

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Gain Through Pain



RABBI
 EPHRAIM
 SKOLNIK

This week's Shabbos is famously called Shabbos *nachamu* the Shabbos of consolation. The question is what exactly is the essence of *nechama* for Tisha b'Av and the destruction of the *beis hamikdash*? We still don't have the *bais hamikdash* and are living in *galus*; how can we have a consolation? Shabbos *nachamu* is the beginning of a seven-week series of *haftoras* of consolation that lead us straight to Rosh Hashana and the new year. Obviously, this is no coincidence and there must be a connection between Tisha b'Av and *nechama* and Rosh Hashana. Tisha b'Av is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. It represents

all the suffering that has befallen the Jewish nation as a whole as well as the suffering of the individual Jew. Yet we know that midday on Tisha b'Av is the time when *mashiach* is born, and we get up from sitting on the floor despite the fact that the temple was set aflame at this time. The essence of consolation is not despite all the suffering, but rather because of it and through it we will be redeemed and have *mashiach*. The end of our book of exile won't just have such an amazing ending that we will forget all the pain and suffering. The ending will show how all the pain of the Jewish nation, as well as of every individual, are all building blocks and integral parts of the redemption, and only G-d can write such a book. Tisha b'Av is not just a day to look back on the past; it is a day to put all our tragedy in perspective as bulding blocks for the future. This is also the reason why Tisha b'Av and *nechama* lead right into Rosh Hashana. Yes, we all have spiritual baggage, but let's take the lesson from Tisha b'Av and its consolation that from the darkest depths can come the highest heights and with our spiritual baggage, not despite it, we can build ourselves again.

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

Menachem, who lived in Israel, had a ticket to travel abroad for a month. His friend heard about his upcoming trip and asked if he minded if a young couple were to stay in his house for a Shabbos during his absence, and Menachem happily agreed.

When Menachem returned after a month and opened the door to his house, he felt a rush of cold air blow past him, and he was very surprised to see that the air conditioning unit was on. When he received his electric bill he was distraught, as he realized the couple who stayed in his house for a Shabbos forgot to turn off the air conditioning, and it was left running for the entire month.

Menachem called the couple to pay for his electric bill. The guest responded that he turned on the air conditioning permissibly, and his forgetting to turn it off upon leaving is only a *grama*, indirect damage which one cannot be forced to pay by court.

Q Whose claim wins?

A It would seem that the guest who turned on the air conditioning would be liable to pay, for although he had

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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permission to turn it on, it was only on condition that he would turn it off. Since he did not turn it off, he is considered as having no permission to use it retroactively.

We can bring proof from the *Darchoi Teshuva* (Y.D. 25;2) who discusses a scenario of one who asks a *shochet* to slaughter his animal. The *shochet* slaughtered the animal but failed to inspect the trachea and esophagus for blemishes as required by *Halacha*, and they subsequently got lost, forbidding the animal from consumption.

Is the *shochet* responsible to pay for the animal as if he damaged it, or is he exempt since the loss he caused was a *grama*, an indirect damage, for he just passively failed to inspect the innards?

Darchoi Teshuva concludes that the *shochet* is considered as having damaged directly, not by *grama*, since the owner of the animal appointed the *shochet* to slaughter the animal properly, including

A SHINING EXAMPLE

Mrs. Abramsky, the wife of the noted scholar, Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, had been bedridden for some time. Her breathing was labored and she was very weak. When her doctor came to check on her, she was told that, seeing that there had not been any improvement, she was in a grave situation. "How long do you think I have left?" she asked. The doctor looked at her for a long moment and said, "Not much time at all I'm afraid." She thanked him and as he left she said to her daughter-in-law

the subsequent inspection of the innards. Had the owner known the *shochet* would not inspect, he would not have allowed the *shochet* to slaughter his animal in the first place. Thus, he considered to have caused a direct damage to the animal's owner when he slaughtered the animal. 🕒

A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

What word does Moshe *Rabbeinu* use in this week's *parasha* that is the name of a *mitzva* described later in *sefer Devarim*?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 🕒

who was attending to her, "Please bring that jacket to the cleaners immediately." Her daughter-in-law was extremely puzzled. "Now Ima you are worried about petty things like making sure Abba's jacket is cleaned?" Mrs. Abramsky looked at her and said, "I do not have much time left, and Abba will have to tear and sit *shivah*. He will need a jacket to respect for a person like him to be sitting and receiving guests in a dirty jacket so I would like it to be cleaned now." The daughter-in-law carried out her instructions with newfound appreciation for what it means to think of others! 🕒

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

A vocal champion of Orthodox practice in New York in the mid-1800s was Reverend Samuel Myer Isaacs. Isaacs was from a Dutch family, and his father had been a merchant-banker in the Netherlands. Upon losing his money because of the Napoleonic wars, his father accepted a position in the Rabbinate in England when Samuel Myer was ten years old. Growing up in England, Samuel Myer would become a lifelong friend of Sir Moses Montefiore. In 1839, he accepted a position as *chazzan* in New York. Part of his duties as *chazzan* was to give a sermon once a month and on all holidays. Evidently in demand, Samuel Myer was the featured guest speaker at 47 synagogue dedications across the country. (He also officiated at 812 weddings, of which he said that, to his knowledge, none had ended in divorce.) He would use the pulpit for the rest of his life to fight for traditional Orthodox practice, calling for what became his motto, "not to touch the worship, but to improve the worshippers." To further this goal, in 1857 he founded his own newspaper, *The Jewish Messenger*. He suggested that Rabbi Abraham Rice, the first ordained rabbi to serve in America, should be made Chief Rabbi of America to give Orthodoxy a united front. Isaacs was also an active proponent of Jewish education. Three times he would establish a day school in New York, and his third attempt finally lasted decades. He founded an after-school Hebrew school, and, together with Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, attempted to start a seminary to train rabbis. His efforts to assist the needy included helping found and serving as first vice-president of Mount Sinai Hospital and serving as treasurer of the North American Relief Society for Indigent Jews in Palestine. Upon his death, a non-Jewish counterpart wrote to Isaac's children, "Our city [New York] could better spare millions of its money than one such resolute watchman and soldier in its moral defense." 🕒

SOURCES: Swierenga, Dr. Robert P. "Samuel Myer Isaacs: The Dutch Rabbi of New York City." Levine, Dr. Yitzchak. "Reverend Samuel Myer Isaacs – Champion of Orthodoxy." *The Jewish Press*. 2012.

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