

## Insights from the Meshech Chochma

### רב מאיר שמחה הכהן מדווינסק זצ"ל פרשת דברים שבת חזון תשפ"ד

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Scattered throughout his Sefer, Rav Meir Simcha presented us several essays on *Megilas Eichah*, novel interpretations of exegesis from predominantly Midrash Eichah Rabba. Rav Yehuda Kupperman and subsequently other expounders on Rav Meir Simcha's opus magnum, culled them into one group, henceforth presenting us with the Meshech Chochma on Megilas Eichah.

עורנו בתנור נבָּמְרוּ מִפְּנֵי זֵלַעְפוֹת רָעֵב. נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנוּ בְּתֵלֶת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה. (איכה ה' י-יא)  
*Our skin was scorched like an oven, with the fever of famine. They have ravaged women in Zion, maidens in the towns of Judah.*

Rav Meir Simcha refers us to Eichah Rabba on our first pasuk: "Two *amora'im*, one said: '(The reason that the Jewish Nation was described as עורנו בתנור נבָּמְרוּ was because they were) like those sun-withered dates i.e., scorched by the blazing sun.' The other one said: 'Like an oven that was not sufficiently heated i.e., in such a case, the bread does not get evenly baked, but rather the outer layer gets dried out and cracked while the inside remains undercooked.'" Regarding this second statement, the Torah Temima offers his understanding: "The walls of a thoroughly fired oven have a robust yellow hue, whereas an oven that was not fully 'baked' has an unhealthy black complexion." He feels that that is why the Torah chose the word נבָּמְרוּ and not נשָׂרְפוּ, the former connoting a less intense heat.

Rav Meir Simcha proposes a different explanation for וְחָד אָמַר בְּתֵנּוֹר שֶׁלֹּא הָסֵק כָּל צָרְבוֹ and with it shows us a continuity between our two pasukim which otherwise, on the surface, appear disconnected, each one describing its own horrible situation.

He begins with the Mishneh in א בלים ה' א: "A תנור, a baking oven's... susceptibility to impurity begins as soon as its manufacture is completed. What is its גְּמֵר מְלֵאכָתוֹ? When it is heated to a degree that suffices for the baking of סִפְגָּנִין, spongy cakes." Rav Meir Simcha proposes that just as an oven is not מְקַבֵּל טְמֵאָה until it is sufficiently fired, the pasuk is testifying that even at the "lowest" point of the *Churban*, when the remnants of the Jerusalemites were forced from their Land, the sons and daughters of Klal Yisrael were not mired in the sins of עֲרִיּוֹת עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וְגִילּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת. As the Midrash tells us: "(General) Nevuzaradan commanded his legions, saying to them: 'The G-d of these (Jews) hates lewdness; make certain that you do not touch a married woman.' When the (Jewish) women heard this, they all went and said to a (Jewish) man: 'We will eat from our own, we will clothe ourselves from our own, just let us be called by your name, to avoid being taken by the Persian legion. ...except for *three women* who were indolent and did not do so and were subjugated. That is what is meant by our second pasuk, נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן i.e., the minimum number of נָשִׁים is two and בְּתֵלֶת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה i.e., the word בְּתֵלֶת is written

