



Sermon Sparks Psalm 23

This is a post by Evyatar Nevo, an officer in the IDF. He is currently stationed outside of Gaza. We are sharing this from a public facebook post.

I do not cry. Never ever. I did not cry at my wedding, I did not cry when Noga was born, I did not even cry when Bruce Willis pushed Ben Affleck into the elevator and stayed to blow up the asteroid and save earth. OK, I almost cried then. It was just at the back of my throat, but I didn't allow myself to let go.

Last Friday night we made Kiddush. It has been a long time since I've made Kiddush. I mean, I was at the Kiddush, it's just that I didn't make it. You know how it is — sometimes we are with my family, sometimes Inbar's family, sometimes crashing on the couch and all you want is to order Golda ice cream and go to sleep.

So last week, we didn't have the energy to go anywhere, and between you and me, no one invited us out. Everyone just wanted to retreat within themselves. So we were at home, Inbar, Noga and I. Inbar spread out a white tablecloth and sang Shalom Aleichem. Actually, Inbar and Noga sang, I was not able to open my mouth. Somehow my body always knows before me that I'm not okay. It's called a psychosomatic disease. When I am stressed, depressed or just thinking too much — it always looks the same to me. It starts with a small pain in my throat, hoarseness, shaking and chills, swollen tonsils the size of my head, 40-degree temperature, and immediately I find myself in bed praying to God to take me. Anyway, sick men are the poorest creatures in nature.

So, when the chills started, somewhere that the military censor does not allow me to say, while I'm in a uniform, a vest and a helmet on my head, I knew that it was a sign that I should return home quickly or else I won't be there for my part of the war.

So Noga and Inbar sang, just happy that I was home, it didn't matter to them how sick I was, and that I was sitting there like a tree stump, paralyzed, staring into space.

And then it was my moment. I sang Eishet Chayil (the psalm, Woman of Valor) in the voice of a crow (because when it's deserved, it's deserved, but that's already a story for another post), I opened the Siddur and started reciting Mizmor L'David (a Psalm of David Psalm 23). Because on Shabbat I never have the strength to make Kiddush, and because I rarely make Kiddush in my own home on Fridays, I always make sure to also say Mizmor L'David. Whatever, what do I care?

And so, I began to read:

A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd;



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I lack nothing.

My voice started to crack.

He causes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters;

My voice started to shake.

He renews my life;
He guides me in right paths as befits His name.

My eyes wandered to the next sentence.

I got stuck. I read it in my heart and swallowed. Wow, how much this hurt my swollen throat. I read the sentence again in my heart, and in a moment the dam opened wide.

I cried. I cried like I have never cried in my life. Tears rolled down my cheeks and I just sobbed. Noga, this sensitive girl, held my hand and Inbar hugged me and I cried. Just yesterday I wore a uniform with rank on my epaulets, ready to go and conquer Gaza, and here I am, sobbing like a little girl. But I cried. I cried for 1,400 murdered. I cried for whole families that were lost. I cried for parents burying their children. I cried for kidnapped children who have no one to read a bedtime story to them. I cried because they promised us never again.

And then suddenly I stopped crying, and read the next sentence in a loud and clear voice.

Even when I walk in the valley of darkness, I will fear no evil for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff – they comfort me.
You set a table before me in full view of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for many long years.

Am Yisrael Chai!



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Name of Author: Evyatar at <http://evyatar-nevo.com/>