

**TES-YUD KISLEV SHIUR**

This Shabbos is Tes Kislev, the birthday and Hillula of the Mittlerer Rebbe and Sunday Yud Kislev celebrates the liberation of the Mittlerer Rebbe.

All men are invited to join a Chassidus shiur on Shabbos afternoon between Mincha and Maariv in the Kollel, learning

בד קודש

A request sent by the Mittlerer Rebbe to the Governor of Vitebsk province in relation to his arrest, explaining the concept of a king and the significance of his judgements according to Chassidus

**PRE-YUD TES KISLEV
CHASSIDUS BEIS MIDRASH**

In preparation for Yud Tes Kislev, all men and Bochorim are invited to join a Chassidus Beis Midrash learning all of the Rebbe's Yud-Tes Kislev Maamarim.

Sunday December 15, Kislev 17. 8:00-9:15pm in the Goldhirsch Hall. Refreshments served.

FAREWELL RABBI DORON

This Sunday morning, Rabbi Yoel Doron will give a shiur in Kollel for men on Lessons from Bereishis 5752.

Join us for a shiur and Lechaim as we say farewell and thank you to Rabbi Doron for his immense contribution to our community and the Kollel.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by
Kollel Menachem

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A beautiful song from a hoarse voice

The Parsha of Vayeitzei is something we should all be able to relate to, after all it tells the story of our Neshama.

Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and travels to Charan. One his way he spends the night on the Temple Mount. He takes a bunch of stone and places them around his head. The following morning, the stones have fused into one and Yaakov stands this stone up as a monument. He anoints the monument with oil and pledges; *when I return to my father's house, Hashem will be my G-d and this stone which I have stood as a monument will be a House of G-d.*

The Alter Rebbe (Torah Ohr Vayeitzei) explains the deeper meaning of this story, with specific focus on the significance of the stones and Yaakov's promise.

The letters which spell the word Charan (חֲרָן) when rearranged spell the word נָחַר. We find this word in Tehillim (69:4) when Dovid Hamelech says נָחַר גְּרוֹנִי, my throat is dried. Like a dry, hoarse throat which blocks the flow of one's voice, Charan represents the blockage and concealment of Hashem's light from shining in the world.

Each Neshama descends into this world, a world of Charan, a world which hides the presence of its Creator and appears as an independent existence. The Neshama's mission is to enter this world and through Torah, Mitzvos and Emunah, transform it to a place of G-dly revelation.

The blockage of Charan is created by the letter ח, a letter which is associated with Kelipah. Through the Avodah of *Birurim*, refining the coarse world of Charan, the ח is transformed into a ה, a letter (which is similar to the ח in shape, but is) associated with Kedusha.

(We find a similar idea in the difference between Chametz חָמֵץ which represents arrogance and Kelipah and Matzah מַצָּה, which represents humility and Kedusha. Here too, the difference between the two words is one letter, Matzah has a ה in place of the ח in Chametz.)

When the ח of Charan is transformed and the letters once again rearranged, we spell the word חֲנֹנֶה, a loud and joyous song, where the voice is

able to emanate unhindered and be expressed in its full force and beauty.

This Avodah is represented by the stones. Yaakov takes the many stones which represent the hidden sparks of G-dliness which are trapped and hidden within the world. He gathers them and elevates them to a level of oneness with their source. The pouring of the oil down this pillar alludes to the Divine light which this Avodah draws down into the world.

Yaakov says that through this he will return to the house of his father Yitzchak. Yitzchak comes from the term laughter but written in future tense. This refers to the tremendous joy and pleasure which Hashem receives from our Avodah of refining the world. This pleasure will be revealed in the times of Moshiach for the Neshama itself to experience.

Why is it that the refining of the world generates so much joy above?

Joy comes from something novel and unexpected. The Alter Rebbe illustrates this point with an example of a talking parrot. It is only because the nature of the parrot is that it does not talk, that makes the talking parrot the source of enjoyment and delight. The fact that a human being can talk is no cause from great delight, because that is what they are expected to do.

For the spiritual worlds and the realm of the angels to be surrendered to Hashem and radiate His presence is not novel.

But when a world which conceals G-dliness becomes an expression of Hashem's presence, when the hoarse voice of Charan become the beautiful song of Rinah, when dull and inanimate stones become a conduit for G-dly revelation, this is something unique and completely novel.

Chassidus encapsulates this mission in a simple phrase; Hashem creates the worlds **יש מאין**, something from nothing, in order for us to transform the **יש** back to **אין**. When we transform the something-ness of the world back to nothing, surrendering the world back to a state of oneness of Hashem, this is the most joyous song of all.

The weekly Halacha analysis

Asking for rain in the Southern Hemisphere

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

During the rainy season we add a request for rain in the Shemoneh Esrei, saying ותן טל ומטר לברכה. The request for rain is added into the blessing עלינו בברך¹.

In Eretz Yisroel they begin requesting rain from the 7th of Cheshvan. This follows the view of Rabban Gamliel quoted in the Mishna². Even though Eretz Yisroel requires rain immediately after Sukkos, we delay our request for rain for 15 days, to allow the last person who had travelled to the Beis Hamikdosh to cross the Euphrates River before rain would make the roads impassable³.

Even after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh, they continue to delay the request for rain until the 7th of Marcheshvan as many Jews would continue to be Oleh L'regel in Yerushalayim even after the Churban⁴.

Outside of Eretz Yisroel, in the exile (a reference to Bavel), they begin requesting rain from the 60th day after the Tekufah of Tishrei – the Autumn Equinox⁵.

Bavel was a low-lying region and did not require rain until later. Earlier rainfall would damage the fruits and crops which were still out in the field. Based on the halachic calculation this falls on the 5th of December in a regular secular year and the 6th of December in a secular leap year.

In both Bavel and Eretz Yisroel we conclude requesting rain at Mincha on Erev Pesach which marks the end of the winter months. After Pesach one may no longer request rain. If they did so in error, they are required to repeat the Shemoneh Esrei.

Outside of Bavel and Eretz Yisroel

What about countries outside of Bavel and Eretz Yisroel who have different rainy seasons and different rainfall requirements?

The Rif and Rambam⁶ only quote the dates listed in the Gemora. The Rambam writes that in Egypt and Syria they begin requesting rain from the 60th day from the Tekufah, following the Minhag of Bavel. Lechem Mishna explains that since the Gemora uses the generic term “the exile”, it refers to all countries outside of Eretz Yisroel.

In contrast, the Rosh asserts that the request for rain depends on the rainy season of each country or region. In his commentary on the Talmud⁷, the Rosh questions why we follow the practise of Bavel in this matter, suggesting that lands who require rain earlier should be able to begin requesting rain from the 7th of

Cheshvan. He notes that this was the practise of the communities in Provence.

In a Teshuvah of the Rosh⁸ he takes his argument a step further. The Teshuvah begins with an introduction written by his son;

In the year 5073 (1313) the land was in drought throughout the rainy season. On the first night of Pesach Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel (the Rosh) told his students that he had long been bothered why we should be bound by the custom of Bavel. Why in Ashkenaz, whose crops require rain until Shavuos, not continue to mention and request rain after Pesach?

He instructed that the Chazzan continue to say משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם in all of the Yomtov prayers. A tumult ensued and in response, even though it was Chol Hamoed, the Rosh wrote his Teshuvah setting forth his position⁹.

Ultimately, the Rosh writes that since his opinion was not accepted by the community, he deferred so as not to create divisions within the Kehillah.

The Shulchan Aruch

The Shulchan Aruch¹⁰ rules like the Rambam and Rif, that throughout Chutz Laaretz we begin requesting rain from the evening of the 60th day from the Tekufah.

However the Rosh's view is not discounted completely. The Shulchan Aruch adds¹¹ that if one lives in a country which requires rain in the summer and they mistakenly said ותן טל ומטר לברכה after Pesach, they do not need to repeat the Shemoneh Esrei. In this case we rely on the Rosh who would say that one had in fact davened correctly. If they wish to, they can daven a voluntary Shemoneh Esrei but are not obliged to do so¹². This ruling is also echoed by the Levush, the Alter Rebbe and Mishna Berura.

The Southern Hemisphere

This discussion is relevant in the Southern Hemisphere where the rainy season is between Pesach and Sukkos and the Summer season is from Shemini Atzeres until Pesach.

There is a great deal of correspondence from the 1800s between communities in Melbourne, Sydney, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina and the Gedolei Haposkim in Europe and Eretz Yisroel addressing how they should conduct themselves regarding requesting rain in the Shemoneh Esrei¹³.

Based on the above ruling of the Shulchan Aruch, the position of most Poskim¹⁴ is that in Southern Hemisphere countries where rainfall in our summer months is not harmful – either to crops or to people's health – we should also request rain

from the 60th day of the Tekufah until Pesach as they do in the Northern Hemisphere.

Even though it is not our rainy season, it is the rainy season for the majority of the (Jewish) world who live in the Northern Hemisphere and we are requesting for them. In our winter we do not request rain in ברך עלינו since it is after Pesach.

If rain in the summer is harmful, we would not request rain at all during our Shemoneh Esrei at any time during the year.

The leniency of the Shulchan Aruch which relies on the Rosh would apply in the Southern Hemisphere and if one mistakenly requested rain after Pesach, they would not be required to repeat the Shemoneh Esrei.

There is a minority view¹⁵ that in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are completely inverted, we should request rain in ברך עלינו in our winter months from Pesach until Shemini Atzeres.

In a Sicha¹⁶ on the topic, the Rebbe suggests that this view makes sense. However he stresses that this is only as a theoretical Torah discussion. Once the Minhag has already been established especially when it has been observed for generations, we should not change so as not to make Machlokes.

Whether we request rain or not and whether the Shemoneh Esrei is thereby invalidated is a case of doubt. Whereas avoiding Machlokes is expressly forbidden by the Torah “you should not be like Korach and his followers”.

It should be noted that anywhere in the world that requires rain or are experiencing drought between Pesach and Shemini Atzeres, they can (and should) request rain in the blessing שומע תפילה where one may add their personal requests.

1. Brachos 33a
2. Taanis 10a
3. Mishna ibid according to Rashi
4. See Shulchan Aruch Harav 117:1 in brackets quoting the Ra"n Taanis 2a.
5. Taanis 10a
6. Hilchos Tefillah 2:16
7. Taanis Ch. 1 Siman 4
8. Teshuvos Harosh Klal 4 Siman 10
9. In the Teshuvah he quotes the Rambam Pirush Hamishnayos which seems to take the same stance.
10. O.C. 117:1
11. O.C. 117:2
12. Ibid with Ram"o
13. See Teshuvos Btzel Hachochma siman 85 who records the history of correspondence and the responses of Rabbi Shmuel Salant (Yerushalayim), Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor (Kovno), Rabbi Nosson Adler (London) and others. See Hisvaduyos 5743 volume 1 p389 for a comprehensive list of sources.
14. Including modern day Poskim including the Minchas Yitzchok 6:171.
15. Shevet halevi 1:21
16. Hisvaduyos 5742 4:2119 and 5743 1:389