

Parshas Devarim

This week's Parsha is Devarim, the first of the last Chumash, and it is also Shabbos Chazon. It is called Chazon, as it references the Haftorah read this week, the Shabbos that precedes Tisha B'av. Shabbos Chazon always falls out on Parshas Devarim, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe, quoting from R' Levi Yitzchak of Berdychiv, in a Sichah, explains the connection. Chazon comes from the word vision (in Yeshayahu, it is about the Prophet's vision) but the Rebbe says, we also get a vision on this Shabbos of a glimpse of the third Beis Hamikdash.

Chumash Devarim is known as "Mishnah Torah," i.e., that it is a repetition of the Parsheos from when the Jews left Mitzraim, until they ended their journey in the desert, and entered Eretz Yisrael. Moshe and the first generation that left Mitzraim were a generation of knowledge, who saw Hashem and the giving of the Torah. In contrast, the generation that entered Eretz Yisrael was a generation that heard (i.e. the Mishnah Torah) and were able to practice and live in a material world, unlike their predecessors, who were on such a high level that they may not have been able to practice in a materially bound world. The Rebbe explains the critical difference between seeing and hearing (the obvious one that there is very little to argue when someone sees something, versus if it's heard). So, the Rebbe explains, Chumash Devarim, which is Mishnah Torah, which is on the level of

hearing the Torah (as opposed to the generation who saw the giving of the Torah), is the Chumash for those entering Eretz Yisrael, and they (us) had to be taught about Mesiras Nefesh (the Avoda of a Jew), which the previous generation didn't need to be taught. Meaning those who saw Matan Torah and Geulas Mitzraim, need not be proven or cajoled into servitude and self-sacrifice for Hashem, whereas the "hearers," the ones who need to be taught this. The point being then that our generation (the hearers), who are on a lower level, can serve Hashem with a greater leap of faith and greater Mesiras Nefesh. Through the physical world and our actions in it, we will come to witness the coming of Mashiach. Therefore, the Rebbe says, Parshas Devarim, which is Mishnah Torah, will be Shabbos Chazon (vision), which synthesizes two ideas: 1) there is a descent, and 2) this descent leads to the ultimate ascent.

While 9-av is the saddest day on the Calendar, and acknowledges and mourns the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Rashi points out when the posuk uses certain precise words, that reference the punishment and sadness that will befall the Jews on 9-Av. But the Rebbe is saying something far greater. The Sadness happened, which must be acknowledged, but it also means that we can have Chazon, and welcome Mashiach, and the third Beis Hamikdash. May that happen speedily in our days.

Good Shabbos!