

באב, as the גמרא points out very dramatically, is one of the happiest days, if not the happiest day, of the year. It's a day when שידוכים were prepared, where people were able to start a new משפחה and continue the דורות of ישראל. כלל. This day has a number of significances. The most famous one is that on ט"ו באב, the people stopped dying in the מדבר. But R' Elimelech Biderman שטארק און געזונט זאל זיין געזונט און שטארק brings down another, the גמרא in בבא בתרא says that on ט"ו באב people noticed that the days were starting to get shorter. What's the significance of the days getting shorter that they were happy about it? Firstly, the longer the night is, the more we can learn. But also, that was the day that they finished cutting the עצים for the מערכה, because up until ט"ו באב were the hot days where the wood would not have any worms in it, because you would not want to bring חס ושלום wormy, infested wood into the בית המקדש. Now that the days would begin getting shorter, there was a chance that the wood would be infested, and so from ט"ו באב on they stopped cutting. Since they were not doing the wood-cutting anymore, they had more time to learn. This shows us that learning תורה is even higher than preparing things for the בית המקדש.

R' Elimelech would always tell people, if you want to live a long life, learn two משניות in פרקי אבות before you go to sleep, it'll add years to your life. R' Elimelech brings down that R' Zundel Kroizer was once sitting with a Yid who wanted to make a קבלה; he wanted to do something to make his life more meaningful. R' Zundel told him that he should accept upon himself to learn one more minute of תורה every single day. The Yid was disappointed. He was expecting something big. He wanted something dramatic. "If I'm going to add another 60 seconds on my learning, how is that going to improve my life?" R' Zundel showed him this גמרא in בבא בתרא, that they stopped cutting wood on ט"ו באב. The change in nighttime hours was barely felt from one day to the next. The whole difference between ט"ו באב and י"ד באב was just a moment. But for that moment that the day was a drop shorter, they were able to learn more, and because of that it became a day of celebration.

Now, from ט"ו באב until ראש השנה is 45 days. We can start now, even before ראש חודש אלול to be מקבל פני ראש חודש אלול. And in fact, R' Elimelech brings down that there were those who started to say קתיבה וחתימה טובה starting from באב, because they thought it was appropriate for that time. The pasuk says (דברים י"ב) - What does the הקדוש ask from you? ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׁאֵל מֵעֶמְךָ. And as my sister שטארק און געזונט זאל זיין געזונט און שטארק said, for משה רבינו, it was a little thing to be ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׁאֵל מֵעֶמְךָ. For us, ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׁאֵל מֵעֶמְךָ is a big deal. But for משה רבינו, it was מה, what? מה, what are we? However, you can change how you read it and say ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׁאֵל מֵעֶמְךָ - Hashem is asking from you. מה? מה? 45. These are the days that Hashem asks from us. Give Him one more minute on that day, and then we will maybe, hopefully, be prepared to encounter מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא.

