

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Devorim, 5781
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shgalov

Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman

Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg

Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה

Ekman (Santiago, Chile)

Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769

ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF

Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shgalov

DEDICATED BY

Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיי
Shgalov

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by
Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Devarim

INTERRUPTED VISION

The phrase “Shabbos Chazon” applies both to “The Vision of Isaiah,” the Haftorah of retribution read before Tisha B’Av, and the vision of the future Beis HaMikdash, the Temple, vouchsafed to every Jew each Shabbos Chazon. They are connected by the principle of ‘descent for the sake of ascent.’ This concept applies to our approach to Torah, that each day we must envision it as being given anew. That requires an interruption. The interruption between the giving of the Torah each day is similar to the interruption of sleep. Even during a lengthy interruption, a long sleep, so to speak, we should not despair, but look forward to and envision the new day of Redemption.

The Torah reading before Tisha B’Av is always *Devarim* – the first section of the book of Deuteronomy. However, this Shabbos is also known as *Shabbos Chazon* – literally, the Shabbos of Vision – because the opening words of the Haftorah are “The Vision of Isaiah.” *Shabbos Chazon* – Isaiah’s Vision – is the last of the three Haftorahs of retribution, the final prelude to the destruction of the Temple.

Yet the phrase “*Shabbos Chazon*” as interpreted in Chassidus indicates something else – that on that Shabbos each and every Jew is shown a vision of the future *Beis Hamikdash* – the Temple that will be built in the days of Moshiach. Such a designation seems more appropriate for the seven weeks **after** Tisha B’av, when the Haftorahs speak of comfort, consolation and the future rebuilding of the Temple.

Obviously, there must be something about the Shabbos **before** Tisha B’av which includes both visions – that of the Temple’s destruction and that of the Temple’s rebuilding. Further, since

the same phrase – *Shabbos Chazon* – alludes to both visions, that phrase must reveal the inner connection between Tisha B'Av and Moshiach.

There is a principle in Jewish mysticism called 'descent for the sake of ascent.' This means that in order to reach a higher level, one must first descend to a lower level. As a result, one will ascend incomparably higher than would have been possible otherwise.

This concept – descent for the sake of ascent – recognizes that the descent itself is secondary. Indeed, since G-d is the essence of good, of necessity the descent only serves as the means to achieve the elevation that follows. The idea goes further: the descent is itself the beginning and the first step of the ascent, even though it appears to lead in the opposite direction.

So, although the phrase "*Shabbos Chazon*" refers to the Haftorah, to Isaiah's Vision and the prophecy of destruction, that destruction itself is only the 'descent for the sake of ascent' – and therefore also the first step toward building the Temple anew. Thus, in the destruction of the Temple – anticipated on *Shabbos Chazon* – can already be seen the beginning of the Redemption, signified by the vision of the future vouchsafed to every Jew, specifically on that Shabbos.

However, descent and ascent are opposites. Granted that G-d established the order of the world so that descent would precede ascent – destruction coming before a building to greater heights – the question is, why is the world structured like that? Why could things not proceed by a continual elevation, going always higher and higher? More specifically, why did the Temple – the *Beis Hamikdash* – have to be destroyed in order to build the new, permanent *Beis Hamikdash* of the times of Moshiach? Why must there be anger before reconciliation – a concept powerfully and succinctly expressed by Isaiah: "I will give thanks to G-d, because He was angry with me"?

The answer lies in the connection between the Haftorah and the weekly Torah reading – between *Shabbos Chazon* and the portion of *Devarim*. Just as the Haftorah for the Shabbos before Tisha B'av is always the vision of Isaiah – and hence the name *Shabbos Chazon* – so the Torah reading for the Shabbos before Tisha B'av is always the portion of *Devarim*.

The Torah reading begins “These are the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel.” The phrase “these are the words,” which otherwise would be superfluous, emphasizes something specific and current – something that can be pointed out and identified.

That is, the phrase “these are the words,” the opening phrase of the portion of *Devarim*, tells us that the words of Torah – **these words** – are present, identifiable significant and are currently active. It's as if we are hearing them from Moses **today** – as the Sages explain, every day the words of Torah should be new in your eyes.

Indeed, the newness of Torah is reflected in the daily blessing over the Torah, which is in the present tense – “Blessed are You . . . Who **gives** the Torah.” It is continually being given and received. And this continuous giving of the Torah parallels the continuous creation of man. In fact, that the Torah must be new in our eyes each day explains why we need sleep.

That is, we might ask a question similar to the one regarding ‘descent for the sake of ascent.’ Why do we need to sleep, which interrupts our Torah learning? Why can't we be awake continuously and just learn more and more each moment?

The perfection of the world requires our Divine service, making it a “dwelling place for G-dliness.” The Torah learning and mitzvah-observance of the Jewish people draws holiness into the world, transforming and elevating the very nature of existence. Our task is to transform and uplift the world, to give it a new character. In our own personal service we have to change our nature; that's

what alters and elevates the nature of the world. This expresses itself when there's an interruption and our service begins anew each day.

This fact – that the Torah must be given anew each day – explains why we need sleep, that is, why there must be an interruption in our Torah study. Without such an interruption, the uniqueness of each day's learning and each day's mitzvos would not be recognized. Without the interruption, one's Divine service would become simply habitual. Even the novelty would be part of the 'same old, same old,' as the saying goes. (Interestingly, Psalm 137 declares that, experiencing the Redemption, we will feel as if we were "dreamers" until now.)

Sleep interrupts a Jew's Torah study and mitzvah observance precisely in order to **emphasize the newness** of each day's effort. As man is made a "new creation" each day, so too his Torah and mitzvos are a "new creation," automatically higher than the previous state. Indeed, there is a qualitative change, a difference in degree, not just in kind.

Thus, in order to reach the new, higher state, logically there must be an interruption, a break and a barrier between one state and the next. Therefore, **the interruption is itself part of one's divine service**. The "intermission" is an integral component of the action, necessary to reach the next level.

This also answers the question regarding 'descent for the sake of ascent.' In order for there to be something new and unique in the Temple of the times of Moshiach, there had to be an interruption in the Temple service itself. Building a new *Beis Hamikdash* – the Temple in the era of Redemption – required a cessation and termination of the previous Temple. Thus the destruction is actually part of and the first step toward building the new, permanent Temple.

Now, if the second Temple was greater than the first because there was an interruption – that is, a first step – of seventy years

– how much more must the third and final Temple surpass its two predecessors. After an interruption, that is, a first step, of nineteen hundred years, the Temple Moshiach will build must be incomparably, inconceivably, greater.

The practical lesson from all of the above is simply this: Even during the weeks prior to the destruction, even close to the moment of destruction, to Tisha B'av itself – and even to this moment if our righteous Moshiach has not yet come, one should not despair. This interruption, however long, is only temporary. This pause is the actual beginning of the new building. Learning anew – as if the Torah is being given this day, with all its innovative insights – leads automatically to the new era, that of Moshiach, when, as G-d tells the Jewish people, “A New Torah will go out from Me.”

(Based on Sefer HaSichos 5750, Vol. II pp. 595-605)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mrs. Chana (Carrie) bas Reb Meir ע"ה Greenberg
Passed away on 9 Sivan, 5781
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