

THE KTM DAF PARSHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



TORAH תורה
מציון MITZION
KTM MONTREAL



THE BLOOM FROM BENEATH THE FROST

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

It is strange to mark Tu Bi'Shvat in Montreal. The date, which the Mishna establishes as the New Year for the fruits of the trees, falls in the thick of the winter when the trees are barren and frozen over. Even in Israel, it is rare for the bloom to begin on Tu Bi'Shvat, especially during a leap year.

What is the significance of Tu Bi'Shvat taking place in the month of Shvat, during the winter? What lesson can we learn from this?

When we look at the trees in the middle of winter what do we see? We see death. We see withered-away potential. We see branches that once bore beautiful flowers and fruit now covered in snow – without any sign of life. It is specifically at this time that we celebrate the new fruit that stands to blossom from the branches. We foresee the magnificent bloom coming forth from the dreadful death. Tu Bi'Shvat is the time when we look beyond the surface at the potential for great life that lies within. It is a holiday of faith, when we celebrate the beauty that is budding but has not yet become manifest.

So often we look at situations and at once see the devastation. When we look outside all we see are withered and grey branches covered in snow – we only see death. But it is with eyes of faith that we can see the life budding below the surface. According to agronomists, February – around the time of Tu Bi'Shvat – is the best time to prune (certain) trees; this process removes the old, dead branches and allows for more productive growth of the fruits of the next season! This is the message of Tu Bi'Shvat: To tap into the hope that the trees which seem dead will bloom and give fruits once more.

In a spellbinding passage, the navi Yechezkel describes his vision of the valley of the dry bones (Yechezkel 37): As far as the eye can see there are only decomposed corpses. Hashem commands the prophet to order the bones back to life and slowly they begin to rejoin and form skeletons, then grow veins and organs and skin and finally the breath of life is breathed into their nostrils. The prophecy then says (v. 11-12):

“These bones are all the house of Israel. Behold they say, ‘Our bones have become dried up, our hope is lost, we are clean cut off to ourselves.’ Therefore, prophesy and say to them, So says Hashem: Behold! I open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves as My people, and bring you home to the land of Israel.”

We read the words of the prophecy and we can hear the story of Am Yisrael in the 20th century: Our fate was sealed, our graves were dug and our corpses dried out. But miraculously we experienced a collective תחיית המתים, we rebuilt our homeland and re-established our sovereign State. “They say ... our hope is lost”, but alas תקוותנו עוד לא אבדה - our hope is not lost.

We are experiencing yet another period where the devastation and death features prominently all around. On October 7th we heard the echoes of the vision of the dry bones, and over 110 days later we still await the safe return home of the captives and IDF soldiers serving valiantly.

It seems dark and grey. It seems like hope has been lost. It feels like we are going through a metaphorical winter when the trees are bare and nothing grows. The message of Tu Bi'Shvat is to look beyond the surface-level and to see our situation through lenses of faith. We can indeed see the initial glimmer of hope by the incredible civil initiatives throughout Israel and the selfless fighting of our soldiers.

We hope and pray that this initial blooming reaches fruition, and we come closer to the Ge'ula.

PARSHA BESHALACH
SHEVAT 17 5784
JANUARY 27TH 2024

CANDLE LIGHTING: 4:33 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 5:41 P.M.

THIS WEEKS ARTICLES

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BY REUT DOKOW

KTM FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
BY YAAKOV JACKSON
& MICHAEL SLOMINSKY

THE DAF PARSHA, AND ALL
LEARNING AT KTM DURING
THIS TIME, IS DEDICATED TO
THE SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF
THE SITUATION IN ISRAEL, THE
RETURN OF THE CAPTIVES, THE
HEALING OF THE INJURED, &
THE PROTECTION OF OUR BRAVE
SOLDIERS. MAY HASHEM LEAD
THEM TO VICTORY, AND THEN
HOME.

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LOVED ONE'S MEMORY -
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THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

BY DANIELLE WEINBERG

Tu Bishvat marks a period of profound growth, serving as the New Year for trees. This celebration holds valuable lessons for us in the relentless pursuit of our goals. In the tapestry of our lives, we often find ourselves working tirelessly, prompting introspection on whether our endeavors could have borne fruit with less effort.

A well-known Midrash tells a story: Hadrian the Roman Emperor came to Tverya and saw an old man digging holes to plant fruit trees. He said to him, "Grandfather, if you had planted earlier, you wouldn't have had to work so late." The old man replied, "I started working early, and I work late because I do what is good in the eyes of God." Hadrian asked him, "How old are you?" The old man answered, "I am a hundred years old." Hadrian said, "You are a hundred years old, and you still dig holes to plant trees? Do you think you will eat from their fruit?" The old man replied, "If I am worthy of it, I will eat from their fruit. If not, just as my ancestors worked for me, so I work for my children."

Hadrian said, "If you merit eating the fruits, inform me."

When the tree bore fruit, the old man said it was time to inform the king. What did he do? He filled his basket with figs and went to the palace gate. The guard asked him, "What is your business here?" The old man replied that he wanted to see the king. When he reached Hadrian, he asked, "What brings you here?" The old man said, "I am the old man you met on the road, digging holes to plant fruit trees. You told me that if I merit eating the fruits, I should come and inform you. I have merited, and these are the fruits." Hadrian told his servants, "Bring a golden chair, and let him sit in it. Fill his basket with gold dinars." His servants asked, "Why do you honor a Jewish old man?" Hadrian said, "His Creator honored him, and I will not withhold honor from him."

Yet, within this well-known tale, an often-overlooked gem surfaces: "I do what is good in the eyes of G-d." It unveils the essence of planting seeds despite knowing that one may not savor the fruits. This resonates with the idea that our actions possess inherent

value, driven by a sense of duty and purpose.

Frequently, our toil may seem unwarranted, and we question the necessity of our exertions. However, the key lies in adopting the right perspective – doing what is good in the eyes of Hashem. The journey toward our goals is inherently significant, a divine path that we must traverse to fulfill our purpose. The journey itself possesses intrinsic value, not merely the attainment of the destination.

Tu Bishvat, the New Year for trees, unfolds amid the winter chill when trees appear barren and lifeless. Despite this apparent dormancy, Tu Bishvat marks a pivotal transition. "The sap has already entered the trees," and the fruits have set out on their journey, even if the results manifest in the coming months. The celebration underscores the profound lesson that the journey and growth are paramount, transcending the immediate visibility of outcomes. In Tu Bishvat, the importance lies not just in the destination but in the transformative journey and the meaningful work undertaken along the way.



UNITY OF PURPOSE VS. UNITY OF HEART

BY DAVID WEINBERG

When Pharaoh was giving chase to Bnei Yisrael the verse uses a singular verb to describe the traveling of the Egyptians (Shmot 14:10). This seems to imply that they were somehow unified in their journey. Rashi apparently lends credence to this approach by describing that they were at that time "with one heart, as one man".

Strangely, Rashi uses a similar expression when the verse uses a singular verb to describe the camping of the Bnei Yisrael opposite Har Sinai to receive the Torah, albeit with one small nuance. There Rashi says they were "as one man, with one heart" (Shmot 19:2).

What is the implied difference in these nearly identical statements?

Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner in one of his essays about Pesach explains that Pharaoh's army was a coalition of component parts unified by a common goal. They were motivated by the desire to retrieve the monies and riches which were escaping in the rightful possession of the Jews, wanting it instead for themselves. That was what united them. They tolerated each other. They even cooperated as a powerful team. Even as they functioned as a single unit, each one had his separate desires for the spoils. The prime principal was not unity. They happened to share an overlapping interest.

In such cases, when the goal is achieved or the enemy is defeated, the "unity" generally evaporates. To be "with one heart as one

man" means not to really be one, but to function temporarily as a single unit.

On the other hand, to be "like one man with one heart" is the picture of an organically unified group which is essentially one as a familial unit. There, next to Sinai the hearts of the Jews merged. They were focused singularly on the highest common denominator. It was true unity based on eternal principles which united them. It was and is, an unbreakable bond.

Such has been the unity in recent months in Israel. There are difficult days yet ahead, may the path forward be one that continues this unity - "with one heart".

PARNESS HAYOM :: SHEVAT

2 SHEVAT | The Drazin Family in memory of Gertrude Drazin z"l

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WE WON'T LET YOUR HANDS FALTER

BY TIFERET DISHI

A significant part of our history is our wars. In our history as the people of Israel, we faced tough wars. But the way we dealt with them was unique. We always had a secret weapon.

Let's go back for a moment; long ago to the story of Sisera and Yael in the Tanach. Sisera escapes from Israel and comes to the Kenites, to the tent of Yael. In the verses, we see Yael inviting Sisera to enter the tent (Shoftim 4): "Turn aside to me; have no fear." We can begin to see Yael's strategic thinking here, but she doesn't stop there. After enticing and persuading him not to be afraid and to enter the tent, Sisera asks for some water, but Yael gives him milk and covers him with a blanket. "And he said to her, 'Stand at the opening of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say, 'No.'"

Sisera drinks the milk, becomes tired, and falls asleep. After he falls asleep, Yael takes the tent peg and hammers it into his temple, killing Sisera.

One interesting thing in this story is Yael's thinking. She not only saw the problem - "Sisera, the general of the Hittite army, stands before me at the tent entrance,

and if he wants, he can kill me at any given moment." Instead, she thought about a way to entice him, get him into the tent, and eventually kill him.

In the Six-Day War with Israel fighting against five countries, the Egyptian army was gigantic, with an air force and tanks as weapons. Israel could think, "There are five countries against me. How will I succeed?" Instead, Israel took a different path, finding a creative and strategic solution. We managed to destroy 80% of the Egyptian air force while it was still on the ground! Something that changed the face of the war. Israel didn't remain stuck facing the problem but found a different way to shift our chances.

In our parasha, we see Israel's war against Amalek. As long as Moshe's hands were raised, we prevailed over Amalek, and every time his hands were lowered, Amalek prevailed over us. Israel didn't leave it just like that; it took part in the miracle. Aharon and Hur held up Moshe's hands so that he wouldn't get tired; they didn't let him give up. They continued to strengthen him and the people of Israel.

In each of these stories, there is something common to all of them: the hand of God. Our thinking and strategic moves come in all sorts of ways, and what connects them all is our secret weapon: the Almighty. I ask myself, in what way can I be part of Israel's strategy now? And one of the answers that come to me is our prayers and our actions. We are part of the strategy. While we may not fight on the front lines, we are part of the equation. A significant part. If we pray, hold up the hands of Israel above like in this week's parasha, and don't let them give up for a moment, we can make that effort to pray one more prayer each day, come to one more support event for Israel, show presence, pray for one abducted soldier each day in every prayer, try to raise funds, make tzitzit for the soldiers, and the list can continue...

This is our "secret weapon". God. If we have this rare power in our hands, we need to realise it as much as we can at every moment we can. Israel may be a small country, but the strength and heart of the people of Israel is much greater than anything else, and only together will we prevail.

ISRAEL IN FOCUS: HADERA

BY REUT DOKOW

On the fifteenth of Shevat, 1891, residents settled on the land and established themselves in Hadera.

At the beginning of the settlement, the residents suffered from swamps and mosquitoes. "Most people who settled there struggle with a bad swamp, and the hearts of the farm owners are bitter, seeking to sell their farms, but there are no buyers." This was written in a newspaper at the time, showing how difficult their situation was.

However, Baron Rothschild helped them and planted many eucalyptus trees, hoping they would help drain the swamp. Yet, the situation remained difficult, and the residents left the settlement. The Circassians settled there in their place. When the Jews returned, the Circassians did not want to return the land to the Jews, leading to many disputes.

In 1910, it was decided that the lands would return to the Jews, except for a small part of them. Baron Rothschild continued to contribute, and from his funds they continued to plant more eucalyptus trees, aiming to use a lot of water and then dry the swamps. However this method did not prove itself in the end, and what helped with the drying of the swamps was drainage canals that diverted the water straight to the sea.

Today, Hadera is home to one of the largest eucalyptus forests in Israel called "Ya'ar Hadera." Several members of the NILI spy ring lived in Hadera, including Avshalom Feinberg, commemorated by a monument in Nahal Hadera Park. The settlement suffered attacks by Arabs during the events of 1921, 1929, and the Arab revolt of 1936. In 1934, Hadera was declared a local council by the British Mandatory authorities.

After the establishment of the state, new neighbourhoods were built, such as Beit Eliezer to the east and Givat Olga to the west. In 1952, Hadera was declared a city in the State of Israel.

Today, Hadera is a large city with a population of 104,651 residents, located north of Netanya and south of Haifa. It is a city close to the sea with a diverse population, including religious, secular, and ultra-Orthodox residents. There are numerous restaurants, malls, and beautiful places to explore in the nearby area, close to the sea.



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THE RICHES OF REBBI AKIVA

BY YAAKOV JACKSON

Two weeks ago, we learned the story of how Rabbi Akiva became a great Torah scholar. The Gemara adds: Rabbi Akiva became wealthy from six things.

First, from the money he received from Kalba Savua after his vow was dissolved (which we wrote about last time).

Second, he gained money from the ram of a ship, as craftsmen would fashion a sculpture of a type of sheep for every ship, which would be placed on its bow and would be used to conceal money. On one occasion, the sailors forgot this ram on the seashore, and Rabbi Akiva came and found it with the money stored inside.

Third, he became wealthy from a log of wood, as on one occasion he gave four dinars to sailors and said to them: Bring me something worthwhile. However, they only found a log of wood on the seashore. They brought it to him and said to Rabbi Akiva: May our master wait with this until we bring a more worthy item. He found that the log was full of dinars, as on one occasion a ship sunk and all the merchandise, i.e., the money, owned by the people on the ship was placed in that log, and it was found on that occasion by the sailors.

Fourth, Rabbi Akiva became wealthy from a certain lady, from whom he borrowed money and said that God would be his guarantor. When it came time to return the loan, the

king's daughter became insane and threw a purse of jewellery into the sea, which was found by that lady. She told Rabbi Akiva that his guarantor had paid his debt, and she allowed him to keep the loan.

Fifth, Rabbi Akiva also grew wealthy from the wife of Turnus Rufus (the evil Roman governor), who converted and gave him her money.

And sixth, from Ketia bar Shalom, a Roman minister who bequeathed his fortune to him.

We can learn from these stories (which appear in Gemara Nedarim 50a-b), the extent to which Hashem is always able to take care of everything we need, so we must believe in His ability to do so.



NEW!!

Send in your answers to the activities and get mentioned in future editions of the Daf Parasha AND have the chance to win prizes each month!!

After Shabbat email them to KTMfamily@ktmmtl.org or scan the QR code

QUIZ

BY YAAKOV JACKSON

1. HOW DID THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THANK GOD FOR THE MIRACLE OF SPLITTING THE RED SEA?
2. WHAT WENT BEFORE THE CAMP OF ISRAEL IN THE DAY?
3. WHAT WENT BEFORE THE CAMP OF ISRAEL AT NIGHT?
4. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE BREAD THAT FELL FROM THE SKY?
5. WHO FROM ISRAEL WAS AT THE HEAD OF THE SOLDIERS IN THEIR WAR AGAINST AMALEK?
6. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BITTER WATER WHEN MOSHE PUT HIS STICK IN THE STREAM?

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS

1. A. TO KILL THE WICKED OF ISRAEL WITHOUT THE EGYPTIANS SEEING THEIR DEATH. B. TO ALLOW ISRAEL TO SEE WHERE THE EGYPTIANS PUT MONEY, GOLD AND TOOLS.
2. IN THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS
3. A. THE LOCUST: "THERE WAS NONE BEFORE HIM, AND THERE SHALL BE NONE AFTER HIM." B. IN THE PLAGUE OF FIRSTBORNS: "AND THERE WAS A GREAT CRY...THE LIKE OF WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN AND THE LIKE OF WHICH WILL NEVER BE ADDED".
4. HASHEM CONTROLS THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE! IN CONTRAST TO THE EGYPTIAN IDOLS WHO CONTROL ONLY A SPECIFIC POWER SUCH AS THE GOD OF THE SEA, THE GOD OF RAIN, ETC.
5. קידוש החודש - SANCTIFYING THE NEW MONTH
6. TO SMEAR ON THE DOORPOSTS AND ON THE LINTEL SO THAT ON THE NIGHT OF THE PLAGUE OF THE FIRSTBORN HASHEM WILL IDENTIFY THE HOUSES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHO ARE ENGAGED IN THE MITZVAH AND WILL PASS OVER THEM.



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