

# BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' IN ENGLISH

PARSHAS DEVARIM (CHAZON) AND TISHA B'AV - 8-9 MENACHEM AV 5781

Bostoner Rebbe shlit" a - Yerushalayim

Secretariat Email: [bostonrebbe@gmail.com](mailto:bostonrebbe@gmail.com)



Parshas Devarim consistently falls out on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av. The Haftarah we read this Shabbos from the beginning of Sefer Yeshayahu, which discusses the Chazon or vision of the Navi, gives it the additional name of Shabbos Chazon. "If your sins are like scarlet, they will become white as snow, they have become red as crimson, they will become white as wool" (Yeshayahu 1:18)

I once heard from Rebbe Avraham Genachovsky zt"l an explanation of this Pasuk and the nuances of the different analogies to the 'red' color sin and the 'whitening' process of Teshuva. His approach was that the more we understand the severity of our sin, the more we will experience a proportionate level of regret, which will lead to a more effective Teshuva. If one perceives the severity of their sins as strong as the vibrant red color of scarlet, the result will be a whiteness as bright as the snow. You will note that a skier will wear sunglasses so as not to be blinded from the light that is reflected off of the white snow. However, if one perceives their sins as being much less severe, like the dim red color of crimson, then the Teshuva process will only yield a result as white as wool, which is a duller shade of white.

Megillas Eicha ends with the words, "Bring us back to You, Hashem, and we shall return, renew our days as of old. For even if You have utterly rejected us, You have already raged sufficiently against us". (Eicha 5:21-22). Rashi and the Ibn Ezra explain the verse similarly: If you have found us so abominable because of our sins, nevertheless, your anger is more than what is fitting". How can a human being speak to Hashem in such a manner? Can a human being really understand the extent of his sins and their impact on the cosmos? Who is man to judge and determine whether the heavenly response was disproportionate? Does man claim to know better than Hashem or accuse Hashem of being unfair or unjust?

Perhaps we can understand this based on the Gemara (Yoma 86b) that fear-induced Teshuva can turn intentional sins into inadvertent sins, while love-induced Teshuva can turn intentional sins into merits. It is noteworthy that the Targum on Megillas Eicha adds the word שלימה which translates as 'complete', rendering the penultimate Pasuk of Eicha as saying "and we shall return to you completely". If we understand complete Teshuva as love-induced Teshuva, which can turn our transgressions into merits, then we can say that any punishments that we receive from Hashem in this world may turn out to be unfair if we eventually perform Teshuva out of love. Accordingly, as long as the possibility exists for a person to perform Teshuva out of love, we put Hashem in a position, as if it were possible, to be forced to hold back punishment, in order that his actions should not be perceived as unjust after the fact.

This may also be why Teshuva was one of the various things that were created before the Creation of the Universe (see Pesachim 54a), so that it should not be bound by the constraints of time the way that all things created during the six days of Creation are. If the concept and mechanism of Teshuva was designed during the six days of creation, like the list of items created at the threshold of Bein HaShmashos between the sixth and seventh day (see Avos 5:8), it would operate by the laws of space and time and be unable to rectify the past retroactively.

This may also be why after reading the final Pasuk we go back and reread the second to last Pasuk, "Bring us back to You, Hashem, and we shall return, renew our days as of old". This is not only to end the reading on a positive note, but also to complete the reading, which is part of our Teshuva process on Tisha B'Av, in a manner that connotes love instead of fear.

May we merit to see the red fabric that was placed in the Ulam of the Beis HaMikdash on Yom Kippur turn to white, indicating clearly and definitively that we have been forgiven for our sins, speedily in our days.