

RABBI TUVIA VINITSKY-JULY 16, 2014

‘TISHA B’AV: FUTILITY AND HOPE” RAV ARYEH’S ACHDUS

Imagine you are preparing for the vacation of your dreams. It has taken weeks to plan-the carpools, the babysitters, the food in the freezer, the packing . The day arrives and you come to the airport, all excited for this trip. You go through security, you are by the gate and then there is the announcement: Your flight has been cancelled. You can’t believe it, but the ticket agent says, ‘not to worry’ he can put you on the same flight tomorrow night. So you go home and the next day, come back to the airport and guess what the same thing happens. You are still excited for the vacation of your life, but your excitement is waning at this point. Imagine if this continues for a few days, a few weeks, a few months-would you still be so excited for your dream vacation as you were initially. Probably not.

This rabbi Vinitsky said, is the 3 weeks and Tisha B’Av. We have been davening to return to Yerushalyim ha’binuah for close to 2000 years. So many times, we think we are there, but the trip back is cancelled. How can we keep our excitement up. He says, it is only natural that a certain sense of ‘futility’ enters our psyche. So what he says, is, we need some hope. And to do that , we need a plan.

Three times a day, we daven that we should be zocha to see Yerushalyim ha’binuah. Let us assume, we call our travel agent to book this trip and we say we want to go to Yerushalyim ha’binuah. We have Yerushalyim Boruch Hashem, so what do we mean when we say ‘ha’binuah’. We mean we want the Yerushalyim where there is a Bais HaMikdash standing. We have been saying it for so many years-do we even know what we are speaking about?

Rabbi Vinitsky, as you know , is a master story-teller. So he described for us what Yerushalyim was like during the Sholosh Regolim. I don’t think any of us have heard the description he gave. He even quoted from a Roman officer who witnessed the scenes and was spell-bound. The officer wrote, “bless be HE the G-d of this nation” because he was so awe struck.

He explained that before the destruction of the first Bais HaMikdash there was not a Yid or a Goy who did not believe, in Hashem, who did not believe in the Torah and who did not believe that Hashem guards the Jewish nation. The goyim would only attack the Yidden when they felt that Hashem was angry at the Yidden because even they realized, that if Hashem protects his nation, they have no chance of winning in battle.

The shechina was so strong, that even the evil King, Nevuchadnzer (who Rabbi Vinitsky compared to Stalin) go ruach hakodesh letting him know that he can attack the Yidden.

During the sholosh regolim, all the Yidden descended upon Yerushalyim. They left their homes, their farms, their valuables unprotected-and there was never anything missing. No goy would come and steal from the Yid, even though the whole world knew that all the Jews were in Yerushalyim. In the Bais HaMikdash when the Yidden prostrated themselves to Hashem, the walls of the Bais HaMikdash expanded and when they stood up , it constricted-like this there was always room for everyone.

That is why we daven for Yerushaylim Ha'binua"-the rebuilt Yerushaylim-because we want the Bais HaMikdash back, we want the shechina back.

And so we call our travel agent and we say, we want to move to Yerushalyim Ha'binua' and the travel agent says, but you seem to have a life here-you have a beautiful home, there are shuls, yeshivas. Picking up the whole family to move to Yerushalyim ha'binuah seems quite difficult and not worthwhile. You have made a life for yourself here.

But we answer, it may seem like that, but it is not true. We may have homes, yeshivas, shuls, but it is not a life, when young girls have to take care of their families, because their mother was killed in a terrorist attack, it is not living; when 3 teenage boys are killed in cold blood, it is not living; when our homes are under constant rocket fire, it is not living; when so many of our young ones are dying from serious illness. What we are doing now-is not real life. Ask the Rabashkin family, Rabbi Vinitsky suggested, if this is a real life? This is not how Hashem meant life to be-that Jewish blood is cheap.

How do we know we are lacking something? When we need to get nicer homes, nicer furniture, more extravagant vacations-when we are always searching for new things in gashmiyus -it is because our ruchniyus is missing that connection to Hashem. Our physical self is screaming out.

How do we pay for this trip back to Yerushalyim ha'binuah, how do we get ourselves out of golus? Do we have the zchusim of a Rashi, of a Ramban? Do we have the zchusim of the past few hundred years in Europe. We may not, but we have their bank account. Every tragedy that befell us in the past 2000 years is in a golus bank account and we have access to that account.

We want to take this trip, but we don't have cash to pay for it, but the airlines will take miles. So how do we get miles? Rabbi Vinitsky said, we need Rav Aryeh miles. He then went on to explain to us the amazing ahavas yisroel that Rav Aryeh Levin had for his fellow Yidden-frum, not frum etc. To him, every Jew, even the Jewish prisoners, the criminals were like his brother. Their pain was his pain, their joy was his joy-and that is how he lived his life. He gave wonderful examples of this.

And Rabbi Vinitsky said, that is that the achdus we need to have now-Rav Aryeh's achdus. And he said, we can start in 2 different areas-at weddings and at shiva houses. He says at weddings, the focus must be on the choson and kallah, not the food, not our friends, not even on the men learning. Rav Aryeh danced at every wedding as if it was his son. We need to make the choson and kallah happy, as if we were getting married or it was our child sitting on that throne.

In shiva houses, as well, there is way too much chitchat in the kitchen of shiva houses. Do we think the person sitting shiva, needs so much food brought to them-do they even think of eating, are they interested in idle chatter. Rabbi Vinitsky says, if you have nothing to say to the person sitting shiva, then do as Rav Aryeh did. Just sit there and if you can sit there and cry, even better, but even just sitting there, shows the person you care-Rav Aryeh's achdus.

If we implement Rav Aryeh's love of every Yid in every lives, then we will be gaining miles that will enable us to make the trip back to Yerushalyim ha'binuah, b'mahara b'yomeinu

