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Elul - The Tribe of Gad

We are in the month of Elul. Each of the 12 months corresponds to one of the 12 tribes. The Gra and others wrote that the tribe of Gad corresponds to the month of Elul.^[1] ^[1] What is the connection between Gad and Elul?

Gad: Concealment

When Gad was born, Leah said, “Ba Gad”, “Gad has come”, and Rashi explains that this means [according to one interpretation]: “Ba Gad, ba mazal” – “When Gad comes, mazal comes”.^[2] ^[2] Our Sages explain that the word “Gad” is equal in *gematria* (numerical value) to the number 7, and the word “ba” is equal to 9, and since a normal pregnancy can take either 7 or 9 months, Gad represents the fetal state (*ibbur*) of man, which normally lasts for 7 or 9 months.

In Moshe’s blessing to Gad, Gad is given a portion that is by “*Eiver haYarden*”, the crossing of the Jordan, which is not part of Eretz Yisrael proper. The *Eiver haYarden* is also the area where Moshe is buried, though his exact burial place is not known. This can be understood on a deeper level as follows. In the 40 days when Moshe ascended the mountain of Sinai, which began in Elul [and ended on Yom Kippur, when he brought down the second set of *Luchos*], no one knew where Moshe was. This is in connection with the fact that Gad’s portion is not in Eretz Yisrael proper, but in *Eiver HaYarden*, Moshe’s burial place, which no one can see or know of. A fetus in its mother cannot either be seen [by the human eye]. The fetal state [which corresponds to Gad, as explained above] is the beginning state of a person. It is the beginning state of one’s formation, where he cannot be seen, because he is hidden, covered over, and concealed. Thus, Gad represents the idea of concealment.

Anything that exists first begins in a fetal state, a state of pregnancy, which eventually leads to its “birth”, when it emerges into the outside. The “pregnancy” of each thing can also be prolonged, where it undergoes a process of *ibbur* pregnancy and it takes a certain amount of time the “fetus” to develop and emerge.

We find this concept in all three dimensions – *Olam* (World\place), *Shanah* (year\time), and *Nefesh* (soul).^[3] ^[3] The year goes through a process of “pregnancy”, taking a full 12 months until it is complete, and this “pregnancy” can be prolonged whenever there is a leap year, such as when there are two months of Adar that year. The soul also has *ibbur* pregnancy, and this we find in the idea of pregnancy itself. The place in the world where there is *ibbur* is in Eretz Yisrael. The Sages called it “*iburah shel ir*”, the place “where the city extends”, and this is by the *Eiver haYarden*, the crossing

point at the Jordan - which is Gad's portion.

Note that the *Eiver HaYarden* is not part of Eretz Yisrael proper, but in the section of land in Eretz Yisrael that is called *iburah shel ir*, an extension of Eretz Yisrael – but it is not the actual land of Eretz Yisrael itself.

Gad - The Hidden Beginning

The *Zohar* says that had Gad been born from one of the main mothers (either Rachel or Leah), he would have been the greatest of the tribes. Let us try to understand the depth behind this.

The Sages state that first of tribes to go out to war against our enemies, is Gad. The depth of this is that Gad represents the idea of *raishis*, the first. This is connected with the *Zohar's* statement that had Gad come from one of the mothers, he would have been the greatest of the tribes. Gad is really the *raishis*, the first, except that he is the "hidden" first, the hidden beginning. This is also why Gad represents the fetal state [as explained earlier], because the fetal state is hidden, concealed beginning of a person. And that is also why Moshe's burial place is in Gad's portion, a place of concealment.

Gad - The Power To Rectify The Root of Sin

The month of Elul corresponds to the tribe of Gad. The month of Elul is the time of doing *teshuvah*. Every sin creates "concealment" [of G-d's light] to come to the world. Gad, who represents the idea of concealment, is the power to do *teshuvah* [to repent and return to G-d] over the concealment [of G-d's light] that is created from sin.

Through Gad, we have the power to do *teshuvah*. How? The power of Gad reveals that the beginning of each thing is always a state of concealment. When one does *teshuvah*, on a simple level, this means that repents over the acts of sin he committed. However, there is a more inner aspect to *teshuvah*, which is more important: one must repent over the concealment that was created from his sin. After the sin, Adam needed clothing, *begadim*, which covers the skin, and this is another hint that sin creates concealment and covering; and in addition, the word *begadim* is from the words "ba Gad", which implies that sin is rectified through Gad.

When the time for *teshuvah*, Elul, arrives, on a deeper level, our *avodah* during these days is to fix the original betrayal*bege*d of Adam, which caused the need for clothing*begadim*.

Eliyahu HaNavi and Redemption & the Connection to Elul\Gad

The Sages state that Eliyahu HaNavi comes from Gad, from his mother's side. The Sages also said that Eliyahu's name hints to *ba l'hagid*, "he comes to inform" the good tidings of the Redemption. [Thus, the month of Elul, which corresponds to Gad, is also connected with Eliyahu HaNavi. Soon the connection will be explained further].

In Elul, Moshe ascended the mountain of Sinai, but his ascent was not complete, because after 40 days, he descended from the mountain. In contrast to this, Eliyahu ascended the mountain and never descended from it. These are two different levels of ascension. Moshe's ascension was incomplete, whereas Eliyahu's ascension was complete. Eliyahu's burial place is unknown, and in this aspect, Moshe bears a similarity to Eliyahu, because his burial is also not known.

In Elul, Moshe ascended the mountain, and then descended, when he came to give the second set of Tablets. Eliyahu also ascended the mountain, but he did not descend. Eliyahu comes from Gad, who corresponds to the month of Elul. The implication of this is that the month of Elul contains two deep

aspects: Moshe's ascension, and Eliyahu's ascension.

In Elul, there is the power of Gad, which is described as "*ba Gad*". Eliyahu comes from Gad, and Eliyahu represents the good tidings of the Redemption, for he is the one chosen to inform the Jewish people of the Redemption.

On a deeper level, Eliyahu will reveal the level of the first set of *Luchos*. On Yom Kippur, we received the second set of *Luchos* from Moshe, and this was the apex of the 40 days of Moshe's ascension on the mountain which began in Elul. But this was only the external revelation of Elul, for was a revelation that came after sin [the sin with the Golden Calf]. The inner revelation in the month Elul is the first set of *Luchos*, which Eliyahu will reveal when he informs the Jewish people of the Redemption, when the world will be returned to the state of before the sin of Adam.

This is the depth of why Gad is the most prominent of the tribes [according to the Zohar]. It is because he is the tribe who represents the informing of the Redemption, which will signify the revelation of the first set of *Luchos*. Gad is the hidden "first" of the tribes, the hidden beginning, from whom the Redemption is revealed.

Before the arrival of the Mashiach, the Sages that the Jewish people will endure *chevlei Mashiach*, the birth pangs of Mashiach. The onset of labor is usually painful, throughout the pains of pregnancy, labor, and birth. So too, the Redemption will be preceded with pain. However, when Eliyahu will come to inform the Jewish people about the Redemption, at that point, there will no longer be *chevlei Mashiach*, and instead, the Mashiach will be in the category of "painless birth", reminiscent of the level before the sin, where childbirth would have been painless.

The Power of Gad In Elul: A Painless Fetal State - Returning to the State Before the Sin

This is from the power of Gad, as implied in the term "*ba Gad, ba mazal*", which means that Gad has the power of good *mazal*.

In Elul, we prepare for the new year, for Rosh HaShanah, which is the birth of the world, as we say on Rosh HaShanah, "*HaYom Haras Olam*", "Today is the birth of the world." Rosh HaShanah is a time when the world undergoes a new birth. This comes from the power of Gad, who represents the fetal state - one which is holy, undamaged from the sin of Adam, and painless. It is the level of before the sin of Adam, where no rectification is required and where is no need for pain.

Of Eliyahu it says, "*And he will return the hearts of the fathers to the hearts of the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.*" [4] [4] That is how Eliyahu will reveal the redemption - it will be a joyous return, not like a birth which is painful, but a birth that is painless and full of joy [the level of the future, when there will be no more pain].

Anything that we traverse throughout the month of Elul is like the fetal state, for Elul corresponds to Gad, who represents the fetal state [as explained earlier]. But this "fetal state", this process of pregnancy and birth, does not have to be like the painful kind of pregnancy and birth which we are familiar with. Instead, it is a "pregnancy" and "birth" which can be pleasant and joyous to us.

The Sages state that "In Elul, the King comes to the field." The depth of this is because Elul is like the fetal state, where something is emerging into the outside. Instead of pain and ruination, which is a result of sin, we can have Gad's power during this time of the year, a level where there is no pain.

In Yaakov's blessing, Gad is compared to the heel, because the heel is the end of the body, and so is Gad at the end of the year, for Elul\Gad is the last month of the year. Gad, Elul, is the heel of the year, the endpoint of the year, which shows that the year can end with the power of Gad, a good end to the

year, a pleasant end.

Increasing Good Actions in Elul – Connecting To the Power of Gad

The month of Elul, which corresponds to Gad, contains the power of holy action^[5] [5], for Gad is the first of the tribes to go out to war against the enemies of the Jewish people. But Gad's power of action\war is unlike like the war of Yaakov against Esav, which is a painful war filled with strife. Rather, Gad reveals a rectified state of war, one that begins with rectification, not with ruination.

Yaakov and Esav began to quarrel with each other in the womb, when they were yet in their fetal state, and Rivkah complained of the pain of this pregnancy as Yaakov and Esav clashed inside her. But Gad reveals a kind of fetal state which is painless. Thus, through Gad, the painful war fought between Yaakov and Esav becomes rectified.

This is also the depth of why we “increase good deeds” in the month of Elul. [Besides for the simple meaning, that we increase good deeds as part of doing *teshuvah*, it is also because] it is a way for us to connect to the power of Gad, a fetal state which is painless, which rectifies the impaired fetal state of Yaakov and Esav where there was clashing and war.

Thus, Elul is the power of holy “action”, for Gad rectifies the strife in the fetal state between Yaakov and Esav, so that there is no more war between Yaakov and Esav. From Gad's power – the revelation of a “painless pregnancy” - the war between Yaakov and Esav will cease, and through that, we will merit the full meaning of “*ba Gad, bad mazal*” (the “good *mazal*” of Gad).

In Conclusion

May we merit from *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* that we should have “*ba Gad ba mazal*”, the level of before the sin, where there is no pain in pregnancy and birth, and instead, may we have only *simchah* [joy] and *nachas* [pride from our children] in the home.^[6] [6]

^[1] [7] peirush haGra: Sefer Yetzirah 5:3

^[2] [8] Rashi to Beraishis 30:11

^[3] [9] Sefer Yetzirah 3:1

^[4] [10] Malachi 3:24

^[5] [11] Editor's Note: The Sages describe Elul as the month of *maaseh*\action. Refer to ***Essence.of.Rosh.Chodesh_07_Elul - Action***

^[6] [12] Editor's Note: For more on the power of Gad, refer to ***Mazal.of.Rosh.Chodesh_013_Teves - Goat***

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