

Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein 5778 Parashat Korach / פרשת קורח

## The Good Eye of Yerushalayim

We have recently entered the month of Tamuz. According to the kabbalistic tradition each month is associated with a different limb of the body and character trait. The Benei Yisaschar explains that the month of Tamuz is associated with the eye and the sense of sight.<sup>1</sup> This is based on a series of textual and conceptual links.

The name Tamuz originated as the name of an idol. Yechezkel relates that God showed him the following: behold there the women were sitting, making the Tammuz weep.<sup>2</sup> Rashi explains:

There was an image that they would heat up from the inside, and its eyes, which were of lead, would melt from the heat of the fire, and it would appear as though it was weeping, and they would say, “It is asking for an offering.”

Thus, even the original idol for whom the month is named had a focus on the eyes.

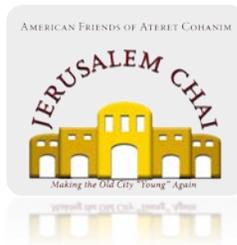
In addition, Tamuz was the only month that the spies spent entirely in the Land of Israel. In that story, the whole mission of the spies was “to spy” the Land, and the verb “to see” appears numerous times in the narrative.

However, ultimately, the spies used their power of sight for nefarious purposes. While their physical eyes did not betray them and they indeed saw giants and fortified cities, their sin lay in their *mental* vision, i.e. their perspective. They saw through an *ayin ra'ah* – an evil eye – filtering all of their sights through a negative lens.

The antidote to such a misuse of sight is to cultivate an *ayin tovah* – a good and positive eye. In addition to being careful as to what our physical eyes see, we must also develop a positive and Godly perspective on what we behold. Such a perspective allows us to see the good in others, in ourselves and in the situations around us. Notions such as divine providence (*hashgacha*) and trust in

<sup>1</sup> Benei Yisaschar, *Tamuz, Mahut HaChadashim*,

<sup>2</sup> Yechezkel 8:14. Translations from Chabad.org.



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God (*bitachon*) have the ability to put a more positive spin on even the most desperate of situations, even while not losing sight of the reality before us.

If part of our mission in Tamuz is the cultivation of an *ayin tovah* then seeing and thinking about Yerushalayim should be part of our strategy. The city's name originates in God's "seeing" the city.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, we have a command to "be seen by God"<sup>4</sup> during the pilgrimage to Yerushalayim on the three major holidays. This connection between Yerushalayim and sight teaches us that a focus on Yerushalayim can help us cultivate this divine perspective on the world that our eyes behold. This *ayin tovah* will, in turn, allow us to see the true beauty and grandeur of Yerushalayim.

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<sup>3</sup> Bereishit 22:14

<sup>4</sup> Devarim 16:16.