



**PARSHAS
RE'EH &
ELUL**

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SHALOSH SEUDAH
TORAH**

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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Finding the Point of G-dliness

Introduction

Upon entering Eretz Yisrael, the Jewish people were to affirm their allegiance to the Torah at the mountains of Grizim and Eival. The Torah informs us very explicitly where these mountains are located: They are on the other side of the Jordan River, further on westward, in the land of the Canaanite who lives in the plain, far from Gilgal, near the groves of Moreh.

In contrast, we are not told where to build the Bais HaMikdash - the center of Judaism. "לְשֹׁכְנוֹ תִדְרְשׁוּ וּבֵאתָ שָׁמָּה" – You shall seek out the resting place of Hashem and come there.

King David spent sleepless nights searching relentlessly for the site where the Bais HaMikdash should be built.¹

Why was the site of the Bais HaMikdash submerged in obscurity? Why could the Torah not tell us where the swelling place of Hashem is, like it did of the mountains of Grizim and Eival?

The Center of the Globe

Hashem began creating the world with the אבן שתיה¹, foundation stone, which is in the Kodesh Kodoshim. From the Kodesh Kodoshim the world developed further and the site of the Bais HaMikdash evolved. Then Yerushalayim, Eretz Yisrael, and the entire Globe came into being.

The Kodesh Kodoshim is where Heaven touched Earth and is the meeting place of the Creator and His creation. Our prayers ascend Heavenward by way of the Kodesh Kodoshim.

"כַּמְגַדֵּל דוֹד צוֹאֲרָךְ" - The Bais HaMikdash is compared to the 'neck'¹ which connects the head to the rest of the body. Heaven and Earth connect in the Kodesh Kodoshim, the innermost sanctum of the Bais HaMikdash.

The Sifri¹ teaches that Eretz Yisrael is higher than any other land and Temple Mount is higher than all of Eretz Yisrael. From a geographical perspective, the Himalayas by far outrank Temple Mount; it is much higher above sea level. What then is the meaning of this Sifri?

Where we to speculate which point of a ball is its highest, the answer would depend on which way the ball is held. If you turn the ball over, the lowest point becomes the highest and vice versa.

We can also ponder which point on the Globe is the highest. (The Chinese and Americans would disagree on that point.) There is only one way to know which place is

¹ שתיה is similar to the word שתי, the horizontal thread which is attached to the loom first. Later, it is interlaced with the ערב, vertical threads, and a cloth is formed. The שתי is the point from where the rest of the cloth is developed.

truly on top and that is by asking the One who made the Globe from which point He began its formation.

The Creator of the Globe has informed us that He began creating the world from the **אבן שתיה** which then developed into the Temple Mount, Yerushalayim, Eretz Yisrael and then the rest of the world.²

Of course, there may be other mountains that have higher altitudes than Temple Mount. Nevertheless, it is the highest point on the Globe because it is on its top. An Esrog can have bumps near its middle which protrude outward more than the bumps which are on top. Yet, the smaller, upper bumps are higher.

Yerushalayim is the Embryo of the World

Yerushalayim is the **הר** - the mountain, or tallest point - from which the entire world evolved. It can be compared to an embryo from which a human being develops. The word **הר** is similar to the word **הריון**, pregnancy. The **הר**, Yerushalayim, developed like the embryo does, through **הריון**.

However, there is a point which is even higher than Yerushalayim, the **"בית ה' "****בראש ההרים**, the Bais HaMikdash, at the top of the mountain. The Bais HaMikdash, which immediately surrounds the **אבן שתיה**, is the **הר** on top of a **הר**.

It compares to the pre-pregnancy stage, when the embryo is but a nebulous point in the mind of the father¹. The Hebrew word for thought, the most original stage of the unborn child, is **הרהור**, a **הר** on top of a **הר**.

The Bais HaMikdash, the **הרהור** of the world, encapsulates the entire Globe, just as the original **הרהור** of the father contains the entire anatomy of the unborn child.

Rosh Hashana is the Bais HaMikdash in Time

The Sefer Yetzirah teaches that the world was created in three dimensions. This is referred to as **עשן** which is an acronym for **עולם** – place, **שנה** - time, and **נפש** – person. For every point in space, we will find a corresponding time and person.

In place, the embryo, which develops into the fetus in forty days, is Yerushalayim. In time, the embryo of the year is the forty days between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Yom Kippur.

One can pray regarding the gender of the child during the first forty days of gestation¹ because it has not yet been irrevocably determined³. Similarly, we pray for the coming year during the forty days between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Yom Kippur. Although prayer can always be effective, it is much harder to alter what has already been finalized on Yom Kippur.⁴

² The World is described as **"ארץ וחצות"** (משלי:כו) the land and her courtyard. Eretz Yisrael is referred to as 'The Land' and the rest of the Globe as its courtyard.

³ Although through very intense prayer and great personal merit one can change the gender of the child even after forty days.

⁴ The patriarchs were the **הר** of 'person' as they were the origin of the Jewish nation. They were also born during the month of Tishrei, the month which is the origin of the year. (**ר"ה דף י"א ע"א**)

They are referred to as **הר**, as well. Yaakov, when he prayed to find a wife, lifted his eyes **אל ההרים**, towards his mountains, which the Midrash interprets as his **הורים**, parents.

On Rosh Chodesh Elul we begin our ascent at the foot of the mountain of Yerushalayim. We move higher and higher and when Rosh Hashana arrives, we have already reached the Bais HaMikdash⁵. On the first night of Rosh Hashana, after the Maariv prayer we recite the psalm, "מי יעלה בהר ה'י", who can ascend the mountain of Hashem. We have already come very far up the mountain of G-d, but have ten days to go until the peak.

During the Musaf prayer we say, "היום הרת עולם", today is the birthday of the world. Today the הר in time develops through the הריון process into the coming year.

We are very close to Hashem during the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur' because these days are the Bais HaMikdash of time. "דַּרְשׁוּ ה' בְּהַמְצָאוֹ" קְרָאֵהוּ בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ קְרוֹב" we are to seek Hashem during these days when He is so near to us.

On Yom Kippur is the Kodesh Kodoshim of time.⁶ On this day the Creator unites with his creation.

At the Point of Origin, Time and Space is Expanded

The characteristics of generations of trees are mapped out within the genes of the original seed. Even a most minor defect in the DNA of a seed will result in a crippled plant.

Although Rosh Hashana is but a short period of time, it contains within it the entire year. Our actions on this day effect the entire year.

Rosh Hashana is a two-day festival but is regarded as a יומא אריכתא, one long day. Time is elastic in the day of origin so two days can be contained in one.

As we get closer to the point of origin, space also expands. Eretz Yisrael is called "ארץ הצבי" because it is similar to the skin of a deer. When the skin is removed from the deer, it is impossible to put it back on because as long as the deer was alive, the skin had stretched along with it, but when it is removed, it contracts. Likewise, Eretz Yisrael was able to miraculously accommodate the growing Jewish nation. Being close to the point of origin, it was not limited to the rigid rules of mathematics. Eretz Yisrael is a מועט המרובה; a place which can hold much more than its natural capacity.

In Yerushalayim this was even more evident. Even though there was extreme overcrowding during the holidays, no one ever found himself without lodging for the night.

In the Bais HaMikdash, we come closer to the source, and this became even more apparent. When praying, the people stood tightly packed together, but when prostrating, they all miraculously had plenty of space.⁷

Adam was also a הר in 'person'. He was the first man and encompassed all of mankind. He was also created on Rosh Hashana, the day which encompasses the entire year. The dust from which he was fashioned came from the place of the Bais HaMikdash, the place which encompasses the entire world.

⁵ (ספרים) בית המקדש is gematria ראש השנה (they both equal 861).

⁶ On the day of Kodesh Kodoshim, the Kohen Gadol who is the greatest person, i.e. the Kodesh Kodoshim, of the Jewish people, enters the place of the Kodesh Kodoshim.

At the actual point of origin, where the Creator touched creation, the limitations of space ceases to matter. The laws of nature are not in effect in the Kodesh Kodoshim, because it is the place where nature originates; itself is above nature.

The Aron Kodesh stood in middle of the Kodesh Kodoshim. However, if one were to measure the total size of the Kodesh Kodoshim and the distance from the Aron Kodesh to the walls, he would reach the startling realization that the Aron simply did not occupy any space.

At the point of origin, the capacity of space is not quantifiable, just as a seed contains the future of the infinite generations of trees which develop from it.

The Center of Sefer Devarim

If a tribunal faced an unusual case and could not decide the law, they were to ascend to the Bais HaMikdash where the Sanhedrin was assembled and accept their ruling as binding. Rashi notes that the Torah uses the word 'ascend' to teach that the Bais HaMikdash is the highest place.

The authority the Sanhedrin is vested with is crucial to the continuation of Jewish life. They were charged with safeguarding, interpreting and transmitting the Torah. If any Sage could interpret the Torah as he sees fit, there would be a myriad of interpretations and the Torah would not endure. In middle of discussing the laws which ensure the vital authority of the Sanhedrin, why does the Torah interject with a seemingly unrelated piece of geographical information that the Bais HaMikdash is the highest place?

However, knowing that the Bais HaMikdash is the highest place, which means that it is the original point of creation, is crucial to understanding the role of the Sanhedrin. They served as the center point of the Jewish people and determined the law for the entire nation.

The Sanhedrin was only vested with its full authority when they were gathered in the Bais HaMikdash. This is because the Bais HaMikdash, as the source of the entire world, is also the source of the Torah, as the verse states, כי מציון תצא תורה. Only with the added component of being in the place of origin, did the Sanhedrin attain complete authority.⁷

The Torah is the blueprint of the world. Just as there is a center point in creation, within the Torah there is also a center point.

Sefer Devarim is משנה תורה, a review of the entire Torah. In a sense, Sefer Devarim is a miniature of the entire Torah.

Sefer Devarim consists of nine-hundred fifty-five verses. The center verse, which corresponds to the center of the world, the Bais HaMikdash, is, "ועשית על פי הדבר אשר יאמר לך, יגידו לך מן המקום ההוא" *from the place of the Bais HaMikdash*. The center of the Torah teaches us that the center of the Jewish nation, the Sanhedrin, attains its full authority when they are in the center of the world.

⁷ This is why זקן ממרא, a sage who disobeys the ruling of the Sanhedrin is punished only if this verdict was determined by the Sanhedrin when they were in session in the Bais HaMikdash.

The Center-Point is Hidden and Requires Seeking

It is impossible for the center-point to be revealed in this physical world because at the point of origin, creation it is still united with G-d who is metaphysical. Space is so spiritual at this point that it is not subject to the laws of mathematics. We are not told where the Bais HaMikdash is because it cannot be referred to as a physical site on a map.

Therefore, David had to expend tremendous effort and needed much help from Hashem in his search to find the place of the Bais HaMikdash - the point where Hashem's presence can be found on Earth.

Rosh Hashana, the first point in time, is also hidden. It is "בכסה ליום חגנו", a holiday that is hidden. The Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh, we bless the new month. However, before Rosh Hashana we do not bless Tishrei, because Rosh Hashana is hidden.

Rosh Hashana needs to be painstakingly sought. During the month of Elul we begin our search for the place of Hashem. Just as King David deprived himself of sleep in his difficult search for the site of the Bais HaMikdash, so do we wake up early to recite Selichos, to search for the time where Hashem's presence can be found.⁸ Whoever does not expend effort, will not truly be in Rosh Hashana.

Like the place of Hashem's dwelling, Rosh Hashana requires searching. לשכנו תדרשו is gematria (numerically equals) בתשרי נברא העולם, the world was created on the first day of Tishrei, Rosh Hashana (they both equal 1316). Because it is the center point in time, Rosh Hashana requires seeking.

Who Can Ascend the Mountain of Hashem?

There is a center point within our hearts which is the source of our being. At this point, we are united with our Creator. Our center point is our G-dly soul. (This was discussed last week.)

We must seek the G-dliness within us all of our lives. With the finding of the essence of our souls, we will be connected to the point of origin in time and space where Hashem can be found.

⁸ When Hashem sent Avraham to the Temple Mount to sacrifice Yitzchak for the Akeida, he did not tell him where to go, Avraham had to search himself.

The king, who is the center soul of the Jewish people and encompasses the entire nation, was also elusive. The prophet Shmuel could not identify the man Hashem chose as king right away. First he thought that it was an older brother of David who was the anointed of G-d. He erred and erred until he eventually found the soul of origin, David.

Shmuel and David also erred at first in their search for the Bais HaMikdash. They first thought that the place where the Bais HaMikdash was to be built was on עין עיטם. Only through further study did they realize that Hashem's dwelling place was to be on the Temple Mount.

שום תשום עליך מלך לשכנו תדרשו is gematria, you shall appoint for yourselves a king (they both equal 1316). Both the center point in soul and the center point in place required searching.

In the psalm we recite Rosh Hashana night, we ask: Who can ascend the mountain of Hashem, and even more important, who can remain standing in this exalted place? The answer: Only a person whose hands are clean from any trace of theft and has a pure heart. An uncircumcised person or an impure person cannot enter the house of Hashem. If our hearts are sealed beneath a spiritual foreskin, Rosh Hashana will be practically inaccessible to us.

May we merit preparing ourselves properly for the holy days we are facing, with clean hands and with pure hearts. May we merit to be the generation that will finally ascend the mountain of Hashem permanently. We will merit this if we are the generation that seeks the G-d of Yaakov, Selah.

ונזכה לתשובה שלימה ולגאולה קרובה ונאמר אמן
May we merit a complete repentance and a redemption soon, Amen.

^א דברים יב:ה

^ב פרק קל"ב – אם אתן שנת לעיני לעפעפי תנומה עד אמצא מקום לה' ^ג

^ג שיר השירים ד:ד

^ד אגדות בראשית פ'

^ה פ' שופטים פ' סקא ט'

^ו ישעי' ב:ב

^ז תניא – הזרע נמשך ממח האב

^ח ברכות דף נ"ד ע"א

^ט פרק כ"ד

^י ר"ה דף יח ע"א

^{יא} ישעי' נה:ו

^{יב} אבות פ"ה

^{יג} תהלים פא:ד