



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Asara b'Tevet Take-Away

We have four, rabbinically declared fast days related to the destructions of the two Batei Mikdash. But Aveilut HaChurban (mourning the Destruction) is not restricted just to those fast days. We also have the Three Weeks and the Nine Days... and we have aspects of Aveilut HaChurban that apply to every day of the year.

[This is similar to other aspects of our calendar - for example, we have a mitzva to celebrate Seder night with matza and maror and with telling over the story and related mitzvot as part of the Seder. But we also have a command to remember the Exodus every day of our lives.]

Starting this PTDT this way is my excuse to talk about Asara b'Tevet even though it is behind us for this year. And I'm going to include other aspects of the whole topic of Aveilut HaChurban.

Let's say it like this:

National mourning - different from personal mourning - carries something above and beyond just mourning. It requires a pro-active agenda. Every specific event - and the actions

and behaviors that brought about various tragedies.

The first Beit HaMikdash was destroyed because of bloodshed, sexual immorality, and idolatry.

The second Beit HaMikdash was destroyed because of unwarranted hatred.

The sin of the golden calf is linked to the 17th of Tamuz.

The sin of the Meraglim is linked to Tish'a b'Av.

Some suggest that the sin of the sale of Yosef is linked to Asara b'Tevet.

So there is our agenda.

TIKUN - Repair.

We must become better people and better Torah observant Jews. We must help - in a pleasant, non-coercive manner - spread Torah and mitzvot to our fellow Jews.

The Meraglim said "It's a nice place to visit by we wouldn't want to live there. (Here, that is.) TIKUN - repair. Come on Aliya. Encourage others to do the same. Help smooth K'lita for recent arrivals.

Work towards AHAVAT YISRAEL to repair the hatred that has split us for thousands of years. This does not mean to homogenize the Jewish people. Rather, it means to respect the differences between groups -

those that do not contravene halacha.

It means to stop gossip and lashon hara that is destructive of lives, of reputations.

To sum it up, we must do our share (and even more) to raise ourselves, our families, our communities, our nation - so that HaShem will have every reason to bring about the Geula Sh'leima.

Any generation in whose time the Beit HaMikdash is not rebuilt, it is as if it was destroyed in that generation.

Let us not be guilty of prolonging the exile.

Let's work towards turning the fast days of Churban into the Yamim Tovim that HaShem via the Navi Zechariya promised us.