



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

15 - 21 July, 2018
3 - 9 Av, 5778

Torah :
Deuteronomy 1:1 - 3:22

Haftorah:
Isaiah 1:1 - 27

■ **TORAH STUDIES**
We have many Judaic topics for you to study. We will provide the material and courses. Please write to us for more information.

■ **FAMILY PROGRAMS**

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ **GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH**

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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MIND OVER MATTER

This week we begin reading the final of the five books of the Torah, the book of Deuteronomy or Devarim.

In this portion we read about the journey of the Jewish people through the desert, as well as the preparation for their settling the land of Israel and the conquest of the nations who were dwelling there at the time.

Earlier in Torah, God promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation and would conquer ten foes in their conquest of the promised land. However, as we read in this week's reading, the Jewish nation traveled through the lands of Ammon, Moab and Edom without conquering their land but rather passed through peacefully. The remaining nations to be conquered numbered only seven.

In other words, while the Jewish people were promised they would conquer the lands of ten nations, at the time of the exodus from Egypt they were to conquer only seven and the others are left to be conquered at the time of the future redemption. Until then, the three other nations were to be left undisturbed.

There are many reasons and explanations for this. The Holy Land of Israel is more than just a plot of land. While it holds a wealth of history and the foundations of our nations history, it also

represents something more spiritual. Every individual is compared to a "miniature Israel," with all of the laws and details which come along with that title which serve as an analogy for our Godly service.

The numbers ten and seven have great significance in Jewish Mysticism. As taught in the teachings of the Kaballah, there are ten Sefirot, Godly attributes from which all of creation came into being. The sublime attributes exist in our souls individually as well. It is these spiritual qualities which serve as the driving force behind everything that we think, feel and do.

Within these ten attributes we find groupings of three and seven: Three attributes of intellect, and seven emotional qualities. Based on this, we can begin to understand the reasoning behind the divided conquest of the Ten Nations. The seven nations conquered upon the exodus from Egypt represented the seven attributes of emotion, while the three remaining lands which will only be acquired with the future redemption represent the three intellectual attributes.

While the essence of our Godly service remains constant, the focal point changes over time and based on circumstances. Today we live in an emotionally driven world. The things that really make us tick are the high strung, emotionally charged subjects. The crux of our

Parshat Devarim

service of God in today's day and age is to control and become masters of our emotional selves. "The mind rules over the heart."

This constitutes the grounds on which the war against the seven Canaanite nations was fought: Are we going to rule our emotions, or will we allow our emotions to rule over us? The nations of Canaan led a course, depraved lifestyle. They spent their lives seeking physical materialistic pleasures. The mission of the Jewish people upon entering the land was to transform it into a holy land. The mission was to turn the land into a place befitting the presence of God Almighty.

Then there are the other three. These represent the intellect. In the future, at the time of the ultimate redemption, the state of the world will be more than intellectual. In those days there will be an appreciation for God and for the world far beyond the ability of human intellect. The worldly intellect will be elevated by spiritual holiness.

The mind enables us to understand and appreciate reality. But today it is the forces of materialism which govern our appreciation. In the future we will be able to understand and appreciate spiritual matters in the same way that we appreciate the concrete physical matters today. This will result in the ultimate paradigm shift. Our entire focus and sense of priorities will change, they will

be overwhelmed by this new perception.

WE “EVERYTHING” UNITED

Towards the end of his life Moses recalls how he requested from God that he be given additional leaders, appointed to assist him in the leadership of the Jewish people. He said, “Eicha Essa Levadi - How can I carry the burden alone?” The word Eicha can also be translated as “woe,” a phrase connoting frustration and anguish.

Part of the liturgy read on the Ninth of Av is the book of Lamentations, known in Hebrew as the book of “Eicha,” referring to the opening words which read, “Eicha Yashva Vadad - Woe [unto Zion] for she sits alone.”

The portion of Devarim is always read on the Shabbat immediately before or directly after the Ninth of Av, the day on which we commemorate the destruction of both the first and the second Holy Temples in Jerusalem. In these two places, aloneness is the common theme, and in both places the term “Eicha” is used. Woe unto being alone, because being alone is not ideal for man.

At the time of creation after God created man, He proclaimed that “it is not good for man to be alone,” at which point He created Eve to walk alongside Adam so that they may support and complement each other on their life’s journeys.

Particularly when it pertains to Godly things, God proclaims it is not good for man to be alone. Prayers are always more meaningful when done with the community. Study is always more clarifying and conducive when done with a study partner.

Our sages tell us that the destruction of the Holy Temples and the subsequent exile came as a result of baseless hate between the Jewish people. Rivalry and discord between brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors tore the people apart from each other and ultimately tore us away from God, as it were.

The only remedy for this exile, the sages tell us further, is baseless love for our fellow. Consciously loving and accepting one another for who each of us is at our core, regardless of our flaws and missteps. Helping each other rebound and correct those very errors which would otherwise tear friends apart. All this is what would bring people back together, and bring us closer to God. This may be the very last thing which God is waiting for.

And this is the message of the “Eicha” liturgy: Take a deep hard look into your heart and find those relationships which could be mended with some good of love and forgiveness. Did this person hurt me? Yes. Does that mean I need to spend the rest of my years carrying the burden of resentment? Certainly not. I can forgive. I can remind myself that he or she is human just as I am. I can rediscover the unwavering love and concern that I have deep within myself for each and every member of my extended Jewish family.

By Rabbi Nissan Aizek

In Jewish History

Shabbat, 9 Av, 5778 - July 21, 2018

Exodus Generation Condemned to Die in Desert (1312 BCE)

On the Ninth of Av of the year 2449 from creation (1312 BCE), the generation of Jews who came out of Egypt under Moses’ leadership 16 months earlier were condemned to die in the desert and the entry into the Land of Israel was delayed for 40 years.

As related in Numbers 14, when the Spies that Moses sent to the Land of Canaan returned with their disheartening report, the people wept all night - the night of Av 9th - proclaiming that they’d rather return to Egypt than attempt to conquer and settle it; G-d decreed that the entire generation would wander in the desert for 40 years until the last of them died out, and that their children, under the leadership of Joshua, will enter the land He promised as Israel’s heritage.

Holy Temples Destroyed (423 BCE and 69 CE)

Both the first and second Holy Temples which stood in Jerusalem were destroyed on Av 9: the First Temple by the Babylonians in the year 3338 from creation (423 BCE), and the second by the Romans in 3829 (69 CE).

The Temples’ destruction represents the greatest tragedy in Jewish history, for it marks our descent into Galut--the state of physical exile and spiritual displacement in which we still find ourselves today. Thus the Destruction is mourned as a tragedy that affects our lives today, 2,000 years later, no less than the very generation that experienced it first hand.

Yet the Ninth of Av is also a day of hope. The Talmud relates that Moshiach (“anointed one”--the Messiah), was born at the very moment that the Temple was set aflame and the Galut began. [This is in keeping with the teachings of our sages that, “In every generation is born a descendent of Judah who is worthy to become Israel’s Moshiach” (Bartinoro on Ruth); “When the time will come, G-d will reveal Himself to him and send him, and then the spirit of Moshiach, which is hidden and secreted on high, will be manifested in him” (Chattam Sofer).]

Fall of Betar (133 CE)

Betar, the last stronghold in the heroic Bar Kochba rebellion, fell to the Romans on the 9th of Av of the year 3893 (133 CE) after a three-year siege. 580,000 Jews died by starvation or the sword, including Bar Kochba, the leader of the rebellion.

Expulsion from England (1290)

The Jews of England were expelled by King Edward I on this date in 1290.

Spanish Expulsion (1492)

The Jews of Spain were expelled by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on the 9th of Av of 1492, terminating many centuries of flourishing Jewish life in Spain.