



A COLLECTION OF TORAH THOUGHTS BY

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# ענפי ארז



בס"ד

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## פרשת האזינו

This Shabbos is one of our titled Shabbosos – Shabbos Shuva, based on the heartfelt cry of the Navi Hoshea: שובה ישראל. The Shabbos arrives during our special days of בהיותו קרוב, more intimately closer to the Borei Olam than any other time of the year. And as Yiden, מאמינים בני מאמינים, try and reach for the more that is achievable at this time and strive to heed Hashem's call to return as close as we can. Teshuva, to return, as we all know has certain components. We must desist - עזיבת החטא, regret our indiscretions - חרטה, and adopt upon ourselves not to repeat the offense – קבלה על העתיד, followed by Vidui. Our sincere pledge to become better, wiser than we have been is an elementary aspect of Teshuva. The sensible and tactful Baalei Mussar sagely advise us not to accept upon ourselves huge and overly ambitious Kabalos that will not stand up over time. Answer this yourselves – how many Kabalos that we made last year during the Yamim Noraim are we still holding on to? The wise thing to do is to make small Kabalos that we can hold onto throughout the year and beyond. It is reported that Rav Shach made a Kabalah to only Bentch from a Bentcher. Once, while Bentching in the Sukkah, he got up and went into the house, despite his age, and got another Bentcher because the last Pasuk of Bentching – a Pasuk which he surely knew by heart - was missing from his Bentcher. When he was questioned, he said a Kabalah means even if one Pasuk is missing it should be done. Imagine that Gedolei Yisroel used something as simple as that for a Kabalah – BECAUSE IT WORKS.

Let's propose something else that I saw, that if I am not mistaken, should speak to all of us. The Haftorah of the second day Rosh Hashana has a Pasuk where Yirmiyahu describes Klal Yisroel as being - חרב

שרידי - survivors of the sword. Rav Leib Chasman, Chevroner Mashgiach, called by Rav Shalom Shvadron “Der Rebbeh”, writes a moving description of how we fit that title. (It is worth noting, that the following explanation is coming from someone who lived through the holocaust and barely survived the massacre of the Yeshiva in Chevron.) We survived rivers of blood, terror filled years of Tzaros, unmerciful deaths and despite all of this ממצותיך, לא סרנו, we have not abandoned Mitzvos and continued doing what is right (See Ohr Yahail vol. 3, page 327). His words struck me as if he was talking to all of us. Every yid that was standing in Shul this Rosh Hashana – either in Shul, outside or wherever – is also a שרידי חרב - we all survived, some better than others, but we were all there listening to the Shofar and pouring out our hearts to the Borei Olam. One “well placed” cough could have created a completely different picture. Rav Leib points out that the greatest award that can be given to anyone, any nation is the medal of honor as being a שרידי חרב and one that retains his loyalty – מחייב, ובכל זאת שמך לא שכחנו. Being a survivor is a מחייב, place us in a position of greater responsibility. If we survived then Hashem has a plan for us, He wants us to do our share in His master plan, otherwise what is the purpose of Him sparing us. There is our תפקיד, purpose of our existence that we have been given a chance to fulfill. Our Tefilah is that Hashem should continue to look at us that way.

Being that it is so, my thoughts for a doable attainment for the new year is to acknowledge our thanks for making it through by being Mekabel to say עלינו לשבח ONLY from a Siddur. We all know how sometimes עלינו, said with at least one foot out the door, gets “Shmettered”, maybe half said, and the rest is in our

-1-

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imagination. Saying thank you for it all, for making us Yiden who know the truth about Who is really in charge seems to be in order.

There is a very powerful precedent for the sage advice of the Baalei Mussar from, what I believe is a little known incident, in Tanach. We just fasted Tzom Gedalia, the story about him is barely known to most. After the Churban Bayis Rishon and subsequent Galus, there still remained a contingent of Jews in Eretz Yisroel. The king of Bavel appointed Gedalia to be their governor. He was murdered by Yishmael Ben Netania who wanted to govern, thinking that he deserved it more being that he was a descendent of Peretz – מזרע המלוכה - (he also married a royal Egyptian convert thereby disqualifying him Rus Rabbah 8:1 and Radak 41:1). The remnant of Yiden grew fearful of the fact that a fellow Jew had murdered the appointee of the king of Bavel and pondered escaping to Egypt. They approached Yirmiah and asked him what to do (42:2).

The Pesukim describe how everyone מקטן ועד גדול came to Yirmiah to ask him to Daven for them because there are only the few of us left. They promised him to follow the words of Hashem:

אלוקינו...אליו נשמע no matter what the answer may be we will accept it.

You can almost hear the earnest pleading of a battered people not knowing what their next move should be. When Yirmiyahu returns to them with the Dvar Hashem to stay in Eretz Yisroel and you will have Rachamim but if you go to Mitzrayim you will be destroyed, the people's reaction (43:2) stuns us: שקר אתה מדבר לא שלחך ה' אלוקינו never sent you to us with that message. What happened here? The Abarbanel (ibid) startles us with a truth that we already know but often choose

to ignore. He says that Gedalia was killed on Rosh Hashana (according to most) and the people were shocked and bewildered and they came to Yirmiyahu with the spirit and "Ruach" of Aseres Yemei Teshuva driving them. We certainly will follow Hashem's orders as expressed through the Navi. But when Yirmiyahu came back it was AFTER YOM KIPPUR and the ardor and enthusiasm of being close to Hashem was no longer there. They were back to their old selves again so they accused the Navi that had stayed with them throughout the Churban as being a liar and trying to fool them. So much for making promises that we can't keep after Yom Kippur. Keep our Kabalos within our reach for the whole year or try it month by month just to show ourselves that we can but be honest with ourselves. We all need our Tefilos for Yiden ALL OVER THE WORLD and to be continued to be spared from the מגיפה that has destroyed us ברוחניות ובגשמיות and be Zocheh to a תשובה שלימה which obviously means to be able to be real in serving Hashem for the coming year and until גואל בב'א.

Among those who are מצפים לישועה and for a גמר חתימה טובה.

אמני דאפקיה  
תיים טאל איתן

