

1 – Topic – A Thought for Tisha B'av

As we prepare for Shabbos Chazon, Shabbos Tisha B'av, Shabbos Parshas Devarim. I would like to share with you an appropriate thought for a Shabbos Tisha B'av. We are told that Achar Mai'a V'esrim when we come up to the heavenly tribunal we will be asked very specific questions immediately (as is discussed in the Gemara Shabbos 31a, 4 lines from the bottom). (צפית לישועה) Tzipisa L'yeshua is one of them. (נשאת ונתת באמונה) Nasata V'nasata B'emunah is one. (קבעת עתים לתורה) Kovata Itim L'torah is one. Now Kovata Itim L'torah we know that a person has to designate time for learning. No one is puzzled by the source of such an obligation. Nasata V'nasata B'emunah, if you dealt faithfully, also is something that everybody is aware of. When the Gemara says (צפית לישועה) did you hope for the Yeshua to come, for Moshiach to come, the question is what is the source for that to be an obligation for every Jew?

The Smak, the Sefer Mitzvos Kotton, in describing Mitzvah Aleph, (The Chinuch lists the Mitzvos in order of the Parshios, the Smak follows the Rambam's example and lists them in the order of the significance, not so much the significance of Schar and Onesh but the significance of what it means to be a Jew). Mitzvah Aleph in the Smak's Sefer is (אָנְכִי יִרְוֶה אֶלְרִיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם) Emunah, faith in HKB"H. Explains the Smak, the Emunah in G-d is that HKB"H is a Melech Hagoel, is a G-d (אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם) who took the Jews out of Egypt and in Emunah that is HKB"H's behavior towards Klal Yisrael, constantly as a Goel. Because that is part of the Emunah, the Tzipisa L'yeshua is appropriately one of the first questions we are asked Achar Mai'a V'esrim, because in fact that is what it is about. That is the way it is. Emunah is Emunah.

The Rambam as you know lists the Yud Gimmel Ikrim and most famously in Perek Cheilek, and there in the Chiyuv of believing in Moshiach, the Rambam adds to Daven that he will come. Now, all the Yud Gimmel Ikrim are Emunah, are issues of faith, and therefore, it seems that the Rambam is the source of the Smak's idea that Tzipisa L'yeshua, the Mispaleil L'boai, to Daven for the Yeshua to come is part of the Mitzvah of Emunah.

As a matter of fact, the Rambam in Hilchos Melachim at the beginning of Perek Yud Aleph says (או מי לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר) (שאינו מחכה לביאתו). Somebody who is not hoping for Moshiach's coming is a Kofer B'torah, is an Apikores. What does one thing have to do with the other? Why does that make him an Apikores? So it seems that the Rambam too holds that Tzipisa L'yeshua is part of the Mitzvah of Emunah. We believe in G-d, we believe in a G-d who is a Melech Goel, a G-d who redeems people. (מִלְךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן).

The question is okay so you have explained Tzipisa L'yeshua, the faith in HKB"H as a Goel has a source. However, the Rambam says that L'hispaileil L'boai, we have to Daven for his coming. If it is part of the Mitzvah of Emunah then why is it part of Tefillah? Why is there an obligation to Daven?

The answer to that is that Davening is part of the Mitzvah of Emunah. In Igros Moshe in the second volume of Orach Chaim. Rav Moshe was asked regarding advocating for or against prayer in public schools. Rav Moshe in the Teshuva as is his style, discusses whether non-Jews have a Mitzvah to Daven.

What is our understanding? What is the source that a non-Jew has an obligation to Daven? Zagt Rav Moshe, exactly this thing.

He says that part of Emunah if you really believe in HKB"Y, then you turn to Him to help you in times of difficulty. That is part of Emunah. If you are not turning to HKB"Y in Prayer, it is because you don't have adequate faith in Hashem as a King who is waiting eagerly to be a Goel. And so, we have learned something today, we learned that L'hispaileil L'boai, to Daven for Moshiach's coming is part of our Mitzvah of Emunah in Hashem.

Jews are Maminim B'nei Maminim. When Jews are in trouble they turn to HKB"Y, they look heavenward. In the foxhole there are very few Apikursim. In times of trouble, Jews in the concentration camps, or in the exile of Spain, they were Tzipisa L'yeshua, and they spoke about Moshiach coming. What about us in the USA in the year 2022, are we Metzapeh L'yeshua? Are we Mispaleil L'boai? We all hope eagerly for HKB"Y to come, however, we have to know that Davening for Moshiach's coming is part of being Metzapeh L'yeshua. Once you hear the link that the Rambam and the Smak are saying, the link between Davening for something and believing in it, you will see that it is in the Siddur everywhere. (אֶת צֶמַח דָּוִד (כִּי לְיִשְׁרָאֵל קָוִינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם) (עֵבֶדְךָ מְהֵרָה תִצְמַח). We Daven for Malchus Beis Dovid to return and we say (כִּי לְיִשְׁרָאֵל קָוִינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם). We are Davening for this because we are Mechakim Kivinu Kol Hayom. We are hoping for the Geulah.

In Kedusha on Shabbos we say (מִמְקוֹמְךָ מִלְּקַנּוֹ תוֹפִיעַ וְתִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ). We say G-d reveal yourself. Then we say (כִּי מְחַכִּים אֲנִחְנוּ לָךְ). Because we are Metzapeh L'yeshua. That is why we Daven for it. We say as is found in Tehillim 102:14 and 15 (אֲתָה תְקוּם, תִּרְחַם צִיּוֹן) and the next Posuk says (כִּי-רָצוֹ עֲבַדְיָךְ, אֶת-אֲבֹנֶיךָ). Because Klal Yisrael has a Ratzon for Eretz Yisrael. Always we Daven for Geulah because we are Metzapim L'yeshua.

As we come to the end of the three weeks, we come to Tisha B'av which this year we will observe the fast of Tisha B'av on the 10th of Av. It is our job really to take a moment and choose a place in Davening to be Metzapeh L'yeshua. Some day we will be asked Tzipisa L'yeshua and you will say of course I did. They will ask for an example. What will be your example of when you were Metzapeh L'yeshua? Not an easy thing. So do what I am trying to do. Take a few words in Davening and try to designate that there is a place that you are Metzapeh L'yeshua.

When we step out of Shemoneh Esrei we say (יְהִי רָצוֹן). We say that (יְהִי רָצוֹן שִׁיבְנָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה). Say those words out loud. After all, when you step out of Shemoneh Esrei you typically wake up from whatever distractions existed during the Shemoneh Esrei. At that moment when people typically feel bad that they didn't have the right Kavana, take a minute and say those 5 words (שִׁיבְנָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ) (בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ). Say it with a Kavana, say it with a feeling, just for the moment. Then you will be able to answer the question of Tzipisa L'yeshua, yes. So this is a thought, a very practical thought, a Yedi'a. You are getting the test questions ahead of time. Isn't that amazing to get the test questions ahead of time? The Beis Din Shel Maila will ask you if Tzipisa L'yeshua? What are you going to answer? Every day, three times a day I stepped out of Shemoneh Esrei and I said (יְהִי רָצוֹן) may it be G-d's will that (שִׁיבְנָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ). We Daven for it. Okay, you Daven for it then you were Tzipisa L'yeshua. You will be Zoche. And so, this is what is on my mind as we come to these days.

2 – Topic – A Thought on Devarim

I do have to tell you that at the very same time at the beginning of the Chumash of Devarim has an important lesson. I advise you to learn the Netziv in the Hameik Davar. As you know, Moshe Rabbeinu for the last 37 days of his life, from Rosh Chodesh Shvat to the 7th day of Adar taught Sefer Devarim, Mishna Torah to Klal Yisrael. We understand that he Chazered and the Netziv asks he reviewed? What was he doing the whole 40 years, wasn't he sitting there and teaching them the whole time? Okay, I guess that Pashut Pshat is that this is a massive review. One big Chazara at the end of the Zman.

The Netziv says that in the Midbar Moshe Rabbeinu taught them the equivalent of Mikra and Mishna (my words for what he is saying). So he taught them the Pesukim and he taught them the Halachos Pesukos. Before his Petira, Moshe Rabbeinu taught them Pilpulai D'oraissa. He taught them the Gemara, the argument in being Mechadeish Chiddushai Torah. That entire area of Torah Moshe Rabbeinu did not teach in the 40 years in the Midbar until they were ready to go into Eretz Yisrael. Pilpulai D'oraissa. That is what he taught them.

He cites the Gemara in Chagiga Daf Vav (Amud Aleph bottom line going to the top of Vav Amud Beis) that says that Moshe Rabbeinu taught the Torah in 3 steps. Sinai, Ohel Moed and then Arvos Moav. When he came down from Sinai he taught them first Torah, from the Ohel Moed he got the Halacha Pesuka (what I am calling Mishnayos and what the Netziv calls Halacha Pesuka), and here he taught them the Drashos of the Torah, the Lomdus of the Torah, before Klal Yisrael went into Eretz Yisrael. A tremendous insight into what it means that Moshe Rabbeinu these last 37 days of his life with an intensity called Klal Yisrael together and they had a massive period of learning Torah.

And so, with these thoughts toward Tzipisa L'yeshua and towards the learning of Torah we turn to a very important Shabbos, a Shabbos in which we observe the Shabbos and at the same time are aware that it is the 9th day of Av and then turn towards a somber recognition of the Galus that we are in. We mourn everything that has taken place in this extended period of time which is most of the life of Klal Yisrael.

And so, with that I want to wish everybody an absolutely wonderful Shabbos, an extraordinary meaningful Yom of Tisha B'av and I hope next week HKB"H should give me the Zechus and I hope to be talking to you from Artzeinu Hakedosha, Eretz Yisrael from Yeshivas Ohr Sameach right in the center of the universe B'eZRas Hashem. May we all be Zoche to be in Eretz Yisrael. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!