

Bnos Tween Light Chodesh Newsletter

CHODESH TAMUZ



“ויקח קרח”

“Korach separated [lit., took] himself.” (16:1)

QUESTION: Why does the Korach episode in the Torah start with the word “vayikach” — “and he took”?

ANSWER: There once appeared to Rabbi Nachum of Chernobyl an impressive looking person who offered to teach him esoteric Torah knowledge. He replied, “Before I can agree to accept your offer, I must consult with my Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritz.” The Maggid listened attentively and then said, “It was very wise of you not to immediately agree, because the person who approached you was from the realm of evil. Incidentally, tell me, where did you get the intuition to turn down such a seemingly valuable offer?”

Rabbi Nachum told him that when he was a very young boy, his mother passed away. His father remarried and his step-mother treated him very harshly. “Once, when I came home from cheider to eat lunch, my step-mother was not home. On the stove were fried eggs. Knowing the size of the portion my step-mother would usually give me, I took a somewhat smaller portion for myself. She came home while I was eating and slapped me. I asked her, ‘What have I done wrong? You were not home and I took less than what you would normally have given me.’

“Her reply was ‘*Alein nemt men nit*’ — ‘*You do not take by yourself.*’ This episode taught me a lesson which remained with me throughout my entire life. Regardless of all my calculations, ‘*Alein nemt men nit.*’”

With the word “*vayikach*” — “and he took” — the Torah is emphasizing Korach’s fatal error. Though he was a wise person, and according to all calculations he felt that he was right, he unwisely wanted to take something on his own, and “*alein nemt men nit.*”

The 17th of Tammuz is a day of fasting which commemorates which five tragedies in the history of the Jewish People?

1. The incident of the cheit haegel and the breaking of the first luchos.
2. The walls of the Jerusalem were breached in the time of the first Bais Hamikdash.
3. The daily Korban in the Bais Hamikdash was discontinued for lack of available sheep.
4. Apostumus burned the Torah.
5. An avodah zarah was set up in the Bais Hamikdash.

QUESTION OF THE CHODESH

Q: What is Shiva Assar b'Tammuz supposed to teach us?

A: Shiva Assar b'Tammuz comes to teach a number of things. One of the things is that we have to look back **על כל מחמדינו** **מהיה לנו בימי קדם**, at all the wonderful things we had in the days of old but we didn't appreciate them as long as we had them.

That's a universal feeling in human beings. They don't fully appreciate what they have. I'm sure they appreciated it to some extent but the glory of a Jewish nation that lived together in Eretz Yisroel, that was something unequalled in our history.

Imagine Bayis Rishon – not one Jew lived anywhere except in Eretz Yisroel. And they were so proud of their superiority. Of course there were people here and there who were attracted to the foolishness of the goyim that surrounded Eretz Yisroel but the vast majority of the Jews were loyal to everything. Even the ovdei avodah zarah were frum Jews. Even Achav who was a real oveid avodah zarah, was a frum Jew. He had a kosher kitchen and when the Navi told him some criticism he put on sackcloth and ashes and he fasted.

And so, once upon a time we had tremendous gifts that we didn't appreciate sufficiently and among the purposes of this period of time now that we're going to start now with Shiva Asar b'Tammuz it's to look back and realize what we once had.

Of course it makes us sad that we don't have them today but it's important to realize that we still owe gratitude to Hashem for what He gave us in the days of old. Once upon a time we had a kingdom, we had Jewish frum police, shoftim v'shotrim – even a policeman was a tzadik gomur. The policeman wore tzitzis and he enforced the Torah's laws. That's why he was called a שוטר, because he had a stick, a שוט in his hand. Once upon a time anybody who did a small chillul Shabbos was put to death.

There was never such a nation that was so devoted in their happiness, in their observance and dedication to Hashem. But after many years of being together in Eretz Yisroel, they began thinking that maybe outside there's also something good. We don't realize the big difference between the outside and the inside and we imagine there's something better out there. That's why it says **ולא תתורו**. You shouldn't look, you shouldn't spy what's doing in other nations, thinking that maybe there's something there too.

That's what happened in Europe too when the people began thinking maybe in Germany it's better to live. The Germans were civilized. You couldn't insult a Jew on the street in Germany. In Austria you could insult a Jew in the street – you know that Zigmund Freud tells a story about his father. His father was walking in the street and he bought a new hat, a new fur hat so a gentile passed by and knocked it off. He said, "Jew get off the sidewalk – but in Germany they were polite. I was in Germany for one day – it was polite in those days. So the Jews said, "Ah! That's culture, that's science!" and many Jews got lost in Germany

That's why Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, "I'm going to show you who Germany is." That's why the greatest wickedness the world ever saw came out of Germany; in order to teach a lesson about what the result is of looking outside of our people.

But in the days of old when they all lived inside of their own mechitzah they couldn't realize what the outside world was and they couldn't fully appreciate the great benefit that Hashem had given them of **מחמדינו שהיה לנו מימי קדם**. And therefore, that's one of the purposes of fasting – we remind ourselves of what we had and we're so sorry that once upon a time we failed to understand how happy we should have been. We failed to realize it.

Another purpose of course is to think about what can we do to bring back those days. Now, you can't bring it back by yourself but still every person is obliged to try, to at least make an effort. So therefore, the taanis tzibur is for the purpose of doing at least one step in the right direction. That's one of the reasons we fast – it's not merely to afflict yourself, not to eat. Very good, very good, it's a mitzvah to fast but one of the reasons for the taanis is for the purpose of reminding us to make one step in the right direction. At least one thing you have to do as a result of a taanis tzibur. There won't be even the slightest change? Nothing at all?!

And therefore, right now we're limiting ourselves to two objectives of this taanis. One is to look back and see what we once had and we lost; we appreciate what our forefathers had, the happiness of **ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה**. They lived among Jews and they lived al pi haTorah and that was their constitution lehavdil; they had no other laws except the laws of the Torah. What a happiness that was!

And also, another purpose of the taanis is to see what can we do to be mekarev the geulah; a little bit better we can be – at least one step in the right direction.

Story of the chodesh

Again it happened that Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria, Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Akiva went up to Yerushalayim. When they reached Mt. Scopus, they tore their garments. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox emerging from the place of the Kodesh Kedoshim. The others started weeping; Rabbi Akiva laughed.

Said they to him: “Why are you laughing?”

Said he to them: “Why are you weeping?”

Said they to him: “A place [so holy] that it is said of it, ‘the stranger that approaches it shall die,’¹ and now foxes traverse it, and we shouldn’t weep?”

Said he to them: “That is why I laugh. For it is written, ‘I shall have bear witness for Me faithful witnesses—Uriah the Priest and Zechariah the

son of Jeberechiah. Now what is the connection between Uriah and Zechariah? Uriah was [in the time of] the First Temple, and Zechariah was [in the time of] the Second Temple! But the Torah makes Zachariah’s prophecy dependent upon Uriah’s prophecy. With Uriah, it is written: ‘Therefore, because of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the Temple Mount like the high places of a forest. With Zachariah it is written, ‘Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem.

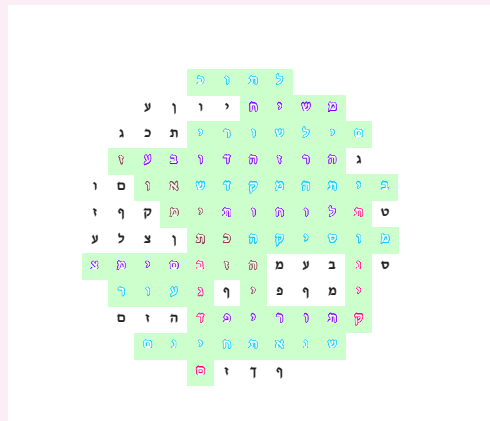
“As long as Uriah’s prophecy had not been fulfilled, I feared that Zechariah’s prophecy may not be fulfilled either. But now that Uriah’s prophecy has been fulfilled, it is certain that Zechariah’s prophecy will be fulfilled.”

With these words they replied to him: “Akiva, you have consoled us! Akiva, you have consoled us!”

Fun Page!

ל ת ו כ
 מ ש י ח י ו ן ע
 ס י ל ש ו ר י ת כ ג
 ג ה ר ז ה ד ו ב ע ז
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1. ביתהמקדש
2. מוסיקה
3. בגדים
4. פירות
5. לוחות
6. יזתמוז
7. ירושלים
8. עבודהזרה
9. צמים
10. עור
11. איכה
12. קינות
13. כותל
14. משיח
15. שנאתחינם



DAY IN THE MONTH

In the midbar, Bnei Yisrael miscalculated the day that Moshe Rabbeinu was expected to come down from Har Sinai with the Torah. The Eiruv rav, fearing that they would be left without a leader, demanded that Aharon and Chur make an image to replace Moshe. Chur protested and was killed by the Eiruv rav. To delay and try to prevent further catastrophe, Aharon asked them for the gold from their wives and children. The men gave their own gold and Aharon bundle it up. After it was thrown into the fire, by tapping into the power of Tumah, the Eiruv made the eigel, a golden calf that they worshipped, and tried to convince the B'nei Yisroel

to worship. Moshe Rabbeinu did come down on the correct day and saw people worshipping the eigel. He became angry and broke the luchos, tablets with the Ten Commandments on them.

During the siege of both Batei HaMikdash, the enemy armies broke through the walls of Yerushalayim on the 17th of Tamuz.

A Roman soldier named Apustamus tore and burned a sefer Torah near Beit Choron in Eretz Yisrael. An idol was placed in the Beit HaMikdash. The korban tamid stopped being brought due to the lack of sheep for the korban.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS:

1) HOW MANY FAST DAYS ARE THERE?

2) WHO BUILT THE FIRST BEIT HAMIKDASH?

3) WHAT ARE THE THREE WEEKS CALLED IN HEBREW?

4) WHICH NATION DESTROYED THE FIRST BEIT HAMIKDASH?

5) WHAT DAYS DID THE BEIS HAMIKDASH BURN ON?

Did you Know?

“Tammuz” is the Babylonian name of this month, as are all of the “official” names of the months in the Hebrew Calendar. In the Torah, however, the month is referred to as “the Fourth of the 12 months of the Jewish calendar, counting from Nissan.

The month of Tammuz begins the “season” of the summer. The three months of this season are Tammuz, Av and Elul.

On the third of Tammuz something happened that broke all the rules of nature. Yehoshua was leading the Jews in battle in Givon against their enemies, the Emories. As the day drew to a close, the battle had not yet reached an absolute conclusion. For the moment the Jews seemed to be winning, but if the battle would reach its inevitable end as darkness came, there would be no decisive victory, and the next morning they would face off against an enemy who would come at them with renewed vigor. Each moment was precious.

A miracle happened. The sun didn’t set. The day stretched on for 12 more hours.

The rules were broken, the battle was won- Hashem had performed a nes for Bnei Yisroel!



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