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Parashat DEVARIM

9th Av 5775

Shabbat Begins 20:47

Shabbat Ends 21:58

Fast begins 20:59

Fast ends 21:50

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COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET



Rabbi Jonathan Tawil
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WHERE'S MY REWARD?

The Midrash Tehillim says that the Giants Og and Sichon were more formidable adversaries than Pharaoh and his army. Moshe had battled Sichon and won. Now he faced a war against the mighty Og.

Yet before this war, Moshe seems to be worried. Hashem has to reassure him – Al Tirah Otoh (3:2) – do not fear him, for I (Hashem) will place him and his people in your hand.

What was bothering Moshe? Surely a man of the spiritual status of Moshe should not fear Og?

Og was not a normal adversary. He was a Giant with a formidable history.

Og was called "Hapalit", the escapee. He escaped from the Mabul (Targum Yonatan), from the war of the four kings against the five kings (Rashi), and from the war waged by the Ammonite nation against his people (Rashbam). What was the secret of his longevity?

Rashi cites the Midrash, which explains that Moshe was concerned because Og had a special merit for doing a kindness to Avraham hundreds of years earlier. At that time, Avraham's nephew Lot was taken captive. Og ran to Avraham to relate to him the news. Og had intended that Avraham should go to battle against the Four mightiest Kings, where he would be killed, opening the way for Og to take Sarah (Avraham's wife) for himself. Nevertheless this relating of news caused Avraham to save Lot's life and bring about a Kidush Hashem in the world.

Hashem rewarded Og with an additional 500 years because of this merit!

Now Moshe faced this formidable foe, and was worried, perhaps this merits reward was still standing in Og's favour. Let us focus a moment on what is happening here. Og the despicable giant, has a bad intention, yet nevertheless is rewarded for his good actions? Has he not been rewarded enough? The Pesikta DeRabi Elazar brings down that he was rewarded by becoming the King of Bashan. How much reward does a man like this really deserve for a seemingly small and unintentional good deed? And surely Moshe the greatest prophet that ever lived, the True Servant of Hashem should not fear such a giant?

Kibud av Va Em. The Zohar (1:146b) states that it is that Kavod showed to his father, that gave him the merit to rule over us for thousands of years! Hence Zecharia states only after the Kavod has ended; only after that merit has ended will Hashem defeat the wicked.

We see that the ramifications of a good deed are long lasting.

Have you ever heard of Nebuchadnezzar? He was the mightiest Leader Babylon ever saw. The Gemara relates that in his early days Nebuchadnezzar served as a secretary and scribe for a previous Babylonian monarch. Once, when Nebuchadnezzar was absent from work, other royal secretaries of the king drafted a letter to be sent to the Jewish

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END?

Before we answer let us turn for a moment to our current exile.

Chazal tell us that we find ourselves in the Galut Edom – the exile of Eisav. This exile has lasted for two thousand years. It is the longest exile of our people. But when will this exile end? The prophet Zechariya tells us exactly when! (2:12) Achar Kavod Shelachani. Rashi explains that the time will come only once the merit of Eisav has been removed. Which merit are we talking about? Eisav was well known to honour his father Yitzchak. He would be exemplary when it came to

THINK, THINK, THINK!

Which possuk is said in a sad tune in the parsha and why?

The possuk of (1:12). It uses the word "Eicha" and discusses Moshe's frustrations at the people constantly arguing and bickering. It is said in the same tune used for Megillas Eicha. Parshas Devorim is always the week before we read Megillas Eicha.

The possuk (3:11) talks about the giant Og and describes his iron bed being nine amos tall. Chazal (Gemora Brochos 54b) tell us that Moshe was ten amos tall, with a stick of ten amos and jumped ten amos and even then he only reached up to the ankle of Og. What then does the possuk mean?

The Sforno explains that it means the amos measurement not as we know it (by our five or six tefachim) but as the Amas measurement of one of the Refoim giants. An ama in this posuk is measured from the elbow to the middle and tallest finger of the hand of the giant and not the average man's.

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king of Judah, Chizkiah. The letter began: "Greetings to King Chizkiah! Greetings to the city of Jerusalem! Greetings to the great G-d!" When Nebuchadnezzar returned to work and discovered how the letter was written, he was furious. "You call Him 'the Great G-d,' Nebuchadnezzar protested, "and you mention Him *las?*!"

In an isolated moment of moral conduct, Nebuchadnezzar insisted that the letter be redone, and written as follows: "Greetings to the Great G-d! Greetings to the city of Jerusalem! Greetings to king Chizkiah!"

The problem was that the messenger had already been dispatched to Jerusalem with the first version of the letter in his hand. So Nebuchadnezzar ran out to call the messenger back and redo the letter. How far did he

need to run? Merely three steps before he caught the messenger to give him a second version of the letter.

Our sages see this episode as the ultimate cause for Nebuchadnezzar's royal success. In the merit of his taking three steps to honour G-d, Nebuchadnezzar received the crown of royalty for three generations!

This world is a physical world. Our sages note that Behay Alma – in this world there is no reward – no payment for good deeds done. The real payment is infinite and in the next world. Yet Hashem chooses to "reward" the wicked in this world in order to finish from them in the next.

Moshe understood that there is an eternal payment for acts of good; he was worried that Og's merit still warranted him being alive.

Therefore Hashem had to tell him, do not worry, his time has come, he has enjoyed enough reward for his actions.

The reward granted to these wicked people for their good actions in this world seems massive. Og the giant gets long life, lives as a mighty ruler; Nebuchadnezzar receives the monarchy for generations. Wow all that for such a small action. Yes! Even small actions count. Yet we must note that the real reward for our deeds is in the next world. We must realise that Hashem guards each and every mitzvah we do, every Amen we say, every Shabbat we keep, every act of kindness, it is all there in front of Hashem.

From the reward these wicked people received for their seemingly small acts of good, we can fathom the reward that we will receive for every Mitzvah – Ah how lucky we are!



Rabbi Raphy Garson
Ohr Yisrael Synagogue Elstree

Director Hertfordshire Learning Experience

BUILDING THROUGH TEARS

Shabbat Chazon is the call to the annual global meeting. A meeting of pain, collective tragedy and a meeting of introspection. This meeting does not take place in executive board rooms, but on hard floors. Those who attend are forlorn, fasting and most of them hopefully cry during this meeting.

As the most persecuted of nations we could mourn daily, but we keep our emotions in check, bar one day when the wellsprings from within surge forth.

Our Sages have a well know axiom "*the gates of tears are never closed*". The Gerrer Rebbe z"l once asked if the gates are never closed, why did Hashem make them in the first place? He suggested that although sincere tears always gain admission above, the gates are needed to shut out false tears which are abominable to God. Rabbi Feur suggests that although not "locked" they are closed – and can only be opened as far as the flow of tears will push them.

Of all the Gematriyot (numerical calculations) I have come across, it is one of the Yaabevtz that is the most beautiful. He pointed out that "*Bechi*" weeping = 32. The same numerical value of *Lev/Heart*. Tears are only meaningful, if they are sincere expressions of the heart. *Shifchi Kamayim Libech (Eicha 2:19)* – The Prophet reminds us to pour our hearts out!

It is said that the *Chatam Sofer* would already be sobbing in anticipation of this day. He would collect every tear in a cup and when he ate his final meal dip his bread into the tears and ashes. Thus fulfilling the passuk in Tehilim "*Ki Efer Kalechem Achalti For I have eaten ashes like bread – and mixed my drink with my tears.*" (102)

Real tears are shed out of a deep sincere feeling and are the most genuine expressions of the human essence. Rav Hirsch put it beautifully... "Tears are the sweat of the soul". When we are moved honestly or agitated we cry!

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Rabbi Aryeh Levin z"l, was a man of rare compassion. He visited a recently widowed woman. She broke down into wailing sobs and he tried to console her.

"Rabbi I will accept your words or consolation on one condition. Tell me where are my tears? I prayed & prayed for my late husband, I said Tehillim after tehilim, and shed 1000s of tears. Why were they wasted?"

Gently he replied "After 120 you will ascend to the world of truth and you will see how meaningful those tears were.. You will discover that God himself gathered them and counted ever single drop. And when a harsh decree was looming over the Jewish People, one of your tears came and washed away that evil decree. One sincere tear can be a source of a *Yeshua, salvation!*

Upon hearing his message she began to cry. This time not with tears of sorrow and grief, but of courage and hope.

Rav Yehudah Sadka z"l, said it poignantly. "Tears shed on *Tisha B'av* are tears of hope". One doesn't cry over something that cannot be rectified. If someone loses a relative the pain is real and tears flow. But they don't flow forever. After a year the gift called "*forgetting*" kicks in and one moves on with life. And yet for almost 1950 years Jews gather to sit and mourn. The tears are indicative that there is a future, there is hope!

Our Rabbis understood that it is very hard to suddenly become mourners. Especially for something that occurred so many years ago. Which is why we have been building up to this moment the last 3 weeks. The 3 weeks physiologically prepare us for the night of mourning. And yet the Sefat emet was asked "*What should one do if he feels no anguish over the Churban(Destruction)?*" "*He should be consumed with pain and anguish over his own personal Churban. If a Jew doesn't feel pain over the Churban – it shows his soul is in a wretched state*".

All of us feel the loss to some degree. But it is incredibly hard for one generally not emotional to shed tears. Perhaps then we should be focusing on more recent events to be the conduit to open up those channels behind our eyes.

All calamities and tragedies that have befallen our people are connected directly to the destruction of our Temples, and the Churban most fresh in our minds occurred a mere 60 years ago. And that we can cry over.

I have been privileged to lead ten trips to Poland together with the amazing organisation JROOTS. On a recent trip to Poland, whilst standing in the death camp of Birkenau, I shared the following story with our group.

Rav Yona Furst was born in Vienna, and became great torah scholar. He was deported to Slovakia, and through the intervention of Rabbi Weissmandl, he returned to the city of Nitra. In 1944 he was deported to Auschwitz.

→ p4

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Tales Of Tzadikim HaRav Zion Abba Shaul

During Rav Ben Tziyon Abba Shaul tenure as rosh yeshiva, people came to him not just to learn Torah, but also to receive his blessings and advice.

Once, a father whose son was critically ill came to Reb Ben Tziyon. The doctors had recommended a treatment for his son that was very risky, and he was unsure whether to give them the go ahead to do it.

"Take him out of the hospital," Reb Ben Tziyon advised him.

The father followed Reb Ben Tziyon's advice, but it proved to be rather complicated. Taking a seriously ill patient out of the hospital is no simple affair, since in such cases hospitals refuse to release medical records to the patient's relatives. In this case, the hospital

staff went so far as to call in the police, and it was only due to the intervention of a community leader that charges weren't pressed against the family.

In the end, the child recovered-without the treatment, the consequences of which may have been dire.

Reb Ben Tziyon disagreed with doctors on many different occasions, and his diagnosis would invariably prove to be correct. How was this possible? He never studied medicine, nor did he have access to X-ray machines or ultrasound devices. As the Chovot Halevavot says, "One who lives a life of faith merits to see without an eye, to hear without an ear. His soul sees" (Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh, Ch. 3).

Reb Ben Tziyon also gave advice on family matters. His approach was innovative-and invigorating.

A father whose son had left yeshiva told Reb Ben Tziyon, "My son's a good-for-nothing. He not only roams the streets, but he has even asked me to buy him a motorcycle."

"Then buy him one!" replied Reb Ben Tziyon.

Though surprised by Reb Ben Tziyon's reaction, the father decided to heed his advice and bought his son a motorcycle. When the young man saw that his father was reaching out to him, he reacted in kind and eventually returned to yeshiva.

THINK, THINK, THINK!

Why do we find an unusual spelling of Yehoshua in Parshas Devorim (3:21) with an additional letter Vov?

The Maharil Diskin says that Yehoshua needs to be written thirty-one times in the Torah to imbue him with strength to conquer the thirty-one kings in Eretz Yisroel. However, his name only appears thirty times. By having it written here with an additional Vav it is like it is written again, making thirty-one times.

How long did it take Moshe Rabbeinu to say Sefer Devorim?

Moshe started saying it on the first of Shevat (1:3) and he died on the 7th of Adar. Assuming the month of Shevat had thirty days then the whole of Sefer Devorim was said over thirty-seven days!

Parshas Devorim is always the last of the three weeks. How is this significant?

Parshas Devorim contains Moshe's words of rebuke to the Jews. The haftora of Chazon is connected to the parsha as it contains Yeshaya's rebuke about the churban. This is appropriate to hear before Tisha B'Av.

Jewish tradition says that the world will last 6000 years. How is the sixth and last of these thousand years alluded to in Sefer Devorim?

There is a tradition from the Vilna Gaon that there are ten parshios in Sefer Devorim, since Parshas Nitzovim-Vayalech are considered as one. Each parsha deals with one hundred years. (According to this, the current year 5775, is in the century that parallels the 7th parsha of Ki-Sovoil!)

How is Sefer Devorim different to the other four Chumoshim?

Sefer Devorim is called "Mishna Torah" that can mean "repeat of the Torah" as much of what is there is a repetition of things mentioned in the other Chumoshim.

Dear Rabbi,

In Mesechet Shabbat page 108b and under Rashi's comments #46 it says "An evil spirit called bat melech rests on the hands in the morning." Where does this spirit come from? Why the name 'princess' and not any other name? Why do the hands need to be washed three times each, and not two or four times for that matter?

"Bat melech" or Princess is the name of a certain "evil spirit," a type of spiritual impurity, which rests on a person's hands in the morning. The name "bat melech" connotes some sort of prominence this spirit enjoys among other spirits.

This impurity rests on a person during sleep because the person is as if dead, not moving or performing mitzvot with the accomplishing tools, the hands. Thus, when we wake in the morning, we remove this impurity by pouring water over our hands three times. Water symbolizes Torah, and the number three symbolizes the three aspects of Torah - Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim (The Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Writings). Torah study has the power to fend off any impurity, as it causes you to meditate on G-d's omnipotence and helps you to understand that the "spirit" has no power of its own if not for the will of G-d.

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He survived the war and became the Mashgiach (*Spiritual Dean*) of Nitra Yeshiva in Mount Kisco. He used to elaborate on specific incidents, highlighting the great strength and faith of our people.

Towards the end of the war he was relocated to the *Theresienstadt* concentration camp. Rosh Hashana 1944, at clear risk to their lives, group of Jews gathered in secret for prayer.

It was not hard to imagine the outpouring of emotions at this time. People who only short while earlier spent holidays with their family, now stood in shadow of death. It is clear that their heartfelt prayers burst the gates of heaven open."

When the service finished, one inmate asked "What about Kiddush?" Prisoners stared in

shock; contemplating wine in *Theresienstadt* was like trying to fly to the moon!

"Listen my friends and you will appreciate the spiritual wellsprings that lie dormant in every soul! Even at the gates of death, our holy nation did not lose its G-dly image... I suggest we make a *kiddush shem shomayim* – a public sanctification of Hashem's name, the like of which the world has never witnessed in history!!

Let us make Kiddush on a commodity so dear, available in great quantities, even in this hell! Let us substitute wine for our tears! Tears that break all iron barriers!"

A cup was placed in the room and in moments it was filled with the hot tears of those unfortunate Jews. He raised his voice and began the traditional melody for the *Rosh*

Hashana Kiddush "Asher bachar banu miko, am... who has chosen us from all the nations"

"It is hard for a mortal to envision the deep pride and holiness that permeated us at that moment. Despite our beatings, and sufferings we were still Hashem's children, that lifted us up from other nations and sanctified us with a heavenly holiness – unparalleled by any other nation!!"

The Talmud reminds us that Kol hamit-abel al Yerushalayim zocheh v'roeh besimhatah – "Whoever mourns for Jerusalem will be worthy to witness her jubilation" (Baba Batra 60b)

May we find the inner strength to reflect and feel the pain of our people and may we be worthy to shed tears of joy, with the rebuilding of our 3rd Temple, speedily in our days. Amen.



HALACHA
Rabbi Dov Levy

TISHA BE'AV

Since the fast day should be on Shabbat, are there any differences this Shabbat?

Public mourning is forbidden on Shabbat, therefore no outward signs of upset or sorrow may be expressed. There are those who refrain from learning Torah from midday onwards on Shabbat, like any other Erev Tisha Be'Av. However if the alternative to learning is doing nothing, it is preferable to rely on the opinions allowing all learning up until sunset of Shabbat.

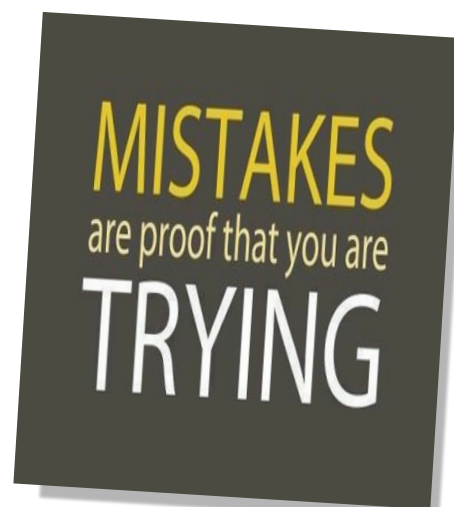
Since Tisha Be'av is on Sunday are there any restrictions after the fast?

You should not eat meat or drink wine (except for Havdalah) until Monday morning. Other than that there are no restrictions once the fast goes out.

What does Havdalah consist of on Sunday night?

Havdalah is made on Sunday night on a cup of wine with the beracha of Hamavdil. One should make the beracha Borei Meorei Ha'Esh on Motsaei Shabbat. No Besamim are used on either night.

QUICK QUOTE...



...Hmmm

This year the ninth of Av is Shabbat so 'Tisha Be'Av' is pushed off to Sunday.



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