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Tu B'Av Light of the Future

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The Words of Our Sages About Tu B'Av

The *Mishnah* towards the end of *Tractate Taanis*¹ states, “Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said:

“There were no better festivals for the Jewish people than *Yom HaKippurim* and the fifteenth of *Av* [“*Tu B'Av*”] where the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in white garments, which they borrowed, so as not to shame those who didn't own [garments], and all the garments required immersion. The Jewish daughters would go out dancing in the vineyards, and what would they say? “Young lad, raise your eyes, and see what you are examining. Do not place your eye on beauty; place your eyes on family [lineage]. “*Charm is false, and beauty is vain. A woman who fears Hashem, she is the one who should be praised....*”

Chazal said that there were no greater festivals to the Jewish people than *Tu B'Av* and *Yom Kippur*. It is understandable that *Yom Kippur* is a joyous day, because it is the day when the second *Luchos* were given. But what was the great joy contained in the fifteenth day of the month of *Av*? *Chazal* say that it was because “the girls of Jerusalem wore borrowed white clothes,” and then each of the girls would go on to look for a marriage partner. But still what exactly was the great *simchah* on *Tu B'Av*?

The *Gemara* asks this question:² “It is understandable why *Yom Kippur* is the happiest festival, because it is a day of forgiveness, the day when the second set of *Luchos* were given; but what is the celebration of *Tu B'Av* about?”

The *Gemara* answers with six different reasons:

- 1) It was the day when they permitted each of the tribes to marry with each other (which had originally been forbidden in the generation of the desert).
- 2) It was the day when they lifted the ban on marrying into the tribe of Binyamin (which had been in effect since the times of the Judges).
- 3) It was the day where the generation in the desert stopped dying (and then the *Shechinah* resumed speaking with Moshe).
- 4) It was the day when the idols of Yeravam ben Nevat were removed from the paths that people took to ascend to Jerusalem on the festival.
- 5) It was the day when the martyrs of Beitar received burial, and a special blessing of *HaTov V'HaMeitiv* was instituted so that their bodies would not decay (and miraculously the bodies did not decay).
- 6) It was the day where they stopped chopping wood to light the fire on the Altar.

Getting back to the crux of the matter, *Tu B'Av* was celebrated with the girls of Jerusalem going out in white clothing which they borrowed. The *Gemara* asks: Where did they borrow from? The *Gemara* answers that a daughter of the king would borrow from the daughter of the *Kohen Gadol* (high priest), who would borrow it from the daughter of the *segan* (deputy) *Kohen Gadol*,³ who borrowed it from the daughter of the *Kohen mashuach milchamah* (the *Kohen* anointed for war purposes),⁴ who borrowed it from the daughter of the *kohen hedyot* (the

¹ *Taanis 26b*

² *Taanis 30b*

³ *The Kohen appointed to replace the Kohen Gadol in case the original Kohen Gadol cannot serve (Rashi to Taanis 31a)*

⁴ *The Kohen who announces that those who are afraid should not go out to war (Rashi to Taanis 31a)*

lower priest),⁵ and all of the rest of the girls in *Klal Yisrael* borrowed from each other (even the wealthy from the poor), so as not to shame those who didn't own [ritually pure] clothing.

Let us now reflect further into this matter.

The Connection Between Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av: A Day of Forgiveness

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said that Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av are both called the greatest festivals of the Jewish people. The *Gemara* explains that Yom Kippur is a joyous day because it is a day of forgiveness from sin.⁶ This seems to imply that Tu B'Av, however, is not a day of forgiveness from sin. However, upon deeper analysis, Tu B'Av is also a day of forgiveness from sin.

The first hint to Tu B'Av's connection to forgiveness is that on Tu B'Av, the girls of Jerusalem went out dancing. The Hebrew word for this is "*cholos*," which is from the word *mechilah*, forgiveness. This implies a connection between forgiveness and Tu B'Av.

A second hint is from the fact that they also went into the vineyards. According to an opinion in the Sages, the *Eitz HaDaas* (the Tree of Knowledge which was forbidden to Adam) was a grapevine. Thus, the deeper meaning of why the girls went into the vineyards was an allusion to forgiveness for the sin of Adam when he ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, which is identified by *Chazal* as a grapevine (hence the connection to vineyards).

The Depth Behind The White Clothes Worn By The Girls of Jerusalem On Tu B'Av

After Adam and Chavah ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, they became ashamed, and then they felt a need to clothe themselves with garments. Thus, the entire concept of garments (clothing/*levushim*) came about as the result of the sin.

On Tu B'Av, the girls of Jerusalem wore white garments, which they borrowed. There are two aspects contained here – it was white, and it was borrowed. The *Gemara* says that a man has an obligation to gladden his family on the festivals, and that a woman rejoices on the festival with "colored clothes."⁷ Contrast this with Tu B'Av, where the girls wore white clothes – the very opposite idea of colored clothes. And *Chazal* state that the great celebration of Tu B'Av was that they wore white clothes. What is the meaning of this, and especially since *Chazal* say that rejoicing on the festivals is specifically with colored clothes?

It shows that the joy on Tu B'Av was of an opposite nature than the joy of all the other festivals - as follows. A woman rejoices on the festivals with colored clothing, due to the fact that we currently live after the sin of Adam, which caused the need for clothing. Colored clothing is the symbol of honor, as the wealthy would wear colored clothing [as opposed to white, uncolored clothing]. Now that we live after the sin, clothing has become the "honor" of man – specifically, colored clothing. The wealthier and more prestigious a person is, the more colored clothing he wears. But this is the impaired level of clothing, for it came about through the sin.

⁵ *Taanis* 31a

⁶ *Taanis* 26b

⁷ *Pesachim* 109a

In contrast, the rectified level of clothing, which is the “clothing” that existed before the sin, is symbolized by the clothing of the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur, which was white. Thus, the connection between Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av is that on both of these days, white clothing is worn, [symbolizing the state of before the sin]. The girls of Jerusalem wore white on Tu B'Av as an allusion to rectified clothing, which is white.

The white clothing worn on Tu B'Av also bears a connection to Yom Kippur because it is a time of forgiveness. The girls on Tu B'Av went out to the vineyards, to allude to this forgiveness. When a person wants forgiveness, he wears white clothing. *Chazal* explain that the color white “whitens” the sins of the Jewish people, and that is why the *Kohen Gadol* wore white on Yom Kippur.

The Depth Behind The “Borrowed” Clothes On Tu B'Av

So far, we have explained one aspect of Tu B'Av – the white clothes worn on this day, which symbolized forgiveness from sin, just as Yom Kippur is the day of forgiveness and the day where the *Kohen Gadol* wore white. It was the rectified form of “clothing” of before the sin.

An additional aspect contained in Tu B'Av, is the fact that the girls wore white clothes that was “borrowed”. All of the girls borrowed the white clothes from a previous owner, and this alludes to a deeper aspect, as follows. The clothing on Tu B'Av was entirely borrowed, to show that all of the clothing that we have now is entirely a result of the sin, so it does not really belong to us, and thus, in the deeper sense, all of our clothing is “borrowed”.

The white clothing worn on Tu B'Av refers to the kind of clothing that existed before the sin, and that was the beginning of the rectification of the sin (and the clothing that it produced). That was one aspect of the rectification. But even more so, the fact that it was “borrowed” clothing shows that even the higher level of clothing, white clothing, is really “borrowed.” Meaning, it is not our actual “clothing.” It showed that all clothing, in essence, is “borrowed.” All clothing is “borrowed” - meaning, it is all **temporary**.

Before the sin, Adam and Chavah did not wear clothing and they were not ashamed. Thus, before the sin, there was no shame. The girls of Jerusalem borrowed white clothes “so as not to shame those who didn't own” clothing – and here is the deeper understanding of this matter. One of the Sages said that clothing is called the “honor” (*kavod*) of a person. The Hebrew word for “garment” is *levush*, which is from the words *lo bosh*, “no shame” – all clothing is meant to remove shame, and to reveal honor. The borrowed white clothes which the girls wore on Tu B'Av was in order to remove the original shame which came upon man after the sin, and to reveal the state before the sin, when there was no shame.

This is the depth of why all the girls wore white on Tu B'Av.

The Level of Before The Sin – The Point of No Shame

In the way Hashem has designed the world, the more colored clothes a person wears, the more dignified he appears, because clothing reveals honor. The clothes of the *Kohanim* in the *Beis HaMikdash* were worn “*l'kavod ul'tiferes*” – “for honor and for beauty”, and they were not only white, but colored as well. Colored clothes are worn to show the honor of the person wearing it.

White clothes, however, reveal the level of before the sin. [There was no need for a person to feel honored in order to get rid of his shame, because there was no shame yet. The “clothing” then was on a totally spiritual level].

The girls on Tu B'Av wore white “so as not to shame those who didn't own clothes” – in other words, they revealed the point where there is no shame, which is the level before the sin.

Usually, who borrows something? The poor borrows from the rich, and the rich do not borrow from the poor. On Tu B'Av, everyone borrowed the clothes from each other – the poor as well as the rich. This was because it revealed the level before the sin, where there is no shame at all, and that is why even the wealthy were not ashamed to borrow from the poor.

The simple understanding of why the girls borrowed white clothes on Tu B'Av was “so as not to shame those who didn't own” clothing, which was to save the poor from embarrassment for not owning their clothing. But the deeper meaning of this is that on Tu B'Av, even the wealthy exchanged their honorable colored clothes for white clothes – an entirely different kind of clothing – in order to reveal the point where there is no shame. This was the depth behind “so as not to shame those who didn't have” – it refers to those who revealed the point of no shame.

On Tu B'Av, everyone wore borrowed white clothing, which showed that their clothing wasn't theirs. Why? Because clothing is all a result of sin. Therefore, all clothing does not really belong to us – so it is entirely “borrowed.” During the rest of the year, when colored clothes were worn, it was for the purpose of honor; but on Tu B'Av, when white clothes were worn, it was to reveal that all clothing is not ours to begin with - and that is why everyone went to borrow the clothes on Tu B'Av.

Thus, the revelation of Tu B'Av was that it removed the clothing of “after the sin.” The word clothing in Hebrew is called “*begged*,” from the word *bogaid*/betrayal, alluding to how clothing is a result of the sin, which is a “betrayal” to G-d. The borrowed white clothes on Tu B'Av was to remove this kind of “clothing” and reveal in its place the kind of clothing that was before the sin.

The Proper View Towards All “Garments”

The *Gemara* says that the daughter of the king borrowed the clothes from the daughter of the *Kohen Gadol*, who had borrowed it from the daughter of the *segan Kohen Gadol*, who had borrowed it from the daughter of the *Kohen* anointed for war, who borrowed it from the daughter of the *Kohen hedyot*. In other words, each of these people borrowed it from a person of lower status than they. The understanding behind this is as follows.

Every sin lowers a person from his original level. When man sinned, he fell from his level, and from then on he needed clothing. Before the sin, the body was the clothing of the soul, and the body did not have to be clothed. After the sin, when man descended from his level, the body had to be covered. The sin produced a need for physical clothing.

On Tu B'Av when everyone borrowed clothing, it was to show that all clothing is really borrowed, because all clothing is really borrowed, for it is a result of man falling to a lower level, which makes the lower level become his garment. The level below you is called your garment. Everyone borrowed clothes on Tu B'Av from someone of lower status than they, which showed that the lower level is always the “garment” of the person. You “borrow” from the lower level.

This revealed the rectification for clothing, which came as a result of the sin. If I use the lower level as a garment, that is what rectifies the garment. This was the forgiveness on Tu B'Av – to use the lower level than you as a garment, recognizing that the lower level than you is but a “garment” for you to wear and nothing else, and not to let your actual level descend to it.

The “Festival” of Tu B'Av – The Light of The Future

Let us have a clearer understanding of this.

Tisha B'Av is called a *moed* (festival). Of Tisha B'Av it is said, “*Call it upon Me, a festival.*” All of the festivals have seven days. Pesach and Succos clearly have seven days, and Shavuos had an additional seven days where its *korbonos* could be brought. If Tisha B'Av is called a “festival,” what are its ‘seven days’? Its “seventh day” concludes with Tu B'Av. Thus, Tu B'Av is the “seventh day” of the “festival” of Tisha B'Av.

The *Zohar*⁸ states that the six kinds of material donated to the Mishkan (gold, silver, copper, turquoise wool, violet wool, and red wool) are parallel to six festivals – “gold” refers to Rosh HaShanah, “silver” refers to Yom Kippur, “copper” refers to Succos, turquoise wool refers to Pesach, “violet wool” refers to Shavuos, and “red wool” refers to Tu B'Av. Thus, Tu B'Av is listed as the “sixth festival” according to Chazal. The *Mishnah* quoted earlier also calls Tu B'Av as a “*yom tov*” (festival).

Tu B'Av will be a festival in the future after we have the third Beis Hamikdash which Tisha B'av will be the celebration of, and Tu B'Av is the revelation of that holiday because it always has been the roots of redemption. The light of the festival of Tu B'Av penetrates into the current dimension and that is why we celebrate it on some level even now. Tisha B'Av will be a festival in the future because it will celebrate the third *Beis HaMikdash*. The three festivals we have now, Pesach Shavuos and Succos, celebrate the [time when we would ascend to the] first *Beis HaMikdash*, and they parallel our three forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov. The future “festival” of Tisha B'Av is parallel to Dovid HaMelech, and its “seventh day,” Tu B'Av, is the root of redemption, which is symbolized by Dovid HaMelech [the root of Mashiach, who will bring the redemption].

The sefer *Kedushas Levi* explains that the word “*Av*” (the month of Av) stands for the words, “*Arur, Baruch*” (cursed, blessed); until Tu B'Av, the month of Av is *arur*/cursed, and from Tu B'Av and onward, it is a month that is *baruch*/blessed. This is because Tu B'Av is the root of a revelation of a new festival in the future. It is the “seventh day” of the “festival” that will be Tisha B'Av, in the future.

The Festival of Tu B'Av Is Enjoyed Now – Tisha B'Av Will Only Be Enjoyed In The Future

However, the difference between the “festival” of Tisha B'Av and the “festival” of Tu B'Av is that Tisha B'Av is not actually celebrated by us now as a festival, and it will only be a festival in the future; for now, it is a time of mourning. But its seventh day, Tu B'Av, is celebrated even now, because its light penetrates into the current dimension, for it is the light of the future. Tu B'Av removes whatever became concealed from us on Tisha B'Av, and it is what reveals Tisha B'Av as a festival.

Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av – Two Levels of Forgiveness From Sin

Thus, Tu B'Av and Yom Kippur are called “the greatest festivals of the Jewish people,” since they are both days of forgiveness. On Yom Kippur we received the second *Luchos* which were atonement for sin. Tu B'Av is also an atonement of sin, but it is a deeper source of atonement – it is the light of the future, which will remove sin.

⁸ *Zohar parshas Terumah 135a*

Therefore it is also a day of *mechilah*, and that is why there was *machol*/dancing on Tu B'Av (because *machol* is derived from the word *mechilah*, forgiveness).

On Yom Kippur, the color white was worn by the *Kohen Gadol*, [and we also have the custom to wear white on Yom Kippur], but it was not borrowed, it is our own clothing. But on Tu B'Av they wore white clothing that was borrowed, because it was a higher level, the level of the future – when it will be revealed that even our “garments” are borrowed,

Thus, the borrowed white clothing on Tu B'Av showed that there is a kind of “clothing” that does not come from this world, but from a higher dimension. It revealed that that all clothing/garments are really “borrowed” from the light of the future; for that is where we borrow all our “clothing/garments” from.

Moshe's Prayers Began on Tu B'Av

Here is an insight, in relation to the above. Moshe *davened* 515 *tefillos* to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. From a superficial perspective, he *davened* each of these 515 *tefillos* in order to get into *Eretz Yisrael*. But we can suggest an entirely different approach to this matter, as follows.

Moshe left the world on 7 Adar. If you make a calculation, you will see that there are 515 *tefillos* from the 15th of Av (Tu B'Av) until the 7th of Adar. That means that Moshe was *davening* the 515 *tefillos* starting from Tu B'Av. He *davened* to get into *Eretz Yisrael*, but his request was not answered. Of course, every prayer is heard by Hashem, but simply speaking, his requests were not answered. But let us reflect about the following.

The Sages state that if Moshe would have been allowed into *Eretz Yisrael*, he would have built the *Beis HaMikdash*, and it would have been forever, because anything built by Moshe cannot be destroyed (that is why the *Mishkan* which he built could not be destroyed, it could only be hidden). Thus, the prayers of Moshe to enter *Eretz Yisrael* were really coming from the light of the future - and that is why these prayers began on Tu B'Av.

Tu B'Av (The Future Revelation) and Tu B'Shevat (The Original Light of Before The Sin)

The Sages draw a parallel between Tu B'Av and Tu B'Shevat, as follows. Tu B'Shevat reveals the birth of trees, alluding to the secret of the “tree” that is the *Eitz HaChaim* (the Tree of Life) which will remove the *Eitz HaDaas* (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). Along the same lines, Tu B'Av removes the destructive effects that took place on Tisha B'Av. In clearer terms: Tu B'Shevat is a revelation of the spiritual light that existed before the sin, whereas Tu B'Av is the light of the revelation of the future. Tu B'Shevat awakens the light contained in the original *Eitz HaChaim*, whereas Tu B'Av awakens the light that will be revealed in the future.

The Depth Of Why All Garments On Tu B'Av Required Immersion

The *Gemara*⁹ says that all the borrowed garments required immersion, in case any of the garments of the women were ritually impure due to menstrual impurity. They immersed all the garments on that day – not only the garments that were being worn, but even the garments that weren't worn. The depth of this is as follows.

⁹ *Taanis* 31a

The garments which were worn certainly needed to be immersed, in case any of them were ritually impure due to menstruation. But the entire concept of menstruation was a curse that came about through sin, and the sin also produced the need for clothing. These are “clothes that were worn” – clothes that came from the betrayal of the sin, combined with the menstrual impurity that came about through sin.

But the clothing that wasn't worn also needed to be immersed – why? The *Gemara* says that since it was going to be worn later, it also requires immersion now. The depth of this is because the borrowed clothing on Tu B'Av was not being borrowed from this world (our current dimension), but from a higher world.

On Tu B'Av all garments needed immersion, parallel to the concept that the Sages write about the ascension of the soul to Heaven, when it has to undergo immersion in the fiery River of *Dinor*. On Tu B'Av, all “garments” need to be nullified. All garments on this world need immersion, in relation to the light of the future. If we are to accept the light of the future, we need to undergo immersion in all our garments. This is because the garments are not of this world, but from the future light. In order to receive them, the garments need to be immersed/nullified.

“Take Us In Marriage, For The Sake of Heaven”

The *Gemara* explains that there were three groups of girls who went out into the vineyards on Tu B'Av. The beautiful girls among them said “Do not pay attention to our beauty...*a woman who fears Hashem, she shall be praised.*” The girls of prestigious lineage said, “A woman is only for children.” The less attractive girls said, “Take us in marriage for the sake of Heaven.”

The less attractive girls who said “Take us for the sake of Heaven” reflects the highest perspective. It is above the current world we live in, where there is no such thing as a person who does something entirely for the sake of Heaven. When a person marries, it cannot be completely for the sake of Heaven. So what were the less attractive girls saying?

After the sin, Adam blamed it on Chavah: “the woman You gave to me.” The result of the sin was that Adam blamed it on woman, and we learn from this that a person's marriage on this world is never with intentions that are completely for the sake of Heaven. If Adam's marriage to Chavah would have been completely for the sake of Heaven, Adam could have never blamed Chavah for the sin, because the perfect intentions in marrying here could never lead to such results. He could only blame the sin as her fault because his marriage to her was not totally for the sake of Heaven, and ever since then all marriages are not completely for the sake of Heaven.

Where did the faulty attitude originate from, though? It started with Adam's request from Hashem for a spouse. Once he made that request, it could not be totally for the sake of Heaven. Thus, when the less attractive girls were saying “Take us for the sake of Heaven,” it reflected the state before the request of Adam for a spouse. If Adam had never requested a spouse from Hashem, then his connection to Chavah would have been complete and perfect.

We see that after the sin, Adam separated from Chavah for 130 years, and this could only be possible because their entire connection was already damaged. Their connection was bound to become severed, and that was inevitable, because it began from a faulty root. When the less attractive girls were saying “Take us for the sake of Heaven” it was a return to the way things used to be in the original plan of the world, when there was no request yet of man for a spouse. This would have led to a complete, perfected level of marriage where the man and woman are completely unified.

Tu B'Av reveals the light of the future; it is the “seventh” day of the festival of Tisha B'Av – it completes the festival of the future that will be Tisha B'Av. Just as when a man marries a woman, there are seven days of festivity afterwards (*Sheva Berachos*), along the same lines, there are seven days of celebration after Tisha B'Av, ending with the seventh day, Tu B'Av. The seventh day of celebration is the main day of the celebration; thus Tu B'Av is the main part of the celebration, because it is a return to the original plan of Creation.

1- The Day When All Tribes Were Allowed To Intermarry With Each Other: A Day of Revealed Unity

The *Gemara* explains several reasons what the joyous celebration of Tu B'Av was.

According to the first reason, it was because Tu B'Av was the day when the tribes were allowed to marry into each other. The depth of this is follows.

The tribes began with the 12 sons of Yaakov, who each came from four different women. This began a disparity amongst *Klal Yisrael*, and that was the deep reason why the tribes couldn't intermarry into each other. However, they were all rooted in Yaakov *Avinu*, which was the one point that bound them together. They had different mothers, which made them separate from each other, but they all had one father, which was the point that bound them together. Until Tu B'Av, there was disparity amongst them, due to the fact that they all came from different mothers. On Tu B'Av, their unified point was realized, and thus it was the day where they began to marry into one other.

Avraham and Sarah's children were not united, for they had Yitzchok and Yishmael, who went separate ways. Yishmael was thrown out of their home, and Yitzchok continued the family. From the house of Yitzchok and Rivkah, came Yaakov and Esav who went his own separate way, and Yaakov who carried on the legacy. There was no unified point revealed yet. Yaakov had four wives, with twelve children. The twelve children were all righteous, but they did not all come from one mother, so there was disparity amongst them.

However, the disparity did not begin with Yaakov marrying four wives. It began with the flaw in the marriage of Adam and Chavah. If Adam and Chavah would have had a perfect connection with each other, there would only be one mother (Chavah) for the Jewish people, not four mothers.

On Tu B'Av, the tribes were allowed to intermarry with each other, because their unified point became revealed. They had been separated until then because they came from four separate mothers, but on Tu B'Av, the level was revealed where there is only one woman to be married to (Chavah), which is described in the verse “*A woman of valor, is the crown of her husband*” – the perfected level of marriage between Adam and Chavah, which was never actually reached, but which will be revealed in the future. Hence, the brothers became unified on this day. It was a return to the original plan of Creation, when there is only “one woman” to be married to – the perfected level of marriage between Adam and Chavah.

2- The Day When The Ban On Marrying The Tribe of Binyamin Was Lifted

The second reason in the *Gemara* for why Tu B'Av is celebrated is because it was the day that the ban on marrying the tribe of Binyamin was lifted. The depth behind why the tribes placed a ban on marrying into the tribe of Binyamin was because Binyamin was born at the same time of the death of his mother Rachel, so Binyamin's birth furthered the disparity amongst the tribes, for he was born with no mother, which placed more of an emphasis

on the different mothers of the 12 brothers. This paved the way for the eventual separation of Binyamin from the rest of the tribes later in history.

But on Tu B'Av, their unified point was revealed, thus there was no more reason to shun the tribe of Binyamin. It revealed that there is only one mother, not four – and the one mother is Chavah, “the mother of all the living.” Therefore, it was a revelation that everyone has one mother, Chavah - and so there was no reason for disparity amongst the brothers.

3- The Day When The Generation of The Desert Stopped Dying: When Death Ceases

The next reason in the *Gemara* for the celebration of Tu B'Av is because it was the day where those decreed to die in the desert stopped dying. The depth of this is because Tu B'Av represents the cessation of death, the result of the sin. It was decreed on the nation that they cannot enter *Eretz Yisrael* and that they would all die in the desert. Tu B'Av is when they stopped dying. Moshe prayed to enter *Eretz Yisrael* which he didn't merit, and he began praying for this on Tu B'Av (as explained earlier). The decree of death upon the generation began with the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av), and Moshe's prayer began on Tu B'Av. The 9th of Av was the root of destruction, but the light of the festival of the future began with the 15th of Av, when Moshe's prayers began – and that is the depth behind why the people in the desert finished dying.

Thus, Tu B'Av reveals how the “seventh day” after Tisha B'Av is a festival. In our current dimension, we can only enjoy this “seventh day” after Tisha B'Av as a festival, (and that is why we celebrate Tu B'Av), but we cannot enjoy Tisha B'Av right now as a festival, even though it will be a festival in the future. Tu B'Av is therefore called by Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel as ‘the best festivals to the Jewish people’ - because it is a festival even now, on some level. The people in the desert finished dying on this day, symbolizing a cessation of death – a return to the level when there will no more sin and thus no more curse of death.

Furthermore, the *Gemara* says that until the people in the desert stopped dying, the *Shechinah* did not speak with Moshe. On Tu B'Av, when the people stopped dying, Moshe's prayers began (40 years after the original decree). When Moshe began to *daven* to Hashem to get into *Eretz Yisrael*, this was a return of the *Shechinah* to Moshe. Until then, it was said that the “*Shechinah* speaks from his throat” – but on Tu B'Av, the light of the future was revealed, and that was when Moshe davened for the future – which came from a higher level of *Shechinah* which returned to him on that day. Death stopped on that day – the curse of death upon mankind ceased – because it was the revelation of the light of the festival of the future.

4- The Day When The Nation Was No Longer Prevented From Ascending To The Beis HaMikdash

Another reason the *Gemara* gives for the celebration of Tu B'Av is because it was the day when the idols of Yeravam were removed from the paths that led to Jerusalem, which had prevented the nation from ascending to the *Beis HaMikdash* during the three festivals.

Part of the exile is that we no longer have the *mitzvah* of traveling to the *Beis HaMikdash* each year on the three festivals. This is part of the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. On Tu B'Av, those obstacles preventing us from ascending to the *Beis HaMikdash* were removed. If we cannot ascend to the *Beis HaMikdash*, it is like death; but Tu B'Av reveals the future state where there is no death, because it is the light of the future, which will enable us to ascend to the *Beis HaMikdash*.

5- The Day When The Martyrs of Beitar Merited Burial And Their Bodies Did Not Decay

The next reason the Gemara states for the celebration of Tu B'Av is because it was the day where the martyrs of Beitar were buried, and the bodies did not decay.

What did this have to do specifically with Tu B'Av? The depth behind this was because there was a revelation of “no death.” The body only decays as a result of death, when it is placed in the earth, which is a curse given to mankind due to the first sin of man. The bodies in Beitar did not decay, because Tu B'Av reveals a return to the original state of man, where there is no such thing as death and decay.

6- The Day When The Woodchoppers Stopped Chopping Wood For The Altar

The final reason brought in the *Gemara* for the celebration of Tu B'Av is because it is the day where the woodchoppers ceased from chopping wood for the *maarachah* (pyre) on the Altar. *Rashi* explains that this was because the sun loses its strength beginning on Tu B'Av, so the wood isn't dried enough by the sun and thus it is difficult to chop.

The depth behind this is because Tu B'Av removes the “dryness” that came into man's soul due to the element of earth which man has sunken into as a result of the sin. As we know, the earth is a dry substance which is personified by the property of dryness. From Tu B'Av and onward, there was no more “dryness” – in other words, the aftereffects of the evil *Eitz HaDaas* which had brought on death to mankind, which sends man into the dry earth, ceased. Instead, the opposite of dryness became revealed, in which there is only life – the level contained in the *Eitz HaChaim*.

Tu B'Av – The Revelation of Above Bechirah/Free Choice

There is [much] more that we can say about *Tu B'Av*, and the words here are but a brief description.

Tu B'Av is the light of the future. It is the time when the girls of Jerusalem said, “*Young lad, lift now your eyes*” – the Hebrew word for “young lad,” “*bochur*”, is from the word *bechirah*, “choose.” They were saying that one can reach a higher kind of *bechirah*, to “lift your eyes” above the level of *bochur* and to see past the level of *bechirah*, and to instead receive a higher kind of *bechirah*, in which there are no other options to choose from, where a person is left with no choice other than to do the will of Hashem. Thus, Tu B'Av celebrates the future, where there will be no more *bechirah* (free will), when there will be no other options to choose from.

This is the depth of what the Sages said that on Tu B'Av, “One who does not have a wife, should turn to there”¹⁰ (to go to the vineyards on Tu B'Av to find a suitable wife). An unmarried man is called a “*bochur*”, alluding to *bechirah* (free will); on Tu B'Av, one can be a “*bochur*” in the higher sense, where he chooses not to have *bechirah* – the level of the future.

In the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the young *bochurim* were tragically “*charav*” (destroyed) in the streets, as the verse in *Eichah* laments. On a deeper level, this symbolized the ruined state of “*bochur*,” which is *charav*/destroyed – an opposite arrangement of the same letters. But the future will be the rectified state of “*bochur*,” in which one will

not have *bechirah*. It will reveal that a person is not really on the level of “*bochur*” [with free choice], and that he is rather like an elderly person, who sees no other alternatives.

The Festival That Comes From The Future

And so, Tu B'Av reveals the festival that will be in the future. Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said that Tu B'Av is of the greatest festivals for the Jewish people. This needs understanding: how could Tu B'Av be the greatest festival?! And how can it be on a higher level than the three main festivals [Pesach, Shavuot, and Succos] we have?

The answer to this (which merits a separate discussion for itself), along the lines of what we are saying, is because Tu B'Av is really the festival that comes from a light of the future. Therefore, it is above the level of the three current festivals and all that they reveal.

Chazal state that the third *Beis HaMikdash* will be built in the month of Av. It shall be inaugurated again, with the help from Hashem, speedily in our days - on Tu B'Av.¹¹

¹¹ Editor's Note: For more about the nature of “the festival of Tu B'Av”, see *Bnei Yissocher (I): Maamarei Tamuz-Av, maamar 4*