



The happiest month?

We have just commenced what is probably the happiest month on the Jewish calendar. It's the month of Nisan and as many of us know, throughout this month we do not say the Tachanun prayer and that is because nearly the entire month is festive.

Now of course we know that from the middle of the month until the end, that's the festival of Passover and then the days thereafter and soon after that is Rosh Chodesh, but what about the first half of the month?

Well, we know from the Torah that during the first 12 days of Nisan, that's when the Nesi'im, the Princes, the heads of the tribes, brought a sacrifice to inaugurate the new altar in the sanctuary in the wilderness. On each day, a different Nasi brought his sacrifice.

So therefore, the first 12 days are festive. However, I have a question: surely that day was only festive for one single person? Perhaps, at most, it was festive for his whole tribe - but that is only one twelfth of the nation. The entire people didn't celebrate and yet today none of us say Tachanun during that period?

I believe that a very powerful message emerges from this.

When it comes to sadness, we so often readily identify with the worries, the troubles, and the sorrow of others.

This is happening right now at a time when there is so much sadness in Israel and as a nation, we are reaching out with so much altruism and sympathy for all those who are there.

But from the month of Nisan we are taught that it is not just during times of sorrow that we should empathise with others, it is also when they are happy.

When a person is having a Simcha, we should rejoice with them. Even if there is one single person rejoicing, that is a reason for the entire nation to be happy and that's why we celebrate as a people, for the first half of Nisan as well.

May Hashem bless us, that in the same way as we are expressing sorrow with all those who are grieving right now, so may we soon all celebrate together, the great redemption of our people.

I wish you all Shabbat Shalom.