

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

Rabbi Pinches Friedman

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim 5770

Translation by Dr. Baruch Fox

Our Task in the Three Weeks Is to Reunite the Final Heh Representing the Shechinah With the Letters Yud Heh Vav

During the three weeks, it is worthwhile to ponder the deeper significance between the number of weeks and the number of days that comprise this sad, mournful period of the Jewish calendar. On the one hand there are twenty one days in three weeks; on the other hand, if we actually calculate the number of days from shivah asar b'Tamuz to tishah b'Av, we come up with twenty two days.

Most of our holy sources, in discussing the three weeks, however, view them as being comprised of only twenty one days—leaving tisha b'Av out of the count. We find this in the works of the Arizal, the Megaleh Amukos and the Avodas Yisroel, among others. The source for this manner of reckoning the days of the three weeks appears to be Rashi's commentary on the prophets (Yirmiyah 1,11): **”ויהי דבר ה' אלי לאמר, מה אתה רואה ירמיהו, ואומר מקל שקד אני רואה”**—Yirmiyahu tells Hashem that he sees a staff made of wood from an almond tree. Rashi, citing an allegorical Midrash, comments: **”השקד הזה הוא משעת חניטתו עד גמר בישולו עשרים ואחד יום, כמנין”**—the period of time it takes an almond tree to ripen and mature is twenty one days, the same as the number of days between the seventeenth of Tamuz, when the city was divided, and the ninth of Av, when the Temple was burnt. Here we find the Midrash stating explicitly that the three weeks are considered a twenty one day entity.

A simple explanation for this reckoning is based on the fact that the day of tishah b'Av is considered a “moed,” a festival. We find this in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 559,4): **” אין אומרים תחנון”**—tachanun is not recited on tishah b'Av since it is considered a festival. We find this same description in Scriptures (Eichah 1,15): **”קרא עלי”**—**מועד**—this sad, mournful day is referred to as a “moed,” a festival.

The grate, Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz, zy”a, explains—based on a Yerushalmi (Berachos 2,4)—that tishah b'Av is considered a festival, because it is the birthday of Mashiach ben Dovid. Other holy sources explain—based on the Midrash (Eichah Rabbah 4,14)—that by destroying the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem vented his wrath on the wood and stones of the physical structure, thus, sparing Yisroel from extermination; for this reason, as well—the salvation of the people of Yisroel from Hashem's wrath—tisha b'Av is considered a festival.

In summary, we have explained why the three weeks are reckoned as twenty one days—leaving tisha b'Av out of the count. Now, then, let us address the matter of three weeks and twenty one days

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

and their particular relevance to the process of mourning the destruction of the first and second Temples.

Three Roars During the Three Watches of the Night

Let us begin, by revisiting a topic we discussed at length last year. The night is divided into three watches; the Holy One wails and roars like a lion during each of these watches over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash; the three weeks correspond to these three watches. The Gemorah teaches this as follows (Berachos 3.):

“רבי אליעזר אומר שלש משמרות הוי הלילה, ועל כל משמר ומשמר יושב הקדוש ברוך הוא ושואג כארי, שנאמר (ירמיה כה ל) ה' ממרום ישאג וממעון קדשו יתן קולו שאוג ישאג על נוהו.”

Additionally, they taught (ibid.):

“אמר רב יצחק בר שמואל משמיה דרב, שלש משמרות הוי הלילה, ועל כל משמר ומשמר יושב הקדוש ברוך הוא ושואג כארי ואומר, אוי לבנים שבעוונותיהם החרבתי את ביתי, ושרפתי את היכלי, והגליתים לבין אומות העולם.”

Due to our numerous sins and transgressions, resulting in the destruction of the Temple, the Almighty roars like a lion three times, once during each of the watches of the night. As a consequence, we are required to mourn during these three weeks in the hope that we will be inspired to repent fully—thus, hastening the redemption and the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash.

We proceeded to explain the matter of the Holy One roaring like a lion three times as a reaction to the destruction of the Temple based on a teaching in the Gemorah (Yoma 9):

“מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב, מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו, עבודה זרה וגלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים... אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב, מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם, ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות, עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים.”

We have learned that the first bayis was destroyed due to the transgression of the three cardinal sins in its time—idol worship, sexual immorality and murder. In contrast, during the period of the second bayis, people were engaged in the study of Torah, performance of mitzvos and acts of kindness; the Temple was destroyed, however, due to the sin of “sinas chinam,” senseless hatred. Furthermore, we are taught that the sin of “sinas chinam” is equivalent in severity to the three cardinal sins combined.

We can explain why this is so—that “sinas chinam” is equivalent in severity to the three cardinal sins combined—based on the following Mishnah (Avos 4,21): “הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם”—jealousy, lust and honor remove a person from the world. The Panim Yafot (Bereishis 2,17) explains that these three negative character traits parallel the three cardinal sins. Idol worship stems from haughtiness and an inappropriate sense of honor; sexual immorality stems

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

from lust; while murder, usually, stems from jealousy—as exemplified by the story of Kayin and Hevel.

Rav Tzaddok hakohen, zy”a, in his Pri Tzaddik draws the exact same associations. He explains that when a person has an inflated self-image, he seeks honor and wishes to rule over others like a king or a deity, which is akin to idol worship.

Now, the sin of “sinas chinam,” senseless hatred, stems from these three negative character traits. If one is jealous of his friend, or lusts after his neighbors’ possessions or feels that his friend does not pay him proper respect, the result is “senseless hatred.” Seeing as the three cardinal sins also stem from these three traits—jealousy, lust and honor—we understand why “sinas chinam” is equivalent in severity to the three cardinal sins. So, just as the first bayis was destroyed because of the three cardinal sins; so, too, the second bayis was destroyed due to “sinas chinam.”

Three Roars to Subdue the Three Negative Traits

The words of the Gemorah are well-known (Berachos 5.): **“לעולם ירגיו אדם יצר טוב על יצר הרע”** שנאמר רגזו ואל תחטאו” Rashi explains that this is a suggestion to wage a constant battle against our evil inclination with all the positive resources we can muster—as a means to avoid sinning.

The author of the Tanya explains the matter in Likutei Amarim (chapt. 29) as follows: one must confront his animalistic tendencies, his evil inclination, and tell it in a loud voice, full of anger, that he is evil, depraved and repulsive and to stop cowering before the Almighty.

In this manner, we can address the issue of the three times the Holy One roars like a lion during the three watches that divide the night. The negative personality traits represent the night; they blind us and lead us astray just as the darkness of the night does. Therefore, **“שלוש משמרות הוי הלילה”**—the night is divided into three watches—corresponding to the three negative traits of jealousy, lust and honor which confound our lives and remove us from the world. **“ועל כל משמר”** ומשמר יושב הקב”ה ושואג כארי” it should not surprise us, hence, that the Holy One sits and roars out loudly like a lion on each of these watches against these threats and affronts.

This is consistent with what we have learned in the Gemorah (Kiddushin 30:): **“יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ומבקש המיתו... ואלמלא הקב”ה עוזרו אין יכול לו”**—without the Holy One’s assistance, we would succumb daily to the powers of the evil inclination. To protect ourselves, we must learn to be strong and courageous like a lion. To remind us of what we must do and to motivate us, the Holy One roars like a lion three times during the night. He is rallying us to rise against these three traits—jealousy, lust and honor—like a ferocious lion, in order to conquer “sinas chinam” and to finally put a swift end to this bitter exile.

Adom HaRishon Separated the Final Heh from the First Three Letters of Hashem’s Name

Let us follow this path to gain a greater insight into the enormity of the three weeks. We find an incredible allusion in the Tikunei Zohar to explain the concept of **“שלוש משמרות הוי הלילה”**—

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

the night is divided into three watches. The darkness of the exiles originates from the sin of the tree of knowledge. As a result of that sin, Adom harishon caused a separation between the letters of Hashem's, holy, four letter name הו"ה—between the final heh, representing the Shechinah (the Divine Presence), and the first three letters, yud, heh and vav. So, when the Gemorah states: **”שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁמֵרוֹת הוּא הַלַּיְלָה”**, we see that the word **הוּא** consists of the first three letters of the holy name—they are the reason the Holy One cries during the night.

Continuing in this vein, the Tikunei Zohar elucidates the possuk after Adom harishon's sin (Bereishis 3,9): **”וַיִּקְרָא ה' אֶלְקִים אֶל הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַיֶכָּה לָּךְ”**—and the Lord called to Adom and said **איכ"ה** (where are you?). The word **איכ"ה** can be broken down to **איך ה'**—Hashem is asking Adom how he could have caused this harmful separation between the final heh and the first three letters of His name, **יה"ו**. Similarly, the prophet Yirmiyah laments (Eichah 1,1): **”אַיֶכָּה יִשְׁבָּה בְּדָרְךָ”**—once again, we find this construct, **איך ה'**—we can now interpret Yirmiyah's question homiletically as: how can the heh sit all alone, i.e. separated from the letters **יה"ו**? How has this come to pass? How can we tolerate this situation?

The Tikunei Zohar goes on to explain the remedy for correcting the injury to the four-letter name **הו"ה** caused by the sin of the tree of knowledge—Adom harishon subsequently reincarnated into the three patriarchs and Moshe Rabeinu. The Avos provided the remedy for the letters **יה"ו**. When the letter heh was added to Avraham's name, this corrected the first heh; Yitzchak corrected the letter yud—he was named after the **צחוק**, the laughter and mirth, yet, his name begins with a yud; Yaakov Avinu provided the remedy for the letter vav—as we have seen that his name occasionally appears spelled in full with the addition of a vav.

This left only the injured final heh, which was separated from the first three letters. Moshe Rabeinu corrected the final heh—heh has a numerical value of five--when he gave Yisroel the five books of the Torah. This completed the correction of the four letters of Hashem's name and provides another interpretation of the possuk at the beginning of parshas Va'era: **”וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵינוּ אֲנִי ה', וָאֵרָא אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי וְשָׁמִי ה' לֹא נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם”**—addressing Moshe, Hashem tells him that He appeared to the forefathers using a different name; they were not privy to the four-letter name. This can be viewed as an allusion to the fact that during the lives of the Avos, the name was not yet fully corrected; not until the time of Moshe Rabeinu was the correction complete.

Every Jew Shares in the Responsibility to Elevate the Shechinah

The Arizal in Shaar Hagilgulim (Intro. 23) teaches that when Adom harishon sinned, he was not alone; all of the neshomehs destined to come into this world, were part of his makeup and partook in the sin along with him. Therefore, every human being shares in the responsibility to make amends for the sin of the tree of knowledge. In other words, we all bear responsibility for the

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

separation of the final heh from the first three letters of the holy name, and it is incumbent upon us to participate in the correction and process of reuniting these letters.

This ties in beautifully with an insight provided by the Divrei Elimelech (Terumah) which he heard from his father, quoted in the name of the holy Opter Rav, zy" a, the author of the Ohev Yisroel. He states that it is the duty of every Jew, even the lowliest and seemingly least significant, to raise the Shechinah from the dust, **לאוקמא שכינתא מעפרא**. Every Jew need concern himself with the exile of the Shechinah and feel her sorrow and endeavor to raise her.

Kabbalistically, the final heh represents the Shechinah, the Divine Presence. The first three letters provide nurturing and influence to the final heh. When the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and Yisroel went into exile among the nations, the Shechinah went into exile, as well. Thus, the final heh, representing the Shechinah, was once again separated from the letters **יה"ו**. In the process, she was deprived of this vital connection and the nurturing influence it provided. As a result, the Shechinah remains in distress over the dishonor to Hashem, the dishonor to the Torah and the dishonor to Yisroel that are the sad reality in exile.

She wallows in the dust grieving over her children in exile. Even from the depths of exile, it is our job to elevate the Shechinah out of the dust through the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvos. An allusion to this task can be found in the Mishnah (Avos 2,12): **יוכל מעשיך יהיו לשם**—and all of your actions should be for the sake of Heaven—the word **לשם** can be seen as an abbreviation for **לאוקמא שכינתא מעפרא**, to raise the Shechinah from the dust.

An Amazing Story Involving Rabbi Zusha, zy" a

Rav Tzaddok hakohen, zy" a, recounts an amazing story in his Pri Tzaddik (Naso) involving the holy Rabbi R' Zusha, zy" a. Once, while walking along the road, he happened upon a goy riding in a wagon carrying a heavy load of "hay." Lo and behold, the wagon broke down and fell along with the large load of "hay."

Upon realizing that he was unable to lift the "hay" by himself, he turned to Rav Zusha for help. When Rav Zusha replied that he was weak and frail, the goy responded: "You are able to lift the 'hay,' you just don't want to." Rav Zusha's reaction is a lesson for us all in how to approach every situation as a message concerning the service of Hashem. He thought to himself: "Zusha, did you hear what the goy just said? Even you possess the ability to elevate the final heh; the problem is that you just don't want to."

We understand that the three weeks correspond to the three night watches during which the Holy One cries three times over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. We also learned from the Tikunei Zohar that the Gemorah's statement, **"שלש משמורות הוי הלילה"**, alludes to the fact that a separation has occurred between the first three letters of Hashem's name and the final heh. By extension, we see that the three weeks themselves correspond to the three letters of Hashem's name, the **יה"ו**, that have been separated from the final heh.

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

We now have a wonderful explanation why the three weeks are reckoned as only twenty one days—with the exclusion of tisha b'Av. It is reminding us of our obligation to help reunite the letters יה"ו—which have a numerical equivalent of twenty one (10+5+6)—with the final heh. Tisha b'Av, itself, represents the final heh; therefore, the Rabbis instituted the five (numerical equivalent of the letter heh) afflictions observed on tisha b'Av—similar to the practice on Yom Kippur. In the final analysis, the twenty one days together with tisha b'Av represent the union of the four letters of Hashem's name.

לשמה Learning Torah

Reunites the Final Heh with the Letters יה"ו

Let us now introduce a superb bit of advice found in the holy teachings of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, zy"l, suggesting a method by which we can successfully elevate the Shechinah, the final heh, in order to reunite her with the three letters יה"ו. He writes in the Noam Elimelech (parshas Mishpatim) that the purpose of engaging in the study of Torah "לשמה", for the sake of the Torah itself, for the purest of motives, is aimed at reuniting the final heh with the letters יה"ו. He explains that the term "לשמה" contains the letters לשם ה', meaning for the sake of the heh. In other words, learning Torah "lishma," without ulterior motives, is designed to reunite the final heh with the first three letters of Hashem's name, the letters יה"ו.

We can embellish this idea further—that engaging in Torah study with the proper motives serves to unite the final heh with the first three letters of the holy name—based on the fact that Torah study is accomplished via the mouth and its powers of speech. The Gemorah explains (Eiruvin 54.):

"אמר ליה שמואל לרב יהודה, שיננא פתח פומיך קרי, פתח פומך תני, כי היכא דתתקיים ביך ותוריך חיי, שנאמר כי חיים הם למצאיהם ולכל בשרו מרפא, אל תקרי למצאיהם אלא למוציאיהם בפה."

It is known that there are five origins of speech in the mouth and oral cavity, i.e. every letter of the aleph-beis derives from one of these five sites. These sites are the throat, the palate, the tongue, the teeth and the lips. Let us posit that these allude to the final heh, which has a numerical value of five. The Torah can be seen as an allusion to the first three letters of Hashem's name.

The Torah emanates from (a) the ten commandments--alluding to the letter yud, numerical value of ten—(b) the five books of Moses—alluding to the first heh in Hashem's name—and (c) Torah she'b'al peh which is comprised of the six orders of the Mishnah—an allusion to the letter vav, possessing a numerical value of six. As a result, when one engages in Torah study, utilizing the five origins of speech in the mouth and oral cavity, one is effectively uniting the final heh with the first three letters of Hashem's name, the yud, first heh and vav.

How beautifully this coincides with the famous dictum in the Gemorah (Berachos 8.): **"מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ד' אמות של הלכה בלבד"**

Shvilei Pinches

Parshios Matos-Masei & Bein Hametzorim

HaMikdash was destroyed the only thing that remains for the Holy One Blessed be He in His world is a mere four amos of halachah. “Since the day that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed”—resulting in the exile of the Shechinah and the separation of the final heh from the letters יה"ו—“the only thing that remains for the Holy One Blessed be He in His world is a mere four amos of halachah”—specifically four amos, corresponding to the four letters of his holy, ineffable name which unite by means of the study of Torah “lishma,” לשם ה' – “לשמה”—whose purpose is to reunite the final heh with the letters יה"ו. If we merit to achieve this reunion, we will realize the complete redemption when Hashem’s name will be complete and His throne will be complete—speedily, in our days, Amen.