

BILVAVI Tu B'Av

LIGHT OF THE FUTURE
DEPTH OF TU B'AV
Q & A

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Light of the Future

THE WORDS OF OUR SAGES ABOUT TU B'AV

The *Mishnah* towards the end of *Tractate Taanis*¹ states, “Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said:

“There were no better festivals for the Jewish people than *Yom HaKippurim* and the fifteenth of *Av* [“*Tu B'Av*”] where the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in white garments, which they borrowed, so as not to shame those who didn’t own [garments], and all the garments required immersion. The Jewish daughters would go out dancing in the vineyards, and what would they say? “Young lad, raise your eyes, and see what you are examining. Do not place your eye on beauty; place your eyes on family [lineage]. “*Charm is false, and beauty is vain. A woman who fears Hashem, she is the one who should be praised....*”

Chazal said that there were no greater festivals to the Jewish people than *Tu B'Av* and *Yom Kippur*. It is understandable that *Yom Kippur* is a joyous day, because it is the day when the second *Luchos* were given. But what was the great joy contained in the fifteenth day of the month of *Av*? *Chazal* say that it was because “the girls of Jerusalem wore borrowed white clothes,” and then each of the girls would go on to look for a marriage partner. But still what exactly was the great *simchah* on *Tu B'Av*?

The *Gemara* asks this question:² “It is understandable why *Yom Kippur* is the happiest festival, because it is a day of forgiveness, the day when the second set of *Luchos* were given; but what is the celebration of *Tu B'Av* about?”

The *Gemara* answers with six different reasons:

- 1) It was the day when they permitted each of the tribes to marry with each other (which had originally been forbidden in the generation of the desert).
- 2) It was the day when they lifted the ban on marrying into the tribe of Binyamin (which had been in effect since the times of the Judges).

¹ *Taanis* 26b

² *Taanis* 30b

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- 3) It was the day where the generation in the desert stopped dying (and then the *Shechinah* resumed speaking with Moshe).
- 4) It was the day when the idols of Yeravam ben Nevat were removed from the paths that people took to ascend to Jerusalem on the festival.
- 5) It was the day when the martyrs of Beitar received burial, and a special blessing of *HaTov V'HaMeitiv* was instituted so that their bodies would not decay (and miraculously the bodies did not decay).
- 6) It was the day where they stopped chopping wood to light the fire on the Altar.

Getting back to the crux of the matter, Tu B'Av was celebrated with the girls of Jerusalem going out in white clothing which they borrowed. The *Gemara* asks: Where did they borrow from? The *Gemara* answers that a daughter of the king would borrow from the daughter of the *Kohen Gadol* (high priest), who would borrow it from the daughter of the *segan* (deputy) *Kohen Gadol*,³ who borrowed it from the daughter of the *Kohen mashuach milchamah* (the *Kohen* anointed for war purposes),⁴ who borrowed it from the daughter of the *kohen hedyot* (the lower priest),⁵ and all of the rest of the girls in *Klal Yisrael* borrowed from each other (even the wealthy from the poor), so as not to shame those who didn't own [ritually pure] clothing.

Let us now reflect further into this matter.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOM KIPPUR AND TU B'AV: A DAY OF FORGIVENESS

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said that Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av are both called the greatest festivals of the Jewish people. The *Gemara* explains that Yom Kippur is a joyous day because it is a day of forgiveness from sin.⁶ This seems to imply that Tu B'Av, however, is not a day of forgiveness from sin. However, upon deeper analysis, Tu B'Av is also a day of forgiveness from sin.

The first hint to Tu B'Av's connection to forgiveness is that on Tu B'Av, the girls of Jerusalem went out dancing. The hebrew word for this is “*cholos*,” which is from the word *mechilah*, forgiveness. This implies a connection between forgiveness and Tu B'Av.

A second hint is from the fact that they also went into the vineyards. According to an opinion in the Sages, the *Eitz HaDaas* (the Tree of Knowledge which was forbidden to Adam) was a grapevine. Thus, the deeper meaning of why the girls went into the vineyards was an allusion to forgiveness for

³ The *Kohen* appointed to replace the *Kohen Gadol* in case the original *Kohen Gadol* cannot serve (*Rashi* to *Taanis* 31a)

⁴ The *Kohen* who announces that those who are afraid should not go out to war (*Rashi* to *Taanis* 31a)

⁵ *Taanis* 31a

⁶ *Taanis* 26b

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the sin of Adam when he ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, which is identified by *Chazal* as a grapevine (hence the connection to vineyards).

THE DEPTH BEHIND THE WHITE CLOTHES WORN BY THE GIRLS OF JERUSALEM ON TU B'AV

After Adam and Chavah ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, they became ashamed, and then they felt a need to clothe themselves with garments. Thus, the entire concept of garments (clothing/*levushim*) came about as the result of the sin.

On Tu B'Av, the girls of Jerusalem wore white garments, which they borrowed. There are two aspects contained here – it was white, and it was borrowed. The *Gemara* says that a man has an obligation to gladden his family on the festivals, and that a woman rejoices on the festival with “colored clothes.”⁷ Contrast this with Tu B'Av, where the girls wore white clothes – the very opposite idea of colored clothes. And *Chazal* state that the great celebration of Tu B'Av was that they wore white clothes. What is the meaning of this, and especially since *Chazal* say that rejoicing on the festivals is specifically with colored clothes?

It shows that the joy on Tu B'Av was of an opposite nature than the joy of all the other festivals – as follows. A woman rejoices on the festivals with colored clothing, due to the fact that we currently live after the sin of Adam, which caused the need for clothing. Colored clothing is the symbol of honor, as the wealthy would wear colored clothing [as opposed to white, uncolored clothing]. Now that we live after the sin, clothing has become the “honor” of man – specifically, colored clothing. The wealthier and more prestigious a person is, the more colored clothing he wears. But this is the impaired level of clothing, for it came about through the sin.

In contrast, the rectified level of clothing, which is the “clothing” that existed before the sin, is symbolized by the clothing of the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur, which was white. Thus, the connection between Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av is that on both of these days, white clothing is worn, [symbolizing the state of before the sin]. The girls of Jerusalem wore white on Tu B'Av as an allusion to rectified clothing, which is white.

The white clothing worn on Tu B'Av also bears a connection to Yom Kippur because it is a time of forgiveness. The girls on Tu B'Av went out to the vineyards, to allude to this forgiveness. When a person wants forgiveness, he wears white clothing. *Chazal* explain that the color white “whitens” the sins of the Jewish people, and that is why the *Kohen Gadol* wore white on Yom Kippur.

⁷ *Pesachim* 109a

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THE DEPTH BEHIND THE “BORROWED” CLOTHES ON TU B’AV

So far, we have explained one aspect of Tu B’Av – the white clothes worn on this day, which symbolized forgiveness from sin, just as Yom Kippur is the day of forgiveness and the day where the *Kohen Gadol* wore white. It was the rectified form of “clothing” of before the sin.

An additional aspect contained in Tu B’Av, is the fact that the girls wore white clothes that was “borrowed”. All of the girls borrowed the white clothes from a previous owner, and this alludes to a deeper aspect, as follows. The clothing on Tu B’Av was entirely borrowed, to show that all of the clothing that we have now is entirely a result of the sin, so it does not really belong to us, and thus, in the deeper sense, all of our clothing is “borrowed”.

The white clothing worn on Tu B’Av refers to the kind of clothing that existed before the sin, and that was the beginning of the rectification of the sin (and the clothing that it produced). That was one aspect of the rectification. But even more so, the fact that it was “borrowed” clothing shows that even the higher level of clothing, white clothing, is really “borrowed.” Meaning, it is not our actual “clothing.” It showed that all clothing, in essence, is “borrowed.” All clothing is “borrowed” - meaning, it is all **temporary**.

Before the sin, Adam and Chavah did not wear clothing and they were not ashamed. Thus, before the sin, there was no shame. The girls of Jerusalem borrowed white clothes “so as not to shame those who didn’t own” clothing – and here is the deeper understanding of this matter. One of the Sages said that clothing is called the “honor” (*kavod*) of a person. The Hebrew word for “garment” is *levush*, which is from the words *lo bosh*, “no shame” – all clothing is meant to remove shame, and to reveal honor. The borrowed white clothes which the girls wore on Tu B’Av was in order to remove the original shame which came upon man after the sin, and to reveal the state before the sin, when there was no shame.

This is the depth of why all the girls wore white on Tu B’Av.

THE LEVEL OF BEFORE THE SIN – THE POINT OF NO SHAME

In the way Hashem has designed the world, the more colored clothes a person wears, the more dignified he appears, because clothing reveals honor. The clothes of the *Kohanim* in the *Beis HaMikdash* were worn “*l’kavod ul’tiferes*” – “for honor and for beauty”, and they were not only white, but colored as well. Colored clothes are worn to show the honor of the person wearing it.

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White clothes, however, reveal the level of before the sin. [There was no need for a person to feel honored in order to get rid of his shame, because there was no shame yet. The “clothing” then was on a totally spiritual level]. The girls on Tu B’Av wore white “so as not to shame those who didn’t own clothes” – in other words, they revealed the point where there is no shame, which is the level of the before the sin.

Usually, who borrows something? The poor borrows from the rich, and the rich do not borrow from the poor. On Tu B’Av, everyone borrowed the clothes from each other – the poor as well as the rich. This was because it revealed the level of before the sin, where there is no shame at all, and that is why even the wealthy were not ashamed to borrow from the poor.

The simple understanding of why the girls borrowed white clothes on Tu B’Av was “so as not to shame those who didn’t own” clothing, which was to save the poor from embarrassment for not owning their clothing. But the deeper meaning of this is that on Tu B’Av, even the wealthy exchanged their honorable colored clothes for white clothes – an entirely different kind of clothing – in order to reveal the point where there is no shame. This was the depth behind “so as not to shame those who didn’t have” – it refers to those who revealed the point of no shame.

On Tu B’Av, everyone wore borrowed white clothing, which showed that their clothing wasn’t theirs. Why? Because clothing is all a result of sin. Therefore, all clothing does not really belong to us – so it is entirely “borrowed.” During the rest of the year, when colored clothes were worn, it was for the purpose of honor; but on Tu B’Av, when white clothes were worn, it was to reveal that all clothing is not ours to begin with – and that is why everyone went to borrow the clothes on Tu B’Av.

Thus, the revelation of Tu B’Av was that it removed the clothing of “after the sin.” The word clothing in Hebrew is called “*begged*,” from the word *bogaid*/betrayal, alluding to how clothing is a result of the sin, which is a “betrayal” to G-d. The borrowed white clothes on Tu B’Av was to remove this kind of “clothing” and reveal in its place the kind of clothing that was before the sin.

THE PROPER VIEW TOWARDS ALL “GARMENTS”

The *Gemara* says that the daughter of the king borrowed the clothes from the daughter of the *Kohen Gadol*, who had borrowed it from the daughter of the *segan Kohen Gadol*, who had borrowed it from the daughter of the *Kohen* anointed for war, who borrowed it from the daughter of the

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Kohen hedyot. In other words, each of these people borrowed it from a person of lower status than they. The understanding behind this is as follows.

Every sin lowers a person from his original level. When man sinned, he fell from his level, and from then on he needed clothing. Before the sin, the body was the clothing of the soul, and the body did not have to be clothed. After the sin, when man descended from his level, the body had to be covered. The sin produced a need for physical clothing.

On Tu B'Av when everyone borrowed clothing, it was to show that all clothing is really borrowed, because all clothing is really borrowed, for it is a result of man falling to a lower level, which makes the lower level become his garment. The level below you is called your garment. Everyone borrowed clothes on Tu B'Av from someone of lower status than they, which showed that the lower level is always the “garment” of the person. You “borrow” from the lower level.

This revealed the rectification for clothing, which came as a result of the sin. If I use the lower level as a garment, that is what rectifies the garment. This was the forgiveness on Tu B'Av – to use the lower level than you as a garment, recognizing that the lower level than you is but a “garment” for you to wear and nothing else, and not to let your actual level descend to it.

THE “FESTIVAL” OF TU B'AV – THE LIGHT OF THE FUTURE

Let us have a clearer understanding of this.

Tisha B'Av is called a *moed* (festival). Of Tisha B'Av it is said, “*Call it upon Me, a festival.*” All of the festivals have seven days. Pesach and Succos clearly have seven days, and Shavuos had an additional seven days where its *korbonos* could be brought. If Tisha B'Av is called a “festival,” what are its ‘seven days’? Its “seventh day” concludes with Tu B'Av. Thus, Tu B'Av is the “seventh day” of the “festival” of Tisha B'Av.

The *Zohar*⁸ states that the six kinds of material donated to the Mishkan (gold, silver, copper, turquoise wool, violet wool, and red wool) are parallel to six festivals – “gold” refers to Rosh HaShanah, “silver” refers to Yom Kippur, “copper” refers to Succos, turquoise wool refers to Pesach, “violet wool” refers to Shavuos, and “red wool” refers to Tu B'Av.

Thus, Tu B'Av is listed as the “sixth festival” according to *Chazal*. The *Mishnah* quoted earlier also calls Tu B'Av as a “*yom tov*” (festival).

⁸ *Zohar parshas Terumah 135a*

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Tu B'Av will be a festival in the future after we have the third Beis Hamikdash which Tisha B'av will be the celebration of, and Tu B'Av is the revelation of that holiday because it always has been the roots of redemption. The light of the festival of Tu B'Av penetrates into the current dimension and that is why we celebrate it on some level even now. Tisha B'Av will be a festival in the future because it will celebrate the third *Beis HaMikdash*. The three festivals we have now, Pesach Shavuos and Succos, celebrate the [time when we would ascend to the] first *Beis HaMikdash*, and they parallel our three forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov.

The future “festival” of Tisha B’Av is parallel to Dovid HaMelech, and its “seventh day,” Tu B’Av, is the root of redemption, which is symbolized by Dovid HaMelech [the root of *Moshiach*, who will bring the redemption].

The sefer *Kedushas Levi* explains that the word “*Av*” (the month of Av) stands for the words, “*Arur, Baruch*” (cursed, blessed); until Tu B’Av, the month of Av is *arur*/cursed, and from Tu B’Av and onward, it is a month that is *baruch*/blessed. This is because Tu B’Av is the root of a revelation of a new festival in the future. It is the “seventh day” of the “festival” that will be Tisha B’Av, in the future.

THE FESTIVAL OF TU B'AV IS ENJOYED NOW – TISHA B'AV WILL ONLY BE ENJOYED IN THE FUTURE

However, the difference between the “festival” of Tisha B’Av and the “festival” of Tu B’Av is that Tisha B’Av is not actually celebrated by us now as a festival, and it will only be a festival in the future; for now, it is a time of mourning. But its seventh day, Tu B’Av, is celebrated even now, because its light penetrates into the current dimension, for it is the light of the future. Tu B’Av removes whatever became concealed from us on Tisha B’Av, and it is what reveals Tisha B’Av as a festival.

YOM KIPPUR AND TU B'AV – TWO LEVELS OF FORGIVENESS FROM SIN

Thus, Tu B’Av and Yom Kippur are called “the greatest festivals of the Jewish people,” since they are both days of forgiveness. On Yom Kippur we received the second *Luchos* which were atonement for sin. Tu B’Av is also an atonement of sin, but it is a deeper source of atonement – it is the light of the future, which will remove sin. Therefore it is also a day of *mechilah*, and that is why there was *machol*/dancing on Tu B’Av (because *machol* is derived from the word *mechilah*, forgiveness).

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On Yom Kippur, the color white was worn by the *Kohen Gadol*, [and we also have the custom to wear white on Yom Kippur], but it was not borrowed, it is our own clothing. But on Tu B'Av they wore white clothing that was borrowed, because it was a higher level, the level of the future – when it will be revealed that even our “garments” are borrowed,

Thus, the borrowed white clothing on Tu B'Av showed that there is a kind of “clothing” that does not come from this world, but from a higher dimension. It revealed that all clothing/garments are really “borrowed” from the light of the future; for that is where we borrow all our “clothing/garments” from.

MOSHE'S PRAYERS BEGAN ON TU B'AV

Here is an insight, in relation to the above. Moshe *davened* 515 *tefillos* to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. From a superficial perspective, he *davened* each of these 515 *tefillos* in order to get into *Eretz Yisrael*. But we can suggest an entirely different approach to this matter, as follows.

Moshe left the world on 7 Adar. If you make a calculation, you will see that there are 515 *tefillos* from the 15th of Av (Tu B'Av) until the 7th of Adar. That means that Moshe was *davening* the 515 *tefillos* starting from Tu B'Av. He *davened* to get into *Eretz Yisrael*, but his request was not answered. Of course, every prayer is heard by Hashem, but simply speaking, his requests were not answered. But let us reflect about the following.

The Sages state that if Moshe would have been allowed into *Eretz Yisrael*, he would have built the *Beis HaMikdash*, and it would have been forever, because anything built by Moshe cannot be destroyed (that is why the *Mishkan* which he built could not be destroyed, it could only be hidden).

Thus, the prayers of Moshe to enter *Eretz Yisrael* were really coming from the light of the future - and that is why these prayers began on Tu B'Av.

TU B'AV (THE FUTURE REVELATION) AND TU B'SHEVAT (THE ORIGINAL LIGHT OF BEFORE THE SIN)

The Sages draw a parallel between Tu B'Av and Tu B'Shevat, as follows. Tu B'Shevat reveals the birth of trees, alluding to the secret of the “tree” that is the *Eitz HaChaim* (the Tree of Life) which will remove the *Eitz HaDaas* (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). Along the same lines, Tu B'Av removes the destructive effects that took place on Tisha B'Av. In clearer terms: Tu B'Shevat is a revelation of the spiritual light that existed before the sin, whereas Tu B'Av is the light of the

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revelation of the future. Tu B'Shevat awakens the light contained in the original *Eitz HaChaim*, whereas Tu B'Av awakens the light that will be revealed in the future.

THE DEPTH OF WHY ALL GARMENTS ON TU B'AV REQUIRED IMMERSION

The *Gemara*⁹ says that all the borrowed garments required immersion, in case any of the garments of the women were ritually impure due to menstrual impurity. They immersed all the garments on that day – not only the garments that were being worn, but even the garments that weren't worn. The depth of this is as follows.

The garments which were worn certainly needed to be immersed, in case any of them were ritually impure due to menstruation. But the entire concept of menstruation was a curse that came about through sin, and the sin also produced the need for clothing. These are “clothes that were worn” – clothes that came from the betrayal of the sin, combined with the menstrual impurity that came about through sin.

But the clothing that wasn't worn also needed to be immersed – why? The *Gemara* says that since it was going to be worn later, it also requires immersion now. The depth of this is because the borrowed clothing on Tu B'Av was not being borrowed from this world (our current dimension), but from a higher world.

On Tu B'Av all garments needed immersion, parallel to the concept that the Sages write about the ascension of the soul to Heaven, when it has to undergo immersion in the fiery River of *Dinor*. On Tu B'Av, all “garments” need to be nullified. All garments on this world need immersion, in relation to the light of the future. If we are to accept the light of the future, we need to undergo immersion in all our garments. This is because the garments are not of this world, but from the future light. In order to receive them, the garments need to be immersed/nullified.

“TAKE US IN MARRIAGE, FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN”

The *Gemara* explains that there were three groups of girls who went out into the vineyards on Tu B'Av. The beautiful girls among them said “Do not pay attention to our beauty...*a woman who fears Hashem, she shall be praised.*” The girls of prestigious lineage said, “A woman is only for children.” The less attractive girls said, “Take us in marriage for the sake of Heaven.”

⁹ *Taanis* 31a

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The less attractive girls who said “Take us for the sake of Heaven” reflects the highest perspective. It is above the current world we live in, where there is no such thing as a person who does something entirely for the sake of Heaven. When a person marries, it cannot be completely for the sake of Heaven. So what were the less attractive girls saying?

After the sin, Adam blamed it on Chavah: “the woman You gave to me.” The result of the sin was that Adam blamed it on woman, and we learn from this that a person’s marriage on this world is never with intentions that are completely for the sake of Heaven. If Adam’s marriage to Chavah would have been completely for the sake of Heaven, Adam could have never blamed Chavah for the sin, because the perfect intentions in marrying here could never lead to such results. He could only blame the sin as her fault because his marriage to her was not totally for the sake of Heaven, and ever since then all marriages are not completely for the sake of Heaven.

Where did the faulty attitude originate from, though? It started with Adam’s request from Hashem for a spouse. Once he made that request, it could not be totally for the sake of Heaven. Thus, when the less attractive girls were saying “Take us for the sake of Heaven,” it reflected the state before the request of Adam for a spouse. If Adam had never requested a spouse from Hashem, then his connection to Chavah would have been complete and perfect.

We see that after the sin, Adam separated from Chavah for 130 years, and this could only be possible because their entire connection was already damaged. Their connection was bound to become severed, and that was inevitable, because it began from a faulty root. When the less attractive girls were saying “Take us for the sake of Heaven” it was a return to the way things used to be in the original plan of the world, when there was no request yet of man for a spouse. This would have led to a complete, perfected level of marriage where the man and woman are completely unified.

Tu B’Av reveals the light of the future; it is the “seventh” day of the festival of Tisha B’Av – it completes the festival of the future that will be Tisha B’Av. Just as when a man marries a woman, there are seven days of festivity afterwards (*Sheva Berachos*), along the same lines, there are seven days of celebration after Tisha B’Av, ending with the seventh day, Tu B’Av. The seventh day of celebration is the main day of the celebration; thus Tu B’Av is the main part of the celebration, because it is a return to the original plan of Creation.

I- THE DAY WHEN ALL TRIBES WERE ALLOWED TO INTERMARRY WITH EACH OTHER: A DAY OF REVEALED UNITY

The *Gemara* explains several reasons what the joyous celebration of Tu B'Av was.

According to the first reason, it was because Tu B'Av was the day when the tribes were allowed to marry into each other. The depth of this is follows.

The tribes began with the 12 sons of Yaakov, who each came from four different women. This began a disparity amongst *Klal Yisrael*, and that was the deep reason why the tribes couldn't intermarry into each other. However, they were all rooted in Yaakov *Avinu*, which was the one point that bound them together. They had different mothers, which made them separate from each other, but they all had one father, which was the point that bound them together. Until Tu B'Av, there was disparity amongst them, due to the fact that they all came from different mothers. On Tu B'Av, their unified point was realized, and thus it was the day where they began to marry into one other.

Avraham and Sarah's children were not united, for they had Yitzchok and Yishmael, who went separate ways. Yishmael was thrown out of their home, and Yitzchok continued the family. From the house of Yitzchok and Rivkah, came Yaakov and Esav who went his own separate way, and Yaakov who carried on the legacy. There was no unified point revealed yet. Yaakov had four wives, with twelve children. The twelve children were all righteous, but they did not all come from one mother, so there was disparity amongst them.

However, the disparity did not begin with Yaakov marrying four wives. It began with the flaw in the marriage of Adam and Chavah. If Adam and Chavah would have had a perfect connection with each other, there would only be one mother (Chavah) for the Jewish people, not four mothers.

On Tu B'Av, the tribes were allowed to intermarry with each other, because their unified point became revealed. They had been separated until then because they came from four separate mothers, but on Tu B'Av, the level was revealed where there is only one woman to be married to (Chavah), which is described in the verse "*A woman of valor, is the crown of her husband*" – the perfected level of marriage between Adam and Chavah, which was never actually reached, but which will be revealed in the future. Hence, the brothers became unified on this day. It was a return to the original plan of Creation, when there is only "one woman" to be married to – the perfected level of marriage between Adam and Chavah.

2- THE DAY WHEN THE BAN ON MARRYING THE TRIBE OF BINYAMIN WAS LIFTED

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The second reason in the *Gemara* for why Tu B'Av is celebrated is because it was the day that the ban on marrying the tribe of Binyamin was lifted. The depth behind why the tribes placed a ban on marrying into the tribe of Binyamin was because Binyamin was born at the same time of the death of his mother Rachel, so Binyamin's birth furthered the disparity amongst the tribes, for he was born with no mother, which placed more of an emphasis on the different mothers of the 12 brothers. This paved the way for the eventual separation of Binyamin from the rest of the tribes later in history.

But on Tu B'Av, their unified point was revealed, thus there was no more reason to shun the tribe of Binyamin. It revealed that there is only one mother, not four – and the one mother is Chavah, “the mother of all the living.” Therefore, it was a revelation that everyone has one mother, Chavah - and so there was no reason for disparity amongst the brothers.

3- THE DAY WHEN THE GENERATION OF THE DESERT STOPPED DYING: WHEN DEATH CEASES

The next reason in the *Gemara* for the celebration of Tu B'Av is because it was the day where those decreed to die in the desert stopped dying. The depth of this is because Tu B'Av represents the cessation of death, the result of the sin. It was decreed on the nation that they cannot enter *Eretz Yisrael* and that they would all die in the desert. Tu B'Av is when they stopped dying. Moshe prayed to enter *Eretz Yisrael* which he didn't merit, and he began praying for this on Tu B'Av (as explained earlier). The decree of death upon the generation began with the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av), and Moshe's prayer began on Tu B'Av. The 9th of Av was the root of destruction, but the light of the festival of the future began with the 15th of Av, when Moshe's prayers began – and that is the depth behind why the people in the desert finished dying.

Thus, Tu B'Av reveals how the “seventh day” after Tisha B'Av is a festival. In our current dimension, we can only enjoy this “seventh day” after Tisha B'Av as a festival, (and that is why we celebrate Tu B'Av), but we cannot enjoy Tisha B'Av right now as a festival, even though it will be a festival in the future. Tu B'Av is therefore called by Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel as ‘the best festivals to the Jewish people’ - because it is a festival even now, on some level. The people in the desert finished dying on this day, symbolizing a cessation of death – a return to the level when there will no more sin and thus no more curse of death.

Furthermore, the *Gemara* says that until the people in the desert stopped dying, the *Shechinah* did not speak with Moshe. On Tu B'Av, when the people stopped dying, Moshe's prayers began (40 years after the original decree). When Moshe began to *daven* to Hashem to get into *Eretz*

Yisrael, this was a return of the *Shechinah* to Moshe. Until then, it was said that the “*Shechinah* speaks from his throat” – but on Tu B’Av, the light of the future was revealed, and that was when Moshe davened for the future – which came from a higher level of *Shechinah* which returned to him on that day. Death stopped on that day – the curse of death upon mankind ceased – because it was the revelation of the light of the festival of the future.

4- THE DAY WHEN THE NATION WAS NO LONGER PREVENTED FROM ASCENDING TO THE BEIS HAMIKDASH

Another reason the *Gemara* gives for the celebration of Tu B’Av is because it was the day when the idols of Yeravam were removed from the paths that led to Jerusalem, which had prevented the nation from ascending to the *Beis HaMikdash* during the three festivals.

Part of the exile is that we no longer have the *mitzvah* of traveling to the *Beis HaMikdash* each year on the three festivals. This is part of the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. On Tu B’Av, those obstacles preventing us from ascending to the *Beis HaMikdash* were removed. If we cannot ascend to the *Beis HaMikdash*, it is like death; but Tu B’Av reveals the future state where there is no death, because it is the light of the future, which will enable us to ascend to the *Beis HaMikdash*.

5- THE DAY WHEN THE MARTYRS OF BEITAR MERITED BURIAL AND THEIR BODIES DID NOT DECAY

The next reason the *Gemara* states for the celebration of Tu B’Av is because it was the day where the martyrs of Beitar were buried, and the bodies did not decay.

What did this have to do specifically with Tu B’Av? The depth behind this was because there was a revelation of “no death.” The body only decays as a result of death, when it is placed in the earth, which is a curse given to mankind due to the first sin of man. The bodies in Beitar did not decay, because Tu B’Av reveals a return to the original state of man, where there is no such thing as death and decay.

6- THE DAY WHEN THE WOODCHOPPERS STOPPED CHOPPING WOOD FOR THE ALTAR

The final reason brought in the *Gemara* for the celebration of Tu B’Av is because it is the day where the woodchoppers ceased from chopping wood for the *maarachah* (pyre) on the Altar. *Rashi* explains that this was because the sun loses its strength beginning on Tu B’Av, so the wood isn’t dried enough by the sun and thus it is difficult to chop.

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The depth behind this is because Tu B'Av removes the “dryness” that came into man's soul due to the element of earth which man has sunken into as a result of the sin. As we know, the earth is a dry substance which is personified by the property of dryness. From Tu B'Av and onward, there was no more “dryness” – in other words, the aftereffects of the evil *Eitz HaDaas* which had brought on death to mankind, which sends man into the dry earth, ceased. Instead, the opposite of dryness became revealed, in which there is only life – the level contained in the *Eitz HaChaim*.

TU B'AV – THE REVELATION OF ABOVE BECHIRAH/FREE CHOICE

There is [much] more that we can say about *Tu B'Av*, and the words here are but a brief description.

Tu B'Av is the light of the future. It is the time when the girls of Jerusalem said, “*Young lad, lift now your eyes*” – the Hebrew word for “young lad,” “*bochur*”, is from the word *bechirah*, “choose.” They were saying that one can reach a higher kind of *bechirah*, to “lift your eyes” above the level of *bochur* and to see past the level of *bechirah*, and to instead receive a higher kind of *bechirah*, in which there are no other options to choose from, where a person is left with no choice other than to do the will of Hashem. Thus, Tu B'Av celebrates the future, where there will be no more *bechirah* (free will), when there will be no other options to choose from.

This is the depth of what the Sages said that on Tu B'Av, “One who does not have a wife, should turn to there”¹⁰ (to go to the vineyards on Tu B'Av to find a suitable wife). An unmarried man is called a “*bochur*”, alluding to *bechirah* (free will); on Tu B'Av, one can be a “*bochur*” in the higher sense, where he chooses not to have *bechirah* - the level of the future.

In the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the young *bochurim* were tragically “*charav*” (destroyed) in the streets, as the verse in *Eichah* laments. On a deeper level, this symbolized the ruined state of “*bochur*,” which is *charav*/destroyed – an opposite arrangement of the same letters. But the future will be the rectified state of “*bochur*,” in which one will not have *bechirah*. It will reveal that a person is not really on the level of “*bochur*” [with free choice], and that he is rather like an elderly person, who sees no other alternatives.

THE FESTIVAL THAT COMES FROM THE FUTURE

¹⁰ *Taanis 31a*

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And so, Tu B'Av reveals the festival that will be in the future. Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said that Tu B'Av is of the greatest festivals for the Jewish people. This needs understanding: how could Tu B'Av be the greatest festival?! And how can it be on a higher level than the three main festivals [Pesach, Shavuos, and Succos] we have?

The answer to this (which merits a separate discussion for itself), along the lines of what we are saying, is because Tu B'Av is really the festival that comes from a light of the future. Therefore, it is above the level of the three current festivals and all that they reveal.

Chazal state that the third *Beis HaMikdash* will be built in the month of Av. It shall be inaugurated again, with the help from Hashem, speedily in our days - on Tu B'Av.¹¹

¹¹ Editor's Note: For more about the nature of "the festival of Tu B'Av", see *Bnei Yissacher* (I): *Maamarei Tamuz-Av*, maamar 4

Depth of The Festival of Tu B'Av

THE SEVEN-DAY “FESTIVAL” OF TISHA B’AV THROUGH TU B’AV

Chazal state in *Pesikta* that “*Tisha B’Av* is called a festival”, for it is written, “Call it upon Me a festival.”¹² Furthermore, *Chazal* explain that the “festival” of *Tisha B’Av* has seven days, just as *Pesach* and *Succos* have seven days.

When does the “seven-day festival” of *Tisha B’Av* conclude? Seven days after *Tisha B’Av*, it is *Tu B’Av* (the fifteenth day of the month of *Av*). Thus, the “festival” begins with *Tisha B’Av* and ends with *Tu B’Av*.

Regarding *Tu B’Av*, *Chazal* state in the *Mishnah* that it was one of the greatest festivals of the Jewish people, a day in which the daughters of Jerusalem would go out wearing borrowed white clothing, when they would say, “Choose for yourself a mate, for the sake of Heaven.”¹³

Thus, *Tu B’Av* is certainly a festival, as we see from the *Mishnah*; and *Chazal* are teaching us in the *Pesikta* that this festival actually begins with *Tisha B’Av*.

THE FESTIVAL OF TISHA B’AV: THE BIRTH OF MOSHIACH

Let us reflect here a bit, with *siyata d’shmaya*, into the days between *Tisha B’Av* and *Tu B’Av* which are like a period of “*Chol HaMoed*.”

Chazal state that *Tisha B’Av* is the day of the birth of *Moshiach*. Just as there was a festival in which the Jewish people were born, celebrated on the day when they left Egypt (i.e. *Pesach*], so is there a festival which celebrates the day of the birth of *Moshiach* [the festival of the future redemption]. This will be the future festival of *Tisha B’Av*.

THE ROOT OF TISHA B’AV: THE SIN OF THE SPIES

Let’s reflect more into the words of the *Gemara*, so we can better understand these days.

¹² *Eichah* 1:15

¹³ *Taanis* 26a and *Bava Basra* 121a: “There were no greater festivals for the Jewish people than *Yom HaKippurim* and the fifteenth of *Av*.”

At the end of Tractate Taanis¹⁴, *Chazal* list five tragedies of Tisha B'Av, the first being that the Spies gave a bad report about *Eretz Yisrael* and the people cried since it was decreed on the ninth of Av that the generation of the desert would not enter the land.

It is clear that because of this, even their entry into the land of *Eretz Yisrael* needed a *tikkun* (correction). They entered it with their faith dampened by the report of the Spies, and this was the root of their eventual exile from the land of *Eretz Yisrael*. When they were exiled from *Eretz Yisrael*, they left amidst destruction, just as they entered it amidst a state of ruination.

Thus, the root of Tisha B'Av is in the sin of the generation of the desert when they became discouraged from the report of the Spies. *Eretz Yisrael* is called *Eretz Tovah*, the “good land”, but the generation of the desert was called *dor raah*, “bad generation”, because they were not spiritually fit to enter the land. This ruination occurred on Tisha B'Av, and it was the first tragic event which took place on this day. The second tragic event which took place on Tisha B'Av, many years later, was the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

THE ROOTS OF THE FUTURE JOY ON TISHA B'AV

Let's reflect. *Chazal* state that Tisha B'Av will be turned into a complete festival. If Tisha B'Av began with the sin of the Spies' report, how will this be turned into a festival? How can such a sin be transformed into a reason for celebration? If the root of the ruination began with the sin of the Spies, then the correction for the sin must be somehow contained in this event as well. Where is a hint that that this event will be turned into good for us?

There are several ways how we can see the correction for the sin of the Spies, which is contained in the very event which brought about devastation.

One way how we can see it is that the decree upon the generation not to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, as a result of the Spies' report, did not include Yehoshua and Calev, who did not sin with the Spies. Since Yehoshua and Calev merited entering *Eretz Yisrael*, there was already a root that this sad episode will be transformed to good in the future, because it was a symbol that the entry of the people into *Eretz Yisrael* contained a rectified aspect. In this way, the eventual destruction that would come to the *Beis HaMikdash* was therefore not a complete destruction. That is the hint that Tisha B'Av will become a festival.

The *Gemara* gives several reasons for the festival of Tu B'Av.¹⁵ According to one reason, it was the day when the people in the generation of the desert stopped dying, after the decree not to enter the land was given. As long as people were dying, the *Shechinah* left Moshe. When the people stopped dying, the *Shechinah* returned to Moshe. Simply, the *Gemara* is saying that it was because the *Shechinah* returned to Moshe. What is the depth of this joy?

The *Beis HaMikdash* was a place of prayer for all the nations. Calev and Yehoshua were saved from the decree on the generation, in the merit of prayer. Moshe's prayer for Yehoshua was that he shouldn't be influenced from the Spies, and Calev himself prayed by the graves of the forefathers in order to be saved from their influences. Therefore, in their merit, the *Beis HaMikdash* was never completely destroyed. They entered the land due to prayer, and therefore "the house of prayer for all the nations" did not become totally destroyed.

Thus, the *Shechinah* which returned to Moshe was also in the merit of Yehoshua and Calev who were saved due to prayer and didn't take part in the sin of the Spies. In their merit, there will be a future *Beis HaMikdash* – the house of prayer for all the nations. That meant that even after there will be destruction of the first and second *Beis HaMikdash*, there will be a third *Beis HaMikdash* that will be forever, which will be a house of prayer for the entire world. Since Calev and Yehoshua didn't sin, they did not have a part in the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, and this contains an aspect of an eternal *Beis HaMikdash* in their merit.

Who else didn't die, due to the sin of the Spies? The *Gemara* says that those younger than 20 or older than 60 weren't part of the decree to die in the desert. What is the depth behind the fact that those younger than 20 and those older than 60 weren't part of the decree? We find that when the Jewish people were counted in the desert, those younger than 20 and those older than 60 were not part of the count. The Sages state that "Blessing does not settle, only upon something unseen by the eye." When something is counted, it has been 'seen', so blessing cannot settle upon it, because blessing can only descend upon something which cannot be seen.

Thus the decree wasn't on those younger than 20 and older than 60, because they could not be affected by *ayin hara*, since they weren't counted. Those who were decreed to die in the desert were part of those who were called the "bad generation" who could be affected by *ayin hara*.

In summation, one of the roots of how Tisha B'Av will be a festival in the future is due to the prayers of Calev and Yehoshua, and another reason is because there were people younger than 20

and older than 60, who didn't die in the desert along with the rest of the generation. In either case, we see that there were those in the generation of the desert who weren't part of the decree, who were allowed the entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, and this showed that the entry to *Eretz Yisrael* contained an aspect of completion.

This paved the roots of the eternal *Beis HaMikdash* of the future, when Tisha B'Av will be turned into a festival.

THE TRIBE OF LEVI – THE POINT AMIDST EXILE THAT IS NOT IN EXILE

The tribe of Levi merited to leave Egypt and also enter *Eretz Yisrael*. They also were not part of the decree, and therefore they were not a part of the reason for the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

What was the merit of the tribe of Levi? Not only did they merit to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, but they were never part of the exile in Egypt to begin with. All the rest of the Jewish people were in Egypt and did not enter *Eretz Yisrael*, and this was a subtle way of being 'left behind' in Egypt. Since they were still "in Egypt" (demonstrated by their sin with the golden calf) they were not on the spiritual level to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.

But the tribe of Levi was never in the exile of Egypt, and their entry into *Eretz Yisrael* was because they were never in Egypt.

The tribe of Levi were spread out in *Eretz Yisrael* and they did not have a portion in the Land of their own. They didn't either take part in the sin of serving the golden calf. On a deeper level, they knew what their real *avodah* was which was entirely different than any of the other tribes.

The root of all the exiles was Egypt. Then there were the exiles of Babylonia, Persia-Media, and Greece. Now there is the exile of Edom/Rome [Western society], which contains the exile of Yishmael, and within it, the exile of the "*Erev Rav*" [the Mixed Multitude].¹⁶

But the tribe of Levi was never part of the root of the exile, which was in Egypt. This reveals that there is always a point even within exile that isn't part of the exile. The entry of the tribe of Levi into *Eretz Yisrael* showed that there is always a tribe of the Jewish people which is not part of the exile.

¹⁶ For more on "exile of the *Erev Rav*", refer to *Erev Rav Talks*

The tribe of Levi whose role is to remain dedicated to learning Torah, whether they were in Egypt or in *Eretz Yisrael* is not part of the exile. This does not mean that they weren't part of the exile at all, but to a certain extent, they were not part of the exile, because they weren't in bondage there. This shows us that even within exile, there is a point which isn't part of the exile and which remains apart from it.

THE REVELATION OF TU B'AV: THERE IS ALWAYS TORAH IN OUR EXILE

Now we can better understand what the “festival” of Tu B’Av is. The *Gemara* explains that from Tu B’Av and onward, the sun begins to weaken, so the daytime is decreased and the nights become longer, and from then on, a person can increase his Torah study.¹⁷ This is related to the fact that night time is the main time for Torah study, as the Rambam states,¹⁸ that nighttime is when a person acquires most of his Torah wisdom. Thus, Tu B’Av is a revelation of more Torah.

This connection between Tu B’Av and increased time for Torah learning is also related to the connection between Tu B’Av and the tribe of Levi, as explained above, who merited to enter *Eretz Yisrael* because they were never in the exile of Egypt since they only learned Torah. It is written, “*For from Zion comes forth Torah, and the word of Hashem, from Jerusalem.*”¹⁹ The Torah comes forth from *Eretz Yisrael*, and Yerushalayim specifically, due to the merit of the tribe of Levi, who always learned Torah, even amidst the root exile, Egypt. The Torah in *Eretz Yisrael* is in their merit, and this is the depth behind why the mourning of Tisha B’Av will be turned into joy in the future – it is because there was always a tribe of Levi who were always learning Torah, even amidst the very root of the exile.

TU B'AV – THE RECTIFICATION OF THE IDOL OF MICHAH

The Jewish people had to cross the *Yam Suf* in order to enter into *Eretz Yisrael*, and the depth of this is that they had to cross over into *Eretz Yisrael* by leaving behind completely any influences from Egypt. Crossing the *Yam Suf* was supposed to be a complete separation of the Jewish people from Egypt, so that they could be spiritually fit to enter into *Eretz Yisrael* on the other side. But most of those who crossed the sea didn’t merit entering the land of *Eretz Yisrael*, and this was because they were carrying “the idol of Michah” with them, which was brought from Egypt.

¹⁷ *Taanis* 31a

¹⁸ *Rambam Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:13

¹⁹ *Yeshayahu* 2:3

This idol of Michah that they brought with them was the root of all the disasters (the sin with the golden calf, the sin of the Spies, the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*) that would occur later.

We mentioned earlier the words of the *Pesikta*, which teaches that the festival Tu B'Av begins with Tisha B'Av, making it a seven-day festival. What is the root of a seven-day festival? Pesach and Succos each have seven days. On Pesach, specifically on the seventh day of Pesach (*shvii shel Pesach*), the Jewish people crossed the sea. But on this great day, when they crossed the sea so that they could leave behind Egypt, receive the Torah 50 days later, and soon enter into *Eretz Yisrael*, the idol of Michah was with them.

Their bringing the idol of Michah with them as they crossed the sea was the root of all the sins of the generation of the desert, which ultimately led to all sins afterwards. This, in turn, lead to the decree to die in the desert and not to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. The sin with the Spies was only the outcome of this, but the root of the ruination began on the seventh day of Pesach, when they crossed the sea with the idol of Michah. So it was this event which prevented them entering *Eretz Yisrael* later on.

The “festival” of Tu B'Av came along and turned this decree into joy. How so? The Mishnah states “There were no greater festivals for the Jewish people than Tu B'Av and Yom Kippur.”²⁰ What is the connection between Tu B'Av and Yom Kippur? Yom Kippur was when the sin with the Golden Calf was rectified. On Tu B'Av, their sin with the idol of Michah was rectified, similar to the rectification of the sin with golden calf. The idol of Michah was present before the golden calf, so the idol of Michah was the root of their sin with the golden calf.

Thus, Tu B'Av, which rectified their sin with the idol of Michah, was a rectification of the root of the sin with the golden calf. Whereas Yom Kippur rectified the sin with the golden calf in the active sense, Tu B'Av rectifies the *root* of the sin with the golden calf - the idol of Michah.

TU B'AV – REVEALING THE POWER OF AHAVAS CHINAM/PURE LOVE

Now we can understand better about the “seven-day festival” that lasts from Tisha B'Av through Tu B'Av.

Tisha B'Av is about destruction and separation, whereas Tu B'Av is about connection. [On Tisha B'Av, we mourn the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, which caused us to be separated from the true, *Eretz Yisrael* of old, and which was also caused by separation, the sin of baseless

²⁰ Taanis 26b, Bava Basra 121a

hatred which was prevalent then.] However, on Tu B'Av, the girls of Jerusalem would go out and look for a marriage partner, and they would call to others to choose wisely whom they should marry. This personifies connection.

In simpler terms which apply to the soul, Tisha B'Av reveals the soul's power of "hatred", whereas Tu B'Av reveals the soul's power of "love". The "seven day festival" that spans Tisha B'Av through Tu B'Av begins with revealing the soul's force of "hatred" – represented by the day of Tisha B'Av, where we mourn the destruction of Jerusalem [and of our 'hated' state] - and ends with the soul's force of "love", represented by the day of "Tu B'Av".

TU B'AV – THE DAY THAT COMMEMORATES THE ABSOLUTE LEVEL OF ACHDUS/UNITY IN THE FUTURE

Chazal state that "Holiness (*kedushah*) begins with separation and ends with unity, [whereas] the Other Side of evil (the *Sitra Achara*) begins with unity, but ends with separation." We began this exile with separation, spread out among the nations throughout the world - but we end with Tu B'Av, a state of unity. The borrowed white clothing which was worn on the day of Tu B'Av (in the times of the *Gemara*) was to show the unity (*achdus*) amongst everyone, to reveal the point of equality (*hishtavus*) amongst everyone, which was reflected in the fact that everyone wore the same thing.

The festivals of Pesach, Shavuos and Succos do not begin with separation, but with unity. These three festivals begin with the exodus from Egypt, when there was unity. These festivals, which commemorate the exile from Egypt, ended in separation, when we became separated from *Eretz Yisrael*. However, the 'festival' of Tisha B'Av, which ends on Tu B'Av, begins with separation and ends with unity. It starts from destruction and separation, the tragic day of Tisha B'Av, and ends with Tu B'Av, a day of the absolute level of *achdus*, unity.

The depth of this is because Egypt, which is the root of the "world of separation" (*alma d'piruda*), is called *Mitzrayim*, which is from the word *meitzar* (confines), from the word *tzaar* (pain), which implies narrowness and separation. The three festivals of Pesach, Shavuos and Succos commemorate our exodus from Egypt, which was the place of separation. In contrast, Tu B'Av, as we explained here, commemorates the eventual entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, which is the place of unity. It symbolizes the fact that the Jewish people left a place of separation, Egypt, in order to enter into a place of unity, *Eretz Yisrael*. The fact that the people left Egypt to enter *Eretz Yisrael* was a way of leaving behind the *alma d'piruda*, the "world of separation to enter into the dimension of absolute *achdus/unity*.

Pesach, Shavuos and Succos are called *shalosh regalim*, which means “three feet”, but just as a person with three feet will not be able to walk properly and get to his goal, the three festivals do not bring a person to his ultimate goal. Only the “festival” of Tisha B’Av, which ends with Tu B’Av, is the festival that ultimately leads one to entering *Eretz Yisrael*.

Thus, Tisha B’Av is the “festival of the future”. The festivals we have now – Pesach, Shavuos and Succos – commemorate the exodus of Egypt. But we haven’t yet fully entered *Eretz Yisrael*, because the entry into the land of *Eretz Yisrael* was incomplete and it contained sin, and therefore our joy was not yet complete. The “festival” of Tisha B’Av, which will in the future end with the “festival” of Tu B’Av, is the festival that celebrates a true entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, which will be eternal.

Thus, the Sages said there were no better festivals for the Jewish people than Yom Kippur and Tu B’Av. The depth of Tu B’Av is because it is a joy that celebrates the time when we will all enter *Eretz Yisrael* [cleansed from sin] and we will stay there forever, never again being exiled from it.

TU B'AV – THE REVELATION THAT THE BEIS HAMIKDASH WAS NEVER DESTROYED

Thus, since Tu B’Av is a celebration about the fact that there is always a point within our exile that is not part of the exile, it is a revelation that the *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed.

The first two Holy Temples were destroyed only to those who were “exiled” from *Eretz Yisrael*. They never truly ‘entered’ *Eretz Yisrael* due to the sins which caused the destructions of the Holy Temples, including the sin of baseless hatred.²¹ If one is free from the sins that caused the destruction of the two Holy Temples, then he has uncovered the soul’s power of *ahavas chinam* (loving others freely without judgement). If one has merited to truly “enter” *Eretz Yisrael* by uncovering the power of *ahavas chinam*, then one is “in the state” of the third *Beis HaMikdash*, which is eternal and can never be destroyed.

When the third *Beis HaMikdash* will descend from Heaven onto this earth²², there will be a revelation that the first two *Batei Mikdash* were never actually destroyed, and that the entire destruction was nothing but a dream. This is the depth of what we will express in the future, “*Then, we were like dreamers*”²³ – that this exile is really one long nightmare which we will arise from, and we will realize in the future that it was all a ‘dream’. The *Beis HaMikdash* is ‘destroyed’ only in our

²¹ See *Yoma* 9b

²² See *Rashi* to *Succah* 41a

²³ *Tehillim* 126:1

dreamlike state - but when we come out of this long sleep-like state, it will be revealed that there never was a ‘destruction’ in the first place! The *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed!

When *Moshiach* comes, speedily in our days, and he reveals the third *Beis HaMikdash*, he will reveal that there was never a destruction, because the third *Beis HaMikdash* has always been in Heaven, where it will indeed descend from. Thus, the actual *Beis HaMikdash*, the one that is forever which has always been Heaven – which we know as “the third *Beis HaMikdash*” - was never actually destroyed.

This is the deeper meaning of “All who mourn Jerusalem, will see it rebuilt.”²⁴ One who mourns it properly will see it ‘rebuilt’ in its time in the sense that for him, the *Beis HaMikdash* was never destroyed.

This is essentially the “festival” of the seven days between Tisha B’Av and Tu B’Av. One who merits to leave behind the state of baseless hatred, and to leave all of “Egypt” behind, and to fully “enter *Eretz Yisrael*”, to go from the state of separation to the state of absolute unity - is one who reveals the level that is the depth of the verse “*Bone of my bones*” [which refers to the intrinsic connection we have with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, described as our connection with His *atzmiyus*, His essence, as it were]. This is to uncover the soul’s power of true *ahavas chinam* - and this, itself, reveals how the *Beis HaMikdash* was never truly destroyed.

When the festival of Tisha B’Av is revealed in the future, it will not just be a festival ‘from then onward’. Rather, it will reveal *retroactively* that Tisha B’Av had been a festival all along! That light shines even now, in our current time, in these days, where there is a light of the future complete festival, where the *Beis HaMikdash* stands in its fully glory, just as it has been all along....

²⁴ Taanis 30b

Q&A

I listened to two wonderful *derashos* of the Rav about Tu B'Av, and Baruch Hashem, this has given me much meaning and inner content to this day, which I never had much knowledge or connection to. I heard many points the Rav said about Tu B'av, such as the fact that it is the “light of the future”, the festival of the future which shines even now, that it is a day of absolute unity, a day of baseless love (*ahavas chinam*), etc.

QUESTION 1: My main question is: What is the inner *avodah* on this day, and how can I connect to this day on a practical level? Which action can I do, together with an inner thought, so that I can connect to the light of Tu B'Av? Especially since it is barely recognizable on this day of how great this day is, and the world behaves as usual on this day, and it is just that we don't say *Tachanun*. Besides for this, I do not see anyone doing anything for this day. Understandably, not saying *Tachanun* isn't enough to connect to the festival of Tu B'Av. Is it that when I don't say *Tachanun* I should concentrate on the power of absolute unity found on this day, and connect to this concept through inner, deep focusing, as the Rav has said, that it is a day of *ahavas chinam*? I am not referring to the title of “Festival of Love” which the outside world has devised. Or should I just daven for *shidduchim* for others, as many do – and I should do so with added inner concentration? What exactly is the avodah of this day, on a practical level, so that I can connect to the inner essence of this awesome day, the light of the future, the festival of Tu B'Av?

ANSWER: Firstly one should identify where the power of *ahavas chinam* (baseless love) is, in his personal soul. Going further than this, one should focus [on this] with inner, deep concentration, as phrased in the question. Finally, one should actualize the potential of this love, on a practical level in the areas of prayer and action, from a desire to expand his love. These are the three garments of the soul – thought, speech and action.

QUESTION 2: I also want to know: Is the power of *ahavas chinam* (baseless love) on Tu B'Av the same thing as the power of “unconditional love”, or is it a different power?

ANSWER: It [*ahavas chinam* – baseless love] is a higher power than “unconditional love”. The *gematria* of *ahavah* (love) is *echad* (one) as is well-known. There are [altogether] three levels: 1) Conditional love, 2) Unconditional love, 3) *Echad* – oneness.

QUESTION 3: I also want to know: We find several times throughout the year in which the light of the future shines even now. Examples include Tu B'Av, Lag B'Omer, Purim, Chanukah. Why do we need so many days a year in which we celebrate this light of the future, and why isn't one day enough? Is it because we are in exile and therefore we need to draw forth much light from the future in order to survive in the now?

ANSWER: Just as Avraham *Avinu* had four entrance ways, so are there are many different entrance ways which are conceptually different from each other, and each person should examine which of the entranceways are particularly relevant to the root of his [personal] soul.



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