

The Arizal's Incredible Revelation

During the Period of Bein HaMetzarim It Is Incumbent upon Us to Subdue the Hand of the Klipah that Attacked Our Mikdash

The upcoming Shabbas Kodesh, which approaches auspiciously, is referred to as Shabbas Chazon. This name reflects the fact that the haftarah-reading comes from the navi prophesying about the “churban” (Yeshayah 1, 1): “חזון” —The vision (“chazon”) of Yeshayah the son of Amotz, which he saw concerning Yehudah and Yerushalayim. Hence, it is fitting that we explore a topic related to the “churban.” The Gemara (Ta’anis 29a) describes the following miraculous event:

“תנו רבנן משחרב הבית בראשונה, נתקבצו כיתות כיתות של פרחי כהונה ומפתחות ההיכל בידן, ועלו לגג ההיכל ואמרו לפניו, רבונו של עולם הואיל ולא זכינו להיות גזברין נאמנים, יהיו מפתחות מסורות לך, וזרקום כלפי מעלה, ויצתה כעין פיסת יד וקיבלתן מהם.”

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: When the Temple was destroyed the first time, groups upon groups of young kohanim assembled with the keys to the Heichal in their hands, and they went up to the roof of the Heichal, and they said before Him: “Master of the Universe! Since we were not privileged to be trusted caretakers, let the keys be handed over to You.” They threw them towards heaven and something like the palm of a hand emerged and received them from them.

In the sefer Yad Yosef (Devarim), the great “darshan” (expounder), Rabbi Yosef Tzorfati, utilizes this passage to interpret the formula we recite in the Mussaf service on the “Shalosh Regalim”: “... ואין אנו יכולים לעלות ולראות ולהשתחוות לפניך: —and we are unable to ascend, and to be seen, and to bow down before You . . . because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash. He explains that these words refer to the palm that emerged from above to catch the keys of the Heichal. Here are his sacred words:

“הכוונה שפירחי כהונה היו עולים לגגות לזרוק המפתחות לומר, הרי המפתחות מסורות לך ועשה אתה במקדשך כרצונך, אתה בידך, ולא תשלוט [יד]

האויב עלינו, רק אתה עשה בעצמך מה שתרצה, יצתה כמין פיסת יד ולקחתם, ומסר אותם ביד נבוכדנצר, ולזה רמזו מתקני התפילות, ואין אנו יכולים לעלות מפני היד שנשתלחה במקדשך.”

The young kohanim ascended to the roof of the Heichal to throw the keys heavenward with the proclamation: These keys belong to You; do with Your sanctuary as You please; the matter is in Your hands; do not let the hand of the enemy prevail over us; only You, do as You please.” The form of a hand emerged and caught them; and handed them over to Nevuchadnetzar. Those who instituted the formula of the tefilot alluded to this event with the following words: “And we are unable to ascend, because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash.”

The Klipah of the Hand that Was Sent Forth against the Beis HaMikdash

Based on his exposition, I would like to propose my own explanation for the matter of “פיסת יד”—the palm of a hand that emerged from heaven to take the keys to the Heichal and to deliver them to the evil Nevuchadnetzar. We find a wonderful interpretation of this tefilah: “מפני היד שנשתלחה במקדשך” --because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash—in the teachings of our teacher, the Arizal, in Pri Eitz Chaim. Here is what he says:

“סוד מה שאנו אומרים בתפילת מוסף, מפני היד שנשתלחה במקדשך, יובן [על פי המבואר בזוה"ק] פרשת תרומה דף קע"ב. סוד חלון אחד, הנקרא חלון זיהרא וכו', ובו צורת יד, והוא כפוף תחת כנפי השכינה, ובעת החורבן שלט על בית המקדש ונחרב עיני שם, וזה שאמר מפני היד שנשתלחה במקדשך.”

The secret meaning of that which we say in the Mussaf service—“because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash”—can be understood based on that which is explained in the Zohar hakadosh parshas Terumah 172. There is a window

... in it is the shape of a hand; it is controlled by the wings of the Shechinah. At the time of the churban, it reigned over the Beis HaMikdash. This is the meaning of the statement: "because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash."

Let us elaborate on the words of the Arizal based on a teaching from the Zohar hakadosh (ibid.). It states that there is a star in the heavens that contains the shape of the hand of the klipah. While the Beis HaMikdash stood, it was subject to the dictates of the Shechinah, which dwelled in the Beis HaMikdash. By means of this hand of the klipah, shevet Yehudah was able to successfully rule over and subdue the enemies of Yisrael. It was for this purpose that Yaakov Avinu bestowed the following blessing on shevet Yehudah (Bereishis 49, 8): "ידך בעורף אויבך"—**your hand will be on the neck of your enemies.** In other words, that hand of the klipah will itself be used to strike at the neck of Yisrael's enemies and subjugate them under the realm of kedushah. However, when shevet Yehudah strayed from the ways of Hashem and worshipped avodah zarah, they attributed to that heavenly hand super powers; they used it in various ways constituting forms of idolatry.

The Arizal adds to this an embellishment of his own from the secrets HKB"H revealed to him personally, in keeping with the notion of (Tehillim 25, 14): "סוד ה' ליראיו"—**the secret of Hashem is revealed to those who fear Him.** He explains that this is the secret meaning of the statement: "Because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash." For, at the time of the churban, due to Yisrael's transgressions and rebellion against Hashem and His Torah, the klipah of the hand also rebelled against the holy Shechinah. Consequently, shevet Yehudah lost control of that hand. Therefore, instead of striking the neck of Hashem's enemies--"ידך בעורף אויבך"--who were laying siege to Yerushalayim, the hand was sent out against the Beis HaMikdash, destroying it down to its foundation.

Now, if we combine the explanation of the Arizal with that of the Yad Yosef, we can shed some light on the notion of the "פיסת היד"—the palm of the hand that reached out from the heavens to take the keys to the Heichal, which the young kohanim threw heavenwards. As explained, there is a star in the heavens which contains the shape of a hand. It is the hand of the klipah which shevet Yehudah used to subdue Yisrael's enemies, fulfilling the words of Yaakov's berachah: "ידך בעורף אויבך". At the time of the churban, however, it was authorized to reach out and take the keys and to hand them over to Nevuchadnetzar. This enabled him to enter the Heichal and destroy the Beis HaMikdash, employing the power of that hand that was sent forth against our Mikdash.

"Those whom He redeemed from the hand of the oppressor"

In the sefer Ba'al Shem Tov (Yisro), an explanation is brought in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov, zy"a, regarding a passuk discussing the future geulah (Tehillim 107, 2): "יאמרו" "גאולי ה' אשר גאלם מיד צר"—**those redeemed by Hashem will say; those whom He redeemed from the hand of the oppressor.** This implies that they will express their gratitude to Hashem for delivering them from the "hand" of the klipah that was sent forth against the Beis HaMikdash. To enhance this idea, let us examine the words of the divine poet in Lamentations (Eichah 1, 10): "ידו פרש צר על כל מחמדיה"—**the oppressor spread out his hand on all her treasures.** This can be interpreted as an allusion to that hand that the oppressor spread out to snatch the keys of the Heichal tossed up in the air by the young kohanim. It is with regards to that hand that David HaMelech said: "יאמרו" "גאולי ה' אשר גאלם מיד צר"—those redeemed from the very same hand spread out by the oppressor.

This provides us with a very nice explanation for the words we recite in Tachanun on Mondays and Thursdays: "עד מתי עוֹזֵךְ בַּשְּׁבִי"—**how long will Your strength be in captivity and Your glory in the hand of the oppressor?** As this verse infers, two outstanding attributes—"midot"—prevailed in the Beis HaMikdash—strength and glory. Hence, we pray: "How long will Your strength be in captivity and Your glory in the hand of the oppressor?" For, these two midot which prevailed in the Beis HaMikdash remain captive in the hand of the klipah that was sent forth against our Mikdash.

We can suggest that it is for this reason that the Melech HaMashiach is named David. It states in the Zohar hakadosh (Lech Lecha 82b): "David HaMelech lives forever; even during the times of the Melech HaMashiach, he will be King. If from the living David is his name; and if from the deceased David is his name." The Melech HaMashiach, the head of shevet Yehudah, is called "דוד" (14), possessing the same numerical equivalent as the word for hand--"יד" (14). For, at the time of the future geulah, when he will come to redeem Yisrael and wage war against their mortal enemies, he will once again merit to subdue and harness the hand of the klipah under the wings of the Shechinah. He will use it to strike down the enemies of Yisrael in keeping with Yaakov Avinu's berachah: "ידך בעורף אויבך".

The Idol in the Heichal that Broke Its Fellow's Hand

Concerning this topic, let us present the wonderful explanation provided by the great author of the Ben Ish Chai, in his sefer Ben Yehoyada, on the allegories and parables in the Talmud (Ta'anis 29a). He addresses the passage in the Gemara (ibid. 28b and 29a) discussing the two idols placed in the Heichal of the Beis HaMikdash by Menashe, the King of Yisrael. This sacrilegious act caused the Shechinah to abandon the Beis HaMikdash. As a consequence, the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed fifty-five years later. However, one of the idols fell on the other and broke off its hand. The following message was found written on the unbroken idol: **“את צבית לחרובי ביתא, ידך—אשלימת ליה—you wanted to destroy the house of G-d; I have given Him your hand as compensation.”**

The Ben Ish Chai explains that this message came from the force of evil. HKB”H wanted to support Yisrael and encourage them by conveying the message that even during the times of the churban, HKB”H protects them by having the forces of evil battle one another: **“נראה כתיבה שמוצאו כתוב על הסמל, היתה על ידי כוחות הסטרא אחרא, להודיע לישראל שכוחות הסטרא אחרא נלחמו בהם, על דרך מה שאמר הכתוב (ישעיה—יט-ב) וסכסכתי מצרים במצרים, ומוחמות כן היה לישראל הצלה פורתא מן הכליה”** to substantiate his explanation, he cites the passuk (Yeshayah 19, 2): **“I will cause Egyptians to fight Egyptians.”** Because of this, Yisrael will be spared to some minor degree from annihilation.

In this manner, he proceeds to explain why the one idol broke off the other's hand, based on the Arizal's interpretation of the words: **“מפני היד שנשלחה במקדשיך”**. This verse refers to the hand of the forces of evil which ruled in the Beis HaMikdash and ultimately destroyed it. Therefore, the first idol broke its fellow idol's hand to avenge the fact that it wanted to destroy the Temple with that very same hand.

Let us add a tidbit of our own to his explanation based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 31a): **“אמר רבי יוחנן, ששה חדשים נתעכבה שכינה לישראל במדבר שמה יחזרו בתשובה, כיון שלא חזרו אמר תיפח עצמן—Rabbi Yochanan said: For six months the Shechinah lingered for Yisrael in the midbar, hoping that perhaps they would return by means of teshuvah. When they did not return, He said: May their very essence suffer agony!** Although it is true that Menashe, the King of Yisrael, drove the Shechinah away by introducing idols into the Heichal; nevertheless, the Shechinah lingered in the midbar for six months hoping that Yisrael would perform teshuvah and she would be able to return to the Beis HaMikdash.

According to this scenario, we can suggest that this is why HKB”H arranged for the idol itself to submit itself under the wings of the Shechinah and for it to break its fellow idol's hand. HKB”H wished to demonstrate to Yisrael that if they returned by means of complete teshuvah, the Shechinah would rule once again over that hand and prevent it from destroying the Beis HaMikdash. Additionally, the klipah itself would combat the enemies of Yisrael, in the sense of: **“ידך בעורף אויביך”**—just as the one idol broke off its fellow idol's hand to prevent it from destroying the Beis HaMikdash.

The Hand that Was Sent Forth against Our Mikdash Is Sustained by the Left Hand representing Gevurah

After much thought, I would like to propose my own explanation for this phenomenon. As explained, while the Beis HaMikdash stood, the hand of the klipah was subservient and obedient to the will of the Shechinah—to the degree that shevet Yehudah used it to strike down the enemies of Yisrael. As a result of their sins, that very same hand destroyed the Beis HaMikdash, as expressed by the words: **“היד שנשתלחה במקדשיך”**. I would like to refer to the pesukim sung by Yisrael at the sea (Shemos 15, 6): **“ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב—Your right hand, Hashem, is majestic in might; Your right hand, Hashem, crushes the enemy.”** Rashi explains in the name of the Mechilta: **“כשישראל עושין רצונו של מקום, השמאל נעשית ימין. ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח, להציל את ישראל, וימינך השנית תרעץ אויב.”** **The right hand is mentioned twice in the passuk. When Yisrael are compliant with the will of the Omnipresent, the left becomes a right. Thus, Your original right hand, Hashem, is majestic in might, to save Yisrael; while Your second right hand—previously Your left hand—crushes the enemy.**

It is known that HKB”H manages the world with two hands, representing the attribute of chesed and the attribute of din. The right hand represents “midas hachessed,” providing those who serve Hashem all that is good. The left hand represents “midas hadin,” doling out punishment to the wicked. The source for this notion is the Tikunei Zohar in the passage of Pasach Eliyahu (Introduction 17a): **“חסד דרועא ימינא, גבורה דרועא שמאלא.”**

Now, when Yisrael are compliant with the will of the Omnipresent, they transform “midas hadin” into “midas hachessed.” As a result, the left hand, representing the attributes of din and severity, becomes another right hand. Thus, it enables Yisrael to use the attribute of severity—gevurah—to

strike down their enemies. This then is the interpretation of the passuk: “ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח”—this refers to the actual right hand, the embodiment of chesed; it performs acts of kindness and favor for Yisrael, rescuing them from their foes—the Egyptians—and from difficult situations. “ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב”—the second part of the passuk refers to the left hand, the embodiment of din; for Yisrael's benefit, it is transformed into a virtual right hand, functioning as a hand of chesed. Thus, Yisrael can use its inherent qualities of gevurah to pound and crush the heads of her enemies.

We can now begin to appreciate the concept of the klipah that appears in the form of a hand to wage war. When HKB”H's left hand, representing din, is dominant in the world, then this klipah draws its power from the residual elements of gevurah native to the left hand; it wages battles with the attribute of gevurah. Now, when Yisrael act in accordance with the will of G-d, the left hand functions like a right hand and battles Yisrael's enemies, in the sense of: “ידך בעורף אויבך”. Yet, when Yisrael neglect to act according to the will of G-d, this transformation does not occur; the din of the left hand remains in full force against Yisrael, chas v'shalom. Hence, that very same hand of the klipah that is nourished from the residue of the forces of severity battles against Yisrael.

Behold! The divine poet lamenting the time of the churban states (Eichah 2, 3): “גדע בחרי אף כל קרן ישראל, השיב אחור ימינו מפני—He cut down, in burning anger, all the dignity of Yisrael; He drew back His right hand in the presence of the enemy. He burned through Yaakov like a flaming fire, consuming on all sides. The Zohar hakadosh explains (Beshalach 57a) that HKB”H removed his right hand--the embodiment of “midas hachessed”--leaving only the left hand, creating a situation of total din. Seeing as the time of the churban constituted a situation of total, unmitigated din, the hand of the klipah, being nurtured by the attribute of gevurah—which was heretofore subservient to the Shechinah, vanquishing Yisrael's enemies—now battled against the forces of kedushah to destroy the Beis HaMikdash. It no longer functioned as a right hand, a force for chesed.

Tefillin Shel Yad Subdue the Klipah of Yad Tefillin Shel Rosh Correspond to the Beis HaMikdash

I was struck by a wonderful idea based on the explanation of the Arizal cited above, which I would like to present upon the royal table. I would like to explain why the tefillin shel yad are

donned prior to the tefillin shel rosh, as dictated by halachah in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 25, 5). The source for this practice is found in the Gemara (Menachos 36a): “תנא כשהוא מניח מניח של יד—ואחר כך מניח של ראש, וכשהוא חולץ חולץ של ראש ואחר כך חולץ של יד”—**a Tanna taught: When one puts on tefillin, he dons the “shel yad” first; afterwards he dons the “shel rosh.” When he removes them, he removes the “shel rosh” first; afterwards he removes the “shel yad.”** The Gemara explains the rationale for this practice: “אמר קרא (דברים ו-ח) והיו לטוטפות בין עיניך, כל זמן שבין—**the passuk states: “And let them be ‘totafot’ between your eyes.” This implies that as long as they are between your eyes (i.e. whenever you are wearing the “shel rosh”), they shall be two (i.e. you should also be wearing the “shel yad”).**

It appears that the matter can be explained based on a tremendous chiddush we learn from the divine Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the Zohar hakadosh (Midrash HaNe'elam Chayei Sara 129a). He says that even today in galut, it is possible to fulfill the mitzvas aseh of (Shemos 25, 8): “ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי—**They shall make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them**—by fulfilling the mitzvah of donning tefillin shel yad and tefillin shel rosh. This opinion is also shared by the Shela hakadosh (Chullin):

“כתב בעל ספר המוסר פרק ד' וזה לשונו, וסוד תפילין עמוק מי ימצאנו, אבל אכתוב מעט מזעיר ממה שכתבו חכמי האמת. דע שצריך לנהוג בהן קדושה גדולה, לפי שיש בהן סוד המרכבה קדושה, ואחר שנחרב הבית כתב הקדוש רשב”י, שעל תפילין נאמר ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם, שבסיבתם הקב”ה משרה שכינתו בישראל, לפי שהם סוד המרכבה וסוד האבות, ולכן יש בהן שי”ן של ג' רגלים מצד הימין כנגד האבות אברהם ויצחק ויעקב, ומצד השמאל שי”ן של ד' רגלים כנגד ד' חיות נושאי המרכבה.”

Tefillin represent a deep mystery! One must treat them with the utmost reverence and sanctity, because they possess the secret of the Holy Chariot (a vessel subservient to Hashem's will). Since the destruction of the Temple, we fulfill the command of “they shall make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them” through the mitzvah of tefillin—as taught by the holy Rashby (Chayei Sarah 129.). By means of the tefillin, HKB”H's Shechinah dwells among Yisrael; because tefillin represent the secret of the Chariot and the secret of the Avos. It is for this reason that they have a three-legged “shin” on their right side, corresponding to the Avos--Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; and on their left side, they have a four-legged “shin,” corresponding to the four creatures bearing the Chariot.

After careful consideration, it is apparent that Rashby's chiddush coincides amazingly with the elucidation in the Gemara (Berachos 8a), regarding the passuk (Devarim 28, 10): "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך, אמר רבי אליעזר, אלו: תפילין שבראש-- the passuk states: **"Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you."** Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: **This is a reference to "tefillin shel rosh."** Seeing as the tefillin shel rosh allude to the Beis HaMikdash—which is why they have a three-legged "shin" on the right side corresponding to the holy Avos and a four-legged "shin" on the left side corresponding to the four holy creatures carrying the Chariot of the Kisei HaKavod--therefore when the goyim see the tefillin shel rosh, they are consumed with intense fear and awe as they were when the Beis HaMikdash was extant.

Nevertheless, we must still endeavor to understand why HKB"H commanded us to don both tefillin shel yad and tefillin shel rosh. Many explanations have already been suggested; however, based on what we have discussed, we can suggest a novel explanation based on an elucidation in the Gemara (Menachos 37a). The Gemara deduces that the tefillin shel yad should be placed on the left arm from the passuk (Shemos 13, 16): "והיה לך לאות על ירכה"-- **and it shall be a sign upon your arm.** Note the peculiar spelling of the word "yadchah," meaning "your arm"; it is spelled with the letter "hei" at the end. This is an allusion to the words **יד כהה**, meaning the weaker (less dominant) arm, which for most people is the left arm.

We have already explained that at the time of the churban, the hand of the klipah was sent out to destroy our Mikdash. For, it was nurtured from the left hand, constituting the attribute of gevurah on the side of kedushah, which remained unmitigated and was not transformed into a force for chesed, due to our countless sins—as it is written: **"השיב אחור ימינו"—He drew back His right hand.** Therefore, HKB"H commanded that the tefillin be placed first on the left arm. This action is actually performed by the right hand, the hand of chesed. It binds the tefillin to the left arm and hand, the side of din, in order to subjugate the "midas hadin" of the left hand under the control of the "midas hachessed" of the right hand. In this manner, the words of the passuk are fulfilled: **"ימינך ה' נאדרי בכה, ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב"**—the left hand also becomes a functional right hand. Thus, the influence of the klipah of the hand—that was sent forth against our Mikdash, from the attribute of gevurah—will be abolished.

Therefore, immediately after performing the mitzvah of donning the tefillin shel yad—by binding the tefillin to the

left arm—we don the tefillin shel rosh, corresponding to the mitzvah of: **"ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם"**—establishing a sanctuary for the Shechinah to dwell upon. Thus, we prepare for the future geulah—when the power of the hand that was sent forth against our Temple will be eliminated. Then we will merit the coming of the Mashiach, whose name **י"ד** is equivalent to **י"ה**—the hand of kedushah that will build the third Beis HaMikdash, swiftly, in our times.

The Holy Shechinah Subdues the Klipah of י"ד with the Name י"ה

Following this line of reasoning, let us proceed to delight in the words of the Arizal. He taught us that the star which contains the shape of a hand was subject to the will of the Shechinah when the Beis HaMikdash stood. It served to subdue the enemies of Yisrael, in keeping with the berachah: **"ידך בעורר"** **אויבך**. It appears that we can explain this matter based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 17a): **"דריש רבי עקיבא, איש דריש רבי עקיבא, איש"** **Rabbi Akiva expounded: If a husband and wife are meritorious, the Shechinah is present between them.** Rashi provides the following clarification: **"שכינה ביניהן, שיהי חלק את שמו ושיכנו ביניהן, י"ד באיש וה" באשה"**—the letters י"ה, one of G-d's names, are split between the man and the woman; the letter yud appears in the word **איש**, while the letter hei appears in the word **אשה**. Here we learn a very important principle from Rabbi Akiva. The name י"ה alludes to the holy Shechinah, which is known by this name.

Amazingly, this helps us understand why there were fifteen steps in the Beis HaMikdash between the "Ezras Nashim" (the women's courtyard) and the "Ezras Yisrael" (the men's courtyard). Now, we know that the number of steps corresponded to the fifteen "Shir HaMa'a lot" (Songs of Ascent) composed by David HaMelech in sefer Tehillim (Mizmor 120-Mizmor 135). Additionally, the Leviim stood on these fifteen steps while singing their songs during the Simchat Beis HaSho'eivah on Succot, as described in the Mishnah (Succah 51a): **"Chassidim and men of good deeds would dance before them with flaming torches in their hands, and say before them words of songs and praises. And the leviim, with their harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and countless other musical instruments, stood on the fifteen steps that led down from the 'Ezras Yisrael' to the 'Ezras Nashim,' which corresponded to the fifteen 'Shir HaMa'a lot' in Tehillim. For on them the leviim would stand with their musical instruments and utter song."**

The Maharal explains in *Gevurot Hashem* (Chapter 59) that these fifteen steps in the Beis HaMikdash are the same number as the name י"ה, with which Olam HaBa and Olam HaZeh were created. Based on our current discussion, we can suggest that the number of steps equaled the name י"ה as an allusion to the Shechinah, referred to by the name י"ה, which HKB"H rested in the Beis HaMikdash—as HKB"H states: **"וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם"**. The name **שְׁכִינִי** itself alludes to this fact. Rearranged, its letters spell **שָׁכַן י"ה**, conveying the fact that HKB"H placed the name י"ה, representing the Shechinah, in the Beis HaMikdash.

We can suggest that this is the reason why the leviim uttered their song on these fifteen steps. It was their job to preserve the dwelling of the Shechinah, represented by the name י"ה, in the Beis HaMikdash. For, the Gemara (Shabbas 30b) teaches us that the Shechinah only dwells in a place that exhibits the simchah of mitzvah. This fact is alluded to by the word שיר"ה, whose letters can be rearranged to form שר י"ה—indicating that they sang for the sake of י"ה. In fact, we learn in the Mishnah (Succah 51b) that when they exited the Beis HaMikdash after the Simchat Beis HaSho'eivah, they would say: **"אנו ליה וליה—עניינו—****we are for י"ה and toward י"ה we direct our eyes.** In other words, their entire purpose was to connect with the Shechinah, represented by the name י"ה.

This enlightens us with regards to the words of the Arizal. As long as the Shechinah dwelled in the Beis HaMikdash, the klipah of ד"י was obedient to the Shechinah. For, the numerical value of the name ה"י exceeds the numerical value of the word ד"י by one. Thus, the Shechinah controlled the klipah of the hand, and it was obliged to fight against the enemies of Yisrael. At the time of the churban, however, when our transgressions drove the Shechinah away, causing the name ה"י to vacate the Beis HaMikdash, the klipah of ד"י gained power and proceeded to destroy our Beis HaMikdash, as we state in our prayers: "מפני היד שנסתלחה במקדשך".

Amalek Represents the Klipah of the Hand

It appears that we can find support for this idea from the pesukim related to the battle with Amalek (Shemos 17, 16): "וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יָד עַל כָּס יְהוָה מִלְחָמָה לֵּה' בַּעֲמָלֵק מִדּוֹר דּוֹר" -- **and he said, "For there is a hand on the throne of ה'"; Hashem maintains a war against Amalek from generation to generation.** We can interpret the meaning of this passuk based on a passage

from the Midrash Rabbah (Eichah 5, 1): “אמרו ישראל לפני הקב”ה, רבונו של עולם הכתבת לנו בתורתך (דברים כה-יז) זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק, Yisrael said to HKB”H, “Master of the Universe, You wrote for us in Your Torah: ‘Remember what Amalek did to you.’ Did he only do it to me and not to You? Didn’t he destroy Your sanctuary?” This passage indicates that Amalek represents the klipah of the hand that was sent out against our holy Temple.

Accordingly, we can suggest that this is the allusion inherent in the passuk: “כִּי יֵד עַל כֶּסֶּף יִהְיֶה מַלְחָמָה לָּהּ בְּעַמְלֶק.” “כִּי יֵד”—that very same hand of Amalek, who followed in the ways of his grandfather Eisav, spreading out his hand to combat Yisrael and to ultimately destroy the Beis HaMikdash; “עַל כֶּסֶּף יִהְיֶה מַלְחָמָה לָּהּ בְּעַמְלֶק”—HKB”H combats him with the name יָד to subdue his klipah of יֵד.

This provides us with a wonderful explanation as to why the month of Av is split up into two parts. The first fourteen days are days of din; whereas from the fifteenth of Av to the end of the month the force of din is diminished. In fact, the fifteenth of Av is a day of simchah and lessening of the forces of din. Here is what the Kedushas Levi writes on the subject (Shabbas Nachamu):

חודש אב, פירוש א"ב, היינו תחילה עד ט"ו באב א'רור, ומחמשה עשר באב, היינו ב'רור, וזהו א"ב - א'רור ב'רור. The name of the month Av is formed by the letters "aleph" and "Beis." From the beginning of the month until the fifteenth of Av, it is א'רור (cursed; beginning with the letter "aleph"). From the fifteenth of Av, it is ב'רור (blessed; beginning with the letter "Beis"). That is the significance of the name א"ב—"aleph" for א'רור and "Beis" for ב'רור.

Based on what we have learned, we can provide the following explanation. The first fourteen days of Av are days of din; they allude to the klipah of י"ד, which was sent out against our Mikdash. From the fifteenth of the month and onward, corresponding to the divine name י"ה—the Shechinah that obliterates the klipah of י"ד—all the forces of din are mitigated. Illustrating this fact, the Mishnah teaches us (Ta'anis 26b): **לֹא** **יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיוּ יָמִים טוֹבִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כַּחמֶשֶׁה עָשָׂר בְּאָב**—**Yisrael had no days as festive as the fifteenth of Av.** The Mishnah explains that on that day, the daughters of Yerushalayim went out into the vineyards to engage in matters of shidduchim. According to what we have learned, the fifteenth of Av was auspicious for ensuring that the Shechinah, represented by the name י"ה, would dwell between a husband and wife.

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