

עדת אש קודש

Adass Aish Kodesh



Lights That Spring Ahead

By Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

As the weather turns colder, it can seem that our connection with mitzvos gets a bit frosty as well. Memories of the wondrous days of Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur are receding, that frisson of tangible kedusha has wafted away, replaced with the daily grind of life in the material realm of the everyday. One can discern a certain slackening in our daily devotion, winter days grow darker, and we seem a bit more tired. Avodas Hashem needs a (bren) a fire, and in this darkness it seems ever harder to ignite our inner selves.

I speak to a lot of Yidden, youngsters, young married couples, older sweet Yidden, Rabbonus throws one into the cauldron of every sort of human situation. Call it "The Winter Blues" but things are more complex than that. Seventy days from the beginning of Succos, the Time of Happiness and here we are in the doldrums, wondering how we can move on.

It is just at this juncture that Hashem sends us Chanukah, the illuminating Yom Tov that was created for the Golum Yidden as a tool to reignite our hearts. The Sefas Emes Zt"l points out that Chanukah is unique in that in other instances of Hashem sending the Jews miracles, it was because they were in a particular danger and the Divine intervention was needed to save them from destruction. Chanukah is different, the Jews found a bottle of oil that would make it possible for them to do the mitzvah of lighting the lights after they were delivered from danger. They were actually exempt from this particular service because there was no oil available. This then is a unique occurrence, and we should ask why. Says the Rebbe, this was in fact a gift from Hashem, because the Yidden

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sought to do the mitzvah of lighting, despite the absence of any oil, Hashem gifted them this miraculous chance. Therefore, every Yied should know that every year at this time Hashem sends special help to each soul that seeks to do the Will of Hashem. It is incumbent for us to open our hearts and accept this gift, as our ancestors were blessed to do then.

The Sochotchover Rebbe Zt"l, the Shem Mishmuel goes further with this aspect and points out that the mazel for the month of Teves is the Gedi, the goat. According to chazal, the mazel of a month has a kind of influence over that particular period. The Rebbe goes on to tell us that in the Gemorah of Baba Kama we find mention that goats have a tendency to spring about and jump. The Jews at the time of the miracle of Chanukah were a small group, weak and limited in any knowledge of waging war, yet they "sprang" into battle against a stronger army with seasoned generals. They didn't look at what seemed to be the odds that were stacked against them, rather, they leaped (like the goat) into the fray. This took place in Teves, the mazel of which is the goat. Says the Rebbe that from that time on, this time of the year is propitious to "spring ahead" in the realm of Yiddishkiet.

Even if one doesn't feel worthy of reaching any higher level of spirituality, now is the time to spring up and allow Hashem's gift of illumination to bring you closer.

We are all bogged down with weariness and sloth, this is the Golus Hashem has sent us into. All the technology and time saving instruments hasn't really given us more time to grow, sadly it's just the opposite, we have become ensconced in ever more useless information that blocks up our souls and leads to atrophy.

The Radomsker Rebbe Zt"l explains that the halachah of kindling the Menorah states: "Hadlaka oseh Mitzvah" a mitzvah should have the ability to ignite our hearts with the fire of devotion. The Rebbe continues with a passionate brocha that the mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights should influence us for good. His holy blessings reverberate in our times.

May we all regain the "bren", the fire of our Yiddishkiet, and with this freshness, may we spring forward into new and greater levels of Avodah and Torah.

We may be broken, but Hashem has bestowed upon us this opportunity of reawakening our inner pintele Yied. May it bring each and every one of us all that is good, with menucha, gezunt, and kol tov.

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