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15 AV

XPLORING SPECIAL DATES

ON OUR CALENDAR

"לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמשה עשר באב..." "There were no greater festivals for the Jewish people than 15 Av (Tannis 4, 8)."

From 5735 and on, the Rebbe farbrenged nearly every year on this date.

At these farbrengens, the Rebbe would expound on the uniqueness of this day (partial list):

> It is the day on which the last generation destined to die in the desert found out that the gezeirah had been nullified. This is the ascent (עליה) following the previous descent (ירידה), the punishment of the meraglim decreed on Tisha B'av (see farbrengen 15 Av 5735). The moon is full on 15 Av. This symbolizes שלימות (completion). On some occasions, the Rebbe explained how 15 Av even has an advantage over the other Yomim Tovim that fall out of the fifteenth of the month, Sukkos and Pesach (see farbrengen 15 Av 5736). The Shulchan Aruch tells us that this is the day upon which the

nights begin to get longer, and therefore one can add in study of Torah at night starting on this date (see farbrengen 15 Av 5740). 20 AV

Histalkus of Horav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's Father

On 20 Av 5704, the Rebbe's father, Hagaon Hamekubal Horav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, was *nistalek* in Alma-Ata (today Almaty), Kazakhstan.

After four difficult years of exile in Chi'ili, Kazakhstan, Horav Levi Yitzchok arrived in Alma-Ata after Pesach 5704. While his living conditions improved there, unfortunately this brought about a negative result: A terrible illness which he had been suffering from for some time but hadn't been felt amidst the hunger and want of his exile, was now able to show itself, and it spread drastically. On Wednesday, 20 Av, his situation deteriorated. Towards evening, Horav Levi Yitzchok's soul left its body. He was 66 year old. The *levaya* took place the following day.

"After my father-in-law the [Frierdiker] Rebbe left Russia, [Horav Levi Yitzchok] was the only descendant of the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek left as a leader in Russia," the Rebbe said in a *sicha*. "Therefore, people turned to him for guidance (הדרכה ה). Because of his activities in spreading Torah and the wellsprings [of Chassidus], he was arrested and exiled, and he was *nistalek* in his place of exile." (Sefer Hasichos 5748 p. 587 -588.)

In 5730, every Shabbos during the farbrengen, the Rebbe began explaining Horav Levi Yitzchok's *ha'aros* on Sefer Hatanya, from the newly published sefer "Likkutei Levi Yitzchok."

In 5731, the Rebbe began to explain Horav Levi Yitzchok's *ha'aros* on Sefer HaZohar, and teach a lesson from them in *avodas Hashem*. This continued for many years afterwards.

MENACHEM AV 5777

לזכות החתן הרה"ת ר' **משה דובער** שיחי' **בעגון** והכלה המהוללה מרת **נחמה מאשא** תחי' **ווילהעלם** נדפס ע"י **משפחתם** שיחיו

{IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

Every year on Chof Av, the Rebbe would daven at the *amud* and say *kaddish*, and hold a farbrengen. In the later years, these farbrengens were televised and broadcast live. When it fell out on a weekday, the Rebbe would make a *siyum* on a *masechta* in connection with the *yahrtzeit*.

On the 20th *yahrtzeit*, in 5724, the Rebbe established "Keren Levi Yitzchok," a fund named after his father. Its purpose was to loan money to educational institutions that taught *al taharas hakodesh* and to teachers who taught *limmudei kodesh*.

During the farbrengen on Chof Av 5740, the Rebbe made a call to establish kollels everywhere for Jewish seniors—"Kollel Tiferes Zekeinim." The Rebbe then added: "The suggestion is in connection with the *yahrtzeit* of my father and teacher, who gave his life for the spreading of Torah and Yiddishkeit in general, over there [in Russia]. He was arrested because of this, judged and sent away, and he is buried there, in exile. The kollels should be called "Kollel Tiferes Zekeinim Levi Yitzchok," and this will certainly give his soul nachas."

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Rebbe draws lessons from occurrences on dates in Jewish history:

22 AV Yechezkel Hanavi Stands Up

וְאַתָּה שְׁכַב עַל צִדְּרָ הַשְּׁמָאלִי וְשַׁמְתֶ אֶת עֲוֹן בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו... שְׁלֹש מֵאוֹת וְתִשְׁעִים יוֹם... וְכַלִית אֶת אֵלֶה וְשָׁכַבִת עַל צִדְרָ הֵימֵנִי שֵׁנִית... אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם..

And you shall lie on your left side, and you shall place the iniquity of the house of Israel through it... three hundred and ninety days...

And when you complete these, you shall lie on your right side a second time... forty days...

(Yechezkel, 4,4-6)

22 Av was the day that Yechezkel Hanavi completed the number of days for which he was instructed by Hashem to lie down (Siddur Rav Yaakov Emden). The Gemara in Sanhedrin (39a) relates how a Tzedoki confronted Rabbi Avahu: "Hashem laughs at His neviim," he said, "First he tells the navi to lie down on his left side for so many days, and then on his right side for a much smaller and disproportionate amount of days." Before Rabbi Avahu answered the Tzedoki, a student of his asked him: "What is the rationale for *shemitta*?" Rabbi Avahu responded: "Now I will tell you something that answers both questions. Hashem told the Yidden, 'Plant for six years and rest during the seventh, so as to know that the land is mine? The Yidden did not do so, but instead sinned and they were exiled. The way of the world is that if a physical king is angered by a country, if he is cruel, he kills all of the inhabitants; if he is merciful, he kills half of them; if he is most merciful, he causes the prominent people among them to suffer. So too, Hashem caused Yechezkel to suffer in order to cleanse the Yidden of their sins.

The Maharsha explains that the 390 days corresponds to the 390 years that the Yidden sinned, from when they entered Eretz Yisroel until the exile of the ten tribes, and the 40 days correspond to the 40 years that the Yidden sinned after the exile of the ten tribes, until the destruction of Yerushalayim.

When speaking about this Gemara at the farbrengen of Shabbos Eikev 5737, the Rebbe pointed out how each year on 22 Av, all undesirable things are wiped away (for that's when Yechezkel's days of lying down ended; the days that served to atone for the Yidden's sins), to the extent that the *mida* of *Din* can no longer accuse.

Tzaddikim in every generation accept suffering upon themselves, to the extent that they suffer the pains of exile, which are worse than death. This shows us the greatness of *tzaddikim*; they accept suffering in order to save Yidden from undesirable occurrences.

The Rebbe connected this with the *yahrtzeit* of his father, Horav Levi Yitzchok two days earlier on Chof Av, who was sent to exile because of his work in strengthening and spreading Yiddishkeit, eventually bringing about his passing.

(Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 2 pgs. 469-471)