

# Dvar Torah Outline — Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av: “Moed” in Darkness, Hidden Light, and Teshuvah Me’Ahavah

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## Abstract

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Rabbi Shulman contrasts the “lived” experience of the Nine Days—darkness, mourning, and absence—with a deeper Torah view in which this time is paradoxically called a **מועד**. Drawing from Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen (Pri Tzadik), Rabbi Shulman explains how Rosh Chodesh (especially Rosh Chodesh Av) contains hidden קדושה and “light,” even amid and how the very experience of rock-bottom can become the fuel for חורבן, טומאה and transformative תשובה מאהבה that retroactively reveals good בתוך החושך.

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## I. Entering the Nine Days: surface mourning vs. hidden depth

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### A. The immediate context

- Rabbi Shulman opens on ראש חודש מנחם אב, the beginning of the Nine Days.
- The contrast:
  - The revealed/lived Nine Days experience: escalating mourning and pain.
  - The Torah/Chazal framing: a deeper story that can intensify and refine our avodah.

### B. The goal: deepen the נכון אבילות

- If the בית המקדש is still not rebuilt by תשעה באב, the pain is meant to **deepen**, not flatten into habit.
- Every day without the בית המקדש should already be felt as an ongoing loss.

### C. The textual anchor for the shiur

- Rabbi Shulman learns a piece of **ראש חודש מנחם אב** on **רב צדוק, פרי צדיק**.
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## II. “קרא עלי מועד”: how Chazal derive “moed” from Eichah (2:00)

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### A. The Gemara’s question: why is Rosh Chodesh a “moed”?

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara (Pesachim): where do we see that ראש חודש has the status of a מועד (holiday-like time)?

### B. The pasuk in Eichah: peshat vs. derash

- The source pasuk:
  - “קרא עלי מועד” (He called against me a “moed” / appointed time.)
- Peshat (as in common translations):
  - The enemy “called a gathering” to assemble attackers against Israel.
- Chazal’s deeper reading:
  - The word מועד also means festival/holy time is labeled (paradoxically) תשעה באב → as a מועד.

### C. Practical halachic expression: no Tachanun on Tishah b’Av

- Rabbi Shulman notes the surprising halachic outcome:
    - We **do not say** תחנון on תשעה באב because it is called a מועד.
  - He contrasts this with expected mourning practices (e.g., not wearing tefillin in the morning), which stem from אבילות rather than “moed.”
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## III. Rosh Chodesh as “moed” and the korban brought even in tumah (5:00)

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### A. Another Gemara angle: korban Rosh Chodesh “במועדו”

- Rabbi Shulman explains that the Gemara asks:
  - How do we know the שעיר של ראש חודש can be brought even when most of כלל are טמאים?
- Answer:
  - Because the Torah says offerings are brought “במועדו”—in its appointed time.

## B. “Moed” as revelation: Hashem meets us there

- Rabbi Shulman connects “moed” to revealed encounter with Hashem via the pasuk:
  - “אֲשֶׁר אֶנְעִד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה” (where I will meet with you there).
- Core idea:
  - In the Mikdash, Hashem’s presence can dwell **even amidst tumah**, echoing:
    - “הַשֹּׁכֵן אִתָּם בְּתוֹךְ טְמֵאתָם” (Who dwells with them within their impurities.)

## C. The thematic payoff for Av

- If a “moed” means Hashem is present even when we are distanced/tamei, then:
    - Rosh Chodesh Av (the archetypal “moed” learned from Eichah) hints to Hashem’s closeness even inside a month of mourning and distance.
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# IV. Why Chazal call Rosh Chodesh “mekudash” when Tanach doesn’t (8:00)

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## A. The observation

- Rabbi Shulman notes:
  - Pesukim do not explicitly call Rosh Chodesh a **מקרא קודש**.
  - Yet in practice and language, Chazal speak in terms of **קדושה**.

## B. The Mishnah’s מקור: declaring the new moon sanctified

- The Mishnah in Rosh Hashanah describes Beit Din declaring:
    - “מְקֻדָּשׁ! מְקֻדָּשׁ!” (Sanctified! Sanctified!)
  - Rabbi Shulman frames this as:
    - Chazal revealing a hidden depth in Rosh Chodesh that is not explicit in the pesukim, but is discoverable through deeper contemplation.
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# V. Sefer Yetzirah and the letter ט: Av as “good light” hidden in darkness (10:00)

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## A. The Sefer Yetzirah mapping

- Rabbi Shulman introduces **ספר יצירה** (tradition attributed back to Avraham Avinu; redacted by Rabbi Akiva).

- It links each month to:
  - a letter,
  - and other spiritual/body correspondences.

## B. Av corresponds to the letter ט

- The month of **אב** is linked to **טית** whose numeric value is 9 (ט), suggesting resonance with **תשעה באב**.

## C. Why ט? Because ט is “טוב” and אור

- Gemara (Bava Kamma): seeing ט in a dream is a good sign because its first appearance in Torah is:
  - “**וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאֹר כִּי טוֹב**” (And God saw the light, that it was good.)
- Rabbi Shulman’s irony:
  - Both Batei Mikdash were destroyed in Av, yet Av corresponds to good light.

## D. Mikdash as “light”—and its extinguishing in Av

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara (Bava Batra) about הורדוס:
  - After killing sages, he is told to rebuild/beautify the Mikdash because he “extinguished the light of Torah,” and the Mikdash is “light.”
- Yet: Av (destruction) is tied to ט (light) → therefore it is **hidden light**.

## E. The “hidden light” model (Sh’fat Emet + Rashi)

- Rabbi Shulman develops the idea of **אור הגנוז**:
  - Rashi: the primordial light was hidden away for צדיקים לעתיד לבא
- This yields a key framework:
  - In עולם הזה, true light can appear as darkness because it is **concealed**, not absent.

# VI. Half-Hallel on Rosh Chodesh: why it developed specifically in Bavel (17:00)

## A. The Gemara’s discussion (Arachin): should we say Hallel?

- Rabbi Shulman explains:
  - If Rosh Chodesh is called a **מועד**, one might think to say **הלל**.
  - The Gemara answers: it was not established as a full Yom Tov (איסור מלאכה), so it is not full Hallel.

## B. Story of Rav in Ta'anit: discovering "chatzi Hallel"

- Rav came from Eretz Yisrael to Bavel and saw them saying Hallel on Rosh Chodesh.
- He wanted to protest—until he saw they **skipped a paragraph**, indicating it is **חצי הלל**.
- Rav concludes:
  - "שמע מינה מנהג אבותינו בידינו" (we learn this is an ancestral custom).

## C. Rabbi Shulman's deeper reading: Bavel is "darkness," so it finds hidden light

- He cites the association of Bavel with darkness:
  - "הושיבני בְּמַחְשָׁכִים" (He made me dwell in darkness) — Chazal: **זו בבל**.
- Bavel (and more broadly גלות) is living without the Mikdash's revealed light.
- In that darkness, people learn to identify **sparks of light**:
  - Hence the minhag in Bavel to say **חצי הלל** on Rosh Chodesh—recognizing a "spark" of Yom Tov.

## D. Related expressions of Rosh Chodesh's semi-festive nature

- Rabbi Shulman notes:
    - Some have a minhag (especially among women) to limit certain מלאכות on Rosh Chodesh.
    - There is a notion of a festive Rosh Chodesh meal (e.g., Shaul HaMelech's seudah where David's absence was striking).
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# VII. Tishah b'Av as hidden "good": rock-bottom that awakens teshuvah (29:00)

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## A. The question: how can Tishah b'Av be "טוב"?

- Rabbi Shulman articulates the challenge:
  - If Av is ט (good/light), how is תשעה באב not only darkness?

## B. Midrashic idea: Churban triggers hirhurei teshuvah

- Immediately upon seeing churban, the heart awakens:
  - recognition of what was lost,
  - desire to return (even if teshuvah unfolds over time).

### C. “Only darkness reveals the value of light”

- Rabbi Shulman explains:
  - When people have light, they may not appreciate it.
  - Losing it creates clarity and can initiate real change.

### D. Analogy: addiction and rock-bottom

- He uses a real-life analogy (from an addiction expert):
    - change often begins only when one hits rock-bottom and drops the defenses.
  - This frames תשעה באב as:
    - the national “rock-bottom” that can become the beginning of return.
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## VIII. Teshuvah’s power to transform the past: ”גדולה תשובה” and ”ממרים הייתם עם ה’” (32:00)

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### A. Gemara: teshuvah overrides “lo ta’aseh”

- Rabbi Shulman cites:
  - ”גדולה תשובה שדוחה לא תעשה שבתורה” (Great is teshuvah, for it pushes aside a negative commandment.)
- Example: a man cannot remarry his ex-wife after she was with another man—yet Hashem “takes us back” after our betrayal via teshuvah.

### B. Maharal’s question: does Hashem “break His rules”?

- Rabbi Shulman presents the difficulty:
  - If the Torah prohibits it for humans, and Hashem “keeps His own decrees,” how does Hashem accept us back?

### C. Rabbi Tzadok’s answer: teshuvah can make it “as if it never happened”

- Not that Hashem violates Torah, but:
  - **teshuvah changes the spiritual reality** such that the wrongdoing becomes redefined.

## D. The Izbica Rebbe's reading of the pasuk

- Rabbi Shulman brings the Izbica's diyyuk on:
  - "מִמָּרִים הָיִיתֶם עִם ה'" (You were rebellious with Hashem.)
- Why "with Hashem" rather than "against Hashem"?
  - After **תשובה מאהבה**, it is revealed that even the fall was somehow part of a Divine choreography leading to a higher return.

## E. Free will vs. Divine foreknowledge: "before vs. after"

- Rabbi Shulman explains the classic tension:
  - Before action: we have free will.
  - After the fact: we accept that Hashem's plan encompassed it.
- The crucial safeguard:
  - This perspective is only legitimate **after** real transformation—specifically **תשובה מאהבה**, not as an excuse to sin.

## F. The defining difference between teshuvah me'ahavah and teshuvah mi'yirah

- Teshuvah mi'yirah:
    - removes punishment; does not transform sins into merits.
  - Teshuvah me'ahavah:
    - turns failures into fuel, producing the principle:
      - "במקום שבעל תשובה עומד אין צדיק גמור עומד" (Where a ba'al teshuvah stands, a completely righteous person cannot stand.)
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# IX. Why the churban is still "on us": the Mikdash's absence as ongoing destruction (41:00)

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## A. The churban causes and their continuity

- Rabbi Shulman reviews the sins associated with the destructions:
  - First Mikdash: the three cardinal sins; also "שלא ברכו בתורה תחילה."
  - Second Mikdash: **שנאת חנם**.

## B. “Any generation without rebuilding is as if it was destroyed then”

- Rabbi Shulman states Chazal’s teaching:
  - If the Mikdash is not rebuilt in our generation, it’s as though we destroyed it.
- His reasoning image:
  - Just as trees/grass are “natural” parts of the world, the Mikdash should be a natural reality—its ongoing absence implies ongoing blockage.

## C. Practical implication: Tishah b’Av is not only history

- The darkness of תשעה באב reflects:
    - real contemporary spiritual failures (especially שונאת חינוך),
    - not merely mourning the past.
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## X. In Summary

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- Rabbi Shulman teaches that the Nine Days must be experienced honestly as darkness, yet Torah reveals this time as a paradoxical **מועד** with hidden קדושה.
- Rosh Chodesh Av becomes the “model” for Rosh Chodesh as a moed: Hashem can be present even **בתוך טומאתם**, which is the secret of finding closeness specifically in גלות.
- The letter **ט** linked to Av expresses **אור הגנוז** (טוב/אור)—a light so intense it appears as concealment.
- The minhag of **חצי הלל** on Rosh Chodesh (especially developed in Bavel) reflects recognizing a “spark of Yom Tov” in a place of darkness.
- The rock-bottom of תשעה באב can awaken תשובה, and through **תשובה מאהבה**, even the darkness can become the retroactive fuel that reveals hidden good—turning “חורבן” into the beginning of rebuilding.