



Parashat Ve-Etchanan - #291

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Take Away from Tisha Be-Av: There is No "Us" and "Them"

We constantly hear people invalidating the secular or the religious, the left or the right, government ministers or the Government. How sad that after 2,000 years of exile, and being educated through suffering to have Ahavat Yisrael, there are still those who speak in this manner. Their words are lies, and saying them is considered lording over others!

We must be extremely cautious against making generalizations. We live in a world where nothing is perfect. We must distinguish between one whose only thoughts are evil and who thinks of ways to destroy the Nation and Land of Israel, and one whose intentions are good and wants to save the State, but who is nevertheless gravely mistaken in his path. There is a big difference between an evil person and a good person who errs. As Maran Ha-Rav Kook expresses, if we explain to a good person that $2+2 = 4$ and not 5, he will be grateful to us. When someone is mistaken, there is only one way of convincing him otherwise - and it is not through harshness and insult.

Am Yisrael is not divided in such a way that one group is completely right and possesses all of the positives, while everyone else is lacking. There were times like this in the past, when idol worshippers were completely corrupt and scorned Hashem, but - in our days - the merits are scattered among the Nation. We even give the benefit of the doubt to those who divide the Nation: They are idealists, whose words flow from their heart to defend the Torah and the Land of Israel. But, with all due respect, they are also mistaken when they cut the body of the Nation with a sharp knife and use the terms "us" and "them".

Why do these idealists err so severely? Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah explains that the answer is found in two words: "Kima, Kima" ([the Redemption arrives] slowly, slowly). In the Exile, the Nation crumbles. But with its return to its Land, everything is being rebuilt and revived. This process takes time. It comes slowly, slowly.

It is easy to prove that this is the State about which the prophets prophesized. After all, the Nation is returning home and the Land continues to blossom. This is not the complete Redemption for which we pray each day in the Shemoneh Esrei, but we must nonetheless be joyous for every "crumb" of Redemption. The Nation will not be reborn in a day. Israel will not return to its Land in one day. The Nation will not come to love Yehudah and Shomron in one day. And not everyone will begin to keep Shabbat and eat Kosher in one day.

Reality does not have wings like imagination. We must therefore gird ourselves with patience. Hashem has incredible patience. He waited 10 generations from Adam to Noach before destroying the world and another 10 generations between Noach and Avraham before rewarding Avraham for all of the goodness (Pirkei Avot 5:2). Hashem waited close to 2,000 years before the appearance of Avraham Avinu.

Patience is not idleness, but action based on careful consideration of the pace of reality. What we have accomplished thus far in the State of Israel has great value, and we must continue on. We must do all we can, without losing our joy and optimism. We must rejoice over what we have attained up to this point, in all realms. It is true that there are many complications, but one who only sees darkness and no light is lacking in gratitude to Hashem.

We must increase Ahavat Yisrael - love of our fellow Jews - and the understanding that we are one Nation. That which we have in common is infinitely greater than that which separates us. We are in the same boat; we are one soul. And - most of all - we must remember that difference of opinion is permissible, but division of hearts is forbidden.

Rav Aviner on...

Please Teach Us to Love

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Devarim 5773 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Avraham, our Father
And Sarah, our Mother
Please teach us to love!
To love G-d.
To love man –
G-d's creatures.
For if we truly love G-d
Then we will love His creatures as well.
You, Avraham and Sarah,
Such were your whole lives –
Loving G-d.
“Avraham who loved G-d” (Yeshayahu 41:8)
And Sarah, who loved Him as well.
Because of your love for G-d
You left everything behind.
You land, your birthplace,
Your father's house –
To serve G-d.
And throughout your lives,
You sacrificed all you had,
For G-d's sake.
Please teach us to be like you.
To see G-d's goodness.
Thank G-d for He is good!

For His kindness lasts forever!
G-d does so much good for us!

Avraham, our Father
And Sarah, our Mother.
You never thought about yourselves.
But only about others.
Only about G-d.
Please teach us to follow your path.
We gaze upon you.
And we recite in a loud voice
The words of our great prophet Yeshayahu:
“Look to the rock you were hewn from.
To the quarry you were dug from.
Look back to Avraham your father
And to Sarah who brought you forth.”
(Yeshayahu 51:1-2)
Please teach us to be like you.
For we were hewn from you.
For in essence, we are like you.
Our soul comes from you.
But with all our heart, soul and might,
We long to be like you in our lives as well.
Every single day of our lives.
Yes, please teach us to live
With nothing but the love of G-d
And the love of G-d’s creatures.
Morning, noon and night.
With every ounce of intellect
We shall read of your deeds
In the words of our Torah
In the words of our Sages.
We shall apply our minds
And you, please, help us!
Influence us from On High
To love G-d and His people Israel.
To serve G-d and His people Israel.
Make our devotion to this absolute.
Please teach us.
Avraham, our Father
And Sarah, our Mother

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Women Reciting Kaddish

Woman Reciting Mourner's Kaddish in the Presence of Women

Q: May a woman recite Mourner's Kaddish in the presence of 10 women?

A: Certainly not. And the custom is not to do so in a Minyan of men as well, unless she recites it the Women's section, quietly, so that her voice is absorbed within the men's voices and is not heard (see Shut Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 5:12. Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik in Darom #57 Elul 5748. Shut Piskei Uziel #3. Teshuvot Ibra #4).

Woman Reciting Kaddish in Her House

Q: Can a woman recite Mouner's Kaddish in a Minyan in her house?

A: "All of the Poskim argue against this." Pnei Baruch, Mourning in Halachah 34:20.

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