



# PARSHAS EMOR

SHALOSH SEUDOS TORAH  
5772

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# The Rectification of the Moon

## Combining Parshios

The fabric of each Shabbos is woven from the specific parsha read on it. One should not mix up the parshios, warns the Zohar, rather one must read only the parsha that belongs to each specific Shabbos<sup>1</sup>.

The letters of the Torah correspond to Jewish souls. A complete parsha corresponds to a complete Jewish sect or community. Just as we should not exchange parshios, so should we avoid exchanging our community and individual customs for those of another. Each parsha, family and community is unique and should retain its identity.

However, due to certain spiritual deficiencies which manifest themselves in the fact that there are more parshios than there are Shabbosos that do not occur on Yom Tov (except in some leap years), we sometimes need to read two parshios together on one Shabbos.

We do so before Pesach – Vayakheil with Pekudei; during the Sefirah – Tazria with Metzora, Acharei Mos with Kedoshim and Behar with Bechukosei; during the Three Weeks - Matos with Masei; and before Rosh Hashana – Nitzavim with Vayeleich.

## The Inferiority of the Moon

Initially, Hashem created two equivalent luminaries, the sun and the moon. They both shone with the same brightness. Seeking to gain advantage, the moon spoke disparagingly of the sun<sup>2</sup>. Hashem responded by commanding the moon to make itself smaller.

Due to its quarrel with the sun, the moon is not only much smaller and less luminous than the sun; it also trails behind it by about eleven days each year.

The sun is symbolic of Hashem, and the moon of the Jewish people. The inferiority of the moon is symbolic of the imperfect state of creation and of the exiled state of the Jewish people.

## Rectifying the Mistake of the Moon

We were exiled from Eretz Yisrael due to petty infighting. During periods that are very apt for the redemption, we attempt to rectify this failing by increasing love and fellowship. We are told that Tishrei, Nissan and Shavuot are times that are particularly auspicious for Mashiach's arrival.

Therefore, precisely during these periods, we combine two parshios in one Shabbos. True, usually each sect of Jews makes Shabbos for themselves according to their own customs and traditions, and they shouldn't mix. However, during periods when Mashiach's arrival is much more likely, we want to go above and beyond in the area of brotherhood. We combine groups that would usually be separate in a display of exemplary unity.

Similarly, during the three week mourning period of the Temple's destruction, we combine Matos with Masei. We seek to improve our unity to rectify the sin of discord that brought about the destruction.

## Falling Behind

Jews outside of Eretz Yisrael generally observe two days of Yom Tov, in contrast to Jews of Eretz Yisrael who observe only one.

This year a remarkable phenomenon occurred. The eighth day of Pesach, which only the Jews of exile celebrated, was on Shabbos. This means that they did not read a parsha of the Torah and instead read the appropriate passages of the holiday.

The Jews of Eretz Yisrael, however, read the parsha of Shemini that Shabbos. The next Shabbos the Jews of exile read Parshas Shemini, but the Jews of Eretz Yisrael read Parshas Tazria and Metzora. When - in an attempt to catch up to the Jews of Eretz Yisrael - we read two parshios, Tazria and Metzora; they leaped forward too, and

read Acharei Mos and Kedoshim. The third week we doubled up parshios again, but could not catch up - for Eretz Yisrael reads Parshas Emor.

Finally, this week - the week after Lag B'Omer - Eretz Yisrael slowed down and read only one parsha – Behar - while we read Emor. Next week, we will finally catch up; we will read Behar and Bechukosei, and in Eretz Yisrael only Bechukosei will be read.

Why did we have to wait so long to catch up? The week after Pesach, while we read Shemini, in Eretz Yisrael they could have read only Tazria; and the week afterwards we would have read Tazria and Metzora, and in Eretz Yisrael they would have read only Metzora - and we would have caught up to Eretz Yisrael.

### **Futile Attempt to Catch up**

The Jewish people, who are compared to the moon, were exiled from Eretz Yisrael due to the same failing as the moon - they quarreled and gossiped.

In the Musaf prayer of Yom Tov we lament, "גלינו מארצנו ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתנו", 'we were exiled from our country and we were distanced from our land.' Firstly, we were exiled from the land of Eretz Yisrael but retained a spiritual connection through reading the same parsha of the Torah.

However, sometimes we are also spiritually severed from Eretz Yisroel – "ונתרחקנו", 'and we were distanced' from its Torah - by not reading the same parsha.

During the days of Sefirah we work on rectifying the cause of the separation, baseless hatred and bad character. Lag B'Omer represents the achievement of this goal (as explained on the previous Shabbos). Only after reaching Lag B'Omer can we hope to reconnect with Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, it is only after Lag B'Omer passes together with its Shabbos, that we at last have the same Torah reading as Eretz Yisrael.

Only after we have improved ourselves in the sin that caused our exile, are we reconnected spiritually to our homeland.

### **Dovid and Yonoson**

Every lack of peace has its roots in the first quarrel of history, that of the moon with the sun.

Throughout history, there was tension between the tribes that descended from Rachel and those that are the children of Leah. The jealousy that King Shaul (of Binyamin, son of Rachel) had of King David (of Yehuda, son of Leah) was a prototype of this tension.

When Mashiach will come, "אֶפְרַיִם לֹא-יִקְנָא אֶת-יְהוּדָה וְיְהוּדָה לֹא-יִצַּר אֶת-אֶפְרַיִם"<sup>3</sup>, 'Ephraim (the children of Rachel) will not be jealous of Yehuda (the children of Leah) and Yehuda will not restrict Ephraim.' With the coming of Mashiach, the fault of the moon, and with it every sort of hatred, will disappear. The moon will shine in all its glory and will be in stride with the sun.

There was but one example in history of the children of Rachel and Leah coexisting peacefully - and that was David with Yonoson, the son of King Shaul. Yonoson had good reason to be jealous of David. Had David not been anointed king, Yonoson would have inherited the throne from his father, Shaul. However, he overcame his natural inclination and truly and completely loved David, who was the anointed one of Hashem.

Each parsha comes with a corresponding Haftorah, a chapter of Navi that is read after reading from the Torah. Just as we read different parshios than Eretz Yisrael did this year between Pesach and Parshas Behar, so did we read different Haftorahs. However, the Shabbos after Pesach was the eve of Rosh Chodesh - when the moon renews itself – and the Haftorah of the parsha is abandoned in favor of a special Haftora for a Shabbos which occurs on the day before Rosh Chodesh.

This Haftora describes this unusual love that reigned between David and Yonoson. David and Yonoson exemplified the era of a rectified moon, when the jealousy and competition between Yehuda and Ephraim - which is rooted in the jealousy of the moon - will disappear.

How appropriate is it that theirs is the Haftora read to greet a renewing moon. Due to its sin of quarreling, the moon's light is not constant, and it begins to dim mid-month until it disappears. With the first of the month, the moon begins to shine once more; the effects of its sin are mitigated. The unity between Yonoson and David was a flash of unity in an era of fragmentation.

Theirs is the only Haftora we shared with Eretz Yisrael in this period when we experience the repercussions of baseless hatred. The power of their friendship temporarily suspended the effects of the diminished moon.

### **Eliyahu, Elisha, Gechazi**

King Shlomo, in Shir Hashirim, describes the phenomena of the Jewish people's pursuit of Hashem. "קמתי" "אני לפתח לדודי... ודודי חמק עבר"<sup>4</sup> 'I stood up to open the door for my Beloved, but my Beloved hid Himself and passed on.'

The Jewish people - the moon - move as fast as they can but cannot catch up to the "שמש ומגן ה'", 'Sun and Shield [which allude to] Hashem.' The Jew of exile tries to catch up to the source of his spiritual bounty, his holy homeland, but finds himself perpetually behind in a year when the eighth day of Pesach occurs on Shabbos.

The Prophet Elisha had an unworthy attendant named Gechazi. After Gechazi committed many serious offenses, Elisha cursed him with tzaraas (leprosy); and Gechazi had to leave the city never to return to his teacher<sup>6</sup>.

The Chiddushei HaRim discussed the various degrees to which the Prophet Eliyahu reveals himself to tzaddikim (righteous people). The highest level is when Eliyahu comes with his disciple Elisha and then they leave. Immediately afterwards, Gechazi arrives, out of breath from running, and asks, "Was my rebbe, Elisha, here? Was my rebbe here?"

For thousands of years, Gechazi continues to chase his master, but Elisha is always one step ahead of him.

The predicament of Jews exiled from Eretz Yisrael for the sin of speaking lashon hara, is similar to the Metzora (person who was punished with tzaraas for the sin of speaking lashon hara), who was required to exit the city. They are similar to Gechazi, the paradigm of the Metzora, especially during the period when they cannot even catch up to the Torah of Eretz Yisrael and remain behind - like the moon who trails the sun as a result of speaking evil of it.

### **Gechazi will Eventually Reach Elisha**

When Eliyahu will come to herald the redemption, he will come with his disciple Elisha and Gechazi. After his three thousand year futile pursuit of his rebbe, Gechazi will finally reach him.

אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא" are gematria (numerically equal) "אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא" 'I wait for [Mashiach] each day that he should come' (they both equal 497). We wait for Eliyahu to arrive together with his successor, Elisha, and include every banished Jew as symbolized by Gechazi.

### **Charvona, May He be Remembered for the Good**

In the story of the Megilah of Esther, Charvona advised Achashveirosh to have Haman hung. We are taught that this was actually Eliyahu.

חורבן is similar to חרבונו, destruction. In a time of destruction, when all spirituality is concealed, Eliyahu Hanavi appears hidden in different guises. This manner of Eliyahu's appearance is referred to as 'Charvona.'

Therefore, in the last stanza of Shoshanas Yaakov, we recall, "חרבונה זכור לטוב", 'Charvona - may he be remembered for the good.' We mention Eliyahu in his exile mode, and pray that he appear in a 'good' manner, in his revealed splendor.

When Eliyahu will appear in circumstances of 'טוב' - at the redemption - Gechazi will be fully rehabilitated. Therefore, גמטריה גהזי תיקון וגם חרבונה זכור לטוב is gematria גהזי תיקון, the rectification of Gechazi (they both equal 594).

## Yovel

We are now entering a period during which the light of Yovel (Jubilee) shines. At Mincha we already read parts of Parshas Behar which discusses the laws of Yovel.

This world revolves around cycles of seven. The seventh day of the week is Shabbos when the Jew rests, and the seventh year is Shemita when the Jewish land rests. The Shabbos is very great; it has the power of elevating one who yearns for spiritual ascent.

However, there are those who are complacent in the quagmire of impurity. They feel no need to leave their predicament. They do not take advantage of the Shabbos.

The Jewish slave was in a very sorry spiritual state. He was permitted to marry a non-Jewish slave-woman; so low had he fallen. Nonetheless, he had the option of going free in the seventh year.

However, there is a slave that is so low that he is happy to remain a slave! He is comfortable with his master and non-Jewish slave-wife and seeks no spirituality.

For this man the Shabbos is of no help. He needs the Yovel.

Seven is a number corresponding to this world which was created in seven days. When we move to realms higher than seven, we are in heaven. Yovel, the fiftieth year, arrives after seven cycles of seven; it is from the heavenly realms of eight.

The Yovel leaves the slave no choice. Come the fiftieth year, he must go free! He does not have the option of remaining a slave. Furthermore, a Jew's portion in Eretz Yisrael is returned to him, no matter to whom it was sold.

Yovel is very powerful. With it, every Jew has hope.

After counting the seven weeks of Sefirah, we come to Shavuos, which is the fiftieth day. The light of Yovel shines on Shavuos. Rays of this light can already be discerned beginning from Lag B'Omer.

## Each Jew Merits a Portion in the World to Come

On each of the six Shabbosos of Sefirah we recite one chapter of Pirkei Avos and preface it with the Mishna, "כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא שנאמר: ... לעולם יירשו ארץ..."<sup>7</sup>, 'Every Jew has a portion in the World to Come, proof from the verse: they will inherit the land forever.' Proof that the every Jew has a part in the World to Come is that they all have a permanent portion in Eretz Yisrael.

How does having a permanent portion in Eretz Yisrael prove that the one has a portion in the World to Come? The heavenly counterpart of Eretz Yisrael is the World to Come. Since every single Jew, even Gechazi (see Parshas Metzora), has a portion in Eretz Yisrael, every Jew also merits a portion in the World to Come.

The very worst Jew in history had the soul of the son of Shlomis who was fathered by an Egyptian and cursed the name of Hashem, as related in this week's parsha. Even he will eventually - after fifty thousand Yovels - merit a rectification for his soul<sup>8</sup>.

"בונה ירושלים ה' וינוקב שם ה' מות יומת"<sup>9</sup>, 'One who curses the name of Hashem should be killed' is gematria "בונה ירושלים ה' וינוקב שם ה' מות יומת", 'Hashem builds Yerushalayim, He will gather the banished Jews' (they both equal 1432). When Yerushalayim will finally be rebuilt, the most banished Jew - the soul of the son of the Egyptian who cursed Hashem - will be included.

## Casting Away Materialism

It is the Shabbos after Lag B'Omer that Eretz Yisrael stops running away from us and slows down to give us a chance to catch up.

The Chiddushei HaRim was traveling in a wagon when his assistant saw a man running after the wagon. The man wanted the Rebbe to help him find a salvation for his sinful soul. The assistant wanted to slow down the wagon so the man could catch up, but the Rebbe waved the carriage forward.

In desperation to reach the Rebbe, the man cast his aristocratic walking stick to the side in order to be able to run faster. Then the Rebbe commanded the wagon to stop and explained that one needs to be willing to give something up in order to merit a salvation.

On Lag B'Omer we are exposed to the very great light of the soul of Rabbi Shimon. Even the lowest Jews feel this light. On this day, everyone sheds some of his materialism in an effort to strive to holiness.

By having 'given something up' we merited that Eretz Yisrael slowed down for us so that we can catch up to it.

ונזכה להתקדש ולהטהר מכל סיג ופגם ולקבל התורה באנפין נהירין ונשוב איש אל אחוזתו ואל מחנהו ואיש על דגלו  
May we merit to be made holy, and to be purified from all grime and blemish, and accept the Torah with a shining face - each man in his portion, in his camp with its flag.

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<sup>1</sup> מגן אברהם

<sup>2</sup> תרגום יונתן בראשית

<sup>3</sup> ישעיה' יג:יג

<sup>4</sup> שיר השירים ה:ה-ו

<sup>5</sup> תהלים פד:יב

<sup>6</sup> ריש מלכים ב'

<sup>7</sup> סנהדרין י"א

<sup>8</sup> עיין בהיכל הברכה

<sup>9</sup> ויקרא כד:טז