

BS"D

Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Torat Yisrael

A Message For Shabbat Hatan, Shabbat Tu BeAv, Shabbat Nachamu, Shabbat Matan Torah

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Shabbat Hatan Reshef/Navon – Ve'etchanan 5781

This Shabbat brings together a number of unbelievably joyous events all in one: Shabbat Hatan, Shabbat Tu BeAv, Shabbat Nachamu and Shabbat Matan Torah. The question I asked myself was: is there a connection, a common thread or message to be gleaned from the coincidence of all these events?

My answer is that indeed there is. All these are events share the common denominator of the importance of couples (zugiut). But on top of that, they all point to the purpose of creation as expressed in the three pillars of Jewish faith: Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Torat Yisrael.

- (1) To being with, **Shabbat Hatan** and **Shabbat Tu BeAv** – are of course about the importance of couples. And couples are at the core of the people of Israel, for it is only through newly formed couples that then build families which build Am Yisrael. But couples are also critical to fulfilling the goal of creation - because "It is not good for man to be alone." Interestingly, RSRH explains that it doesn't say it is not good for man to be alone but that it is not good for existence that man is alone:

רש"ר הירש [גרמניה, 1808-1888] בראשית פרק ב פסוק יח

אין הוא אומר: "לא טוב לאדם היותו לבדו", אלא: "לא טוב היות האדם לבדו": כל עוד האדם לבדו, עדיין העולם שרוי בלא טוב. תכלית השלמות, שהארץ תשיג בזכותו, לא תושג בשלמות, כל עוד הוא לבדו. השלמת הטוב היא האשה, ולא האיש; ורק משנברא האשה הושלם הטוב – לאדם וליקום כולו.

So getting married is not only important for the individuals, it is important to fulfill the perfection of creation itself.

- (2) And then we have **Shabbat Nachamu** - which tells of the wondrous prophecy that – against all natural historic occurrences – we will return to our land. It is the prophecy that has turned from the great hope to the great fact (mi tikva le uvda). It is about celebrating the importance of Eretz Yisrael to the people of Israel. For we cannot, as a people, fulfill our goal in creation without being in our own land. Our role is to be an "Ohr Goyim" – a light unto the nations. But we cannot do that as individuals or even communities scattered across the globe, but only if we are a Goy, a nation ourselves. Thus we serve as an example nation, an exemplary nation.

- (3) And finally we have **Shabbat Matan Torah** – Of course the Torah is the guide book to fulfilling creation – it is the book itself that teaches us that there is even a goal of creation. Interestingly, the giving of the Torah is directly connected to zugiut and the importance of newlyweds! The Gemara notes this by linking the 5 kolot of Jeremiah's prophecy on wedding celebrations to the 5 kolot with which the Torah was given:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ו עמוד ב

ואמר רבי חלבו אמר רב הונא: כל הנהנה מסעודת חתן ואינו משמחו - עובר בחמשה קולות, שנאמר: **קול ששון וקול שמחה קול חתן וקול כלה קול** אומרים הודו את ה' צבאות. ואם משמחו מה שכרו? - אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: זוכה לתורה שנתנה בחמשה קולות, שנאמר: ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר ויהי **קולות** וברקים וענן כבד על ההר וקל שופר וגוי' ויהי **קול** השפר וגוי' והאלהים יעננו **בקול** ...

The Maharsha explains the connection between the two, between rejoicing with Hatan/Kala and receiving the Torah, in that the Torah was the wedding day of God and Israel and one who rejoices in a wedding – typified by 5 kolot – also “merits the 5 kolot of the Torah” – apparently meaning that one receives the Torah and merits to understand it or is enlightened by its wisdom.

מהרש"א חידושי אגדות מסכת ברכות דף ו עמוד ב

ואמר שאם משמחו זוכה לה' קולות של תורה כי נתינתה היא היתה יום שמחת לבו וחתונתו עם ישראל

The Pirchei Kehuna, by Rabbi Rachamim Hai Havita HaKohen from Djerba, Tunisia (a figure that surely the family of the Hatan will be happy to hear about), hints to this understanding in saying that one who rejoices in a wedding will be made to rejoice in Torah. He explains the connection in the Gemara to mean that if one is mesamayach the Hatan and Kala, then God, as it were, gives the mesamchim his bride, his Torah. (So the bride here is not the Jewish people, but the Torah itself. I would suggest that we can put the Maharsha's explanation together with the Pirchei Kehuna's explanation and say that God gives to his bride – i.e., the Jewish people – his wedding contract, i.e., the Torah).

פרחי כהונה [ר' רחמים חויתה הכהן, ג'רבה תוניס, אשקלון, 1901-1959] ברכות ו:
דכיון דשימח את החתן בכלתו כמו כן הקדוש ברוך הוא משמחו בכלתו שהיא התורה

So the coming together of a couple is at the heart of perfecting creation (tachlit hasheleimut). It cannot be done by man alone. And this perfecting of creation (tikkun olam) is what coming back to the Land of Israel is all about, and it is what the Torah is all about. The three things that we are celebrating on this Shabbat, then, are really the three fundamental pillars of our beliefs:

Torat Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael.

And that leaves me only to bless you both that you continue to rejoice together, to build Am Yisrael, be'Eretz Yisrael, al pi Torat Yisrael.