

וַיָּרֶבּוּ הַיָּמִים - Many days passed. Tamar was a heroic woman, a great woman. She possessed the ability and patience to wait without end. Tamar waited many years. She was lonely, forsaken, forgotten by everyone. Seasons passed. All her friends married, reared families; all contact with them came to an end; people treated her with ridicule and contempt. Shelah married; Judah had forgotten her. And yet she waited and never said a word. Was she not the incarnation of Knesses Yisrael, which has waited for her Beloved hundreds and thousands of years under the most trying circumstances? Did not Tamar personify the greatest of all heroic action—to wait, while the waiting arouses laughter and derision? (*Abraham's Journey*, p. 179)

Tamar showed the strength of waiting and hoping, of having faith even when she became the subject of mockery. She sat as a widow in her father's house, waiting for Shelah. Tamar remained faithful and loyal. In her simplicity and naiveté, she instinctively trusted Judah. She could not tear herself away from him; something fateful, incomprehensible, tied her to him. So she made the desperate decision to sit at the crossroad. This strength of absurd loyalty is the second foundation of the concealed world of the kingdom of the House of David, of the idea of the Messiah.

Even if the Jewish people had the glow of the past and the promise of a glorious future—*Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart shall throb and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto you, the wealth of the nations shall come unto you* (Is. 60:5)—of what use would these be, if the Jewish people had not had a Tamar and hundreds, thousands, like her, who sat until...Shelah grows up (verse 11), who waited patiently under the most horrible circumstances? Everyone laughed and mocked, saying, God has long forgotten you. Thousands of years passed, and the Divine promise was not fulfilled; yet the Tamars kept waiting. They sat on the ground on Tisha B'Av and cried: *On this night my sons cry and wail; on this night my Temple was destroyed and my palaces burned*. For thousands of years, the Tamars repeated every morning: *I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah*. (*Days of Deliverance*, pp. 152-153)

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Rav's chumash

שלח

פ' 257

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The Mashiach's ancestry is traced to humble origins. They are, however, origins that rise to greatness. Ruth, a Moabite, distinguishes herself through her love, loyalty and kindness when she refuses to abandon her mother-in-law, Naomi, and ultimately converts to Judaism.²¹ Yehuda responds to the event with Tamar by admitting his own failings and errors.²² With this admission, Yehuda takes his first step along the path of responsibility. This

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path will ultimately lead Yehuda to full *tshuva* (remorse and change) for the sale of Yosef as well.²³

The Mashiach will rise, thus, from the greatest royalty of all: the royalty of individuals who, with strength and effort, transcend difficult circumstances to "make their own *yichus*" as they leave their mark upon the history of our people.

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□ Behold, in iniquity was I fashioned (*Psalms* 51:7).

One opinion says David was the son of a beloved wife. Another opinion has it that he was the son of the wife from whom Jesse had been separated for three years. When righteous Jesse heard that there were some who questioned the halachic legitimacy of the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, his ancestors, he withdrew from his wife lest he was forbidden to live with a Jewess. However, he wanted to fulfill the commandment of bringing children into the world. [This could be done in a permissible manner by means of a complex arrangement involving his giving a conditional grant of freedom to his non-Jewish maidservant and then marrying her.] He told the maidservant, "My daughter, prepare yourself

tonight, for I shall free you [conditionally] and you shall come to me." The loyal maidservant told her mistress, who was deeply distressed, for she wished to have additional children by her husband. Seeing her pain, the maidservant suggested that they do as Rachel and Leah had done: without Jesse's knowledge, his wife should take the place of the maidservant. The wife prayed that she should conceive and her prayer was answered. The child born to her was David. When Jesse's wife was seen to have conceived, he and his sons remained silent about their suspicions of David's legitimacy.

(Yalkut HaMechiri, Tehillim 118:28, according to Sefer HaToda'ah p. 322-323).