

עדת אש קודש

Adass Aish Kodesh



SHOLOM AND BROCHA

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

Farible.... Interesting word, sounds sort of cute but jam-packed with pain. If you look it up in an English dictionary you will find that it means: 'to have a grievance, to be aggrieved.'

Sadly our holy nation is tragically adept in living on the planet of Farible. We are an intelligent people and we think into things deeply. Golus has made us extremely sensitive and our internal emotional fissures often percolate into a froth of resentment.

I'm often called upon to mediate between parties that have been battling over stuff for years. Often enough they have forgotten from whence it all started. They will talk at one another for hours, going at each other with rising bile, yet never really getting to the point. This isn't surprising: anger increases confrontation and sabotages the chance of finding compromise. There is only one small matter, holding a grudge never helps, as the famed psychotherapist Angela Buttimer of Georgia put it, "When we hold on to grudges and resentment, its like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick."

Chazal point out that no where do we find in the blessings Balaam gave the Yidden in Parshas Balak the word 'Sholom.' The Rebbe Rav Shraga Fievel of Grietza Ztl points out the Mishnah that says: "Hashem did not find a vessel that could hold blessing other than shalom (peace)."

This shows that sholom is the true container wherein blessing can thrive and flourish. Balaam couldn't abide that the Yidden be blessed with true ever lasting sholom. Even when he had to bless them, he didn't wish those blessings to have any fulfilment, hence the word 'sholom' doesn't

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



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appear. The Rebbe goes further and explains that Hashem didn't want that these blessings should be a missing the vital ingredient of Sholom. At the critical moment the wicked Balaam felt the word creeping onto his tongue and corrupted it. However, the passage says, 'He declaimed his parable and said...' (23:7) the Hebrew for 'parable' is 'mishalo', which in Hebrew has the same letters as sholom. In this way the brocha of sholom was there so that these blessings would be perceived.

When we find ourselves embroiled in our anger, words fly and thoughts inflame. The challenge is for us to remember that the poison will harm us. Rather, seek the hidden sholom. We are a blessed people, we have weathered storms and kept our faith. Grudges drag us down and poison our lives.

When a person is tested, he should realise that this is also a form of communication. Hashem is telling us, "I am testing you, please pass the test."

Rav Meilech Biederman Shlita tells over the story:

"A person said to his Rebbe: "Rebbe, I have an anger-control issue." The Rebbe gave him some advice to help control his anger. Among them, to always speak serenely, as the Ramban writes in his famous letter, "You should always speak serenely to everyone at all times, and this will save you from anger..." And he advised him to be mevater, and let the other person have his way.

Then, the Rebbe said, "I want to speak with you some more about this, only there is an urgent issue I must speak with my gabai about. It will only take a few moments, and then we can continue our conversation. Please wait outside, and when I finish come in.

The gabai may tell you that visiting hours are over, and the door is closed for the day, but don't pay attention to him. Just tell him that I said you can come in."

The gabai came in to the Rebbe's room, and the Rebbe told him, "The man who just left the room is trying to overcome his anger. I want you to get him angry... Let's see if he can control himself."

The Rebbe said these words loud. From outside the room, the man heard it, and he knew that the gabai is going to test him.

The gabai left the Rebbe's room and locked it. The man said, "The Rebbe told me I should return as soon as he finishes speaking with you." "I'm sorry. The door is closed. You can speak with the Rebbe tomorrow night at eight."

The man wanted to get angry, but he knew that this was a test. So he spoke serenely, "Please ask the Rebbe. I know that he wants me to return."

"Sorry. I can't permit that. Even I'm not going back in today."

The man was tempted to push the large gabai aside and knock on the Rebbe's door, but then he remembered the Rebbe's counsel to be mevater. "O. K." the man said. "You win. I'll come back tomorrow."

Just then the Rebbe opened the door, and he said, "You told me that you have a problem with anger, but I see that you handle matters very nicely."

The man replied, "The wall of the Rebbe's room isn't insulated, and when the Rebbe speaks loudly, it can be heard in the outer room. I heard you tell the gabai to test me. I knew it was a test, so it was easy to control my anger."

The Rebbe said, "You're being tested not only now. At home, in business, or anywhere, be aware that your anger is being tested all the time. Heaven wants to see whether you can pass the test. If you remember this, you will be able to overcome all life's challenges."

Mr. Klall Yisroel is tested everyday, in so many ways. Grudges eat away at your soul, anger just makes us ever more broken.

By Chasidim we greet each other with each new encounter with the word, 'Sholom'. It holds everything, may we all share it.

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