

# A SONG AND ITS ALLUSIONS

*by Shlomo Katz*

## Parshas Haazinu

### A Song and Its Allusions

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Today's Learning:

Bechorot 8:9-10

O.C. 205:4-206:1

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Kiddushin 3

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Nedarim 27

Chazal say that the song contained in this parashah contains allusions to the past, the present, and the future (of this world), and the World-to-Come. Our Sages divided it into six parts (plus the concluding verses read by the seventh person). The first letters of each of the six aliyot spell "heh-zayin-yud-vav-lamed-kaf" (see last paragraph below).

R' Yitzchak Karo z"l (15th century; uncle of R' Yosef Karo) explains that the reason the midrash divides up the aliyot of this parashah, whereas it does not do so for any other parashah, is that this parashah contains alternating curses and blessings. If the gabbai or reader stopped in a place that the person receiving the aliyah didn't approve of, a fight would ensue.

Alternatively, each one of the six sections is an allusion to a different aspect of G-d's relationship with man. For example, the first section describes G-d's kindness to mankind in general, the second describes His kindness to Yisrael in particular during their sojourn in the desert, the third part describes G-d's kindness to the Jewish People in their role as inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael, etc.

Also, R' Karo explains, this parashah ordinarily (though not this year) is read during the period of judgment. Thus, the midrash attempts to "brighten" our week with the allusion contained in the initials listed above: "Ha'ziv lach" / "The light is yours." (Toldot Yitzchak)

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"Yeshurun became fat and kicked." (32:15)

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) writes:

We have a tradition that there will be a spiritual revolt in Eretz Yisrael and among the Jewish People in the very era in which the national life of our People reawakens. The reason is that the material tranquility that part of our nation will experience will lead it to believe that it already has attained its ultimate goal, thus causing the soul to become smaller, so-to-speak. Yearning for lofty and holy ideals will cease, and, as a natural consequence, the spirit will sink. Eventually, a storm will come and cause a revolution, and then it will be apparent that Yisrael's strength lies in the Eternal Holy One, in the light of His Torah, and in the desire for spiritual light. (Orot p.84)

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"Were they wise they would comprehend this, they would discern it from their end." (32:29)

R' Simcha Zissel Ziv z"l (the Alter of Kelm; died 1898) writes: It is human nature that simple folk follow the lead of wealthy individuals. What the wealthy declare to be good, the simple folk will desire. What the wealthy declare to be undesirable, the simple folk will disdain.

In contrast, very few individuals pay attention to what the King of the Universe desires. We are called upon to have Yirat Hashem / Fear and Awe of G-d, which Rashi interprets (in his commentary to Shabbat 31a) as despising that which G-d despises. Why is this the case? Simply because we are not aware of our obligations. Such knowledge can come about only through deep study and analysis. This is what our verse refers to when it states: "Were they wise they would comprehend this." If man would apply sufficient study and analysis to the matter, he would be very conscious of his eventual end and he would discern what his real task in this world is.

The Gemara (Shabbat 153a) relates that Rabbi Eliezer taught: "Repent one day before you die." His students asked, "Does one know when he will die?" "Therefore, one must repent every day," Rabbi Eliezer replied.

To whom was R' Eliezer speaking? R' Ziv asks. His students were not simpletons; rather, they included the likes of Rabbi Akiva. Therefore, there must be a deeper message in his words, specifically that one must always reflect on the approaching day of death. Only this can instill in a person proper Yirat Hashem. (Ha'sefer Ha'kattan ch.19)

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"For I shall raise My hand to Heaven and say, 'As I (Anochi) live forever'." (32:40)

R' Moshe Hager shlita (the Vizhnitzer Rebbe in Bnei Brak, Israel) observes: Raising one's hands to Heaven refers to prayer. This verse teaches that one's prayer should be primarily motivated by a desire to increase G-d's honor, the honor of "Anochi" (a reference to G-d, as in the first word of the Ten Commandments). We are taught that the Shechinah shares in our pain (see Tehilim 91:15). [One

way to understand this concept is that G-d created the world as an act of kindness, and He is disappointed (so-to-speak) when our deeds force Him to punish us.] Therefore, if we pray for the Shechinah's pain to end, any pain or suffering we are experiencing will necessarily end as well. (Sichot U'ma'amarei Kodesh p.213)

A related thought:

R' Mordechai Schwab z"l (1911-1994; mashgiach ruchani of Mesivta Bais Shraga in Monsey, New York) writes: We read in Shir Ha'shirim (5:2), "Open your heart to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, tamati / My perfection." The midrash comments: Read "tamati" as "te'omati" / "My twin." Just as one twin feels the other twin's pain, so Hashem feels our pain. (On other occasions, R' Schwab analogized Hashem's reaction to our suffering to the pain a surgeon would feel if he operated on his own child.)

R' Schwab adds: R' Yosef Karo z"l (1488-1575; author of the Shulchan Aruch) used to be visited regularly by an angel, whose teachings to R' Karo are recorded in the work Maggid Meisharim. The angel told R' Karo: If you knew and felt the pain that the Shechinah feels when you sin, you would be so saddened that you would be unable to enjoy the taste of food.

Furthermore, if we would focus all of our prayers solely on ending the suffering of the Shechinah (so-to-speak), we would be assured of being answered, and the Final Redemption would occur. (Kovetz Sichot Ma'amar Mordechai Vol. I, p.9)

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### The Etrog of the (Post-) Shemittah Year

Rambam writes (Hil. Shemittah Ve'yovel 8:11), "If one buys a lulav from an am ha'aretz during the shemittah, he [the seller] should give him [the buyer] an etrog as a gift. If he does not give it to him, he [the buyer] should pay for the lulav and etrog as a unit [in order not to buy the etrog outright]." (An "am ha'aretz" in this context means a person who is not meticulous in his observance of the agricultural laws.)

Although Rambam states that this halachah applies during the shemittah year, it is more likely to apply today in the year after the shemittah. The reason for this is that the status of an etrog, i.e., whether it is considered to be produce of shemittah, is determined "batar lekitah" / by the date of its harvesting. For example, an etrog that grew in 5767 (the year before shemittah) but was harvested during the year 5768 is produce of shemittah, while an etrog that grew in 5768 (the shemittah) but is harvested during 5769 is not produce of shemittah. (This rule is unique to etrogim. The status of all other fruits is determined "batar chanatah" / by the date their buds appeared.)

In Rambam's time and place, most people probably obtained etrogim close to home; therefore, the etrog that was used during the shemittah was likely to have been harvested during shemittah. Today, however, especially in the United States and Western Europe, the etrog used during

shemittah is almost certain to have been harvested before the shemittah to allow time for shipping. It is the etrog used after the shemittah - this year - that likely was harvested during the shemittah.

Why is it forbidden to purchase an etrog of shemittah outright from an am ha'aretz? Because money given in exchange for produce of shemittah is considered to attain the sanctity of shemittah and is subject to many restrictions on how and when it is spent. In order not to place this "stumbling block" before the seller, it is preferable not to buy an etrog outright.

Note that the above is not an issue if the etrog is received from an "Otzar Bet Din." The reason is that one who "purchases" shemittah produce from an Otzar Bet Din is not paying the market value of the fruit but is merely defraying the costs of production and transportation. Indeed, in order to dispel any appearance of marketing the etrogim, they are sold in sealed containers sight-unseen.

Finally, note that an etrog from Eretz Yisrael must be treated with the sanctity of shemittah at all times, including after Sukkot.

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **[Torah.org](https://torah.org)** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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