



## TISHA B'AV SHECHAL B'SHABBOS

The emotions that mark the Jewish calendar, and, in turn, the Jewish heart, swing, like a pendulum, from moments of ecstatic *simcha* to mournful *aveilus*. Sadness to joy, joy to sadness. But one of the most paradoxical emotional states to calibrate is the one that is evoked by Tisha B'Av that occurs on Shabbos. On one hand, we cannot mourn due to the *kedusha* and delight of Shabbos, while on the other hand, how can we be blindly oblivious to the devastation and destruction that Tisha B'Av has wrought upon us this very day?

Concerning this dilemma, Chazal (Tosefta, *Taanis* 13:13) instruct us with deliberate precision:

תשעה באב שחל להיות בשבת אוכל אדם כל צרכו ושותה כל צרכו ומעלה על שלחנו אפילו כסעודת שלמה בשעתו, ואין מונע מעצמו כלום.

*When Tisha B'Av falls out on Shabbos,*

*one eats their fill and drinks their fill, and raises up on their table even like the feast of Shlomo HaMelech in his moment, and should lack nothing at all.*

What was unique about the “feast of Shlomo Hamelech”? Shlomo Hamelech ruled in a time of fabulous Jewish prosperity, and his table surely reflected that wealth with extravagant opulence, as described in Melachim Alef 10:21:

וְכָל כְּלֵי מִשְׁקָה הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה זָהָב, וְכָל כְּלֵי בֵית יַעַר הַלְּבָנוֹן זָהָב סָגוֹר; אֵין כֶּסֶף לֹא נִחָשֵׁב בְּיָמֵי שְׁלֹמֹה לְמַאוֹמָה:

*All the king's drinking vessels were gold, and all the palace's utensils were pure gold; silver was insignificant in the days of Shlomo.*

When Shlomo was visited by Queen Sheba, who greeted him with lavish gifts and rare spices, the pasuk (10:5) describes her jaw-dropping

astonishment regarding his royal feast:

וּמֵאֲכָל שְׁלֹחָנוֹ וּמוֹשֵׁב עַבְדָּיו וּמַעֲמַד מִשְׁרָתָיו וּמִלְבָּשֵׁיהֶם וּמִשְׁקֵיו... וְלֹא הָיָה בָּהּ עוֹד רוּחַ:

*The food of his table, the seating of his slaves, the station of his servants and their attire and his drink... took her breath away.*

It is with this grand manner that halacha permits us to celebrate our Shabbos meals even when Shabbos falls out on a fast day as mournful as Tisha B'Av. Clearly, Chazal are teaching us that the mitzva of *oneg* (delighting in) Shabbos should entirely overshadow, if not cancel, the *aveilus* of Tisha B'Av. Yet the specific language they chose to convey this concept is peculiar — *k'seudas Shlomo b'sha'ato* — like Shlomo's feast in his moment. What is meant by that additional word *b'sha'ato* — “in his moment”?

Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin, founder of Daf Yomi, offers an explanation that unravels the emotional mystique of the day based on the Gemara, *Gittin* 68b, which describes three distinct stages in the political and financial life of Shlomo HaMelech. In his early and late years he enjoyed great wealth and power, but for a brief point in between, Shlomo found himself both penniless and powerless:

על ההיא שעתא אמר שלמה: מה יתרון לאדם בכל עמלו... וזה היה חלקי מכל עמלי. מאי וזה? רב ושמואל, חד אמר: מקלו, וחד אמר: גונדו. היה מחזר על הפתחים...

*Regarding that moment Shlomo uttered (Kohelet 1:3), "What is the worth of man for all his toil..." (Kohelet 2:10) "And this was my share from all my toil." What is meant by the words "And this?" Rav and Shmuel explained: One said his walking staff [was all he owned] and the other said his cloak [was all he owned]. Shlomo would knock on doors [asking for handouts]...*

Apparently, our perspectives of Shlomo Hamelech's vast power and wealth are accurate for the majority of his reign. But there was a short window of time when Shlomo wandered like a vagabond. Rabbi Shapiro suggests that this period is what Chazal meant when they specified "like Shlomo's feast in his moment." Although from a Halachic perspective, our tables should indeed be laden with delicacies, perhaps from an emotional perspective, our Shabbos meals on Tisha B'av should reflect the spirit of Shlomo's circumstances during that in-between moment — a period of poverty

set between a prosperous past and a glorious future. That period, specifically, captures the perfectly-calibrated emotion we should feel on *Tisha B'Av shechal B'Shabbos*, because it epitomizes our existence in two millennia of *galus*.

Shlomo's career commenced in prominence and concluded in prominence, but was punctuated with a short interval of poverty. Similarly, our present *galus*, as long and dreary as it seems, is a temporary aberration from a past enriched by the Beis HaMikdash and a future exalted with the final and eternal Beis HaMikdash. This, suggests Rabbi Shapiro, is precisely the emotion we are to feel today. Just as Shlomo endured that "moment," we endure it too, feeling the pain of our devastation, but reassured by the faith in our destiny. It is that faith that energizes us to sustain the *galus*.

The *Sefer Kol Bo L'Yahrzeit* (p. 280) relates an incredible story that illustrates this nuanced emotion:

Some time after the Holocaust, R' Chaim Shmuelevitz met a survivor of the concentration camps. "What gave you the will to persevere in the face of the Nazi atrocities you encountered?" asked the famed Rosh Yeshiva of Jerusalem's Mirrer Yeshiva.

The Jew responded by describing how the Nazis had stripped the inmates not only of their clothing and dignity, but of every conceivable mitzva. *Kashrus*, *tefillin*, *tzitzis*, *shabbos*, *mezuzah* were all impossible. If the guards caught a Jew holding a *siddur* or even *davening*

with his lips, the repercussions could be deadly.

"But there was one mitzva that the Nazis could not steal from us — the mitzva of *kiddush levana* (sanctifying the new moon)," added the survivor, "Because they could not hide the moon from us!"

He went on to describe how his group of friends calculated the approximate time for *kiddush levana* each month, and, as they marched through the darkness after a day of back-breaking labor, they would steal a glance upwards, squeeze one another's hand, and recite by heart its ancient words:

וללבנה אמר שתתחדש עטרת תפארת לעמוסי בטן שהו עתידין להתחדש כמותה.  
*Hashem instructed the moon to renew itself as a crown of glory to [the Jewish people] who, in the future, will renew themselves like the moon.*

This thought renewed their spirits, girding them with the hope towards, and anticipation of, a glorious future, vastly different from the daily dread that they experienced. "And that," concluded this righteous Jew to Rabbi Shmuelevitz, "Is what strengthened our resolve to persevere through the darkness and pain, knowing that we, the Jewish people, have a bright future ahead."

As we sit down to our Shabbos meals on Tisha B'Av, let us not only feast on gastronomic delights as halacha dictates, but be comforted knowing that we are like both Shlomo Hamelech "in his moment" and like the moon. Our *galus* is bitter, but our destiny bright.



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