

**Had We Been Meritorious We Would Have Read: "איכה אשא לבדי"**  
**Now that We Were Not Meritorious We Read: "איכה ישבה בדד"**

This upcoming Shabbos, on which we read parshas Devorim, is referred to as "Shabbos Chazon." This name derives from the fact that the haftarah designated for this special Shabbos is taken from the words of the prophet Yeshayah, who prophesied about the destruction of the Beis HaMikdosh (Yeshayah 1, 1): "חזון: — ישעיהו בן אמוץ אשר חזה על יהודה ועל ירושלים" — **the vision of Yeshayahu the son of Amotz, which he saw concerning Yehudah and Yerushalayim.** This parsha and this haftarah are always read, without exception, on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av — or on the actual Shabbos of Tisha B'Av, in which case the fast is postponed to the following day, Sunday.

It is a well-known fact that the parshas we read on Shabbos, were arranged specifically by Ezra HaSofer to conform to an annual cycle (Megillah 31:). It is worthwhile, therefore, to investigate why Ezra HaSofer saw fit to institute the recitation of parshas Devorim on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av.

Addressing this issue, the Levush (O.C. 428, 4) cites the words of the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.): "תשעה באב קודם [פרשת] ואתחנן" — Tisha B'Av precedes parshas Voeschanan; then he adds: "כדי שיקראו פרשת דברים שמתחלת תוכחותיו של משה קודם ט' באב, כדי להפטיר בה בחזון שהיא תוכחת על חורבן" — so that Moshe's rebuke of the people, which begins in parshas Devorim, will be read before Tisha B'Av along with the haftarah of "Chazon," which is a rebuke concerning the destruction of the Temple.

In other words, we wish to connect these two rebukes — Moshe's rebuke of Yisroel before his death with the

prophet Yeshayah's rebuke of Yisroel concerning the destruction of the Temple. Since we read Yeshayah's rebuke on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av, it was arranged that parshas Devorim would coincide with the reading of this haftarah.

**"איכה אשא לבדי" Is a Rectification for  
 "איכה ישבה בדד"**

Let us begin our journey by following the Levush's lead. What is the deeper connection between Moshe Rabeinu's rebuke in parshas Devorim and Yeshayah's rebuke concerning the destruction of the Temple? Let us refer to the following Midrash (Eichah Rabbah; Intro. 11): "אילו זכיתם הייתם קוראים בתורה איכה אשא לבדי, ועכשיו שלא זכיתם הרי אתם קוראים (איכה א א) איכה — **had you been meritorious, you would have recited from the Torah, "How can I carry alone?"; now that you were not meritorious, you are required to recite, "How is it that she sits alone?"**

The following requires explanation: (a) clearly, both rebukes employ the term "איכה"; nevertheless, why would the recitation of "איכה אשא לבדי" — "How can I carry alone?" preclude the necessity of reciting "איכה ישבה בדד" — "How is it that she sits alone?" (b) Today, in our times, although we recite from the Torah: "איכה אשא לבדי" — "How can I carry alone?", due to our multitudinous sins, we still mourn the destruction of the Temple, on the night of Tisha B'Av, by reciting: "איכה ישבה בדד" — "How is it that she sits alone?"

To clarify our sages' riddle and deeper message, let us examine the following words of rebuke uttered by Moshe, in our parsha: "איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם"

הבו לכם אנשים חכמים ונבונים וידועים לשבטיכם ואשימם  
 “בראשיכם – how can I alone carry your trouble, your  
 burden, and your quarrels? Provide for yourselves  
 distinguished men, who are wise, understanding, and  
 well known to your tribes, and I shall appoint them  
 as your heads. Rashi comments: חסר יו”ד לומר: “ואשמם”  
 שאשמותיהם של ישראל תלויות בראשי דייניהם, שהיה  
 “להם למחות ולכוון אותם לדרך הישרה” – the word  
 “ואשמם” is written without the letter “yod” (changing  
 the meaning of the word from “I will appoint” to “their  
 guilt”) to teach us that the sins of Yisroel hang on the  
 heads of their judges; for they should have protested  
 and directed them to the proper path. Why, according  
 to Rashi’s insight, did Moshe Rabeinu emphasize this  
 point here – that the judges bore responsibility for  
 the people’s sins?

First, let us recall what we have learned in the  
 Gemoreh (Yoma 9:); “מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב,  
 מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו עבודה זרה וגלוי עריות  
 ושפיכות דמים... אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה  
 ומצוות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב, מפני שהיתה  
 בו שנאת חנם, ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש  
 – עבירות עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים”  
 the first Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed because of the  
 commission of the three cardinal sins – idol-worship,  
 immorality and murder. During the period of the  
 second Beis HaMikdosh, however, the people engaged  
 in Torah study, the performance of mitzvot and acts of  
 kindness. It was destroyed because of baseless hatred,  
 “sinas chinam” – this teaches us that “sinas chinam”  
 carries as much weight as the three cardinal sins. The  
 Gemoreh proceeds to prove, from a possuk in Yechezkel  
 (1, 27), that even during the period of the first Beis  
 HaMikdosh, “sinas chinam” already existed among the  
 leaders of Yisroel.

**“Sinias chinam” among the Leaders of Yisroel  
 Led to “Sinias chinam” among the People of Yisroel**

We must note the alarming commentary of the Kli  
 Yoker on our parsha (Devorim 1, 1). He states that the  
 baseless hatred that existed among the leaders of  
 Yisroel during the period of the first Beis HaMikdosh  
 led to the baseless hatred that developed among the

people of Yisroel during the period of the second Beis  
 HaMikdosh. Here are his sacred words:

“ובט’ באב היה מעשה המרגלים, בו ביום נולדה מדת  
 שנאת חנם בישראל, כמו שכתוב (דברים א כז) ותאמרו  
 בשנאת ה’ אותנו הוציאנו וגו’, פירש רש”י [והוא היה  
 אודה אתכם אבל אתם שונאים אותו, משל הדיוט אומר]  
 מה דבלבך על רחמך מה דבלביה עליך. כי המה סברו  
 מאחר שכל אחד מהם שונא את חבירו, כך מסתמא שונא  
 אותם גם הקב”ה... ותהר צרה זו ותלד מדה רעה זו אשר  
 החריבה בית ראשון ושני, כי בבית ראשון היה שנאת חנם  
 בין נשיאי ישראל, ובבית שני פשתה הנגע בין כל ישראל  
 כדאיתא ביומא”.

The incident with the spies, the “meraglim,” occurred  
 on Tisha B’Av. That very day, the negative characteristic  
 of “sinas chinam” emerged amongst the people of Yisroel.  
 They accused Hashem of hating them (Devorim 1, 27),  
 although He truly loved them. This was an indication  
 that they hated each other and, therefore, assumed  
 that HKB”H hated them, as well. This incident gave  
 birth to the negative characteristic that caused the  
 destruction of the two Temples. During the period of  
 the first Beis HaMikdosh, “sinas chinam” existed among  
 the leaders of Yisroel; during the period of the second  
 Beis HaMikdosh, this defect spread among the people  
 themselves – as stated in the Gemoreh in Yoma.

Additionally, in light of the fact that the first Beis  
 HaMikdosh was destroyed because the people were  
 guilty of committing the three cardinal sins, where were  
 their leaders? Why didn’t they take steps to prevent  
 the people from committing these transgressions? The  
 answer, sadly enough, is that there was a lack of unity  
 among the leaders of Yisroel. Due to their quarreling  
 amongst themselves, they were incapable of presenting  
 a united front and no longer represented a positive  
 influence on the people.

Furthermore, as we learned from the Gemoreh: “ללמדך  
 ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות עבודה זרה גלוי  
 עריות ושפיכות דמים” – “sinas chinam” carries the  
 same weight and gravity as the three cardinal sins.  
 Consequently, the “sinas chinam” that prevailed among  
 the leaders of Yisroel was just as serious a transgression

as the three cardinal sins. Seeing as they were not free of guilt, and their offense was just as great, they were incapable of steering the people away from the sins of idolatry, immorality and murder.

As we discussed at length in our essay on parshas Masei, citing the Sefas Emes (5659), this is the reason that HKB"H arranged for Aharon HaKohen to depart from this world on Rosh Chodesh Av — the commencement of the nine days on which we mourn the loss of the Beis HaMikdosh, which was destroyed because of "sinas chinam." It is HKB"H's wish that Aharon will influence us from above to follow in his ways and to love our fellow Jew. As we learned in the Mishnah (Ovos 1, 12), the disciples of Aharon were characterized as: "אוהב שלום" — loving peace, pursuing peace, loving all creatures and bringing them nearer to Torah.

#### Moshe Rabeinu the Future Redeemer Yearned to Hasten the Redemption

Let us now introduce an idea from the Megaleh Amukos (20). Moshe Rabeinu wanted to enter Eretz Yisroel so that he could build the Beis HaMikdosh. HKB"H told him that that was not possible; for, if he were to build the Beis HaMikdosh, it would be impossible for our enemies to conquer it or destroy it. The Gemoreh (Sotah 9.) explains that our enemies never captured the Mishkan, because it was the result of Moshe's handiwork. This is evident from what we have learned: "משנבנה מקדש ראשון נגנז אהל מועד קרשיו ובריחיו ועמודיו — once the first Beis HaMikdosh was built, the Ohel Moed (the Mishkan) was stored, including all of its structural components.

The Midrash explains (Eichah Rabbah 4, 14) that in the process of the destruction of the Temple, HKB"H visited his wrath on the wood and stones of the structure rather than on Yisroel. This is implied in HKB"H's response to Moshe: "רב לך" — you are on too high a level and your handiwork is beyond the realm and capacity of Yisroel's enemies to conquer. Therefore, Moshe's request to cross the Yarden and build the Beis HaMikdosh was denied; so that HKB"H would not be

forced to visit his wrath, chas v'shalom, on the people of Yisroel. This is what we learned from the Megaleh Amukos.

In fact, Moshe Rabeinu also knew that Yisroel's enemies had no power or control over his handiwork. Yet, according to the Megaleh Amukos (252), he prayed to enter Eretz Yisroel and build the Beis HaMikdosh in the hope of realizing the final and complete redemption — hageulah hasheleimah. As the Zohar hakadosh teaches us (Bereishit 25:), Moshe Rabeinu, himself, is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach. This is alluded to in the possuk (Bereishit 49, 10): "לא יסור שבט מיהודה, דא משיח בן יוסף, ומחוקק מבין רגליו, דא משיח בן יוסף, עד כי יבא שיל"ה דא משי"ה" The possuk states that the royal scepter will not depart from the tribe of Yehudah — this is an allusion to Moshiach ben David; next it states that a lawgiver will not depart from his descendants — this is an allusion to Mashiach ben Yosef; until the arrival of Shiloh — this is an allusion to Moshe; the numerical value of שיל"ה is the same as the numerical value of the name משי"ה — both equal 345.

Moshe's entreaty to enter the land in order to build a Beis HaMikdosh that would endure forever is now easy to comprehend. For, at the time of the future redemption, HKB"H will slaughter the yetzer hara and exterminate it from the world, once and for all. In that event, there will be no need for HKB"H to pour out his wrath upon the wood and stones of the Temple's structure. Nonetheless, HKB"H informed Moshe that Yisroel were not yet worthy and the time for the future redemption had not yet arrived.

Additionally, let us recall the words of the Tikunei Zohar (69, 112.): "ואתמשטותיה דמשה בכל דרא ודרא: — ובכל צדיק וצדיק" — in other words, there is an extension of Moshe Rabeinu's neshamah in every generation and in every tzaddik. The Megaleh Amukos on Voeschanan (45) finds an allusion to this phenomenon in Moshe's proclamation to Yisroel (Devorim 3, 26): "ויתעבר ה' בי" — למענכם" — the word "ויתעבר" derives from the word "ibur," which is a form of reincarnation. Thus, Moshe is telling the people that due to their transgressions

and unworthiness, he will have to reincarnate in every generation and into every tzaddik--instead of bringing in the redemption himself, during his lifetime.

**"How Will I Be Able to Bear the Burden Alone"  
after My Brother Aharon's Decease**

We can now begin to comprehend, to some small degree, Moshe Rabeinu's heartfelt outpouring and open rebuke of Yisroel: "איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם" — "how can I bear your trouble and your burden and your quarrels alone? In other words, so long as my brother Aharon — the ultimate peacemaker — was alive, he assisted me by promoting peace between the members of Yisroel.

Now, however, that Aharon has passed away on Hor HaHar, I have been left alone; how am I to bear this burden alone? I am not capable of eradicating the "sinas chinam" and resolving the disputes alone. Notwithstanding, I will not abandon you, but rather: "הבו לכם אנשים חכמים ונבונים וידועים לשבטיכם" — appoint for yourselves wise, capable men, i.e. the tzaddikim and leaders of each and every generation; "ואשימם בראשיכם" — and I will reincarnate into them. Through them, I will teach you the ways of Hashem and how to overcome the nasty attribute of "sinas chinam," senseless hatred.

By means of his faculty of divine inspiration — "ruach hakodesh" — Moshe foresaw the causes of the destruction of the two Temples. He realized that "sinas chinam" would prevail among the leaders of Yisroel during the period of the first Beis HaMikdosh; outwardly, they acted friendly toward one another, but, in reality, they did not hesitate to stab each other in the back. This "sinas chinam" among the leaders of Yisroel led to the prevalence of "sinas chinam" among the people of Yisroel during the period of the

second Beis HaMikdosh. Therefore, Moshe cried out from the depths of his being: "ואשימם בראשיכם" — the blame for the people's tragic failure, their baseless hatred, lies with the leaders; the leaders failed to guide the masses properly due to their own shortcomings in this matter.

We can now shed light on the meaning of the Midrash: "אילו זכיתם הייתם קוראים בתורה איכה אשא לבדי" — had you been meritorious, it would have sufficed for you to recite from the Torah the possuk relating Moshe's rebuke of the people concerning quarrels and "sinas chinam"; had you taken the message to heart, by putting aside your differences and learning to love and appreciate one another, the Beis HaMikdosh would not have been destroyed. "ועכשיו שלא זכיתם" — now, however, that you were not meritorious and did not heed Moshe's words of rebuke: "הרי אתם קוראים איכה יושבה בדד" — you are forced to recite the lamentations of Eichah, in the aftermath of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdosh due to baseless hatred, "sinas chinam."

Alas, we can also understand why parshas Devorim is always read on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av. This parsha contains Moshe's Rabeinu's rebuke of Yisroel: "איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם" — **how will I carry alone your trouble, your burden and your quarrels?** Reading and hearing this rebuke, is intended to convey the lesson of the Midrash. Had we heeded Moshe's words of rebuke: "איכה אשא לבדי", we would not have to recite on Tisha B'Av: "איכה יושבה בדד". In the final analysis, we must comprehend the tragic consequences of "sinas chinam" and be motivated to perform teshuvah fully to eradicate "sinas chinam" from our midst. In this merit, we will realize the final and complete redemption and will no longer need to recite the lamentation of: "איכה יושבה בדד".