

Shabbos Chazon talk

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In the first Haftorah of the Three Weeks, Yirmiyahu sees a vision of a bare almond branch. He describes this to Hashem as "makel shakaid" an almond 'stick'. He uses neither the word for branch nor the word for staff; rather, he uses the word makel, the stick used by the shepherd to prod the flocks in the right direction. Hashem rarely compliments nevi'im on what they see, but He tells Yirmiyahu that he saw well. What was special about how Yirmiyahu perceived the vision? He identified an almond branch despite the fact that its blossoms were not present. The almond branch blossoms early, so the shakaid aspect implies that Hashem will act soon in punishing B'nei Yisrael. Three weeks after the almond blossom emerges, the fruits are present, so the vision contains a reference to the three weeks. The makel suggests Hashem will deal harshly with B'nei Yisrael. And yet, in the end, there will be fruit. (Ma'aseh Rokem, Rav Karman Barr, cited in 1).

Yirmiyahu's vision is an apt description of how Chazal perceived the Three Week. Hashem has dealt harshly with B'nei Yisrael, but does so to move them in the right direction and not to desert them. If we can use the opportunity of the Three Weeks to increase our feeling of closeness to Hashem, we can make this time more meaningful and fruitful, and have it contribute to our daily spiritual level throughout the year.

Halekach v'halibuv (cited in 1) says that some say that Shabbos Chazon has more kedushah than any other Shabbos of the year. The Tiferes Shlomo cites a hint to this in the verse in Lecha Dodi, "Rav lach sheves b'emek habacha". One can read 'sheves' as 'Shabbos', in which case the sentence can mean that the Shabbos that is within the valley of tears (i.e. the 9 days) is the greatest. There is no mourning on Shabbos, because Shabbos represents in the time domain what the Bais Hamikdash represents in the space domain. That is, on Shabbos, the Shechina is present within us, even while we are in galus. The contrast between our mourning for the absence of the Bais Hamikdash and the close presence of the Shechina during the other days, and experiencing the presence of the Shechina on Shabbos, makes Shabbos Chazon potentially truly great. Chazon means vision, and on this Shabbos we are to have a vision of the way we should live our lives and of our hopes for the future.

In Rav Yitzchok Mirsky's Hegyonei Halacha (part 2, pp 233-241), there is a beautiful exposition of what the process of mourning for Yerushalaim is all about. He brings the statement from Chazal "Kol hamisabel al Yerushalaim zocheh v'roeh b'simchasah". The Chasam Sofer and Torah Temimah, among others, ask why the statement is said in the present tense (Everyone who mourns for Yerushalaim merits and sees its joy; why doesn't it say will merit and will see?). A second question is why Tisha Ba'av is called a Mo'ed (like the other holidays), with some of the halachic aspects of a Mo'ed. Rav Mirsky points out that the mourning for Yerushalaim has a different character from mourning for someone who has died, in that there is an aspect of joy and comfort within it. In the Chumash, Ya'akov would not be comforted for the loss of Yosef. Rav Yossi says that we are comforted for the dead but not for the living. When

someone has died, there is no hope remaining of seeing him, and with time the mourner is comforted. But for one mourning over Yosef who was still alive, there is still a purpose for the mourning and the seeking of the person, so that Hashem does not provide the *nechama* that one has when mourning the dead. Similarly, the fact that we have been mourning for Yerushalaim for the past 1,900 years is a sign that our hope is true and that Yerushalaim will return to us; otherwise it would have been forgotten. There is a famous story told variously about Napoleon, a Czar, or another powerful ruler who heard Jews mourning. When told they were mourning for the temple lost hundreds of years before, the ruler said that if people can still mourn for Jerusalem after so long, surely it will be revived and return to them. There is an aspect of joy and of *mo'ed* in knowing that the connection with Hashem and Yerushalaim is still present. We are to observe Tisha B'av with awareness of Hashem's love for us, in the same way that we experience this love in observing the *shalosh regalim*.

So we are supposed to recognize the part of Yerushalaim that remains living, and work on intensifying our connection to the Shechina that is here. The *Nesivos Shalom* (cited in 1) notes that in the Haftarah, even after we sin and while Hashem is rebuking us, Bnei Yisrael are called '*banim mashchisim*', corrupt children, but we remain '*banim*', children, nonetheless. Similarly, it is said that a *sefer* of the Tanach never ends in complete punishment. Yet, the last sentence of Eichah seems to: "For even if You had utterly rejected us, You have raged sufficiently against us." We repeat the previous sentence, *Hashivenu*, to end Eichah on a more positive note. Yet, even the last sentence has comfort. If Hashem did not still care about us, did not have a connection with us, He would reject us but would not be angry at us. One is angry at a child, with whom there remains a connection, not at someone not cared about.

Rav Shimshon Pincus emphasizes our ongoing relationship with Hashem in a different way in his *Galus u'Nechama* (beginning p. 113). He asks why believing in the coming of Moshiach is one of the 13 *Ikarim* of the Rambam. How does this affect our everyday life? He says that B'nei Yisrael are to live a "*chaim meshutafim*" a life in partnership with Hashem. If there is a business and it is not going well, the partners worry but the employees generally continue receiving the same salary and don't have to share the concerns of the business partners. When Hashem entered into the *Bris Bain Ha'bsarim* with Avraham, He includes in it revealing to Avraham the difficult times that Bnei Yisrael will have in the future, being strangers and enslaved in Mitzraim. Likewise, partners share in the anticipation of future events as part of their ongoing relationship. Rav Pincus gives a *mashal*. A newly married *choson* is in the *yichud* room with his *kallah*. He talks about how he hopes they have many children so that they can say *kaddish* for him in the future. The *choson* is missing the boat; being married is about having a relationship with your wife and sharing experiences, positive and negative. Similarly, the belief in Moshiach reflects our shared life with Hashem, which includes living now in partnership with Him.

Finally, our connection to Yerushalaim and the Mikdash, both now and when the *geulah* is realized, supplies us with strength. Rav Yaakov Emden (cited by Rav Mirsky) asked why, in *Pirkei Avos*, does the *mishnah* that contains "Rabbi Yehuda ben Taima says, be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to do the

will of your Father in heaven” continue with “Yehi ratzon milfoneicha...sheyibaneh Bais Hamikdash Bimhaira v’yameinu.” the yehi ratzon asking for the building of the Bais Hamikdash that was incorporated into the end of the shemonah esreh? What does this plea have to do with the first part of the michna? Rav Yaakov Emden explains that in galus we are weakened and do not have the strength to serve Hashem properly. The plea to build the Bais Hamikdash is a plea to restore our strength and serve Hashem in this more powerful way. May we merit this speedily.

Note: Two talks on the naaleh.com website were tremendously helpful in preparing this talk. These were:

1. Mrs. Shira Smiles, Shabbat Chazon: Valuable Vision

<http://www.naaleh.com/viewclass/2186/single/> (There is an accompanying 8 page source sheet as a pdf file)

2. Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg, Mourning over the Real Jerusalem

<http://www.naaleh.com/viewclass/2164/single/> (discusses Rav Mirsky’s article)