

On Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av

I just got a call from my grandson Elimelech who called to wish me a Good Chodesh. When asked how my Rosh Chodesh was going so far, I said that we Davened but didn't say Tachnun. He reminded me jokingly, that is because today is the Yearzeit of Aharon Hakohain. Incidentally, why is only Aharaon's yearzeit mentioned in the Torah? My answer follows:

In Parshas Shemini, Aharon was reluctant to bring the Korbonos because he thought that Hashem remembers the Aigel which he might have helped create, and Moshe had to convince him that the opposite is true. The Mishkan was made to prove that Hashem forgave the Bnay Yisroel the Aigel and they now have a Mishkan where they can bring Korbonos to Hashem and they will be accepted.

The Zohar teaches that all the days of the month receive their strength or blessings from Rosh Chodesh, as was mentioned on these pages last week. Since Hashem assured Aharon in Parshas Behaaloschah that his lighting of the Menora will last forever, implying that the Bais Hamikdash will always be in his Zechus, therefore, his Yearzeit had to be mentioned on Rosh Chodesh Av. This is to remind us that eventually, the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash will be commemorated in this month, and will also be rebuilt in this month. It will be in the Zechus of Aharon that we will see the rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdash, since the death of a Tzadik is Mechapair on the Klal Yisroel, Bimhaira B'Yomainu, Amain V'Amain.

Have a happy Chodesh
Luv Zaidy

Shabbos Devorim (Chazone)

1) Here we go again, getting into the real mood of Tisha B'Av, by reading Parshas Devorim, which is always read on the Shabbos proceeding this auspicious day. The Torah was written thousands of years before the Churban Habayis, the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. The calendar, as we know it, was created by some of the Sages of the Talmud, also millennia ago. How is it then that this Parsha always is read at this time, and doesn't fall during the winter months? The same question could be asked of other Parshiyos. For instance, why is Parshas Bamidbar always read before Shavuos and Parshas Mekaitz is almost always read during Chanukah? This might be a difficult question to answer, unless we refer to a famous quote in the Zohar, Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world.(Zohar II 161) There are many ways to understand this statement, one of which could apply to our questions.

To man, who is limited in the past and present tenses, we adjust our thinking based on history or current events. We can celebrate an occasion that happened years ago, or react to what is happening now. We cannot however, celebrate or dedicate an event, which will take place tomorrow, because we do not know that it will happen. To Hashem, to whom time is not limited to past, present or future, all that happens or will happen, is displayed and known. Therefore, seeing that certain occurrences will take place at certain times in the future, Hashem so arranged the Torah, that certain Parshiyos will be read to coincide with those historic events. Or, Hashem made those events occur at the times those certain Parshioys are read, because they are somehow integrated. Whether this interferes with the concept of free choice could be argued, but a good argument could be made for the above explanation.

To the traditional Jew, to whom the Torah is not merely a history book, recording what happened to our forefathers, or a collection of commandments, but rather a guide to our way of life, we must find at least an allusion in every Parsha, to what happens to us. Today's Parsha is actually a giveaway, since in the first section we find the word Aicho, whereby Moshe expresses the difficulty he has in carrying the burden of the people. This is the same word which begins Megillas Aicho, read on Tisha B'Av, lamenting the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash and the ensuing exile. The preceding Possuk includes a Blessing that Moshe gave to the Jews, that Hashem should increase their numbers a thousand fold. That is why, in many Shuls, on this Shabbos, while the first Possuk of the reading for Levy, begins with Aicho, it is customary to interrupt the reading of Kohain before the preceding Possuk, and begin Levy with that Possuk, containing the blessing, rather than with Aicho. Since the Aicho, said by Moshe, is followed by a blessing, we read this Parsha just before observing Tisha B'Av, hoping that today's Aicho will also be followed by a joyous blessing from Hashem. That this will be the last time we read Aicho as a lamentation, and will have it replaced with a blessing.

2) Rashi comments that Moshe postponed reproaching the Bnay Yisroel until just before he died, even as Yaacov did. How does this compare to what the Baal Haturim says, that Moshe reproached the Bnay Yisroel ten times? The answer is that he based his remarks on the verse, 'And they tested Me ten times'(Bamidbar 14:22), at which time Moshe chastised the Bnay Yisroel, the way one is supposed to when he sees another commit a sin. But, what Moshe is going to tell them now, is all encompassing, when he will remind them of all the sins they and their fathers committed, and this is much stronger than what he said at the time. This he postponed until just before his death.

3) Moshe spoke to the Bnay Yisroel all that Hashem told him to tell them. Throughout the Chumash, Hashem prefaced His remarks to Moshe by telling him to say the following to the people. The words that Moshe is going to say to the people now, will be from his heart and not from Hashem, why then does it say that Hashem told him what to say? The answer could be taken from what Rav Yisroel Salanter, the founder of the Mussar movement, said. A Rav whom the people do not want to drive from their city, is no Rav. Probably, he allows everyone to do as they please and doesn't Mussar them. On the other hand, a Rav who gets driven from his city is no Mensch, because he has to give Mussar in such a way that people will accept it, and love him for it. During the last 40 years, every time the Bnay Yisroel sinned, Moshe, as the true devoted shepherd, defended them before Hashem, but in his heart, he knew that they were wrong. We are taught, that we should try to correct a person who sins, and this is a Mitzvah, which Moshe couldn't really do properly during all these years. Now that he had the opportunity to really tell the Bnay Yisroel what he should have, he was carrying out the word of Hashem, and it was as if Hashem told him what to say.

4) **This is the land Hashem swore to give to your fathers:** (Ibid 8). This is part of the harsh words Moshe spoke to the Bnay Yisroel. After Hashem promised the land to the fathers, there was a hunger in the times of Avraham and Yitzchak, forcing them to leave the land. Yaacov had to run away to his uncle Lavan, still they didn't complain against Hashem. You witnessed all the miracles that Hashem had wrought to the Egyptians on your behalf, He split the Sea of Reeds, fought against Amalek, gave you Manna to eat and water from a rock, and you had no faith that Hashem will have you inherit the land. Therefore, this generation will not cross the river and only the next generation will inherit the land Hashem promised to your fathers.

This is an introduction to this week's Parsha, and I will try to add some during the week.
Luv Zaidy