

עדת אש קודש

Adass Aish Kodesh



Counting Meaningful Time

By *Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

We all stumble thru our golus, picking up scars, winning some battles, just trying to get by with the least amount of pain. The Torah tells us about our forefathers in Egypt, and how they had slipped into the miasma of golus that corroded their inner sense of being.

“Moreover, I have heard the groan of the Children of Israel whom Egypt enslaves and I have remembered My covenant.” (Parshas Vaeira 6:5)

The Tiferes Shmuel explains that Hashem is everywhere, there is nothing that Hashem doesn't see or know. The Eibishter heard the whimper of pain that emanated from each Yiddisha neshomah. The Jews themselves were beyond even realising how dark things were, it was the pintele Yied that cried out and although consciously they weren't aware of it, Hashem heard it. Why did this obvious enslavement not cause overt cries of pain? Writes the Torah further:

“I am Hashem. And I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt.” Parshas Vaeira 6:6)

The Rebbe Reb Bunim from Pshisk Zt"l points out that the Hebrew word for burdens is “sivlos” which has its root in the word “sovel” , a word used for “withstanding” or “patience.” The Jews had become used to their life as slaves, they took it as a given that this was their situation and nothing would change. This in fact was the worst of that golus, the sense of despair that had become regularised to such a point that people didn't look for anything better. This is why it was only that small whisper of a cry that Hashem could hear that called out for redemption.

This has been the way much of golus has been throughout history. Yidden would find themselves caught up in a world of darkness and after a while see it as normal. They forgot what they were, the Children of Israel, created for greater things, a Nation of Prophets and the children of Prophets. Instead of

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Harav Y. R. Rubin Shlita
36 Bury Old Road
Prestwich – Manchester
M25 0FT



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reaching for greatness, they were easily distracted with materialistic baubles.

Presently we are all living in a golus, but in truth, it is not easy to remember this truth. We get by and plan for the next holiday. Worry about our credit cards whilst forgetting about the credit account in Shomayim. Yes we “walk the walk” of a Torah Nation, but inside some are spiritually deaf to what is important.

The Sefas Emes taught us in Parshas VaYechi that Yaakov was unaffected by his surroundings. He was completely above whatever was happening and was therefore able to “Live” in the ultimate sense even in Egypt. His children, though, were not on this level. They needed to work on strengthening their faith so that their physical surroundings had no autonomous existence but was seen as simply a screen that hid Kaviyuchal The Eibishter.

We are in many ways in the same position. We don't have the spiritual backing that previous generations had, theirs were simpler times, whilst ours is a complicated existence. We need to remind ourselves all the time that this world that glistens with all its trinkets of materialism is just that, a screen that hides Hashem. Question is how can we do this? We are often torn away from our safe “bubble” and find ourselves swimming in the ocean of crassness. We get lost in the world of slick advertisements, even if they are for Glatt Kosher voyages in the high seas of gashmiyous. I read an idea that I want to share with you and have fleshed it out to make it a bit more practical.

We can space out reminders throughout the day that will keep us aware of what our goals are in life. Let's say you set up a reminder on your phone to beep every hour. Upon hearing the bleep you take out five minutes to learn something, anything, just for five minutes. In the average nine to five work day, excluding lunch break, this will add about thirty-five minutes of learning to your day. More than that, it will be a constant reminder of what it is you're meant to be doing here on this mortal coil. Sounds daunting, nay, even a bit “too frum” but think about it before you discard it. I know, anytime you come up with something that you want to do to grow closer to Hashem and be more aware of His presence, the Yeitzer Hora is going to start working overtime to stop you. This plan can be modified, at each beep you can just say to yourself, “Ain Ode Milvado” or “Shivisi Hashem l'negdi Tamid” It is the reminder that counts, the knowledge that you are here for a greater existence than today's slavery.

These Parshos have been given the unique name of “Shovavim” the acronym of the names of the Torah portions read for these six weeks. On a Jewish leap year (such as this one) two weeks are added to this period and then it is called “Shovavim Tat” corresponding to the 2 additional Torah portions read in those weeks. According to our holy seforim, it is an auspicious period for Yidden to work on their awareness of Hashem in their daily lives and fine tune their inner compass towards a more spiritual life.

We are blessed with so much, yet our hearts may seem empty. Let's allow these special weeks to become the ignition point for a meaningful future.

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