



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Pekudei / פרשת פקודי 5779

The Joy of Adar and Yerushalayim

This week we ushered in Adar Bet and have certainly entered the time period of “when adar enters joy increases.” In its original context, this statement is part of a Mishna that connects the joy of Adar with the sadness of Av:¹ “Just like when Av enters, we decrease joy, so, too, when Adar enters we increase joy.” The language of the Mishna implies that there is a connection between the increased joy of Adar and the decreased joy of Av. What is the thematic connection between these two emotional fluctuations?

Perhaps one approach emerges from the writings of Rav Tzadok HaCohen.² He notes that there are many celebratory occasions periods in the Jewish calendar so why is Adar singled out as a time of great joy? Rav Tzadok explains that true joy comes from the realization of absolute divine imminence. It is the lack of feeling God’s presence in our lives that causes worry and anxiety that devolves into sadness. However, if we were to realize that, even when He seems to be distant, God is always close to us, such a consciousness will lead to the greatest of joy.

On the major holidays there was a great revelation of the Divine Presence. As such, the Jewish people felt joy, but a joy that was only experienced due to the revealed nature of God’s closeness. Accordingly, when the revelation left and God concealed himself, the joy dissipated. Purim, however, is different. The story of the Megilah contains no moments of revelation or open miracles. Rather, due to their elevated consciousness, the Jewish people realized that even seemingly natural events are directly engineered by God who is always close to His people. As such, Purim allows us to tap into this higher level of joy – a joy of the omnipresence of God which never leaves.

¹ Ta’anit 29a.

² Pri Tzadik, Shemot, Rosh Chodesh Adar.



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Rav Tzadok associates this mindset with the verse “be joyous with Yerushaalyim.”³ Perhaps his intention is that Yerushalayim represents our immutable, constant and inherent connection with God. No matter what happens in history and no matter who has sovereignty over Yerushalayim, the Jewish people’s hopes and attachment to Yerushalayim defied logic and showed that they were utterly bonded with God. Living life with that consciousness brings joy no matter what situation one finds themselves.

This can be the key to understanding the relationship between Adar and Av. In Av, the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed that engendered a lack of overt divine presence in the world. This naturally generates feelings of sadness and despondency. Purim, then, is the rectification of this state. We need to realize that even in our current state of exile, God never left us and is still intimately involved in our personal and national lives. If we build this Yerushalayim consciousness in our minds in addition to building the physical Yerushalayim around us, we will merit to never have the mourning of Av.

³ Yeshayahu 66:10.