

Hashem's appointed Festivals that you are to designate as holy convocations – these are My appointed festivals. (23:2)

The term *moed* is commonly translated as “festival.” When we peruse *halachah*, we come across a law which seems to contradict this translation. The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 559) rules that, on *Tishah B'Av*, we do not recite the *Tachanun* prayer. This is a prayer of supplication, and, since the *Navi* (Yirmiyahu in *Megillas Eichah* 1:15) refers to *Tishah B'Av* as a *moed*, *kara alai moed lishbor bachurai*, “He proclaimed a set time against me to crush my young men,” we do not recite *Tachanun* on a *moed*. We wonder why the saddest day of the Jewish calendar year, the day designated as our national day of mourning, should be called a *moed* – a festival? What aspect of a day upon which countless tragedies occurred could be considered festive?

In his *Pirkei Torah*, **Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl**, quotes the *Telshe Rav*, **Horav Avraham Yitzchak Bloch, zl**, who explains that *moed* has its root in the word *vaad*, meeting. We are now introduced to a new dimension concerning the meaning of *moed*. It is not merely a festival, but rather, a time in which the Jew can achieve a clear recognition of Hashem, as if he is having a meeting – one on one – with the Almighty!

Various vehicles can help us to achieve this profound recognition of Hashem. By recalling the miracles relating to the exodus from Egypt, we encounter *Hashgachah Pratis*, Divine Providence, through the medium of joy and happiness. We remember how we suffered, and how Hashem set us free amidst miracles and wonders unparalleled in the history of mankind. What greater joy can there be than the knowledge that it was all for “us.” *Succos* and *Shavuos* also fall under this category. Their celebration also brings to mind glorious and seminal events which engender within us an enormous sense of joy and inspiration.

Yet another conduit provides a vehicle through which we may arrive at a clear recognition of Hashem: destruction, sorrow, pain and anguish. It is dependent upon our worthiness. When we are worthy, Hashem appears to us amidst joy and happiness. When we lack the necessary merit, the revelation of Hashem comes through gloom and doom. A child recognizes his father through reward and punishment. Through the pain of *Tishah B'Av*, we must recognize Hashem with such clarity that the day becomes a *moed*, a “meeting” with the Almighty. The power of this meeting, if realized, is incredible, because it catapults the Jew out of his pain and sorrow, for how can one be anguished when he is in the presence of Hashem? This is why *Tachanun* is not recited on *Tishah B'Av*. It is a *moed*!

The *Rosh Yeshivah* employs this exposition to explain a cryptic statement which *Chazal* made in the *Talmud Taanis* 29a, “Just as when (the month of) *Av* enters, we decrease in joy, so, too, when (the month of) *Adar* enters, we increase in joy.” The word *k'shem*, just as, connotes compassion between two similar subjects. How do we compare the joy of *Adar* with the sorrow of *Av*?

We mentioned earlier that joy and sorrow are both channels for recognizing the Almighty. Two varied approaches, which, if employed properly, created the same encounter. As when *Av* enters, we decrease in joy so that we may meet with Hashem; likewise, in *Adar* we increase our joy so that we may encounter Him through another venue. *Av* and *Adar* are two disparate means for achieving one goal: meeting with Hashem!