

PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת ואתחנן

תשעה באב תשפ"ג / July 27, 2023



תשעה באב

סעודת המפסקת

One Erev Tisha B'av, a talmid of the holy Chasam Sofer saw his Rebbe sitting by the table with an open sefer, holding an empty cup. Tears poured from the Chasam Sofer's eyes and dropped into the glass until the cup was full.

Before sunset, during the סעודת המפסקת – the final meal before the fast, the Chasam Sofer dipped pieces of bread into the tears, and this was his meal.

Moshiach is Almost Here

The Yismach Yisroel of Alexander zt"l lived far from his shul. When he was older, and it was hard for him to walk, a Yid offered the Yismach Yisroel to sell him a home closer to the shul. The Yismach Yisroel, however, refused to buy a house in galus, arguing, "I already have where to live in Eretz Yisroel!"



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תשעה באב

The Kozhnitzer Maggid zt"l explained a reason why שבת נחמו coincides with פרשת ואתחנן after Tisha B'Av. Since one isn't allowed to learn Torah on Tisha B'Av, after Tisha B'Av, we read in פרשת ואתחנן about the עשרת הדברות – the Ten Commandments. To show that the days of mourning have passed and we are ready to accept the Torah.

Preparing for The ימים נוראים

It says that שבת הגדול in preparation for the Yom Tov Pesach. שבת שובה for Yom Kippur, and שבת נחמו is in preparation for the ימים נוראים – the holy days that are coming. This is another reason why we read the עשרת הדברות on Shabbos Nachmu, since we accept upon ourselves to do mitzvahs in preparation for the new year.

נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אלקיכם (ישעי מ:א)

Be consoled, be consoled, My Nation says Hashem.

Console yourself with the fact that you are My "עמי" – My Nation – this should be your greatest consolation.

חמשה עשר באב – THE GREATNESS OF THE 15TH DAY IN AV

The Mishna says "לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמ" – "שה עשר באב, שבהם בנות ישראל יוצאות בכלי לבן שאולין" There isn't a greater Yom Tov than the 15th

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חמשה עשר באב - The greatness of the 15th day in Av *continued*

day in Av, the Yiddish girls went out dressed in borrowed white dresses.

Rashi says that even the rich girls borrowed dresses not to embarrass those who didn't own them.

The Gemara lists why it was a special Yom Tov:

- In פרשת מסעי it says that women were only allowed to marry men from their Shevat - tribe. On חמשה עשר באב they were allowed to do a shidduch with men from other Shvotim.
- After the sin of the Meraglim, Hahem told that generation that they wouldn't be able to enter Eretz Yisroel. Every year on Tisha B'Av, the Yidden placed themselves in a grave in preparation to die. Some died, others stayed alive and repeated the same thing a year later. After fourteen years, all Yidden remained alive, and they thought that perhaps they mixed up the dates. But when they saw a full moon, חמשה עשר באב, they realized that the decree was over, and they celebrated with a big Seudah - for then Hashem spoke to Moshe, as the pasuk says "והיו כאשר תמו וגו' וידהר ה' אלי" after the generation of the Midbar died, Hashem spoke to Moshe.
- During the destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdash, thousands of Yidden were killed in the city of Beitar, and the Keiser commanded that they weren't allowed to be buried. When they were

permitted to bury the dead, on חמשה עשר באב, they realized that their bodies were still fresh.

- The Maharsha writes a reason for the special simcha of חמשה עשר באב is because this day has a merit that the Third Beis Hamikdash will be built speedily in our days.

The words of חמשה עשר באב have the numerical equivalence (928) of the words כתיבה וחתימה - טובה - to show that we are already preparing for Rosh Hashana.

Trembling from חמשה עשר באב

From as a child, Maran, Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l used to tremble from fear in bed from חמשה עשר באב. Despite the hot weather, he needed to be covered with an additional warm blanket. When asked why he shakes so, Maran answered, "My sister once told me, Ahre'la, you should know that from Rosh Chodesh Elul, even the fish in water tremble in fear of Elul. So I understood that the fish who don't understand anything is enough for them to tremble from Chodesh Elul. But, I, who knows that it says in the holy Seforim that the chairs in heaven are already being moved around in fear of the upcoming New Year, therefore I already start trembling from חמשה עשר באב!"

**EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY,
ESPECIALLY A CHASSIDISHE STORY...**

ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר (ואתחנן ג:כג)
I implored Hashem at that time, saying...

HaRav Reb Hersh of Riminov zt"l lost

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EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY, ESPECIALLY A CHASSIDISHE STORY...

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eighteen children r"l during his lifetime, yet accepted his pain in grace.

One Friday Night, when Rebbe Hersh was saying the 'לכה דודי' prayers, his daughter-in-law came running into the Beis Medrash screaming that his daughter's situation was grave; it seemed she was about to die.

The Rebbe, Reb Hersh, said, "The pasuk says ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר - the word בעת derives from the word בעתה - which means a terrible calamity. Moshe Rabbienu asked that even when one is in a situation of בעתה - he should still be able to לאמר - say a word to Hashem."

The Rebbe Reb Hersh continued, "I ask of You, Hashem, allow me to have a lechtiga Shabbos..."

His daughter lived through the Shabbos and passed away two days later, on Monday.

A subscript story depicting Reb Hersh of Riminov's greatness of accepting challenges with faith.

Rebbe Yosef of Riminov zt"l (the only surviving son of Reb Hersh of Riminov) related a fascinating story.

When Rebbe Shalom Kaminke zt"l lost a son, he couldn't be consoled. His father, Rebbe R' Hersh, sent him a letter of consolation, saying: "It pains me that I, who already lost eleven children, and you, who only lost one child, can't be consoled?" Rebbe R' Hersh continued later, saying that he received his strength to accept יסורים באהבה - pain with

love from a righteous woman who lived near Riminov.

The woman and her husband were childless, and the man was already in their fifties. One Erev Pesach, when the situation was dire by Rebbe Mendele of Riminov zt"l, the Yid brought him matzahs, wine, fish, meats, and vegetables, plus a huge sum of money to bring in Pesach. Rebbe Mendele blessed the Yid that since you revived my family, Hashem should revive yours with children and long age

A year later, they had a girl. When their daughter was fourteen, she was proposed a shidduch, and her mother wanted to finalize it in Rebbe Mendele's home. While traveling to Riminov, the daughter got a sudden headache and was rushed into a nearby hotel, where she fainted, and a short while later, she passed away.

When the Chevra Kedisha arrived, the mother told them they could arrange the funeral but shouldn't yet remove the body. The mother entered the Beis Medrash of Rebbe Mendele and said, "Listen, everyone! I was on the way to Riminov to finalize my daughter's shidduch, and on the way, a shadchen came to me and said, 'You have one daughter, and you want to give her away to a human being? I have a mechutan, a wealthy person, where you don't have to provide a dowry. All you need to prepare is her white clothes.' Rabboisi, I am now finishing a shidduch, and now is the באדע-ק' (time to cloak a kallah with a veil before the chuppa), and everyone should drink a L'chaim!"

When Rebbe Mendele heard the woman's words, he said: "האשה בכל אלה לא מצאתי" - I never met such a woman, and the Rebbe went out to the levaya.

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**EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY,
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After the levaya, the woman invited the crowd to wash for a seudah and honored Rebbe Mendele to bentch. The Rebbe also added ברכה אבילים and sent כוס של ברכה to the woman, saying: "In the merit of your strong Emunah, you will give birth to a son within a year. But with this son, do a shidduch with a human, not the Ribono Shel Olam! With Hashem, you will do a shidduch by the seventy!"

Rebbe Hersh of Riminov concluded in his letter that he was honored with Mesadar Kidushin by this boy's wedding since his mentor, Rebbe Mendele, wasn't alive. And from this righteous and simple woman, he learned to have Emunah and accept his fate lovingly.

כבד את אביך ואת אמך... (ואתחנן ה:טז)

Honor your father and your mother...

Maran, Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l, upon his father's, Maran, Rebbe Yissocher Dov of Belz zt"l request, used to travel to Marinbad to heal his body with its fresh air. Maran Rebbe Aharon never left his room during the day, yet he would open the window late at night to inhale some fresh air and say, "Ah! כיבוד אב ואם! ואם! כיבוד אב ואם!"

כבד את אביך ואת אמך... (ואתחנן ה:טז)

Honor your father and your mother...

The first year following his wedding, Maran Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l was ill, and the doctor forbade him from immersing in a

mikvah. His father, Maran Rebbe Yissocher Dov of Belz, worried about his holy son, who might not obey the doctors instructions. So he warned him that due to Kibbud Av, he couldn't use the mikvah until he was healed.

One wintry day, Rebbe Pinyele of Ostilla zt"l witnessed Maran Rebbe Aharon heading to the mikvah at sunrise and was out fifteen minutes later. Rebbe Pinyele wondered how Maran would disobey his father. So the next day, he hid inside the mikvah, and to his surprise, he saw Rebbe Aharon enter the mikvah area, remove his clothes, and go down the steps to the mikvah until he reached the last step, and say: "I'm prepared to do the mitzvah of Kibbud Av and not immerse in the mikvah!" Then Maran went up the steps, got dressed, and went home.

לא תחנם (ואתחנן ז:ב)

Nor shall you show them a favor.

During the times of Maran The Sar Shalom of Belz zt"l, there was only one shoemaker in town who was a non-Jew. When the first Jewish shoemaker opened a shop, the Sar Shalom was pleased. When asked why he was so excited, the Sar Shalom answered, "When there was a non-Jewish shoemaker, he always worried that he would transgress on לא תחנם. For Chazal say that it means not giving them extra presents. And since it wasn't appropriate for a Rav to bargain for a better price, I always paid fully whatever the non-Jew requested. And I was always bothered. Perhaps he's requesting more money, and I'm giving him a gift. Therefore, I can stop worrying about transgressing לא תחנם, now that there's a Jewish shoemaker in town."

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THIS WEEK'S VORT – פרשת ואתחנן

ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר (ואתחנן ג:כג)
I implored Hashem at that time, saying...

The Medrash says that Moshe Rabbeinu davened 515 tefillos, the numerical value of the word ואתחנן. The numerical value of the word תפילה is also 515. We learn from this that a tefillah can be considered a prayer when it comes to a request. The Abudram adds that the words 'עבודת לב' – work of the heart, and 'בכונת הלב' – one's thoughts and intentions, the numerical value is also 515 – to teach us that our prayers need be with כונה!

ואתם הדבקים בה' אלוקים חיים כולכם היום (ואתחנן ד:ד)
But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d, are alive today.

The word ואתם are the letters of אמת. If you are steadfast with the midah of Emes – righteousness, then הדבקים בה' – you will be worthy to connect with Hashem.

ושבת את ה' אלקיך... (ואתחנן ד:ל)
You will return unto Hashem

The word "ושבת" can also be relate to שבת. If the Yidden will observe Shabbos as Chazal says, then Hashem will return us to our land by bringing the גאולה שלימה – our final redemption.

פרקי אבות - פרק ג'

רבי נחוניא בן הקנה אומר: כל המקבל עליו עול תורה מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות ועול דרך ארץ (אבות ג:ה)
Reb Nechinya ben Hakanah said: Whoever takes upon himself the yoke of Torah

removes from himself the yoke of government (paying taxes, etc.) and the yoke of earning a livelihood.

Reb Nechinya lived during the Roman era and placed terrible decrees on the Yidden, including not allowing them to learn the Torah. Therefore, Reb Nechinya strengthened their resolve, saying they shouldn't pay attention to the decrees since those who learn the Torah will be protected from the yoke of government.

כל המקבל עליו עול תורה מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות

A young man came to the Sanzer Rav zt"l for a bracha. The young man was summoned to the army and was afraid he would be drafted since he was physically built and strong. The Sanzer Rav told him, כל המקבל עליו עול תורה – מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות – A person was born to work hard in this world – אדם לעמל יולד – if he's worthy of toiling in learning Torah, he won't have to struggle for the army, livelihood, or other physical demands. The Sanzer Rav concluded, "If you accept upon yourself the yoke of learning Torah with the same physical strength required for a soldier in the army, then you will be freed from army services."

The young man accepted to learn the Torah and was freed from serving in the army.

הוי מקבל את כל האדם בשמחה (אבות ג: יב)
And you should greet every person happily.

When Maran, Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l, and his brother, the Bilgorai Rav zt"l arrived in the city of Ungvar during WWII, they were transported with an ambulance to Budapest, Hungary and upon arrival they were hospitalized in the local hospital. Maran

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פרקי אבות - פרק ג'
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was released soon after, while the Bilgorai needed to remain for another few weeks.

Yidden used to visit the Bilgorai Rav, and on one visit, the Bilgorai Rav told the Yid: "I can't compare myself to my brother," and he explained why. "A woman recently approached my brother and cried that her husband was drafted to the Munktaba Labor Camps. Rebbe Aharon consoled her by saying, 'A Yid isn't allowed to cry! A Yid always has to be B'Simcha - happy! Therefore, don't cry so much; be happy!'"

The Bilgorai Rav concluded, "After all the suffering my brother experienced, losing his whole family, many of his chassidim, and the whole Belzer court, he can still say that a Yid should be b'Simcha, and is not allowed to cry - I wouldn't be able to do that!"

Wishing all of Klal Yisroel an easy and meaningful fast.

שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו