



# Menucha v'Simcha



A PARSHA WEEKLY BY THE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY KOLLEL

Candle Lighting: 8:15p.m.

**Parshas Chukas 5774**

Vol. 10 Issue. 31

## DVAR TORAH

### Symbolism in Judaism

By Rabbi Yosef Prupas

The common perception of death is fear, dark, and doom. Life ends and what is beyond is an abyss of the unknown. In Judaism, however, the idea of “passing on” has a whole different meaning. The righteous are unfazed with the prospect of moving into another world. This world is only a corridor leading to the main room of the palace. The work of this world is rewarded in the next.

This attitude resonates in the seemingly unfortunate occurrences in this week's Parsha. When the venomous serpents attack, Hashem commands Moshe to erect a pole with a replica of a snake on top. Moshe is informed that when the victims direct their attention to the top of the pole they will be healed. The Gemarah asks the following question, “Do you think it is the snake that kills or gives life? Rather, when the Jewish People looked up they would make themselves subservient to their Father in Heaven and be healed. If not, the venom would have its effect.” This is difficult to understand. What was the need for a copper snake on top of a pole? Why didn't Hashem just command them to look up at the heavens and they would be healed? The Maharal tells us that placing the source of affliction in their direct line of vision would cause them to pray with greater intensity.

A similar concept is derived from the juxtaposition of the story of the death of Miriam with the laws of the *para aduma* (red heifer). Our sages tell us that we learn from this that just as the *para aduma* brings purity to the impure, so too the death of the righteous brings forgiveness to the Jewish People. This explanation is puzzling, since the concept of human sacrifice runs contrary to the basic tenets of Judaism! The Meshech Chochma explains, it is not the death that brings forgiveness, rather it is the effect of the death that brings repentance. Shock from the death of a special person brings on a sense of remorse. People repent after being shaken from their complacency and their sense of guilt over having not taken heed to the words of the righteous one. They regret not having taken the opportunity to

learn more and grow from the teachings from the *tzaddik* that was in their midst. These feelings serve as a catalyst for greater introspection and to seek atonement for their sins.

Suffering, pain, and death are not the result Hashem desires for His people. Rather, only when the subtle hints remain unnoticed, does Hashem employ physical aids to prompt us and set us on the path of repentance. The death of the *tzaddik* is of no consequence to him. The world he enters is far better than the one he left. The symbolic snake, created solely by the command of Hashem, served to bring those who sinned to greater remorse.

External stimuli are not new to Judaism. Hashem gave us positive symbols as well, such as *teffilin*, *mezuzos*, and *tzitzis*, to serve as constant reminders of our service and subservience to the One Above. May the positive reminders be sufficient to maintain our path of growth. And may we merit the day when death, pain, and suffering will be forever abolished from our lives

## DVAR HALACHA

### Laws of the Three Weeks

part 1

By Rabbi Yochanan Eskenazi

In the year 3828 (68 CE) on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of *Tammuz*, *Titus* broke thru the walls of *Yerushalayim*. Three weeks later on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of *Av*, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed. During that time period over one million men, women, and children were killed. After the *Churban* the Jewish people were exiled from our land and tormented by our oppressors. For close to 2000 years (this year 5774, will be 1946 years since the destruction) the Jewish people have been cast into the role of the “wandering Jew”. Throughout our history we have been persecuted and even until this day we see much anti-Semitism. Our *Chazal* teach us, all the tragedies and oppressions the Jewish people have suffered throughout our history, has their roots in the period of *Bein Hamitzarim*. We observe every year the “Three Weeks” as a period of commemoration and national mourning over the loss of our homeland of *Eretz Yisroel*, *Yerushalayim* and especially of the *Bais Hamikdash*.



Menucha Vesimcha has been dedicated by **Raizy's Art Class**  
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The Rambam [Hilchos Melachim 12:4] writes that the reason why *neivim* (prophets) and *chachamim* (sages) mourn for the loss of the *Bais Hamikdash* is not for the desire to live the glorious life of “the land of milk and honey” and so that the Jewish people the rulers of the world. Rather they mourn the fact that we do not have the liberty to completely devote ourselves to the study of *Torah* in order to merit *Olam Haba*. We long for the opportunity to become the best people that we can be; to perfecting ourselves like the opportunity our ancestors had.

There are five levels of *aveilus* (mourning) observed during the Hebrew calendar dates between the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz* until the 10<sup>th</sup> day of *Av* [the day after *Tisha B'Av*]. This period is referred to as *The Three Weeks*. The closer to *Tisha B'Av* it is, the degree of mourning intensifies. The *halachos* being discussed here are exclusively for the 13 days from *Shiva Asar B'Tammuz* [17<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*] until *Rosh Chodesh Av* [which begins the period that is known as “the Nine Days”].

*Chazal* teach us that 5 tragic things happened to the Jewish people on *Shivah Asar B'Tammuz*; *Moshe Rabbeinu* broke the 1st *luchos* [when he saw the Jewish people serving the Golden Calf], the *Kohanim* were prevented by *Nevuchadnezzar's* army from bringing the *korban tamid* [which was not brought again until the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Bais Hamikdash*], the walls of *Yerushalayim* were destroyed [which led to the destruction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Bais Hamikdash*], the Greek general *Apastomus* publicly

burned a *Sefer Torah*, and an idol was placed in the *Bais Hamidash* (Mishnah Taanis 26b). Since these tragedies occurred on *Shevah Asar B'Tammuz*, *Chazal* designated this day as a public fast day (Shulchan Aruch 549:1 & Mishneh Berurah 549:2).

It is important to note, the *Gemara* makes no mention of the restrictions of any activities starting from the Three Weeks. The *Gemara* mentions that *Chazal* wanted to prohibit eating meat all year because of the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*, but they saw that *klal yisroel* would not be able to handle it (Gemara Bava Basra 60b). At some point in history, our *Chazal* instituted that there are restrictions starting from *Shiva Asar B'Tammuz*, which continue until after *Tisha B'Av*. However, it is clear that these restrictions were rooted in the *Gemara*.

Prohibited activities include; haircutting and shaving, joyful activities [such as music, singing, dancing, and weddings], reciting *birchas she'hechyanu* [the blessing recited for buying new things], and other miscellaneous potentially dangerous activities.

There is a *machlokes haposkim* whether the prohibitions start at *shkiyas hachamah* (sunset) or *tzaitz hakochavim* (nightfall) of *Shiva Asar B'Tammuz*. Many *poskim* hold that it starts at *shkiya* (Laws of Daily Living, Three Weeks, pg. 31 & Koveitz Halachos 4:1 & ftnt. 1). The opinion of *Harav Moshe Feinstein*, *zt"l* is they start at *tzaitz hakochavim* (Igros Moshe OC 1:168, 3:100, 4:112:2).

## Kollel News

### Friday, June 27:

8:15 p.m.: Candle Lighting

8:33 p.m.: Shkiya/sunset

### Shabbos, June 28:

8:15 a.m.: *Shacharis*

8:43/ 9:19 a.m.: Latest Krias

Shema

*Chaburas Chacham Lev*

*Rabbi Eskenazi's Ramban Shiur*

**1. Women's Rosh Chodesh Tammuz Shiur: THIS Shabbos!** You are invited to join us in honor of Rosh Chodesh Tamuz to hear Rabbi Yechiel Biberfeld speak on the topic: "Opening the Door for *Moshiach*" Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, Parshas Chukas, June 28, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.—at the Kollel.

**2. Special Learning Seder In the Merit of Our Three Boys:** In the

**5:00 p.m.: Women's Rosh Chodesh Shiur**

5:15 p.m.: Special Learning Seder in merit of Our Three Boys

6:00 p.m.: Mincha

8:33 p.m.: Shkiya/ Sunset

9:28 p.m.: Ma'ariv.

9:45 p.m.: 72 minutes

merit of our three boys, a special seder at the Kollel will take place this Shabbos afternoon— 45 minutes prior to Mincha: 5:15- Special Learning Seder 6:00- Mincha.

**3. Mazel tov to the Kollel rabbis upon the completion of Me-sechta Niddah!** With gratitude to Hashem Yisborach we invite the community to a special *siyum* Kiddush this Shabbos at the Kollel, following davening. After almost a year of intense learning, the Kollel rabbis have completed the entire mesechta of Niddah and will be celebrating this Shabbos with a *siyum*.

### Community News:

#### Mazal Tov:

**David and Kineret Shakov** on the birth of a granddaughter to their children, Yaakov and Tziporah.

**David and Ellen Weiss** on the engagement of their son, Meir to Sarah Bena Winiarz.

**Barry and Miriam Gesserman** on the upcoming wedding of their son, Yoni!

**Ms. Esti Lordjan** on the upcoming wedding of her daughter!

If you would like to receive *Menucha Vesimcha* by weekly email or to sponsor an issue of *Menucha Vesimcha* in someone's honor / memory, please contact the editor at:

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