

## The Three Weeks Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

There are 12 constellations corresponding to 12 different ways of re-arranging the letters of Hashem's name- *yud keh vav keh*. This tells us that there are 12 different ways of discovering Hashem. The *Bnei Yissachar* wrote a book in which he discusses all the months of the year and how different combinations of the letters of Hashem's name characterize the nature of each month. For example, the combination of letters for the month of Tamuz is Hashem's name spelled backwards. The three -week period is a time to look for Hashem in the darkest of all places and it is there that we will find Him. We have to look both backwards- what are the events that actually happened that characterized this darkness, and we have to look forward -at what we can change so that we can find Hashem.

Let's begin by looking backward. Yerushalayim was the seat of spiritual connection where

the puzzle pieces and the picture were joined. It's called, "*Ir shechubra lo yachdav* -The city that binds them together." There were 12 tribes and each had a different path to finding Hashem. Yerushalayim was the magnet, the core of the world, that connected them together.

It was originally called *Moriah*, then *Bet Elokim*, then *Shalem* by the non-Jews- a place of wholeness. We call it Yerushalayim, the place where this wholeness can be experienced. If Yerushalayim was like a lit candle it seems antithetical that it was destroyed. But in fact, it was part of Hashem's plan because we were no longer matching the puzzle pieces to the picture. Hashem gave us the *Bet Hamikdash* in the merit of the avot. We had the potential to develop the sense of unity they did. But we failed. When *Klal Yisrael* sinned with immorality, idol worship, and murder, all that the *avot* stood for was lost. The prophets

had to tell the people that the disparity between the pieces and the picture had become too great and the *Bet Hamikdash* would be destroyed.

Yirmiyahu's first prophecy showed an almond tree which takes only three weeks to blossom, signifying that the destruction would happen fast. The second image was a pot boiling over towards *tzafon*-the north. Hashem said, "*Ki m'tzafon tezeh hara* -The evil will come from the north." *Tzafon* comes from the root word *l'hatzpin*- to conceal. It's the concealment of Hashem inside and outside us that brings about evil. The pathway to finding Hashem is deciding who you don't want to be and then figuring out who you do want to be. The four major exiles brought darkness which delineated for us what we did not want to be. Our goal during the Three Weeks should be to recognize the concealment and commit to living a more elevated life.

## Tehilim 48: Jerusalem- The Eternal City

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

Tehilim chapter 48 is the *shir shel yom* of Monday, a love song for Yerushalayim. There are differing opinions when it was composed and whether it makes reference to any particular event when it speaks about kings gathering together in Yerushalayim. Did they come together for an invasion or to celebrate? Ibn Ezra notes that this *mizmor* sings the praises of Yerushalayim and speaks about our love for Hashem and Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim evokes Hashem's praise and greatness and is a place where the One Above and His people connect and commune together. Some commentators say that this *mizmor* is about the salvation of Yerushalayim and Judea during the days of Chizkiyahu, when Sancheriv led the invasion of the Assyrians. In one day, one of the most powerful kingdoms that had posed a very great threat and had already caused damage to the nation, was destroyed.

"With an eastern wind you will shatter the ships of *Tarshish*." If the Assyrian battle was a land war, why the reference to ships? Where

is *Tarshish*? King Yehoshofat reigned during the years 867 to 846 BCE. Achazyah the son of King Achav ruled in the north. The two made an alliance for the sake of trade. Together, they sent ships to *Tarshish* to bring gold, but they were shattered and sank in the port of Eilat. Later on, Yehoshofat joined with King Yehoram, the son of Achav in a war against Moav. This was a coalition between Israel, Judea, and Edom and they managed to overcome the threat of Moav as Elisha the prophet had predicted. Then they all came to Yerushalayim to celebrate.

Rashi, Redak, and Seforno describe this chapter as a prophetic song written about the aftermath of the battle of *Gog u'Magog* when Hashem will bring judgment upon all the nations; the evil ones will fall and the others will come to recognize Hashem. Other commentators say it's a description of Shlomo Hamelech's dedication of the *Beit Hamikdash*. The nations would hear of his wisdom and would come to Yerushalayim bearing gifts. They would stand in awe of the king and of his

mighty empire. For a very short time, Israel was both an economic as well as a military force, having essentially cut off most of its enemies living in greater Israel, from the area of Syria all the way to Eilat, and regaining almost all the borders promised to Avraham Avinu. Most of those conquests were made by David Hamelech and came to fruition in the life of Shlomo Hamelech. Others argue that the chapter speaks about David himself. Though there was no *Bet Hamikdash* yet, he drew the plans that were later used by his son, and secured Israel's full independence and military superiority.

The Malbim connects this chapter to chapter 46 in Tehilim which describes a great storm in the Middle East. Israel lies on a major fault and there was an earthquake that shattered mountains, caused a major tsunami, and led to floods across the entire fertile crescent, wiping out entire cities. Yerushalayim wasn't affected, while the area all around it was. To the world, it was a mark of Hashem's special hashgacha for His holy city.



## The Three Weeks: Final Fire

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

As we mourn the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, we anticipate our return from exile and the rebuilding of the third *Bet Hamikdash*. According to the Gemara, the edifice will descend fully formed from heaven. However, according to the Rambam, Mashiach will build it. How can we understand these two contradictory perspectives?

Rabbi Schwab quotes Zechariah 2:9 that says that Hashem's presence in Yerushalayim will be visible as a fiery wall, for He Who set the fire that destroyed Yerushalayim will also rebuild it through fire. What is the image of fire meant to convey? In the time of the *Bet Hamikdash*, eating of the new grain crop was not permissible until the omer was brought on the first day of *Pesach*. The Talmud discusses the question if today, without a Temple, one could eat the new grain already in the morning. R. Yochanan Ben Zakai says no, because perhaps the *Bet Hamikdash* will be built. How do we understand this, if the construction of the Temple does not override *Yom Tov*? The answer given is that the Temple will come down already built from heaven.

But if Hashem built the Sanctuary, how can we fulfill the command, "Make for Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them?" Here Rabbi Schlesinger cites the prayer, "[Hashem] will show us [the *Bet Hamikdash*] being built and will gladden us with its completion." There is a verse in Eichah, "Its gates sank into the earth," The Midrash notes that the gates were not captured by the enemies. Although the structure of the *Bet Hamikdash* will descend from heaven, Moshiach will have the task of digging up and attaching its doors and gates. Therefore, as it says, he who completes the project is credited with having done the project. Hence, the prayer according to the Gra is understood, that we should be privileged to see Hashem's building, and we will rejoice with completing the structure.

While so many of the utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash* were carried away by the enemy, the doors of the *Bet Hamikdash* did not suffer that fate. Homiletically, the gates were rewarded for showing honor only to Hashem, for lifting their "heads" and opening only to allow God's presence to enter (Tehillim 24). Therefore, where it says in Tehillim, "I will exalt You, Hashem, ki dilisani/for You have lifted me up," can be read with an alternate translation of dilisani, You have given me doors, the doors of the *Bet Hamikdash* at its inauguration. So too do we have to work on our own "gates" to merit rebuilding those gates.

For forty years before the actual destruction, Hashem gave *Bnei Yisroel* many omens of the impending disaster. For example, the westernmost wick of the *menorah* would not always stay lit as it had done until now. Even more obvious, the gates of Yerushalayim always had guards protecting the walls, yet this holiest of places had its doors thrown open on its own.

On the seventeenth of Tamuz, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached, beginning the final assault that would destroy the Temple. We are not mourning only the breach of the walls 2,000 years ago; we are mourning the breach of the walls that insulated Jews from the influences of the outside world, writes Rabbi Reisman. Especially with modern technology, these negative, secular influences invade and corrupt our homes, our families, our children. The broken walls deprive us all of a sense of modesty and privacy. The breakdown begins with one small breach, writes the Siach Eliyahu, but each year, the hole grows. It is time to repair the breach.

The fire that Hashem will send down into the third *Bet Hamikdash* will be ignited by the passion of *Bnei Yisroel* for its rebuilding, says the *Aruch L'ner*. Hashem will infuse the Godly spirit within the walls that we will build. This is our work for the three weeks, to strengthen our desire for the *Bet Hamikdash*. Focus on that idea before reciting each *Shemoneh Esrai*,

suggests the *Netivot Shalom*, and in our *Birkat Hamazon*, adds Rabbi Arieli.

During this period of *bein hametzorim*/between the borders, the *Torah* readings all record aspects of entering the Land of Israel and establishing its borders. Hashem's love for us in *Eretz Yisroel* was clear. How can we feel His love now during our extended exile? The Talmud in Taanit 29 tells us, "Just as when the month of Av begins, we decrease the joy, so when the month of Adar begins, we increase the joy." What is the connection? Just as His love was still manifest in the concealed salvation from Haman's plot, so too must we recognize Hashem's love for us even in these dark times. He left the intensity of the *Bet Hamikdash*, but His love still remains as He watches over us even in concealment.

Fire is above nature in that it consumes everything in its path. Hashem destroyed the *Bet Hamikdash* with a fire he sent from above. During the moments of the destruction, He was with us, present, but concealed in the fire. And with fire, the Temple will be rebuilt. In retrospect, through that fire we will see that all that happened to us was from love. In Eichah it says, "All who pursue Hashem, can reach Him during the *bein hametzorim*. While the *Bet Hamikdash* was the physical place for this connection, we can still strive for it even without the supporting structure.

When we can view our personal challenges as a reflection of the troubles of the world, our personal *tefillot* become very powerful. We can then say, "For Your salvation do I yearn all day," with a sense of longing that encompasses both personal requests and our national yearning for *Moshiach*.