

Ascent and Drawing Down of the Lion on Tisha B'Av

The sages say that the Mashiach is born on Tisha B'Av, the ninth of Av, the Jewish national day of mourning for the destroyed Temple. It is written that every new soul is born into the world after the passing of a *tzaddik*. The passing of the *tzaddik* is called *ha'alat man* in Kabbalah—the ascent of feminine waters from below to heaven above. On the other hand, the soul descending to this world is called *hamshachat mad*—drawing down of masculine waters. For example, the 18th of Elul is the day of passing of the famous Maharal of Prague. After a number of years, the Ba'al Shem Tov was born on that day and after him, the Alter Rebbe. The passing of a great *tzaddik*—the ascent of the Maharal's soul—gives birth to two new souls of *tzaddikim*—the descent of the souls of the Ba'al Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe into this world.

The same is true of Mashiach. The Mashiach is born on Tisha B'Av as a result of the ascent of the feminine waters. We may have surmised that the passing of the holy Arizal (Rabbi Isaac Luria) on the 5th of Av, a few days before the ninth of Av, is the particular ascent of feminine waters, that will bring the soul of the Mashiach down into the world. However, 243 years after the Arizal's passing, on the ninth of Av 5575 (1815) itself, the great *tzaddik*, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Lublin, also known as the Seer of Lublin, passed away.

It is written in the *Shulchan Aruch* (the code of Jewish law) that we refrain from learning most parts of the Torah on Tisha B'Av. There are things that it is permissible to study on this day, and indeed, every Jew is obligated to study Torah on this day—this is why we recite the blessings over the Torah on the Tisha B'Av. The Lubavitcher Rebbe emphasized^[1] that we have to learn Torah at every moment on Tisha B'Av, but the topics we study have to be the appropriate topics for this day. Chassidim learn the teachings of Chassidut on the 9th of Av (as per the instructions of Rebbe Hillel of Paritch). As the Seer of Lublin, one of the Chassidic greats, passed away on this day, it is appropriate to study his teachings on Tisha B'Av. The Seer wrote three books. He ascended to heaven on the ninth of Av and apparently, due to this ascent of feminine waters, the Mashiach descends on this day.

Destruction of the Temple and the Birth of Mashiach

We can also understand the concept of passing away prior to drawing down of masculine waters as the destruction of the Temple, as in the saying of the sages, “A lion ascended during the constellation of the lion and destroyed the lion so that the lion will ascend during the constellation of the lion and build the lion.”^[2] The lion of the unholy husk is Nebuchadnezzar, who in the Bible is referred to as a lion in the verse, “A lion ascended from his thicket.”^[3] Nebuchadnezzar ascended to Jerusalem in the month of Av, which is the month of the constellation of the lion (Leo), and destroyed the lion—the Holy Temple. But this took place with Divine Providence in order to build something better—a true, eternal building that will never be destroyed. The entire, “ascent of the lion in the constellation of the lion and destroyed the lion” is in order to make it possible for the holy lion to ascend. “The lion roared, who will not fear?”^[4] God is likened to a lion. The Holy Lion (God) ascended during the

constellation of the lion and will build the lion (the Temple)—the building that will last forever.

We can now understand that the fiery ascent of the two previous Temples to heaven on the ninth of Av is the main meaning of passing on that precedes and is for the sake of the new drawing down. The new drawing down is the Mashiach, who is born, according to the sages, on the ninth of Av. It is written that he is born after noon, when we already feel some relief from the severe laws of mourning.

May we merit to see the Mashiach drawn down to us on this Tisha B'Av.

[1] *Sefer Hasichot* 5702 p. 574.

[2] *Pesikta D'Rav Kahana* 13:15.

[3] Jeremiah 4:7.

[4] Amos 3:8.