

Parsha Pearls

Succos 5768

הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד הנופלת.

May the Merciful One raise up for us the fallen succah of David.

The source for this line in the blessing after meals is the verse, "On that day I will raise up the fallen succah of David, and I will close its breaches and rebuild its ruins, and I will build it as in days of old" (Amos 9:11). The commentators (Rashi, Radak and Metzudas David) say this refers to the royal dynasty of David.

The Zohar (Vayikra 6a) explains this verse in the context of a discussion on another verse in the fifth chapter of Amos. The chapter begins as follows: "Hear this thing, that I lament for you, house of Israel. The virgin of Israel has fallen and will never arise again." The Zohar relates that Rabbi Yehuda expressed his puzzlement over this verse to Rabbi Acha. He was aware of the answer often given that the verse is to be divided differently to read: "She will never fall again; arise, O virgin of Israel." (See the Gemora, Berachos 4b.) But this did not satisfy him, because the chapter is clearly meant as a lamentation, not a consolation.

Rabbi Acha replied that he had had this same problem, and asked Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who replied, "In all the previous exiles, G-d predetermined an end time, and at that time, the Jewish people returned to G-d; the virgin of Israel returned to her place at the time He decreed for her. But in this final exile

it is not so; she will not come back on her own like she did the other times. This verse is the proof, for it says, 'the virgin of Israel has fallen and will never again arise.' It does not say that G-d will not raise her up. This is analogous to a king who became wroth with his noblewoman and banished her from the palace for a certain amount of time. When the time was up, the noblewoman immediately returned to the king. This happened one time, two times, three times. On the last time she was sent far away from the palace for a long time. The king said, 'This time is not like the other times, when she came to me. Rather, I will go with all the members of my palace and invite her back.' When he came to her, he saw that she was lying in the dust. Who can imagine the glory of the noblewoman at that time, and the king's overtures to her, until the king took her by her hands and raised her up and brought her to his palace, and swore that he would never part from her again. So too, every time the Jewish people went into exile, when the time came she returned and stood before the king, but now in this exile it will not be so, but rather the Holy One, blessed is He, will hold her hands, raise her up, appease her and return her to His palace. And this is why it says, 'On that day I will raise up the fallen succah of David' – she will not arise again as in previous times, but I

will raise her. Who is 'the succah of David'? This is the virgin of Israel. This is her glory and praise."

The Zohar continues and says that this is the meaning of the verse, "Rejoice exceedingly, daughter of Zion; call out in joy, daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king will come to you" (Zechariah 9:9). He will come to you, and not you to Him. He will come to appease you, to raise you up, to pay you up, to bring you to His palace and to come together with you in an everlasting union.

According to this, we can explain the Gemora in Berachos 4b: Rabbi Yochanan said, "Why is there no verse beginning with nun in Ashrei (i.e. Tehillim Chapter 145)? Because it alludes to the downfall of Israel, as it says, 'The virgin of Israel has fallen and will never arise again.'" Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchok said, "Even so, David supported them in the next verse with his prophetic inspiration: 'Hashem supports all the fallen.'" The meaning is that although Israel will never arise again on her own, Hashem will support her and raise her up, as the Zohar explains.