

עדת אש קודש

Adass Aish Kodesh



IT SURE ISN'T COMFORTABLE

Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

We know so much, yet feel so small. We are constantly told that previous generations were great in their Torah and holiness, in our hearts we know we could never reach that level, so, what are we trying to do? As we stand before yet another Tisha B'Av, with the Bais Hamikdosh not yet rebuilt, nor our golus getting any easier, what can we take from this week's Torah reading that can offer some chizuk?

The Rebbe Rav Henoch of Alexander Ztl is said to have taught that Shabbos Chazon is actually the greatest Shabbos from the entire year. He explained that it is known that everything that happens during the week starts with the Shabbos. Shabbos Chazon therefor is the time where the Yidden were about to experience our greatest loss, our Bais Hamikdosh with its connection with the Shechinah. The Rebbe describes that when children are about to leave home, their father holds them closest and blesses them with heartrending tears that they never forget their home, nor the love their father will always have for them. This then is what the Rebbe wants us to understand about this Shabbos. That the love Hashem has for us has no borders, and our pain is felt by kaveyuchle Der Eibishter just as a parent that has to part with their young. This year finds Shabbos Chazon falling on Tisha B'Av itself, with our fast being held the next day. My heart tells me that the words of the Tzadik are even more moving. The mixture of the Shabbos with its innate simcha and the broken heartedness of Tisha B'Av creates a potent spiritual blend that calls us closer to Hashem despite the pain we bare.

In Parshas Devarim, we can learn some clear lessons that offer hope and understanding of where we hold despite our difficult golus.

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“These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Israel on the far side of the Yarden, in the Desert, in the wilderness, across from Suf between Paran and Tofel and in Lavan, Chatzeiros and Di Zahav.” (Devarim 1:1)

Rashi explains that Moshe mentioned these locations as a subtle admonishment to Bnei Yisroel for the sins they committed there. In the Mevasser Tov, the Biala Rebbe Shlita asks: ‘Why did he admonish them in such an indirect way, without making any overt mention of their actual sins? On previous occasions he had no qualms about bluntly confronting them for their mistakes, as we find in just one verse out of many, “And now you have risen in the place of your fathers as a society of sinful people to increase Hashem’s anger.”² Furthermore, of all possible allusions to the sins of Bnei Yisroel, why did Moshe choose the locations where they were committed?’

The Rebbe points out that throughout this week’s parsha, with each admonishment that Moshe levels against Klall Yesroil, at the same time he defended their case before the Bais Din Shel Maalah, showing how they were not totally to blame. The Chelkas Yehoshua explains that the mentioning of the locations of their sins provided some excuse for their actions, and thus served as a defence on our behalf.

A person’s location has a large impact on their actions. The Yidden of the Midbar were then in a vast empty desert, a place that was not theirs and therefore uncomfortable. Given such a situation it was no wonder that they would act out and make mistakes. The only place where Klall Yisroel could ever feel at home, was in Eretz Yesroil, and until they got there, well they're slipping up could be understood.

Today, the golus exerts upon us an equally negative influence. Beyond the natural stress that goes with not being in our natural home, Eretz Yisroel with the Bais Hamikdosh, we must cope with a sordid world where all sense of moral borders are being attacked.

The Shem MeShmuel writes that even the study of foreign language will effect a person’s ideals, impressing him with values that are distant from our holy roots. In the times of the Chiddushei Harim there were laws enacted prohibiting Jews from wearing distinctive clothing. The Rebbe Ztl fought against these dictates to the point of having to go into hiding and leaving his home in Warsaw, preferring to live in the small inconspicuous shtetle of Ger. The fear of what even subliminal attacks against our values could bring, was seen as a danger that called for the greatest mesiras nefesh we could muster.

The Rambam writes: ‘Man’s nature is to be drawn after the ideals and deeds of his friends and neighbours, adopting the lifestyle of his countrymen.’

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Let us look into our communal mirror, for a moment. How much more damage are we witnessing in this golus from the massive inroads the secular society is having in our cherished homes?

Moshe Rabbenu reminds the Yidden of how they fell into sin when held up in places that weren't conducive to their spiritual growth. At the same time, he gives us the answer to the quandary of what we can do.

“These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Israel...” This is a rare way of introducing lessons Moshe would give to the people. ‘All of Israel...’ everyone together, putting aside petty squabbles and jealousies. Unlike all those stops in the desert, where discomforts and edginess could drive a wedge between us, Moshe with his last breath is saying, ‘All of Israel...’ This is the potion that will keep us going. The Torah was given with the very same formula, ‘All of Israel...’ With one heart, one mind.

Golus thrives on our divisions, and no greater tragedy than the Churban Bais Hamikdosh can show us this.

We may be broken in so many ways, and splintered into smithereens because of this long golus. Our redemption will come, this has been promised. The Moshiach is straining on the chains that hold him back. One great thing we can do, live in Sholom with one another. In the face of such solidarity, nothing can hold us back.

Yes, the outside world stamps its madness on our holy souls, but the Eibishter knows where we are, and shares in our pain. Shabbos Chazon is that Shabbos wherein we can remember His love for us, and the Tearful separation we all suffer. That love is eternal, feel it and know it, and in this way help add one more building block to our future Bais Hamikdosh, may we see its completion soon!

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