



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFRA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

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

תשפ"ה

תזריע - מצורע

פרשת

CREATION THROUGH TORAH

Parshas Shemini ends with a listing of which categories of animals, birds and fish are permitted and which are forbidden. Our parsha begins with the birth of a child, his bris milah, and the halachos of tumah and tahara which ensue from childbirth. This juxtaposition is very deliberate. Rashi tells us that just like the creation of man followed the creation of all of the animals, so does man's Torah, meaning the halachos which pertain to man, follow those of the animals. What does this mean?

HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l explains that when Hashem created the world, it was contingent on the Jewish people later accepting the Torah. Accordingly, the world was really, in a sense, created when we accepted the Torah, and the words of the Torah are actually the creation of the world we live in. It is therefore most appropriate for the Torah to teach the halachos of man after those of the animal kingdom, because our creation comes after them.

Rashi's explanation is actually the statement of R' Simlai in a medrash, which is in response to a discussion of the order of Creation. Based on a posuk in Tehilim ('achor va'kedem tzarasani'), Chazal tell us that if man has merits, we point out that he was first and foremost in Creation, but if he doesn't, he should realize that even the flies were created before him. R' Yishmael explains that while he was created last, man is punished first, and R' Yochanan explains that man is also the last one to be praised. It is in response to these opinions that R' Simlai tells us that man's Torah is last because he was last in Creation. Unlike the other opinions cited, R' Simlai doesn't seem to be addressing how man was created both first and last, but according to HaRav Sorotzkin's explanation, this can be easily understood: True, man is the primary part of Creation. The order Hashem created the world in is inconsequential. What does matter is, why He created the world, which was so that we should later accept the Torah. Yet Torah is not just the reason for Creation, but the very foundation on which it stands. R' Simlai is telling us that we must realize that while we are the main reason for Creation, fulfilling the Torah is even more important, as it is only in this merit that we exist at all. As we count up towards the yom tov of Shavuot, we should realize that by accepting and learning Torah, we are giving validity and reality to Creation.

וְיִקְרָא. צָרִיךְ לְהוֹדִיעַ צַעֲרוֹ לְרַבִּים, וְרַבִּים מִבְּקָשִׁין עָלָיו רַחֲמִים! (מועד קטן ה.)

The Torah mandates that the metzora must inform and warn those around him of his status so that they distance themselves from him. However, were the only intent to maintain themselves as tahor, the Torah should have simply said "v'tamei yikra". The repetition of the word 'tamei' is therefore understood to mean that he should so inform them for a different reason — so that they should be inspired to daven for his complete recovery.

TORAH TEMIMAH



*From the desk of
the Rosh Kollel...*

Welcome to all our new subscribers!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Pesach campaign! Your help enabled so many to enjoy their Pesach seder and the entire yom tov!

Exciting things are happening in the kollel! - Now well into our 16th year since the kollel was first established, the kollel and its beis medrash continue to be a real asset to the community on so many levels. We have reached the final stages of organizing and cataloging our vast otzar ha'seforim (around 3,000 volumes). This new system will not only improve learning in the kollel, but with benefit the broader community as well.

THE SEFER IS OUT! - In honor of reaching our 16th year, I have published 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. To find out how to get your own copy, email me at: rabbi@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 sefer, 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

THE MAKING OF A MIKVA

Most types of tumah are removed by immersing in a mikvah. [The exceptions are tumas meis (contact with the dead) which requires sprinkling of the ashes of the parah adumah, or a metzora who must undergo a sprinkling process as well, or a zav (an emission from a male, which is not common nowadays) who must immerse in a natural spring.] A mikvah is defined as a gathering of water in the ground. If the water is contained in some sort of vessel such as an above ground pool, it cannot serve as a mikva by Torah law, according to all opinions, regardless of the original source of the water.

Practically, most mikvaos are filled with rainwater, however some are filled with water from a natural spring. (Whether or not the mikvah will retain the status of a mayan or natural spring is a matter of debate and beyond the scope of these pages.) The rain or spring water however must come to the mikva without the aid of a receptacle or container, meaning that if a bucket is filled with rainwater, it cannot be then directly poured into the mikvah. If it is, it is invalidated. This is known as a "mayim sh'uvim" (drawn water) and for all intents and purposes, water from the faucet has the same status. Although a minority opinion (Rambam) holds that mayim sh'uvim is only invalid by Rabbinic decree (lest one come to immerse in a receptacle), the majority opinion holds such water to be invalid by Torah law. Accordingly, an in-ground swimming pool, since it is filled with pipe water, cannot serve as a mikvah.

However, mayim sh'uvim is only invalid by Torah law if it is poured directly into the mikvah. If however, the water is poured on the ground and then subsequently travels three tefachim (about one foot) before running into the mikvah, the water is only invalid by Rabbinic decree. It is partially for this reason that many mikvaos are constructed in a way that both the rainwater running down from the roof, and the tap water used to fill the

immersion pool, run along the ground for three tefachim before falling into their respective areas.

Practically speaking however, it is difficult to constantly change the waters of a mikvah, refilling it with rainwater. Retaining the same water for a long period of time is also problematic from a sanitary standpoint. Filtering rainwater is also wrought with problems from a halachic standpoint. Therefore, the solution offered to fill up the immersion pool with mayim sh'uvim and purify that water by one of two methods: hashaka and zeria. The water in the immersion pool can then be changed (or under certain strict conditions, filtered) regularly.

The more commonly known method of hashaka is accomplished when a pool filled with drawn water touches and connects with the waters of a kosher mikvah. Typically, this is accomplished via a large hole (practically about the size of a fist) between the two pools of water. According to most opinions, once the waters touch, the drawn water becomes a valid mikvah and the connection between the two pools can be broken by placing a rubber stopper in the hole.

The second method of "koshering" the mayim sh'uvim is by mixing it into a kosher mikvah: Once a mikvah contains the requisite amount of 40 se'ah (measures) of rainwater, any water can be added to it to create a larger volume. Even if it overflows into another place (such as an adjacent empty in-ground pool), the water remains valid). This procedure is known as zeria. Typically, drawn water is slowly released into a reservoir of rainwater (usually by hamshacha, as above) allowing it to mix into it until the point where it begins overflowing on the opposite end into the empty immersion pool. Since this water is constantly being diluted by clean drawn water, the waters remain clean and the overflowing waters are, as well.)

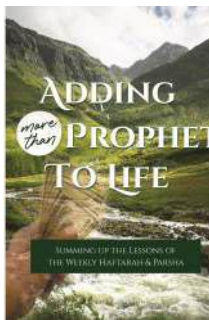
Most modern mikvaos utilize both hashaka and zeria for added stringency, although either one is valid according to the vast majority of opinions. Both the "bor hashaka" and "bor zeria" reservoirs are filled with rainwater. Then, water is released or poured into the bor zeria until it overflows into the immersion pool ("bor tevilah"). Once it is filled, the stopper is removed between the bor tevilah and bor hashaka and the mikvah is ready to use.

SPARKS OF SHABBOS

The medrash tells us that after Kayin was sentenced to wander the world, he met up with his father, Adam and explained that he had done teshuva and reached a compromise with Hashem. Upon hearing that teshuva works, Adam exclaimed "mizmor shir la'yom ha'shabbos"! R' Dovid Cohen (Yeshivas Chevron) explains that since Adam had failed in the few hours before Shabbos by eating from the eitz ha'daas, thereby losing the opportunity of Shabbos, when he heard there was a way to rectify it and reach that high level, he praised Shabbos. Even though we don't attain that same level of the original intended Shabbos, we look forward to the day when we will. In the meantime, the Shabbos we have can be elevated a lit bit higher if its acceptance is coupled together with an element of introspection and teshuva.

L'maaseh...

Once, Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l had returned from a long fundraising trip into the city. His assistant who accompanied him, served him a cup of coffee so the rosh yeshiva could regain his strength. R' Aharon pushed the cup away from himself and his assistant understood that it was probably because he was fasting that day. After pressing him as to the purpose of his fast, R' Aharon explained that he was expecting a phone call to inquire about a certain bochur for shiduchim. "I am fasting that they shouldn't call me, as I have nothing good to say about this boy", R' Aharon, explained. Usually, when it came to shiduchim, R' Aharon was wont to exaggerate and call every good bochur 'the next R' Akiva Eiger', yet this time, he really couldn't find anything good, and so he davened - and fasted - that he shouldn't have to answer the question.



DIVREI HA'NAVI - ADDING PROPHET TO LIFE

The navi tells the story of four men afflicted with leprosy who sat outside the city. In desperation, and instead of dying of starvation, they foursome chose to venture into enemy territory and surrender, reasoning that it was better to possibly be sustained as slaves then die of starvation. In the end, Hashem made a miracle. The enemies fled, the city emptied out and all of the Jews in the region were saved.

The meforshim ask numerous questions. Some want to know how these four sat together. After all, a metzora is supposed to sit in solitary confinement. Others point out that their city wasn't a walled city in the times of Yehoshua and therefore, while they should have been excluded from society, there was no need for them to be banished from the city's limits.

In addressing some of these questions, Rav Yonoson Eibeshitz wonders how Hashem could inflict Jews with tzard'as at all, after He promised us that we won't suffer from any diseases that the Egyptians suffered, which includes tzaraas. He explains that there are really two types of tzaraas. There is a physical infectious disease which non-Jews can suffer from. This is indeed a machalah of Mitzrayim which we are spared from if we follow the Torah's ways. Then there is the spiritual malady of tzaraas which our parsha deals with, which is tamei and not a medical illness. The gemara (Sanhedrin 107b) tells us that these four lepers were none other than Geichazi and his sons, who was cursed by Elisha that they should become afflicted with the physical leprosy of Naaman, as a punishment. The reason they sat outside of the city wasn't because they were observing the halachos of tzaraas in our parsha, but rather, to avoid infecting others. Therefore, they were able to sit together, but were isolated outside of the rest of society.

The Me'am Lo'ez opines that the reason why this haftarah is read for parshas Metzora is in order to teach us that one should not denigrate a metzora. Although he is in some respects considered dead and sits alone, one shouldn't mistreat him, as we see that these four lepers were the ones who brought salvation to the Jewish people, because, if they hadn't wandered into enemy territory, they wouldn't have discovered and empty city with enough supplies to sustain the entire nation.

Chazal tell us that the reason why Elisha had cursed Geichazi with tzaraas was because he caused others to worship idols. When he tried to get him to do teshuva, Geichazi replied that since he caused others to sin, the doors of teshuva are closed. The gemara cites this episode to teach us that when rebuking, one should pull his student or child close with his right hand, while pushing away or rebuking with his left, meaning that he should be mekarev his student with a large measure of love and warmth. Elisha failed to do so, but rather pushed Geichazi away with two hands.

A negah tzaraas can only be decided by a kohein. Even if the kohein is completely unlearned, he must call a talmid chacham who will render his decision and recommend the kohein to pronounce it as a negah which is tamei. Why? Perhaps the reason is because by telling the afflicted person that he is tamei, he is also rebuking him for failing in speaking lashon hara or arrogance, etc. Just because the talmid chacham can see this is the case, doesn't enable him to rebuke the person. Rather, he must tell the kohein to do so because, as a kohein, he has the DNA of Aharon who was ohev sholom u'rodef sholom and loved every Jew. A kohein naturally has a certain madreigah of ahavas Yisroel and is therefore worthy of rebuking his fellow Jew. This is why the beracha they recite when they recite birkas kohanim is 'l'vareich es amo Yisroel b'ahavah', because this is the role of a kohein and as such, is the most capable of transferring beracha and telling his fellow Jew where he has gone wrong. May we be zocheh to infuse every rebuke to our students, children, or others with an extra measure of ahavas Yisroel. Without it, we cannot possibly communicate the message effectively.



Although Hakadosh Boruch Hu is Omniscient, He created the world order in a way as if He doesn't know what is going on. On one level, He is like a top doctor who is unaware that his child is ill because he was never told about it. If the father would know, he would certainly seek the best medical care for his son. So too, we need to turn to our Father in Shomayim and tell him of our pains and troubles. Then as a compassionate father with all the expertise in the world, He will help us. Beyond this though, even a father who is aware of his child's malady, is sprung into action when he hears the child's heart-wrenching cries. So too, when we call out in tefilah, Hashem is moved to help us. (Adapted from Shaarim b'Tefilah)