Weekly Quiz
Taanis 28 – Megillah 4

1. Why is the full Hallel not said the entire Pesach?
2. Please name one Rosh Chodesh that the entire Hallel is recited.
3. Please cite the three Tannaic views how long the intense mourning of Tisha B’av is
4. Who is allowed to study Torah on Tisha B’av?
5. Is one allowed to work on Tisha B’av? Is it a halachic issue or a minhag?
6. Please give two reasons we’re happy on Yom Kippur.
7. Please cite five reasons we’re happy on 15 Av.
8. On what grounds can a future Beis Din reverse a previous ruling from a Beis Din?
9. What were two things that Yehoshua neglected in battle?
10. Why are we obligated to hear the Megillah during the daytime if we heard it by night?

Good Shabbos!

From the Desk of Rabbi Yaakov Fisch

This week we celebrate the conclusion of studying Maseches Taanis and immediately began studying Maseches Megillah. The transition from Taanis to Megillah reminded me of the transitions of Taanis Esther to Purim. Taanis Esther or the Fast Esther is a rather unique fast on the Jewish calendar as it does not commemorate anything tragic or something that requires mourning. The purpose of Taanis Esther is to recall how effective the power of prayer can be in times of distress. Esther told Mordechai that before she can reach out to the King, she needs the Jewish Nation to pour their hearts out in fasting and prayers. Mordechai heeded this request and organized a mass gathering of prayer. Ultimately, G-d listened to these prayers and Esther was successful in her mission. The Fast of Esther is observed to remind us of this powerful lesson. When we are in a crisis or in times of distress, G-d is always available and attentive to our prayers.

Have a Peaceful Shabbos,

Rabbi Yaakov Fisch

Friday, December 17, 2021
Rava states that the obligation to recite the Hallel in Rosh Chodesh is not a Biblical requirement. There are only 18 days a year in Israel and 21 days in the Diaspora to recite the Hallel and Rosh Chodesh is not included. The Gemara relates a story with Rav who visited a community in Bavel and witnessed them saying Hallel on Rosh Chodesh and contemplated interrupting them but then he saw that they skipped some chapters of the Hallel. He concluded that saying the partial Hallel must be a custom in the community or menaḥaṭ their fathers. Tosfos has a debate if one should recite a blessing on the partial Hallel. The Shulchan Aruch in Ch. 422:2 of Orach Chaim rules in accordance with the Rambam that one does not say blessing over partial Hallel. The Rema disagrees and quotes the Rosh and Rabbeinu Tam that one should make a blessing over the partial Hallel. These are their words.

The Gemara underscores the importance of the Torah Study. As we know, how important it was to have the daily Tamid sacrifice brought twice daily; once in the morning and once in the evening. As we just learned in the conclusion of Taanis, that one of the reasons that we fast on the 17th of Tammuz is that we missed bringing the Tamid for an entire day for the first time in hundreds of years. That is nothing short of astounding! The Tamid sacrifice is omitted from the Avodah and we implement a public fast over this catastrophe! Yet, that does not measure up to the lack of public Torah study as demonstrated with the story in our Gemara with the Yehoshua and the angel. Due to the ensuing battle (some would say a pretty good excuse), the evening Tamid and the public Torah study was overlooked. The angel chastised Yehoshua for overlooking this. Yehoshua questioned the angel as to which area (Torah study or Tamid) was the reason for this unusual intervention and the angel responded that it was the lack of Torah study. One can reasonably ask, what the big spiel is just to miss one day of Torah study? The Derech Hashem writes in Chapter 4 that there is no greater manifestation of G-d’s presence in this world other than Torah study. Every time we utter the holy words of Torah we are connecting to the Shechina and the connection cannot be rivaled in any other manner. That is what V’Talmud Torah K’neged Kulam means. When Yehoshua and his generation stopped learning Torah for just one night, it was considered so significant that the angel was required to intervene.
he Men of the Great ing and formulated their prayers. The Rambam Assembly were a group of 120 outstanding sages elaborates on the Laws of Tefilia and described the among several of who were prophets. The earliest historical development of Tefilia and attributed the Sage was Ezra the Scribe who gathered the Jews from the diaspora with the mission of rebuilding the Second Temple. His colleague Nechemia as well as the famous prophets Chaggai and Zecharia. The famous Mordechai from the Megillah had a membership in the group. The final member was the sage Shimon Hatzadik as the Mishna in Pirkei Avos states.

This group was a transformative one as it oversaw the transition from the era of proph-
to the Mishnah.

As the Gemara in Talmud Sanhedrin states that the Sages of this group prayed that the Yetzer Harah of Avoda Zarah as the population could not handle the temptation. The response that they received from Heaven was that to maintain the spiritual equilibrium of free will, if the Yetzer would subside a significant pull towards the food would discontinue as well and the sages accepted the deal. Another relatively er message they taught us is that even during unknown thing that the Men of the Great Assembly times if suffering we should still look for G-d’s con-
ceptual presence.

Shmuel quotes the Braisa that if Erev Tisha B’Av The Mishnah Berura explains that even though there is no obligation per se to eat meat on Shabbos if one re-
frains eating meat on Shabbos, that is inappropriate. These are the words of the Shulchan Aruch in Ch. 552: 11:

The Mishna Berura explains that even thought there is no requirement to eat meat on Shabbos, bitions of fasting are relaxed on Shabbos. Not one should not refuse to eat meat on Shabbos only that, one may indulge in a feast fit for a king because of Toshá B’Av. These are the words of the the caliber of Solomon. One may drink wine on Shabbos if it coincides with Shabbos. The Mishna Berura explains that even though there is no obligation per se to eat meat on Shabbos if one re-
frains eating meat on Shabbos, that is inappropriate.

These are the words of the Shulchan Aruch in Ch. 552: 10: 
The Braisa equates the practice of many restrictions of Tisha B’av with the restrictions a mourner has during a “shiva” for a mourner. One of the restrictions is the ban of studying the Torah since studying the Torah brings a person happiness. For this reason, children should not go to school on Tisha B’av, for this for the study of Torah brings them happiness. One can fairly question, how much happiness and joy the children get from going to school to study Torah? After all, we were once kids and we would appreciate a day off and the absence wouldn’t normally be a sign of mourning! The Taz in his commentary to the Shulchan Aruch basically concedes to the question and writes that the happiness of Torah study and the subsequent deprivation of it results in mourning is pertaining to the adult teachers and not to the student who is the student. The Bach and the Magen Avraham disagree and maintain that it affects the children as well and one day of not studying Torah would cause them sadness.

Taanis 31

The Mishna stated that Yom Kippur and Tu B’Av were the happiest days in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur was considered the most joyous since we were given the second set of Tablets and it is the National Day of Forgiveness for the Jewish People, what is special about the 15th of Av? There are various responses offered. One response is offered by Rav Masna who states the bodies that fell in the battles of Beitar did not decompose after several months and they were finally buried on Beitar. That is why it is such a great Simcha and a special Bracha of הטוב והמטיב was implemented during the bentching and it the focus of the blessing is covering the story of Beitar. Tosfos points out the other time we recite this blessing is when bringing a bottle of wine to the table. The connection between Beitar and the bottle of wine to the table is that in the story of Beitar the bodies piled up like a fence in the vineyard and did not decompose. Since the miracle took place in a vineyard, it is important to make this blessing on a cup of wine as well. The Meshech Chochmah has a different perspective on this issue. He says that after the defeat of Beitar, people thought it was the end of the Jewish people as the Romans had delivered a crushing defeat. They had been exiled from Jerusalem and put together significant resistance in Beitar under the leadership and that got crushed. The morale was extremely low as people thought that G-d had permanently abandoned the Jews. When they saw the bodies had not decomposed, it was a sign that G-d had not abandoned the Jews and the blessing of הטוב והמטיב was on the eternal Jewish people. It is for that reason that we make the blessing of הטוב והמטיב on a bottle of wine like no other item remiss us of the difference between Jews and Non-Jews than a bottle of wine.

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