

Sing and Rejoice, O' Daughter of Zion

Rabbi David Etengoff

Dedicated to the sacred memories of my mother, Miriam Tovah bat Aharon Hakohen, father-in-law, Levi ben Yitzhak, sister, Shulamit bat Menachem, sister-in-law, Ruchama Rivka Sondra bat Yechiel, Chana bat Shmuel, Yehonatan Binyamin ben Mordechai Meir Halevi, Shoshana Elka bat Avraham, Tikvah bat Rivka Perel, Peretz ben Chaim, Chaya Sarah bat Reb Yechezkel Shraga, Shmuel Yosef ben Reuven, Shayndel bat Mordechai Yehudah, the *Kedoshim* of Har Nof, Pittsburgh, and Jersey City, and the *refuah shlaimah* of Mordechai HaLevi ben Miriam Tovah, Moshe ben Itta Golda, Yocheved Dafneh bat Dinah Zehavah, Reuven Shmuel ben Leah, and the health and safety of our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world.

This week's *haftorah* begins with Zechariah's famous words, "*rani v'simchi bat Zion*"

("Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion"), and continues with the following *pasukim*:

...for, behold! I will come and dwell in your midst, says the L-rd. And many nations shall join the L-rd on that day, and they shall be My people; and I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the L-rd of Hosts sent me to you. And the L-rd shall inherit Yehudah as His share on the Holy Land, and He shall again choose Yerushalayim. (2:14-16, this and all Tanach translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*)

According to the Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi, 1160-1235), our *pasuk* is referring to the messianic era, when "*v'nilvu goyim rabim el Hashem ba'yom hahu v'hayhu li l'am*" ("And many nations shall join the L-rd on that day, and they shall be My people.") This position is also maintained by the Abarbanel (1437-1508), who uses this interpretation as a springboard to differentiate between the temporary and incomplete redemption symbolized by the rebuilding of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*, and the *geulah he'atida* (complete future redemption) for which we all long:

Do not think that the *geulah he'atida* will be like the period of the Second *Beit HaMikdash* — this will not be the case. For the *geulah he'atida* will not be contingent upon the whims of people, such as Koresh or Darius the King of Persia; instead, I, Hashem, will come to you [and help you to create the Third *Beit HaMikdash*]. Moreover, during the Second *Beit HaMikdash*, My *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) did not come down [from Heaven,] nor was there any prophecy. In the *geulah he'atida*, however, I will come and be present therein as in times past. (*Commentary on Zechariah 2:14*, translation and brackets my own)

These incisive words of the Abarbanel focus upon two essential ideas: the origins of the Second and Third *Batai Mikdash*, and the differences that will obtain between them. His view was influenced, no doubt, by the court intrigues he witnessed during his years as financial advisor to King Alfonso V of Portugal and King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. In his interpretation, the Second *Beit HaMikdash* was the result of ancient Persian political caprice, rather than the direct outcome of the manifest involvement (*hashgacha*) of Hashem our people's affairs. This, he asserts, will not be the case with the Third *Beit HaMikdash*, for, then, our entire nation will recognize Hashem's palpable *hashgacha* in its very creation, and declare as *Dovid HaMelech* did so long ago, "me'ate Hashem hayitah zot he niphlat b'ayneinu" ("This was from the L-rd; it is wondrous in our eyes," *Sefer Tehillim* 118:23). Moreover, once Hashem is the causal agent in the building of the Third *Beit HaMikdash*, His *Shechinah* will be present therein and prophecy will blossom anew.

In his work, *Chomat Anach* on our *pasukim*, the Chida *zatzal* (Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1806) notes that the first letter of each word in our phrase, "*rani v'simchi bat Tzion*," when read in reverse, spells "*tzibur*" (*tzadi-bet-vav-raysh*, community). In general, this word connotes the idea of people united in pursuit of similar values and goals. This analysis leads the Chida to suggest another key difference that will obtain between the Second and Third *Beit HaMikdash*:

And it is possible to suggest that the *geulah* [*he'atida*] is contingent on when the Jewish people will [finally] be unified (*b'achdut*)...for, as we know, the destruction of the Second *Beit HaMikdash* took place as a result of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred); and how is it possible, therefore, for there to be the *geulah* [*he'atida*] during the time of *sinat chinam*? As such, the words, "*rani v'simchi*," are stated in the singular — representative of the time when the entire nation will be in *achdut*. (Translation and brackets my own)

For the Chida, *achdut* is the antithesis of *sinat chinam* and a crucial component in achieving the *geulah he'atida*. Fortunately, there is a strong countermeasure to the pernicious sin of *sinat chinam*. Rabbi Yitzhak Avraham Kook *zatzal* (1865-1935), the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine under the British Mandate, offers us a valuable insight. He proposes *ahavat Yisrael* (unconditional love for the Jewish people) as the antidote for *sinat chinam*, and conceptualizes it in the following poetic manner:

Listen to me, my people! I speak to you from my soul, from within my innermost soul. I call out to you from the living connection by which I am bound to all of you, and by which all of you are bound to me. I feel this more deeply than any other feeling: That only you, all of you, all of your souls, throughout all of your generations, you alone are the meaning of my life. In you I live. In the aggregation of all of you, my life has that content that is called life. (*Shemonah Kevatzim* 1:163, translation, Chanan Morrison)

Little wonder, then, that for Rav Kook, the opposite of *sinat chinam* was not *ahavat chinam*, baseless love. In his worldview, such a concept simply did not exist. Rather, this great and holy soul considered every Jew, by definition, to be worthy of love and respect. As such, he is famous for the following powerful statement (*Malachim Kivnei Adam*, pages 483-485): “There is no such thing as *ahavat chinam* (groundless love). Why groundless? He is a Jew, and I am obligated to love and respect him. There is only *sinat chinam*, but *ahavat chinam*? Never!” (Adapted by Chanan Morrison from Rav Kook’s work, *Malachim Kivnei Adam*, pages 483-485)

May the time come soon and, in our days, when the groundswell of *ahavat Yisrael* will nullify the *sinat chinam* of our age. Then, as we experience the *achdut* that will enable the *geulah he'atida* to be realized, may we sing as one: “*rani v'simchi bat Tzion!*” *V'chane yihi ratzon*.

Shabbat Shalom and may Hashem in His infinite mercy remove the pandemic from *klal Yisrael* and all the nations of the world.

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>

They may also be found on <http://www.yutorah.org> using the search criteria Etengoff and the *parasha*'s name.

The email list, *b'chasdei Hashem*, has expanded to hundreds of people. I am always happy to add more members to the list. If you have family or friends you would like to have added, please do not hesitate to contact me via email <mailto:rdbe718@gmail.com>.

*** My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpvd>

*** I have posted 164 of [Rabbi Soloveitchik's](#) English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link.