



The Magnificent Union of the Tochachah of Moshe Rabeinu with the Tochachos of His Two Gilgulim Yeshayah HaNavi and Yirmiyah HaNavi

Next Shabbas Kodesh **Shabbas Chazon**, which approaches auspiciously, the Shabbas preceding Tishah B'Av. Without exception, the Torah-reading for this special Shabbas is parshas Devarim. In the words of the Tur and the author of the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 428, 4): "תשעה באב קודם ואתחנן"—**Tishah B'Av precedes Vaeschanan**. Hence, the Torah reading on the Shabbas prior to Tishah B'Av is parshas Devarim.

We learn from our sages of blessed memory in the Gemara (Megillah 31b) that the Torah-readings on Shabbas are not random. They were arranged by Ezra HaSofer to correspond magnificently with the annual cycle of festivals and historic events. Thus, it behooves us to explore Ezra HaSofer's rationale for instituting the reading of parshas Devarim on the Shabbas prior to Tishah B'Av.

The Tochachah of "איכה אשא לבדי" versus the Tochachah of "איכה ישבה בדד"

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing the explanation of the esteemed Rabbi Mordechai Yoffe, zy"l, the author of the Levush (O.C. ibid.), regarding the reason that Tishah B'Av always falls out immediately before the reading of parshas Vaeschanan: "והטעם הוא כדי שיקראו פרשת דברים שמתחלת בתוכחותיו של משה קודם ט' באב, כדי להפטיר בה בחזון שהיא תוכחת על חורבן". In other words, we wish to read parshas Devarim, in which Moshe begins his rebuke of Yisrael, prior to Tishah B'Av (Devarim 1, 12): "איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם"—**how can I bear your trouble and your burden and your quarrels alone?** Additionally, we wish to read the haftarah of Chazon prior to Tishah B'Av, because it contains the prophet's rebuke

related to the churban (Yeshayah 1, 1): "חזון ישעיהו בן אמוץ אשר חזה: על יהודה וירושלים"—**the vision of Yeshayahu the son of Amotz, which he saw concerning Yehudah and Yerushalayim**. Thus, on this upcoming Shabbas Kodesh preceding Tishah B'Av, we unite these two tochachos (rebukes).

Let us elaborate on the connection between these two tochachos based on a statement in the Midrash (Eichah Rabbasi, introduction, 11): "אילו זכיתם הייתם קוראים בתורה איכה" אשא לבדי, ועכשיו שלא זכיתם הרי אתם קוראים (איכה א-א) איכה ישבה בדד—**had you been meritorious, you would have recited from the Torah, "How can I bear alone?"; now that you were not meritorious, you are required to recite, "How is it that she sits alone?"** Thus, we have an explicit connection between Moshe's rebuke—"איכה אשא לבדי"—and the lament of the divine poet regarding the churban of the Beis HaMikdash—"איכה ישבה בדד". The implication is that had we responded appropriately to Moshe's tochachah "איכה אשא לבדי", we would not have sinned, and the Beis HaMikdash would not have been destroyed. Then, we would not have to recite "איכה ישבה בדד" on Tishah B'Av annually.

It should now be obvious why Ezra HaSofer instituted the reading of parshas Devarim on the Shabbas prior to Tishah B'Av, uniting the tochachah of Moshe Rabeinu with the tochachah of Yeshayah HaNavi regarding the churban. The lesson is clear! Had we heeded Moshe Rabeinu's rebuke "איכה אשא לבדי", the Beis HaMikdash would not have been destroyed. Thus, it is our obligation to reexamine the tochachah of Moshe Rabeinu, prior to Tishah B'Av, so that we will merit the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, swiftly, in our times!

The Amazing Connection between Moshe Rabeinu and His Gilgul Yeshayah HaNavi

I had a wonderful idea concerning Ezra HaSofer's profound rationale for having us read parshas Devarim prior to Tishah B'Av and connecting the tochachos of Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayah HaNavi. Let us refer to what the great author of Shevet Mussar presents in Midrash Talpiot in the name of the Sefer HaGilgulim: **He wrote in Sefer HaGilgulim that Yeshayah is a gilgul of Moshe. Therefore, he had a speech impairment like Moshe, who came from Hevel.**

Concerning his speech impairment, we find that when HKB"H appeared to Yeshayah and designated him to go and prophesy to Yisrael, he humbly refused, as it is written (Yeshayah 6, 5): **וַיֹּאמֶר אוֹי לִי כִי נִדְמִיתִי כִי אִישׁ טָמֵא שְׁפָתַיִם אֲנֹכִי וּבִתּוֹךְ עִם טָמֵא שְׁפָתַיִם אֲנֹכִי יֵשֵׁב כִּי אֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ ה' צִבְאוֹת רָאוּ עֵינַי. וַיַּעַף אֵלַי אֶחָד מִן הַשְּׂרָפִים וּבְיָדוֹ רִצְפָה בְּמַלְקָחִים לְקַח מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ. וַיִּגַע עָלַי בִּי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נֹגַע זֶה עָלַי שְׁפָתַיִךְ וְסָר עֲוֹנֶךָ וְחַטָּאתֶךָ תִּכַּפֵּר.** Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am doomed; for I am a man of impure lips and I dwell among a people of impure lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Hashem, Master of Legions." One of the seraphim flew to me and in his hand was a coal; he had taken it with tongs from atop the mizbeiach. He touched it to my mouth and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity has gone away, and your sin shall be atoned for."

Per Rashi's commentary, "רִצְפָה" is a smoldering coal that the seraph took from the mizbeiach and placed it on the lips of the prophet Yeshayah to punish him for speaking negatively of Yisrael. The term "רִצְפָה" is a contraction of two words "רִצּוֹץ פֶּה" meaning "break the mouth." HKB"H told the malach to **break the mouth of the one who spoke ill of My children.** His source is the Midrash (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1, 6). We learn from the Midrash that Yeshayah was punished for claiming that he dwelt in the midst of a people with unclean lips. The seraph touched a glowing coal to his lips to punish him "midah k'neged midah."

Yeshayah Was Cured when He Began Extolling the Virtues of Yisrael

From what we have just learned, the great Arizal deduces that Yeshayah HaNavi, who was a gilgul of Moshe Rabeinu, also had a speech impairment, since his lips were burnt with the coal. Notwithstanding, I searched meticulously in all the Midrashim of Chazal and could not find a source for this claim. On the contrary, the Midrash Tanchuma (Vayishlach 2) depicts

Yeshayah's greatness. After all, he remained unscathed from the burning coal even though the seraph itself was scorched by it. In fact, the passuk says explicitly that the seraph, who is a fiery creature, had to handle the coal with tongs.

Therefore, it behooves us to defend the assertion of the Arizal in Sefer HaGilgulim—that Yeshayah HaNavi had a speech impairment like Moshe Rabeinu. It is quite surprising, in fact, that according to the Midrash, the coal did not burn Yeshayah. If that is so, then why did HKB"H send the seraph to touch the coal to his lips to atone for speaking ill of Yisrael? In the words of the seraph: **"Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity has gone away, and your sin shall be atoned for."**

To reconcile this discrepancy, let us present a fascinating Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah 6, 406). It describes what Yeshayah HaNavi did after being touched with the burning coal:

HKB"H said to Yeshayah, "Behold, this touched your lips, your iniquity has been removed and your sin has been atoned for." Upon realizing this, Yeshayah began justifying Yisrael's behavior and advocating on their behalf. This is evident from what he says at the conclusion of his nevuah (Yeshayah 50, 4): "Hashem Elokim has granted me a tongue for teaching"; He taught me to advocate on their behalf. "Hashem Elokim has opened my ear for me" to hear His voice that said (ibid. 6, 8): "Whom shall I send?" He gave me the sense to respond, "Here I am! Send me!" (ibid. 50, 5) "And I did not resist." Therefore, since I did not back away, I did not become a stranger (alienated) to the nevuah. Rather, I prophesied consolations more so than all of the other neviim.

We can now reconcile the assertion of the Arizal. Indeed, Yeshayah HaNavi developed a speech impediment after his lips were touched with the burning coal; however, he performed teshuvah and began to defend Yisrael and extol their virtues. As a result, he was healed. The Midrash proves this point from Yeshayah's declaration: **"Hashem Elokim has granted me a tongue for teaching."** Understood simply, he is stating that HKB"H cured him of his impediment and gave him a healthy tongue with which to prophesy to Yisrael. In fact, the Midrash teaches us the reason that he was healed; because HKB"H instructed him to extol the virtues of Yisrael.

A Fascinating Comparison with Moshe Rabeinu

Let us add an intriguing thought to the words of the Arizal. Upon further scrutiny, it is apparent that a fascinating

comparison exists between Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayah HaNavi, his gilgul. Moshe Rabeinu was also burned by a smoldering coal and developed a speech impairment. He was ultimately healed at the time of Matan Torah. Chazal, blessed with “ruach hakodesh,” reveal to us how Moshe became speech impaired. Here is a pertinent Midrash (S.R. 1, 26) related to the passuk (Shemos 2, 10): **“ויגדל הילד ותביאהו לבת פרעה ויהי לה לבן”**—**the boy grew up, and she brought him to the daughter of Pharaoh, and he became her son.**

Pharaoh’s daughter used to kiss him and hug him as if he was her son; she did not take him out of the royal palace . . . Pharaoh also used to kiss him and hug him. He (Moshe) would take Pharaoh’s crown and place it on his own head, as they were destined to do to him when he rose to greatness . . . The magicians of Mitzrayim sat there and said, “We are afraid of him who takes your crown and places it on his own head, lest he be the one of whom we prophesy that he is destined to take the kingdom from you.” Some of them counselled to kill him; others counselled to burn him.

Yisro sat among them, and he said to them, “This youth lacks common sense. Instead, test him by placing before him a gold plate and a burning coal. If he reaches out his hand for the gold, then he has sense, and you should kill him. But if he reaches out his hand for the coal, he lacks common sense, and he does not deserve the death sentence.” They promptly brought these items to him; he began to reach out his hand to take the gold, but Gavriel came and pushed his hand aside. He grabbed the coal instead and placed his hand with the coal into his mouth; thus, his tongue was burnt. As a result, he became speech impaired with a heavy tongue.

Thus, we see from this Midrash that there were many parallels between the lives of Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayah HaNavi. Both incurred speech impediments due to a malach and a burning coal. Moshe Rabeinu was healed at Matan Torah, so that he could teach Yisrael Torah. Similarly, Yeshayah HaNavi was healed so that he could prophesy clearly and eloquently to Yisrael. Let us refer to the Midrash at the beginning of this week’s parsha (D.R. 1, 1): **“These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Yisrael etc.” Until Moshe was privileged to receive the Torah, it is written about him (Shemos 4, 10): “I am not a man of words.” After being proven worthy to receive the Torah, his speech impediment was healed, and he began to speak words. From where do we know this? From what we have read in this passage: “These are the words that Moshe spoke.”**

We can now truly appreciate the profound wisdom of Ezra HaSofer. He arranged for us to read parshas Devarim on the Shabbas prior to Tishah B’Av to associate the tochachah of Moshe Rabeinu--**“איכה אשא לבדי”**—with the tochachah of Yeshayah HaNavi--**“חזון ישעיהו בן אמוץ”**. As aforementioned, Yeshayah was a gilgul of Moshe Rabeinu. He was sent back to Olam HaZeh to arouse Yisrael to perform teshuvah. Hence, we connect their two rebukes on the Shabbas preceding Tishah B’Av, since they both strove to arouse Yisrael to perform teshuvah in order to prevent the churban of the Beis HaMikdash.

“A prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me”

We will now revisit the Midrash Talpiyos. It presents a comparison between Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayah HaNavi found in the Midrash Shochar Tov (Tehillim 90): **“כל הנביאים היו מתנבאים ולא היו יודעים מה היו מתנבאים, אלא משה וישעיה בלבד”**—**all of the neviim would prophesy without being aware of what they were prophesying, with the exception of Moshe and Yeshayah.** It is worth adding another statement from the Midrash (D.R. 2, 4): **There are no greater neviim than Moshe and Yeshayah.** It is surprising that he does not present another incredible similarity between the two that he himself cites in the name of another Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah 1, 385): **“Our Rabbis taught that Yeshayah lived 120 years.”** As we know, Moshe Rabeinu lived 120 years.

Now, the Midrash Talpiyos utilizes these parallels to interpret Moshe Rabeinu’s statement to Yisrael (Devarim 18, 15): **“נביא”**—**מקרבך מאחריך כמוני יקים לך ה' אלקיך אליו תשמעו**—**a navi from your midst, from your brothers, like me, shall Hashem, your G-d, establish for you—to him shall you listen.** Here Moshe is alluding to his gilgul, Yeshayah HaNavi, who will be a prophet like him. We can suggest that Moshe alluded to this with the word **נביא**, which can be interpreted as an acronym for **נשמת בני אמוץ**—**the neshamah of Yeshayahu ben Amotz.** Moshe describes him as being **“כמוני”**—**like me**—he will live 120 years just like me. This is supported by the fact that the word **“כמוני”** is spelled deficiently in a sefer Torah, without the letter **“vav”**; as such, its gematria is precisely **120.**

This explains very nicely Moshe’s final request: **“Listen to him!”** Seeing as Yeshayah will be a gilgul of Moshe and he will be comparable to Moshe, Moshe beseeched Yisrael to heed his tochachah. Although they neglected to heed Moshe’s tochachah: **“איכה אשא לבדי”**—**how can I bear alone?!**

Nevertheless, he was admonishing them to heed Yeshayah's words of rebuke: "חזון ישעיה בן אמוץ"—to prevent the churban of the Beis HaMikdash.

Yeshayah a Gilgul of Moshe Rescued King Chizkiyahu a Gilgul of Amram

It is with great pleasure that we will now present to our esteemed readers a glimpse of the wonders of Hashem related to the reincarnation of neshamos. As we have learned from our great luminaries, Yeshayah HaNavi was a gilgul of Moshe Rabeinu. This tidbit can help us comprehend the following passage from the Gemara (Berachos 10a):

"אמר רב המנונא, מאי דכתיב ומי יודע פשר דבר, מי כהקב"ה שיודע לעשות פשרה בין שני צדדים בין חזקיהו לישעיהו, חזקיהו אמר ליתי ישעיהו גבאי, דהכי אשכחן באלהו דאזל לגבי אחאב, ישעיהו אמר ליתי חזקיהו גבאי, דהכי אשכחן ביהורם בן אחאב דאזל לגבי אלישע.

מה עשה הקב"ה, הביא יסורים על חזקיהו, ואמר לו לישעיהו לך ובקר את החולה, שנאמר בימים ההם חלה חזקיהו למות, ויבוא אליו ישעיהו בן אמוץ הנביא, ויאמר אליו כה אמר ה' צו לביתך כי מת אתה ולא תחיה וגו', מאי כי מת אתה ולא תחיה, מת אתה בעולם הזה ולא תחיה לעולם הבא.

אמר ליה, מאי כולי האי, אמר ליה, משום דלא עסקת בפריה ורביה, אמר ליה, משום דחזאי לי ברוח הקודש דנפקי מינאי בנין דלא מעלו, אמר ליה, בהדי כבשי דרחמנא למה לך, מאי דמפקדת איבעי לך למעבד, ומה דניחא קמיה קוב"ה לעביד.

אמר לי, השתא הב לי ברתך, אפשר דגרמא זכותא דידי ודידך ונפקי מנאי בנין דמעלי, אמר ליה, כבר נגזרה עליך גזירה. אמר ליה, בן אמוץ כלה נבואתך וצא, כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא, אפילו חרב חדה מונחת על צוארו של אדם אל ימנע עצמו מן הרחמים."

Rav Hamnuna said: What is the meaning of that which is written (Koheles 8, 1): "Who is like the Wise One, and who knows a thing's interpretation"? It means: Who is like HKB"H, Who knows how to make a compromise between two tzaddikim—namely, between Chizkiyahu and Yeshayah. Chizkiyahu said, "Let Yeshayah come to me! For, thus do we find concerning Eliyahu; he went to see Achav." Evidently, the honor due a king is greater than the honor due a navi. Yeshayah said, "Let Chizkiyahu come to me! For, thus do we find concerning Yehoram the son of Achav; he went to Elisha." Evidently, the honor due a navi is greater than the honor due a king.

What did HKB"H do? He brought afflictions upon Chizkiyahu, and then He said to Yeshayah, "Go visit the

sick one." For so it says (Melachim II 20, 1): "In those days, Chizkiyah took sick unto death, and Yeshayah the prophet, son of Amotz, came to him and said to him: Thus, said Hashem! Instruct your household, for you are dying, and you will not live." Why does the passuk say: "You are dying, and you will not live"? If one is dying, it is obvious that he will not live. The Gemara explains: "You are dying" in Olam HaZeh "and you will not live" in Olam HaBa.

He (Chizkiyahu) said to him (Yeshayah): Why do I deserve to be punished so severely? He replied to him: Because you did not procreate. He explained to him (why he did not marry): Because I saw via "ruach hakodesh" that the children issuing from me would not be virtuous. He (Yeshayah) said to him: What have you to do with the secrets of the Merciful One? You should have done what you were commanded and let HKB"H do that which He sees fit.

He (Chizkiyahu) said to him: So, now give me your daughter; perhaps my merits and yours combined will result in virtuous children issuing forth from me. He said to him: But a decree (of death) has already been issued against you. He said to him: Son of Amotz, conclude your prophecy and go. I have this tradition from my grandfather's house: Even if a sharp sword rests upon a man's neck, he should not desist from praying for mercy.

In fact, HKB"H acquiesced to King Chizkiyahu's tefilah; the death decree was annulled, as it is written (ibid. 2):

"ויסב את פניו אל הקיר ויתפלל אל ה' לאמר, אנא ה' זכור נא את אשר התהלכתי לפניך באמת ובלבב שלם והטוב בעיניך עשיתי ויבך חזקיהו בכי גדול. ויהי ישעיהו לא יצא העיר התיכונה ודבר ה' היה אליו לאמר, שוב ואמרת אל חזקיהו נגיד עמי, כה אמר ה' אלקי דוד אביך שמעתי את תפלתך ראיתי את דמעתי, הנני רופא לך ביום השלישי תעלה בית ה', והוספתי על ימיך חמש עשרה שנה."

He then turned his face toward the wall and prayed to Hashem, saying, "Please, Hashem, remember now, how I walked before You truly and wholeheartedly, and I did what is good in Your eyes." And Chizkiyahu wept profusely. And it was when Yeshayah had not gone out to the inner court, and the word of Hashem came to him, saying, "Return and say to Chizkiyahu, the ruler of My people, 'So has Hashem, the God of your father David, said: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I shall heal you. On the third day, you shall go up to the house of Hashem, and I will add fifteen years to your life.'"

King Chizkiyahu Was a Gilgul of Amram Who Wanted to Refrain from Fathering Children

In the sefer *Gilgulei Neshamos* (59) authored by the Rama of Pano (who passed away on the 4th of Menachem Av), he presents a fascinating bit of information that he learned from his mentor, the divine kabbalist Rabbi Yisrael Saruk, ztz"l. He writes that King Chizkiyahu was a gilgul of Amram, who separated from his wife Yocheved in Mitzrayim, because he felt it best not to bring any more children into the world. We learn this from the following passuk related to the birth of Moshe (Shemos 2, 1): **“וילך איש מבית לוי ויקח את בת לוי. ותהר האשה ותלד בן ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא—a man from the house of Levi went and he took a daughter of Levi. The woman conceived and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was good . . .**

Apropos this passuk, we learn in the Gemara (Sotah 12a):

“וילך איש מבית לוי. להיכן הלך, אמר רב יהודה בר זבינא שהלך בעצת בתו תנא עמרם גדול הדור היה, כיון שגזר פרעה הרשע כל הבן הילוד היאורה תשליכוהו, אמר לשוא אנו עמולין, עמד וגירש את אשתו. עמדו כולן וגירשו את נשותיהן.”

“A man from the house of Levi went.” To where did he go? Rav Yehudah the son of Zevina said: He (went) followed the advice of his daughter (Miriam). A Baraisa was taught: Amram was the leader of the generation. When he saw that the wicked Pharaoh decreed (Shemos 1, 22): “Every son that will be born, you shall throw him into the river;” Amram said, “We are laboring in vain (producing children).” He proceeded to divorce his wife. Following his example, all the Jewish men proceeded to divorce their wives.

אמרה לו בתו, אבא קשה גזירתך יותר משל פרעה, שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים ואתה גזרת על הזכרים ועל הנקיבות, פרעה לא גזר אלא בעולם הזה ואתה בעולם הזה ולעולם הבא, פרעה הרשע ספק מתקיימת גזירתו ספק אינה מתקיימת, אתה צדיק בודאי שגזירתך מתקיימת, שנאמר ותגזר אומר ויקם לך. עמד והחזיר את אשתו, עמדו כולן והחזירו את נשותיהן.”

His daughter said to him, “Father, your decree is harsher than Pharaoh’s. Pharaoh only decreed against the males, whereas you have decreed against the males and the females. Pharaoh only decreed against life in Olam HaZeh, whereas you have decreed against life in Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa. Regarding the wicked Pharaoh, it is uncertain whether his decree will be carried out or not. You are a tzaddik; it is certain that your decree will be carried out”;

for, it says (Iyov 22, 28): “You would utter a decree and it would be done.” Amram proceeded to remarry his wife; they all proceeded to remarry their wives.

With this understanding, the Rama of Pano explains that Amram initially had the same mindset as King Chizkiyahu. He divorced his wife to refrain from the mitzvah of “pru u’rvu.” Since the Egyptians were drowning the children in the Nile, he felt that it was futile to procreate. Miriam, however, set him straight, arguing: **“What have you to do with the secrets of the Merciful One?”** This explains very nicely why Chizkiyahu, a gilgul of Amram, was initially of the same mindset. He also intended initially to refrain from having children until he was rebuked by Yeshayah HaNavi. The navi informed him that it was his duty to abide by the commands of the Almighty without being deterred by ulterior calculations: **“What have you to do with the secrets of the Merciful One?”** This is the gist of his sacred insight.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to grab onto the coattails of the Rama of Pano and elaborate on his sacred words. As we have learned, Yeshayah HaNavi was a gilgul of Moshe Rabeinu. Moshe Rabeinu would not have been born, if Amram had not taken his wife back. Therefore, HKB”H—the grand orchestrator of the reincarnation of neshamos—chose Yeshayah specifically to rebuke Chizkiyahu for questioning the command of HKB”H regarding procreation. After all, Moshe Rabeinu was only born because Amram reunited with his wife and did not reckon whether Moshe would survive or be drowned in the Nile.

In this light, the remark of Chizkiyah HaMelech to Yeshayah HaNavi takes on added significance: **“השתא הב לי ברתך, אפשר—so, now give me your daughter; perhaps my merits and yours combined will result in virtuous children issuing forth from me.** Chizkiyah, who was a gilgul of Amram, realized that HKB”H had sent Yeshayah HaNavi to him specifically because he was a gilgul of Moshe, Amram’s son. Therefore, Chizkiyahu wished to combine the merit of Amram—who reunited with his wife and merited fathering Moshe Rabeinu—with the merit of Yeshayah—a gilgul of Moshe, who merited teaching the Torah to the entirety of Yisrael. In their combined merit, he hoped that he would have virtuous children.

The Amazing Connection between the Three Neviim Who Prophesied with the Expression “Eichah”

We will now add another brick to this edifice we have built. To highlight the profound wisdom of Ezra HaSofer who arranged for us to read parshas Devarim prior to Tishah B’Av, let us refer to the Midrash Rabbah (Eichah 1, 1):

Three prophesied with the language of “eichah”—Moshe, Yeshayah and Yirmiyah. Moshe said: “How can I alone carry etc.”; Yeshayah said (Yeshayah 1, 21): “How she (the faithful city) has become a harlot!”; Yirmiyah said: “Alas, she sits alone (destitute).” Moshe saw Yisrael in its glory and tranquility . . . Yeshayah saw them in their impetuosity . . . Yirmiyah saw them in their disgrace . . .

Due to the profound institution of Ezra HaSofer, the three are intimately connected. On the Shabbas preceding Tishah B’Av, we read the tochachah of Moshe Rabeinu: **“איכה אשא לבדי”** טרחכם משאכם וריבכם; for the Haftarah, we read the tochachah of Yeshayah HaNavi: **“איכה היתה לזונה קריה נאמנה”**; after Shabbas, on Tishah B’Av, we read the lament of Yirmiyah HaNavi: **“איכה ישבה”** בדרד. This association conveys the message that had we only heeded the first tochachah employing the expression **“eichah”** uttered by Moshe Rabeinu, we could have prevented the subsequent two prophecies employing the expression **“eichah”** related to the churban of the Beis HaMikdash.

This coincides magnificently with the revelation of the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (84) that Yirmiyah HaNavi was a **“nitzotz”**—a spark from the neshamah—of Moshe Rabeinu. He substantiates this claim with an elucidation from the Pesikta d’Rav Kahana (13, 6) concerning Yirmiyah HaNavi. To paraphrase the passage, it points out numerous similarities between Moshe and Yirmiyah. They both prophesied for forty years; they both prophesied about Yehudah and Yisrael; they were both opposed and challenged by their own shevet (Moshe was challenged by Korach who was from shevet Levi); Moshe was thrown into the Nile, while Yirmiyah was thrown into a pit; Moshe was saved by a maidservant, while Yirmiyah was saved by a servant; they both delivered words of tochachah.

We have discussed at length the profound rationale of Ezra HaSofer, who arranged for us to always read parshas Devarim from the Torah on the Shabbas preceding Tishah B’Av. Thus, we connect the three tochachos employing the expression **“eichah.”** Hopefully, we will heed the tochachos of these three holy neviim—Moshe Rabeinu and his two gilgulim, Yeshayah HaNavi and Yirmiyah HaNavi—and be inspired to perform teshuvah. In that merit, we will hasten the geulah, swiftly in our times! Amen.

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