

“Return Our Judges...And Remove From Us Grief And Sighing “

In our daily *Shemoneh Esrei* Davening, we call out to *HaShem* - “Return Our Judges (strong leaders who know how to pass stern judgment as needed) as in the first (days) , and our advisers like in the beginning. And Remove From us Grief and Sighing.”

One may ask how does having Judges and Advisors remove from us grief and sighing? Maybe we can ask them their opinion on things that perplex us- but how does that go so far as to remove from us grief and sighing?

So our Chachamim teach us that *HaShem* is always with us, and he is always seeking to guide us in the way that is best for us, even if it doesn't seem like it at first.

Now you may ask, how does one have a conversation with *HaShem* so as to be able to seek out His Omniscient guidance in life? The answer is that *HaShem* has his messengers.

When you have a person with Strong *Emunah* and Awe of *HaShem* who is learned, and benevolent, and emulates *HaShem* in His way of seeking the best for all of us, and you put your trust in him, *HaShem* will shine his great kindness on both of you and send you the answer that is best for you through that sincere servant.

It's not simply that the person is so intelligent, and sees so many perspectives of the issues that you don't etc, that he can figure out the right answer for you. Rather it's *HaShem*, that you believe and trust in, that implants the right answer for you in this sincere servant, and this person is able to guide you on the right path.

There is a qualification to this rule though. The sincere servant has to be willing to not simply give into your desires and wants, and be too eager to give you an answer that might please you, even though it seems to be a god one. Rather he has to be able to *LACHTHOCH/To CUT*, as they say in Modern Hebrew. He has to 'tell you as it is', and stay on course.

And there is a hint to this in *Parshath Devarim* and its *Haftarah*, the end of which is the source of the paragraph of the *Shemoneh Esrei* that we quoted above.

The pasuk in the *Haftarah* says (Yeshayah ,perek 1, pasuk 26) “And I will return your judges like in the beginning, and your advisors like in the beginning , after that they will call you City of Rightousnes/*Ir HaTsedek* , a Trustworthy Borough “ . You will be able to be a Tzadik- one who follows the laws of *HaShem* completely, after you have ‘strong leaders who know how to pass stern judgment as needed’.

And the actual parshah , discusses the sending of the Spies at the end of two years of being in the *midbar*, and B"Y constantly testing and angering *HaShem*, and *Mosheh R"AH* repeatedly interceding on their behalf .

The pasuk states: (Devarim, 1, 23) “And it was good in my eyes ...” *Rashi* explains that when B"Y asked Moshe to send spies, Mosheh Rabeinu thought that if he showed that he had no

qualms about doing so, B"Y would see that he didn't flinch, and would get the picture, that they have nothing to worry about, and that they should go forward and conquer the land.

He was like a donkey salesman who accedes to allowing his donkey to be 'test driven' in all terrains and conditions, to show that he has nothing to hide about his assertions about his healthy, strong and capable donkey.

Unfortunately, that gambit didn't work. B"Y did not back down from their request, and the *Meraglim* did not get the picture, that they should only report on what Mosheh asked for - whether the land is good, etc, and not give their own opinion on whether or not it's a good idea for them to move forward and conquer the land.

On that fateful day of *Tisha Be'Av* in the desert, our forefathers began to "Sigh and express their Grief ", about what they thought was their misfortune. And ever since then, we have all continued to sigh and cry on that day.

To be sure, Mosheh Rabeinu had every right to believe that the MEN of conviction/ANASHIM, that he was sending, would follow his instructions, and not instigate an insurrection. Unfortunately, neither those *meraglim*, nor different components of the people that had asked for them, were at the same level of *Emunah Peshutah* – Simple *Emunah*, as Mosheh Rabeinu.

Had the MEN that were chosen for the task, stayed true to what HaShem had told them to do, ie.-' move forward and conquer the land, which is good for you' , had they been the '*strong leaders who know how to pass stern judgment as needed*' ,everything would have been different.

We would have avoided the last 3,000 years of subjugation to the pursuits and interests of the goyim, we would have had Mosheh Rabeinu, we would have built the *Beith Hamikdash* right away, and we would have been in *Olam Habah* for a long time.

But that's not what happened. But now that we understand the story better, hopefully we all can learn the lesson, and move forward from here.

May we earn the privilege of having '*strong leaders who know how to pass stern judgment as needed*', and may we all commit ourselves to following the advice of HaShem that comes through them. So that we can all merit seeing the *Olam Habah* hurriedly in our days.

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