

## VAYELEKH 1 - HAKHEL - THE ASSEMBLY TO SAVE THE NATION

The Torah in its penultimate ruling enjoins - "At the end of seven years - following the year of Shemithah during Hol HaMoed Sukkot there is to take place an assembly of the men, women, children and the stranger." 1 The Torah apparently expresses a purpose for this Misva known as Hakhel in our parasha "that they may hear and they may learn to revere God your Lord and to observe faithfully every word of this teaching." 2 The ceremony begins with trumpets being sounded throughout Yerushalayim calling on the people to assemble in the women's courtyard of the Bet Hamikdash to hear the King read sections from the book of Devarim. 3 The Hinukh writes that one who transgresses this commandment to assemble and does not come at the appointed time to hear... their punishment is severe - for this precept is a mighty pillar and a great glory in the religion of Israel. 4 In searching for a deeper understanding of this precept I found a comment by R. Bahya "the mystical dimension of the Misva of Hakhel is that all the nation who exist are called to appear before Hashem the King of the world - Hence the reading from the Torah must be performed by the King of Israel below as he represents the King above in the celestial spheres - He concludes and emphasizes "He the King (and not the Kohen Gadol.)" 5 We will attempt to use this final comment - to serve as a springboard leading us to a comparative observation between the public torah reading of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippour and that of the King of the Israel read at the close of every Shemithah cycle. While the annual (individual and national) Tikun is initiated by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur and advanced by the people on Hol HaMoed Sukkot; the seven year cyclical Tikun is to be initiated by the King and is advanced thru the assembly of the people via the Misva of Hakhel. It is concerning this latter Tikun that R. Bahya emphasizes "The King! And not via the Kohen Gadol as required in the parallel annual cycle.

### ANNUAL VS SEVEN YEAR CYCLE

It is apparent from the writings of R. Shalom Sharabi that these two cyclical tikunim are related and thereby integrated as part of our service of the Creator. While the annual Yom Kippour reading by the Kohen Gadol and the Assembly of Israel at Hakhel are respectively counted as individual misvot - they both apparently form part of a Tikun known as Parsouf HaZemanim. 6 This Parsouf or celestial countenance represents a particular place in the spiritual worlds 7 somewhat associated with the sin of Adam Harishon 8 that is rectified to some extent annually each year from Rosh Hashana thru Shemini Aseret. 9 We will assert that an additional Tikun or its relative completion will take place every seven years which includes the misva of Hakhel. The Rashash writes in Nahar Shalom that "There is an annual rectification associated with the first 6 years of the Shemithah cycle that is interdependent with that of the 7th year. When comparing the rectifications of the first six years of the Shemithah cycle to the seventh- the latter is considered a rectification of the Panim - or the elevated aspect of the spiritual countenance while the former represents a rectification of the Ahor - or its lower aspect." 10 It appears to me that the rectification applicable to the annual cycle is ministered on Yom Kippour of the subsequent year and ends to some extent on Hashana Rabbah - or the last day of Hol HaMoed Sukkot. The seven year cycle similarly will begin and end "at the appointed time" on Sukkot of the year following the Shemithah cycle.

### TIKUN OF ANNUAL CYCLE

We know from the writings of R. HaAri that beginning with Rosh Hashana of the new year we are to rectify the mishaps of the previous year. Life for the coming year is expressed in how the divine reservoir or womb of life known as the Shehina will receive the spiritual seed which descends during the Musaf repetition prayer of Shemini Aseret. 11 Our service is to insure that this Divine Womb properly receive the Holy seed and holds on to it without miscarriage. 12 This is the secret of the annual Tikun as expressed by the Kohen Gadol in his Seder HaAvodah in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. "Do not listen to the negative spiritual forces request - that the spiritual seed not descend into the spiritual womb or the earth. Furthermore - he beseeches that God please insure that this year be one that the women or Shehina - not lose their holy seed after it descends into her at Musaf of Shemini Aseret. 13 In order to facilitate this Tikun the Kohen Gadol at the conclusion of the Yom Kippur service - went to the women's courtyard - bringing with him the Sefer Torah - where he would read concerning that days service concluding with the ultimate blessing requesting that God save Israel who are in need of his salvation. This of course being a reference to the annual judgement of man - which is determined by the Union of the Holy seed and Egg in determining the DNA of the fetus of the coming year. Since it is an annual Tikun it must be initiated via the blessing

and service of the Kohen Gadol and not the King! Secondly on the night of הושענא רבא - we are to facilitate the reception of the holy seed into its receptive womb via the reading of Sefer Devarim. R. HaAri teaches that it is particularly this final book of Devarim which is associated with the spiritual womb of the Shehina that must be read to facilitate a proper reception. 14

#### TIKUN OF 7 YEAR CYCLE

Based on the above - I would like to suggest that the Tikun of the 7 year cycle be somewhat parallel to the known annual cycle depicted above. There are a few points that should be highlighted to prove our assertion. They are both to take place or to be finalized at the appointed time which is Hol HaMoed Sukkot in the year following the cycle. The blessings of the King are to basically parallel that of the Kohen Gadol. The details of the seven year blessings to be recited by the King are enumerated in the Mishna following the teaching of the annual blessings recited by the Kohen Gadol in the seventh chapter of Sotah. 15 The King also is to recite the final blessing beseeching God to save Israel. What need is there for this set of blessings seeing that the Kohen Gadol had in just the previous week made this request in the same location of the women's court? The answer appears to be that - the latter blessings represent part of the Tikun of the alternative 7 year cycle - or an alternative establishment of the reservoir or spiritual womb of Israel. Hence a new blessing and reading needs to be done. This time by the King in the women's court who represents the seventh channel or celestial king related to the Shemitah or 7 year cycle. Here also the assembled are to complete the Tikun by listening to Sefer Devarim being read by the King in the women's courtyard. 16 This somewhat parallels the reading that takes place on הושענא רבא - or the night of the great request for salvation.

#### WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT RECTIFY

It appears to me that the seven year cycle can only be fully rectified via the Misva of Hakhel. We today in our exile - have not retained even a reference of the initial rectification of this part of the cycle which are the blessings and reading by the King of Sefer Devarim in the women's courtyard. We have retained on the other hand a semblance of the initial rectification of the annual cycle of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippour and its completion via the reading of Sefer Devarim during the first part of the night of Hoshana Rabba. Though we cannot currently recite the blessings of the Kohen Gadol in the women's courtyard - we do recite and re-live somewhat the Seder HaAvodah of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippour. We make reference of the prayer of the Kohen Gadol in the Holy of Holies - namely that Hashem not to listen to the negative forces arguing to halt the rain or the spritual holy seed from descending. We also make reference of his request that this year or that which is associated with the annual cycle - be one that the woman which is a reference to the Shehina not lose the seed which enters her on Shemini Aseret. We complete the Tikun by reading Sefer Devarim and fortify the coupling on Simhat Torah by dancing with the scroll. This apparently is the method that the holy seed stays attached to the womb of the Shehina and does not detach as per the request of the Kohen Gadol. 17 All of this in the secret of the Talmudic teaching (Nida) that there are three days for the seed to latch onto the womb. 18 Hence the dancing and holding onto the Torah is integral in facilitating the annual Tikun. 19 We can now see why the Hinukh can extol the Misva of Hakhel. It will indeed be a great glory to be able to rectify and advance the Tikun of the seven-year cycle. For now, though we can only pray - until we merit the rebuilding of the Temple so that we might once again assemble as one people in the women's courtyard (Shehina) to hear the words of Sefer Devarim from the King of Israel. This as R. Bahya hints will come about only when the celestial Kingship is established above.

Shabbat Shalom  
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