

KOL MEVASSER

Living Judaism

Rabbi Yosef Benarroch

We find ourselves in the middle of the saddest time period in the Jewish calendar, the "Three Weeks" between the fasts of the seventeenth of Tamuz and the ninth of Ab. It is during this time period that both our Temples were destroyed. The Shulkhan Arukh, quoting the Talmud states, "When the month of Ab begins we decrease our joy" (SA OH 551:1). Jewish law imposes many restrictions during this time period. All of these restrictions serve to help us feel, on a personal and national level, the great loss that our people incurred.

But our Rabbis warn that these three weeks of mourning are not just to remind us about the past. By remembering the past, our Rabbis teach, we must learn valuable lessons for the present. The Talmud states that if in any given generation the Temple is not rebuilt, then the people of that generation are as guilty about the destruction as those who lived through it. By not correcting the transgressions of the generation that lived through the destruction of the Temple, we become accomplices to that event even though it took place over two thousand years ago. It is therefore important for us to understand the sin of that generation so that we can learn from it and hopefully correct it.

What then was the sin of that generation? What is it that we must correct? One of the answers mentioned by our Rabbis was causeless hatred. They point out that when the Temple stood people mistreated each other. Causeless hatred, they claim, was what led to the destruction of the Second Tem-

ple. Until we can correct this negative trait the Temple cannot be rebuilt. While I feel strongly about this teaching, today I would like to explore this question from a different perspective.

Rabbi Yosef Karo in his "Shulkhan Arukh" (Code of Jewish Law), records the various customs and restrictions that we follow during these three weeks. There is one particular law which is quite peculiar. In his code he states the following, "One must be especially careful from the 17th day of Tamuz until the 9th day of Ab not to walk alone from the fourth hour (of the night) until the ninth hour, and that (teachers) should not strike their students during these days" (Shulkhan Arukh 551:18).

It is not my intention here to get into the question of teachers striking their students. While this may have been a common practice in yesteryears, suffice it to say that in Jewish education today this is no longer the case. Nevertheless I would like to explore the significance of this law.

Why does Rabbi Yosef Karo go out of his way to say that this practice should not be implemented during these auspicious days? Is there anything deeper to be understood from this restriction and its specific application during the "Three Week's"? Why is it any worse to strike a student during these days?

The late Rabbi Avraham Yitshak Hakohen Kook (Rav Kook) offers a fascinating insight into this law. He says the following, "During the days between the calamities (the Three Weeks) our nation will be redeemed through teachers who are armed with spiritual courage,

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KJ Schedule Pinhas

Erev Shabbat

Friday, July 10th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit..... 6:30 pm
Candle Lighting 7:48 pm

Shabbat

Saturday, July 11th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 8:30 am
Women's Tehillim Group 7:00 pm
Minha & Arbit 7:00 pm
Havdalla..... 8:56 pm

Weekdays

Sunday, July 12th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 7:30 am
Monday to Friday July 13th to 17th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am

Rosh Hodesh Av / Erev Shabbat

Friday, July 18th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:15 am
Minha / Arvit..... 6:30 pm
Candle Lighting 7:45 pm

Torah & Haftara Readings

Bamidbar / Numbers

Parashat Pinhas 686-698

Haftara from Prophets 699-701

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorach

*Wishing you and your family a
Peaceful & Joyful Shabbat*

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so that they do not need a rod to beat" (Megeed Yerahim on Tamuz Rabbi Kook). Rabbi Kook chose his words carefully. What did he mean by this statement? What is the difference between a rod that beats, and spiritual courage? What does it mean to be armed with spiritual courage, and why is it so essential during the "Three Weeks"?

The answer is highly significant. According to Rabbi Kook the sin of the generation of the destruction was not only causeless hatred, but causeless indifference. Jews were not only indifferent to each other but to the way they lived as Jews. Yes they kept the laws, but not out of conviction. They went through the motions but their practice of Judaism lacked meaning.

The prophet Isaiah, who spoke during the times of the destruction, summarizes this all too well in the following statement, "And the Lord said: For as much as this people draw near, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor Me, but they have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment of men learned by rote. Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the prudence of their prudent men shall be hid (Isaiah 29:13-14).

The prophet Isaiah depicts a nation going through the motions. They followed the laws and kept the rituals, but they did it out of rote and fear. They practiced Judaism but they did not live it. It is this indifference that led to the destruction.

It is this dilemma that Rabbi Kook is addressing. The only way to redemption is to remove the yolk of fear and rote mechanical observance. During these three weeks specifically we must correct the great travesty that led to the destruction. We must develop a love for the Torah, by

Refuah Shlemah

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internalizing its beautiful message and living inspired and meaningful spiritual lives.

It is for this reason that Rabbi Kook explains that during these "Three Weeks" we must be careful to stay away from teachers who need a "rod to beat". When the only way a teacher can teach is by force and aggression it means that the Torah they are teaching is not being internalized. It means that people are following the Torah not through choice but because they feel they have no alternative. They are at best going through the motions. Their relationship to the Torah is not one of love, but fear. This was the very sin that led to the destruction and so during the "Three Weeks" we must do everything we can to correct that sin.

It is for this reason that Rav Kook explains that during these weeks we must not see the Torah as a burden, but as a way of life that is filled with beauty and spirituality. We must accept the Torah out of choice and not through coercion. The Three Weeks teach us to not simply go through the motions but to internalize our practices. To do that, explains Rabbi Kook, we require teachers who are armed with courage. We need teachers who do not scare us but who inspire us and kindle within us an insatiable desire to know more and to grow higher.

We too, as the prophet Isaiah mentions, are guilty of paying lip service to G-d and turning Judaism into rote practice. As we near the ninth of Av, let us all hope that we will begin living Judaism so that we may all speedily witness the building of our Temple. *Shabbat Shalom*

Seudah Shlisheet

is sponsored in memory of
David ben Itzhak Hattanian, z"l
by
The Hattanian Family

In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries July 11 to 18, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend Shabbat services.

24 Tammuz / Shabbat, July 11th

Aaron David *Aharon David ben Avraham Haim*
Elias Joseph *Eliyahu ben Yitzhak*

25 Tammuz / Sunday, July 12th

Heskel Dabby *Haskel ben Yoseph*

26 Tammuz / Monday, July 13th

Flossie David Solomon *Farha bat Roza*
David Hattanian *David ben Itzhak*

28 Tammuz / Wednesday, July 15th

Ezra Said Goury *Ezra Said ben Simcha*

29 Tammuz / Thursday, July 16th

Selim Ashair Hanoon *Selim ben Ashair*

1 Av / Friday, July 17th

Aron Philip Blank *Aharon Shraga ben Avraham*
Ezra Ezrapour *Ezra ben Avraham Hayim*
Yohanan ben *Yehezkel Shamashian*

2 Av / Shabbat, July 18th

Shlomo Dallal
Shimon Sarraf

Shepherds for Our Communities

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

When Moses approached the end of his career, he asked God to appoint a new leader for the Israelites, so that “the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd” (Bemidbar 27:17). He wanted to be sure that his successor would be someone who would lead the people as a shepherd who tends his flock.

A shepherd is often lonely. A shepherd often loses sleep. A shepherd watches over the entire flock, especially weaker sheep and stragglers. A shepherd keeps the flock in order, making sure that all are accounted for. A shepherd leads the flock with thoughtfulness and devotion.

A shepherd fails if he can't keep the flock in a harmonious framework. He fails if he favors the strong sheep and ignores the weaker ones. He fails if he does not look out for the welfare of the flock, but places his personal needs before theirs.

A good shepherd is strong enough to maintain control, and gentle enough to be sensitive to the needs of each member of the flock.

To be a shepherd of sheep is challenging. To be a shepherd of a community of people is far more challenging. Moses knew from experience how difficult it was to shepherd the Israelites. His plea to God was for a successor who could lead the people effectively, honorably and harmoniously. Moses wanted the Israelites to have a leader who would emulate the best qualities of a shepherd.

An article by Professor Christine Porath (New York Times, June 21, 2015) discusses key research on the nature of effective leadership. She notes how incivility in the work place leads to

demoralization and to a decline in quality of productivity. A survey of 4500 doctors, nurses and other hospital personnel, found that 71% tied medical errors to abusive, condescending or insulting conduct by those in authority. 27% tied such behavior to patient deaths!

Various studies have demonstrated a sharp decline in efficiency and effectiveness when employees were treated with incivility. They have shown that “the number one characteristic associated with an executive's failure is an insensitive, abrasive or bullying style.” Such executives may think that rudeness and bullying are signs of power; in fact, these are the very qualities that undermine the success of those executives. They have not understood that a shepherd needs to be strong, but also gentle and sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.

What is true in hospitals and industry is even truer in religious institutions. When the shepherds, whether rabbinic or lay, serve the community with selflessness, idealism and sensitivity—the result is a harmonious community where everyone feels valued and respected. When the shepherds, whether rabbinic or lay, behave in a callous and bullying manner—the community becomes demoralized. When the community feels that the shepherds are more interested in their own power than in the needs of the people, the community begins to unravel. Demoralized people stray away, lose confidence, stop attending, and stop contributing. Without genuinely devoted shepherds, “the flock of the Lord” loses direction.

In responding to Moses' request, God replied: “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is spirit, and lay your hand upon him....and you shall put of your honor upon him so that all the congregation of the children of Israel may hear-ken” (27:18-20).

The Me'am Lo'ez, the classic Ladino biblical commentary, explains that Joshua was a man “of spirit,” a man who understood the needs and sensitivities of each person. “And I [God] know that he is a man in whom the spirit resides, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, thoughtfulness and strength, fear of God and spirit of prophecy.” Joshua would be the successor to Moses because Joshua had the qualities of a genuine shepherd. He was strong and was also considerate of each person. He put the interests of the public before his own personal interests. He was not one who hungered for, or abused, power.

In asking Moses to transfer authority to Joshua, God wanted the public to witness the smooth transition of leadership to Joshua. The people needed to be assured that they would be led by a true and good shepherd, someone endowed with the spirit of God.

Selfless, devoted and talented shepherds are not easy to find. But without them, we are lost.



*KJ Women's
Tehillim*

*Join our wonderful group of
women as we gather to read the
Psalms and pray for those in
our community*

Shabbat Day @ 7:00 pm

Norma & Sam Dabby Jewish Education Center

KJ Kids Talmud Torah & Sunday School

Nurture *Creativity*
Celebrate, Explore & Inspire
Share *Friends & Community*

Drama, Music, Art
Jewish History
Hebrew for Prayer
Shabbat & Holidays
Games & Fun
Torah & Tefillah

New! First Day of Class—Sunday, August 16th
To register or for information contact Dafna at
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