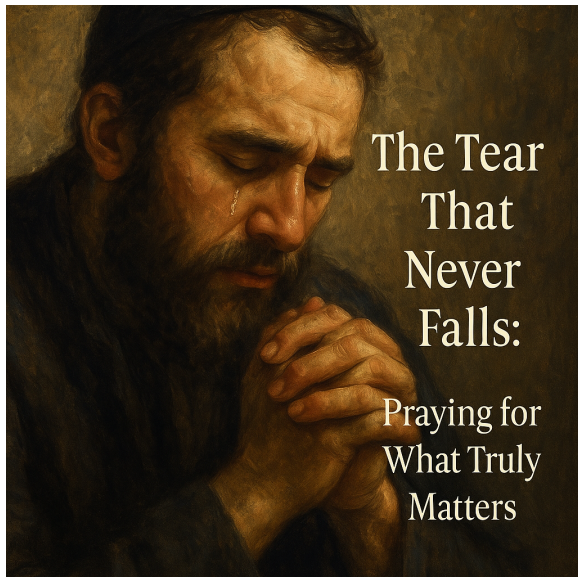




Adapted from Rabbi Shlomo Farhi Torah Class

The Tear That Never Falls: Praying for What Truly Matters

“There’s No Good Excuse Not to Go”

Before we begin, a reminder:

This Sunday we depart for our community’s journey to Poland — a difficult, powerful, and life-altering experience. It is the kind of trip that always gets pushed off, always becomes “next year,” always feels impossible to schedule — until one realizes:

there is *nothing* more important than seeing these places with your own eyes.

If I, who have gone seventy times, can fit it in so that *you* can go, surely you can find your way there too.

It will strengthen your Jewish identity more than you can imagine.

Rivka’s Unfinished Plan

We turn now to a pivotal moment in the parashah — the story of Yaakov, Esav, and the blessings.

Rivka approaches Yaakov and says plainly:

“Your brother has fooled your father. And your father — Yitzchak Avinu — is too pure to see through his façade.”

Yitzchak, raised in holiness, born to Avraham and Sarah, simply doesn’t recognize the tactics of a con-artist. (A “con-man,” by the way, is not named for his cons, but for his ability to gain your *confidence* — a crucial insight into how easily we are fooled.)

But Rivka?

She grew up in the house of Lavan — the global headquarters of deceit.

She knows the language, the smile, the handshake, the bait-and-switch. Her family once welcomed Eliezer with the intent to poison him. She knows exactly what Esav is.

And so she devises the elaborate plan: dress Yaakov, prepare food as Yitzchak loves it, send him in as Esav, and secure the blessings.

But a question cries out:

What was the plan for AFTER?

Obviously Esav would come home.
Obviously he would realize what happened.
Obviously he would be furious.

Why didn't Rivka pre-emptively tell Yaakov:
"Get the blessings, then run — straight to
my brother in Charan"?

Why wasn't escape part of the original plan?

A Midrash of Tremendous Consequence

The answer comes from a powerful
Midrash:

**God does not "let things
slide."
He is infinitely patient, but
debts that are not addressed
are eventually collected.**

The Midrash teaches that Yaakov caused
Esav to cry a *great and bitter cry*.
When was this cry "repaid" in Jewish
history?

Thousands of years later — in Shushan.

Mordechai runs through the streets in grief,
raising a **great and bitter cry**, echoing
Esav's language. That suffering came to us
through Haman, descendant of Amalek,
descendant of Esav.

And the Midrash adds:

Esav shed **three** tears
— one from the right eye

— one from the left
— and one that never fell.

That un-fallen tear, the Midrash says, has
been responsible for countless tears
throughout Jewish history.

So the nation pleads before God:

"Master of the world, for his
three tears You had
compassion —
what of *our* tears?
For the Holocaust, the
pogroms, the hostages, the
terror, the exile...
When will You respond to *our*
endless river of tears?"

The Uncomfortable Principle Behind Divine Justice

From here, a difficult truth emerges:

Esav did **not** deserve the blessing.
He was wicked.
He had sold the birthright — legally
abandoning it.

And yet — one raw, authentic cry pierced
the heavens.

Even though the *content* was unjustified.
Even though the *person* was undeserving.

A real tear — a genuine prayer — has
cosmic power.

If *Esav's* tears can be answered, how much
more so the tears of Am Yisrael?

But there is a deeper twist.

Tears That Are Heard... and Tears That Aren't

The Torah describes a poor man whose nighttime garment is taken as collateral for a loan. The lender must return it each evening, despite the obvious flaw:

If the debtor gets it back every night, the collateral loses its purpose.

There is no pressure to repay the loan.

Why then return it?

Because, says the Torah:

“If he cries to Me — I will hear.
For I am compassionate.”

He is crying over nothing — literally over pajamas — but Heaven cannot bear the sound of his anguish.

And the lender, even though technically correct, risks punishment simply for causing someone else to cry.

What a terrifying power tears hold.

“Haven’t We Cried Enough?”

A great sage was once asked:

If tears are so powerful,
why has our suffering continued?

*Why have millennia of Jewish tears not
overturned our exile?*

*Why has God not answered us as He
answered Esav?*

The first answer is simple:

Maybe He will — in His time.

Just as Esav’s cry took centuries to be answered, perhaps our redemption has already been purchased by our tears — only awaiting its moment.

But the deeper answer comes from the Zohar, in a heartbreaking story:

The Cry of a Twelve-Year-Old Orphan

Rabbi Yosi’s son, twelve years old, had already lost his mother. When his father died, the child threw himself onto the body and cried:

“Hashem — in Your Torah You
forbid taking the children while
the mother is present.

You say: send away the
mother before taking the eggs.

But You took my mother AND
my father — and You left *me*.

Why have You violated Your
own Torah?”

At that moment, **300,000 angels burst into tears.**

God declared:

“I cannot bear the tears of this
young lamb.”

And Rabbi Yosi was brought **back to life**, given **26 more years** — the numerical value of the Divine Name of mercy.

A prayer that defied nature, defied death,
defied the decree — was answered.

Why?

Because the tears were real.

But Why Aren't *Our* Tears Enough?

One night, the holy Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg stayed at an inn. At midnight he heard a man sobbing — “Oy! Oy! Oy!” — with such anguish that Reb Shmelke believed he had discovered a hidden tzaddik pouring out his soul over the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash.

He crept near the door to absorb these exalted prayers...

...until he heard the man wail:

“WHY did you give me that omelet before bed!? My heartburn is KILLING me! Bring me the Gaviscon! Where's the Tums?!”

Not a single tear was for the Temple.
Not a single cry was for God.

Everything was about *me* — my pain, my discomfort, my omelet-induced suffering.

Reb Shmelke understood immediately:

****Our tears have not outweighed Esav's**

because most of our tears are not for Heaven.**

We cry from fear.
We cry from frustration.
We cry because life hurts.

But we rarely cry over our *distance from Hashem*.

We cry for antisemitism —
but not for the exile itself.

We cry about what is happening TO us —
but not about what is happening IN us.

The Tear That Never Fell

Rivka never planned for Esav's wrath, because she never imagined he would shed a tear that reached Heaven.

But he did.

Two tears fell for worldly pain — for lost blessings, lost honor, lost destiny — and those Rivka anticipated.

But the third tear remained inside the eye.
It never fell.
It was internal.

A tear for something deeper.
A tear for connection.
A tear for spiritual loss.

That tear — silent, hidden, unspoken — is what shook Heaven.

And that is the tear that our generation so often forgets.

We cry for the omelet.
We cry for the antisemites.
We cry for the external aches.

But do we cry for the **neshama**?
For the **Beit HaMikdash**?
For **holiness**?
For **proximity to Hashem**?

One Tear Can Tip the Scales

But imagine —
just once —
a Jew crying not for the heartburn, not for the enemies, not for the inconvenience, but for the soul.

For the distance between us and God.

For the closeness we long for but do not feel.

For the connection we want — or want to *want*.

That single tear could outweigh all three of Esav's, all the decrees they set in motion, all the suffering that has echoed through our history.

We say to Hashem:

“Ribono shel Olam —
We want You.
We want to come home.
And even when we don't want it — we want to WANT it.”

Let our synagogues, our batei midrash, our yeshivot, our leaders cultivate this inner world — awaken that forgotten tear — so that Am Yisrael can finally cry over what truly matters.

And in that tear, may the redemption blossom.

Amen.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Tears have cosmic power — even undeserved tears.

Esav's cry reshaped Jewish history. A sincere tear pierces Heaven regardless of who sheds it.

2. Hashem does not ignore suffering — He delays, but He does not forget.

Tears unaddressed now may be answered in future generations.

3. Causing another person to cry is spiritually dangerous.

Even when you are technically correct, Heaven may respond strictly on your behalf.

4. Most of our tears are for physical pain, not spiritual loss.

This weakens their power. We must learn to cry for what truly matters.

5. The “tear that never falls” is the tear for holiness.

One heartfelt internal cry can outweigh centuries of suffering.

SHABBAT-TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between crying from pain and crying from spiritual longing?
How can we cultivate the second?
 2. Why did Esav's undeserved tears have so much impact — and what does that teach us about prayer today?
 3. What would it look like for our community to “cry for closeness” rather than just for safety or comfort?
 4. Which of your own prayers come from the “outer world” and which come from the “inner world”?
 5. If one sincere tear can change history, what tear are you waiting to shed?
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