



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFHA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

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

תשפ"ה

במדבר

פרשת

TORAH IS A FAMILY CELEBRATION

HaRav Elchonon Wasserman HY"D notes that in instructing Moshe regarding taking the census, the posuk makes specific mention of the families "l'mishpechosom". Instead of telling Moshe to count the number of mishpachos, Hakadosh Boruch Hu includes it in his instruction of se'u - "elevate". Explains Rav Elchonon, that the family unit is more than just a way of subdividing segments of k'lal Yisroel. Rather, it is central to Judaism. Chazal tell us that one of the reasons Nadav and Avihu were punished was because they failed to get married and raise families. Surely they meant well, thinking that their role as parents would interfere with their own personal growth and service of Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Nevertheless, the Torah calls this a "foreign fire".

The Torah tells us that after matan Torah, the b'nei Yisroel complained that they could no longer marry close relatives. Perhaps it was because they knew the importance of the family unit that they desired to marry within their own family. We would also like to suggest that perhaps this why all agree that Shavuos must be celebrated on a physical level as well: The gemara (Pesachim 68b) cites a machlokes between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua regarding how one should properly celebrate yom tov. R' Eliezer maintains that one must decide whether he is going to spend the entire day in the beis medrash in spiritual pursuits, or spend the entire day eating, drinking and physically enjoying yom tov. R' Yehoshua tells us that one should split his time, devoting some of his time to simchas yom tov, and spending part of the day in the beis medrash growing spiritually. Although the halacha clearly follows R' Yehoshua, the gemara tells us that on Shavuos, even R' Eliezer agrees that one must also celebrate with food and drink since "it is the day the Torah was given to k'lal Yisroel". This begs explanation. After all, if R' Eliezer maintains that true expression of celebration is when it is of a spiritual nature, then this should certainly be true of the day we received the Torah! However, since "family" is essential to Torah true Judaism, one cannot fully celebrate by remaining within the walls of the beis ha'medrash alone. Although (according to R' Eliezer) this may be true of Succos and Pesach, this is because these yomim tovim are expression of our closeness and avodah of Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Shavuos however, is the day we received the Torah - the day we became k'lal Yisroel, a nation that "celebrates" family.

כתוב אחד אומר (במדבר ח, כד) מִבֶּן חָמֵשׁ וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעֲלָה וְכָתוּב אֶחָד אֹמֵר (במדבר ד, ג) מִבֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים אִי אֶפְסָר לִוְמֹר שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁכֵבֶר נֹאמֵר כ"ה וְאִי אֶפְסָר לִוְמֹר כ"ה שָׁכֵבֶר נֹאמֵר שְׁלֹשִׁים הָא כִּי צִדַּק כ"ה לְלִמּוּד וּשְׁלֹשִׁים לַעֲבוּדָה מִכָּאן לְתַלְמִיד שֶׁלֹּא רָאָה סִימָן יָפֵה בְּמִשְׁנַתוֹ ה' שָׁנִים שׁוֹב אִינוֹ רֹאֶה: (חילין כד.)

In one place, the Torah tells us that the Leviim are to begin serving in the Mishkan from the age of twenty-five, yet in our parsha, the age is set at thirty. This can only be reconciled by explaining that the Leviim would enter to serve as apprentices at the age of twenty five and only take on their full role at thirty. From here we can derive that one might have to invest five full years in study before achieving any level. Beyond this, his efforts might be futile..



From the desk of
the Rosh Kollel...

Welcome to all our new subscribers!

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

SEPARATE BURNERS, ONE OVEN

By definition, a kosher kitchen, in addition to using only kosher ingredients for cooking, maintains an absolute separation between meat and milk. Many go as far as to have separate designated dishtowels without relying on washing them in between, and even designating separate bottles of ketchup (which is advisable in a house where children poke the bottle into their hot foods). The only exceptions to this separation in many instances is the use of stovetop burners for both meat and dairy as well as having only one oven. While having separate ovens and burners is commendable, for many people it is not practical. What are then, are most of these people relying on, and how should they conduct themselves in the most preferable way, under the circumstances?

The leniency for using the same burner for both 'genders' (michig & fleishig) is based on two explanations: First, (with the exception of chometz on Pesach when this is questionable) if two dry pots touch each other, the flavor does not pass from one pot to another. This is know as "shnei keilim hanogim zeh ba'zeh" and means that if one is carrying a kosher pot in one hand and a treif pot full of non-kosher food in the other and the two hot pots touch, the kosher food remains kosher. This is essentially the basis of eating airline meals which are double wrapped where the outer layer becomes treif since it is exposed to the non-kosher oven, but does not affect the inner metal container. (It is worth mentioning that several poskim question applying the heter of shnei keilim to two thin layers of foil, and therefore at least the inner container and lid should consist of a harder aluminum or plastic.) As such, even if the grate (of a gas burner) is in fact treif, as long as both it and the pot are clean and dry, no forbidden flavor will transfer to the pot. The issue of course becomes if the contents of the pot overflow, making their way between the pot and the burner. Accordingly, one should also be careful to make sure the pot is dry if it was previously sitting on a counter top, especially, near the sink.

The other reason to be lenient and rely on using the same burner for both genders is that even in the event that the contents of the pot overflow while cooking, they are immediately burnt by the

fire, before they could possibly be absorbed by the metal of the grate itself. As such, the grate in fact remains kosher, but this is only true in the fire is burning at the time of the overflow. While the custom of many is to rely on either of these approaches, many opt to either install a single or double burner unit for use with milchigs, or use a portable plug-in electric burner instead. The added advantage of this is that the surface space between the burners remains kosher (fleishig) which is practically useful for those pieces of schnitzel, etc. which tend to jump out of the frying pan, landing on that surface.

Using the same oven for both genders however, is an entirely different matter. If one makes chicken in gravy, for example, the fleishig steam from the pan rises and becomes absorbed in the walls of the oven, very much like a lid which is placed on top of a pot. (Although this is primarily the upper part of the oven, for our purposes, we will make no distinction.) If one subsequently cooks a cheese lasagna in the oven, its vapors will rise and will also be absorbed into the oven's walls and along with it, the absorbed meat flavor will be released back into the oven, theoretically absorbed by the lasagna in turn. If the pan remains covered the entire time, then in theory, the oven remains pareve and a pareve food cooked after it also remains pareve. Therefore, many poskim permit the use of a single oven if it is designated as either meat or dairy, provided that the opposite gender is always covered when put into the oven. If however, gravy or food spills out of the pan of the covered species, this would render the oven non-kosher and would have to be cleaned and kosher. If the oven is self cleaning and this is a viable option, then this is the best way to kosher it. If it isn't, many poskim permit running it at a high temperature for an extended period of time. It is however preferable to always keep both genders covered, but doing so, does not permit the simultaneous cooking or baking of two meat and milk, even in two separate covered pans.

This is all, however, in respect to the oven. The racks are viewed in a similar way as the grates of the stovetop and one should only use them interchangeably if they are clean. Placing a layer of foil on the rack, beneath the pan is a commendable extra step to take as well.

SPARKS OF SHABBOS

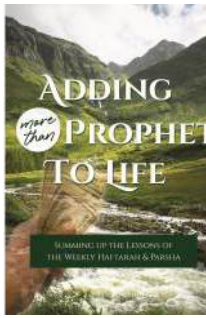
Everything manifests itself on three levels: olam, shana, v'nefesh (place, time and soul). The Nesivos Sholom explains that the Shechina dwells amongst us on all three: In the Beis HaMikdash, when we do His will and merit "V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'socham"; on Shabbos, which is "os hi beini u'vein b'nei yisroel", and the Torah which Chazal describe in terms of our marriage to the Ribono shel Olam. While we don't have a Beis HaMikdash, our shuls and our homes qualify as a mikdash me'at and if we permeate our surroundings with kedusha and Torah on Shabbos, we can merit to have the Divine presence visit us on all three levels, an extremely potent beracha.

L'maaseh...

A married talmid of Rav Shmuel Birnbaum came to complain to his rebbe about his sholom bayis or lack thereof. As a concerned rebbe, the rosh yeshiva asked him what was wrong and the avreich went on to list a series of complaints about his wife's cooking and housekeeping skills. When R' Shmuel realized what this man's problems centered around, he turned to his talmid and told him, "so it is all YOUR fault". Not quite understanding how bad food preparation and letting the laundry and dishes pile up could be his fault, he turned to his rebbe for an explanation, and R' Shmuel was forthcoming with one: "If you were completely dedicated to your learning, then it would be the unanswered questions that would catch your attention. Every "tzarich iyun" (needs clarification) would occupy your thoughts and attention and you wouldn't even notice these minor details at home, let alone, would they bother you. Rav Shmuel's lesson in sholom bayis to this one student can serve as an inspiration and lesson to all of us: If we sgteep up our dedication to Torah, we won't be bothered by the small and less significant things



Chazal teach that we should serve Hashem with simcha. This means that a person should daven with simcha. Certainly, this enhances his tefilah, and just like one who shakes a lulav with simcha has done a greater mitzvah than one who does so merely because he is obligated to do so, tefilah is no less. However, explains R' Shimshon Pinkus zt"l, when it comes to tefilah, simcha is more than a spice or enhancing ingredient. Rather, it defines the tefilah itself. If a person realizes Who he is conversing with and that Hashem is full of love and mercy for us and has the ability to do anything and everything for us, we would be so excited at the opportunity to speak to Him and discuss our needs. If we don't realize the potential, then it is like the person who is schlepping a very heavy bag through the streets thinking he is carrying rocks; if he would only realize that the bag is full of diamonds, he would jump at the opportunity to schlep them!



DIVREI HA'NAVI - ADDING PROPHET TO LIFE

The final pesukim of our haftarah are words most of us are familiar with: "v'erastich li l'olam v'erastich li b'tzedk u'b'mishpat, u'v'chesed u'v'rachamim, v'erastich li b'emunah v'yadaat es Hashem". Every morning we recite these two pesukim and declare a triple betrothal to Hakadosh Boruch Hu as we wrap the retzuos of our tefillin around our fingers. Although it would seem like we are placing a ring on our fingers like a chosson does to his kallah, it seems that there is much more going on here and we need to understand why 'erastich' is repeated three times if a typical marriage only includes a single declaration.

The medrash Rabah in parshas Bo discusses the mitzva of kiddush ha'chodesh and compares it to a marriage in a mashal where a king betroths a woman and gives her only a small gift. Only later, when the marriage is fully completed with chuppah, he showers her with many more gifts. Similarly, our initial commitment of "kiddushin" to Hashem happened in Mitzrayim when we were redeemed from slavery. Then we only received the gift of a very small mitzva, that of kiddush ha'chodesh, as it says "v'rastich li l'olam". Only later, when Hashem became our full fledged husband, as it says in the haftarah of Ki-Seitzei, "ki bo'alayich osayich", did He give us many more gifts of Torah and mitzvos.

Why kiddush ha'chodesh was this first gift needs to be understood, but beyond this, it seems from this message that it was yetzias Mitzrayim which served as the kiddushin for the Jewish people's marriage to Hakadosh Boruch Hu. On the other hand, we also find that it was the luchos which served as the kesef kidushin which effected our marriage to Him, so how are we to understand this?

At every wedding, the mesader kiddushin recites a beracha "mekadeish amo Yisroel al yedei chuppah v'kiddushin". Loosely translated this means that Hashem sanctified us with the mitzva of kiddushin and marriage, but on a deeper level it also refers to k'lal Yisroel's marriage to Hakadosh Boruch Hu as we have touched upon above. However there is one oddity which jumps out at you from this beracha. Usually, kiddushin comes first and is followed by nesuin which is accomplished through chuppah. Although there is a big debate in the poskim as to exactly what chuppah is, all agree that it follows kiddushin. In fact, if the order is reversed, it is questionable as to whether or not the nesuin falls in place automatically retroactively or not. Why then, does the beracha reverse the order?

R' Yehonason Eibeshitz explains that the original kiddushin was given when we left Mitzrayim on condition that we would accept the Torah. Then, Hashem inverted the mountain and held it over our heads like a chuppah. When Moshe Rabeinu came down with the luchos and smashed them, he reneged on the original acceptance of kiddushin; since the condition wasn't fulfilled because we didn't actually get the Torah, there was no marriage. It was only later, when he descended with the second set of luchos that there was another kiddushin at which point, we became married to Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Thus, we as a nation were sanctified through chuppah - when we stood under the shadow of the mountain - and kiddushin, when we later received the second set of luchos. It is after this model that the nusach of the beracha we recite at every chuppah was fashioned.

Let us return to the original kiddushin, when we received the mitzva of kiddush ha'chodesh, in light of a discussion of the census we find in our parsha: All males were counted from the age of twenty and up, the age deemed fit for military service and on a deeper level, the age at which a person is responsible for his actions, in beis din shel maalah. The only exception to this was shevet Levi who were counted from the age of one month. On a simple level this is because after thirty days, an infant has proven himself to be viable, meaning that a baby that passes away before he turns thirty days is considered a neifel and in some respects was never really born. The Rabeinu Bachaya, however, offers a different understanding and writes that the Torah linked the counting of shevet Levi to the month since Leviim represent emunah, which is symbolized by the moon, as the posuk says "v'emunascha ba'leilos". Accordingly, kiddush ha'chodesh represents emunah, and this was the gift we received together with our original kiddushin before we even left Mitzrayim.

The Chasam Sofer conveys a similar idea. He wonders why we are sometimes referred to as Hashem's children, and in other places, Chazal refer to us as Hashem's bride. He explains that it is only with the emunah we displayed after leaving Mitzrayim that we were elevated to the status of a wife.

However, the Radak addresses the triple expression of betrothal. He explains that each "v'erastich" corresponds to a different golus and our redemption from it: V'erastich li l'olam refers to golus Mitzrayim. The second refers to the exile in the aftermath of the churban of the Beis HaMikdash. V'erastich li b'emunah refers to our current state of golus and the geulah we anxiously await. Accordingly, emunah is the midah with which we will merit a final and complete marriage to the Ribono shel Olam.

So it was through emunah that we gained our initial kiddushin with Hakadosh Boruch Hu, and it is with emunah that we will merit our final geulah and finally be reunited with the Ribono shel Olam as choson and kallah.

These pesukim are typically said when we don tefillin six days a week, but on Shabbos we don't say them. Tefillin, is a vehicle which united us with Hashem yisborach. The gemara in meseches Berachos tells us that Hashem's tefillin mirrors ours: In our tefillin, it says "shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem echad", unifying Hashem as one. In His tefillin, it says "mi k'amcha Yisroel goy echad ba'aretz", praising us that we are one unified nation. On Shabbos we don't need this expression of unity because this is when we sit in the cheder ha'yichud with Hakadosh Boruch Hu. We say "mizmor shir l'yom ha'Shabbos" in which we proclaim "l'hagid ba'boker chasdecha, v'emunascha ba'leilos" because even in the darkest of night, we have emunah and it is through this that we are united with Hakadosh Boruch Hu. May we be zocheh through the zechus of Shabbos and the emunah all week long to merit a final reunion with Hakadosh Boruch Hu, with the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash and the ushering in of the 'yom sheh kulo Shabbos"!