

PARSHAS SHMINI

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת שמיני - שבת החודש
כ"ה אדר ב' תשפ"ד / April 4, 2024



What's happening in Belz

Shabbos ב' אדר ב' – is the yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Rivka Miriam a"h – the Rebbetzin of the Mittle Rav – Reb Yehoshua Rokeach zt"l.

One Erev Shabbos before candle lighting, the Mittle Rav zt"l (lit. the 'middle' Rabbi) heard his Rebbetzin crying in her room. He quickly sent one of his gabbaim (assistants) to check out what happened. The Rebbetzin replied that for years she had a steady custom of giving eighteen reinish (coins) to tzedakah and today she didn't have any money to give to tzedakah before lecht bentshen (lighting Shabbos candles)

The Mittle Rav wanted to know how badly his Rebbetzin wanted to give tzedakah and asked her if she would agree to give her 'shteren tichel' (a bejewelled headscarf that some Rebbetzins wear Friday Night) as collateral in return for borrowing that sum of money. The Rebbetzin immediately agreed and the Mittle Rav gave her the money and then told her to keep her 'shteren tichel'.

After the Rebbetzin lit the Shabbos candles, her holy sons Reb Shmuel of Sokohl zt"l, Reb Yissochur Dov of Belz zt"l, who would later become known as the Frierdige Rav, along with the other holy sons and chassidim accompanied their father, the Mittle Rav to Shul. On the way to Shul, the Mittle Rav exclaimed: "If one lights Shabbos candles like this, it is no wonder we merited such devout and holy children!"

Shabbos Parshas HaChodesh - שבת החודש

This Shabbos is the fourth Shabbos of the four parshiyos. It is called שבת פרשת החודש since we read for Maftir the parsha of "החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים" in פרשת בא. Hashem commarided the Yidden the mitzvah of Kiddush HaChodesh – to count the months from Nissan. The parsha also talks about the halachos regarding the Korban Pesach, which every Yid had sacrifice on Erev pesach.

Since we don't have a Beis Hamikdash and we cannot be עולה רגל – come to the Beis Hamikdash to sacrifice the Korban Pesach, we read about it in remembrance.

During the yotzros (add-ons) in Mussaf, we say: "החודש אשר ישועות בו מקיפות" – the month (Nissan) that is surrounded with Yeshuahs – salvation. Since it is the year's first month, the yeshuahs affect the rest of the year.

The Degel Machane Efraim Zt"l said that he heard from his grandfather, the holy Baal Shem Tov zt"l, that Rosh Chodesh Nissan is a time to daven for good rulers since "באחד בניסן ראש השנה למלכים" – the first day of Nissan is the Rosh Hashanah for the kings. All kings and government officials worldwide are judges, and we need to daven for favorable rulers since there are some unfavorable rulers".

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Everyone loves a good story, especially a Chassidic story...

ואת החזיר...טמא הוא לכם (שמיני יא:ז)

And the pig...it is unclean for you

R' Moshe Vaye Shlita, renowned Kashrus expert, especially in the Halachic area of Bedikas Tolo'im (checking food for insect infestation), shares that Hashem does a great chessed (kindness) by not allowing us to eat bugs and worms and many forbidden meats and foods, since most are detrimental to our health.

R' Moshe once gave a shiur (speech) in a remote country. A Yid, a Shomer Torah U'mitzvos, approached him after the speech and shared his story:

"My wife was stricken with a rare disease. A worm was growing in her brain and was feeding off the marrow in her brain. This causes a person to stop functioning and eventually die. We researched worldwide to find a surgeon specializing in this field. After successfully operating on my wife and removing the worms, the doctor asked us, 'Did you ever hear about the Jewish nation?'

"We both nodded yes." And I said, "Of course, we know of the Jews. We are Jewish!"

The doctor removed his glasses and looked at us in wonder, "It can't be that you are Jewish".

They replied, "We may not comply with the Torah, but we are Jewish."

The doctor explained, "Your wife's illness comes from eating pig, and I know that Jews are forbidden to eat pig...".

The couple lowered their eyes and shamefully admitted that they had eaten the pig meat.

This incident overtook the couple, and they vowed to change their lifestyle from then on, becoming Shomer Torah U'Mitzvos - fully observant Jews.

והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי קדוש אני (שמיני יא:מד)

You shall sanctify yourselves, and you will be holy

Chazal say (ברכות נג): that the word והתקדשתם refers to מים ראשונים - washing one's hands before eating bread and והייתם קדשים refers to מים אחרונים - washing after eating bread, before Benching.

Harav Reb Moshe Rokeach zt"l, son of Maran Reb Aharon of Belz zt"l, said that his father kept 300 "chumros" (stringencies) regarding halachos of נטילת ידים - washing one's hands before eating bread.

R' Shmuel Porgesz z"l, a devoted shamash (attendant) of Maran Reb Aharon of Belz, related that Maran instructed him: "I have many chumros in Netillas Yadayim, but you don't have to accept them all upon yourself. But before you serve me, please wash your hands."

Maran once said he washes his hands often because "if you would learn the halachos of Netillas Yedayim well, you would understand why!"

ולא תטמעו בהם ונטמתם בהם (שמיני יא:מג)

Do not contaminate yourselves through them lest you become contaminated through them.

The holy Meor Einiyim zt"l was a guest at someone's home and was served a cup of tea, with the milk next to it. The Meor Einiyim drank the tea but didn't touch the milk. His host asked why the Rebbe didn't drink the milk, to which he replied "I don't see any milk on the table!".

The host decided to investigate the milk's

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**EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY,
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origins and learned that whilst his wife used to always make sure to oversee their non-Jewish maid milking the cows each morning, that morning however she wasn't present during the milking. Since a non-Jew milked the milk, it was considered "חלב עכו"ם" – milk of a non-Jew.

Understandably, the holy eyes of the 'Meor Einiyim' could not 'see' this milk.



The Rebbe's Torah

ויקרבו כל העדה ויעמדו לפני ד', ויאמר משה זה הדבר אשר צוה ד' תעשו וירא אליכם כבוד ד' (ט:ה-ו)
And the entire assembly approached and stood before Hashem. Moshe said: This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do; then the glory of Hashem will appear to you.

After the Torah writes all the requirements about the Mishkan's inauguration, the Torah continues about the mitzvos a person is required to do. What message did Moshe Rabbeinu want to convey here to the Yidden?

At the time, the Yidden felt they were on a high (level), since Hashem forgave them for Chait Ha'gel (the sin of idolatry), and He came to rest His presence in the Mishkan they had built. Therefore, the Yidden wanted to come closer to Hashem. So Moshe Rabbeinu told them that the way to become closer to Hashem and reach loftier heights is by doing His will and keeping all the

mitzvahs.

This is alluded to in the passuk. 'ויקרבו כל העדה ויעמדו' ויאמר משה זה הדבר אשר צוה ד' תעשו – Moshe said you should first do everything that Hashem commands you to do, and then you will merit 'וירא אליכם כבוד ד' – the glory of Hashem will appear to you.



THIS WEEK'S VORT

פרשת שמיני

ויקרבו כל העדה ויעמדו לפני ד'... (שמיני ט:ה)
And the entire assembly approached and stood before Hashem.

It is brought down in the name of Ari Hakadosh zt"l that one should try to fulfill the mitzvah of "ואהבת" – love one's friend just like yourself before starting to daven. This is alluded to in the passuk – the whole assembly came close to one another – and only then 'ויעמדו לפני ד' – they were able to daven to Hashem (as Chazal say: "אין עמידה" – the word עמידה can also mean davening).

וידם אהרן (שמיני יג)
And Aaron was silent.

Rashi says that because Aaron remained silent, he was rewarded that Hashem spoke to him directly, introducing the parsha of שתויי יין (when Kohanim may or may not do their service in the Mishkan).

The above can be better understood with the Gemara (שבת לב) that says: The Shechina (Divine presence) can only rest during Simcha shel Mitzvah (the joy of doing a mitzvah) and not when one is sad.

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THIS WEEK'S VORT - פרשת שמיני - *continued*

So, even though Aaron had a right to mourn over the loss of his two children, he accepted it with simcha – blocking out all sadness – he, therefore, merited to hear Hashem speak to him.

כל מפרסת פרסה ושוסעת שסע פרסות מעלת גרה בבהמה אותה תאכלו
(שמיני יא:ג)

Everything that has a split hoof, which is completely separated into double hooves, and that brings up its cuds – that one you may not eat.

Maran Reb Yissocher Dov of Belz zt"l (known as the Freerdige Rav – lit. the previous Rabbi) used to speak about the topic of giving tzedakah (charity), saying: "It is not enough for a person to give tzedakah graciously, one also needs to exert oneself to go round town and collect money on behalf of the lesser well-off people. We learn this concept from the two signs that render an animal kosher: "מעלה גרה" – to give from your own money tzedakah a "גרה" – (a type of coin from Biblical times) and "מפריס פרסה" – walk your own footsteps to go and collect funds for other Yidden – as the Moshe Rabenu told Paroh: לא תשאיר פרסה: not one footstep will be left behind.

ויקטר על המזבח מלבד עולת הבוקר (שמיני ט:ז)
And caused it to go up in smoke on the Alter: aside from the morning elevation offering

The two stokes break up the words in this passuk to show that until this point, one cannot drink wine – אל תשת. And from hereafter, when you are allowed to drink wine.

"אתה ובניך אתך" – just when you sit together with your household on Pesach, Shabbos, Yom Tov

"בבואך אל אוהל מועד" – when you make a חנוכת הבית – celebration of moving into a new home,

"ולא תמתו" – when one is saved from danger and makes a סעודת הודעה – a thanksgiving meal,

"חקת עולם" – by a bris milah which is a 'חק' (a mitzvah we don't understand)

"לדורותיכם" – during a wedding (a wedding creates generations)

"ולהבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול" – during Kiddush on Shabbos and havdalah on Motzei Shabbos when we separate between the weekday and the weekend, and

"בין הטמא ובין הטהור" – Purim, when one separates between the tainted Haman and the clean Mordechai

"ולהורות את בני ישראל" – during a Siyum for a Mesechta (להורות is a phrase used for learning, like Torah).