

Reflections on Rosh Chodesh Av 5771

With back to back murders of one Jew by another, the image of Rachel Imeinu crying for her children as we were sent into golus comes to mind.

Do you know that in the times of the Bais Hamikdosh, the breads never got stale? Hashem kept them fresh as if they came out of the ovens at every moment.

Imagine being able to go into the temple and seeing an outward miracle and having a complete awareness of Hashem's presence and involvement in this world. Now imagine that we have a challenge and have to choose between what seems right and what the Torah tells us to do. We walk into the temple, see that Hashem is maintaining the breads and other miracles – does that not give us strength and courage and help us realize our choice should be to expend energy that is pleasing to Hashem?

We lost the temples because these outward miracles were not enough! Our choices, despite the outward miracles, did not reflect the inner strength to overcome our natural tendencies – we did not choose to love Hashem with all our hearts, with all our soul and with all our might. Instead we hated each other and lost the outward visible inspiration of Hashem's miracles in the temple.

After over 2000 years of separation, have we made one iota of progress with sinas chinum or is it worse than ever?

The two terrible murders of Jews killing other Jews is the backdrop to the upcoming 9 days and Tisha BAv 5771. Is it not time we try to repair the sinas chinum? Have we given up on repairing it and accepted it as human nature?

Rachel Imeinu cries for us – was she afraid of what we would suffer? Did she foresee the suffering that following a path of sina would bring to us? Why was being sent away the remedy? Ein Od Milvado - The outward realization that Hashem exists and is all there is needs to become internal to us. Unless we bring it inside our minds, seeing it outside of ourselves is not enough to resonate when we are at our free will point, needing to choose between the natural and the action that reflects love and fear of Hashem.

Suffering is designed for us to have no choice but to restore inner peace by realizing that Hashem is the only power and the only one to whom to address our bekoshos, our pleadings and requests. When we realize He is the only Power and the King, we become quite grateful that He loves us and really wants to help!

What holds us back from realizing that He is the only Power and how much He wants to give to us? It is our preference to believe what WE feel and want, our desire.

It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to from the place of our desires, to expand our understanding of who we are so that we see that at no time can we ever be anything except a secondary cause. Even the desire that Hashem gives us, along with free will

which is also a creation of Hashem, has at its root source, none other than Hashem, because He is the only Power. We do not generate our own life force! But Hashem does not stand in the way of our free will and our desire! He created them with us in 100% control.

If we choose to align our desires with Hashem's will, how can we ever fail? Do you feel resistance to that? Why? Does it seem like sacrificing something that is "us?" Does it seem we would be nullifying our greatest pleasures for some kind of boring service that has no meaning or pleasure, that is just a ritualistic act? Look again at that – it is the loud booming voice of the yetzer hara, the physical near-sighted lower side of us that needs to have glasses put on it! How can we not realize that whatever pleasure we think we can take for ourselves is anything but a tiny proportion of what Hashem is already giving to us many times over? When we realize how He is providing so much good for us, the small amount of what we wish to take and defy His will becomes laughable. And when we are able to comprehend the bigger picture, we also realize that the small thing we feel is such a big sacrifice, if it is good for us, will be given to us in any event.

What is the purpose of *sinas chinum*? Whatever purpose we may think it provides to us, it is a propitious time to reconsider. The energy that we expend in *sina* for whatever good reasons we rationalize can be re-connected to loving Hashem and His creations. When we truly see that each of us is small and beloved in His eyes including those we condemn and hate, we come closer to comprehending that our energy toward *sina* is not pleasing to Hashem and is blocking us from drawing closer to Him and from the *Shelamos* we all yearn for. All of the promises of the Torah are for *Klal Yisroel*. When we have hatred, we divide ourselves and *Klal Yisroel* does not exist. Let us all sacrifice any hatred we have in our hearts by seeing how displeasing it is to Hashem and realizing that we love Hashem and want with the energy that He gives us to only do what is pleasing to Him because He is the only power.

Jews murdering other Jews? This is the power that we use to hate each other! That is not what He wants. He is very patient, but we must listen to the messages He sends us. We won't regret learning how to love one another – the challenge of moving our energy from hating each other to loving each other has a pot of gold at its source beyond any other benefit or pleasure we can imagine. And choosing to do so is 100% in our control. Act now!