

PARSHAS SHOFTIM

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת שופטים

ראש חודש אלול תשפ"ג / August 17, 2023



ROSH CHODESH ELUL

Days of ימי רצון

There are three reasons why the days of Chodesh Elul are called ימי רצון:

- Moshe was in heaven from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur. He asked Hashem to forgive the Yidden, and Hashem forgave them on Yom Kippur. That's why it's called ימי רצון – days of Desire that Hashem, in His goodwill, forgave the Yidden.
- Every Yid wants to be good and do teshuvah during Elul.
- Hashem wants the Yidden to always be as good as during the month of Elul.

Intelligence and Teshuvah

The word (אלול 66) is equivalent to the word (בינה 66) – intelligence. Through בינה one can reach teshuvah – repentance. That's why we say in Shemona Esra, "אתה חונן לאדם דעת" – Hashem should give a person intelligence first, and then we say "השיבנו אבינו" – Return to your Father and do teshuvah.



Read More on Chodesh Elul
worldofbelz.org/rosh_chodesh_elul/

The Months of Elul and Tishrei

An acronym for the month of אלול is: "ונתתי לבי את לדרוש ולתור" – And I gave my heart to demand and return." The end letters are the word תשרי – for during these two months, אלול & תשרי are designated for self-introspection and to do teshuvah.

Even the Fish Tremble

Tzaddikim said that from when you bentch Rosh Chodesh Elul, "even the fish in the waters tremble!" The Nachlas Dan of Modtitz z"l shared a reason. Since fish swallow one another, the larger fish eat the smaller ones. When it comes to Chodesh Elul, they ask for forgiveness from one another. That's why we say, "the fish in water tremble," alluding to the fact that we need to ask forgiveness from each other.



The Belzer Rebbe Shlita Blowing Shofar During the Month of Elul

Shofar Blowing During Elul

One year on Rosh Chodesh Elul, Maran

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ROSH CHODESH ELUL

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Rebbe Yissocher Dov of Belz zt"l held the shofar in his hand and was ready to blow when he suddenly restrained himself. "This is not how you blow the shofar," he said. Maran asked for a Tur Hilchas Rosh Hashanah and reviewed the halachas of blowing shofar during Elul. Soon after, he blew the shofar.

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

ושפטו את העם משפט צדק. (שופטים טז:כ)
*And they shall judge the people with
righteous judgment.*

Harav Reb Yaakov Leib from Kovla zt"l, the son of Harav Rebbe Mordchei of Neshchiz zt"l, once had a Yid come to him with a Din Torah. The Yid came with his 'borer' – arbitrator and the other party came with his borer. The Yid wanted Reb Yaakov Leib to serve as the dayan.

After hearing the arguments and testimonials from both sides, it appeared that the Yid was guilty of charges that would cause him a significant monetary loss. Reb Yaakov Leib saw how upset the Yid was with the verdict and appeased him with the following explanation:

Hashem has mercy on His children, yet it seems you were destined to lose money. It's a chesed from Hashem that He caused you to lose money by having to give to another. Sometimes, it's decreed that one should spend money on doctors and medication, which isn't good since a person is sick and has to take bitter pills, etc.

At other times, Hashem can cause one to lose money through a robbery, which causes great agony – agmas nefesh – the pain of losing money overnight, especially since he knows another person is enjoying his money. In other instances, Hashem can cause a fire to destroy all his possessions, which may be easier to accept since a person didn't cause it.

However, in this instance, Hashem caused you to have a Din Torah with another person, but it doesn't cause that much pain since he understands that the p'sak – the ruling is from the Torah. So the Torah complained to Hashem that through him, people lose money. Hashem calmed the Torah and said that if a person accepts the p'sak halacha from the Beis Din, Hashem will have mercy on him, and the person will recoup his loss, plus more.

When Reb Yaakov Leib concluded his explanation, he turned to the Yid and said, "You should know that according to the p'sak halacha of the Torah, you lost all your money so I won't charge you for the Din Torah. But if you earn back your profits, I'll accept payment."

Soon after, the Yid earned back his lost money, plus some more, and paid Reb Yaakov Leib, as promised.

צדק צדק תרדוף למען תחי'... (שופטים טז:כ)
*Righteousness, righteousness, shall you
pursue, so that you will live...*

HaRav HaKadosh Rebbe Shimon of Yarislov zt"l was a talmid of the Rebbe R' Elimelech of Lizensk z"tl. He was known to visit many tzaddikim of his generation and bask in their presence, despite being older than them, since his Rebbe, R' Elimelech, once told him

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

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that if he acted unassuming towards every tzaddik, then he would merit a long life.

When Rebbe Shimon was in his nineties, he said he had already visited two hundred and fifty tzaddikim. He used to transcribe the pasuk צדק צדק תרדוף – you should run in search of seeing tzaddikim, 'למען תח'... so you shall merit to live a long life.

The Rebbe, Reb Shimon, once said that another reason for his longevity is that he accepted everything Hashem sent his way, with love. He never questioned Hashem's ways. He explained that if he questioned Hashem, he would be told to come up (to heaven) for his questions to be answered.

Maran Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l, used to say: "The Rebbe R' Shimon of Yarislov zt"l was from the big Malachim (angels)!"

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך (שופטים יח:יג)
*You shall be wholehearted with Hashem,
your G-d.*

Rashi explains: Follow Hashem fully. Just hope to Him and don't doubt your future; fully accept what happens to you, then you will be with Him and in His following.

A non-religious young boy, a war survivor, once approached Reb Yisroel Meirowitz z"l, a meshamesh of Maran, Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l. The boy shared with him that since he suffered greatly during the war, he had terrible anxiety, which didn't give him peace, and he wished to rid himself of his trauma and anxiety.

He told Reb Yisroel that he would love to share his angst with Maran Rebbe Aharon of Belz, yet since he's not religious and doesn't know how to approach a rebbe, Reb Yisroel should accompany him. Reb Yisroel agreed.

With a broken heart, the boy shared his problems and all that pains him with Maran Rebbe Aharon. Rebbe Aharon answered him, with Rashi's explanation to follow Hashem, and then Hashem will be with you, and wished him well.

The boy thanked Reb Yisroel and said that since that visit, he was a "ברי' חדשה" – a new person! All his anxious thoughts vanished like לב טהור ברא לי אלקים ורוח נכון חדש בקרבי" – a pure heart Hashem gave me and a new true spirit in me."

פרשת שופטים – THIS WEEK'S VORT

שופטים ושוטרים תתן בכל שעריך... (שופטים טז:יח)
*Judges and officers shall you appoint in all
your cities.*

The word שעריך is the acronym for:
שיניים – teeth – watch what you speak.
עיניים – eyes – watch what you see.
ראש – head – watch what you think.
רגל – feet – watch where you go.
ידיים – hands – watch what you do with your hands.

ושפטו את העם משפט צדק. (שופטים טז:יח)
And they shall judge the people with
righteous judgment.

When there are fewer Batei Dinim (courthouses), there accumulates more Din Torahs, which causes them to pasken – give a verdict hurriedly, and they can't judge with yishuv hadas – mindfully, the way halacha

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THIS WEEK'S VORT – פרשת שופטים – continued

requires. Therefore, the pasuk says, שופטים – establish enough Beis Dins, which will lead to העם משפט צדק – they will be able to pasken – judge righteously since every halacha will be thought through placidly, with the right frame of mind.

ולא תקח שוחד כי השוחד יעור עיני חכמים... (שופטים טז:ט)
You shall not accept a bribe, for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise.

Parshas Mishpatim talks about שוחד – bribery using the phrase “יעור פקחים” it blinds intelligent people, and in this pasuk, it says – It blinds chachamim – wise people. The two factors teach us that a Dayan needs two qualifications: to be a chacham, a wise person who knows the Torah, and be people smart.

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך (שופטים יח:ג)
You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d.

Hashem constantly bestows good upon His children since Yidden are considered “בנים” – children of Hashem. And just like a father seeks to give his child everything he needs, even before the child requests it. A Yid who truly believes that Hashem will provide everything that he needs, for such a person, Hashem will provide. This is alluded to in the pasuk תמים תהיה עם ה' – if you are whole with Hashem, with a strong Emunah – believe in Him, then you can be assured that Hashem will give you everything you need.

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך (שופטים יח:ג)
You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d.

The first letters of the word תמים stand for. The pasuk teaches us that a person who possesses all four is a true תמים wholehearted with Hashem.

פרקי אבות – פרק ו'

כל העוסק בתורה לשמה זוכה לדברים הרבה (אבות ו:א)
One who engages in the Torah for its own sake gains many things.

Hashem gave 613 mitzvahs, but we can't perform all of them since some are designated for Kohanim, some can only be achieved if you live in Eretz Yisroel, and some mitzvahs could only be performed during the times of the Beis Hamikdash. Chazal says there is a way to fulfill all mitzvahs – “העוסק בתורת עולה כאילו הקריב עולה” – one who learns the halachas of a Korban Olah is as if he sacrificed the Korban. Understandably, this is when one learns לשמה – then he is worthy לדברים הרבה – as if he fulfilled many mitzvahs, which he couldn't have performed otherwise.

שכל העולם כולו כדאי הוא לו (אבות ו:א)
The whole world is worthwhile for him.

This is because, without the Torah, the world can't exist. If there's a time when no one learns, and only one Talmid Chacham learns Torah, then the world stands in his merit, for if not for his Torah – the world could be destroyed – שכל העולם כולו כדאי הוא לו.

פת במלח תאכל ומים במשורה תשתה ועל הארץ תישן, ואם אתה עושה כן אשריך בעולם הזה וטוב לך לעולם הבא (אבות ו:ד)

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פרקי אבות - פרק ו'
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You shall eat a mouthful of salt and drink water sparingly, and on the earth, you shall sleep, and if you do so, you will be blessed in this world, and it will be good for you in the world to come.

When Maran, Rebbe Yissocher Dov of Belz zt"l wandered from place to place during WWI, he arrived at a train station in Hungary, where they needed to wait seven hours for the next train. The station was an open area with no seating. Maran removed his fur overcoat, placed it on the floor, and sat down. The scene was very peculiar for his chassidim, to see Maran sitting on the floor. Noticing their bewildered looks, Maran explained, "The Mishna says ועל הארץ תישן, ואם אתה עושה כן אשריך בעולם הזה – what does it mean? What kind of עולם הזה is it that one needs to sleep on the floor? However, If a person comes to a situation where he needs to serve Hashem ועל הארץ תישן – and if he does so ואם אתה עושה כן, and doesn't complain to Hashem, then אשריך בעולם הזה – because he merits to understand that everything is for his good.

INCREASING TZEDAKAH DURING THE MONTH OF ELUL

איש לרעהו ומתנות – One for the Other and gifts for the Poor. During the month of Elul, one is required to increase in giving tzedakah.