



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFKA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

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GREATEST ACQUISITIONS

When Avram entered the contract know as the bris bein hebesarim, the Torah tells us that Hashem put Avram to sleep and then informed him that his descendants would be enslaved for centuries in Mitzrayim but would end up leaving "b'rechush gadol" - with tremendous wealth. Some suggest that the reason why Avram fell asleep was so that he shouldn't daven for his children, but it would seem that Hashem could have then simply ordered him to abstain from tefilah just like He would later tell Moshe to cease from davening. Also, from a simple reading of the pesukim, it seems that the fact that the Jewish people would leave Mitzrayim wealthy is some how a consolation for having endured generations of slavery. Money is always useful but most people wouldn't want their children to be enslaved just so that their great grandchildren will be able to build up their portfolio.

HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l suggests that Hakadosh Boruch Hu caused Avram to fall into a slumber for the same reason He put Adam HaRishon to sleep before creating Chava; since she was created from Adam, Hashem put him to sleep so that he shouldn't feel the pain of the surgery. Here as well, Avram was sedated so that he shouldn't be too pained by hearing about his descendants' exile and slavery. Still, Hakadosh Boruch assured him that it would be well worthwhile, not because they would leave with gold and silver. Although this would also come to fruition, the main "rechush gadol" is the personal growth they would experience because of their oppression:

In the time leading up to the shevatim's descent to Mitzrayim, there was jealousy and strife among them. While we cannot even fathom the level the Shivtei Kah were on, their midos needed refinement, and ultimately, when they left Mitzrayim, they came out more refined individuals, despite the fact that they had experienced setbacks in other areas. This, explains Rav Sorotzkin, was Hashem's message to Avram: They will suffer, but ultimately, it will be good for their development, and becoming better people is truly a rechush gadol that makes the suffering a price worthwhile paying.

Many people suffer. All of us have challenges and experience difficulties. This is part of golus. It is our reality. These difficulties were designed to help us grow and become better people and better Jews, the reward of which is eternal. Of course it isn't easy. It was so painful for Avraham Avinu to hear that his children would suffer that Hashem had to sedate him before telling him about it, but he understood that it was a necessary ingredient in the building of K'lal Yisroel, and we should take comfort in the fact that every difficult experience is to help us grow in life so that when we leave this world after 120 years, we will be enriched beyond anything we could have imagined.

ואמר רבי יצחק: ארבעה דברים מקרעין גזר דינו של אדם, אלו הן: צדקה, צעקה, שינוי השם, ושינוי מעשה... ויש אומרים: אף שינוי מקום דכתיב: ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך לך מארצך (בראשית י"ב:א), והדר: ואעשה לך גדול (בראשית י"ב:ב). (ראש השנה טז)

Sarah wasn't just barren; she was an ailonis which means that she was physically incapable of conceiving and carrying a child, yet when she and Avraham moved to Eretz Yisroel, she was completely cured and gave birth to Yitzchak, the progenitor of the Jewish people, so we see that this move didn't just bring her beracha, but changed her reality. Ultimately, this would serve as a precedent for her descendants who are able to overcome that which was otherwise impossible, by moving to another location.

TORAH TEMIMAH



From the desk of
the Rosh Kollel...

Welcome to all our new subscribers!

This past Sunday, the kollel began the winter z'man with renewed energy and vigor. We are all looking forward to what promises to be an exciting z'man full of energy and simchas ha'Torah!

In honor of reaching our 16th year, I am publishing the Shabbos derashos on the haftarah and parsha which were said within the walls of our beis medrash. This is a second volume to the edition published upon our 10th anniversary five years ago. Dedication opportunities are available. Contact us at info@torahkollel.com for more information.

...Boruch Hashem, we recently expanded our premises (slightly) by enclosing the porch off of the beis medrash, and plans are underway for major improvements in the coming months. If you would like to take part in the zechus of our makom Torah, please contact us at info@torahkollel.com.

The current situation worldwide is still frightening. Please increase your commitment to Torah study, tzedaka and chesed, and of course daven for all the captives, soldiers and the general situation.

From the early hours of the morning, until late at night, the beis medrash is and active asset to the community at large. Mosdos Avahas Yehonoson - "Torah Kollel" continues to impact on the community at large in many ways and exists thanks to the benevolence and generosity of its supporters around the world. Consider having a part of this tremendous zechus by sponsoring a bookcase, a day, week or month of the Torah Kollel. Contact us at info@torahkollel.com for further information.

- Rabbi David Lewin

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Sugyas ha' Sedra

AN EXTRA SPECIAL MILAH KNIFE

The Rema in Yoreh Deah writes that although a knife used for bris milah is usually muktza on Shabbos, if there is a bris on Shabbos, one may move the knife after the bris, and return it to its proper place, even if the mohel has placed the knife down in the interim. The Taz however, disagrees. He contends that since the milah knife is ordinarily considered muktza machmas chisaron kis (a more stringent category of muktza, that due to its inherent value, the item would not be used for any other purpose) and therefore, due to its delicate nature, one may only move the knife for the purpose of the bris itself. Afterwards, the knife reverts back to its original muktza status.

Obviously, if leaving the knife lying around will pose a potential danger (such as children wandering around the house or shul) one may move it to a safe place. Since it is impractical for the mohel to hold the knife until he is ready to put it away, the Elyah Raba suggests that someone else should take it from his hand and return it to its place. He contends that this is permitted and says that the Talmud Yerushalmi supports this view. Although the Machatzis HaShekel writes that he does not know to which Yerushalmi he is referring, the Tehillah l'Dovid explains that he is referring to a man giving his lulav to his wife to put away, which is in fact a Gemara in the Bavli as well. He understands that the arba minim are considered muktza (like wood and rocks) after the mitzvah has been completed and nevertheless, one can take it from his hand, which would seem to support the Elyah Raba who permits passing the milah knife to someone else after the bris is over.

The Tehillah l'Dovid, however questions this parallel; he explains that since it is clear from the Gemara that there was a custom to carry around the arba minim throughout the day as a way of showing endearment of the mitzvah, as such, the mitzvah is not over until it is put away. Therefore, when someone else takes it from his hand, the lulav has not yet reverted back to the status of muktzah. Seemingly, the same could not be said about a milah knife whose mitzvah ends after the milah is over.

One could answer that although the Tehillah l'Dovid's reasoning makes sense, there is a fundamental difference between these two types of muktza. A lulav, is a branch of wood which is muktza machmas gufo (complete muktza) and therefore, were it not for the chavivus ha'mitzvah, would revert back to being muktza

SPARKS OF SHABBOS

David ha'melech davened for a "lev tahor" and a "ruach nachon" (Tehilim 51). The Gra explains that he made these two requests because a when a person sins it is either because he is rebellious or seeking tumah, or because his vision of reality is distorted and he thinks that his aveiros are actually mitzvos. If a person has a lev tahor, he seeks only to do ratzon Hashem, and if his ruach is nachon ie he has a correct spirit or vision, he will actually do so. The Gra explains that when we say "v'taheir libeinu l'avdecha b'emes" on we are asking for these two things - a lev tahor and a ruach nachon. Perhaps the reason why we ask for this more on Shabbos than during the week is because the goal of Shabbos is to get closer to Hashem and connect with him. By ensuring that we have a lev tahor and the correct approach, we can be more successful in doing so.

L' maaseh...

One Chanuka, Rav Moshe Feinstein's yeshiva celebrated the Chanuka mesibah with an elaborate fleishig meal. Rav Moshe attended. The food was enjoyable and served with elegance. Of course there was divrei Torah and the bochurim danced. Eventually, R' Moshe made his way out of the dining hall to the awaiting car and the bochurim escorted him, dancing around the car, until it pulled away. The next day, the phone in the yeshiva rang and the bochur who picked up heard R' Moshe on the other end, and he wanted to speak to the woman who worked in the yeshiva's kitchen. After she hung up the phone, the bochur curiously asked the woman why the rosh yeshiva called her, and she told him that since he had allowed to bochurim to dance him to the car, he had neglected to come in and personally thank her for the delicious meal, and so now he was calling to apologize and express his appreciation for a job well done.

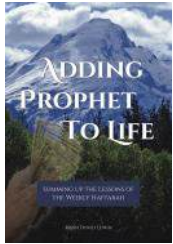
immediately upon the completion of the mitzvah. A milah knife, however, is a utensil. It is only because of its great value that it has a stricter level of muktzah (i.e. and not just kli sheh' melachto l'isur). Perhaps one could argue that it remains a kli sheh melachto l'isur and only regains its unique machmas chisaron kis status after it is placed down.

However, we would like to suggest another approach to this issue: The Gemara says that in the city of R' Eliezer, who permitted all melachos to be done for the sake of milah, they would chop wood to make coals in order to manufacture the milah knife on Shabbos. In the city of R' Akiva, however, they did not, since he held that only melachos performed during the milah itself may be done on Shabbos. (The halacha of course, follows the opinion of R' Akiva.)

The Gemara tells us that when the goyim made gezeiros forbidding bris milah, the city of R' Eliezer was not subject to it. Why this was so, begs explanation. Additionally, the entire Gemara is difficult; what does it mean that in the city of R Eliezer, they used to make coals... It sounds like this happened all the time. Is it possible that knife from last week's bris was always nowhere to be found? Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that the people in R' Eliezer's city had such a chavivus for the mitzvah of milah, that they always manufactured a brand new knife for each baby boy and the family would then keep the knife. Ideally, this should have been done before Shabbos, but if a new knife had not been prepared, R' Eliezer allowed them to make a new knife instead of using one of the many dozens that already existed in the same city. Although we don't pasken like R' Eliezer and only permit the bris milah itself and not other preparatory desecrations of Shabbos, it could very well be that we do possess the same chavivus for the mitzvah. As such, the knife does not revert back to its prior status until it has been put down!



As we listen to the Chazan's repetition of shemoneh esrei, we respond "Amein" to each beracha affirming the words he is saying. Although for the most part we don't think of it, but the shaliach tzibur is really acting as our agent in repeating the words we just davened and our answering him is so that it should be considered as if we actually said these berachos ourselves. This is true for most of the chazaras ha'shatz. Yet, when we get to "modim", we don't only answer "amein", but go on to recite our "own version", as if just answering amein isn't enough. Indeed, the Avudraham explains that a person cannot fully fulfill his obligation of saying thank you via a shaliach and so we each express our thanks to Hashem for ourselves. It follows then, that when we recite birchos ha'shachar in the morning, or other berachos such as asher yatzar throughout the day, we should realize what we are saying and thank Hashem with focus and appreciation. Investing a second or two to stop and think before making any beracha can transform a dry liturgy into a heartfelt appreciation for all that our Creator does for us!



DIVREI HA'NAVI - ADDING PROPHET TO LIFE

The Pirkei d'Rebbi Eliezer (perek 32) lists six people who were named before they were born - Yitzchok, Yishmael, Moshe Rabeinu, Shlomo, Yoshiyahu, and Moshiach. One of them is cited by Rashi in this week's parsha, and another has been cited by many recently in light of the current situation.

The Pirkei d'Rebbi Eliezer goes on to explain that Yitzchok's name represents (yud) the ten nisyanos which Avraham endured, (tzadi) that his mother Sarah was 90 years old when he was born, (cheis) that his bris milah was on the eighth day of his life, and (kuf) that Avraham was 100 years old when he was born. Although the Torah implies that he was called Yitzchok because both Avraham and Sarah laughed ("tzchok") when they heard that they would be having a child, the commentaries explain that in which case he should have been called Tzchok because as a future tense, "Yitzchok" implies something that hadn't happened yet.

Then, he writes that Yishmael was called as such because his name is a contraction of "yishma Keil" - that Hashem will listen, because in the end of days, Yishmael's descendants will oppress the Jewish people and we will call out to Hakadosh Boruch Hu, and He will listen. This is the meaning of the posuk (Tehillim 55:20) "yishma Keil, vayaaneim" - Hashem will hear and oppress them.

Yet, a cursory reading of the pesukim in our parsha seems to indicate otherwise, that the malach who appeared to Hagar told her that Hashem had heard her cries and will give her a child.

R' Dovid Luria explains that the two actually fit together: It was because Sarah oppressed Hagar and caused her to cry out in pain that Hashem rewarded her with a child who would in turn oppress Sarah's children and cause us to scream out in pain.

R' Zev Volf Einhorn takes a different approach: If we fast forward to next week's parsha, we find Yishmael using his koach of tefilah. He was dehydrated, lying in the desert, abandoned by his mother who could bear to watch him die, and he screamed out to Hashem, Who made a miracle and made a water source appear in the desert. Generations later, it was the Jews who were thirsty for water and Yishmael's children brought them salty foods and empty flasks.

If you put the two together, it comes out that Yishmael was charged with a mission of inspiring us to tefilah, but he misuses and abuses this power.

Let us fast forward to next week's parsha: Hashem decides to destroy Sedom but first gives Avraham the opportunity to daven for the metropolis and its residents. The Torah presents a monologue of Hashem's decision to let Avraham know what He is planning to do: "How can I hide this from Avraham, after all, he will give birth to a large nation?". This needs to be understood. Clearly, Hashem knew that He was going to destroy Sedom. If for some reason He saw it necessary to let Avraham daven anyway, so be it, but what do this have to do with how many descendants Avraham would end up having?

The Dubno Magid offers a mashal that a man once entered a clothing store that had a large sale and started grabbing all kinds of items - pants, shirts, dresses - off of the shelf. Another shopper went over to him and asked him about his behavior. "It's true that there is a good sale here, but why are you indiscriminately grabbing things off the shelf without even checking the sizes? How do you know if it will fit your child?" The man smiled and explained that since he has fifteen children, it will likely fit one of them. "If it's not good for Yankel, Shloimi can fit into it. If it doesn't fit Sarah, it will be good for Yocheved now, or for Esti next year." Tefillah works very much the same way. We often daven very hard for someone or something and Hashem refuses our request. Yet, no tefillah goes to waste and He puts it away for another time. Reuvein could daven very hard for his cousin's refuah but he will succumb to his illness, because Hashem has His reasons, but many years later, Reuvein's grandson might be in a dangerous situation but nobody knows of it, and so Hashem uses those tefilos which He stored away to say his grandson from danger. Because Avraham would be the forebearer of so many descendants, Hashem wanted to give him the opportunity to daven.

Every Shabbos mincha before we take out the sefer Torah we say "va'ananim tefilasi lecha Hashem eis ratzon...". We don't say this any other time, not when we take out the Torah, and not as part of any other regular tefilah. In his siddur, R' Yaakov Emden writes that in the end of days, before Moshiach's arrival, K'lal Yisroel will be in a tremendously difficult situation on Shabbos and at mincha time, we will all go and daven for rachamei shomayim and Hashem will hear our tefilos and on motzei Shabbos, Moshiach will come.

It is an eis tzara l'Yaakov, but let us allow it to inspire us to tefilah. We want our tefilos to be answered, all of our needs met, but we must know that no tefillah goes to waste. As we say in selichos, our tears are stored "b'nodcha lihyos" - in Hashem's flask. May He add them to all the tefilos uttered in the current matzav and save us from our oppressors b'karov!

This week's Yesodos is dedicated l'ilui nishmas:

ר' שמואל שמעלקא ב"ר משה ז"ל

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