

CHIZUK IDUD

*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

by **Rabbi Yerachmiel Roness**
Ramat Shiloh, Beit Shemesh

D'varim & 9 Av 2015

Our custom is to read Parashat D'varim right before Tish'a b'Av. One of the reasons for this custom can be seen through the word EICHA which is used sparingly throughout the Tanach. The Book of Lamentations read on Tish'a b'Av begins with this word. EICHA YASH'VA BADAD, how has she (Jerusalem) sat alone, and is thus known as Megilat Eicha. The first time this word is used in the Chumash is found in our Parasha (D'varim 1:12) as Moshe expresses his inability to lead the nation: EICHA ESA L'VADI, how can I bear the burden alone. We continue this linguistic connection with our choice of Haftara, Divrei Yeshayahua (1:21), where we meet up with this expression once again. We echo the words of the prophet, who in response to the rampant corruption of his time bitterly laments: EICHA HAYTA L'ZONA KIRYA NE'EMANA", how has this loyal city become like a harlot.

Rav Soloveitchik (MiP'ninei HaRav pg.

316) points out that this same word, albeit with a different pronunciation, can be found in the Torah in one previous location.

In Parashat B'reishit, after Adam and Chava had partaken from the Tree of Knowledge and hidden themselves in shame, the Almighty calls out saying: "AYEKA - where are you?", (3:8).

The Rav made the following comment: If the hopeful call of AYEKA is not heeded, it then has the potential of becoming transformed into the bitter lamentation of EICHA.

The verse describes how G-d calls out Adam as he walked in the garden L'RU-ACH HAYOM, and the Midrash (B'reishit Rabba 19:6) discusses whether this takes place at sunrise or sunset. Demonstrating his homiletic prowess, the Rav explained that Ru-ach HaYom, the Zeitgeist surrounding us, can be interpreted as G-d calling out to man - AYEKA! This can take place at either sunrise or sunset, at a time of new beginnings and of hope, or of failure and despair.

At the sunrise of the Emancipation, as freedom was extended to all, liberalization was the call of the hour. It was as if a new light had begun to shine on Jewry, and yet, when G-d appeared to ask AYEKA, Jews hid from Him - after all, they were now

emancipated. Later on, during the period of World War II, a bleak sunset of darkness and calamity, G-d's cry to mankind was heard again: AYEKA - where are you? Again, there was no response to G-d's call, and in lieu of AYEKA the terrible ramifications of EICHA were experienced.

Wanting to give this Midrash an Eretz Yisrael spin, we might say the following:

On the eve of the 9th of Av as the spies instilled fear in the hearts of the People of Israel, they began to sob bitterly. Our Sages (Taanit 29a) say that the nation cried that night. The Almighty then had occasion to say "You cry for naught - for no reason - the time will come when you will have good reason to cry... at the destruction of the Temple." Night and darkness befell the Jewish people then, just as it did in the 30s and 40s. Did not the expulsion from Spain occur around the 9th of Av? Did not WWI commence on this day? The Almighty was crying out to the Jewish People: "AYEKA - I am waiting for you in Eretz Yisrael". Alas, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people were hiding in the Diaspora refusing to leave. Rav Teichtel in his "Eim Habanim S'meicha" perceived a direct link between the peoples' refusal to leave to Eretz Yisrael and

the imminent Holocaust. The AYEKA was tragically transformed into EICHA. Now, seventy years later, we are experiencing a period of sunrise as we bask in the light of Hashem's Chesed. A younger generation has arisen in the Diaspora - a generation who knew not the trauma of the Holocaust. In our Parasha, Moshe stands before such a younger generation, far removed from their parents' aversion to Eretz Yisrael. Moshe reminds them of the sins of their fathers, beseeching them to not repeat their mistakes: "Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the Commandment of the Lord your God" (D'varim 1:26-27).

Our present generation is being beckoned as well, we too are being beseeched: "Come home and atone for the sins of your forefathers - AYEKA - where are you?" They couldn't, or wouldn't, make Aliya you can and should! We must not rebel, we must go up! 🚩🚩🚩