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TISHA B'AV

לעילוי נשמת התינוק מאיר בן אריה לייב

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PNIMIYUS

The *sefarim bakedoshim* (the Arizal, the Gra, and others) said that in the latter generations, the three wicked generations of history will return as soul-reincarnations. These include the generations of the Deluge (*Mabul*), the Dispersal, (*Haflagah*), and Sodom. Long ago, these were only the third of the generation. In the later generations, all of these people will return, all at once.

The reality found in the outside world today is the absolute antithesis to the will of Hashem, to the light of the holy Torah, and to the observance of *mitzvos*. The clearer one is about this, the more it becomes engraved deeply in the depths of his soul, and then he can separate his own life from the world outside of him.

In spite of the fact that the *Navi* says, “*Within my nation, I dwell*”¹ – each person is living in this generation – yet, a person can also resemble what is said, “Each righteous person is given a palace befitting his honor.”² Life as it is, in our generation, is the depths of the destruction, which we are found in. The reality today necessitates that a person should build for himself his own “palace befitting his honor”, within.

The *Mesillas Yesharim*, in the beginning of the sefer, when describing the purpose of life, says that one must become pulled after Hashem as iron is pulled towards metal. Anything which brings a person closer to Hashem should be pursued, and one should grab onto any such means, and not weaken his hold from it. In contrast, one should run away from anything which distances a person from Hashem, as if he is running from a fire. In our generation, one must run away from the life of the world today in the same way that he would run from a fire.

Let us intensify this discussion. In previous generations, the task of separating from the world was only for exceptionally spiritual individuals, who were able to disassociate from the world and develop a private life of their own, an inner world, whereas the rest of the generation could live as usual, to some degree. But in our generation, such a possibility does not exist. It is not possible for a person to survive (spiritually) if he lives the same life as the rest of the world. If he lives like the rest of the world, he is heading towards the lowest depths of the *She’ol* (abysses), and it is almost certain that he will fall there very quickly, because that is where the generation is found in.

Therefore, what was once an *avodah* for individuals, to separate and abstain themselves from the world, and build for themselves a life of their own – in our times, as the days pass and we have no idea until when it will continue like this, when the end will arrive and the redemption will come – each individual who wants to fear Hashem, truly, and love Him, and go wholesomely in His ways, and become attached to Him and in His Torah – he must separate himself from the entire life of the outer world today.

There was a well-known dispute between Beis Hilel and Beis Shamai if a person may say “How beautiful and kindly is this bride” even if she does not appear this way. Beis Shamai is of the opinion that one may not veer

¹ *Melachim II 4:13*
² *Shabbos 152a*

from the truth, and Beis Hilel is of the opinion that one may say she is beautiful. From this, the Sages learn “A person’s *daas* (thinking) should always be mixed with others.”³ However, the Sages only said that one’s *daas* should get along with others. They did not say that a person should actually mix with others. Even when it comes to one’s *daas*, there is a mixture of good and bad within his *daas*, and he needs to sort it out so that he can know how to connect properly to others, which parts he can connect to and which parts he should stay away from.

The reality of life in our generation – as Hashem has arranged, in His Divine Providence – is such that it is necessary for any person, who wishes to remain a true ben Torah, to create for himself a reality in which he will be able to develop his own personal life. This separation must be made, understandably, from the “seventy nations” of the world, [which includes] those who do not have *yiras shomayim*. But in essence, it must really be a much deeper separation than that.

In Creation, there exists a movement, an inner kind of movement, which is flowing and leading everyone towards the most depraved depths. Most people are already there. This is currently where the entire Creation is moving towards – as in the possuk, יִרְדּוּ לְשֵׂאוֹל “They have descended into the grave”. If a person does not secure for himself a reality that is independent of the rest of the world’s, he, too, will be swept away with the rest of the world’s current. Understandably, some people will be swept away quicker, and some a little slower, but either way, the movement of Creation is still there, and this can *chas v’shalom* mean that a person will become swept away with the direction that the world is taking today. To separate from the world, one needs to create his own inner place of respite, similar to what is said of the sons of Korach, who merited their own place of respite⁴, even within Gehinnom itself. When one places himself in such a place, he has an inner perspective, so that he does not move after all that is found in his surroundings, because he has his own independent movement in his life.

For most people, this is very difficult, because by nature, people are very like-minded with others and they want to do what everyone else is doing so that they can fit in with everyone else. Even more so is that people think, speak, and act like their surroundings. Deep down, even as a person wishes to clarify if a certain thing is good or bad, he looks to the right and to the left, to see what others around him are doing. And if he sees that others regard something as permissible, he says to himself that it must be permitted, and he continues on his way.

This, however, would have been fine until recently, when the world was a purer place. But in the final generation, it is no longer proper for a person to act based on what his surroundings do. In our generation, the situation of today obligates one to have an internal world of his own. These words are a matter of life and death, to our souls, in the absolute sense. It is the only option that can save a person: to build an inner respite of his own, a life of his own. Most people cannot live in it totally, and therefore, anyone who seeks Hashem needs to find for himself, as much as he can, those individuals whom he can partner with, who separate themselves from the entire surroundings.

³ Kesubos 16b

⁴ Bamidbar Rabbah 18:20

The generation is moving in an unprecedented direction. Everything is changing in front of our eyes. The world is constantly moving and changing, both in the external sense and in the internal sense. It is changing very fast. If a person doesn't see it, he is like a blind person groping in the dark. How, then, should our lives look? There are two parts of what a person needs to do - an external part, and an internal part.

Concerning the external part, in everything a person encounters, he should not think about what his surroundings are doing. If that is his perspective, he will fall into the same place that the rest of the generation is in. Instead, he should look back at least 20 years, at what the world used to look like, and he should think about how people behaved then. If one is deeper, he can also reflect about the generation before the Holocaust, and perhaps several hundred years before that. But in no circumstances should a person look at the world from where it is today.

Certainly, in the end of the day a person will have to deal with whatever exists today, and he does not live in the previous generations. "Do not say what used to be, that the original days were better than these, for not from wisdom do you ask on this."⁵ One must deal with whatever is in front of him - the lifestyle that exists on the outside world today. But what is the way by which we should examine each thing? This can be compared to a person with a line in front of him, and he wants to see if the line is straight or not. How can he check if the line is straight? Comparing it to another line isn't feasible, because who says the other line is straight? Instead, he needs to use a ruler and check if the line in front of him is straight. What is the 'ruler' by which a person can examine all of life and see if it's 'straight'? If a certain behavior is written about in Shulchan Aruch, it is an open *halachah*, and it is much easier to check. But if something isn't written explicitly in Shulchan Aruch, how can we check it? The true barometer that measures this is: To wonder how people behaved 20 years ago and earlier.

One needs to deal with the current situation, but it is necessary for a person to have an inner 'ruler', by which he will measure and check whatever exists today in our times. In order to gain a clear perspective on today, one needs to return to at least 20 years ago, and earlier than that if one can, and based upon the perspective of the past, one should examine each thing that is in the reality today. In order to deal with the current reality, which is not like how things used to be, one needs wisdom of life, together with *tefillah* to Hashem. But the very least one needs to do is to have an inner sense of *yashrus* (lit. "uprightness", sticking to Hashem's will without compromising), by which he will examine each thing. We can give an example. When difficult questions would come before Rav Shach zt"l, how would he decide? He would try to think to himself: If this question would have come before the Chofetz Chaim zt"l, how would the Chofetz Chaim decide? Understandably, this is a very subtle thing to know. How is it possible to know what the Chofetz Chaim would have thought? But we are just using this as an example, and it is very clear: One should try to view the world from a perspective of 20 years ago and earlier, as if he is viewing the world before it has fallen to where it is now. What does the world look like, from that viewpoint? When one views the world from there, he will gain a sense of *yashrus* \uprightness, to some degree. That is all one side of the coin, and it is the external part of the task at hand.

⁵ *Koheles* 7:10

The other side of the coin is the internal task we have. It necessitates that a person should open the inner world within him. The stronger one's inner world is, the clearer it is and the more he is truly connected to Hashem and His Torah, to that degree, his *neshamah* can then discern what brings him closer to Hashem, as well as what moves him in the opposite direction than this.

There are some things which clearly bring a person closer to the Creator. Other things simply settle the mind, so that a person can be calm and be able to serve the Creator, as the *Mesillas Yescharim* states, that all of This World was created to give a person *yishuv hadaas* (a settled mind) so that he can be calmed physically and emotionally and thus be able to serve the Creator. These are things which calm the “animal” level of the soul. But when it comes to these things, one needs to choose things which are closer to holiness. In addition, one must carefully weigh the matter in his mind and see if he should make use of it, and he also needs to truly pray that whatever he is making use of should bring him closer to the Creator and that it shouldn't distance him.

Most of the things found in our generation, even if they aren't expressly forbidden, do not bring a person closer to Hashem. Instead, they move a person in the opposite direction. A small percentage of what's available in this generation can bring a person closer to His Creator, but even then, it will depend on how a person uses it and how he connects to it.

When a person is truly connected with Hashem and His holy Torah, he has access to an inner light in his soul which offers him a clearer perspective. He won't understand how others can be in doubt about certain things, because to him, it is clear that certain things are the complete opposite of Hashem's will which is Torah. Hashem's light fills all of Creation, and one who has purified himself internally can feel it [and gain its clear view on reality].

Most of the things found in the world today – to repeat: this is not about what's found outside in the world, but in our own sheltered places – are things which totally remove a person from any inner, truthful life.

If one doesn't yet have a connection to his inner world, he must at least do the external task mentioned earlier, which is to reflect on how the world looked 20 years ago and earlier, and view the world from that perspective. That perspective can lessen the spiritual difficulties of today, to some degree, but it doesn't solve the issues. This is because there are many new things today which distance a person from Hashem. Various new things keep appearing on the scene and we don't know what the proper perspective should be about them. We would need different tools of carpentry to take apart each thing and examine what each thing is made of.

But the more that a person lives an inner, truthful kind of life, the more that the entire world will seem to him like a strange, distanced, far-removed place, because all of it is the total opposite of holiness. The first thing one can notice is that there are things today which contradict *halachah*. But that is just the first step. The second step to reach is to recoil from something because it goes against the purity of our *neshamos* which come from above. Our *neshamos* can feel out something and sense if it's okay or not – each person on his own

level, according to the purity of his own soul. The more that a person lives in this way, he slowly distances himself from all that's found on the outside.

However, Chazal state, "Yerushalayim will not be built only through the destruction of Rome."⁶ It is not possible for one to only separate from the outside world – that would just be misguided piety. In order to truly disconnect from the outside world, it is necessary for one to build an inner world that is expansive and deep. If one's soul is not filled with a bond with Hashem, if it is not filled with the depth of Torah, then this is like what Chazal said, "The pit is empty, it has no water – it has no water, but there are snakes and scorpions in it." One will be empty, and other unwanted influences will come in to him, by default. It will not be possible one to fulfill "*And I will separate you from the nations*" unless this is followed with *kedusha*.

Thus, separating from the world is only one side of the coin. In order to distance oneself from the darkness, one needs an increase of light. As our Sages have already explained, there will be an influx of novel Torah insights in the later generations, and this is obvious to everyone. This influx of Torah in our generation is really above the actual level of our generation. Understandably, there are all kinds of different "devices" [a.k.a. technology] by which all of this Torah is coming through to the next generation (which is a separate discussion), but it's still an increased illumination of Torah in the world. So on one hand, there is terrible spiritual destruction taking place, but at the same time, this destruction has brought with it an increase of Torah to the world.

In order to succeed in passing through our current lifetime in the proper way, as mentioned, on one hand: We need an absolute separation from the world outside. This separation divides into two parts: (1) Through reflecting – not by reflecting about the generation of today, but reflecting about the previous generation or several generations ago. (2) And also, through accessing the purity of our *neshamah*, which has been carved out from the Throne of Glory, and which is revealed in each person on his own level. That is how a person can separate himself from what's found outside in the world today.

But at the same time, we cannot only be involved in a war with the outside influences and with distancing ourselves from it. Perhaps we can put up posters each day decrying certain things that are unacceptable for our people, and we can wage wars of zealousness against things which we should oppose. But that alone won't be enough to give us a real spiritual life. It will only help us run from the "fire" that is raging today.

In order for us to really survive spiritually, we need to build a rich, inner world of our own. Each person needs to be truly prepared to connect himself, his life, with the lot of the *tzaddikim*, to have a true bond with Hashem and with His Torah, just like the *tzaddikim*. Chazal state that *tzaddikim* are compared to trees with deep roots in the ground, which cannot be uprooted by the wind. This is because they are firmly and deeply connected to their place.

In previous generations, it was possible for people who were lacking a deep connection to Torah and to Hashem to still pass the tests of This World, to some level, without falling into depravity. But in our

generation, this isn't possible! Either a person today is connected strongly to HaKadosh Baruch Hu and to His Torah, truly, and in the depths of his thoughts – or, if not, he will *chas v'shalom* fall to the other side. It is impossible for all of our life to only be involved with waging war against evil. That approach will not succeed!

On one hand, understandably, we need to war with evil, to totally separate from it. But on the other hand, the depth of our free will is being given to each person in this generation, of how much he is truly willing to give his life for Hashem and for His holy Torah, to connect himself to the beis midrash. How much is a person willing to connect himself to the beis midrash, not just externally? That, Baruch Hashem, exists today. But how much depth is there to one's bond to the Torah? How deeply connected does one feel to the Torah? Does he feel that he is intrinsically connected with it? In our generation, becoming connected deeply to one's inner world is not an act of piety, and it is not a high spiritual level. It is needed, in order to counter the deep *tumah* (defilement) that is found on the other side. To counter all of the defilement, we have the great Light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu and His Torah which is revealed in Creation.

When a person separates himself from the outside (this is not totally possible, but as much as one can), one needs to separate not only from the actions and speech of the world today, but mainly from the way of thinking of the world today, through attaining clarity of thought and through deepening the emotions. One needs to mentally and emotionally separate from the surroundings today.

Along with this, one needs to become truly connected to Hashem and to His Torah, every day, hour, and moment, and to be truly found there. Then a person merits the guarantee of Chazal that “Anyone who mourns Jerusalem will merit to see it in its joy.” And as Chazal also said, he will be *zocheh* to it in the present, not just in the past. This does not refer only to the general Beis HaMikdash, but to one's personal Beis HaMikdash within, to the opening of one's own inner world. Of the Beis HaMikdash it is said, “*And I will dwell amidst them*”⁷, which is interpreted by the Sages to mean, “Within each of them.”⁸ When one traverses the path of truth and he becomes opened to his inner world, the light of the third Beis HaMikdash will shine for him even now. The light of the future redemption will not arrive suddenly. Although the verse says that the Redemption will come suddenly, that only refers to the external revelation of the Redemption. The inner revelation of the Redemption is a spiritual light that is slowly descending onto our world.

In previous generations, in order to get to this light, one needed great exertion to get it. But in our generation, any effort will enable one not only to merit reward in Heaven, but to have a revelation here on our world. One who separates himself from the lifestyle of the world today and connects himself, truly, to Hashem and to His Torah, will merit to have his inner world opened to him. When that world becomes opened to a person, the gates of intellect and heart become opened to the person, enabling one's intellect and heart to become attached to a place of bliss with Hashem.

This is the meaning of “Anyone who mourns Jerusalem, will merit and see it in its joy.” One can see the reality of the inner dimension of life, the true life. “The Sages and the prophets did not desire the days of

⁷ *Shemos 25:8*

⁸ *Alshich (Toras Moshe) ibid*

Mashiach in order to have any control over the world....but to be free to pursue the study of Torah and its wisdom.”⁹ That is the main revelation of the days of Redemption: the clarity of the words of Torah, the revelations of Torah, and the revelation of its Giver within it. This *ohr* is found in our generation today. We are found in the End of Days, and we have no idea when the actual time of the *Geulah* will come. But according to the *Gra*, the six centuries of history correspond to the six days of Creation. The day divides into 12 hours, and according to this ‘Heavenly clock’, we are in the sixth hour, after midday, after the time of *plag Minchah*, close to the time of “Kabalas Shabbos” - the future Shabbos, which will be the seventh millennium. As with every Erev Shabbos, the closer that we get to Shabbos, the more we can feel how Shabbos is approaching. On the first day of the week, the light of Shabbos shines the least, and on the second day of the week the light of Shabbos is a bit stronger, and on the third day of the week it becomes stronger. At the fourth day of the week, it is three days before Shabbos, and the light of Shabbos begins to shine more powerfully. On the sixth day of the week, Erev Shabbos, when the preparations for Shabbos are underway, it is as if there is an “addition of Shabbos” already taking effect.

When one traverses the true kind of life, on one hand he realizes that he faces an awesome war with all of the influences found on the outside, because he is living within This World. But at the same time, there is a new light beginning to radiate, which shines within him, and this light can connect him to the depths of an eternal life, to the true power from which makes it possible to mourn over Jerusalem. Of this it said, “It is proper for you to mourn over Yerushalayim.” This applies to one who has a revelation of the *Shechinah* in him. But even more so, it is the power by which one can deal with all that takes place on the outside.

Throughout all the generations, one needed *zehirus*, to be careful, and it was a spiritual level to reach. In our generation, *zehirus* alone will not be enough to withstand all of the spiritual difficulties. In our generation, what *zehirus* do we need? It is brought in the name of the *Maimoni*, one of the grandsons of the Rambam, that *zehirus* is from the word *Zohar*, to “shine” - the light of the *neshamah*. The true power by which we can attain *zehirus* in our generation, besides for the basic *zehirus* which we need, is essentially this radiance of the *neshamah*. To the degree that one separates himself from the external, superficial world, and he connects himself with the inner world, the *olam pnimi*, accordingly, one will be *zocheh* to the words of the Chazon Ish that “the gates of the intellect and heart become opened to him”, he will become a *ben Olam HaBa*, one who is destined for the World To Come, becoming a person who will have the spiritual energy to be saved from the raging storm winds that are threatening to blow away the entire generation. May Hashem give us together that we be *zocheh* to stand and greet Mashiach, with the complete Redemption, speedily in our days. Amen.
[בין המצרים_028_חיי פנימיות. בדור. דידן. תשעז]

On Tuesday after Tisha B'Av (9 P.M. Eretz Yisrael time, 2 P.M. EST) the Rav shlit”a will be speaking, on the topic of how The Media is Blocking the Ein Sof. The derasha can be heard live on Kol HaLashon.
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