

B E I T S A S S O N

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Message from our Rabbi

Dear members of the *Beit Sasson* community,

First, I want to thank Hashem for giving me the opportunity to be the rabbi of such a wonderful and special community.

Second, in these days, as the New Year is approaching, our hearts are still heavy and painful from the terrible disaster that befell the State of Israel and the "nation which dwells in Zion" on the day of Shemini Atzeret. The tragedy that struck us was unbearably difficult, and we find ourselves facing heavy challenges of pain and loss, but also of reunification and revival.

Break and revival are central themes in Judaism, reflecting the dynamic of destruction and repair, fall and revival, which characterize the history of the people of Israel and the spiritual journey of every individual of the people of Israel.

In the history of the Jewish people, there have been calamities that left a deep mark on our national identity, such as the destruction of the Temple, the Exile, and the Holocaust. Even on a personal level, we all have experienced moments of crisis, such as sin, personal failure, or loss, which are an integral part of the lives of each and every one of us.

Judaism sees calamity as an essential part of the process of spiritual growth. It allows a person to face his weaknesses, examine his life and strive for correction. Our Sages said: "Seven times a righteous person will fall and rise" (Proverbs 24:16), which indicates that even the righteous person, who is an individual who fears the heavens, can fall, but his greatness and strength is in his ability to rise again.

Restoration is the stage in which the person or the nation works to repair the fracture, rebuild and strengthen itself from the destruction. Rehabilitation in Judaism is considered not only a physical action but also a spiritual process of self-correction and continuous improvement.

In Kabbalah, the idea of breaking and repairing appears in the Torah of the Ari (Rabbi Yitzhak Luria), where the process of "breaking the vessels" and repairing them is described. The World was created with the breaking of the vessels, and the human task is to collect the scattered sparks of holiness and return them to their divine origin, a process known as "repairing". This idea emphasizes the need to act to correct reality after experiences of a fracture.

On the national level, the restoration is manifested by the return to Zion after the destruction of the First Temple, and by the establishment of the State of Israel after two thousand years of exile. This

restoration is not only physical, but also spiritual and cultural, seeking to return the Jewish people to their historical and religious place.

For us, the break and the restoration are not seen as opposite processes but as two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, misfortune is inevitable and is part of the human process, but the restoration is the hope that follows. There is constant encouragement for repair and rebuilding, out of the Jewish belief in the power of a human being and of the nation to rise from the brokenness and become stronger. This process encourages a return to the good repentance and correction, and is accompanied by the promise of redemption and building a better future for all of us.

During this past year, we experienced moments of immense sorrow and pain, but at the same time we also discovered the tremendous strength that exists in us as a people and community. This could be seen in the mobilization of our communities for many projects that helped and supported the State of Israel and our dear soldiers, as well as the mobilization of all the Jewish people in the world for the Land of Israel and the State of Israel.

The New Year that begins on Rosh Hashanah invites us to look forward, to get stronger and to look for new meanings.

One of the most important tasks that is placed before us in the New Year is to increase our unconditional affection and interpersonal relationships among us. The prophet Micah reminds us: "Tell man what is good and what the Lord requires: do justice, love, kindness, modesty, and you will walk with your God" (Micah 6:8). This is a call to each and every one of us to devote our time and energy to strengthen the bonds between us, to do kindness and charity, and strengthen the family bond and the values of Judaism.

Following the disaster we experienced on October 7th, we are required more than ever to show strength and unconditional affection towards others, as Rabbi Kook taught: "If our Temple was destroyed by unconditional hatred, we will return to build our country, and the entire world through unconditional affection. "Our bond as a nation is a powerful tool that gives us the ability to face challenges and bring us to a better world.

May we find the strength within us to work together for a strong, cohesive community imbued with a spirit of kindness, brotherhood and friendship for our community, the nation, and the land.

I send each one of you a happy and sweet New Year's greeting, full of peace, health, and love. May Hashem grant us and all the people of Israel a year of construction and renewal, and may we be privileged to see the difficult days behind us, when the people, the state and the country stand stronger and more united than ever. Good news, salvation and comfort.

For us and for the entire nation of Israel.

Rabbi Oren Simhi