



Maximizing Potential

Chamishah Asar B'Av

Opposites

“There were no holidays for the Jewish people like Chamishah Asar B'Av and Yom Kippur.”²¹ In this passage from a *mishnah* in Masseches Taanis, our sages combine two concepts that seemingly couldn't be more distinct from each other: Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, and Chamishah Asar B'Av, a rabbinic holiday that, until its institution, had nothing unique about it.

Indeed, the Gemara goes on to ask: “Granted, we mention Yom Kippur as it is a day of forgiveness, the day the final set of *luchos* were given — but what's [so special about] Chamishah Asar B'Av?” Nevertheless, the *mishnah* brings these two days together, saying that they are both the greatest days of the year.

This idea, however, is alluded to in the name of the *mazal* for the month of Av — “Aryeh,” which stands for “Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom

Kippur, Hoshanaah Rabbah,” these being special days, and specifically mentioning Yom Kippur.

Ready for Redemption

Every concept in Torah must have a practical lesson, and in our case, a relevant lesson regarding Chamishah Asar B'Av. The uniqueness of the fifteenth day of any month is the fullness of the moon. This symbolizes the fullness of the Jewish nation who are compared to the moon.



לזכות בני השלוחים
 לוי בן אסתר
 חנה רבקה בת אסתר
 שרה מושקא בת אסתר
 לרגל יום הולדתם בחודש מנחם אב

שיגדלו להיות שלוחים, חסידים,
 יראי שמים, מקושרים אל הרבי,
 ושיהיו מקור לנחת רוח רב
 להוריהם, למשפחתם ולנשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
 הרה"ת ר' יצחק וזוגתו מרת אסתר
 שיחיו טייכטל
 שלוחי המלך בנאשוויל, טענעסי

Specifically, the fifteenth of Av was the day when the death of the Jews in the desert ceased, nullifying the decree of Tisha B'Av, allowing the Jews to enter Eretz Yisroel. This symbolizes the ultimate nullification of the events of a later Tisha B'Av — the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, readying us to reenter Eretz Yisroel with the coming of Moshiach. This is the lesson we learn from the general idea of Chamishah Asar B'Av — that we are ready and our *avodah* is complete, and the *geulah* will be at any moment.

Increasing Kedushah

This is the advantage of the fifteenth of Av over the fifteenth day of any other month, whether it's Pesach on the fifteenth of Nissan or Sukkos on the fifteenth of Tishrei — Chamishah Asar B'Av comes after the ultimate low

of Tisha B'Av.

At the end of Maseches Taanis,² we are told that, “from now [Chamishah Asar B'Av] and on, whoever increases [in Torah study day and night, years] will be added to [his life].” The concept of increasing *kedushah* is always applicable, but there is a specific benefit to doing so after Chamishah Asar B'Av, bringing about an immeasurable difference in one's *avodah*.

The power of this day, like that of Yom Kippur, affects the entire year that follows, allowing us to harness the energy that we receive from Chamishah Asar B'Av and to grow in our *avodah*.

Hamaaseh Hu Ha'ikar

It is incumbent upon everyone to take upon themselves *hachlatos*

tovos and to begin to fulfill them immediately, not even to wait until the morning of Chamishah Asar B'Av. The *mishnah* in Avos³ tells us, “One hour (“*sha'ah*”) of repentance and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life in the World to Come.” The word “*sha'ah*” can also mean a moment. This highlights the fact that we must start now — since every single moment is infinitely valuable.

May it be that in this very moment, Hashem gives all the Yidden *brachos* from His open hand, leading to the ultimate *bracha*, the true and complete *geulah* through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

(Adapted from the sicha of 15 Av 5748)

1. Taanis, 26b.
2. Ibid. 31a.
3. Perek 4, mishnah 17.