

## The Secret of Batsheva

### Batsheva and Ruth

On Shavuot we read the book of Ruth. Ruth is the great-grandmother of King David, described by the Sages as “the mother of Kingdom. During the last days of the Omer, just before Shavuot, it is worthwhile to learn about Batsheva, David’s wife and the mother of his successor, King Solomon.

The last, seventh week of the Omer and its spiritual service has a special connection to Batsheva. This week is called Batsheva, which literally means “the daughter of seven”.

The word “daughter” in Hebrew, (בת/*bat*) is related to “Shabbat” (שבת). Every woman is related to the secret of Shabbat - especially Batsheva - since the first part of her name, Bat, means ‘daughter,’ and the second part, Sheva, means ‘seven,’ alluding to the seventh day, Shabbat.

According to the Arizal, Batsheva and Ruth have a very intimate connection. From the figure of Batsheva we reach the figure of Ruth, (although chronologically Ruth lived before Batsheva).

The verse reads:

“עד ממחרת השבת השביעית תספורו חמשים יום”

“Until the day after the seventh Shabbat, you shall count fifty days”.

We have to count the seventh Shabbat (49 days), which is the Batsheva, and from there we come to the Giving of the Torah on the fiftieth day, the secret of the Fiftieth Gate of Understanding, which is the secret of Ruth.

### Mashiach ben David is Born from Batsheva

Batsheva was originally married to Uriyah the Hittite. According to the story, David took her in an improper matter. The Sages, however, teach us that all who say that David sinned in the literal sense, as may be understood from the story, is mistaken.

True, something was amiss, and a lot of atonement was needed.

Even so, Mashiach comes only from the union of David and Batsheva. Mashiach must descend from both David, and Shlomo, their son, and not from David’s children from any of his other wives.

### Mashiach’s Origins in David and Achitophel

Not everyone is familiar with the origins of Batsheva. Batsheva was the daughter of Eliam, the son of Achitophel. Achitophel served as King David’s most important advisor until he joined with Absalom, David’s son, when the latter led a revolution against David.

Thus, we see that Mashiach's origins are not only in King David, in Ruth, Bo'az, and further back to Peretz, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham. From the side of Batsheva, Mashiach is also a descendant of Achitophel. There is a lot to meditate on in this respect.

### **Batsheva and Parashat Beha'alotcha**

The Torah portion of Beha'alotcha, which is very much connected to Batsheva, is always read close to the holiday of Shavuot. Beha'alotcha contains many topics related to the number 7 (Batsheva- "the daughter of seven"). It begins with the lighting of the Menorah in the Tabernacle. One of the secrets of the Menorah is that it, too, is known as Batsheva. The Menorah is a candelabra with 7 oil lamps, and Aaron the High Priest must light the Menorah in such a way that the "flames rise on their own". The word here for flames is שלהבת/Shalhevet, from the word בת/Bat, daughter, Batsheva.

### **Batsheva's Destiny to be with David**

The Sages say that Batsheva was meant to be with David from the six days of creation, but that he took her prematurely. Batsheva was David's predestined soulmate, and in spite of the evil inclination involved in this act, David sensed their predestination and so did Batsheva.

In fact, the Torah's first word, בראשית/In the beginning, equals לבת שבע לדוד המלך/Batsheva for King David. Furthermore, in all other places in the Bible where the word בראשית/In the beginning appears, it is related to kingdom and sovereignty, the beginning of a king's rule.

The primary kingdom, the eternal kingdom of Israel, is the kingdom of King David., Thus it is fitting that the Torah begins with a word that hints towards the kingdom of King David - especially through his soulmate Batsheva, from whom Mashiach is born.

### **Adam's Sin and David and Batsheva: The Secret of the Fig**

The verse in Psalms regarding David and Batsheva states:

"אחור וקדם צרתני ותשת עלי כפכה"<sup>1</sup>

"Back and front You have formed me, and put your palm over me"

Originally, this verse was said by Adam describing his own creation together with Eve (Adam is the front and Eve the back). The Arizal says that David and Batsheva are the main reincarnation of Adam and Eve in the Bible, and that like them, they also ate prematurely.

Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge too early (if they would have waited until Shabbat they would have been permitted to eat from it) and likewise David took Batsheva too early.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms 139:5.

The most straightforward identification of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is that it is the fig (according to Rashi's literal interpretation, which is why Adam and Eve made themselves loincloths from fig leaves to cover themselves).

The Arizal writes that this is related to the type of figs called *Bnot Sheva*, literally, "daughters of Sheva," which are mentioned in the *Mishnah* in *Ma'asrot*.<sup>2</sup> The *Mishnah* speaks about two types of figs. The "*Levasim*" are fig trees of poor quality. The "*Bnot Sheva*" (singular: Bat Sheva) are the best type of fig tree, white and beautiful. The Arizal connects this *Mishnah* and Batsheva with the verse about Samson, who also "followed (and was led astray through) his eyes",

"כי תואנה הוא מחפש"

"For he sought a reason (to entrap the Philistines)"

The word for 'reason' is תואנה/*toanah*, which shares a root with the word 'te' *enah*' (fig).

It is as if the Almighty was looking for a way to entrap David and Batsheva. Like all the sins that lead to the pedigree of the Mashiach, there was some orchestration on the part of the Almighty to cause these negative events to occur.

The sin of David is not as we may understand literally from the story, for he and Batsheva were truly meant to be together. The sin was the lack of patience. The rectification is patience.

### **Back: Uriyah the Hittite, Front: King David**

Let us return to our verse about David and Batsheva: "Back and front You have formed me, and placed your palm upon me."

The commentary on this verse explains that God created Adam the last of all the creatures, but his soul is the first—"Back and front [i.e., last and first] You formed me."

What we learn from this is that the rectification of Kingdom begins with a state of facing backwards, an unrectified state, where it is impossible to see what the process should be. We do not see the truth or what exactly needs to be done. Eventually, however, it turns around and becomes "face to face."

Similarly, Batsheva initially faced David backwards, because originally she was not matched with David but with Uriyah the Hittite (a match apparently made by her father or grandfather).

### **Uriyah the Hittite and Uriyah the Priest**

What was the purpose of this first marriage? To protect her, just as the *kelipah* (husk) protects the fruit inside.

There is another Uriyah in the Bible, Uriyah the Priest. He is a descendant of Aaron, whose wife's name is Elisheva.

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<sup>2</sup> *Maasrot* 2:8.

As much as we don't picture Uriyah as a very big Tzadik, and ultimately, David brought about his death, the Arizal nonetheless states that Uriyah the Hittite is similar to Uriyah the priest, who has a spark of Aaron the High Priest, who is connected to Elisheva.

All the priests are descendants of Elisheva and all the kings are descendants of Batsheva.

The marriage between Aaron and Elisheva was entirely holy (they were not back to back), while that of David and Batsheva was back to back, not initially entirely holy.

### **David and Batsheva: An Evolved State of Adam and Eve**

The first time that Adam and Eve sinned, Adam blamed his wife for the sin.

With David, however, after Nathan the Prophet told him that he had sinned with Batsheva, his spontaneous reaction was "I have sinned to God." I am to blame. The moment that he confessed and did not try to avert the blame, Nathan informed him that God would forgive him.

It was David himself who said (in the parable of the poor man's ewe) that the rich man should be killed, thus ruling that he himself should die. Nonetheless, God forgave him, although He punished him with four calamities.

### **The Death of David and Batsheva's First Child**

The first calamity was the death of the first baby born to David and Batsheva shortly after he was born. Before the baby died, he was very ill, and David fasted and prayed, attempting to change the decree. When the child died, however, David immediately changed his clothes and went back to his normal behavior. To those who were surprised at his conduct, he explained that from now on, he was on his way to see his dead son, but that his son could no longer come to see him—therefore, there is no further need to mourn him.

Following the baby's death, Batsheva no longer wanted to be with David, and he had to do many things to convince her. Among them, he swore that the next son that she would bear, (Solomon), would be his rightful successor.

### **The Soul of Mashiach Reincarnated in Nechemiah**

There is a story in the *Sefer Hachezyonot* (Book of Visions) from Rabbi Chaim Vital, that in a dream, the Arizal asked him if he knew who the child who died was, and why David prayed with such fervor to keep him alive. Rabbi Chaim Vital replied that he did not know the answer. The Arizal explained that this first child was the very soul of Mashiach (even more so than King Solomon).

Later, this soul came back as Nechemiah the son of Chakalyah, the scribe who built the wall of Jerusalem in the beginning of the second Temple period. Nechemiah was the wine pourer of the king of Persia. Because of his special position, the sages gave him permission to touch wine that was used to celebrate idolatry. Due to this permission he was given the additional name Hatirshatah, which means "permitted." Amazingly, the

average value of each of the 4 words of his full name, Nechemiah Hatirshatah Ben Chakalyah, is exactly equal to “David the son of Yishai”

### **David Should Have Waited an Additional Seven Years**

As above, the Arizal says that Elisheva is face to face (rectified Chesed/loving-kindness) with her husband, while Batsheva is initially back to back - meaning that she is *Gevurot* (severe judgements).

Her name implies that David should have let Uriyah safe-keep her for another 7 years. If that would have happened, David would have married her in holiness, the actual Mashiach would have been born and the Temple he would have built would have been the final Temple. This is not what ensued in reality with King Solomon, who on the day he completed building the Temple married the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh and sowed the seeds of destruction.

### **Patience in Waiting for Kingdom**

Currently, our state in the Holy Land is an example of the kingdom that is not in its rightful place. Someone else is “keeping” it. The true husband, like King David, suddenly sees and feels that he wants her right now. He wants Mashiach now. But, he is told to be patient. To continue to act, but with patience.

The Three Days of *Hagbalah*, the Three Days of Limitation and separation before the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, reflect this required patience. Moses was instructed to fence off Mount Sinai so that no one might approach it out of spontaneous excitement at the chance of coming near to God. Rebbe Nachman talks about this type of evil inclination, which drives a person to want to draw near to holiness, without the proper timing. The Lubavitcher Rebbe says that it is essential to build the vessels to contain the light before bringing it down. When the proper vessels are built, then the kingdom will be given to its rightful owner.

Currently, we too are in a state in which Batsheva is in the hands of Uriyah. We have all fallen in love with her, and even she feels that she is in the wrong hands. She feels that her true husband is King David.

But first the Three Days of Limitation and the Giving of the Torah have to transpire. In the meantime, there are things that are not permissible. The moral is to save the excitement until the flame rises on its own, just like in the beginning of Parashat Beshalach with the lighting of the Menorah.