

The
CHASSIDUS
PERSPECTIVE
 with Reb Yoel Kahn

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THE TRUTH ABOUT GOLUS

On the Shabbos days during the Three Weeks, Halacha dictates that one may not act in a way that can be interpreted as an expression of sadness or mourning, and to the contrary, one must increase in happiness and joy.

The Rebbe once related that there was a Jew in his hometown of Yekaterinoslav who wore slippers the entire week, including on Shabbos. At one point, he was sitting *shivah* over a close relative of his who had passed away. The Rebbe's father Reb Levi Yitzchok ruled that he must wear shoes on the Shabbos during *shivah*. Otherwise, an onlooker who was unaware of his custom might suspect him of showing signs of mourning on Shabbos.

Similarly, the simple reason why one must increase in joy on Shabbos during the Three Weeks is so that no one will think he is expressing *aveilus* on this day. However, on a deeper level, the reason why these Shabbos days demand a higher level of *simchah* is because they are on a higher level than the rest of the year.

SEIZING THE NOVEL INSIGHT

This concept can be explained with an analogy of a teacher who loves his student dearly and derives tremendous pleasure from imparting knowledge to him. Suddenly, when he is in the middle of teaching him, a novel, profound idea flashes in his brain. If the teacher will not concentrate immediately on this new idea, the flash will dissipate as quickly as it surfaced and the chance to grasp the new thought will be lost.

The teacher doesn't want that to happen, so he shifts gears and begins to focus on the new idea. His motives are not selfish—he

doesn't only want to grasp the idea himself; he wants to convey it to his prized disciple. However, the more he delves into the new insight, the less he is able to focus on teaching the student.

"The reason these Shabbos days demand a higher level of *simchah* is because they are higher than the rest of the year."

This phenomenon can be approached in two ways. On a superficial level, the student is losing out; as time passes, the teacher is putting ever less effort into their studies. This can be viewed as an unfortunate situation and a real "*churban*." However, when one looks a bit deeper, he will realize that the decrease in focus on the student is a reflection of an increase in focus on the new insight.

GREATER AFFECTION

This concept can be applied to the idea of *golus*. The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and subsequent *golus* is a reflection of something deeper which is presently taking place.

Halacha states that a husband is obligated to spend time with his wife before setting out on a journey. Although he is about to initiate a separation, this itself arouses a greater affection toward his spouse. Similarly, the separation between Hashem and His nation during *golus* is compatible with a greater love present at that time.

The Midrash relates that a certain Arab who was able to understand the language of the animals heard a cow moan. The Arab interpreted that the Beis Hamikdash had just been destroyed. When the cow grunted once again, he explained that "the savior of the Jews has been born." At the very moment of the *churban* the savior of the Yidden was born, because the superficial detachment of *golus* is a reflection of Hashem's great love to us.

INTIMATE POSITION

This explains a puzzling story. The Gemara relates that when Titus entered the *kodesh hakodoshim*, he saw the *keruvim*—one of which appeared as a male and the other, as a female—facing each other in an intimate manner. Thinking that this was a Jewish idol *chas veshalom*, he sent it out to all the nations of the world, saying, “See what this nation worships!”

Elsewhere, the Gemara explains that the *keruvim* would face each other in such a manner when the Yidden fulfilled Hashem’s will and thus aroused Divine affection. By contrast, when the conduct of *Bnei Yisrael* was lacking, they would separate from each other.

How can it be that the *keruvim* were facing each other intimately at the time of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, a period marked by utter concealment and a seemingly absolute *lack* of affection?!

The answer is because when viewed from a deeper perspective, the time of the *churban* was actually a time of great Divine will and the most profound affection between Hashem and the Yidden.

A TIME TO REJOICE

There is a distinction between the *golus* and the halachic obligation to spend time with one’s wife before setting out on a journey. In the latter case, the primary objective of the husband is to travel; as a necessary prerequisite, he must focus on his wife and show her affection. However, by Hashem and the Yidden it works the other way around: Hashem desires to show us His greatest love, and *as a result* he “set out on a journey” and brought about the *golus*.

This idea is parallel to the above-mentioned analogy of a teacher and student. The teacher desires to convey the profound concept to the student, and *as a result* he distances himself from him.

This explains why the Shabbos days of the Three Weeks are marked by an increased measure of joy and delight. The *sefarim* of the Baal Shem Tov’s students explain that while the Three Weeks generally take on a certain superficial appearance, the Shabbos days of this period reflect on the inner significance of the time. Accordingly, these days are a time of celebration and joy.

THE CORRECT APPROACH

There is an additional point that can be derived from this analogy.

The student is experiencing an ever-increasing measure of distance and detachment, and he can easily be dismayed. However, the correct approach he should adopt is to focus on the inner truth that the separation is a reflection of his teacher’s great love for him.

We must approach the *golus* in a similar manner. Although the darkness of *golus* is growing with each passing generation, we must realize that this is just the way it appears superficially. Yes, we were sent into *golus* due to our sins, but

there is a reason why Hashem allowed the sins to happen in the first place. The purpose of the *golus* is so that we will ultimately receive the third Beis Hamikdash.

By strengthening our *bitachon* that the darkness of *golus* is merely a reflection of the process to bring the *geulah*, we will initiate the *revelation* of His affection toward us, in the form of a *geulah* greater than ever before.

“Hashem desires to show us His greatest love, and as a result he “set out on a journey” and brought about the *golus*.”

In honor of the engagement of
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