



The Three Shabbasos of the “Three Weeks” Correspond to Shabbas Bereishis, Shabbas Matan Torah and the Shabbas of the Geulah

We are approaching the third and final Shabbas of the three weeks of “Beis HaMetzarim.” As always, we will read parshas Devarim on this very special Shabbas, which is known as **Shabbas Chazon**. This appellation signifies that we read for the Haftarah the following stirring prophesy of Yeshayahu HaNavi (Yeshayah 1, 1): **“חזון ישעיהו בן אמוץ: אשר חזה על יהודה ועל ירושלים—the vision of Yeshayahu the son of Amotz, which he saw concerning Yehudah and Yerushalayim.** Thus, this haftarah prophesying about the churban of the Beis HaMikdash is always read, without exception, on the Shabbas prior to Tishah B’Av or on Tishah B’Av itself when it falls on Shabbas and the fast is postponed to the next day—as is the case this year.

We learn from our blessed sages in the Gemara (Megillah 31b) that the weekly Shabbas Torah-readings conform to an annual cycle, arranged with precision and profound meaning by Ezra HaSofer; they are not random. It is worthwhile, therefore, to investigate why Ezra HaSofer saw fit to institute the annual reading of parshas Devarim on the Shabbas prior to Tisha B’Av.

Addressing this issue, the Levush (O.C. 428, 4) cites the words of the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.): **“כדי שיקראו פרשת דברים שמתחלת בתוכחותיו של משה קודם ט’ באב, כדי להפטיר בה בחזון שהיא תוכחת על חורבן”**—so that Moshe’s rebuke of the people, which begins in parshas Devarim, will be read before Tisha B’Av along with the Haftarah of “Chazon,” which is a rebuke concerning the destruction

of the Beis HaMikdash. Moshe’s tochachah begins with the passuk (Devarim 1, 12): **“איכה אשא לבדי טרדכם ומשאכם—how can I bear your trouble and your burden and your quarrels alone?** In other words, on this vital, pivotal Shabbas, we combine the tochachos of Moshe Rabeinu and Yeshayahu HaNavi.

The Shabbasos of “Bein HaMetzarim” Are the Most Important Shabbasos of the Year

I would like to share with you my own explanation concerning the profound intent of Ezra HaSofer, instituting that parshas Devarim always be read on the Shabbas preceding the fast of Tishah B’Av. To begin with, we find that the kedushah of the three Shabbasos of “Bein HaMetzarim” surpasses that of all the other Shabbasos of the year. Let us refer to what the Tiferes Shlomo comments on the following pesukim from the harsh tochachah in parshas Bechukosai (Vayikra 26, 34): **“אז תרצה הארץ את שבתיה כל ימי השמימה ואתם בארץ איביכם, אז תשבת הארץ והרצת את שבתיה, כל ימי השמימה תשבת את אשר לא שבתה בשבתותיכם בשבתותכם עליה.”** Then the land will appease its shemitah years (Shabbasos) during all the years of its desolation, while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land will rest and be appeased for its shemitah years. All the days of its being desolate it will rest, whatever it did not rest during your shemitah years when you dwelled upon her. Here is his sacred insight:

The text is emphasizing the tremendous importance of the Shabbas day in galus. When Shabbas arrives, Hashem, Blessed is He, is happier than He was while the Beis HaMikdash was extant. For, on Shabbas Kodesh, there is a union above even during times of galus, since it is an established constant. During the weekdays, so to speak, HKB"Y is also in galus, in keeping with the passuk (Tehillim 91, 15): "I am with him in distress." Hence, when the day of Shabbas arrives, Hashem is overjoyed by the unity that exists and that He departs galus. However, while the Beis HaMikdash was extant, that unity existed during the week, as well; although, the unity on Shabbas was on a higher level. Therefore, the degree of Hashem's joy was not that significant.

And this is the interpretation of the passuk: "Then"—during times of galus—"the land will appease its Shabbasos"—those who observe Shabbas, who abide by the will of HKB"Y bringing Him great joy. As it is written (in the poetic prayer of Lecha Dodi): "You have dwelled too long in the valley of weeping"—the days of suffering between Shivah Asar B'Tamuz and Tishah B'Av are the "valley of weeping. Thus, 'רב לך שבת' infers that the day of Shabbas during the "days of suffering" surpass those of the rest of the year, because the distress is so great on the weekdays. Therefore, the joy is enhanced above on Shabbas, as we say (in the tefilah on Shabbas): "On the seventh day, He ascended and sat on His Throne of Glory."

The Three Tefilos of Shabbas Correspond to Three Special Shabbasos

Let us now explain the significance of the three Shabbasos of the three weeks of "Bein HaMetzarim." Rabeinu Yaakov (O.C. 292), the Ba'al HaTurim, explains Chazal's rationale for instituting three distinct tefilos on Shabbas Kodesh. We recite "אתה קדשת"—You sanctified—on Shabbas night; "ישמח"—Moshe rejoiced—on Shabbas morning, and "אתה אחד"—You are One—at Minchah on Shabbas afternoon. They are arranged sequentially to represent the three most significant Shabbasos in the history of the world. He notes that this is in sharp contrast to the tefilos of Yom Tov, for which they only instituted one formula— "אתה בחרתנו".

Let us elaborate. Shabbas night represents the Shabbas of creation; hence, we mention how G-d rested on the seventh day after completing the creation of the heavens and the earth. Shabbas morning represents the Shabbas of Matan Torah, the Shabbas on which Yisrael received the Torah; hence, we describe how Moshe Rabeinu descended Har Sinai with the two luchos of stone in his hand. Shabbas afternoon (Minchah) represents the Shabbas of the future geulah, a time that will be entirely Shabbas; hence, we mention that all the nations of the world will recognize the sovereignty and Oneness of G-d and His people Yisrael.

Along these lines, the Shelahakadosh (Maseches Shabbas) provides us with additional wonderful insights regarding the practical significance of these three Shabbasos. He explains that they each represent a fundamental principle of Judaism—the existence of the Almighty, the fact that the Torah was given from above, and the concept of reward and punishment. Shabbas Bereishis illustrated that Hashem brought a new reality into existence. Shabbas Matan Torah illustrated that the Torah was given from the heavens. The Shabbas of the Future will illustrate that those who were meritorious will receive the true, eternal reward, whereas it will be a day of reckoning for the reshaim.

Accordingly, he asserts that this is why "יום השביעי"—"the seventh day"—is mentioned three times in the passage of "ויכולו". For, the passage alludes to these three distinct, special Shabbasos: Shabbas Bereishis, Shabbas Matan Torah, and the Shabbas of Le'asid La'vo—the Future to Come.

Shabbas Chazon Corresponds to the Shabbas of the Future Geulah

I would now like to propose a novel idea. During the times of the churban, Yisrael damaged these three Shabbasos that represent the fundamental roots of our emunah. Here a pertinent passage from the Gemara (Yoma 9b):

"מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב, מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו, עבודה זרה וגלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים... אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ומצוות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב, מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם, ללמוד ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים."

The first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because the people were guilty of the three cardinal sins—avodah zarah, immorality and murder. These sins were not prevalent during the times of the second Beis HaMikdash; the people of that period engaged in Torah-study and performed mitzvos and acts of kindness. It was destroyed because of “sin’as chinam”—baseless hatred. This teaches us that “sin’as chinam” is equivalent to the three cardinal sins.

Thus, we can suggest that this is why the pesukim above from the tochachah mention three times that Yisrael would be punished for not observing the Shabbas: (1) **אָז** “אָז (2) תִּרְצֶה הָאָרֶץ אֶת שְׁבִתֶּיהָ כֹּל יְמֵי הַשָּׁמָה וְאַתֶּם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם” **כָּל יְמֵי הַשָּׁמָה תִּשְׁבֹּת אֶת אֲשֶׁר לֹא (3) תִּשְׁבֹּת הָאָרֶץ וְהִרְצֵת אֶת שְׁבִתֶּיהָ.”** This teaches us that the flaw related to the three special Shabbasos—Shabbas Bereishis, Shabbas Matan Torah and the Shabbas of the Geulah. As explained, they represent the three fundamental roots of our emunah: The existence of Hashem, Torah is from the heavens, and reward and punishment will be meted out le’asid la’vo.

As such, it behooves us to understand the significance of the three Shabbasos of the “Bein HaMetzarim,” so that we can correct the flaws that led to the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash. We can suggest that it is for this reason that these Shabbasos are more important than all the other Shabbasos of the year, as per the interpretation of the poetic words: **“רַב לָךְ שִׁבֹּת בַּעֲמֹק הַבְּנָא”**. By correcting on these three Shabbasos the flaws created in them at the times of the churban, we can fulfill the dictum (Berachos 34b): **“בַּמָּקוֹם שֶׁבִּעָלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִין, צַדִּיקִים גְּמוּרִים אֵינָם עוֹמְדִין”**—in the place where “ba’alei teshuvah” stand, total tzaddikim cannot stand.

Let us embellish this thought. The “michaber”—the author of the Shulchan Aruch—brings down (O.C. 428, 8) in the name of the Pesikta that it was instituted to read the Haftarah referred to as **“ג’ דְּפִּירְעוֹתָא”** on the Shabbasos of “Bein HaMetzarim.” These three Haftarahs from the Navi depict the punishment and suffering associated with the churban of the Beis HaMikdash. The first is (Yirmiyah 1, 1): **“דְּבַרֵּי יִרְמְיָהוּ”**; the second is (ibid. 2, 4): **“שְׁמַעוּ דְּבַר ה’”**; the

third is: **“חֲזוֹן יִשְׁעִיהוּ”**. Our sacred sefarim explain that these three Haftarahs are aimed at remedying the (three) senses of speech (**“דְּבַרֵּי”**), hearing (**“שְׁמַעוּ”**), and sight (**“חֲזוֹן”**).

In keeping with our current discussion, however, we can say that these three prophecies--**“חֲזוֹן,” “שְׁמַעוּ,” “דְּבַרֵּי”**—align with the three Shabbasos of “Bein HaMetzarim.” The first Haftarah, **“דְּבַרֵּי”**, corresponds to Shabbas Bereishis, when HKB”H rested from the creation of the universe, which He created with His speech—as it is written (Tehillim 33, 6): **“בְּדִבְרֵי ה’ שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשׂוּ”**—with the word of Hashem the heavens were made. The second Haftarah, **“שְׁמַעוּ”**, corresponds to the Shabbas of Matan Torah, as we have learned in the Gemara (Makkos 24a): **אֲנֹכִי וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לָּךְ מִפִּי “Anochi” and “lo yihyeh lecha”** (the first two dibrot), **we heard directly from the mouth of the Almighty.** The third Haftarah, **“חֲזוֹן”**, corresponds to the Shabbas of the Future Geulah. A “chazon” is a vision, the ability to see things more clearly or to see things that have yet to be revealed. Concerning the future geulah, it is written (Yeshayah 30, 20): **“וְהָיוּ עֵינֶיךָ רוֹאוֹת אֶת מוֹדִיךָ”**—and your eyes will behold your Teacher. It is also written (ibid. 52, 8): **“כִּי עֵין בַּעֲיִן יִרְאוּ בְּשׁוּב ה’ צִיּוֹן”**—with their own eyes they will see that Havaya returns to Tziyon.

Thus, it is apparent that Shabbas Chazon, the third Shabbas of the three weeks of “Bein HaMetzarim,” relates to the future geulah, when the tikun of the three Shabbasos will be completed. Hence, it is appropriate for the Haftarah of “חֲזוֹן יִשְׁעִיהוּ” to conclude with pesukim that speak of the future geulah (ibid. 1, 26): **“וְאֶשְׁיִבָּה שֹׁפְטֶיךָ כְּבִרְאשֹׁנָה וְיַעֲצִיבְךָ כְּבִתְחִלָּה, אַחֲרַי כֹּן יִקְרָא לָךְ עִיר הַצֶּדֶק קִרְיָה נְאֻמָּה, צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפַּט תִּפְדָּה וְשִׁבְיָהּ בְּצִדְקָה.”** Then I will restore your judges as at first, and your counselors as at the beginning; after that you will be called “City of Righteousness,” “Faithful City.” Tziyon will be redeemed through justice, and those who return to her through righteousness.

One Thousand Lights Were Confiscated from Moshe Rabeinu due to Cheit HaEigel

Following this exalted line of reasoning, we will now proceed to explain the rationale of Ezra HaSofer for instituting the reading of parshas Devarim prior to Tishah B’Av. We find the following passuk in this week’s parsha

"ה' אלקי אבותיכם יוסף עליכם ככם אלף פעמים (Devarim 1, 11): **"may Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves, and bless you as He has spoken of you.** Rashi comments: **What is meant by stating again "and bless you as He has spoken of you"? . . . He (Moshe) said to them, "This (berachah) is from that which is mine, but He shall bless you as He spoke of you."**

To explain the matter, let us refer to a teaching of the Arizal's in Sha'ar HaPesukim (Vayikra) regarding the tradition to inscribe the letter **"aleph"** of the word **"ויקרא"** at the beginning of sefer Vayikra as a miniature letter, **א**, זעירא, a **small "aleph."** He writes that in the aftermath of the "cheit ha'eigel," when HKB"H tells Moshe (Shemos 32, 7): **"לך רד"—go, descend**—Moshe forfeited 999 parts of the brilliant light that radiated from him; in other words, only one part of one thousand remained with him. This is the implication of the **"small aleph,"** because a large (normal-sized) **"aleph"** equals one thousand. This is evident from the spelling of its name **אלף**, which also means one thousand. The small, simple **"aleph"** merely equals one; hence, it is called a **"small aleph."**

The Arizal adds a tremendous chiddush. Because Moshe was deprived of these magnificent lights, he was not able to transmit them to Yisrael; this was the cause of the final galus. Hence, this galus is referred to as **"one thousand years of galus."** This description appears in the Zohar hakadosh (Pekudei 227b) in relation to the passuk (Shir HaShirim 8, 12): **"האלף לך שלמה"—the thousand are yours, Shlomo.** This alludes to the **"one thousand years of galus,"** a description that encompasses this entire galus, even though it has lasted for more than one thousand years.

Let us attempt to explain this teaching of the Arizal's based on a passuk related to the first luchos (Shemos 32, 16): **"והמכתב מכתב אלקים הוא חרות על הלוחות"—and the script was the script of G-d, etched on the luchos.** They expound on this passuk in the Gemara (Eiruvim 54a): **"מאי דכתיב חרות על הלוחות, אלמלי לא נשתברו לוחות הראשונות לא נשתכחה תורה מישראל. רב אחא בר יעקב אמר אין כל אומה ולשון שולטת בהן, שנאמר חרות אל תיקרי חרות אלא חירות."** **What is the meaning of that which is written: "Etched on the luchos"? Had the first luchos not been shattered, the Torah would**

never have been forgotten by Yisrael. Rav Acha bar Yaakov said: No nation or tongue would have been able to rule over them, for it says: **"Charut," do not read this as "charut"—meaning engraved or etched—but rather "cheirut"—meaning freedom.**

This teaches us explicitly that the exile among the nations of the world was a consequence of the shattering of the first luchos due to the **"cheit ha'eigel."** Furthermore, according to the Arizal, due to the **"cheit ha'eigel,"** almost all of the one thousand lights were confiscated from Moshe Rabeinu, ultimately resulting in the **"thousand years of galus."** It stands to reason, therefore, that the tikun for this aberrant situation is to restore to Moshe Rabeinu the one thousand lights that he received at Matan Torah.

Moshe Rabeinu Is Destined to Teach Yisrael the Torah from the One Thousand Lights

Following this sublime path, let us now interpret what Moshe said to Yisrael: **"May Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves."** Recall Rashi's comment: **He (Moshe) said to them, "This is from that which is mine."** The Ma'or V'Shemesh explains the profound intent of Moshe Rabeinu based on a teaching of the Arizal's in Sha'ar HaKavanos. On every Erev Shabbas, the one thousand lights that were confiscated from Moshe due to the **"cheit ha'eigel"** are returned to him. Yet, on Motza'ei Shabbas, they vanish again. This then is the message Moshe was conveying to Yisrael: **"יוסף עליכם ככם אלף פעמים"—may Hashem extend to you Berachos from the one thousand lights that will be returned to me on Shabbas.** This explains very nicely Rashi's clarification: **"This is from that which is mine,"** i.e., from the one thousand lights I get back on Shabbas.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to latch onto his coattails and expand on this notion. We find the following exposition in the Midrash (V.R. 13, 3) regarding HKB"H's statement (Yeshayah 51, 4): **"כי תורה מאתי תצא"—For Torah will come forth from Me.** HKB"H said: **"A new Torah will come forth from Me."** The commentaries find this perplexing, since one of the basic tenets of our faith is: **שזאת התורה לא תהא מחולפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת מאת הבורא יתברך שמו"**—that this

Torah will not be exchanged, nor will there be another Torah (forthcoming) from the Creator, Blessed is His name. So, how can HKB”H say that a new Torah will be forthcoming from Him?

It appears that we can resolve this difficulty based on what we have learned about the one thousand lights. HKB”H gave them to Moshe Rabeinu when he went up to receive the Torah, so that he would teach them to Yisrael. Due to the “cheit ha’eigel,” however, they were confiscated. The fact that Moshe was supposed to transmit them to Yisrael is stated clearly by the Arizal in the Sha’ar HaPesukim cited above. He says that their sin caused Moshe to be deprived of the one thousand lights; and as a result of his loss, they lost out, as well.

This makes perfect sense, because everything that was given to Moshe Rabeinu at Matan Torah was meant to be taught by him to Yisrael. Due to “cheit ha’eigel,” however, the lights were taken away from Moshe and that ultimately led to the galus of Yisrael. Therefore, at the time of the future geulah, on the day that is entirely Shabbas, HKB”H will return the one thousand lights to Moshe, and he will transmit them to Yisrael.

HKB”H Will Sit and Expound on the New Torah that Will Be Delivered by the Mashiach

It is with great pleasure that we will now provide support for this scenario. We learn in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah 26, 429): **“עתיד הקב”ה להיות יושב בגן עדן ודורש, וכל הצדיקים יושבים לפניו, וכל פמליא של מעלה עומדים על רגליהם, וחמה ומזלות מימינו של הקב”ה, ולכנה וכוכבים משמאלו, והקב”ה יושב ודורש. In the future, HKB”H will sit in Gan Eden and expound. All of the tzaddikim will be seated before Him; the entire heavenly family will stand on their feet; the sun and constellations will be to the right of HKB”H; the moon and the stars will be to His left. HKB”H will sit and elucidate a new Torah that will be delivered by Mashiach in the future.** We learn that HKB”H will reveal the new Torah to us in the future through the Melech HaMashiach.

Furthermore, the Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 25b) teaches us that Moshe Rabeinu, the first redeemer, at the

time of “yetzias Mitzrayim,” is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach le’asid la’vo. This is alluded to in the passuk (Bereishis 49, 10): **“לא יסור שבט מיהודה, דא משיח בן דוד, ומחוקק: מביין רגליו, דא משיח בן יוסף, עד כי יבא שיל”ה דא מש”ה, חושבן דא כדא.”** The passuk says: **“The staff shall not depart from Yehudah”**—this alludes to Mashiach ben David; **“nor a lawgiver from between his feet”**—alludes to Mashiach ben Yosef; **“until Shiloh arrives”**—alludes to Moshe; for the numerical value of **שיל”ה** is the same as the numerical value of **מש”ה**; both equal exactly 345. The Ohr HaChaim explains that Mashiach’s neshamah will contain elements from both David HaMelech and Moshe Rabeinu.

The Zohar hakadosh (Mishpatim 120 a) also points out an allusion to this in a passuk from Koheles (1,9): **“מה שהיה”**—**whatever has been is what will be.** The first letters of the words **מה שהיה ה’וא** form the name **משה**. In other words, just like Moshe Rabeinu was instrumental in the first geulah—the geulah from Mitzrayim--**“מה שהיה”**; so, too, he will be instrumental in the final geulah --**“הוא”**. The same applies to the giving of the Torah. Just as Moshe served as the redeemer in the first geulah and is destined to do so again in the final geulah; so, too, he will serve, once again, as the deliverer of the Torah to Yisrael. Just as he taught Yisrael the Torah after Matan Torah, so, too, he will teach Yisrael the Torah in the future, albeit with new insights and revelations. In a similar vein, it says in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 21, 51a): **“עתידי לאתגליא קוב”ה: למשה באורייתא בגלותא בתראא כגוונא דפורקנא קדמאה”**—HKB”H is destined to reveal Himself to Moshe through the Torah during the geulah from the final galus just as He did in the first geulah (from Mitzrayim).

Now, this enlightens us as to Moshe Rabeinu’s profound intent at the beginning of sefer Devarim. He already knew that he would not enter the land and that Yisrael would have to endure “one thousand years of galus.” Therefore, he prayed for the geulah of Yisrael from galus by saying: **“May Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves.”** In other words, he prayed that Yisrael would be redeemed, so that he would be able to teach them the new Torah associated with the one thousand lights that had been given to him originally at Matan Torah.

With this understanding, we can interpret the conclusion of Moshe's prayer: **"And may He bless you as He has spoken of you."** He is referring to the fact that at the time of the future geulah, HKB"H will provide Yisrael with the reward for the fulfillment of the mitzvos that He promised them. For, as we are taught (Kiddushin 39b): **"שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא"—reward for the performance of a mitzvah is not granted in this world.** Hence, at the time of the future geulah, HKB"H will provide us with all of the Berachos and rewards that are due to us.

So, it is for this reason that Ezra HaSofer instituted the reading of parshas Devarim on the third Shabbas of "Bein HaMetzarim." As explained, the third Shabbas corresponds to the future geulah. Therefore, it is fitting to read the tefilah of Moshe Rabeinu, who is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach: **"May Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves, and bless you as He has spoken of you"**—swiftly, in our times! Amen.



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