בית המקדש בימיו כאלו נחרב בימיו, ולכן כפל ואמר בכה שלא נבנה, תבכה שהוא כאלו נחרב בימיו.

In a different manner, as it says in the Midrash (Lam. Rabbah 1:40) on the verse, **“When the L-rd afflicted me on His day of wrath”** (Lam. 1:12), **“The Holy One, Blessed be He, had only one day of wrath. If they had repented immediately, they would have been redeemed.”**<sup>14</sup> Scripture says: **“Weeping, she has wept in the night,”** and the weeping is to awaken mercy, as is known. Actually, this is impossible to accomplish in only one day, for as Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said, **“Do not try to appease your friend during his hour of anger”** (Pirkei Avot 4:18). **Rather, do so at night, when the day and his anger have passed, then it is the time for crying to awaken mercy in order that they should be redeemed. Also, [the rabbis] of blessed memory said, “Any generation in which the Temple is not built, it is as if it had been destroyed in their times”** (Yerushalmi Yoma 5a), and therefore the text is doubled and says **“Weeping,”** that it was not built, [and] **“she has wept,”** that it is as if it has been destroyed in your days.

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<sup>14</sup> Our text of Lam. Rabba 1:40 reads, “Rabbi Acha said, the Holy One, Blessed be He, had only one day of wrath; if Israel had repented, they would have cooled it.”