



PARSHAS DEVARIM

5772
SHALOSH SEUDAH
TORAH

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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Cleaving to Hashem in the Valley of Tears

The Connection between Sefer Devarim and Sichon and Og

After Moshe Rabbeinu conquered the monarchies of Sichon and Og, he addressed the Jewish people for the final time. At this parting lecture, he related his novel Torah interpretations and reviewed the Torah in all seventy languages¹. This parting address of Moshe comprises Sefer Devarim.

Sichon and Og were 'kelipos' - shells of impurity - that had obstructed the Jewish people's entry into the holy land. Trapped within every evil enclave are sparks of holiness. When kelipos are shattered, holy sparks are released. These sparks can then be revealed in original Torah insights.

With the destruction of Sichon and Og, Moshe was able to originate the Torah ideas of which Sefer Devarim consists.

Sichon and Og had represented all seventy gentile nations. With their defeat, holy sparks were released from all seventy nations. Moshe was then able to explain the Torah in the seventy languages. This Torah had heretofore been buried under the kelipos of the seventy gentile nations.

Sefer Devarim Contains Sparks of Mashiach

Evil enclaves are the polar opposites of the holy sparks they imprison. Sichon and Og symbolized the wicked forces which barricade Eretz Yisrael and deny the Jewish people entry. Hence, they trapped holy sparks of Mashiach - who will bring every Jew into Eretz Yisrael.

Prior to the arrival of the ultimate Mashiach - who will be of Davidic descent - a Mashiach who will descend from Yosef will appear.

"סיחן מלך האמרי, עוג מלך הבשן", 'Sichon the King of Emori and Og the King of Bashan,' are gematria (numerically equal) "משיח בן יוסף, משיח בן דוד", 'Mashiach of Yosef and Mashiach of David' (they both equal 1000). This symbolizes that Sichon and Og were the bolts of Eretz Yisrael that imprisoned holy sparks of Mashiach.

Sefer Devarim is composed of the sparks of Mashiach previously trapped by Sichon and Og. We begin reading it on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av, because Tisha B'Av is the day when Mashiach is born².

Tisha B'Av is the Day of Eisav

Eisav has complete jurisdiction over Tisha B'Av - it is the day of the devil. The Jewish people were instructed not to trespass Eisav's property even as "מדרך כף רגל³", 'the sole of a foot can tread.' Holiness is barred entrance into the Satan's territory.

Evil thrives in depression and gloominess. The Satan and Lilith, his feminine counterpart, are termed, יגון ואנחה – grief and groaning⁴. It is forbidden to import even a shred of joy into Eisav's territory. To be happy on Tisha B'Av – Eisav's day - would be

usurping his property. R' Pinchos of Koritz said that even smiling on Tisha B'Av is dangerous.

The tiring journey around the land of Eisav, symbolizes the long and weary exile of Edom when holiness must bow before the Satan. However, exile is only temporary. When "The רגל (foot) of Mashiach will stand on the Mount of Olives"⁵ - as Prophet Zechariah depicted - we will conquer the territory of Eisav - forbidden even עד מדרך רגל.⁶

Our Tisha B'Av Souvenir

We depart from every Yom Tov with spiritual souvenirs⁷. From Sukkos we take joy for a whole year, from Rosh Hashana awe of Heaven, and so on. Tisha B'Av is also referred to as a Moed (holiday), and that is why we do not recite Tachanun. What memento does the Yom Tov Tisha B'Av leave us with?

When Hashem saw the destruction of his earthly dwelling, he asked the heavenly hosts, "What does a mortal king do when he mourns?"

"He sits on the ground," they answered him. Hashem's presence then descended to the ground.

On Tisha B'Av, we sit on a low chair, close to the ground. A Jew's success comes from always being in the proximity of Hashem. If on Tisha B'Av the ground is where Hashem can be found, then that is where we will be, as well.⁸

The lesson we draw from Tisha B'Av is: We are always close to Hashem. If G-d forbid, we ever experience distress, pain, or grief, we remind ourselves of Tisha B'Av's teaching – we are always near Hashem. "גם כי אלך בגיא צלמות לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי"⁹, 'Even if I walk in the valley of death, I shall not fear because You are with me.'

There is no place where a Jew can find himself - not in body nor in soul - were Hashem does not accompany him as a devoted, loving companion, sharing in his throbbing pain. Even in the den of devils - גיא צלמות - is gematria לילות ס"מ (they both equal 607) – Hashem is with me – אתה עמדי!

"בגבול אחיכם בני עשו", 'The borders of your brothers, the children of Eisav,' is gematria, "כי אתה עמדי" (they both equal 560). Tisha B'Av - the day of Eisav - teaches אתה עמדי, Hashem is always with me.

The Goodness Hidden in Tisha B'Av

The Sefer Yetzirah teaches that the letter 'ט' is associated with the month of Av. 'ט' first appears in the Torah in the word טוב. Someone who sees the letter 'ט' is his dream, should expect good things to happen to him in the future.

However, the right head of the 'ט' is bent inwards.¹⁰ This teaches that the goodness of the 'ט' is hidden.

Av, therefore, appears to be a month of misfortune; we do not see its goodness. This is especially so of ט' באב. However, Tisha B'Av contains the greatest good¹¹; it is when Mashiach is born. ט' באב, when we spell the 'ט' with its inner, hidden goodness - טית באב - is gematria משיח בן דוד (they both equal 424).

The Greatness of Shabbos Chazon

The Shabbos before Tisha B'Av is referred to as 'Shabbos Chazon' because we read the Haftarah of 'Chazon Yeshayahu.'

'Chazon' means to perceive. This Shabbos is called Chazon, says R' Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev, because on this Shabbos, every Jew envisions the Third Bais HaMikdash according to how strongly he desires its erection.

Shabbos Chazon is the greatest Shabbos of the year. Shabbos is the opposite of the weekdays. Because the weekdays of this period languish in the depressing dungeon of Eisav, Shabbos Chazon is especially lofty and joyous.¹²

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi wanted to annul the fast of a Tisha B'Av that fell out on Shabbos instead of pushing it off until Sunday. However, the other sages disagreed.

On Tisha B'Av, Mashiach ben David is born. Rabbi Yehuda was from the family of King David. Souls of a family are intertwined and sense each other and, therefore, Rabbi Yehuda sensed the birth of Mashiach more deeply than his fellow sages. That is why he held that there was no need to observe the fast of Tisha B'Av for Mashiach had already been born.¹³

Shalosh Seudos with King Shlomo

At the eve of Tisha B'Av, we usually eat a meal of mourning consisting of a piece of bread and a hardboiled egg dipped into ashes. The bowed, darkened visage of Yirmiyahu joins us at this meal and we eat it in contemplative somberness.

However, when Tisha B'Av occurs on Shabbos, we fast on Sunday. On Shabbos, we do not lower ourselves to the ground to partake of a meal of mourning before beginning the fast. Instead, we enjoy a festive feast in honor of Shalosh Seudos. There are no restrictions as to what can be served, the Gemara rules. We may even partake of a meal resembling ¹⁴סעודת שלמה בשעתו - the feast of King Shlomo in his time.

King Shlomo reigned during the summit of Jewish spiritual and material prosperity. Under his jurisdiction, the Temple was built and the Jewish people were a proud nation of G-d. Yirmiyahu's fate, on the other hand, was bitter. To his misfortune, he had to prophesize the destruction of the Temple, and accompany his people along their wretched descent from Yerushalayim.

However, mystical tradition teaches that Yirmiyahu was none other than a reincarnation of King Shlomo¹⁵. The night before the inauguration of the Bais HaMikdash, King Shlomo married the daughter of Pharaoh and woke up late, thereby delaying the first daily morning offering. It was then decreed that the Bais HaMikdash he built would eventually be destroyed and Shlomo would descend to this world again and witness its destruction.

However, Shlomo will not forever languish as Yirmiyahu - he will come again as Mashiach. There is no persona of absolute tragedy. The exalted soul of Shlomo was merely at its lowest point in Yirmiyahu.

On Shabbos, there is no mourning or destruction. Therefore, when Shabbos is on Tisha B'Av, the soul of Yirmiyahu joins us for the final meal before the fast - but in its glorious state as King Shlomo. And instead of a meal of mourning we enjoy a meal of King Shlomo בשעתו – in his time of grandeur - not when he was Yirmiyahu.

Shalosh Seudos of Shabbos Chazon

Every day at the time of Mincha, Din – strict judgment – reigns. Mincha is the prayer of Yitzchak, the patriarch who personified strict judgment and awe of Heaven.

Shabbos is a day completely the opposite of the weekdays. Hence, Shabbos at Mincha-time, a great Chesed – loving-kindness – reigns¹⁶. It is a time of רעוא דרעוא, great Divine favor.

Tisha B'Av is a day of harsh Din. Therefore, Shabbos Tisha B'Av is a day of utmost mercy. This is especially so by Mincha/Shalosh Seudos time of Shabbos Tisha B'Av. An exceptionally strong Divine benevolence is then prevalent.¹⁷

The Cherubim Faced Each Other During the Churban

Shlomo built the Bais HaMikdash and drew the Divine Presence down, to dwell between the two Cherubim in the Holy of Holies. The faces of the Cherubim were made to resemble the image of a boy and girl. They represented the sacred union of Hashem and his beloved - the Jewish People.

Shlomo also described the holy affection between Hashem and the Jewish people in his work – Shir Hashirim – which Rabbi Akiva termed, Holy of Holies¹⁸.

When divine favor was withdrawn from the Jewish people due to their sins, the Cherubim would turn away from each other. When they merited Divine favor, the Cherubim faced each other. Therefore, רעוא דרעוא is gematria "ופניהם איש אל אחיו"¹⁹ - the Cherubim faced each other (they both equal 558).

As the Bais HaMikdash erupted in flames, the Cherubim were facing each other, the Gemara teaches. During the destruction of Yirmiyahu, the union King Shlomo expressed in Shir Hashirim was strong. Hidden in Yirmiyahu is Shlomo.

Hidden in Eichah - Yirmiyahu's book of lamentations - is tremendous joy. Tisha B'Av will be transformed "למועדים טובים"²⁰, Prophet Zechariah promised. איכה, with its internal, concealed letters - אלף יוד כף הא - is gematria מועדים טובים (they both equal 237). Hidden in Eichah is the restoration of Yirmiyahu.

The three week period from the Seventeenth of Tamuz until Tisha B'Av corresponds to the three weeks from Rosh Hashana until Shemini Atzeres. Shemini Atzeres is a day when we celebrate our nuptials with Hashem; it is King Shlomo's day. Tisha B'Av is closely linked to Shemini Atzeres; the Cherubim face each other on this day of desolate destruction.

Transforming Yirmiyahu to Shlomo

קינות – lamentation - shares the letters of תיקון - rectification. We ask Hashem, "ושמחנו בתיקונו"²¹, gladden us with the rectification of the Bais HaMikdash. By reciting the lamentations of Tisha B'Av we build the Bais HaMikdash.

We focus on revealing the greatness of Tisha B'Av and the Shlomo in Yirmiyahu. Yirmiyahu concludes Eichah with the phrase, "חדש ימינו כקדם", 'renew our old days.' Yirmiyahu prays to transform back to his original state as Shlomo.

Following Tisha B'Av is Shabbos Nachamu, when Hashem consoles us with the promise of redemption. Our consolation is that Yirmiyahu will revert back into Shlomo and replace the lamentations of Eichah with the song of Shir Hashirim.

If we add the numerical value of נחמו (104) to ירמיהו (271), it is gematria שלמה (375). Shabbos Nachamu transforms Yirmiyahu to Shlomo.

"יה"ר להקים עלינו מלכות דוד ושלמה, בעטרה שעטרה לו אמו ביום חתונתו – זו מתתן תורה - וביום שמחת לבו - זה בנין ביהמ"ק שיבנה במה"ב"²²

“May it be His will that he establish for us the Kingdom of David and Shlomo, with the crown of his wedding day – this refers to Matan Torah – and the day of his heart’s rejoicing – this refers to the erection of the Bais HaMikdash that will be built, soon in our days. Amen.”

¹ רש"י דברים כז:ח

² מדרש איכה

³ דברים ב:ה

⁴ כתבי האריז"ל

⁵ זכרי' יד:ד

⁶ רש"י דברים ב:ה

⁷ מוסף לשלש רגלים – "והשיאנו ה' אלוקינו את ברכת מועדיך"

⁸ ר' פנחס קאריצער

⁹ תהלים כג:ד

¹⁰ בבא קמא דף נ"ח

¹¹ אוהב ישראל, דברים

¹² אוהב ישראל, דברים

¹³ בני יששכר

¹⁴ עירובין דף מ"א ע"א, תענית דף כ"ט ע"ב

¹⁵ עיין חת"ס על התורה - בהר

¹⁶ זוהר

¹⁷ עיין שיר בני היכלא, לאר"י

¹⁸ מדרש תנחומא פרק א'

¹⁹ שמות כה:כ

²⁰ זכרי' ח:ט

²¹ מוסף לשלש רגלים

²² מדרש איכה פתיחתא סימן ל"ג