

Powerful Perspective

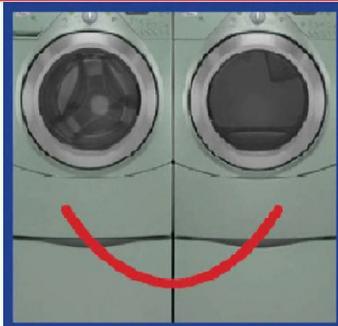
Parshat *Devarim* always coincides with *Shabbat Chazon*, the Shabbat before *Tisha B'av*. Let us therefore find some direction within the *parsha* to help us navigate the intensity of this period.

In retelling the tragic story of the *meraglim*, Moshe Rabbeinu describes how the people “complained within their tents and said, it is with the hatred of Hashem that He took us out of Mitzrayim” (*Devarim 1:27*). The *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* notes that this response caused the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash*. It is our obligation, says the *Sefat Emet*, to believe that all Hashem does for us is good. When *Am Yisrael* failed to believe

in this reality, when they spoke of Hashem’s hatred towards them, it indeed turned into hatred and destruction. Rav Gedalyah Schorr in *Ohr Gedalyahu* points out the name of this month – *Menachem Av* — conveys this important lesson. The month of destruction and devastation should be understood with this deeper perspective; Hashem loves us, cares for us and wishes to comfort us. Our challenges and difficulties in life are akin to the chastisement of a caring parent. Although painful for the child, it is perceived as coming from love, not from a punitive place.

Rav Tzvi Meyer Zilverberg imagines for us the ‘conversation’ that perhaps ensued between Hashem and the Jewish People at the final moments prior to their exile. The gemara (*Yoma 54b*) recounts that when the enemy stormed the *Beit Hamikdash* to destroy it, they found the *keruvim*, which usually faced away from each other when

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the Jewish People disobeyed the word of Hashem, surprisingly embracing each other. At that poignant moment Hashem was expressing to His people how much He loved them and cared for them. This holy embrace has accompanied *Am Yisrael* throughout our tumultuous history, pogroms and holocausts. Hashem wants us to know that behind all these events is a loving Father who watches over every one of us and that all we endure is ultimately for our benefit.

This is the Shabbat during which we can envision the future *Beit Hamikdash*

Rav Avraham Schorr in *HaLekach Vhalebuv*, further quotes the *Sefat Emet* who notes it is particularly when we view these events as signs of love that they indeed transform the experience into one of love. Our perception creates the reality. "*Ohev et hatochachot*" (*Avot 6;6*) means the following — when one loves the challenges they encounter, when one understands it all comes from the One who loves enduringly, the very pain is transformed into sweetness.

Shabbat Chazon, the height of our national pain, is one of the holiest *Shabbatot* of the year. This is the Shabbat during which we can envision the future *Beit Hamikdash* and *geulah*. This time of sadness, redirected by our attitude, has the potential to be reestablished as a time of joy and hope; it is we who can create a new reality. ■



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