



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

בס"ד

ח' אב
8 Av

Besamei HaTorah ... Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

איכה (א:12) * How (1:12)

There is a difference of opinion between Rebbe Yudah and Rebbe Nechemiah. Rebbe Yudah says that איכה is an expression of rebuke as it says in Yirmiyahu (8:8) 'איכה תאמרו חכמים אנחנו' – 'How can you say, 'We are wise'? Rebbe Nechemiah says that איכה is an expression of lament as it says in Eichah (1:1) 'איכה ישבה בדד' – 'Alas, she sits in solitude'. [Medrash HaGadol]

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The Torah emphasizes the gigantic size of Og's bed (3:11). Sforno expounds on the necessity of mentioning this fact which seems so trivial. By accentuating the size and strength of these people, we can realize that it is unnatural for them to have been defeated by a standard army. However, the nation of Ammon *does* defeat them, only because that is the will of Hashem. Although these facts seem trivial, they are essential to stress that Hashem has the ability to do anything, and is not limited to natural parameters.

Tisha B'Av Reflections

Rav Ephraim Wachsman said a story. One man, a student of Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, ז"ל, the late Mashgiach in Kaminitz, remembers the time when the Yeshivah was forced to flee and take up quiet residence in a small town under Russian occupation. With the Communists on the search for Yeshivah students, tension was in the air. One day, the police abruptly entered the town, which threw everyone into a state of panic, including the Yeshivah students. When Rav Baruch Ber learned of his students' reaction, he was disturbed. He said, "We cannot lose ourselves. We need to strengthen our Emunah in Hashem." As such, he established that each day they should recite the Thirteen Ani Maamin. And indeed, the students started doing so. Together, the Yeshivah poured out their worried hearts to Hashem, trusting that He would take care of them. A few days later, the police arrived and arrested the entire Yeshivah. It was horrible, the officials taking the students in groups to prison. But while the police may have been able to take away the physical liberty of the students, they had no sway over squelching their spirit. In unison, the students hummed the encouraging words of Yeshaya HaNavi (8:10), "Utzu Eitzah V'Sufar Dabru Davar V'Lo Yakum Ki Imanu Keil," our enemies devise a scheme, speak a plan, and it will not be successful, for Hashem is with us! The quiet energy was palpable between the students, their spirits aflame despite the terrifying circumstances they were walking into. The next thing they knew, they were transported to Siberia. Yet they sang their way to Siberia, calming themselves with the same tune. Our enemies will attempt to harm us, but it will be to no avail, for Hashem is on our side. Three days later, the Germans entered that small town, and massacred everyone. The entire Yeshivah was saved.

It is clear that everything Hashem does is for our good. Something obviously good is easily felt as good. But what about something that is not readily apparent to be good? The answer is the same. Everything Hashem does is for our good. Nothing changed, except one thing. We don't understand how it is good. It is good, and that is a fact. A fact that by itself we can take comfort in. Our comprehension may be lacking, and we cannot wrap our minds and hearts around it, but that doesn't change the fact. It is good because Hashem is good, and He knows what He is doing. Do we really know what is for our good? Our understanding or lack of understanding doesn't change that truth. Hashem has a plan, and He knows what that is, even if we are in the dark about it!

פרשת דברים - שבת חזון תשפ"ה

Parashas Devarim 5785 Pirkei Avos 3

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg
Staten Island Z'manim

Erev Shabbos:

Plag HaMinchah: 6:43

Candle Lighting: 7:53

Sh'kiah: 8:11 זמן וע' Tzeis: 8:58

Shabbos Kodesh:

Sof Z'man Krias Shema:

Mogen Avraham: 8:52 Gra: 9:28

Sof Z'man Tefillah (Shacharis): 10:40

Chatzos: 1:02 Sh'kiah: 8:10

Havdalah: Tzeis HaKochavim: 8:57

Rabbeinu Tam (72 minutes): 9:23

(some say 9:46)

Next Week: Va'eschanan

Candle Lighting: 7:45

Feeling Tisha B'Av

Rav Gad Eisner, ז"ל, better known as Rav Gad'l, was the beloved Mashgiach of Yeshivah Sfas Emes in Tel Aviv. He inspired thousands of Yidden during his lifetime. People wanted to be close to him not only because of his Torah wisdom, but because he overflowed with happiness and made everyone around him feel happy. But there was a time in his life when he didn't know how he could go on living. It was at the end of World War II. The Germans were losing the war, so they emptied out the camps where the Jews were imprisoned and marched them from one location to another. The Jews were exhausted, starving, and dressed in rags. Many of them couldn't keep going. The Nazis solved the problem by shooting anyone who stopped marching. Rav Gad was one of those people, and he just couldn't go on. He laid down on the ground, no longer caring if he lived or died. But his friend yelled, "Gad! Get up! Run!" Rav Gad told his friend to go on without him. He was finished. But then his friend called him again. "Gad'l, please get up!" Hearing his name with the "l" at the end, as he was called by his loving parents, woke up Rav Gad's will to live. He suddenly remembered what it was like to feel precious, protected, and loved. He got up and continued forward. He survived, and with his unique gifts, he helped rebuild Klal Yisroel!

✪ *Echoes of Tisha B'Av*

Rav Zev Smith relayed about Rav Nesanel Quinn, *zt"l*, who served as the *Menahel* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath for close to fifty years. Tisha B'Av was not just a lesson, it was an experience. Rav Smith said: As a young *Bachur*, I went to Rabbi Quinn's *Eichah Shiur*, a week or so before the fast. To see him stand and cry in advance of Tisha B'Av needed no elaboration. On Tisha B'Av itself, I would sit next to him, even if just to witness for the wailing that we heard from him. He had *Yartzeit* on *Shabbos Chazon*, the *Shabbos* before Tisha B'Av. He read the *Haftorah*, and he did not want someone else to read it, because that *Haftorah* uses the *Trop* from *Eichah*, which is a tune of mourning, and some people find this unsuitable for *Shabbos*. So Rav Quinn *Lained* it himself. But he made matters worse. He would start choking up and then cry, over the *Churban* theme in the *Haftorah*. He would teach the *Halachos* in *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 180)*, "Before *Bentching*, one should remove the knife from the table." One of the reasons is because someone was once *Bentching*, and when he reached the words, "*U'V'nei Yerushalayim*, Rebuild Yerushalayim," he became so distraught that he took the knife and stabbed himself. Rabbi Quinn asked, "What are the chances that today someone will do this, that the *Shulchan Aruch* should call for removing the knives? He said that *Chazal* were teaching us a lesson. "Look how a *Yid* felt about the *Churban*! He simply couldn't live without Yerushalayim!" Rav Smith said, "A friend of mine was at a wedding where the family gave Rabbi Quinn the last of the seven *Brachos* that are said under the *Chupah*. When he reached the words '*Od Yishamah*, Let there be heard in the cities of Yehudah and the streets of Yerushalayim sounds of joy,' he was so overcome with emotion that it took him a few minutes to regain his composure. This incident was shared with the family at the *Shivah*, and they said, 'We never gave Rabbi Quinn the last *Brachah* at a family *Chupah*. He couldn't handle it!'"

Pearls of Wisdom... A Word for the Ages

After World War II, there was a *Yid* who was completely broken, who could not be comforted by anyone. He had lost his entire family, and eventually, he left *Yiddishkiet*, *R"L*. One day, someone brought him to see the *Klausenberger Rebbe*.

The *Klausenberger Rebbe* held his hand tight, and he cried with him. The *Rebbe* said to him, "They took the best ones, and they left us! They took the best ones, and they left us!" The *Klausenberger Rebbe* repeated those words again and again. They both cried and cried each time he repeated it, with more intense tears. After that meeting the fellow was able to start his life anew. He came back and built a family, which he raised as a *Frum* family. He explained that everything changed when he met the *Klausenberger Rebbe*, because he then knew there was someone who felt his pain!"

✪ *L'Maaseh*

Rav Eliyahu Munk, *zt"l*, was the chief Rabbi of Paris in the years before the Holocaust, and when the war was over, he did not abandon the city. He and his wife moved back to their hometown, where they raised a family. As his children got older, it became very clear that their *Shidduchim* were not to be found in France, and one by one, the Munk children traveled to America. Some went to *Yeshivah*, and some went to meet their husbands. One of the older Munk boys, Yaakov, was learning in *Yeshivah* Rabbi Chaim Berlin, and his *Rosh Yeshivah* was Rav Yitzchak Hutner, *zt"l*. By the age of twenty-five, he had been dating for some time already, and when he got engaged, the family's *Simchah* was particularly special. Rav Munk purchased a plane ticket from Paris to New York, intending to meet the *Kallah* and her parents, and to visit his children who were living there. But by the time he had landed in New York, the engagement was off. Rav Munk came off the plane to find his miserable son putting on a brave face. He escorted his father to the home of his married sister in Boro Park, where he would stay for the next few days. Although there was no *Kallah* to introduce, Rav Munk had every intention of spending some time with the children. His father's presence was a source of calm and reassurance to Yaakov. They made up for lost time, learned *B'Chavrusah* together, and spend *Shabbos* together as a family. But soon it was time for him to go back to Paris. There was a city waiting for its *Rav*. On the day of the return trip, Yaakov went to drive his father to the airport. On his way out of *Yeshivah* to take his father, he was stopped by none other than his *Rosh Yeshivah*, Rav Hutner. Rav Hutner said, "Yaakov, I have something extremely important I need to discuss with you. As soon as your father gets on the plane, find the nearest pay phone in the airport and call me collect." Yaakov told his *Rosh Yeshivah* that he would call him. At the airport, it was not a pleasant goodbye. Yaakov put on his most stoic face as he waved his father off. Once he had gone, the pain hit him in waves, crushing him with utter loneliness, his marriage canceled, his parents an ocean away. He slumped into an airport seat, when he remembered Rav Hutner's urgent matter! Though he was in no mood to run an errand, or to do anything but cry, he went into the nearest phone booth and called Rav Hutner collect. The operator connected him. When Rav Hutner came on, he did his best to keep the trembling out of his voice. "It's Yaakov Munk. The *Rosh Yeshivah* had something for me to take care of?" Rav Hutner said, "Yes. This is a very emotional time for you. Your father just left, and you have a broken engagement. It's difficult. Talk to me, Yaakov. Just talk." The dam burst open. Yaakov poured out his heart, tears streaming down his face. For the next 30 minutes, Yaakov stumbled over the words to describe the hurt and disappointment of the past few weeks. And the *Rosh Yeshivah* listened. Years later, Rav Yaakov Munk would reflect on Rav Hutner's thoughtfulness. How had he known to be there exactly at his lowest moment? Rav Hutner had put himself in young Yaakov's shoes, visualizing the emotional ups and downs of the past few weeks, and the minutes during which he would most desperately need an outlet for his repressed feelings, and had made himself available at exactly that moment. It was a tremendous lesson in *Chesed*. And everyone can do this. We can also perform real acts of *Chesed* that will be truly appreciated by the recipient, and all it takes to follow in Rav Hutner's footsteps, is asking ourselves two questions: When will this person need me the most? And in that moment, how can I help him?

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