



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FATHERS

GIVE YOURSELF A REST AND RECONNECT

WITH YOUR TRUE GOAL

Avos Perek 4 Mishna 16

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Tisha B'Av leaves us with a whirlpool of emotions: sadness, yes, and more. There is an emptiness; Moshiach hasn't come, we are left still bereft, and carrying a gnawing sense of unease. These moments are all too fleeting, soon the Golus takes back its dominant place and the chill of our displacement returns.

Most of us get a chance to take some sort of holiday at this time, directly after Tisha B'Av. Actually, this is a great gift. Sandwiched in between now and Ellul, we can spend some "down time" with family, friends and, most importantly, ourselves. The world is chaotic, and our role in it can be confusing. What is it I really believe in? Where do I want to go? How are my relationships working? How am I doing with those I feel closest with, especially my children? The treadmill of the everyday has no place for contemplation, but a quiet walk in a different environment might just hold the key. We are here for a reason, Hashem has a task for us, one that nobody else can ever fulfill. How does one find what this is? We first have to recognize what is really important to us, and what is just the noise of Golus that smothers our pintele Yid.

**"It's not about the corridor, but what the main palace
holds in store"**

Our Mishnah says:

Rabbi Yaakov would say: This world is comparable to the antechamber before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the antechamber, so that you may enter the banquet hall.

The Koznitzer Maggid ztl points out that too often we confuse the nature of Olam Hazeih and Olam Haba. This world is not a palace filled with treasures which we can hold for ourselves at will. Instead, it is a corridor leading to the true treasures of the World to Come. When we get caught up with the sparkling trinkets of the material world we can lose our focus and then find ourselves threatened in losing out on the true sublime treasures of Gan Eden.

Through the generations we have faced many enemies from without; today our greatest test comes from within. The consumer society means just that: the goal is to consume and everything is geared towards that goal. The whole world is built on the primacy of excess and having ever more. People are measured accordingly: if you have money and you can consume, then you count. Otherwise, you don't. This confusion causes us to forget what it is we are here for, and what to cherish.

The Beis Israel ztl tells us that our Mishnah is referring to Shabbos which closely resembles Olam Haba in this world. If in this world we work on our kedusha on Shabbos, then we will reap the reward of that future world which is described by our Sages as "the day that will be entirely Shabbos and contentment for eternal life."

When relaxing with family on holiday, Shabbos can become a strong beacon of shared holiness. We enter the Shabbos relaxed; there are no pressures; it's time for family talks and unstressed learning. This is the corridor that Hashem gives us, so that we can taste what the Olam Ha'emes, the true world, is like.

I had the merit to witness Shabbos with Tzaddikim when they were resting far from the city. The stillness, the long deep davening, it gently lifted everyone to a higher realm. The schmoozing was different, sweeter and more intimate. Just a taste of those truly restful times energized us all for the coming Ellul.

We have been thrown into a crass and material world; even summer holidays have become extravagant events in over-priced hotels with Chassidic rock stars for your entertainment. I know I am somewhat old-fashioned, but Yidden once had a dynamic called "se past nisht"- it's not becoming of a Torah Yied. How can we expect to refocus ourselves when we are drowning in the sea of affluence?

We sat on the floor, crying over a loss too great to fathom, and now we seem to be shaking off those memories and heading to new and growing examples of mindless consumption. Take a deep breath, sweet Yied, give yourself a real rest, and connect to what is your true goal.

It's not about the corridor, but what the main palace holds in store.