



This issue is dedicated in memory of
Shmuel ben Leib ז"ל

DVAR TORAH WHY DID ISRAEL SLEEP?

After days of preparation, when the morning of the giving of the Torah finally came, the People of Israel was asleep. "Israel was sleeping until the second hour of the day, for in the third month (Sivan) the day is twice the length of the night. The sleep of Shavuot day is pleasant and the night is short. And Moshe came to the camp of Israel and woke them up from their slumber and said to them, 'Wake up from your sleep for your G-d wants to give you the Torah like a groom waiting for the bride to come to the chuppah'" (Rabbi Chanina, quoted in Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer Chapter 40).

The author of the Shem Mishmuel (Harav Shmuel Bornshtein, זצ"ל, 1855-1926, Poland), asked the obvious question: We know that the People of Israel had a powerful desire to receive the Torah. They enthusiastically told Hashem how willing they were to keep the Torah. They even had to be warned time and again not to step foot on Mount Sinai out of their desire for closeness to G-d. How, then, did they let themselves oversleep on that auspicious morning?

Rabbi Chanina's statement does solve a difficulty in the verse: Why does the Torah use the causative form when it says "וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת הָעָם לְקִרְאת הָאֱלֹהִים מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה" – Moshe **took out** the nation towards G-d from the camp" (Shemot 19:17)? He can explain that they had to be woken up and taken out. But that explanation raises a greater difficulty – why was Israel sleeping on the morning of the Giving of the Torah?

The Shem Mishmuel answers that the People of Israel purposely wanted to go to sleep in order to wake up as new beings. Sleep, says the Gemara, is one sixtieth of death (Berachot 57b). It follows that waking up from sleep is like being reborn. The entire People of Israel wanted to wake up for the Giving of the Torah as new people with new lives.

This left its mark on Shavuot for all subsequent generations. Shavuot brings the possibility of renewing life. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashanah 4:8) says: "Since you accepted on yourselves the yolk of Torah I consider it as if you never sinned in all of your days." Accepting the Torah demands beginning life anew. The Jews tried to do this through waking up after a death-like sleep; but accepting the Torah itself involves taking on new life. The Shem Mishmuel quotes the Zohar, that says that Shavuot's שתי הלחם sacrifice, the two breads, correspond to the Torah. And the Torah calls the breads a מנחה חדשה – a new offering. Perhaps, he suggests, they are not only a new offering, but an offering of newness.

Beginning life anew happens in an intense way on Shavuot, but it is really part of our daily – and even constant – experience. Every day we wake up after a sleep that was a brush with death, and make the blessing "המחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים" – He who returns the souls to dead corpses." It goes further, though. The life of the entire world is renewed daily. We close the first blessing of every morning's Keriat Shema by referring to Hashem as "המתחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית" – He who renews, with His goodness, every day always the works of creation." Renewing life is also the essence of teshuvah, repentance. Thus, ends the Shem Mishmuel, renewing life is a "יסוד שהכל תלוי בו" – a foundation upon which everything is dependent."

SOURCE GUIDE: THE STREETS OF YERUSHALAYIM

On the wall of a plaza in Yerushalayim's עיר העתיקה, the Old City, metal letters have been attached to the wall, spelling out the words of the 4th and 5th verses of the 8th chapter of the Book of Zecharyah. Those same verses were quoted by Rabbi Akiva when he explained his laughter as he watched a fox run out of the site of the Holy of Holies. This source guide is built on those verses from Zecharyah's prophecy. **We dedicate this source guide לעיני חיילי צה"ל who died liberating Yerushalayim 50 years ago today during the Six Day War.**

A. Zecharyah's Prophecy

In boldface is that inscription on the wall of that Old City plaza, with the preceding and following verses:

<p>2. Zecharyah 8:1-8</p> <p>(1) And the word of Hashem of Hosts came [to me], saying:</p> <p>(2) Thus said Hashem of Hosts: I am jealous for Tzion with great jealousy, and with great fury I am jealous for her.</p> <p>(3) Thus said Hashem: I will return to Tzion, and I will dwell in the midst of Yerushalayim; and Yerushalayim shall be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of Hashem of Hosts [shall be called] the Holy Mountain.</p> <p>(4) Thus said Hashem, the G-d of Hosts: Elderly men and elderly women will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his cane in hand because of old age.</p> <p>(5) And the streets of the city shall be filled, with boys and girls playing in its streets.</p> <p>(6) Thus said Hashem of Hosts: As it will be wondrous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, it will also be wondrous in My eyes, says Hashem of Hosts.</p> <p>(7) Thus said Hashem of Hosts: Behold I will save My People from the land of the east and from the land of the west.</p> <p>(8) And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Yerushalayim; and they shall be My people, and I shall be their G-d, in truth and in righteousness.</p>	<p>זכריה ח:א-ח</p> <p>(א) וַיְהִי דְבַר ה' צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר:</p> <p>(ב) כֹּה אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת: קִנְאָתִי לְצִיּוֹן קִנְאָה גְדוֹלָה וְחֶמְאָה גְדוֹלָה קִנְאָתִי לָהּ.</p> <p>(ג) כֹּה אָמַר ה': שָׁבְתִי אֶל צִיּוֹן וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם וְנִקְרְאָה יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הָאֱמֶת וְהָר ה' צְבָאוֹת הָר הַקֹּדֶשׁ.</p> <p>(ד) כֹּה אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת: עַד יָשְׁבוּ זָקְנִים וְיִזְנְנוּ בְּרֻחוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִישׁ מִשְׁעֲנָתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ מִרְבַּע זָמִים.</p> <p>(ה) וְרַחֲבֹת הָעִיר יִמְלְאוּ לְקָדִים וְיִלְדוֹת מְשַׁחֲקִים בְּרַחֲבֹתֶיהָ.</p> <p>(ו) כֹּה אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת: כִּי יִפְלֵא בְעֵינַי שְׂאֲרֵית הָעָם הַזֶּה בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם גַּם בְּעֵינַי יִפְלֵא נֶאֱמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת.</p> <p>(ז) כֹּה אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת: הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת עַמִּי מֵאֲרָץ מִזְרַח וּמֵאֲרָץ מְבֹאָה הַשָּׁמֶשׁ.</p> <p>(ח) וְהִבֵּאתִי אֹתָם וְשָׁכְנוּ בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם וְהָיָה לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לְאֱלֹקִים בְּאֱמֶת וּבְצִדְקָה.</p>
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B. Hashem's Plan: Return – Repentance – the Messianic Era

According to Abarbanel (Harav Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, 1437-1508), the prophecies in the 7th and 8th chapters of Zecharyah were addressed to the שרי יהודה, Jewish dignitaries who had remained in Bavel instead of returning to the Land of Israel in the beginning of the Second Temple period. They asked the Kohanim and prophets whether they should continue to fast on the 9th of Av just as they had been doing during the 70 years of the Babylonian Exile. Why still fast if the Beit Hamikdash was being rebuilt?

<p>3. Abarbanel's Commentary on Zecharyah 7</p> <p>The dignitaries of Yehudah that remained in Bavel rejected the building of the Second Beit Hamikdash, as well as the return to Tzion (literally, the [Divine] "remembrance"). This was because the early prophets predicted that when the future redemption comes, the Divine Presence will return, they will no longer leave the Land, there will be a complete return of the exiles, the fruit of the Land will be blessed, the nations will all be blessed through Israel and honor them, there will be a great mass [of people] with Hashem's redemption, and that a Davidic king will reign over them.</p> <p>Therefore, when they saw these things missing in the Second</p>	<p>פירוש אברבנאל על זכריה פרק ז'</p> <p>היו בועטים שרי יהודה שנשארו בבבל על בנין בית שני ופקידתה, לפי שראו שהנביאים הראשונים יעדו שלזמן הגאולה העתידה ישוב בתוך האומה השכינה, ושלא יסחו עוד מן הארץ, ושיהיה אז קבוץ הגלויות כולם, ושהארץ תתברך בפירותיה, ושהגוים כולם יתברכו בהם ויכבדו ושיהיו המון רב בגאולת ה', ושימלוך עליהם מלך מזרע דוד. ולכן בראותם שבעת השלמיות האלה חסרים בבית שני לא היו בוחרים בה ולא מסתפקים עמה.</p>
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Temple they did not choose it and were not satisfied with it. They therefore sent a message to ask if they should cry in the fifth month (on the 9th of Av) like they did when they were in exile – for in their eyes the present situation was still completely an exile.

ולכן שלחו לשאול האם יבכו בחדש החמישי כאשר היו עושים בהיותם בגלות כאילו גם עתה היה הדבר גלות בהחלט בעיניהם.

The Abarbanel counts seven points that the Judaeen dignitaries raised, and Hashem addressed them all (each one introduced by “Thus says Hashem”). Here is the core of His response:

4. Abarbanel's Commentary on Zechariah 7

Therefore Hashem commanded to respond to them that the fasting and mourning was not essential; instead, improving their actions and keeping the mitzvot are. If they would do this (return to Hashem) after returning to the Land at Hashem's invitation – then the Divine Presence would return, they would remain in Hashem's Land; their brothers in the exile would return, the Land would be blessed, and all of the nations would come to them and be blessed through them. Israel would become so numerous that they would not only fill their Land but expand into the surrounding lands. Then a king from the House of David from among them would rule over them.

For if the people of the Second Temple were G-d-fearing and concerned about His Name they would have merited those seven good things and the perfection they now saw lacking. And the fasts that were first declared over their calamities would then become days of joy and happiness.

פירוש אברבנאל על זכריה פרק ז'
 לכן צוה השם להשיב אליהם שהצום והמספד לא היה הכרחי לענינם כי אם הטבת המעשים וקיום המצוות ואם כה יעשו אותם אשר שבו בפקידה תשוב השכינה בתוכם ויתמידו לשבת בארץ ה' ויתקבצו אליהם אחיהם אשר בגולה ותתברך האדמה והאומות כולם ילכו אליהם ויתברכו בהם, ויתרבו כל כך שלא די שימלאו כל ארצות אבל גם שאר הארצות הקרובים לארץ ישראל יהיו גבול להם לפי שימלאו אותם וגם מלך מבית דוד ימלוך בקרבם,

כי הנה אם היו אנשי בית שני יראי ה' וחושבי שמו המה יזכו לכל שבעת הטובות והשלמיות שהיו חסרים מהם עתה והצומות כולם שתקנו על צרותיהם יהיו להם לששון ולשמחה,

Why does He tell them about the extremely elderly men and women, and about the boys and girls playing? Abarbanel: “For through all of this He promises that they will live long years on the Land and not be removed from it.” The Jews in Bavel also spoke about how good living in Bavel was. As our Sages say, the Jews of Bavel lived long lives for they “they ate the beets of Bavel and drank the waters of the Euphrates.” Hashem told them that Jews will also live long lives in Yerushalayim. And the boys and girls playing illustrates the future population growth, as the prophet said, “A youth will die a hundred years old” (Yishayahu 65:20).

Yerushalayim's streets, full of elderly people and children, serve as a direct contrast to the desolation of the Land that followed the destruction. As the prophet says in the previous chapter, “... And they made the desired land desolate” (Zechariah 7:14).

C. Rabbi Akiva: The Fox and the Playing Children

The Gemara (Makot 24b) tells us that Rabbi Akiva and the rest of the Sages watched a fox run out of the location where the Holy of Holies once was. They cried and he laughed. When challenged to explain his laughter, he showed them how the Tanach links Uriah's prophecy of the destruction (“Tzion will be plowed as a field” – see the last Tosafot in Makot) with Zechariah's prophecy of the return (“elderly men and women will one day sit ...”). When Rabbi Akiva saw the fox, in his mind's eye he saw Yerushalayim's streets full of children playing and elderly people with canes. The fulfillment of Uriah's prophecy strengthened his faith in the fulfillment of Zechariah's.

Every day that plaza in Yerushalayim's Old City is full of children playing, as well as aged senior citizens sitting on its benches. That plaza, with its running children and senior citizens, can perhaps serve to strengthen our own faith in the complete fulfillment of all of Zechariah's prophecies.

NAME AND NUMBER BY RABBI MENDEL FARBER

The commandment to count Yisrael contained two factors: name and number. Hashem tells Moshe, “**שאו את** – ראש כל עדת בני ישראל – במספר שמות – according to the number of names” (Bamidbar 1:2). This expression includes two elements, number and name.

Everyone counted came before Moshe and Aharon and said his name; but he was also assigned a number. Eventually every tribe and all of Israel was counted; and the Torah records the population of the tribes and Israel.

A number and a name seem to be mutually exclusive. A name implies independence, identifying a person as an individual. A number, on the other hand, implies being part of a greater whole. I am one with the one that precedes me and the one that follows me. In fact, I am the one that joins the one that precedes me with the one that follows me.

Every Jew truly leads a double life, a life as an individual and a life as an integral part of Klal Yisrael, the Collective Israel. As individuals, each of us is responsible to develop himself or herself into the finest human being possible. Our middot (character traits), our Yirat Shamayim (fear of Heaven), our learning, our davening – developing all of these is very much connected to developing ourselves as independent human beings.

But we also have a responsibility to our People. Each and every one of us has a role to play in the destiny of our People. We are each a separate specific detail but at the same time we are a vital part of a general collective. Each of us has a name but we also have a number.

The Torah introduces the command to count with both a place and a time, and each is recorded with both a general and a specific description. The place is described as “**במדבר סיני באהל מועד** – the Sinai Desert (general) in the Tent of Meeting (specific),” and the time as “**באחד לחדש השני בשנה השנית** – on the first of the month (specific) in the second year (general).” In one, the general collective is primary, and in the other the specific detail is primary (see the Or Hachaim’s commentary for why they are ordered differently).

But that is only when we speak about time and place. But when we speak about the People of Israel themselves, about the **נפש** – both general and specific assume equal importance. The **פרט** – the individual – and the **כלל** – the collective are combined into one expression: “**במספר שמות**.” Our two identities are equally crucial.

May Hashem grant us the zechut, the merit, to realize both potentials He placed within us. May we fulfill our obligations as individuals to achieve the heights of true Jewish human dignity; and may each of us and all of us together fulfill our responsibilities to our People.

שבת שלום ומבורך

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Shapell's Darché Noam
דרכיה דרכי נועם

The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, and Hebrewbooks.org.

We pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.