

Consolation through Isolation

By Dani Eisenstock

Former Shaliach in Kansas City (2002-3)

Nachamu Nachamu Ami! This Shabbat all over the Jewish world we will read these words. Be comforted and be consoled my nation. How can we be comforted and how can we be consoled? Only yesterday we were sitting on the floor crying over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. How can we now be comforted and rejoice?

The story is told about a small community, which was slowly falling apart. A few old men would come to shul every Shabbat and barely maintained a minyan. They decided to seek advice from a great Rabbi. The Rabbi sat with the group of old men and listened to all their sorrows. He cried with them and felt their pain. The old men asked him for advice and he just sat silently. Finally, he bid them farewell. They begged for any advice. He apologized and said – "I don't have any advice for you, I can only tell you that the Mashiach is one of you." And he left.

The old men were about to despair after the Rabbi left- he was their final straw. At first they all thought the Rabbi was crazy. How could the Mashiach be one of them? Then a miracle happened, each person began to look at the friends and everyone around them as potential Mashiach and they began to treat each other with a new found respect. Each person, also started to look at themselves differently. Quickly, the town transformed. People from all over the world heard about this special town and the love that existed amongst them and quickly the place took on a new found vibrancy that everyone wanted to be a part of.

As we sat on the floor, waiting and hoping for Mashiach, we sometimes give up hope. Especially this year, as we are practicing social distancing and sitting even more alone. We can truly despair and give up hope. It seems like the whole town and even the world is falling apart a little bit.

The first parsha we read after Tisha Bav is about Moshe Rabeinu begging to enter the land of Israel. After the three weeks of mourning we are not giving up - we keep on hoping and waiting to return to the land. How do we do this? By realizing that we are not alone. We are all in this together. The Mashiach is amongst us. If we truly believe that everyone around us has the potential to be Mashiach we will truly merit in seeing him soon.

I'll never forget the amazing yearning and love for Israel that I saw in the families I met when I was in shlichut in Kansas City. They taught me the beauty of community of being connected to the land of Israel like Moshe Rabenu looking and supporting and sending so much love to the land of Israel.

It is in our hands to bridge the gap and realize the beauty in the communities all across the world and realize the beauty within the land of Israel. We can truly be consoled and comforted. How? Through Ami – Nachamu Nachamu – Ami. When we truly realize how amazing all parts of the nation are, we can truly be comforted. When we are in Isolation we can truly see and appreciate the beauty of what we are missing and how much greater it will be once we can all get together again.

comments: deisenstock@gmail.com