

## **PEQUDE 2 - GUARDING AGAINST INTRUDERS**

The way towards the Divine Presence is graduated. Man was restricted in his advancement towards the dwelling place of the Shekhina according to his respective division within Israel and in concert with his personal level of purity. Even Moshe - the greatest amongst men, was restricted. As the verse testifies "Moshe could not enter the Ohel Mo'ed because the cloud had settled upon it and the Kevod Hashem - the Divine Presence filled the Mishkan." 1 The opening verse of our parasha pairs the word Mishkan. R. Bahya cites a Midrash that this indicates that the Sanctuary on earth has a parallel one in the celestial regions. 2 The Talmud apparently asserts that the Torah's laws which were stated in terms of the Mishkan such as the delineation of the Mahanot - camps (with respect to their graduated sanctified access) - apply equally and correspond (somewhat) to the areas of the Miqdash BeYerushalayim. 3 The Mishna in Kelim lists the graduating spiritual levels of holiness beginning with that of the land of Israel. 4 This writes R. Natan Shapira a 17th scholar in his Tuv HaAres corresponds to the lowest part of the world of Yesirah. 5 With an ascent towards the Qodesh Qodashim corresponding to the head of Beri'ah. 6 The walls, fences and levitical guards that were placed at various places in and around the Temple Mount were indicative of the spiritual protection required to guard against any unauthorized entry into their parallel celestial arena. 7 The Mishna teaches that Goyim were forbidden to traverse past the Soreg and Hel into the Ezrat Nashim. 8 R. Natan explains that an unauthorized entry by a Goy would allow free passage into the holy of any and all negative forces attached to this illegal. 9 With this in mind we hope to form a clear picture of what preempted the breaking of the walls of Jerusalem at the close of the first temple era and what the impetus was of the Yevanim in gaining an ability to breach the fence or Soreg in thirteen places on the Temple Mount during the second temple era. In order to understand these events properly we must focus on the fact that a physical breach of a protective wall can only take place after its parallel spiritual one occurs. We will see that it is only after the spiritual channel known as Da'at becomes compromised that a breach or an intermingling of the unholy into the holy becomes possible.

## **DA'AT AND KEEPING THE SEPARATION BETWEEN HOLY AND UNHOLY**

The Talmud describes the lofty spiritual channel called Da'at - as it is placed between two forces of stern judgement and kindness depicted by two respective Divine names of EL and YHVH - as in - EL De'ot YHVH. Similarly it describes the Miqdash - as it too is placed between two divine names of kindness and justice - As in the verse describing the Temple. "On the mount of your inheritance - the foundation of your place of dwelling ... YHVH MIqdash ADNY. 10 "From these verses R. Eleazar concludes that one who retains this divine channel of Da'at - it is as if the Bet HaMiqdash was built in his days as the existence of both is dependent upon their ability to sit between these two divine attributes. 11 The Sages teach that it is within the fourth blessing of the weekday amida of Honen HaDa'at that we make Havdala which represents our recognition that there is a difference between light and darkness and Israel and the nations. 12 If Da'at is compromised - the recognition between holy and unholy is no longer discernible. We see from the Sages ruling regarding the insertion of Havdala into the blessing of Da'at that this channel does not only delineate amongst the opposing holy attributes of Hesed and Din but also between that of the Holy and the unholy. Daat is a central column force that balances Hesed and Din- it extends its influence down to the lower central attribute of Yesod -This consists of the appropriate amount of Hasidim and Gevurot to use and dispense. Finally we will recall its relationship with the highest of the central column channels called Keter - which represents the internal or Penimiut of the force - while Da'at represents the same in its external or Hisoniut form. 13

## **THE BREACH IN YESOD**

The Mishna informs us that during the second temple era the Yevanim breached the Soreg - a ten Tefah structure protecting entry into the next level of sanctity. 14 R. Natan tells us that this fence was Sarug - literally woven from Hasadim and Gevurot from Da'at to protect the Yesod -15 The Soreg consists spiritually of the three expanded forms of the Divine name AHYH. These add up numerically to 454 which reflects its purpose as a protecting wall or Homat - also numerically 454. This Soreg is the physical expression of the celestial fence - separating Israel from the nations. 16 This holy level of Yesod which requires protection is associated with Yoseph numerically 156. It is no coincidence that our Sages teach that the breach came thru his counter forces Antiochus or Melekh Yavan - also respectfully numerically 156 - leading the Goyim to gain access to the courtyards 17 and ultimately defiling the oil or the power station of the Hekhal. 18 At the close of the first temple era - Jerusalem also experienced a breach in its walls - which we commemorate in the fast of the seventeenth of Tammuz - which of course led to the burning of the Miqdash three weeks later. 19 A breach corresponds to the entrance of the unholy into the holy. It can only have occurred when the Da'at of the nation became compromised. Namely - when Da'at was no longer surrounded by the two holy attributes or divine names as we learned YHVH MIqedash ADNY. This of course led to the mingling of light with darkness. Let us continue to delve into a possible reason for this blemish in the Daat of the nation.

## **WHAT PREEMPTED THE BREACH**

It always baffled me as to why the Sages basing themselves on a verse from Zekharya instituted a separate fast to commemorate the siege around the walls of Jerusalem on the 10th day of Tevet. 20 What does it represent spiritually that would require us to fast? R. Moshe Antebi in his reflections of the teachings of his teacher R. Moshe Shapiro, makes the observation that the siege is integrally related to both the end of prophecy and the translation of the Torah into Greek. 21 I would advance that all three events - occurring at various times of the temple eras reflect a weakening of the Daat of the nation. These events represent the precursor for breaches in the spiritual walls of the temple. The result of course is the absence of Havdala - light intermingled with darkness - Israel with the nations. The Talmud in the minor Masekhet Sofrim teaches "Once five scholars translated the Torah into Greek for King Ptolemy and the day was difficult for Israel like the day the golden calf was made. 22 Other versions count 70 or 72 scholars assigned to accomplish this task. 23 The Elders of Hillel and Shammai authored Megilat Ta'anit, a scroll of the misfortunes of Israel whereby they record the above noted three events. The Greek translation brought three days of darkness into the world beginning with the 8th of Tevet. These were instituted as fast days - the 9th also associated with the death of Ezra and the 10th with the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. 24 Though these events occurred centuries apart - the Sages consciously attribute them all as days of darkness. I would suggest that these three events stand to summarize the compromise of the Daat of the nation - leading to the ultimate breaches we mentioned earlier. The death of Ezra HaSofer coincides with the elevation of the Greek empire and the end of prophecy. The Talmud concludes that he is synonymous with Mal'akhi - the last of the prophets. His death and resulting end of the prophetic era coincided with the global reign of Alexander the Great. 25 Admittedly we know that the Talmud permitted the Torah to be written in Greek - this did not preclude our Sages to lament over the translation and the rise of Greek global dominance and their cultural influence over Israel. 26 R. Antebi notes that the Sages describe their empire in terms of darkness. Greek is more than a language - it is synonymous with their wisdom and culture. 27 It does appear - that the translation illuminated the Torah in another light - but it was a false light. Profound darkness portrays itself as an illusion of light. We can now better portray the spiritual event of Asarah BeTevet. We know that Jerusalem in general and the Miqdash in particular extended life and light to the world. 28 A fast day is called when the light of the world is surrounded by forces of darkness - The city and its temple no longer shine. 29 Tevet is described in terms of its longest and dark nights. 30 It is befitting that it coincides with the end of prophecy. A world with prophecy and one without are totally different. The Greeks cannot live under the same roof as prophecy - their rise to power drove it away.

#### **THE TIQUN OF DA'AT**

R. Natan details the spiritual parallel of the women's courtyard whose measurements were 135 amot square - as expressing the balancing force of Da'at. We will just give a hint of the wondrous ideas he shares. The Hasidim and Gevurot are in essence five each as is known and are expressed in the numerical value of YHVH or 26 - Hence the measurement of Da'at is 135 x 135 - This is in the secret Da'at Nashim Qalah - Or the Da'at of the women's courtyard is Qalah - numerically 135. 31 The Sages knew it was essential to bring back light into the courtyards - and to remove darkness caused by the breaches of the Yevanim - The success was initiated via the self sacrifice of the Hashmonaim. However - Da'at would need to be reinforced at its core to protect it from once again being accessed by Goyim. We know from the Mishna that the Greeks breached the Soreg in thirteen places while the Makabim who drove them out numbered the same. 32 The only way to reestablish the Da'at of the nation is to arouse its internal force called Keter. We know that this comes about via the lights of the thirteen Middot of Rahamim. 33 This is the secret behind the Taqanah of our Sages requiring those who enter the Miqdash to bow in thirteen specific places in the temple courtyard paralleling the breaches of the Yevanim. 34 It is also not coincidental that when the Sages were forced to translate the Torah they all advanced corrective language in thirteen instances. 35 No doubt in an attempt to fortify the attack upon our Da'at. We must rebuild the central column from its bottom or Yesod reweaving in a proper balance the divine attributes. We must not confuse the false light of Greek wisdom with the true light of Torah. We can then continue and arouse the thirteen emendations of the holy beard - this comes about via our imitation of them - as he is merciful so are we to be. This will help us ascend all the way up the central column to Keter. 36 In this way we can reintroduce the light back into the world - and all the nations will be drawn to it - as described by Yishaya concerning the third temple Venaharu Elav Kol HaGoyim. 37

Shabbat Shalom

Victor Bibi