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<u>Weekdays</u>
Daf Yomi 5:45 AM
Shacharis:
- Monday & Thursday 6:40 AM - Tue, Wed, Fri 6:45 AM
Mincha (Mo – Th)     1:45 PM
MINCHA/MAARIV 8:10 PM Daf Yomi (Take II) 9:00 PM



### CONGREGATION OHEL MOSHE

שבת קודש פרשת דברים

ט' אב תשע"ה ערב ט' באב

# אהל משה



Rabbi Zvi Teichman

**CONGREGATION OHEL MOSHE 2808** SMITH AVE BALTIMORE, MD 21209 WWW.OHELMOSHEBALTIMORE.COM DAVEN@OHELMOSHEBALTIMORE.COM (410) 878-7521

**Issue #391** 

## RABBI'S MESSAGE:

"How Are You Doing?"

There is so much suffering in the world. This is all a consequence of *Churban*. As long as the Temple is not restored we are destined to be challenged with distress. Perhaps the most difficult of all pain is that of mental anguish. I had heard about an individual who was suffering from both severe cancer and major depression who expressed the sentiment that despite the tortuous treatments associated with his cancer if he had to choose between the two he would prefer the physical ordeal any day over the emotional pain of his depression.

Everyone on some level will experience emotional turmoil, it is part of human development. Through the healthy processing of these emotions it forges our character and makes us great.

Have you ever wondered as to where do we insert in our prayers to succeed in this quest for this most vital need? Where do we express our fervent hopes for mental stability and happiness and for G-d to save us from excruciating emotional collapse?

We pray three times a day ההסר ממנו גען ואנחה, *remove from us sorrow and groan*. This we are taught encompasses all emotional deprivation and its associated suffering.

(סידור אשי ישראל עפ"י הגר"א פי' אבני אליהו)

Yet strangely, this request finds itself in the blessing for the restoration of justice.

In the eleventh blessing of the Amida we recite:

השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה ויועצינו כבתחלה, Restore our judges as in earliest times and our counselors as at first

#### והסר ממנו יגון ואנחה, remove from us sorrow and groan

ומלוך עלינו אתה ד' לבדך בחסד וברחמים, and speedily reign over us - You, G-d, alone - with kindness and compassion

The question that begs though is: How does the restoration of 'judges' and 'counselors' like in the 'good ol days', cure emotional stress?

The portion of Devarim is always read on Shabbos Chazon, the Shabbos that precedes Tisha B'Av. Although we avoid any public association with mourning on the Shabbos, nevertheless, there is one verse we read this Shabbos to the mournful tune of Eicha.

(ברים איב) וריבכם וריבכם וריבכם אישא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם (דברים איב), How can I alone carry your contentiousness, your burdens, and your quarrels?

This verse depicts Moshe's frustration in his limited ability to deal effectively with the numerous cases he would have to deal with and resolve. The Torah goes on to describe his appointing of qualified legal assistants to aid him in this overwhelming task.

Why is this verse so significant in the context of the travails of the *Churban* and how does it relate to the sorrowful melody of Eicha?

The problems in life that affect us psychologically are often the product of skewed thinking. When a person undergoes trauma, disappointment or loss, it clouds one's ability to think clearly. Only when we start to understand our reactions can we prevent them from misleading our thought processes. Anger and the need for revenge, unless understood properly, can lead a person to react disproportionately to what justice demands. And so it is with the wide variety of emotions that are provoked by different circumstances in life. If only we could maintain a healthy and brutally honest perspective both from a religious standpoint vis-a-vis G-d's intimate involvement in every detail of our life, as well as from the human emotion viewpoint, remaining conscious of man's frailty in overreacting, we would be able to deflect 'sorrow and groan'.

The Midrash reveals that the 'judges and counselors' of the earlier times refers to none other than Moshe and Aharon as well as Dovid and Shlomo.

Judges are not only purveyors of 'truth' but they also possess the ability to connect with the people on an emotional level. Precisely because they can effectively validate those who are troubled, conveying warmth and understanding, are they then able to present the 'truth' of any situation and have it accepted by their now willing 'friends' who will trust their judgment and the truth of Torah.

Maimonides when listing the attributes of a judge adds that 'he must be a person who is beloved by people at large, and must have a good reputation. When relating Moses' statements concerning the appointment of judges, the Torah mentions... 'Beloved by your tribes'. This

refers to those who are appreciated by people at large. What will make them beloved by people? Conducting themselves with a favorable eye and a humble spirit, being good company, and speaking and conducting their business with people gently." (כנהדרין פ"ב ה"ז)

Moshe, Aharon, Dovid and Shlomo were all renowned not only for their scholarship but for their superlative humanity as well. They succeeding in having their 'advice' heeded because of their loyalty to, and admiration of, the people, and were thus beloved and adhered to in return.

When an individual, however, is left unattended to or simply misunderstood, a poisonous loneliness then sets in further compounding one's distress. Eventually one develops a distorted sense of abandonment from G-d Himself who, in his own mind concludes, has 'punished' and afflicted him with 'undeserved' pain.

With the hoped for restoration of judges and counselors of the caliber of earlier times we will indeed be able to eradicate emotional turmoil. Their empathy and authentic perspective will be soothingly therapeutic in bringing those who despair and are in pain, back from the brink of gloom.

The Mishna and Talmud (ברכות כם) discuss the prayer of *Havineinu*, which is an abridged version of the *Shemona Esrei*, that incorporates the themes of all thirteen middle blessings into one blessing. This blessing is only relied upon in extenuating circumstances.

The condensed sentiment that corresponds to the blessing for the restoration of judges reads as follows:

והַתּוֹעִים, עַל דַעַחָד יִשָּׁפֵטוּ, Let those who are in error, be judged by your knowledge .

Rabbeinu Yonah interprets this sentiment as follows:

'Those who are in error' refer to those who claim G-d has abandoned them in this long exile and no longer attends to them, may it be His will that they be judged by Your 'intimate connection with them', which is Your compassion and kindness.

The essence of this prayer is the restoring of man's acceptance of His loving presence in all aspects of life.

The judges, by their compassionate devotion to those in distress, will succeed in representing His Presence, and thus wipe away all 'sorrow and groan'.

We lament on Shabbos Chazon the plight of those who so often suffer so greatly in silence. Moshe understood the source of their deeper frustration and trauma that manifested itself in an attitude of visible frustration, couched in their reactive contentiousness, feelings of being overwhelmed in their burdens and their misguided quarreling.

May I humbly suggest that Moshe is not simply be moaning his inability to carry it לבדי, alone.

He is rather expressing, אינה אשא אינה וילברי' How can I '*elevate*' them, from their sense of 'לברי' '*isolation*' and loneliness, that displays itself in erroneous, הערהכם ומשאכם וריבכם, contentiousness, burdens, and quarrels.

Moshe goes on to provide the solution by summoning able-bodied judges who will uplift the masses in inspiring them to realize their own personal greatness.

We are all judges in some sense. Don't we all possess the ability to infuse confidence in those who feel so disabled and disadvantaged? By showing honest concern, validation of their pain and understanding of their plight we too can cause 'sorrow and groan' to disappear.

If we simply show sincere interest and appreciation for one another we can initiate the process of ridding the world from 'sorrow and groan'.

Isn't this the antidote to Sinas Chinam, baseless hatred, which we are told was the catalyst for all our subsequent suffering?

When we seek to discover and cherish the inherent worth of every single person, we begin to heal the enormous burden of emotional pain they may be experiencing.



## **IIIHAPPY BIRTHDAYIII**

Noa Kassel , Yehuda Rubin, Chana Kermaier , Elise Steinharter , Nomsie Berry , Avi Schwartz , Bruce Berkowitz

## IIIHAPPY ANNIVERSARYIII

Chaim & Shoshana Chernoff, Sam & Karen Pottash, Mordy & Dassi Lazar

This info is provided by YOU through the member database. Please be sure to update so we can celebrate and commemorate important dates with you!

I recently had the privilege of hearing an enlightening presentation from the renowned psychologist, Dr. David Pelcovitz.

He related a very poignant story he himself experienced. He had been asked to be the introductory speaker at an event on behalf of the homeless. The head of the organization that assisted the homeless, was the featured speaker. Dressed impeccably and clearly a very successful person he seemed a bit incongruous to the mission he headed. He began his speech by making a startling revelation. He went to describe how at the impressionable age of thirteen he observed before his very eyes his father murder his mother and then commit suicide. Traumatized, this vulnerable child roamed aimlessly for many years from homeless shelter to homeless shelter evading the social services authorities who were desperately seeking to find and help him.

It was at one shelter that his life was transformed. The person in charge confronted him and simply uttered four powerful words, "How are you doing?"

It wasn't just his question that penetrated through the thick shell he had developed over those painful years, but more so the sincerity in his eyes that displayed true compassion. He began to let the floodgate of emotion, he so painfully bottled up in those long years of isolation, flow outward, finally sharing his suffering with an accepting and understanding soul. He eventually went on to pursue an education that lead him to Harvard and the string of successes that ensued.

We so badly need for G-d to return his Presence once again to our midst. To once again palpably

sense Him and His loving and nurturing embrace.

If we reach out to His children and plainly but with deep sincerity and empathy ask one another "How are you doing?", we can be certain He will swiftly respond "I am on My way!".

במהרה בימינו, Speedily in our days!

באהבה,	
צבי טייכמאן	

n lead a