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BS"D

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON DEVARIM – TISHA B'AV - 5779

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#TorahTuesday Chumash Mesoras HaRav - Sefer Devarim

Parshas #Devarim

Parshas #Devarim

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה  
Sefer Devarim differs significantly from the other four books of the Torah. Sefer Shemos, Vayikra, and Bamidbar all begin with the conjunctive letter vav, suggesting that each of the first four books are connected to one another. In contrast, Sefer Devarim does not begin with a vav. Furthermore, in Shemos through Bamidbar, Moses is generally referenced in third person, while in Devarim, Moses almost always speaks in first person; Moses himself is the narrator. Finally, Sefer Devarim contains for the most part repetition of mitzvos that were previously enumerated, but with additional explanation.

The Gemara (Megillah 31a) refers to Sefer Devarim as Mishneh Torah. The word Mishneh is derived from the word shinun—to study, to train one’s mind, as used in the phrase וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבָבְךָ, and you shall teach them to your sons (6:7, see Rashi). Originally, Sefer Devarim was given as Mishnah, as Torah Sheb’al Peh, the Oral Law. Only later, on the last day of Moses’ life, do we read that Moses finished writing the words of this Torah in a scroll, until their very completion (31:24). Sefer Devarim, which to that point had the status of Torah Sheb’al Peh, became incorporated into Torah Shebichsav, the Written Law. The phrase Mishneh Torah therefore means Mishnah (Oral Law) which is also Torah (Written Law). Although Sefer Devarim became part of Torah Shebichsav, it did not lose its Torah Sheb’al Peh character. Sefer Devarim thus has a double sanctity of both Torah Shebichsav and Torah Sheb’al Peh. In the first four books of the Torah, God addresses the community, while in Sefer Devarim it is Moses who is addressing them. In the first four books, Moses is the medium through which God addresses the people: Moses served in the role of prophet, repeating verbatim what God told him. In Devarim, however, Moses is not a prophet but a teacher: Moshe

Rabbeinu. He imparted bei’ur hatorah, the explanation of the Torah, and thus it is Moses himself who addresses the people.

There is a halachic implication to the special status bestowed upon Sefer Devarim. The Gemara (Berachos 21b) indicates that even those who maintain that one cannot derive new laws or principles from the juxtaposition of verses agree that in Sefer Devarim, one can derive laws from such juxtaposition. This view maintains that Moses alone juxtaposed specific verses to aid in his Torah Sheb’al Peh explication, but this hermeneutic device cannot be applied to any of the other books of the Torah.

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The Halachos of .. Tisha B’av

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The halachos of The Tisha B’av

Important Note: Please see the “Hilchos Tisha B’Av

Nidcheh” section that is printed in the back of this

sefer for the halachos that are specific to when Tisha

B’Av is postponed to a Sunday.

Tisha B’av is viewed as our national day of mourning to commemorate the tragic events that have occurred on that day, along with other national tragedies. This is evident from many of the KinnoS that are read on Tisha B’av that commemorate events that did not particularly take place on Tisha B’av itself. Due to the catastrophic nature and background of this day, there are many more prohibitions than on a regular fast day.

These halachos will be discussed below.

The Talmud lists five specific tragedies that did occur on Tisha B’av itself:

1. The Meraglim (spies) came back with their negative report about Eretz Yisroel, that led to Klal Yisroel’s despair and the subsequent decree that the Jews of that generation were not allowed to enter Eretz Yisroel.
2. The First Beis Hamikdash was destroyed.
3. The Second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed.
4. The city of Beitar, a Jewish stronghold after the destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdash, was conquered.
5. The Romans razed Yerushalayim and the area of the Har Habayis (Temple Mount).

The Special halachos of TiSha B’av Nidcheh

By

Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Rav, Pine River View, Lakewood, NJ

When Tisha B’av falls out on a Shabbos and is postponed until Sunday,

there are many unique halachos. The following is a comprehensive description of these halachos: On Shabbos: § One should refrain from taking pleasure walks during the entire Shabbos.1 § If one can occupy himself on Shabbos afternoon after chatzos studying topics which pertain to Tisha B’Av or to mourning, he should do so.2 If he cannot, he may study what he does ordinarily.3 It is customary that Pirkei Avos is not studied on this Shabbos.4 § For the halachos that pertain to a husband and wife, see the source cited

below.<sup>5</sup> § The usual seudah ha-mafsekes restrictions do not apply on Shabbos. At the last meal before the fast - which is seudah shelishis - one may eat meat and drink wine and consume whatever food he desires.<sup>6</sup> One should not, however, state explicitly that he is eating in order to have strength for the fast.<sup>7</sup> Some poskim hold that it is forbidden to swallow a timerelease pill that makes it easier to fast since that constitutes preparing on Shabbos for a weekday.<sup>8</sup> Others, however, permit doing so.<sup>9</sup> § Eating seudah shelishis with family members is permissible. Company, however, should be avoided - unless one usually has company for seudah shelishis.<sup>10</sup> Birkas ha-Mazon may be said with a zimun. Zemiros may be sung, even by one who does not always sing them.<sup>11</sup> § Eating, drinking, or washing any part of the body is permitted until sunset only.<sup>12</sup> If one recited Birkas ha-Mazon before sunset, he may eat or drink until sunset.<sup>13</sup> § One may sit on a chair until nightfall (tzeis ha-kochavim).<sup>14</sup> § Since it is not proper to wear Shabbos clothes on Tisha B'Av, it is recommended that one change clothes after nightfall, but before Ma'ariv.<sup>15</sup> Baruch ha-mavdil should be recited before changing into weekday clothes.<sup>16</sup> § No preparations for Tisha B'Av may be made until Shabbos is over. Tisha B'Av shoes or Kinos (unless studied on Shabbos) may not be brought to shul until nightfall, even in an area with an eiruv.<sup>17</sup> Motza'ei Shabbos: § Shabbos shoes may not be removed until nightfall. The custom in many places<sup>18</sup> is to remove them after saying Barechu at Ma'ariv. Others remove their shoes after reciting Baruch ha-mavdil but before Barechu, provided that it is already nightfall.<sup>19</sup> This option is advisable for large groups of people (such as a camp) in order to avoid a long break between Barechu and Ma'ariv.<sup>20</sup> § Atah chonantanu is said in Shemoneh Esrei. Women who do not recite Ma'ariv must remember to recite Baruch ha-mavdil at the conclusion of Shabbos.<sup>21</sup> § After Ma'ariv but before the reading of Eichah, a candle<sup>22</sup> is lit and Borei me'orei ha-eish is recited. If one forgot or failed to do so, Borei me'orei ha-eish may be recited anytime throughout the night.<sup>23</sup> § Customarily, Borei me'orei ha-eish is recited by one person for the entire congregation. It is proper, though, that all the listeners sit down while the blessing is recited.<sup>24</sup> § Preferably, women should listen to Borei me'orei ha-eish recited by a man. If they cannot do so, it is recommended that they recite their own blessing over a candle, but they are not obligated to do so.<sup>25</sup> § Some permit folding the tallis as on every motza'ei Shabbos,<sup>26</sup> while others are stringent.<sup>27</sup> § Dirty dishes from Shabbos should not be washed until Sunday after chatzos,<sup>28</sup> unless they will attract insects, etc. On Sunday: § The rules of fasting for pregnant or nursing women or elderly or weak people are more lenient when Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbos and the fast is deferred until Sunday.<sup>29</sup> One should consult a rav concerning his/her specific situation. § If a bris milah falls on Sunday the tenth of Av, most poskim<sup>30</sup> allow the father, mohel, and sandek to eat a seudas mitzvah after Minchah Gedolah.<sup>31</sup> A minority opinion rules that they should finish their fast.<sup>32</sup> § Before breaking a fast because of illness<sup>33</sup> or to celebrate a bris milah,<sup>34</sup> Havdalah should be recited. Many poskim hold that wine or grape juice may not be drunk and Havdalah should be recited on a Shehakol beverage such as beer, coffee, or tea (with or without milk<sup>35</sup>).<sup>36</sup> Another option is to use wine or grape juice, but have a minor (preferably between the ages of 6-9) drink the wine. Other poskim allow even an adult to drink the minimum amount<sup>37</sup> of wine or grape juice.<sup>38</sup> § There are various views among the poskim concerning the recitation of Havdalah for women who are not fasting (due to illness, pregnancy, or nursing).<sup>39</sup> The preferred option is that the woman's husband (or another man) recites Havdalah<sup>40</sup> and that she or a minor drink the beverage.<sup>41</sup> If that cannot be arranged, most poskim allow her to recite her own Havdalah.<sup>42</sup> If she cannot or will not, there are poskim who permit her to eat without reciting Havdalah.<sup>43</sup> § Most poskim hold that minors do not need to hear or recite Havdalah before eating.<sup>44</sup> A minority opinion requires them to do so.<sup>45</sup> Sunday night: § After the fast is over, one may not eat until Havdalah is recited. Women should hear Havdalah from their husbands or a neighbor.<sup>46</sup> If it is difficult for a woman to wait for Havdalah, she may drink before Havdalah. If drinking is not sufficient, some poskim allow her to eat

without hearing Havdalah while others hold that she should make Havdalah herself.<sup>47</sup> § Havdalah may be recited over wine or grape juice, and it need not be given to a minor to drink.<sup>48</sup> § Only the blessings of Borei peri ha-gafen and ha-Mavdil are recited. Borei me'orei ha-eish is not recited, even if one forgot to recite that blessing the previous night.<sup>49</sup> It is permitted to take a haircut, shave, do laundry, sew, bathe and recite Shehecheyanu immediately after the fast. Meat and wine (other than the wine from Havdalah) should not be consumed until the next morning.<sup>50</sup> Listening to music should be avoided until the next morning.<sup>51</sup>

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subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

### **Home Weekly Parsha DVARIM**

#### **Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog**

This final book of the five books of the Torah is the great oration of Moshe at the conclusion of his 40 years of leadership and service to God and the Jewish people. In it he reviews the events of that period and his observations and comments regarding those events and the behavior of the people of Israel during those decades of miraculous existence in the desert of Sinai. The underlying question that this book and this week's reading of the Torah raises is why it's necessary for us to hear the entire story once again. There is no doubt that the Torah, being the word of God so to speak, has accurately portrayed the events and details that occurred during this last 40 years of the lifetime of Moshe. So, why the repetition and expansion of the story and why does the Torah include the comments and descriptions of Moshe that at times seem to be in variance to the original narrative as it appears in the previous books of the Torah?

The predators of biblical criticism have always pounced on these seeming discrepancies in order to prove that somehow our holy Torah was produced by committee and various personages over many generations. The survival of the Jewish people, as outlined in this book of the Torah that we have just begun to read, gives factual denial to such theories. It is inconceivable to think that Moshe himself would not be aware of the differences in the text that he himself is presenting as the word of God to the Jewish people. There is a lesson to be learned here as always from every biblical narrative and statement.

We are all aware that reality with strict accuracy is one thing while the perceptions and understanding of those very events is a completely different matter. The Torah describes the events that occurred before the death of Moshe in accurate real detail. These are the events and facts as they occurred and to which Heaven, so to speak, testifies. But the Torah also teaches us that these were the impressions and understanding of those events by human beings - by the greatest of human beings, our teacher Moshe.

The Torah wishes to make clear to us the difficulty of achieving absolute truth and reality in our world. Everything that we see and believe is always refracted through our own life experiences and personal emotions. That is why no one always shares the same opinion regarding issues, personalities or events in our lives. The Talmud teaches us that if there are two witnesses to an event that come to testify in a Jewish court and agree to every detail as to what they saw, we immediately suspect them to being false witnesses and poor jurors.

So, the Torah allows us a peek into the soul and mind of Moshe and to reflect on how he saw the events of his lifetime and the story of the 40-year sojourn of the Jewish people in the desert of Sinai. It is always wise to understand the perception of others when we decide on a course of action no matter how convinced we are that we see it correctly and accurately.

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

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### **The Teacher as Hero (Devarim 5779)**

#### **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**

Imagine the following scenario. You are 119 years and 11 months old. The end of your life is in sight. Your hopes have received devastating blows. You have been told by God that you will not enter the land to which you have been leading your people for forty years. You have been repeatedly criticised by the people you have led. Your sister and brother, with whom you shared the burdens of leadership, have predeceased you. And you know that neither of your children, Gershom and Eliezer, will succeed you. Your life seems to be coming to a tragic end, your destination unreached, your aspirations unfulfilled. What do you do?

We can imagine a range of responses. You could sink into sadness, reflecting on the might-have-beens had the past taken a different direction. You could continue to plead with God to change His mind and let you cross the Jordan. You could retreat into memories of the good times: when the people sang a song at the Red Sea, when they gave their assent to the covenant at Sinai, when they built the Tabernacle. These would be the normal human reactions. Moses did none of these things – and what he did instead helped change the course of Jewish history.

For a month Moses convened the people on the far side of the Jordan and addressed them. Those addresses form the substance of the book of Deuteronomy. They are extraordinarily wide-ranging, covering a history of the past, a set of prophecies and warnings about the future, laws, narratives, a song, and a set of blessings. Together they constitute the most comprehensive, profound vision of what it is to be a holy people, dedicated to God, constructing a society that would stand as a role model for humanity in how to combine freedom and order, justice and compassion, individual dignity and collective responsibility.

Over and above what Moses said in the last month of his life, though, is what Moses did. He changed careers. He shifted his relationship with the people. No longer Moses the liberator, the lawgiver, the worker of miracles, the intermediary between the Israelites and God, he became the figure known to Jewish memory: Moshe Rabbeinu, “Moses, our teacher.” That is how Deuteronomy begins – “Moses began to expound this Law” (Deut. 1:5) – using a verb, *be’er*, that we have not encountered in this sense in the Torah and which appears only one more time towards the end of the book: “And you shall write very clearly [*ba’er hetev*] all the words of this law on these stones” (27:8). He wanted to explain, expound, make clear. He wanted the people to understand that Judaism is not a religion of mysteries intelligible only to the few. It is – as he would say in his very last speech – an “inheritance of the [entire] congregation of Jacob” (33:4).

Moses became, in the last month of his life, the master educator. In these addresses, he does more than tell the people what the law is. He explains to them why the law is. There is nothing arbitrary about it. The law is as it is because of the people’s experience of slavery and persecution in Egypt, which was their tutorial in why we need freedom and law-governed liberty. Time and again he says: You shall do this because you were once slaves in Egypt. They must remember and never forget – two verbs that appear repeatedly in the book – where they came from and what it felt like to be exiled, persecuted, and powerless. In Lin-Manuel Miranda’s musical Hamilton, George Washington tells the young, hot-headed Alexander Hamilton: “Dying is easy, young man; living is harder.” In Deuteronomy, Moses keeps telling the Israelites, in effect: Slavery is easy; freedom is harder.

Throughout Deuteronomy, Moses reaches a new level of authority and wisdom. For the first time we hear him speak extensively in his own voice, rather than merely as the transmitter of God’s words to him. His grasp of

vision and detail is faultless. He wants the people to understand that the laws God has commanded them are for their good, not just God’s.

All ancient peoples had gods. All ancient peoples had laws. But their laws were not from a god; they were from the king, pharaoh, or ruler – as in the famous law code of Hammurabi. The gods of the ancient world were seen as a source of power, not justice. Laws were man-made rules for the maintenance of social order. The Israelites were different. Their laws were not made by their kings – monarchy in ancient Israel was unique in endowing the king with no legislative powers. Their laws came directly from God Himself, creator of the universe and liberator of His people. Hence Moses’ ringing declaration: “Observe [these laws] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deut. 4:6).

At this defining moment of his life, Moses understood that, though he would not be physically with the people when they entered the Promised Land, he could still be with them intellectually and emotionally if he gave them the teachings to take with them into the future. Moses became the pioneer of perhaps the single greatest contribution of Judaism to the concept of leadership: the idea of the teacher as hero.

Heroes are people who demonstrate courage in the field of battle. What Moses knew was that the most important battles are not military. They are spiritual, moral, cultural. A military victory shifts the pieces on the chessboard of history. A spiritual victory changes lives. A military victory is almost always short-lived. Either the enemy attacks again or a new and more dangerous opponent appears. But spiritual victories can – if their lesson is not forgotten – last forever. Even quite ordinary people, Yiftah, for example (Book of Judges, Chapters 11–12), or Samson (Chapters 13–16), can be military heroes. But those who teach people to see, feel, and act differently, who enlarge the moral horizons of humankind, are rare indeed. Of these, Moses was the greatest.

Not only does he become the teacher in Deuteronomy. In words engraved on Jewish hearts ever since, he tells the entire people that they must become a nation of educators:

Make known to your children and your children’s children, how you once stood before the Lord your God at Horeb. (Deut. 4:9–10)

In the future, when your child asks you, “What is the meaning of the testimonies, decrees, and laws that the Lord our God has commanded you?” tell them, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand...” (Deut. 6:20–21)

Teach [these words] to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise. (Deut. 11:19)

Indeed, the last two commands Moses ever gave the Israelites were explicitly educational in nature: to gather the entire people together in the seventh year to hear the Torah being read, to remind them of their covenant with God (Deut. 31:12–13), and, “Write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the people of Israel” (31:19), understood as the command that each person must write for himself a scroll of the law.

In Deuteronomy, a new word enters the biblical vocabulary: the verb *l-m-d*, meaning to learn or teach. The verb does not appear even once in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers. In Deuteronomy it appears seventeen times. There was nothing like this concern for universal education elsewhere in the ancient world. Jews became the people whose heroes were teachers, whose citadels were schools, and whose passion was study and the life of the mind. Moses’ end-of-life transformation is one of the most inspiring in all of religious history. In that one act, he liberated his career from tragedy. He became a leader not for his time only but for all time. His body did not accompany his people as they entered the land, but his teachings did. His sons did not succeed him, but his disciples did. He may have felt that he had not changed his people in his lifetime, but in the full perspective of history, he changed them more than any leader has ever changed any people, turning

them into the people of the book and the nation who built not ziggurats or pyramids but schools and houses of study. The poet Shelley famously said, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." [1] In truth, though, it is not poets but teachers who shape society, handing on the legacy of the past to those who build the future. That insight sustained Judaism for longer than any other civilisation, and it began with Moses in the last month of his life.  
Shabbat Shalom

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From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva  
Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

#### **Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a**

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:  
Police Officer who Killed Ethiopian

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion regarding the police officer who killed an Ethiopian man?

A: It is impossible to express an opinion until the investigation is complete. What is certain is that the Jews who made Aliyah from Ethiopia are as beloved and respected Jews as all other Jews. For example, those who learn in our Yeshiva. And in particular, the one who married my granddaughter.  
Rambam's Medicine

Q: Is there value in the medical knowledge brought by the Rambam?

A: No. He did not receive it from Heaven but from the doctors, such as Claudius Galenus, as he notes in his medical writings. We should follow the doctors of our time.

Sign to Be Torah Scholar

Q: I there a sign who is suitable to be a Torah scholar?

A: Everyone can be a Torah scholar. The only condition is that one has a desire to be so. Rambam, Hilchot Talmud Torah Chapter 3. But this does not necessarily mean being a professional Torah scholar. In the future, we will all be Torah scholars.

Revelation of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to Ha-Rav

Q: A message is being spread around on WhatsApp that the Lubavitcher Rebbe revealed himself to Ha-Rav and informed him that the Messiah is coming soon. Is this true?

A: No.

Informing About Birth Close to Shabbat

Q: Baruch Hashem, we had a baby close to Shabbat. Should we inform our families who are not-religious? On the one hand, they might violate Shabbat and drive to the hospital. On the other hand, perhaps they will be upset that we did not tell them.

A: If it is a doubt whether they will violate Shabbat it is permissible. Regarding "Do not place a stumbling block", if one is uncertain that the person will transgress the Halachah, we are "Tolim" (literally "hanging" on the assumption) that he will not violate it (Mishnah Gittin 5:9).

Torah and Tzahal

Q: If all of Am Yisrael learned Torah and fulfilled the Mitzvot, would there be no need for Tzahal?

A: Correct. So it will be in the future, after the beginning of the Messianic era.

Returning Book

Q: I bought an expensive book, read it and was disappointed. I asked in the store whether I could return it since it was within the time limit for return, and was told that I could. Is it permissible?

A: It is immoral to do so.

Fatal Accident on Shabbat

Q: If there is a fatal car accident on Shabbat is it possible to say that it was a punishment for desecrating Shabbat?

A: It is forbidden. 1. We do not know the secrets of Hashem. 2. In the late 5730s, terrorists shot (from a boat) on an Israeli bus that was on a road close to the shore, and a few Jews were killed. When it was related to Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein, they added that the Jews were desecrating Shabbat. Reb Moshe said: It is forbidden to say a bad thing about a Jew when something painful happens to him (Darchei Moshe Volume 2, p. 331).

Birkat Cohanim by 3 Yosefs

Q: Someone told me that it is forbidden for 3 people with the name Yosef to recite Birkat Cohanim at the same time. Is this correct?

A: No.

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#### **Rebuilding the Temple**

##### **Rav Kook Torah**

##### **Uproar Over a New Yeshiva in Jerusalem**

A notice posted in a small (non-Jewish) British magazine in 1921 caused a great stir in the London Zionist office. Confused, the London office dashed off a request for immediate clarification to the Zionist executive in Jerusalem.

The request caught the Jerusalem executive committee by surprise. They in turn forwarded the inquiry to the Chief Rabbi's office in Jerusalem. The inquiry quoted the magazine notice:

"A matter of great significance to the public has been reported from Jerusalem. Chief Rabbi Kook has announced that a new yeshiva or seminary will be established in the holy city, with the goal of instructing men of priestly or Levite descent regarding their Temple duties. The studies will include rites connected to the Temple sacrifices.

The rabbi believes that this matter is extremely pressing, as he is convinced that, with the state of the world at this time, the Jews will once again offer sacrifices to God. Indeed, such a possibility has been long expected by those with insight into Jewish sensitivities, knowledgeable in the prophecies of the Messianic Era." ("The Christian", Dec. 22, 1921)

The Jerusalem executive demanded a response. What was going on? Were there imminent plans to rebuild the Temple and reinstate the Temple service?  
Rav Kook Responds

The reality - a small group of young men studying the Talmudic tractates that discuss the principles and laws governing the Temple service - was light-years away from the London magazine's eschatological portrayal of an academy established for the practical instruction of kohanim. And yet, from Rav Kook's written response, one senses a certain approval for the magazine's interpretation of the significance of the event. And perhaps a measure of disappointment in the reaction of the London Zionist office. Below are excerpts from Rav Kook's dignified reply:

1. It is true that Yeshivat Torat Kohanim was established here [in the Old City of Jerusalem] with the unique goal that scholars who are kohanim will study the Talmudic order of Kodashim, which is the authoritative source for studying all forms of service in the holy Temple.

2. Despite its secular manifestations, the Jewish people's national revival must be anchored in the nation's foundations in holiness. The inner goals of the nation need to be firmly rooted in all matters of holiness.

We must affirm at all times our eternal aspiration that the Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days - openly and with deep faith, without hesitation or misgivings.

3. It is our firm belief that the day will come when all nations will recognize that the place that God chose for all time as the site for our Temple shall be returned to its true owners. There, "the great and holy Temple" will be built,

a house which will become - through the Jewish people - "a house of prayer for all the nations" (Isaiah 56:7), as God has promised.

And even though this yeshiva is entirely and purely an institution for [theoretical] Torah study, the yeshiva's establishment nonetheless contains a subtle message to the world. The nations should not think that we have - even in a fleeting moment of despair, God forbid - conceded to relinquish our rights to the site of the Temple, the cornerstone of all holy places.

In the past, the official British committee questioned my views regarding the Temple Mount and our relationship to it. I responded that, until recently, realizing our national rights to the Land of Israel was universally viewed as an unlikely outcome. Nonetheless, Divine Providence brought about the means so that which was improbable became probable. We are certain that this process will continue, until all peoples will recognize the justice of our rights to our Holy Land, as it is written in Scripture.

So too, the day will come when all nations will recognize the truth of our rights to the Temple area. All will know and recognize that the prophetic vision regarding this holy place - that "My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations" - will only come to pass when this great and holy Temple will be established there, in the hands of its original, eternal owners, the people of Israel, God's people from time immemorial. They and no other.

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The Koren Mesorat HaRav Kinot

Excerpted from The **Koren Mesorat HaRav Kinot**: The Lookstein Edition Kinot

"People respond to the story of an individual personal tragedy more readily than to a national tragedy on a large scale."

The placement of this kina in the sequence of the kinot initially appears odd.

The order of "????? ?????" following "???? ??????" is logical and proper.

However, one would have expected that the kina following "????? ????," which commemorates the martyrs of German Jewry, would have been "?? ??? ???? ??," the second kina pertaining to the Crusades in which Speyer, Worms and Mainz are mentioned by name and the dates of their destruction are recorded. Instead, the story of the death of Rabbi Yishma'el's son and daughter is interjected, interrupting the series of kinot about the destruction of the Jewish communities in Germany. To compound the question, one could also ask why it is necessary to interrupt the description in the kinot of major national catastrophes with a story of a young man and woman who suffered as a result of the Hurban of Jerusalem, but whose deaths did not change the course of Jewish history or the routine of daily Jewish life. The narrative flow of the kinot mourns the destruction of the state, the land and the Beit HaMikdash - all of which changed Jewish history - then the martyrdom of the ten greatest scholars of the Talmud, and then the massacre of thousands of people and the destruction of the most important communities in the Middle Ages, both spiritually and numerically. In the midst of this national commemoration of the tragedies that befell the community, the sequence of kinot is interrupted with the story of the death of two individuals.

The answer is that Judaism has a different understanding of and approach to the individual. We mourn for the individual even if he or she was not a significant person. Rabbi Yishma'el, the father of these youngsters was already killed, and they were orphans. In light of the major calamities, who is responsible to remember a story about an individual young man and woman who were taken captive by some slave merchants? The answer is that we are. We have a special kina dedicated just to them, as if one hundred thousand people were involved, not just two individuals. Their life and their death may not have changed Jewish history, but we suffer and remember. We do not

forget the faceless, nameless individual even in the midst of national disaster and upheaval, even when telling the story of the greatest of all the disasters in our history, the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. In this kina we mourn not for the Jews of Worms or Mainz, not for the Hurban Yerushalayim, and not for the Beit HaMikdash. We mourn for a boy and a girl who were not leaders or scholars and who did not play any major public role. They are as important as the greatest leaders. Sometimes we become so engrossed in the national tragedy that we forget the individual, and the sequence of the kinot is interrupted to highlight the worth of the individual.

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**The Nine Days**

**Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

The Mishnah teaches that "Mishenichnas Av mema'atim b'simchah," "When Av enters, we decrease our happiness," (Taanis 26b). Although the Mishnah does not clarify exactly how we demonstrate our decreased happiness, the Gemara (Yevamos 43a) includes four activities that are banned: one should decrease one's business activities, refrain from construction and planting intended for joyous reasons (Yerushalmi Taanis, cited by Tosafos to Yevamos 43a s.v. Milisa), not conduct weddings and not make a festive meal to celebrate an engagement. (This is the interpretation of the Gemara as explained by the Tur Orach Chayim 551 and by the Ramban in Toras Ha'adam, cf. Rashi ad loc.)

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN CONSTRUCTION AND PLANTING FOR "JOYOUS

REASONS"?

The Mishnah Berurah rules that any construction not necessary for one's dwelling but performed for expansion is prohibited (551:12). Similarly, an improvement to the appearance of a house such as painting, hanging new drapes, wall papering and all house decorating cannot be done during the Nine Days (Piskei Tshuvos). Gardening to enhance the appearance of the property is also forbidden. However, it is permitted to weed, water or mow the lawn during the Nine Days, since these activities are not for enhancement. It is also permitted to plant and maintain a vegetable garden during the Nine Days.

MAY I EXPAND MY HOUSE DURING THE NINE DAYS TO CREATE AN

ADDITIONAL APARTMENT?

While writing this article, I was asked the following shaylah: A family is building a residence for a married daughter and her family by expanding their own apartment into storage rooms and then dividing the entire area into two apartments. For the apartment to be ready on schedule, the contractor says that he needs to work during the Nine Days. Is this permitted?

It would seem that it is permitted to do this expansion during the Nine Days since its purpose is to provide normal living accommodations and not for enhancement.

MAY ONE ENHANCE A SHUL DURING THE NINE DAYS?

Renovations and enhancements for purposes of a mitzvah are permitted during the Nine Days. Therefore, it is permitted to beautify and enhance a shul, yeshiva, or mikvah building or grounds during the Nine Days (Ramah 551:3).

All repair work on existing structures is permitted during the Nine Days (Shulchan Aruch 551:1). Thus, even if a repair is needed as an addition to what was originally built for enhancement, it is permitted to do the repair during the Nine Days.

MAY ENHANCEMENT WORK BE PERFORMED BY A NON-JEW?

There is a halachic difference whether the non-Jew is working as a Jew's employee, or as a contractor who is paid for the job. One may not hire a non-Jewish employee to do work that a Jew himself may not do. However, a non-

Jewish contractor may build an addition on a Jew's property during the Nine Days (see Bach; Elijah Rabbah; Mishnah Berurah). One should offer the contractor some financial compensation to refrain from working on your property during the Nine Days, but one is not required to offer a significant amount of money to get him to wait until after Tisha B'Av (Mishnah Berurah).

#### WEAVING DURING THE NINE DAYS

The Talmud Yerushalmi cites an early custom not to weave during the Nine Days. The reason for this custom is very fascinating. The Hebrew word for "warp" (the lengthwise threads on a loom) is "shesi." This word reminds us of the "shesiyah" stone, which is the foundation stone of the world on which the aron rested in the Beis HaMikdash. In order to remind ourselves that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, we refrain from weaving during the Nine Days (cited by the Tur and Shulchan Aruch 551:8).

#### WHAT PROHIBITIONS APPLY TO CLOTHING DURING THE NINE DAYS?

One may not wear new clothes during the Nine Days, nor may one tailor or purchase new clothes or shoes (Shulchan Aruch 551:6-7). Similarly, it is prohibited to dry-clean clothes or iron them (Shulchan Aruch 551:3). We also refrain from changing tablecloths, towels, and bed linens (Shulchan Aruch 551:3). However, it is permitted to repair shoes and clothes during the Nine Days (Piskei Tshuvos 551:ftn. 157).

Although the Mishnah and Gemara (Taanis 26b and 29b) prohibit doing laundry and wearing freshly laundered clothing only from the Motzei Shabbos preceding Tisha B'Av, the Ashkenazic custom is to refrain from Rosh Chodesh (Rama 551:3).

Because we do not wear freshly laundered clothes during the Nine Days, one should prepare before Rosh Chodesh sufficient clothing already worn since it was last laundered. Towels should also be used at least once before Rosh Chodesh in order to allow their use during the Nine Days.

If one's clothing becomes sweaty or soiled during the Nine Days, one is permitted to change into clean clothes (see Aruch HaShulchan 389:7).

It is permitted to launder children's clothes and linens until the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av (Mishnah Berurah 551:82, quoting Chayei Odom). There is a dispute among poskim until what age this applies. The Rama is lenient and permits the laundering of all children's clothing, whereas several later poskim are stricter (see Piskei Tshuvos ftn. 232, and Chanoch Linaar, 21:2). It is permitted to spot-clean a garment if one is concerned that the stain will set. Furthermore, it is permitted to soak a garment that is dirty without completing its laundering in order to make it easier to clean after Tisha B'Av (Piskei Tshuvos 511:18).

#### WHAT DO I DO IF I AM IN A HOTEL DURING THE NINE DAYS?

If someone is forbidden to use freshly laundered bed linens during the Nine Days, what does one do if one is staying in a hotel or as a guest in someone's home during the Nine Days? Is he permitted to use the freshly laundered sheets? The poskim permit guests to use fresh bed linens since most people are very uncomfortable using unlaundered bed linens slept on by someone else (Shu"t Minchas Yitzchak 10:44; Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer 13:61). The Minchas Yitzchak suggests dirtying the linens on the floor a little before using them. Depending on circumstances, one might also be able to bring one's own used linens. In any instance, one should instruct the hotel not to change the linens once he has used them (until after Tisha B'Av) since the leniency no longer applies.

#### PLEASURE BATHING DURING THE NINE DAYS

The Gemara does not mention any prohibition regarding bathing during the Nine Days. To quote the Ran, "Washing one's body is permitted whether in hot water or cold - and even the entire body - for Chazal only prohibited washing on Tisha B'Av itself. However, meticulous people have the custom not to bathe the entire week."

On the other hand, the Tur, quoting Avi Ezri, writes that the widespread custom is to forbid bathing from Rosh Chodesh until after Tisha B'Av. Furthermore, he states that one who violates this custom is in violation of "al

titosh toras imecha," - do not forsake the teaching of your mother, here referring to the customs of the Jewish people. The Shulchan Aruch records two customs; one to refrain from bathing from Rosh Chodesh and the second to refrain only during the week of Tisha B'Av. The custom is to not bathe for pleasure during the entire Nine Days, but bathing for hygienic and health purposes is permitted. A rav should be consulted as to when and how this applies.

#### WHY IS OUR PRACTICE TO BE MORE STRINGENT THAN THEY WERE AT THE TIME OF THE GEMARA?

In the times of Chazal, the memories of the Beis HaMikdash were still very fresh and a shorter period of mourning was a sufficient reminder.

Unfortunately, with the golus continuing for so long, one needs a longer period of mourning to bring one into the frame of mind of mourning for the loss of the Beis HaMikdash.

#### WEARING SHABBOS CLOTHES

One may not wear Shabbos clothes or other unusually nice clothing during the weekdays of the Nine Days. (Our custom is to wear Shabbos clothes on Shabbos Chazon.) A notable exception is that the celebrants of a bris are permitted to wear Shabbos clothes, since for them the mitzvah is a bit of a Yom Tov.

#### WHO IS CONSIDERED A CELEBRANT REGARDING THESE HALACHOS?

According to all opinions, the baby's parents, the sandek, the mohel, and the woman who brings the baby to the bris (the kvaterin) may wear Shabbos clothes (Rama 551:1). Other opinions extend this heter to include the grandparents and other relatives (Shaarei Tshuvah end of 551:3; see also Piskei Tshuvos), as well as the people who are honored with placing the baby on the kisei shel Eliyahu, those who bring the baby closer to the bris ("cheika"), and the man who functions as the kvatter (Elijah Rabbah). One should ask one's rav for direction what to do. (Incidentally, this discussion is a source that family members attending a bris the rest of the year should wear Shabbos clothes!)

#### EATING MEAT AND DRINKING WINE

Although the Gemara only prohibits eating meat and drinking wine on the day before Tisha B'Av, the accepted Ashkenazic practice is to refrain from eating meat and drinking wine or grape juice from Rosh Chodesh. (Many Sefardim permit eating meat on Rosh Chodesh itself, while others permit this until the Motzei Shabbos before Tisha B'Av.) Early poskim rule that someone who ignores this minhag violates the prohibition of "al titosh toras imecha," (Mordechai, Taanis #639). In addition, some poskim rule that a person who eats meat or drinks wine during the Nine Days violates a Torah law since the Jewish people have accepted this custom as a vow (Aruch HaShulchan 551:23).

#### IF A MOURNER IS PERMITTED TO EAT MEAT, WHY IS ONE NOT PERMITTED EAT MEAT DURING THE NINE DAYS?

This is a very good question. Indeed, the halachos of mourning do not prohibit a mourner from eating meat or drinking wine. The reason one refrains from eating meat and drinking wine during the Nine Days is to remind one of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash where Hashem was served by offering korbanos of meat and wine.

An alternative reason given is that the mourning of the Nine Days is so one does not forget the loss of the Beis HaMikdash, and by forgoing meat and wine we are more likely to remember this loss (Tur Orach Chayim 552). A mourner will not forget his loss during the week of shivah, and therefore there is no need to forbid meat as a reminder.

It is permitted to eat meat at a seudas mitzvah such as on Shabbos or at a bris, pidyon haben, or siyum. People who would usually attend the seudah may join and eat meat. During the week of Tisha B'Av, only a small number of people may eat fleishig at a seudas mitzvah. For example, eating fleishig is restricted to close family members, the sandek and mohel, and an additional minyan of people.

A sick person is permitted to eat meat during the Nine Days. Similarly, someone who has a digestive disorder but can tolerate poultry may eat poultry during the Nine Days. Also, a woman who is nursing or pregnant and is having difficulty obtaining enough protein in her diet may eat poultry or meat during the Nine Days. In these situations, it is preferable for her to eat poultry rather than meat if that will satisfy her protein needs (Aruch HaShulchan 551:26).

A person who eats meat because one is ill or attending a seudas mitzvah will not violate the vow or "al titosh" discussed above because klal Yisroel accepted the minhag of not eating meat with these exceptions in mind (Aruch HaShulchan 551:26).

#### AT WHAT TYPE OF SIYUM IS IT PERMITTED TO EAT MEAT?

One may serve meat at a siyum where the completion of the learning coincides with the Nine Days and where one would usually serve a festive fleishig meal. One should not deliberately rush or slow down the learning in order to have a fleishig siyum during the Nine Days (Eliyahu Rabbah 551:26; Mishnah Berurah 551:73; Aruch HaShulchan 551:28). However, it is permitted to deliberately schedule a seder of learning in advance so that its siyum falls during the Nine Days if this will encourage more Torah to be learned (Aruch HaShulchan 551:28). Some poskim record that they deliberately delayed siyumim that fell during the Nine Days and celebrated them after Tisha B'Av (Aruch HaShulchan 551:28).

One may not eat fleishig leftovers of a seudas mitzvah during the Nine Days (Eliyahu Rabbah 551:26; Mishnah Berurah 551:73).

Incidentally, one sees from these sources that a bris should be celebrated with a fleishig meal, because if not, why are allowances made to eat meat at a seudas bris during the Nine Days? This proves that the seudas bris is not complete without serving fleishig.

#### IS ONE PERMITTED TO USE WINE VINEGAR IN A RECIPE DURING THE NINE DAYS?

Yes, it is permitted to use wine vinegar since it tastes totally different from wine (Rama 551:9).

It is also permitted to drink beer, whiskey and other alcoholic beverages during the Nine Days (see Rama 551:11).

#### MAY ONE TASTE THE FOOD ON EREV SHABBOS CHAZON?

In general, it is a mitzvah of kavod Shabbos to taste the food being cooked for Shabbos to make sure that it tastes good (Magen Avraham 250:1, quoting Kisvei Ari). On Erev Shabbos during the Nine Days one may also taste the food. However, one should try not to swallow food containing meat ingredients (Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah 42:61). No bracha is recited when tasting a small amount of food unless one swallows it (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 210:2).

#### IS IT PERMITTED TO FEED CHILDREN MEAT ON EREV SHABBOS?

In general, it is not permitted to feed children meat during the Nine Days, including erev Shabbos. Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that if the children are fed their Shabbos evening meal before the rest of the family has accepted Shabbos, one may feed them meat at this meal because this is their Shabbos meal (Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 4:21:4).

#### HOW DOES ONE MAKE HAVDALAH DURING THE NINE DAYS?

One recites Havdalah on wine or grape juice. If a young child present is old enough to make brachos but not old enough to understand that we do not eat meat during the Nine Days, that child should drink the Havdalah cup. If there is no such child available, the person reciting Havdalah should drink the wine or grape juice himself.

#### MAY ONE HAVE A FLEISHIG MELAVA MALKA DURING THE NINE DAYS?

Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that one may not, since it is not a universal practice to have a fleishig melava malka (Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 4:21:4).

#### WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE RECITES A BRACHA ON MEAT AND THEN REALIZES THAT IT IS FORBIDDEN TO EAT THE MEAT?

A person who recites a bracha on meat and then realizes that it is the Nine Days, should eat a little of the meat so that his bracha is not in vain, a bracha livatalah. Eating a tiny bit does not provide any simcha and therefore does not conflict with mourning (Sedei Chemed 5:278:5 and 368:4). Furthermore, the person is eating the meat only in order to avoid reciting a bracha in vain. **MAY ONE EAT FLEISHIG SOUP DURING THE NINE DAYS?**

Although it is a dispute among poskim whether this is prohibited, Ashkenazim are strict not to eat soup made with meat or chicken. However, it is permitted to eat food cooked in a fleishig pot that contains only pareve ingredients (Mishnah Berurah 511:63).

#### LITIGATION DURING THE MONTH OF AV

The Gemara (Taanis 29b) teaches that a Jew who has litigation with a non-Jew should avoid scheduling the adjudication during Av, since this is a month in which the mazel for Jews is bad. Should one avoid litigation for the entire month, or only until after Tisha B'Av? Some poskim assume that one should avoid litigation the entire month of Av because the entire month has the same mazel (Magen Avraham). Other poskim rule, however, that the bad mazel is only until the 10th of Av, when the mourning period for Tisha B'Av ends, or until the 15th, which is considered a Yom Tov.

The Chasam Sofer (commentary to Shulchan Aruch) explains that Av has two different mazelos, one before Tisha B'Av and another one afterwards. While the earlier mazel is bad for the Jews, after Tisha B'Av a new mazel begins that is good for the Jews. Thus according to these opinions, there is no problem with scheduling the litigation for shortly after Tisha B'Av.

#### THE REWARD FOR OBSERVING THE NINE DAYS

The Medrash (Medrash Rabbah Shmos 15:21) teaches that Hashem will bring forth ten new creations in the era of Moshiach:

1. He will create a new light for the world.
2. He will bring forth a freshwater spring from Yerushalayim whose waters will heal all illness.
3. He will create trees that every month will produce new fruits that have curative powers.
4. All the cities of Eretz Yisroel will be rebuilt, including even Sodom and Amora.
5. Hashem will rebuild Yerushalayim with sapphire stone that will glow and thereby attract all the nations of the world to come and marvel at the beauty of the city.
6. The cow and the bear will graze together, and their young will play together. (See Yeshaya 11:7).
7. Hashem will make a covenant with all the creatures of the world and banish all weapons and warfare. (See Hoshea 2:20.)
8. There will be no more crying in the city of Yerushalayim.
9. Death will perish forever.
10. Everyone will be joyful, and there will be an end to all sighing or worry.

The Kaf HaChayim (551:1) states that everyone who meticulously observes the halachos of the first ten days of Av, thereby demonstrating his personal mourning over the churban of Yerushalayim, will merit to witness these ten miracles. May we all merit to see these miracles speedily and in our days.

This Shiur is published also at Rabbi Kaganof's site

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Parshas Devarim

The Torah for Eretz Yisrael

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This week, we begin the Book of Devarim. R’ Moshe ben Nachman z”l (Ramban; 1194-1270; Spain and Eretz Yisrael) introduces his commentary to Devarim with the words: “This book, as is known, is ‘Mishneh Torah’ / ‘A Review of the Torah.’ In it, Moshe Rabbeinu explains to the generation that will enter Eretz Yisrael most of the Mitzvot that it will be necessary for them to know.”

R’ Moshe Shapiro z”l (1935-2017; Rosh Yeshiva in several Israeli yeshivot; best known for his lectures on Jewish Thought) asks: Why was entering Eretz Yisrael preceded by a special review of the Torah? The answer cannot be that this was a different generation than the one that received the Torah; therefore, it, too, needed to receive the Torah. The Gemara (Nedarim 22b) teaches that if Bnei Yisrael had never sinned, then the books of the various prophets would never have been written, “only the Five Books of the Torah and the Book of Yehoshua.” This indicates that even if the Sin of the Spies had never taken place and the original generation of Bnei Yisrael had entered Eretz Yisrael, there still would have been a need for five books, including Sefer Devarim.

Rather, R’ Shapiro explains, the necessity for and purpose of this book may be explained as follows: Ramban writes elsewhere in his Torah commentary that the primary performance of Mitzvot is in Eretz Yisrael. Performing Mitzvot in the diaspora, while mandatory and important, is much less significant than performing them in Eretz Yisrael. This means, says R’ Shapiro, that those who live in the diaspora are bound to observe the Torah for only one reason—because it was given at Sinai. In contrast, those who live in Eretz Yisrael are bound to observe it for two reasons—because it was given at Sinai and because the Torah has a special connection to Eretz Yisrael. And, for the latter reason, a second “Giving of the Torah” was held for those who would enter the Land. (Shiurim Al Peirush Ha’Ramban 1:1)

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“These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Yisrael . . . eleven days from Chorev . . .” (Devarim 1:1-2)

Literally, “Chorev” is another name for Har Sinai. However, R’ Shlomo Ephraim z”l of Lenshitz (died 1619) notes the similarity of the Hebrew words “Chorev” and “Churban” and suggests that the phrase, “eleven days from Chorev,” alludes to the eleven days on which we mourn the Churban / destruction of the Temple. They are: the 10th of Tevet, the 17th of Tammuz, and the first nine days of Av. He adds: Because this interpretation is far from the Pshat, I have kept it brief. (Kli Yakar)

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“Eichah / How can I alone carry your contentiousness, your burdens, and your quarrels? Provide for yourselves distinguished men, who are wise, understanding, and well known to your tribes, and I shall appoint them as your heads.” (1:12-13)

Midrash Eichah Rabbah notes that three prophets used the word “Eichah”: Moshe (in our verse), Yeshayah (in today’s Haftarah—Yeshayah 1:21, “How has she become a harlot, faithful city that was full of justice?”); and Yirmiyah (in Eichah 1:1, “How does she sit in solitude, the city that was great with people . . .”). The Midrash continues: This may be likened to a noblewoman who had three servants. One saw her in her days of living peacefully, as Moshe saw Bnei Yisrael; one saw her in her wild days, as Yeshayah saw the Jewish People; and one saw in her in her disgrace, as Yirmiyah saw the nation. [Until here from the Midrash]

R’ Yitzchak Shmelkes z”l (1828-1906; rabbi of Lvov, Galicia) asks: If these three prophets saw the Jewish People in three different states, as the analogy

in the Midrash implies, then why did they prophesy using the same expression—“Eichah”? He explains with another analogy:

There are three types of doctors: Some doctors cannot correctly identify an ailment until its symptoms are quite pronounced. Better doctors can identify the ailment as soon as the patient shows the earliest symptoms. The best doctors can identify an ailment, or a proclivity to a certain ailment, even in a seemingly healthy patient.

R’ Shmelkes continues: The three prophets mentioned in the Midrash were not prophesying about three different states of the Jewish People. Rather, they were all prophesying about the eventual destruction of the Bet Hamikdash and the exile, and therefore they used the same word—“Eichah.” Moshe Rabbeinu was like the third, most expert doctor; even when Bnei Yisrael were living peacefully in the desert, he saw the first hints of the ailment that would ultimately bring disaster. That is why, in our verse, he appointed judges to help guide the nation. Yeshayah’s prophetic vision was less acute; he saw the impending doom only after the first signs were evident. As for Yirmiyah, he saw the forthcoming destruction and exile only when they were all but inevitable. (Bet Yitzchak)

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Tisha B’Av

R’ Zalman Rotberg z”l (1913-2002; Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Bet Meir in Bnei Brak) writes: The Book of Eichah, in which the prophet Yirmiyah poured out his heart over the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash and the exile, teaches us not only about the past, but about the future. Our Sages teach that prophecy can be attained only when one is in a state of joy. This means that Yirmiyah wrote Eichah, which is prophetic, in a state of joy! How is this possible? Because the mere fact that Hashem spoke to Yirmiyah even in the midst of the destruction was a hopeful sign. It indicated that Hashem had not abandoned His people, that His relationship with us has a future.

There is also another reason why Hashem wanted Yirmiyah to view the destruction through the prism of prophecy. The truth is that man cannot fully grasp the significance of either the Bet Hamikdash or its destruction. The Bet Hamikdash was the “residence” of the Shechinah, but just as we cannot fathom the essence of the Shechinah, so we cannot fully comprehend what it means for the Shechinah to have a “residence.” It follows from this, too, that we cannot grasp the great loss when the Shechinah’s “home” was destroyed. Through prophecy, however, Yirmiyah could put some of the loss in perspective for us.

We can learn from this, too, adds R’ Rotberg, that it takes a great person to appreciate the depth of the losses that the Jewish people have suffered. Indeed, the authors of the Kinot / lamentations which we recite were all great scholars and righteous men.

R’ Rotberg relates: All of us sigh or moan when we hear of a person who is ill or who died tragically. But, we do not feel another’s pain the way great people do. The Chazon Ish’s sister (R’ Rotberg’s aunt) used to beg visitors not to enter the Chazon Ish’s study before he had eaten breakfast, because, as soon as a visitor asked him to pray for a seriously-ill relative, the Chazon Ish immediately lost his appetite and became very pained. This is an emulation of Hashem’s own behavior; Chazal say that He appeared to Moshe from a thorn-bush as if to say, “I am suffering with Bnei Yisrael.” (Tuv Da’at III, p. 329)

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What is Sinas Chinam?: Expressing Mutual Admiration

by **Jonathan Rosenblum**

Mishpacha Magazine



August 7, 2019

<http://www.jewishmediaresources.com/2007/what-is-sinas-chinam-expressing-mutual-admiration>

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WHAT IS SINAS CHINAM?

By Yonoson Rosenblum | AUGUST 7, 2019

I recently heard Rav Reuven Leuchter speak during the Three Weeks on the subject of sinas chinam, the sin for which the Second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and for which our long exile continues.

The term sinas chinam, he noted, is a strange one. Even when we experience something akin to hatred, we never think of it as causeless. We may be mistaken about the subject of our dislike, but at least we can usually identify a cause.

To properly define sinas chinam, Rav Leuchter suggested, we must first identify its opposite, the most fundamental love: the love one feels for oneself — as in, "love your friend as [you love] yourself."

Sinas chinam is the opposite of self-love: the rejection of another for no reason other than that he is not me and his way of serving the Borei Olam is different from mine. So long as one cannot accept that Hashem has created each of us different and with his or her unique path to Him, one is engaged in sinas chinam not to mention denial of the Creator Himself, even if he is doing nothing at that particular moment to damage another in any way or even thinking negatively about any particular person.

To illustrate the point, Rav Leuchter recalled a talk he once gave to a group of simple balabatim, most of whom could not read a Hebrew verse. After ascertaining what each one did, he told them how important their livelihoods are in Hashem's eyes. To the builder, he said Hashem desires a world filled with well-constructed buildings; to the manufacturer of floor tiles, Hashem wants beautiful homes; to the shmatteh merchant, Hashem wants people dressed in comfortable garments.

Their eyes lit up, followed by puzzlement. No other rabbi had ever spoken to them in such a fashion. All they had ever heard from visiting speakers was: "The only worthwhile activity is learning Torah; all else is hevel havalim."

That message, to a group of unlearned Jews, Rav Leuchter pointed out, was to deny them any means of serving the Ribbono shel Olam in a meaningful fashion.

RAV LEUCHTER WAS SPEAKING to a room full of Keshar Yehudi volunteers, all of whom work one-on-one with secular study partners. His message to them was succinct: Every Jew has a natural connection to Taryag Mitzvos. But not every Jew is suited to be chareidi. Get rid of any desire that they should become like you — i.e., chareidi.

The volunteers' task, he said, is to help those with whom they are learning to develop a relationship with the Creator, particular to the situation in which they find themselves, both in terms of their natural kochos hanefesh and in terms of their specific background. Chinuch al pi darkam is the goal, not convincing them to be like us.

Rav Leuchter recounted an incident from his days working in kiruv in Haifa. Frequently, he confided, it would have been the easiest thing in the world to use the momentum of those with whom he was working with to pull them into the chareidi camp.

In one case, for instance, a recent baal teshuvah, whose livelihood consisted of singing at weddings, had contracted to sing at a New Year's party and wanted to break the contract.

But the chareidi rav with a long frock told him he had obligations in Choshen Mishpat, and he should just drink another vodka and go ahead. He offered the baal teshuvah as much time learning together as he wanted, and told him not to accept any more such engagements. But in the meantime, he had to fulfill his contractual obligations.

Rav Leuchter would not let him jump ahead of himself. Today that man is raising a frum family. He is no longer singing professionally, but neither is he learning full-time in kollel.

Because he worked with that particular baal teshuvah and many others in the context of their world, not his own, Rav Leuchter was able to help them become balanced, fully functioning religious Jews, not the sad detritus of a kiruv worker too eager to pull them into his box.

Kiruv is but one context in which it is crucial to accept that each of us has a unique path of Divine service.

Each of us has a part to play in the symphony to Hashem's unity. Acknowledging the multiplicity of parts in that song of Divine unity is the key to rediscovering the unity Klal Yisrael experienced at Sinai, and the precondition to the end of our Exile.

Some Mutual Admiration

A few months back, I described a discussion in Baltimore between Rabbi Moshe Taragin of Yeshivat Har Etzion and myself on the different religious communities in Israel. We each began by describing what we view as the particular strengths of the other's community.

In that column, I reported Rabbi Taragin's praises of the chareidi community. But I saved my response, concerning the virtues of his community of hesder yeshivot, for a later date. In light of Rav Leuchter's message above, the time to share my response has come.

I began by expressing my admiration for the emphasis the national religious yeshivot and ulpanot place in their chinuch on inyanei emunah and internalizing a deep faith. That is particularly manifest in the way the community responds to tragedy: the kidnapping and murder of the three yeshivah bochurim in the summer of 2014, battlefield deaths, and drive-by killings on the roads of Judea and Samaria.

Just before Pesach, Rabbi Achiad Ettinger, the founder of a hesder yeshivah in a poor South Tel Aviv neighborhood and father of 12, was shot by an Arab terrorist near the West Bank settlement of Ariel. After Pesach, his wife was interviewed by Israel Radio and asked about the very difficult Pesach the family had just passed.

Without bravado and without denying the pain of her loss, she responded, "It was a Pesach nifla'ah [wonderful]. Why must we always focus on what we lack rather than on what we have?"

One of my sons, a chareidi youngster studying for dayanus, commented after listening to that interview: "When I hear Jews like that, I feel optimistic about the future of the country."

The second point I mentioned was the combination of commitment to Torah and to Klal Yisrael, with the latter often manifested in joining elite combat units. The Baltimore panel took place shortly after the return of the body of Zechariah Baumol, Hy"d, 37 years after the Battle of Sultan Yacoub, in which he was killed or captured, along with two other hesder yeshivah comrades, Yehudah Katz and Zev Feldman, Hy"d.

The religious press was filled with stories of their commitment to Torah learning. Katz wore his tefillin in his tank into battle. His chavrusa at the time of his death, Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, is still waiting to complete the few remaining folios of the tractate they were then learning. When Katz was called up to battle, his chavrusa promised to wait until he returned to make a siyum.

The chareidi world is rightly concerned about the impact of IDF service on both a bochur's religious observance and growth in Torah learning. But that should not keep us from expressing admiration for those who grab every possible moment to learn in the midst of IDF training or even battle.

A remark of Dr. Leo Deutschlander, when he was asked about the fact that both he and Dr. Judith Rosenbaum Grunfeld, two of the central figures of the early Bais Yaakov movement, held PhDs, is apt. He said, "If a person tells you he intends to swim the English Channel, you think, 'What a fool.' If he tells you he swam the English Channel, you are impressed."

I also mentioned the level of tzniyus found in the Rabbi Taragin's community, where full hair covering in the form of a tichel is the norm, and nary a \$5,000 natural-looking, long sheitel is to be found. And finally, I pointed to the self-respect of members of the community. The Rambam's dictum that one should strive never to be dependent on others is fully

observed in the community, and there is no culture of begging as a means of parnassah.

These praises did not cause me for a moment to question the derech I have chosen for myself, even if they did suggest ways in which I might strengthen my own avodah.

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### **The Mass Shootings: Tisha B'Av in America**

#### **by Rabbi Benjamin Blech**

Will the barbaric bloodbath murders in the United States never end?

Nine people were killed and 27 were injured Sunday morning in a shooting in Dayton, Ohio, the latest such incident in a grim week of mass shootings across the nation. The attack came less than 24 hours after a man with an assault-style weapon killed 20 people in El Paso at a Walmart and a week after a gunman fired on a garlic festival in Gilroy, Calif., killing three people, including a 6-year-old boy, and wounding 12.

The El Paso murders and the Dayton killings are but the latest instances of deadly mass shootings in 2019, bringing the total number of such incidents up to at least 17. In the past two years we've been witness to a stunning number of horrific massacres, each one destroying the lives of scores of victims as well as countless families and friends – the Virginia Beach government offices, the plant in Aurora Illinois, the country music bar in Thousand Oaks California, the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, the capital Gazette newspaper offices in Annapolis Maryland, the Santa Fe high school in Texas, the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas high school in Parkland Florida, the church in Sutherland Springs Texas, and the outdoor music festival on the Las Vegas strip.

All these tragedies in the United States of America, land of the free and the home of the brave. All these committed by angry people, people who in their own minds were able to justify the slaying of innocents, the murder of women and children, be they at prayer in their houses of worship, in schools studying to prepare for their future, in malls doing nothing more than browsing and shopping or in social gatherings with friends seeking relief from the stresses of life.

Surely there must be something we can do. Surely there has to be a way to put a stop to this national carnage. And it has gone much too far for us to feel our only response can be to endlessly repeat “our hearts are broken and our prayers go out to you.”

Politicians will try to use the headlines of the moment to bolster their own concerns. We will hear the loud arguments on both sides of the guns agenda. Proponents of the “more funds for mental health” will make their pitch.

Amateur psychologists and sociologists will offer their pat slogans. These have all been the same responses till now.

But perhaps there needs to be another approach that has not yet been tried in contemporary America – but one that has been the Jewish people's response for millennia as a way to cope with indescribable tragedy.

Jews were keenly aware this past weekend that the mass murders in El Paso and Dayton coincided with the beginning of the Hebrew month of Av. Jews around the world began an annual period of mourning for nine days, commemorating the events that led to Tisha b'Av, the ninth day of the month on which both of the Temples were destroyed.

It is instructive to note how Jews chose to remember the loss of the two temples which offered us the greatest connection to God. For more than 2000 years we choose these tragedies to motivate us to identify our own possible moral failings that might have been responsible. Tisha b'Av does not revolve around either the Romans or the Babylonians, the mighty nations directly responsible for putting the torch to the magnificent edifices we built to honor our Creator. Instead it is a national day of repentance, recognizing that our greatest obligation is to acknowledge the transgressions which could've made possible such immense tragedies.

Indeed, the Sages did not shy away from acknowledging the collective sin they saw as true cause of Tisha b'Av: the Temple was destroyed because of *sinat chinam*, because of needless and unwarranted hatred.

What a profound echo of America's failing today. The bloodbaths of mass murder are rooted in a veritable plague of hatred – hatred of other views, hatred of people who differ with us in any discernible way, hatred of anyone to whom we can attach a name or label that can be used to justify our loathing. The very word civilized, implying civil discussions with respect for others who do not share our opinions, can no longer be used to describe a society in which disagreement is met not by tolerance but by total rejection and excommunication.

Look at the social media – at Twitter and Facebook and all the others – and you will see the most vile, abhorrent and unfiltered mudslinging cast into mediums where anonymity allows the cruelest expressions of hatred free reign, unhampered by social etiquette or the demands of respectful dialogue. *Sinat chinam* – baseless hatred – begins with words; it ends with the events of this past weekend.

So I offer my humble suggestion. America needs a national day of mourning like Tisha b'Av. We need to set aside a day to mourn for what was and is no more; for the goodness and the vision that made America so great and the envy of the world; for civility, for respect, for graciousness, for tolerance and for love of others. And we need a day in which we can collectively, seriously and unflinchingly, search our hearts and our souls to determine our own measure of guilt in having allowed our greatness to be diminished by our pettiness and our unequalled success threatened by our moral failing.

Judaism teaches that Messiah will be born on [Tisha b'Av](#). America needs to be reborn. America needs a national day of introspection, reflection – and yes, repentance.

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