



SICHA – 6 TISHREI 5745

Amongst my childhood memories is one from the beginning of the First World War, when we lived in Russia.

Generally, I was very involved with my studies in school, and was not aware of what was going on at home; I was just not very involved in it, and did not ask what was happening, etc. There were, however, some exceptional occurrences, which one could not help but notice.

At that time, at the beginning of the First World War, the government decreed that the Jews residing in countries bordering territories at war with Russia, cannot be trusted. Therefore they must move into the depths of Russia, far from the border areas. The border areas included Poland and Lithuania, etc.

Many of them traveled to areas where there was already a large Jewish population. Including the city where we lived—Dniepropetrovsk.

A large group of travelers arrived—then they were called “bezhnitzes,” here they are called refugees.

Since so many people had arrived so suddenly—and they were people of high stature: rabbis, teachers, ritual slaughterers and leaders and heads of communities—there was a great need to ensure that they would be accommodated as quickly as possible, and as perfectly as was feasible at the time.

Relative to the number of Jews that lived in the city, it was a tremendous task, a heavy burden, to absorb the large number of exiles that had arrived.

Immediately various committees were formed in order to organize the aid for all of the newcomers' needs.

Among those at the head of these committees was my mother, whose Yahrzeit we observe today.

It was an amazing sight: I had never before seen such an involvement with so much energy, both at day and at night. Although my main involvement was in school rather than at home, it was so outstanding that it was etched in my memory for all the days of my life.

We are faced with the question: What can we, today, derive from this story in practical terms?

But then we realize that the lesson is a very obvious one:



פרשת זארא

Every Jew—each one of us amongst the Jewish People, has been “exiled from our land!” Each and every one of us; whether we will call it a “refugee” or a “bezhnietz,” in Hebrew we say “we were exiled from our land!”

It may seem that we do not have any special needs, since we live in a “kind country,” in which we can earn an honest living with both spiritual and physical tranquility.

So it seems that we have no needs. But in fact, this shows how thirsty we are: We are so thirsty that we do not even recognize our hunger and thirst—the true hunger and thirst—for Judaism.

Although, with G-d’s help, there are many Torah institutions, and everyone has individual Torah study sessions and extra care in the fulfillment of Mitzvot, still, it is not comparable to a true revelation of Godliness. It is not comparable to the understanding of Torah and the care in fulfillment of Mitzvot in the manner truly desired by G-d. As the Mittlerer Rebbe describes at length the way it was during the time of the Holy Temple.

We have become accustomed to the darkness of exile, so it seems that when we study Torah with intensity, or fulfill G-d’s commandments with extra care, we have achieved the ultimate perfection possible.

However we must realize what we have lost, Heaven forbid. We have lost the revelation of Godliness that was clearly revealed when the Holy Temple stood. So great was the revelation, that they witnessed ten miracles on a daily basis; some of which took place in the entire city of Jerusalem—and they were seen by the physical eye.

After this realization, when we beseech in our prayers “Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish,” we will say it with the full intensity and tumult, because we truly feel what we once had. Then we truly scream—although it is a silent prayer—we cry out not only because these words were established by the Great Assembly to be recited in the prayers, rather because we feel the need for what we are missing.

What are we missing? That it should “speedily flourish!”

Because if the redemption will take place a moment earlier, then a moment earlier “The glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together, for the mouth of G-d has spoken.”

