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Parshat Devarim

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Chug in Camp Hasc Wednesday Night!

Next week's chug will be at Camp Hasc at 10:30 PM (9:30 camp time). For more details call 917-514-5438 or email cbina.yna@gmail.com.

The YNA Melave Malka reunion with HaRav Bina will B'ezrat Hashem be July 31 - details to follow.

Five Towns Melave Malkas for the Summer!

Bring friends from any Yeshivah.

9:45-11:00 Basketball/Swimming

11:00 BBQ/Dvar Torah

This week's Melave Malka will take place at 11 Manor, in Lawrence. The Melave Malka will not be every week, and will be weather permitting. Call 516-318-1207 to check.

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HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Devarim

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

Printer Friendly Sichva



"The Cause of the Destruction - a Lack of Faith"

Moshe Rabenu tells us: "Hashem said to me: You shall not distress Moab and you shall not provoke war with them" (Devarim 2:9). Chazal wonder why Moshe had to be told not to wage war with Moab: "could it have entered the mind of Moshe to wage war without Divine sanction?!" (Baba Kamma 38a). We know that when Moshe fought Sichon and Og, he was merely following Hashem's directive (see Devarim 2:24, 3:2). Why then, would Moshe even consider fighting Moab on his own, that he needs to be commanded not to? Chazal explain: "Moshe reasoned with a 'kal vachomer' as follows:

if in the case of the Midianites who came only to assist the Moabites, the Torah commanded 'harass the Midianites and smite them' (Bamidbar 25:17), in the case of the Moabites should not the same injunction apply even more strongly" (Baba Kamma 38a). A 'kal vachomer', as we know is, one of the "rules by which the Torah is elucidated" (the Braita of R' Yishamel - introduction to Sifra).

Rashi and Tosafot (see Sukkah 31a) dispute whether we are permitted to introduce our own derivations using the principles of elucidation, or whether we must use only those which have been handed down to us from generation to generation. Regarding two of these principles they are in agreement - we may not deduce on our own a "gezerah shava" that is not part of our tradition, and we are permitted to derive a 'kal vachomer' of our own.

The halacha states that construction of the Beit Hamikdash must follow Hashem's strict guidelines - man may not make any changes on his own volition, as it says: "everything is in writing, by the hand of Hashem, which He gave me understanding to know" (Divrei Hayamim I 28:19 - see Sukkah 51b and Zevachim 31a). This axiom, however, includes that which can be derived by means of a 'kal vachomer'. In other words what we determine using a 'kal vachomer' has the status of "in writing by the hand of Hashem" (see Sukkah 52a). The Torah was given to us to be elucidated and explained by means of a 'kal vachomer', and the results of these derivations have the status of that which is explicitly stated. Even "the scroll that Shmuel handed over to David (containing specific instructions on how to build the Beit Hamikdash and its vessels) is given to derivation" - using the rules by which the Torah is elucidated (see Yerushalmi Megilla 1:1).

We can now understand why if Hashem commanded Moshe Rabenu "Harass the Midianites" (Bamidbar 25:17), he could have assured we can assume by means of a 'kal vachomer' that Hashem had commanded him to wage war against Moab as well. He therefore had to be specifically commanded to desist from doing so. Although Chazal tell us that one cannot be punished for an offense not explicitly forbidden in the Torah but only derived by means of a 'kal vachomer' ("we do not punish based on a kal vachomer" (Sanhedrin 54a)), this is only because a 'kal vachomer' is a human intellectual derivation whose logic may be flawed. We cannot risk punishing someone for something which we consider prohibited, if in fact it may be permitted (see Rashi Sanhedrin 73a "hekeisha"). This, of course, does not apply to Moshe Rabenu's 'kal vachomer', for Moshe had complete mastery over the entire Torah and cannot be suspected of flawed logic or of forgetting a certain law. Even if Moshe could be mistaken, the Almighty would certainly inform him of his mistake, which is precisely what took place - Hashem did not agree with Moshe's 'kal vachomer' (not due to some flaw in the 'kal vachomer' itself) and He commanded him "Do not distress Moab". It is also possible that this whole principle of "we do not punish based on a 'kal vachomer'" only applies to punishments of death at the hands of Beit Din, but a "kal vachomer" would provide sufficient reason for going to war, and therefore Hashem had to prevent Moshe from doing so.

Why was Moshe forbidden to smite and destroy Moab the way he had done to the Midianites? Chazal tell us: "The Holy One Blessed is He said to him: the idea you have in your mind is not the idea I have in my mind. Two doves have I to bring forth from these nations - Ruth the Moabitess and Naama the Ammonitess" (Baba Kamma 38b). Ammon and Moab were wicked people, and it is due to their base character that we are forbidden to marry them: "because of the fact that they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were leaving Egypt" (Devarim 23:5), despite this, two doves are destined to emanate from them and because of that Hashem cannot let them be destroyed - "do not distress Moab". Destroying Moab now would amount to destroying the house of David and the Mashiach, G-d forbid.

The Gemara implies that had it not been for this one dove that was destined to descend

from them, the destruction of Moab would have been justified. How are we to understand this in light of the fact that the prohibition against marrying descendants of Ammon and Moab applies only to the men - "an Ammonite - not an Ammonitess, a Moabite - not a Moabitess" (Yevamot 76b). The Gemara explains that their sin was not having come forth to greet the Jewish people with bread and water. Such a complaint can only be filed against men, for it is not the manner of women to go out and greet passersby. Doeg the Edomite countered: "they should nevertheless have greeted the Israelites with bread and water - the Ammonite men should have greeted the Israelite men and the Ammonite women should have greeted the Israelite women" (ibid.). The Gemara, however, rejects this contention claiming that it is not even the way of women to go out even to greet other women, as the pasuk tells us: "Kol kvuda bat melech pnima" "every honorable princess dwelling within" (Tehillim 45:14). Another proof of this is the conversation between the angels and Avraham Avinu: "they said to him, where is Sarah your wife, and he said 'behold! - in the tent'" (Bereishit 18:9) - it is not the way of a woman to be outside her home (see Rashi Yevamot 76b and Rashi on Shoftim 5:24). (I would like to point out that advocates of "sherut leumi" - national service for women, are staging a rebellion against the kingdom of David! They are claiming that the women of Ammon and Moab should have sent out their women to greet the Jewish women. If that is true, then the women truly were guilty of "not coming out to greet the Jewish people with bread and water". Taking this one step further, we would have to conclude that it is forbidden to marry a female descendant of Ammon and Moab as well. Given that David was a descendant of Ruth the Moabite, he should be forbidden from marrying into the Jewish nation (as claimed Doeg the Edomite)). If the women of these nations were not guilty of any wrongdoing, why should they be destroyed? Why was it only Ruth's being a "good dove" that saved the nation, there was no reason to kill Ruth nor any of the other women?

The daughters of Ammon and Moab may not be prohibited to us in marriage, but this does not make them righteous women. We know that they worshipped Baal Peor and were guilty of many more serious offenses. Their merit alone was not sufficient to save the men from destruction. It was only the righteous Ruth, the mother of the future Moshiach who will descend from her speedily in our day, who had enough merit to save the entire Moab nation from destruction.

Chazal have described Ruth and Naama as "two good doves". They are both described as good, yet there is a vast difference between them. Ruth entered the congregation of Hashem four generations prior to Naama's marrying Shlomo Hamelech, and she merited having Oved, Yishai, David, and Shlomo descend from her. Chazal tell us what a great tzaddik Yishai was (see Shabbat 55b), David we know is the father of the Moshiach and composer of the book of Tehillim as well, while Shlomo Hamelech authored three books of Tanach (Mishlei, Kohelet, and Shir HaShirim), and built the Beit Hamikdash. These people and their accomplishments relate back only to Ruth, not to Naama.

Why was Ruth given a greater share than Naama: "on account of the one night by which the elder (daughter of Lot - mother of Moab) preceded the younger (daughter of Lot - mother of Ammon), she (Ruth) preceded her (Naama) by four generations in having a descendant in Israel: Oved, Yishai, David, and Shlomo" (Baba Kamma 38b). Lot's daughters both acted (see Bereishit 19:37-38) with the intent of fulfilling a Mitzvah (see Nazir 23a) - "they were under the impression that the whole world was destroyed as in the generation of the flood" (Rashi Bereishit 19:31). They saw it as their mission to save mankind, even if this was through an incestuous relationship with their father. It was the older daughter who came to her father one night earlier than her younger sister. For her speedy act, she was rewarded with Ruth as her descendant who entered the

Jewish nation four generations prior to Naama, the descendant of her sister. Both carried out the same Mitzvah, yet that difference of one night had a major impact. It was for her quickness and zeal that she was rewarded with the credit of four books of

Tanach and the building of the first Beit Hamikdash. The younger daughter's delay in acting resulted in her forfeiting any share in this. We see how much can be gained by extra "zrizut" and how much can be lost by a lack of it.

The Torah describes Shem and Yefet's covering their naked father: "and Shem and Yefet took a garment" (Bereishit 9:23) - "it is not written 'and they took' (vayikchu) rather 'and he took' (vayikach), this teaches us about Shem that he exerted effort in the fulfillment of the commandment more than Yefet" (Rashi there). That extra effort that Shem placed in carrying out this Mitzvah, on the surface, does not seem to be of any significance, yet it is immediately clear from the Torah's description and Noach's reaction that there is a major difference between them. Noach's blessing of Shem was: "Blessed is Hashem, the G-d of Shem" (Bereishit 9:26), while Yefet was blessed with "May G-d extend Yefet, but he will dwell in the tents of Shem" (ibid. 27). Yefet was given everything the physical world had to offer - Europe, America, Australia along with all their Dollars and Pounds Sterling. Regarding physical rewards it is written that their "end will be eternal destruction" (Bamidbar 24:20), Shem's reward, on the other hand, was spiritual and therefore of far greater and long lasting value. The Divine Presence was destined to "dwell in the tents of Shem" (Noach is alluding to the Shchina's dwelling in Yerushalayim - city of Malki Tzedek who was Shem himself - see Rashi Bereishit 14:18). In addition, we see that Hashem set aside His Name specifically for Shem "Blessed is Hashem, the G-d of Shem". We do not find, by the same token, the expression "G-d of Yefet". In later years there will be "G-d of Avraham, G-d of Yitzchak, and the G-d of Yaakov" (Shmot 3:6), but Shem was the first human being on whom Hashem conferred His Name.

Should Yefet not have been equally rewarded, did he and his brother Shem not carry out the Mitzvah together? The difference is that Yefet did not put the same effort into performance of the Mitzvah. We can explain that Shem acted "lishma" whereas Yefet acted "shelo lishma". Yefet was rewarded, but only in this world - with multitudes of dollars and sterling. The spiritual reward, have the Shchina dwell within him, was only given to Shem. We know that Yefet did have a share in the construction of the second Beit Hamikdash, for the Persians who built it were his descendants from him, yet Chazal tell us: "'May G-d grant beauty to Yefet and may He dwell in the tents of Shem' (Bereishit 9:27) - although G-d granted beauty to Yefet, the Divine Presence dwells only in the tents of Shem" (Yoma 9b-10a), the Shchina only dwelled in the first Beit Hamikdash that was built by Shlomo Hamelech - a descendant of Shem. Speedily in our day, the third Beit Hamikdash will be built by the Moshiach and will also be a housing for the Divine Presence. The Shchina, however, did not dwell in the second Beit Hamikdash which was constructed by descendants of Yefet. (Perhaps we can suggest an allusion to this from the pasuk "dwell in the tents of Shem". The name Shem is comprised of the two letters "shin" and "mem". The "shin" stands for Shlomo Hamelech, while the "mem" for Moshiach - thus the Shchina can only dwell in the Beit Hamikdash of Shlomo and the Moshiach - not the second Beit Hamikdash built by the Persian king Coresh). It would be improper to suggest that there was no Divine Presence at all in the second Beit Hamikdash, after all the miracle of Chanukah occurred during that time, the Beit Hamikdash contained the Menorah which was "a testimony for all mankind that the Divine Presence dwells with Israel" (Shabbat 22b), and many other miracles occurred, yet we cannot compare the level of the presence of the Shchina with that of the first Beit Hamikdash.

Chazal point out another distinction between the rewards granted Shem and Yefet - "Shem's children were privileged to be given the commandment of the tallit of tzitzit and Yefet earned burial for his children, as it says: 'I will give to Gog a place there for a tomb ... and there they will bury Gog and all his multitude' (Yechezkel 39:11)" (Rashi Bereishit 9:23). Both of the brothers were given a form of covering in reward for their having covered their father, yet what a difference there is between these two coverings! One of them was given a Tallit of Tzitzit - a Mitzvah equivalent to all Mitzvot,

regarding which it is written: "whoever is scrupulous in the observance of this Mitzvah is worthy to receive the Divine Presence" (Menachot 43b). Just prior to his passing, the Gr"a held on to his tzitzit crying: "how difficult it is to leave this world, for a mere few kopecks I can perform a Mitzvah that can elevate me so high that I can receive the Shchina. In the Next World, I can give everything I have and still not be able to perform such a Mitzvah! (see Aliyot Eliyahu - 117). Yefet also was given a covering, not tzitzit, but rather burial rights - to bury Gog and Magog may they be buried speedily in our day. One receives a Mitzvah and the other internment - what a vast difference there is between one who places that extra effort and joy into performing a Mitzvah and one who does not.

It is said in the name of the Ar"l HaKadosh z"l (whose Yahrzeit was on 5 Av) that he was able to achieve so much only because he carried out performance of each and every Mitzvah with great joy. He performed the same Mitzvot that other people did, yet his Mitzvot were imbued with joy and happiness, which enabled him to reach such lofty spiritual heights. I do not think there has been anyone since the time of R' Shimon Bar Yochai who managed to uncover the secrets of the Torah that the Ar"l did - all due to his joy in serving Hashem.

The Ramban tells us that the "tochacha" section of Parshat Ki Tavo alludes to the tragedies that were destined to accompany the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash (see his commentary to Vayikra 26:16). The reason the Torah provides for that exile, from which we are still suffering, is "Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of heart" (Devarim 28:47). Although Chazal tell us that the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash resulted from senseless hatred (see Yoma 9b), the root of this hatred was their not serving Hashem with joy. Had they carried out Mitzvot with joy, they would not have deteriorated to a situation of baseless hatred and other grave sins.

Similarly, Chazal tell us that the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash resulted from the people's having transgressed the three cardinal sins of idolatry, illicit relations, and murder. In the "tochacha" section of Parshat Bechukotai which the Ramban tells us refers to the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash, however, the Torah attributes the tragedies to not observing the laws of Shmitta - "and you, I will scatter among the nations ... then the Land will be appeased for its Sabbaticals during all the years of its desolation, while you are in the Land of your foes; then the Land will rest and it will appease for its Sabbaticals, all the years of its desolation it will rest, whatever it did not rest during your Sabbaticals when you dwelled upon her" (Vayikra 26:33-35). The first exile lasted for seventy years, corresponding to the number of Shmitta years that were not observed from the day they entered the Land of Israel, as we are told: "those who survived the sword he exiled to Babylonia ... this was in fulfillment of the word of Hashem spoken by Yirmiyahu, until the Land would be appeased of its Sabbatical years - all the years of its desolation it rested, to the completion of seventy years" (Divrei Hayamim II 36:20-21). How do we resolve this statement of Chazal attributing the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash to transgressing the three cardinal sins, with the Torah's attributing it to lack of Shmitta observance? We have to explain, as we did above in our discussion of the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash, that the root of violation of the cardinal sins was a lack of proper observance of Shmitta.

What do Shmitta and not serving Hashem amid an atmosphere of joy have in common? They each stem from a lack of faith. Had the faith of the people been stronger, they would have believed Hashem's bracha of "I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year" (Vayikra 25:21), and they would not have found Shmitta to be such a difficult Mitzvah to observe. Observance of Shmitta is a great test of one's belief. Once the people violated this prohibition their spiritual condition deteriorated further and further. Similarly, had the people during the period of the destruction of the second Beit

Hamikdash had more faith in Hashem, had they truly believed in reward and punishment, in the infinite reward awaiting those who observe Mitzvot, they would have rejoiced at the opportunity to fulfill each and every Mitzvah. Did they not realize that the one Mitzvah that Shem carried out with joy brought him infinite spiritual reward? Even Yefet - as reward for the Mitzvah of covering his father, was given vast amounts of dollars and sterling. Who among us would not fulfill a Mitzvah if we knew there was a million dollar reward awaiting us at the end? Would we not be happy to jump at every opportunity? One who does not keep Mitzvot has demonstrated that he does not believe in these rewards. This lack of faith begins to manifest itself with a lackluster attitude towards Mitzvot. When joy is lacking in our Mitzvot, we cannot transmit the message to our future generations - without proper warmth the food cannot cook. A clear example of this was Mendelsohn - father of the "haskala" movement. He was known to keep the Mitzvot, but in a very cold manner. The result was that many of his children and students left the faith.

This lack of faith, the root of the destruction of both Temples, is alluded to in the Torah. When the spies returned from their mission and related what they saw, we are told: "The entire assembly raised up and issued its voice; the people wept that night" (Bamidbar 14:1) - "Rabbah observed in R' Yochanan's name - it was the night of the ninth of Av and the A-lmighty said to Israel: You wept in vain, therefore I will establish it for you as a time of weeping for all generations" (Sanhedrin 104b) - referring to the two destructions that are destined to occur on that day. How does Moshe, at a later stage, refer to the sin of the spies? "Yet in this matter, you do not believe in Hashem, your G-d" (Devarim 1:32) - the people lacked faith that Hashem could overpower the fortified cities and the giant inhabitants that the spies came across during their tour of Israel. It was this lack of faith that caused them to weep that night and for many generations thereafter.

Lack of faith, in fact, is the root of all sin - during the periods of the first and second Beit Hamikdash as well as at all other times. If we would believe with a full heart in the great reward awaiting us for every word of Torah we learn - a reward that cannot be measured in dollars but in our spiritual bank account in Heaven, we would rejoice at each and every opportunity to learn. The only thing that prevents us from learning is a lack of faith. Among the other rewards for Torah study, Chazal tell us: "he who studies Torah 'lishma' ... hastens the redemption" (Sanhedrin 99b).

If it was a lack of faith that resulted in our weeping in response to the account of the spies, resulting in our mourning the destruction of Yerushalayim for the past two thousand years, then we must realize that a strengthening of our faith can bring about tremendous good. The prophet tells us: "for a brief moment have I forsaken you, and with ... I have concealed My countenance from you for a moment, but with eternal kindness shall I show you mercy" (Yeshayahu 54:7-8). Two thousand years of Inquisition, Holocaust, Intifada, and any other name you may wish to call it will feel as "a moment". We can only imagine what "eternal kindness" means - a salvation and consolation that words cannot begin to describe. This can be accomplished by strengthening our faith, our Torah study, our rectifying of the violation of the three cardinal sins that lead to the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash and the senseless hatred that was the cause of the destruction of the second one.

We must strengthen our "bitachon", confidence in Hashem as well. What is bitachon? The Chazon Ish (see Emunah uBitachon perek 2, note 1) explains that this does not imply that I am confident that Hashem will do for me as I wish. There were scholars of the Mussar movement who used such a definition for bitachon (A story is told of R' Yisrael M'Salant zt"l that he once gave a drasha in Shule in which he claimed that if one has total bitachon that Hashem will answer his wish, Hashem will indeed answer that wish - whatever it may be even if he desires ten thousand rubles. A tradesman in the audience listened very intently and said to himself: "why work? I will sit in the Beit

Midrash and spend my entire time engrossed in learning and davening. I will have complete bitachon that Hashem will provide me with ten thousand rubles and on that I will sustain myself!". The man did just that, he quite his job and went to sit and learn in the Beit Midrash. Days turned into weeks until his final penny was exhausted - with no sign of the ten thousand rubles. He approached R' Yisrael asking him why his request did not produce any results. R' Yisrael responded that if he truly believes with a full heart that Hashem will provide him with the money, it will surely come. R' Yisrael said to the man that he realizes he is growing impatient, perhaps he can give him five thousand rubles in exchange for the ten thousand that will surely come his way. The man was overjoyed and jumped at the opportunity. R' Yisrael then said to him: "go back to your work, if you are willing to sell your share of ten thousand rubles for a mere five thousand, this is a sign that you lack bitachon in the arrival of the ten thousand, if so there is no reason for you to wait for fulfillment of your request" (see Tnuat Mussar section one, end of chapter 27). R' Yisrael's view, as we have seen, is that if one has total bitachon, Hashem will fill any and all of his desires). The Chazon Ish differed with this definition of bitachon. He defined bitachon as "total belief that nothing in this world happens by chance - Hashem determines all that will happen". Things do not take place simply because I want them to. How do I know what is best for me? Would it really have been in the tradesman's best interest to be given his ten thousand rubles? Many Jews left Poland as a result of the extreme poverty that existed there and in an effort to improve their lot eventually found their way to Eretz Yisrael or Iehavdil, America. We know what happened to the wealthy Jews who remained behind in Poland. Wealth in this case was their downfall. Many wealthy Jews educated their children in the "enlightened" non-Jewish institutions, whereas those who could not afford the tuition educated their children in Yeshivot and chederim. The children of the wealthy people left assimilated, while the children from less affluent families went on to lead lives of Torah and Mitzvot.

Each month, on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh we ask Hashem for: "a life in which Hashem fulfills our heartfelt requests for the good" - we may be aware of what it is that we desire, but we cannot know whether it is truly best for us. We may be experiencing the Intifada and other troubles, yet we must have the bitachon that Hashem is carrying us on a path that will lead to the arrival of the Moshiach and a total redemption speedily in our day. R' Simcha Zisel of Kelm zt"l gave the following interpretation of the pasuk: "When Hashem will return the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers" (Tehillim 126:1): when the Moshiach finally arrives all the trials and tribulations we suffered throughout the generations will appear as nothing but a dream. This can be compared to one who is being beaten terribly only to awaken under the warmth of his blanket and discover that it was all a dream. This long exile, which included the Holocaust and many other tragedies, will appear as nothing but a bad dream for in reality it was all part of the tremendous chesed that Hashem showers us with.

The Gemara tells us that when R' Akiva and his colleagues were about to enter the orchard in their quest to uncover some of the hidden secrets of the Torah: "R' Akiva said to them: when you arrive at the stones of pure marble, do not say 'water, water!', for it is said: 'one who tells lies shall not be established before my eyes' (Tehillim 101:7)" (Chagiga 14b). I did not merit entering the orchard and therefore cannot understand the deep meaning behind this statement, but on a simple level it would appear that the "pure marble stones" refers to Hashem's attribute of judgment (like marble - strong and hard) and "water" alludes to the attribute of chesed. On who is on a very high level can discern that judgment (marble) is really chesed (water). All the judgment Hashem meted out in this world over the years - the terrible tragedies and illnesses, were done only to improve our situation. There are times when a doctor must amputate a patient's leg, G-d forbid. Do we call the doctor a cruel person? No! He is acting on behalf of the sick!

In the future it will become clear to us that even the marble is water. R' Akiva, however, warned his colleagues that at this point we are forbidden to make such a statement. We may understand on an intellectual level that all of our troubles are for our own good, yet when we do suffer in this world, we may not recite the bracha "hatov vehemetiv" "Who is good and does good", we may only say "dayan haemet" "the True Judge". In the Next World, "on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One" (Zecharia 14:9), will everything that transpires become clear and only then may we say "hatov vehemetiv" even for tragedies (see Pesachim 50a). In this world even R' Akiva and his colleagues were not on the level where they could recite "hatov vehemetiv" for their troubles.

Each and every day, we recite: "on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One", it only at Mincha of Shabbat that we say: "You ARE One and Your Name is One" [40] , for Mincha of Shabbat is when we begin to taste a piece of the Next World. Although the entire Shabbat feels like the Next World, the peak of this feeling is felt at Mincha. Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabenu established that we read the Torah on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbat morning. Ezra came along at a later time and enacted the Torah reading for Mincha of Shabbat (see Baba Kamma 82a). The Gemara explains Ezra's enactment as being for the sake of those sitting on the street corners. The Gr"a used to say that Chazal always had additional reasons for many decrees, beyond those which are explicitly stated. Perhaps we can add the following reason for Ezra's decree: During the time of Moshe Rabenu, the Jewish people were on a high spiritual level - there may have been downfalls such as the Golden Calf and the spies but the overall situation was quite good. The Jewish people were constantly moving from strength to strength - from Egypt to Har Sinai, onward through the desert to the Land of Israel, and to the eventual construction of the Beit Hamikdash. The Jewish people were on an upward trend, in which "Israel will attain success" (Bamidbar 24:19). The period of Ezra followed the great disaster of the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Although the second Beit Hamikdash was now under construction, it brought with it its share of disappointments. The people were crying over the fact that the Divine Presence did not reside in the second Beit Hamikdash the way it did during the first one (see Ezra 3:12). The Jewish people's had sunk so low that many took non-Jewish wives (ibid. 9-10) and at one point they forgot to build a Sukkah (see Nehemiah 8:14) and carry out other Mitzvot.

This period was followed by the many decrees of the Greeks against the Jewish nation. How can the nation be comforted, what can we tell them? To look forward - not only to look at the present but to look ahead towards the future as well. The Jewish people must realize that a better world awaits us. This is Shabbat Mincha - a glimpse of the Parsha to be read the following week. This is especially poignant this coming Shabbat - Shabbat Chazon. On Shabbat Chazon we begin our mourning - the Ramma is of the opinion (see Orach Chaim 553:2) that the prohibition against Torah study on the eve of Tisha B'Av after midday applies on Shabbat as well. Amid all that sadness, we come to Shule for Mincha to hear the beginning of the Torah reading for Shabbat Nachamu. We are now in the midst of Shabbat Chazon, yet we must realize that what lies ahead for us is Shabbat Nachamu. Many years ago I thought of this idea, and this year I realize that we can apply this to the Torah reading of Tisha B'Av itself. The Torah reading begins with some very difficult statements: "when you beget children and grandchildren and will have been long in the Land, you will grow corrupt and make a carved image of anything" (Devarim 4:25). As we read the many terrible things that will occur, we eventually arrive at the pasuk: also read "You have been shown in order to know that Hashem, He is the G-d! There is none beside Him!" (ibid. 35) - the pasuk that introduces our Simchat Torah festivities. Even on the mournful day of Tisha B'Av we look forward to better times, to Simchat Torah. May it be the will of Hashem that "the fast of the fifth month ... shall be for the house of Yehuda a time for joy and happiness for us and the entire house of Israel" (Zecharia 8:19). May all the prophecies of the prophets be fulfilled and may we soon merit "Hashem will be the King over all the land;

on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One" (Zecharia 14:9)

Kollel Rennert Dvar Torah by HaRav Oren Cohen

MOURNING AND CONSOLATION

We have almost arrived at the culmination of the period of year referred to as bein hametzarim - may we merit these days being transformed into days of joy and happiness and all sadness and suffering behind us. Amen.



The Mishna in Massechet Taanit (26b) states: "when the month of Av enters we reduce our joy" - our joy is already reduced more than a week prior to the day in which the actual destruction took place. The fact is that many mourning practices have already been in effect since 17 Tamuz. The intensity of the mourning increases as we move forward from 17 Tamuz towards 9 Av.

Beginning on 17 Tamuz, many communities have a practice not to cut their hair, get married, wear new clothes, and listen to music. When Rosh Chodesh arrives we cease eating meat, drinking wine, and washing clothes. The week in which Tisha B'Av falls the mourning practices intensify even more including the fact that on the Shabbat prior to Tisha B'Av there are many who do not wear their full complement of Shabbat clothes. Regardless of each person's specific minhagim the common denominator is that it becomes progressively stricter as each day passes.

The Rama rules that on Erev Tisha B'Av the only Torah we learn are subjects relating to destruction and mourning - this is because learning Torah brings joy to the heart.

The meal prior to the fast, the seudah hamafseket is eaten by each person individually while sitting on the ground and there are limitations regarding what specifically may be eaten.

The culmination of mourning occurs on Tisha B'Av where we observe laws of a mourner as well as the five afflictions of refraining from eating, drinking, bathing/washing, wearing shoes, and marital relations. Many do not wear tefillin in the morning. We sit on the ground and there are those who sleep with a rock under their head. In addition, we refrain from greeting each other and we spend many hours reciting kinot mourning the destruction of the House of Hashem.

What happens at this point is what requires explanation. The moment midday arrives, the time when the Beit HaMikdash was set on fire by the enemy, it is precisely here that the laws of mourning are relaxed - we may sit on chairs, we may wear our tallit and tefillin, the parochet is returned to the Aron HaKodesh, we begin to learn subjects of consolation. What is the meaning behind this? The mourning practices until now became stronger leading up to this terrible moment, we finally reach it, and suddenly it begins to decrease!

Some have explained this practice based on a tradition that the Moshiach will be born on Tisha B'Av afternoon (see Esther Rabba peticha 14). We can now begin to understand this atmosphere of consolation which begins after chatzot.

There is another explanation from which we can derive a very valuable lesson:

These days are designated for mourning the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and the resulting exile - the laws of mourning have intensified from 17 Tamuz until 9 Av. However, the greater the level of mourning, the greater there is reason for consolation. Why? Because, as in everything else in life - the stronger a person loves and feels connected to something, the more he mourns its loss. When what has been

lost was not of such great importance, the less he cries over the loss.

If something is very valuable yet the person feels no strong connection to it, he will not mourn from the depths of his heart (e.g. a child, G-d forbid, whose mother dies shortly after he was born will not feel the same loss no matter how hard he tries, as one who is orphaned from a mother who raised him).

The feeling of mourning is strongest when the loss is something very dear and a person feels connected to it.

Let us relate this to our mourning over Yerushalayim.

When a person suffers a great loss, the feeling of despair begins to lessen as time progresses. This, however, is not the case when speaking of the mourning over the destruction of Yerushalayim. Many years have passed and yet we continue to mourn and cry and to observe mourning practices. Why is this so? Why are we mourning an event which took place 2,000 years ago?

We are mourning the loss of the Beit HaMikdash and yearning for the arrival of Moshiach and the glory days of our past. Every Jew who feels a connection yearns for these days both spiritually as well as physically.

Feeling the loss implies a connection to our past. When we feel the connection, then the mourning becomes deeper and more intense - we feel the loss firsthand. This feeling of loss also means praying for a better future, knowing what it is that we want. This is precisely the point - the deeper we mourn, the stronger our soul feels connected to the eternity of the Jewish nation and to all the great things we once had. This is precisely our consolation - that we have not separated from our roots - the Jewish people feels connected to the Beit HaMikdash with every fiber of its soul.

Chazal write: "whoever mourns Yerushalayim merits and sees its joy" (Taanit 30b). Why did Chazal use the present tense, should have not been written in future tense - "will merit and will see its joy"? Chazal are teaching us that a person who feels the loss - this is his consolation - that he feels connected. He merits and sees its joy in the present.

We began by asking why at the height of mourning, our mourning practices begin to lessen. The answer is that if we have reached this point, if we have observed the mourning practices with all its details, then we are connected. When we feel connected we will feel consoled that Hashem will redeem us with the total redemption which He has promised us many times through His prophets.

Chazal teach us (Taanit 29a) that the wicked Tarnus Rufus plowed the Heichal in fulfillment of the prophecy: "Zion will be plowed like a field" (Yirmiyahu 26:18). The following beautiful idea has been suggested:

One of the incidents of destruction which we mourn on Tisha B'Av is the plowing of the city. One could ask of what significance is it that the city was plowed - once the Beit HaMikdash has been destroyed why should it matter whether or not the city has been plowed.

Had the ruins remained as they were, so long as a person sees what he has lost he will feel saddened - the memory will not easily dissipate and he will feel and mourn the loss every time he passes by that location. The wicked Tarnus Rufus in all his wickedness, sought to plow and entirely destroy every remnant of the glorious past. There was no longer a past - it has died. Now at the sight of the Beit HaMikdash are plants, flowers, gardens, and orchards - a new world, come and experience the present.

Tornus Rufus had the goal of erasing the past and erasing any hope for the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash in the future. Nothing can be worse than our disengagement from the past.

Our consolation is that in the present we feel connected to the past.

The story is told that Napoleon once passed by a shul on the night of Tisha B'Av and observed many Jews sitting on the floor to dim lights and reciting the kinot. Napoleon wished to know what they were busy with and when he heard that they were mourning the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash which had taken place many years before, he reacted: any nation that remembers and knows how to mourn the past will be guaranteed a future.

Let us pray to the Creator that still this year the Beit HaMikdash will be rebuilt and He will console us with the arrival of the Moshiach and the building of our house of Glory. Amen.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Visitor Log

The following people visited/learned in Yeshiva:

- Jonathan (Chaim) Frankel (5768-69)
- Adam Lewis (5762-63)
- Rabbi Jeffrey Geizhals (5738)

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- [David](#) (5768-69) Kastner on his engagement to Atara Dubinsky.
- [Rav](#) Yaakov (Jeffrey, 5750-51, Kollel & Staff) and Karen Thaler on the birth of a daughter.

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

Printer Friendly Tehillim List

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Ditzza bat Vardit | ● Avraham David ben Miriam Goldeh |
| ● Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel | ● Ephraim Yitzchak ben Golda |
| ● Chaya bat Grunia | ● Margalit bat Rachel |
| ● Yitzchok ben Shayna Ita | ● Yaacov ben Baila |
| ● Moshe Zanvel ben Brindel | ● Leah bat Eidel |
| ● Gershon Yitzchok ben Mottel Tzerel | ● Ester Bas Lea |
| ● Reuven ben Tova Chaya | ● Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah |
| ● Rivka Margalit bat Etta | ● Chaya Esther bat Golda Rachel |
| ● Chaya Meira Mindel bas Chava Golda | ● Shayna bas Chava |
| ● Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka | ● Eliezer ben Sorah |

- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Elazar ben Nouber
- Na'ava Bat Ami bat Sara Leah
- Gilad ben Aviva
- Edmund ben Nazir
- Devorah Leah bat Hindel
- Avram Gershon ben Tzippah
- Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka
- Dovid ben Miriam
- Evelyn Bat Dina
- Rafael Pinchas ben Esther
- Avraham Pinchas ben Sarah Etel
- Fruma bat Rochel
- Yonatan Moshe ben Devorah Tova
- Naomi Sara bas Henna Miriam
- Fruma bas Ita
- Tinok ben Esther Sharon
- Leah Bat Rivkah
- Zacharia Kalman ben Yael Margolit
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa
- David Yosef ben Faige Perel
- Tsilah Blimah bas Tsipporah



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?- [let us know!](#)** We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh