



בס"ד



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לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר מפיאסצנה
הרב קלונימוס קלמן שפירא
זצוקלה"ה



לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
הרבנית הצדקנית
חיה שרה בת הרב שלמה
יחיאל רובין ז"ל



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Some years ago, I had the zechus to publish a Sefer on Tehillim titled 'Rhythm of the Heart'... Please allow me to share what I wrote about Kapital 80 in light of the Three weeks:

RHYTHM OF THE HEART GRASPING FOR MEANING

Tehillim Kapitel 80
Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

How do you mourn that which you never had? How does one realise his desperation when all his experiences are of just such hurting?

We have lived in golus for so long that we can't even imagine what true spiritual wholeness is. In Yiddish there is an expression *A verm vos lebt in chrain meint az dos leben iz zees*, "A worm that lives in horseradish thinks his life is sweet." If all we recognize is the daily treadmill of a life lived so far from our roots, then grieving over our lost glory is difficult indeed. Hashem so wants us to be drawn closer to Him, yet we have allowed ourselves to become comfortable in our detachment.

In truth, this is unfortunately quite understandable. Just as that worm knows no better, we too have become lulled into insensitivity. After all, we have no tangible point of reference to the glory that was once ours. We have never met or even known someone else who met someone who witnessed those long-gone times. In trying to survive we have accepted that living in horseradish is the norm.

True, we do have strikingly vivid depictions of those past times. Our liturgy is full of scintillating glimpses, and we articulate our longing at every turn of our lives. The question is how much we really internalize these images and prayers. Do we truly await the rebuilding of our holy Temple? Or is it just a metaphor for the yearning of an unsettled and burdened soul?

I believe that the way for us to begin to approach the enormity of our losses is by first turning to look within our own selves. If we start to realize how far we have slid and what this has done to our worldview, then just maybe we can begin to comprehend the enormity of our devastation.

The period of the Three Weeks is an auspicious time for such thoughts. It is an opportunity to energize our souls and transform that muffled quaint uneasiness that lies within every Jewish heart into a raging storm of relentless desire.

Foremost, we must know that there was a time when Yidden knew the truth unequivocally and basked in a sun that shone clearly. Every one of our ancestors strove to reach the pathways that led to Yerushalayim, and once there, they participated in the joyousness that was the avoda in the Beis Hamikdash. In those sweet times, every Yid felt tangibly part of a holy flock that was watched over by the most faithful of all shepherds, Hashem.

But the human being is a fickle creature, and insidiously the egoism set in, leading our forefathers astray. I remember a rebbe of mine once teaching us a powerful lesson. If one builds parallel roads, they will follow each other forever. However, if one road diverges just a little, with each passing mile the two roads draw further apart.

This widespread divergence is our sorry state today. We must first accept the reality of our situation and then seek out that loving Shepherd once again.

King David speaks of this in our kapitel. He explores all the wonders of the times spent under the shadow of Hashem's refuge and then goes on to depict our estrangement. If nothing more, one can gain an understanding of what is really missing in our lives. Knowing that indeed something is amiss, is a beginning.

“Shepherd of Israel, give ear; You Who lead Joseph like a flock, You Who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.”

Hashem, You are our true and only Shepherd. It was Your will that led us, Yosef's family, into our first golus. It was Your essence that took us out at the given time and finally crowned Your glorious aron with the keruvim - an expression of the height of closeness between Hashem and His people.

We are now in a deeper and darker golus than ever before. We cry out that this golus should also end and those same keruvim find their rightful place on top of a restored aron, shining forth to all of mankind.

“Hashem, lead us back and cause Your Face to shine; thus we will be delivered.”

We accept that we have lost our way. We beseech Hashem to effect a change, making us aware and thereby causing all to see this clear certainty.

“You have fed them the bread of tears, and You have made them drink tears in large measures.”

Hashem, we did not run from You. Rather, over the many years we have cried copiously over our estrangement. Even the bread we earned was soaked in the tears of our loss. Yes, we made many mistakes, but we always knew deep in our hearts that we were wrong. Tears come from the well of the heart, and we serve them up to You as our indication of who we really are.

“G-d of Hosts, lead us back. Cause Your Presence to shine and thus we shall be delivered.”

We may have drifted ever further away, but we seek Your Presence. No matter how far the divergence in the proper road has taken us, no matter how many bends that road has, we still seek Your Presence. Even if we seem so materialistic with our large homes and fancy cars, in our inner heart there is a voice that asks for Hashem's Presence. If we fan that spark with the gentle breeze of prayer, we can hope to see that reality shine forth.

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This in itself will be our deliverance. The inner Yid wants nothing more than to bring comfort to the Shechina. As the Imrei Emes said, "Exile contains redemption within itself, just as seeds contain the fruit. Working toward this understanding with real diligence will bring out the hidden reward."

The kapitel goes on to depict every one of our exiles and how we have sought Hashem within those confines. The Rebbe Reb Bunim of Peshischa added another dimension to our hopes and aspirations in golus. "The real exile of Israel in Egypt was that they learned to endure it," he would say. He reproved his chassidim for imploring Hashem for a livelihood in exile instead of praying for the advent of the Moshiach, when a livelihood will be granted as a matter of course.

He illustrated this foolishness with a parable. A king once banished his errant son to a farm to perform hard labor. Soon after, the king received a letter from the prince. He opened it, prepared for reconciliation if the youth had petitioned for it. But the lad merely asked his father to instruct the farmer to feed and clothe him better. "How foolish of him!" thought the king. "Had he asked to be restored to his royal position in the palace, his problems of food and attire would have been solved as a matter of course and in a manner more agreeable to him."

"Thereby we will not turn back from You; revive us and we will invoke Your name."

Hashem, we are simple humans. Despite the fact that we think of ourselves as sophisticated and worldly, we are just confused. We have lost contact with what is real. However, we have not turned ourselves away from You. We speak of You and want to dwell in Your shadow. If You will revive us and give us the energy to know the wholeness of Your Will, we will invoke Your Name.

I don't believe today's generation has turned away from Hashem. Rather, the masses were never given any semblance of an idea of what Torah life gives its adherents, and the rugged day-to-day desensitizing of our times has calcified the inner conscience of some of those who do live in a Torah atmosphere. This leads to living a Torah-life on automatic cruise control, and this is golus written in large, bold letters.

Gutte Yidden have taught us, 'Alleh Yidden zeinen heilig', "All Jews are holy!" It is golus that sometimes makes that hard to remember.

David finishes the kapitel as he has intoned throughout. **"Hashem, lead us back. Cause Your presence to shine and thus we will be delivered."**

The Three Weeks are a time to reach out to Hashem and ask for His healing Hand to take ours and lead us back to where we really, deeply want to be.