

CALEV AND REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

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The 9th day of the Jewish month of Av, Tisha b'Av, is a day that exemplifies sadness. It is a time appointed for sad things to possibly occur. In the Hellenistic mindset that has defined most of western thinking for over two thousand years, "Time" is viewed as a linear line moving from point a to point b. the Jewish and Biblical view of the world views specific dates and appointed times are gates through which time flows in a cyclical and upward spiral fashion.

Therefore the Passover season is not only a commemoration of the liberation that once was but it is rather a time that calls forth the spiritual strengths and power of renewed liberation from all the slavery that still confines us. Sukkoth is not only a commemoration of wandering through the desert for forty years and living in booths but is rather a time that is ripe for strengthening our faith and belief in a G-d intimately involved in our lives. And the fast days are times that are appointed for great tests and turbulence. They are times that can easily be filled with sadness and yet they are times that can be used for introspection and growth.

Tisha B'av is one of those times.

The litany of disasters is staggering

On the 9th of Av (423 BCE) the First Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

On the 9th of Av (69 CE) Titus and his Roman army burnt the Second Temple On the 9th of Av , the Bar Kochba revolt was crushed and the city of Betar - the Jews' last stand against the Romans - was captured and liquidated

On the 9th of Av in 1086 the first Crusade began.

On the 9th of Av in 1290 the Jews were expelled from England.

On the 9th of Av in 1306 the Jews were expelled from France.

On the 9th of Av in 1492 the Jews were expelled from Spain, On the 9th of Av in 1914 that Germany declared war on Russia, On the 9th of Av 1942 recorded the first killings started at Treblinka On the 9th of Av in 1990 the Gulf War began. Around the 9th of Av 2005 Jews were expelled from Gush Katif During the days of Av the badly managed second Lebanese war was fought.

and so it goes...

Yet the first Tisha B'av occurred over 3000 years ago.

Moshe (Moses) sends twelve important men to spy out the land and ten of them return with a declaration of weakness.

And Calev stilled the people toward Moshe, and said: "We should go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." But the men that went up with him said: "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."
(Bamidbar/Numbers 13; 30- 33)

Their weakness wasn't physical, it was optical. It was a weakness of vision. It was a failure in believing in their Divine destiny. Therein lays the trap and the problem. As long as large segment of our people see themselves as grasshoppers, unable to contend with the "giants" that surround us, we are destined for greater failure. This lack of vision is what led to the sins prior to the destruction of the first Temple. Lacking the courage to be "themselves" caused many to mimic the sins of the pagan neighbors. It is also what led to the hatred that destroyed the second temple. If you consider yourselves unworthy you need to look for unworthiness in every one else around you.

One of our great sages, the Gaon of Vilna, wrote that it is the "sin of the spies" that will plague the Jewish people throughout the generations until the last days:

Many will fall in this great sin of, "They despised the cherished Land." Also many guardians of the Torah will not know or understand that they are caught in the sin of the spies, that they have been drawn into the sin of the spies by many false ideas and empty claims, and they support their claims with the already proven fallacy that the commandment to settle the Land of Israel no longer applies in our day, an opinion which has already been refuted by the Torah giants of the world, both the early and later authorities. (Kol HaTor, Chapter 5)

It is not surprising then that again in these days we are faced with increased calls by the American president to vacate Jerusalem. We are hearing the rumblings of a world that may be preparing to force Israel out of its Biblical heartland by military might and strength. Nothing much changes in this world until we , with G-d's help , change it.

In order to rectify the disasters that we have experienced and In order to bring about a rectification of the world, we need to reconnect to our inner strengths and calling. That is the strength that is guiding those young and old people who are busily building outposts as the Americans are eagerly planning to destroy them. We need to declare without fear the cry of Calev (Caleb) ben Yefuneh;

""We should go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it YACHOL NUCHAL LAH."

Only then will we merit the prophecy of Zechariah;

Zechariah8:19 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons; therefore love ye truth and peace

And the rest of the world will be redeemed...