



# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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This *Shabbat* we bless the new month of *Chodesh Av*, or as our tradition refers to this month, the month of *Menachem Av*.

**Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, zy'a**, wrote that in addition to the tragedies that have befallen *Am Yisrael* during these three weeks, that there are actually two great events which are said to occur during these days. Rav Wolfson suggests that it is on the 17th of *Tamuz*, when *Boaz* marries *Rut*, hence setting into motion the birth of *David Hamelech*, from whom *Mashiach* will be descended. So too, our tradition teaches us that *Mashiach* will be born on *Tisha B'Av*. Rav Wolfson, suggests therefore, that these three weeks are in their essence days of great joy and anticipation. However those great lights of hope, have been covered over and clouded by the darkness and tragedies which have subsequently come to be associated with these days. The work of these three weeks is to strive to uncover those great lights. In the words of the great **Reb Tzadok HaCohain M'Lublin zy'a**, "*Ein Lecha Shum Or Mitgaleh, eleh mitoch hachoshech hekdome lo - no light can be revealed, unless it emerges from the darkness which precedes it...*" (*Resisei Laila 24*).

Similarly, **HaRav Shlomo Aviner shlita**

**teaches** that if we look out at the world we live in and we see dark images and painful shadows, we must not forget that a shadow is merely a reflection of light, that is waiting to be fully revealed.

The second of our two *parshiyot* this week,

*Parshat Maasei* recalls for a second time the passing of *Aharon HaKohen*, and tells us that the date of his passing is *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*And Aharon died there, during the fortieth year after Bnai Yisrael went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fifth month on the first of the month.*



Rav Shlomo Aviner

So, we must ask, why does

the *Torah* specify the exact date of *Aharon's* passing, a detail that is not elaborated upon for any of the *Avot* or *Imahot*, or for *Moshe Rabbeinu*? Why is the date of *Aharon's* passing mentioned here in this second account, and not in the earlier account of his passing which we read of a few weeks ago in *Parshat Chukat*? Why is the date of his passing specified now, in the midst of describing the journeys of the Jewish people in the wilderness?

**Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Horowitz, the Patiker Rav zy'a**, suggests that there is an eternal message to be gleaned from the date of *Aharon's* passing being both revealed during the verses which describe the extended wanderings of the Jewish People in the wilderness, as well as the actual date of *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*Aharon*, as we know, represents the ultimate *Ish Shalom*, the great peace-maker and

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unifier of the Jewish People. The Jewish People, as we know, will experience an extended reality of wandering that will occur following the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, which of course we commemorate, during the nine days, beginning with *Rosh Chodesh Av*. As we begin these days of reflection of the destruction and absence of the *Beit HaMikdash*, we also recall the life and legacy of *Aharon HaKohen*, whose legacy we must work to emulate, which will form the foundation to re-building the *Beit HaMikdash*.

The work of these three weeks is the work of repairing the world, one kind deed, one friendship, one *mitzva*, one *tefila* at a time.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may we be blessed to use these days wisely, to do much good, to reveal, uncover and bring forth those great lights of hope, consolation, and promise, and merit to transform our sorrow to celebration. *Chodesh Tov*. ■



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